

2015 INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT ON THE TEACHING PROFESSION COUNTRY UPDATE ON 2014 GOALS

POLAND

In Wellington, during the 4th International Summit on the Teaching Profession, the Polish delegation proposed the following priorities for follow-up actions in 2014:

- to focus on developing professional capacity of teachers;
- to support leadership at schools;
- to better include the community in educational processes.

These priorities are in line with the goals of the Ministry of Education program aiming at the modernisation of school development instruments. The program has been carried out on a pilot basis in 160 counties (*powiat*) across Poland.

The changes have been initiated as a result of analysis of the reform efforts undertaken recently and the debates on further developments. The shared opinion was that completion of school education structure reform and successful implementation of the new national curriculum framework, which extended schools' and teachers' autonomy, set the ground for further improvement of school performance quality. It was also agreed that the progress could be achieved only through the engagement of whole school communities and especially the active involvement of teachers and school leaders into development processes.

Two main instruments supporting the changes have been introduced through new legal regulations:

- new approach to school inspection, shifting its focus from control to internal and external evaluation, which takes into account the results of external examinations, the estimations of educational added value, opinions of key stakeholders: students, parents, and external partners (e.g., employers);
- system of assistance and counselling for schools, integrated with programs of professional development for teachers and school leaders.

The local and regional school development centres are playing a crucial role in these modernisation efforts. They support schools throughout the whole development process: beginning with assisting in the collection and assessment of evidence, through offering advice on the identification of schools' strengths and weaknesses, up to helping in the elaboration of a development plan. The plan should encompass professional development of the teaching staff and in-service training programs tailored to specific teachers' needs. The cooperation networks of teachers play an important role in the improvement of their professional competencies.

The pilot program offers various training opportunities for teachers, school leaders, and schools: workshops, seminars, and conferences, as well as information and training materials (books, manuals) which are available in traditional paper form and on-line. Examples of good practices have been identified, evaluated, and promoted.

During the last year (2014), the program was carefully monitored and evaluated. The results of those processes will serve as a basis for recommendations and guidelines for the full-fledged, obligatory implementation of the new system from the beginning of 2016.