

# The Effect of Trained Principals on the Professional (Self) Development of Employees

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The matter election of principal in schools can sometimes become a political issue. All political parties are interested in this position, especially the ones that are now in power. The work of a principal is a rather complex activity, especially during the time of transition, when teachers, who are managed by the principals, expect the implementation of every outlined change and to achieve the goals of educational reform. Principals often must struggle to supervise teachers and deal with difficulties, because during their professional development they did not acquire basic competency in management, or management in education. This article discusses research among the main participants in education (teachers, principals, and advisors) and examines what kind of influence education has on principals' ability to provide leadership in times of change. The results of this research show that leadership in schools is more efficient if principals are more educated in disciplines such as management in education.

*Key words:* principal improvement, professional development, teaching observation

## Introduction

European strategic goals for a period of ten years given in the Lisbon Declaration (European University Association 2000) are incorporated in a document called 'Education Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina strategy,' which was signed in Bruxelles in 2002. In response to this document, Entity Ministers of Education have undertaken certain commitments, and agreed to take the following reform measures (OSCE 2002):

- All teachers should undergo training for four years concerning implementation of modern teaching methods.
- Teacher licensing and certification should be standardized and include certain procedures.
- A system of teacher improvement centers should be established.
- Implementation of subjects revision and systems of teacher improvement revision before employment.

- Improvement of school leadership quality.

Because of the complexity of the educational system in Bosnia and Herzegovina, educational reform and other written materials that are products of projects within the international community have not been embraced and adopted by the decision makers and power centers.

Improvement of teachers, and especially principals, has not received the needed attention. Analyzing present educational practices, it is rather obvious that there are only few parties with good intentions, who are willing to make a profound analysis of the true state of education and the need to develop teachers and leadership staff in schools. Few are also willing to acknowledge that teachers are, in the end, the ones who have to respond to students' and parents' demands.

This work presents the results of research that has been conducted among teachers, principals, and advisors at the Pedagogical Institute in two groups of schools. The purpose of the research is to determine the effectiveness of the principal training implemented by the Pedagogical Institute. Expectations are that well-trained principals effectively lead their schools. Morrison (2003, 219–220) sets 'training and teaching of principals and their assistants' as a high priority and precondition for successful work in leading the educational institutions, that are subject to constant changes. This study aims to answer the question of whether the level of training which principals receive in management in the education field has an effect on employee development, without which there cannot be successful introduction of educational reform.

### Paradigm and Methodology of Research

The study uses the traditional, empirical, analytical, quantitative focus, the paradigm on which Marentič-Požarnikova (1987, 65) says that 'in the past few decades the world has experienced significant shifts in the direction of qualitative research,' especially in education and services. Therefore, in this study, the quantitative approach is combined with the descriptive method, which is more common for a qualitative approach to research. This is particularly evident in the area of interpretation of statistical indicators.

#### THE AIM, TASKS AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The aim of this research is to identify the opinions of participants on their professional development in elementary schools, and to corre-

late these opinions with the level of principal training in the field of management in education.

The task of this research is to determine how different levels of experience and principals' training in management in education influence the opinions of school employees on their own development and the development of their colleagues.

Accordingly, the hypothesis is: 'There is a difference in the opinions on the need for professional development of teachers and principals in relation to the level of principals' training in the field of management in education.'

#### SAMPLE, METHOD AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

It was necessary to determine the 'model which will guarantee, based on the positions of the questioned sample, the existence of the same views and opinions' of all teachers, managers and elementary school advisors, 'as the basic set or populations' (Mužić 1979, 534).

The sample of respondents in this survey is dedicated (purposeful sample), because the schools and teachers in which the reform, – including a shift from an eight-year curriculum to a nine-year one –, is in progress, are included in the survey. Professional training of principals and teachers from these schools is inevitable. The sample consisted of respondents from among the teachers, principals, and advisors from educational institutes which are in charge of their schools. Group A is composed from 6 schools with 71 teachers and principals that attended organized training in management in education, while group B is composed from 7 schools with 76 teachers and principals that have not attended organized training in management in education. Thus, it was a sample from which one was expected to 'learn the most' and collect the most useful information (Sharan 1998, 61).

This research used the questionnaire that Mužić identifies with the 'simultaneous action and the written data collection from large numbers of people (respondents) about something they know, feel or think.' Bearing in mind that it is non-functional and very expensive to have the answers from all basic sets (all teachers, elementary school principles and advisors from pedagogical institutes), it was decided to carry out the survey in order to get the answers from the selected sample, as a subset of the basic group 'in order to determine the distribution of behaviors, opinions and attitudes of the basic group' (Ristić 2006, 350).

The sample in the survey was selected on purpose and as such

does not provide for generalization. That was not the intention of the researcher, because the territories in Bosnia and Herzegovina are treated with different intensity, both in introduction and acceptance of reforms, as well as in professional development and strengthening of school management teams and teachers.

#### INSTRUMENT OF MEASUREMENT

The survey was conducted by using questionnaires with the same or customized questions for all three target groups. As a basis for the construction of research instruments, systems of questionnaires have been used called 'Black Eye' ([www.ric.si](http://www.ric.si)). These questionnaires are used to measure the quality of schools in the Republic of Slovenia, within the standards of 'PRSP' (Recognition of the Republic of Slovenia for business excellence), which are compliant with European standards of quality in education (EFQM – European Foundation for Quality Management).

In creating the survey sheet it was taken into account that completing the survey should not require a great effort for the respondents. Therefore, questions were taken from Likert's descriptive scale judgement with 3–4 levels of satisfaction (e.g. very important, important, average important and unimportant) in combination with the checklist (Mužić 1979, 313–320). Short, simple and unambiguous closed-type questions (dichotomous or multiple choice) were selected, which participants answered by marking a small x in the box next to one of the two, three, or four answers offered (Bakovljević 1997, 73–76).

Two different types of questions were used in creating the research instrument (questionnaire), namely:

- Dichotomous questions (structured), which respondents answer with yes, no, or do not know.
- Questions with multiple choices (structured). In the offered questions, respondents could choose only one of the answers.
- (Open (unstructured) questions were not used in this study because their treatment requires more time.)

The questionnaire included questions about teaching observation. This is one of the very important activities of principals. Even more important is the information gained in that process. Questionnaires also contained questions about the possibility to access the professional development seminars for teachers, questions about who influences the development of teachers, and questions about the level of education of principals.

## Data Processing

It was planned that data processing would be conducted by using an  $F$ -test and  $t$ -test. The idea was that by using an  $F$ -test, it should be established whether the attitudes of samples that will be compared have equal variances. Depending on results gained in such a way, the  $t$ -test would be used to determine in which case there were significant differences in opinion of the observed populations. However, this method would be applicable only for samples larger than 30 subjects (Mužić 1999, 129). Therefore, this method would not give good results because the size of the sample, except in the case of teachers, is no more than 30 ( $n \geq 30$ ). So it seemed appropriate to use the  $AVM$  (Average Value Method Testing – arithmetic mean) (Walker 2006). It was possible to apply this method because the ‘four degree’ Likert scale of attitude assessment is functionally connected between the numerical value from 2 to 5. Grade 2 indicates the lowest and 5 the highest level of satisfaction. After obtaining the structure of responses from 2 to 5, it was possible to calculate the arithmetic mean value of satisfaction of the response to every question or subquestion for all three populations from both groups. The obtained average values have been effectively used to record the difference in the levels of the respondents’ expressed satisfaction with the same issues. Finally, the analysis of the responses was compared to those of the corresponding focus group on the matter. These results are presented in tables. So, it was shown that the use of the method of mean values was more effective in recording the differences in the attitudes of the population studied. These differences are, as it will be seen, sometimes very small, but they are still differences.

### STATISTICAL INDICATORS

The following tables present data obtained by measurement, using  $AVM$  which will be the basis for the interpretation, after statistical processing.

The resulting data significantly reduce the subjectivity of researchers, although Mužić (1999) considers that the appearance of ‘subjectivity does not mean arbitrariness’ (Mužić 1999, 138).

Observed data in tables show the attitudes of the observed population. The basic principle used in the context of interpretation of data is to compare the obtained results with the same instrument in two different populations. Thus, conditions for legal deduction are acquired, based on verifiable and correct results, not on the results

TABLE 1 Professional development of teachers: teaching observation, feedback and seminars

Question	Teachers		Principles		Advisers	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
(1)	3,96	4,15	4,16	4,14	4,50	5,00
(2)	4,34	4,40	4,83	4,57	4,00	4,28
(3)	4,86	4,90	5,00	5,00	4,83	4,85

NOTES Questions: (1) Does the principal visit your classes? (2) How often do you get feedback from your principals? (3) Do you have the possibility to attend seminars for teachers?

that match some moment. This is crucial for Mužić (1999, 140) who says that we should avoid the 'conclusion based on something that is in itself false.'

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEES

Table 1 shows grouped data obtained by statistical analysis of data dealing with the theme of professional development. Numbers in this table are average values of levels of satisfaction given by the respondents when answering the questions.

Teaching observation (Question 1: Does the principal visit your classes?<sup>1</sup>) is part of the principal's job. It is evident that the principals more often observe teaching by teachers in School B. Principals of School B, in the opinion of teachers, tend to be bossy and controlling, rather than encouraging the development and motivation of employees. Teachers in this group also felt that the most effective control is by the students. Principals' opinion of observation is in an almost balanced position in both groups of schools. Advisors in group A believe that principals are more engaged in schools A (teachers: -0.19, principals: +0.02, advisors: +0.50).

When it comes to giving feedback (Question 2: How often do you get feedback from your principals?), teachers and school advisors of B schools are more satisfied. School A principals believe they provide better feedback (teachers: -0.43, Principals: +0.26, Advisors: -0.28). The fact that feedback is provided means nothing if the quality of the information and the way in which it is given are unknown. It is especially important to know whether it has implications in practice, after observations. Or it may mean that principals at schools B more often 'patronize' more often their associates, because they have already acquired competence, by which they effectively show their positional power.

The teachers of both groups highly valued opportunities to attend

TABLE 2 Professional development of teachers

Group	Teachers		Principals		Advisers	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
(4a)	4.57	4.38	5.00	4.71	4.66	5.00
(4b)	4.61	4.23			4.66	4.85
(4c)	4.71	4.30			4.33	4.71
(4d)	4.60	4.30			4.16	4.71
(4e)	4.69	4.39			5.00	4.71

NOTES Question 4: How much is your self-development influenced? Groups: (4a) school management, (4b) other teachers, (4c) students, (4d) parents, (4e) only on your own initiative.

various seminars (Question 3: Do you have the possibility to attend seminars for teachers?). In the opinion of teachers and advisers, the opportunity to attend seminar is higher, although insignificantly in schools B (teachers:  $-0.04$ , principals:  $0.00$ ; Advisers:  $-0.02$ ). This may explain the general attitude towards the need for seminars and opportunities that are available to schools.

If you ignore the financial abilities of schools for organizing seminars, it is interesting to get information about, who influences – and to what extent – the education of teachers (Question 4: How much is your self-development influenced?). The data on this issue were obtained by the 4th group of questions, which are summarized for all three populations of respondents in table 2.

Almost all the possibilities of influence on teachers are taken, starting from management, colleagues, and parents of students to the existence of strong own initiatives to self-development and strengthening. It is evident that the self-education of teachers is strongly influenced by the principals of School A (4a). The attitude toward the need for self-education is evident from school principals in group A. Advisers think a little differently. They believe that school principals in group B have more influence on their colleagues to self-educate (teachers:  $+0.19$ , principals:  $+0.29$ , advisers:  $-0.34$ ), which was a logical consequence of the general situation in schools B according to advisers.

It was concluded that the exchange of information is more prominent in schools in group A. This indicated that other teachers (4b) in schools in group A have more influence on the development of colleagues than they do in schools in group B. Advisers in both groups have a uniform opinion (teachers:  $+0.38$ , Advisers:  $-0.19^2$ ). It is shown that teachers in Group A schools are more intensive in school communication than those from schools in group B.

When it comes to the influence of students (4c) on teacher education, it is more intense with school teachers in group A. Advisers think differently. They believe that students in B Schools have more influence on their teachers (teachers: +0.41, advisers: -0.38), which can be a consequence of ignorance of the situation in their schools. This could also imply the expressed desire of the adviser with respect to the needs that are placed before them during the introduction of changes (such as the shift to a nine-year curriculum). The results are similar when it comes to the influence of parents (4d) on self-education of teachers, which showed a higher degree of satisfaction with school teachers in group A. Advisers again do not have the same opinion, which may be accounted for by ignorance of the situation in 'their' schools (teachers: +0.30, Advisers: +0.55), or what can be interpreted to be in school B. Advisers think that teachers from schools in group B should cooperate more with parents. Teachers and advisers from schools in group A agree that the teachers' self-education is performed largely on their own initiative (4e) (teachers: +0.30, advisers: +0.29). Reviewing the results related to questions about professional development of teachers, a conclusion can be made that the schools in group A show a stronger level of investment in professional development. It can also be concluded that the degree of exchange of professional experiences, as the best aspect of professional development, has the more fertile ground in schools from Group A.

#### EDUCATION OF PRINCIPALS

Respondents in this survey were asked about what area principals should be constantly trained in (Question 5: Do you think that your principal needs permanent professional development in the following areas?). Table 3 summarizes the statistical analysis of data collected from the processing of questionnaires for all three populations of respondents.

Respondents were offered a framework of curriculum contents intended to train principals in management in education. This framework included topics such as working with people and managing human resources (teachers, parents, and local community), handling law enforcement and legislation, supervising and motivating people, and planning and introducing changes in schools.

Respondents from Group A are more aware that they need training in the field of human resource management (5a). Principals of schools from Group A, while more trained in management in education, are aware of the need for additional training in working

TABLE 3 Professional development: Education of principals

Area	Teachers		Principals		Advisers	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
(5a)	4.00	3.86	5.00	4.42	4.83	3.71
(5b)	3.96	3.72	5.00	4.71	4.66	4.57
(5c)	4.02	3.81	5.00	4.85	4.50	3.71
(5d)	3.98	3.78	5.00	4.71	4.66	3.71
(5e)	3.98	3.67	5.00	4.71	4.66	3.85

NOTES Question 5: Do you think that your principal needs permanent professional development in the following areas? Areas: (5a) human resource management, (5b) implementation of laws and bylaws, (5c) people leadership and motivation, (5d) planning and introduction of change in teaching, (5e) mobilization of resources (teachers, parents and local community).

with people. There is little difference in the degree of satisfaction of teachers and school advisers, so it can be said that the teachers from both samples agree about the need for education of their principals (teachers: +0.14, principals: +0.58, advisers: +0.12) in the area of human resource management.

When it comes to the education of principals in the legislative filed (5b), there is a greater degree of agreement among all respondents in the schools in group A about the need for training, which shows that one training demands another training. Continuous improvement gives wider demands and it never ends (teachers: +0.24, principals: +0.29, advisers: +0.09). Training in the understanding and interpretation of legislation is very important for executives during the transition phase of the educational system.

The changes that are implemented in schools follow the constant changes and amendments to the law, and there is no need to explain financial transactions, because it is rather obvious how bad the financial situation is within the school system. The need for this education does not have the same intensity in all environments. The general attitude of principals in the schools surveyed is that it is very difficult to carry out their obligations under the annual work program.

Very little money is set aside to support teaching, and even less is reserved for extracurricular activities, competitions, festivals, etc. Provisions for better material conditions for schools are very problematic.

Therefore, the principals of these schools must often be 'workers of miracles' to provide the necessary means for achieving the objectives of the annual work program of schools.

This problem is greater when we consider that schools operate in the manner of treasury operations budget users, but under the guidance of principals who are not properly trained in this area. A solid educational reform and spending plan is destined to fail if the principals responsible for executing it have not been well-educated in the subject. It is even more difficult for these principals to ensure the timely but legal expenditure of funds, due to the extensive, unnecessary, and very complicated procedures they must follow. Therefore, the need for training in the application of laws and bylaws is very necessary, as noted even by participants.

The result is similar regarding the need for principal training in the area of leadership and motivation of people (5c). All respondents in group A schools have a higher degree of consensus about the training needs of principals in the area of managing and motivating people, (teachers: +0.21, principals: +0.15, advisers: +0.79). It is obvious that respondents from A schools have a higher degree of agreement when it comes to education principals on managing and motivating people. This can be interpreted by assuming that the principals of the B schools (which are also 'old' principals with a few mandates) are more successful in the cosmetic presentation of the situation in their school. They, from their own experience, know that it is essential what the ministry thought about their work, rather than other participants. These changes are decorative, and their schools can be subsumed under the term 'school – the Christmas tree,' which is discussed by Fullan (2001a).

Advisers believe that the principals of B schools must devote more attention to management and motivation of people, which is acceptable, considering that it is those managers who had not been given organized managerial training.

Also, when it comes to the training needs of principals in the field of planning and implementation of changes (5d), a higher degree of consensus was expressed by the respondents from School A than those in School B (teachers: +0.20, principals: +0.29, advisers: +0.95). Almost the same was found in the case of the need for training in the use of segments of human resources both within and from outside the school. Respondents from School A also have a greater degree of consensus on the need for training in the use of human resources (5e) (teachers: +0.31, principals: +0.29, advisers: +0.81).

So in the matter of the professional development of people in schools, we can draw conclusions that the climate and culture of schools in Group A is at the higher level of awareness of need for continuous professional development, which is one of the main de-

terminants of successful leadership of people and organizations. It is a little strange, but also expected, that in schools with higher levels of principals' training, a higher degree of consensus on the needs of education in educational management is reported.

## Conclusions

The study showed a high degree of agreement from the principals of both groups of schools regarding the continuing professional development of the principal. All principals of schools from Group A (principals with organized training in management in education) responded to all the questions (5a–5e) with the highest mark (average: 5.00) which in qualitative terms means that they agree that continuous professional training is essential for their work in school. School principals from Group B (principals without organized training in management in education) have also responded to questions with a very high average, which ranged from 4.42 to 4.85. This means that for them, too, continuing professional education is very important. Teachers and advisors gave their opinions on the development of principals. The Method of mean values showed no significant difference in opinion about the need for professional development of principals for the benefit of teachers from school group A. The average rating of responses to offered options from question 5 for teachers of A schools ranged from 3.96 to 4.02, and for the group of teachers from B schools from 3.67 to 3.86, which, generally, means that for both groups of teachers continuous professional development of principals is essential, but still with a slight advantage in the attitude that concerns the need for principals' improvement, with teachers of school Group A. We are informed about this slight advantage, – but still an advantage –, by the difference in average rating of Schools A and Schools B, which range from 0.14 to 0.31 in favor of values of teachers' attitudes in school group A. There is a particularly close level of agreement between both groups of schools concerning the professional training of principals in the areas of human resources management and planning and introducing changes. So we can say that teachers from both samples agree about the need to educate their principals. This is in accordance with the opinion of the authors Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004), that principals of educational institutions are expected to 'maintain and continually develop their resources' (Everard, Morris, and Wilson 2004, 4). The results obtained from the study are in agreement with the statement of the authors Stoll and Fink (2000), who claim that 'principals must learn if they want teachers to learn' (Stoll and Fink 2000, 15). They only

occasionally have the opportunity to attend still rare and uncertified training sessions in the field of management in education. They are more oriented towards their own self-development, which Alibabić (2003) says is the 'kind of education that is deliberately and independently organized by the person who teaches, with or without instructional help. It occurs as a function of additional school learning, and beyond that, it is conducted by the young as well as by adults.'

In that sense, the position of principals on professional development of teachers is very important, because providing teachers with constant training to obtain competency means effectively leading during changes. Another opinion on the matter is offered by Day (1999), who states that "teachers should not be the subject of development, but they must develop,' because 'the success of the school is dependent on the successful development of teacher.' Principals, as pedagogical leaders and managers should be aware of the essential need for the professional development of teachers, especially in times of change, where further strengthening of teachers is necessary for the challenges that come with change. (Bush and Bell 2002).

Regarding the development of teachers in the research conducted, principals of both groups of schools list teacher education as their top priority. However, the principals of schools in group A have a slightly higher level of awareness (5.00) than the principals of schools in group B (4.71). The principals from schools in group B have devoted more energy to visiting their teachers' classes than have their colleagues from the schools in group A. This appears to show a wish of principals of schools in group B to control and direct their teachers to properly conduct pedagogical and educational work. We believe that the principals of A schools have relied more on the self-development of their teachers, as seen from the data concerning that matter, and that according to teachers in school A their principals influence their self-education more (+0.20 in favor at A school). This is similar to the greater impact of students (+0.41), parents (s +0.30) and fellow teachers (+0.38), each of which displayed more intense influence in A schools. This kind of intensive participation between all participants (teacher, parents, students) is common for successful and efficient implementation of educational change such as the implementation of the curriculum of 9th grade primary school. Teachers of schools in group A have shown more positive attitudes regarding initiatives for their own self-development. In A schools the intensity of attitudes among teachers on this issue is up to 0.30 higher than it is among the teachers in B schools.

Research has shown a mild increase of interest from teachers in

schools in group A, when it comes to the possibility of participating in seminars. It can be concluded that it is customary to visit the seminars for teachers, but that the effects of these seminars are weaker because there is no transferring of knowledge to colleagues who did not participate in them. When it comes to opinions of advisors on the training of teachers, those from B schools show a slightly more favorable attitude, which is probably because advisors either desire such an outcome, consider it normal or simply because they are too busy with their own work and on this issue they do not have a completely clear position. As for the need for continuing education, Fullan (2001a) concludes that, for the introduction of changes, it is important 'to develop specific purpose, activities, opinions and feelings and concern for continuous improvement and professional enrichment. There is no shorter path' (Fullan 2001a, 34). Constant concern for professional education of principals and teachers has its foundation in the deliberations of Ender and Strittmatter (2001), who speak about the role of leadership towards students and parents, and especially toward the teaching staff, whose quality, in the opinion of the authors, makes 90% of the quality of a school. All this indicates that the statement 'there is a difference in views on the need for professional development of teachers and principals, in relation to the level of training principals in management in education' *is confirmed, thus confirming the hypothesis of the research.*

Hence the study shows that the attitude towards self-development of all, including the principal, is much more positive in schools in group A and all that are questioned. We should pay attention to the results that follow from the responses to the five questions that are intended for teachers, which are, in reference to the same question which was asked of principals, richer for the option 'principal acts as if he knows it all.' The structure of the answer to the question of the need for professional training of principals is shown in table 4.

Table 4 shows that teachers of the A schools are more aware of the need for professional development of principals. 78% of them believe that the training for the principal is necessary or very necessary, while the same attitude represents 66% of teachers from B schools. Thus, teachers from schools in group A were 12% more aware of the need for professional training of principals. It is interesting to note that almost the same percentage of teachers in both groups of schools (A – 56%, B – 55%) believes that this development is required. Even more interesting is the information obtained from teachers in the descriptive answer option 'principal acts as if he knows it all,' which indicates that teachers from B schools have shown a higher

TABLE 4 The structure of responses to the 5th question of the questionnaire for teachers

	Schools A			Schools B		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
<i>(a) Education on human resource management</i>	17	42	17	10	40	21
<i>(b) Education on the implementation of laws and bylaws</i>	15	43	18	6	38	25
<i>(c) Education on the leadership of people and their motivation</i>	17	43	15	9	40	22
<i>(d) Education on planning and implementation of changes in teaching</i>	16	43	17	10	36	25
<i>(e) The use of human resources (teachers, parents, local communities)</i>	17	41	18	3	41	26
<i>The percentage of average response</i>	22%	56%	22%	11%	55%	34%

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) very necessary, (2) necessary, (3) principal acts as if he knows it all.

degree of agreement (12%) about allegations that principals behave as though they know everything or that what they do not know they do not need to learn because they have better things to do. This result was confirmed by the principals. In fact, all principals in A schools are of the opinion that their further training in all areas offered is much needed (though they are already trained), while their colleagues from B schools have a slightly lower degree of agreement about the need for their own continuing education. It is, however, important to conclude that the vast majority of teachers and principals believe that the training of principals in these areas is needed.

Advisers also have similar opinions, and they place the subject of legal issues, such as implementation of laws and by-laws, at the top of the list of priorities in principal training. This is not surprising, considering that current advisers base their 'advice' on the control and monitoring of work in accordance with the laws.

For teachers, those from schools in group A list the areas of leading and motivating people and managing human resources as the top priorities in the education of principals, respectively. Conversely, teachers from B schools believe that it is essential that their principals acquire more skills in managing human resources, and after that, skills in leading and motivating people. The issue of the impact of training principals on the success of introducing change may be superfluous, but the findings from contacts with school principals,

after organized development, indicate that the principals who finish organized education in management in education have broader views on education.

Principals with training in education management have a different attitude toward change, which may not be imposed 'top down' (Kotter 1996), but rather the opposite way, beginning with their own schools. They are encouraged to change within a school with a high level of participation from all parties in all aspects of education, from strategic planning, to decision-making, to creating a curriculum and identifying 'the need to institutionalize change' (Fullan 2001b, 46). In fact, trained principals know what Bitel (1997) advises: 'To get the job done, you have to act with people and motivate them by taking them for what they are, not what you think they should be' (Bitel 1997, 102). At the same time, it is clear to these principals that 'teachers and principals practically learn from each other during the process of teaching' (Fullan 2001b, 80) and that is why their attitude towards the strengthening of their associates is intense.

In this survey, respondents indicated that it takes constant professional training of school principals according to the following priorities: leadership and people management and motivation, planning and implementation of change, implementation of laws and bylaws, and finally, the use of human resources (teachers, parents, local communities).

Similar results were obtained by Erčulj (2001) in research among Slovenian principals and teachers and who were asked what knowledge and skills they believed, after completion of the School for principals, assisted in the work at school. They responded that a principal's most important areas of knowledge were law, visiting schools and classes, planning (short and long-term), running meetings, and working with people (climate, professional development of employees) (Erčulj 2001, 87-96).

This study showed that principals, after training, are 'differently working with people – take them more into consideration, for example in planning and decision making, they devote more attention to motivation [...] are better organized, know how to prioritize, know the action plan' (Erčulj 2001, 87-96).

Therefore, training principals in management in education, if anything, at least provides a better opportunity for everyone at the school to successfully introduce changes, because the process of implementing change is approached by a well-trained principal. This type of principal undertakes changes in the school with clearer goals and strategies to achieve them, an ability to use resources rationally,

the skills to encourage participation from all participants in education, and the training necessary to monitor the implementation of changes. These are the foundations for the successful introduction and mastery of changes.

Finally, we can say that research shows that the professional development of principals certainly has a positive effect on the learning culture and attitude towards the professional (self) development of all employees at the school. Therefore, for planners and organizers of professional development, the results of this study may be an incentive to devote due attention to the problem of professional training for educators. Training of teachers and principals, as proved in this study, is an investment worth investing in, because the students will feel the effect, students who are the future bearers of social development.

### Notes

1. Questions 1–5 are customized for the other two groups of respondents (e.g. principals and advisers).
2.  $-0.19$  Difference in this case is interpreted as a small difference, while in the case (issue 13) a difference of  $0.02$  is interpreted as negligible, but on the basis of it the conclusion is reached.

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