



# Policy and Practice of Teacher Professional Development in Malaysia: The ongoing effort of enhancing teacher quality

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## TPD Policy in Malaysia

Pre-service teacher education in Malaysia is performed by two different types of institutions.

- Primary school teachers are trained by institutes of teacher education (ITEs - known as teacher training colleges until 2008) –
  - offering Bachelor's degrees
- Secondary school teachers graduate from universities with Bachelor's and Master's degrees.
- Since the establishment of a separate Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in 2004, education of primary and secondary teachers has been governed by two different ministries: ITEs remained under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (MoE), while universities ceded to MoHE.
- The separation of primary and secondary teacher education governance has posted an obstacle to the realisation of a single vision of teaching throughout all levels of the schooling system.
- Since 2013, the separation of MoHE and MoE was come to the end. Both of the Ministries were combined as MoE – Higher Education Institution is under the Department of Hisger Education MoE
- However, the separation of teacher education for primary and secondary still remain in the current practice

## TPD Policy in Malaysia

The changing policy – guided by 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia plan:

- The liberalisation of the Initial Teacher Industry (ITE)
- The phasing out of automatic induction into the teaching profession of ITE graduates
- The granting of more autonomous power to schools in matters including human resource selection

### *Teacher Education – The Open Market Policy*

As part of the drive to improve the quality of teachers, the supply the school teacher will eventually be opened not only to other public universities but to private institutions as well (10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia plan, chapter 5). In fact private universities and colleges are now offering ITE programmes both for primary and secondary school teachers.

One of the major implications of this is the concept of competition and competitive advantages – the teacher education institutions would be forced to compete in the open market to sell their products

### *Teacher Education – The removal of automatic induction of initial teacher policy*

More thorough screening process for the induction of the initial teacher to be appointed as a teacher in a public school

the automatic induction of initial teachers into the profession would be removed

Initial teachers who do not ‘qualify’ would be weeded out

### *Teacher Education - autonomous power to schools in selecting the so called a good teacher*

The 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan also envisages the granting of more autonomy to schools through the leadership programme associated with accountability measure of their overall performance

School will be given more leeway and independence in the running of the school, including matters related to teacher employment

## TPD Policy in Malaysia

- The Malaysian TPD system consists of formal training programmes, a professional support network and several types of allowances and incentives.

### *Formal Training Programmes*

- The in-service training of crucial subjects (such as Mathematics, Science, ICT and English)
- The improvement of the daily teaching practice
- The use of ICT tools in the classroom
- English as a language of instruction

### *Professional Support Network*

- Resource Centres and Teacher Activity Centres - act as coordinating agencies for in-service educational programmes, providing teachers with facilities and opportunities to share resources, ideas and experiences in producing their own teaching materials

### *Allowance and Incentives*

- Teachers as public servants are entitled to various allowances, such as housing allowance, public service allowance, entertainment allowance, housing and car loan allowance, and cost of living allowance.
- Monetary incentives are granted on the basis of a tripartite system, by subject taught, location of school and professional excellence.
- A special hardship allowance is granted to teachers serving in remote areas, its amount growing gradually with the level of remoteness.
- Teachers of excellent performance are rewarded through the Excellent Teacher promotion scheme

## TPD Policy in Malaysia

### **Other Measures Introduced by the Government to enhance teachers' professionalism**

Improving the teacher service scheme in terms of remuneration and promotional opportunities

- MOE had embarked in collaboration with other ministries and agencies on a number of capacity-building initiatives that serve to develop ICT leaders and empower educational leaders at all levels to adopt and adapt ICT in teacher preparation
- The peer coaching program carried out by Microsoft under the auspices of UNESCO effectively trains teacher leaders to become peer coaches for their colleagues in ICT utilization and integration
- Increase the qualified graduate teachers – post graduate degree

## TPD Policy in Malaysia

Table 1 Formal TPD activities offered to primary and secondary school teachers in Malaysia

Non-degree programmes	Degree programmes
On-going short term in-service training and development programmes one to five days, in various subjects and skills	Malaysian Trainers Development Programme 14-week courses to upgrade qualification in various subjects
Conversion Courses 6-week courses in the use of English as language of instruction for Mathematics, Science, and English teachers	14-weeks course for professional development courses to upgrade qualification in various subjects
Upgrading the Professionalism of Teachers at Smart Schools 12-week course for the teachers of Smart Schools, focused on the integration of ICT into teaching	Specialist Certification Course one-year specialist course in the integration of ICT into teaching, for primary school teachers with three years of experience
Upgrading the Professionalism of Teachers at Remote schools 4-week course	Special Degree Course for foreign language teachers one- or two-year courses in various languages
Upgrading the Professionalism of Teachers at Indigenous schools 4-week course	Special Degree Course for non-graduate teachers one- or two-year courses in various subjects
	Degree course for non-graduate teachers via distance education
	Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching

# Challenges for TPD in Malaysia

- ▶ Strong hierarchy of positions
- ▶ Great working load, particularly the numerous administrative duties beyond direct teaching tasks
- ▶ Lack of time (Thang et al. 2010)
- ▶ The relative under-payment of educators (Siti Eshah et al. 2009)
- ▶ Credentialism of formal professional development activities: strong emphasis on degree courses (Rao & Rohana 2011)

## TPD Policy in Malaysia

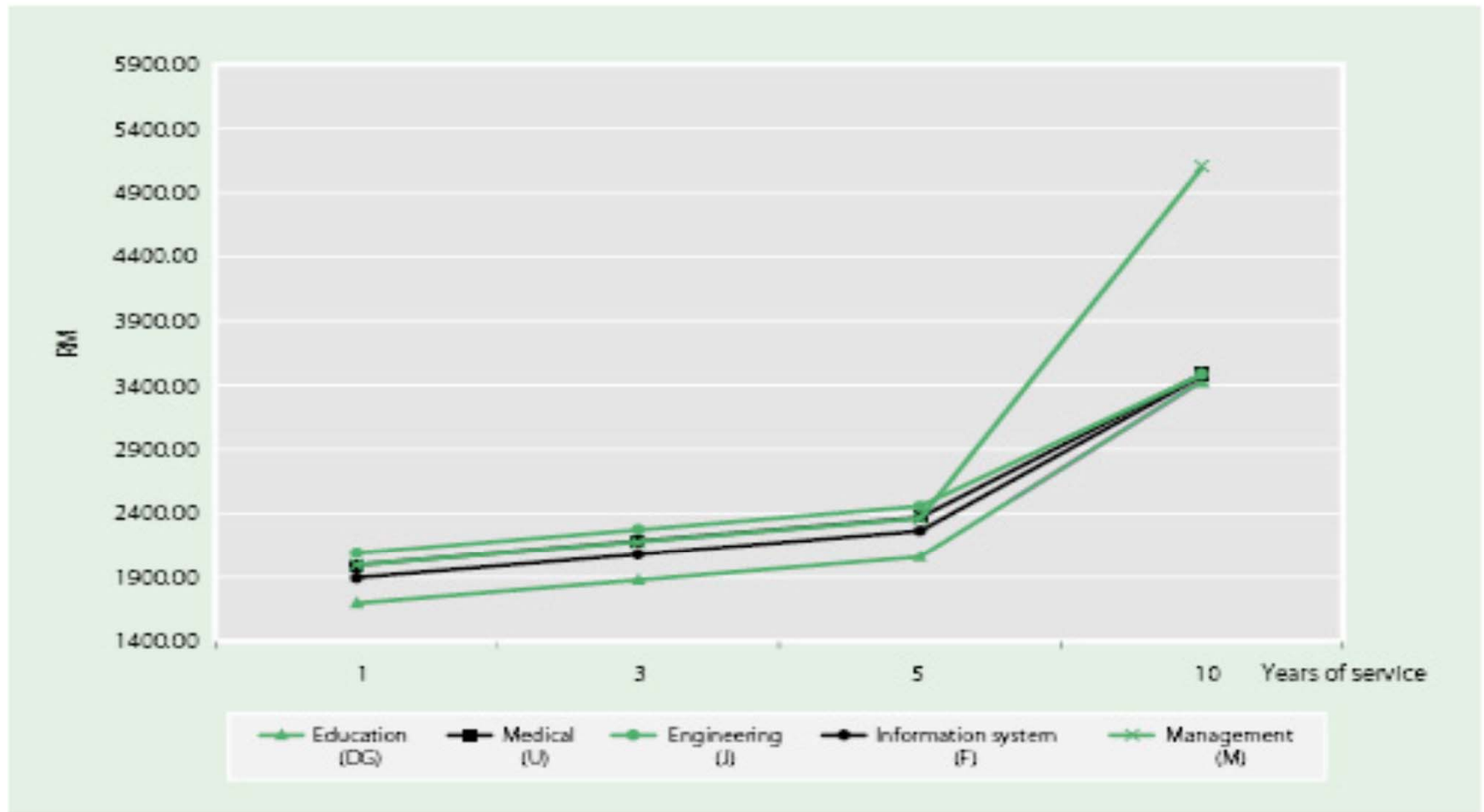


Figure I: Salary Progression for teachers and Several Other Public Services

Source: Data from the Public Services Department of Malaysia (cited from Mosheim, S.E., Ahmad, H. & Vongalis-Macrow, A., 2009)



## TPD Policy in Malaysia

Research Finding (Research Funded by USM Short-term Research Grant Scheme)

**Investigation of TPD policies and practices**





## A nation-wide teacher survey

- ▶ Topics of the survey:
  - ▶ opinions on the prestige of teacher profession
  - ▶ the assessment of own skills and competences
  - ▶ the organisational climate of the own school
  - ▶ own professional development
  - ▶ non-formal TPD activities
  - ▶ frequency of participation in formal TPD courses
  - ▶ obstacles of a successful professional development
- ▶ Likert-type scales
- ▶ Convenient purposive sampling

## A nation-wide teacher survey

- 467 respondents from Malaysian primary and secondary schools

The respondents by school level:

<i>Primary school</i>	<i>Secondary school</i>
37%	63%

The respondents by gender

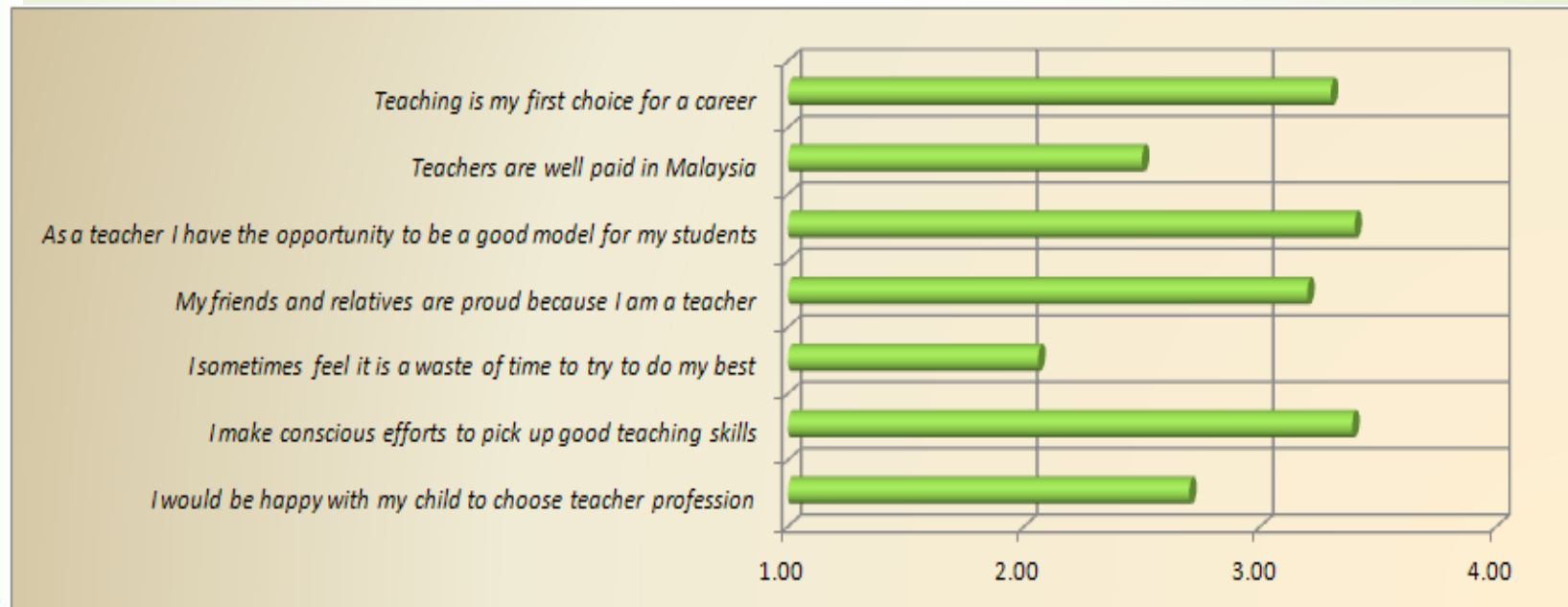
<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
21%	79%

The respondents by professional experience:

<i>&lt; 6 years</i>	<i>6 to 10 years</i>	<i>10 years &lt;</i>
28%	23%	49%

## Findings of the survey

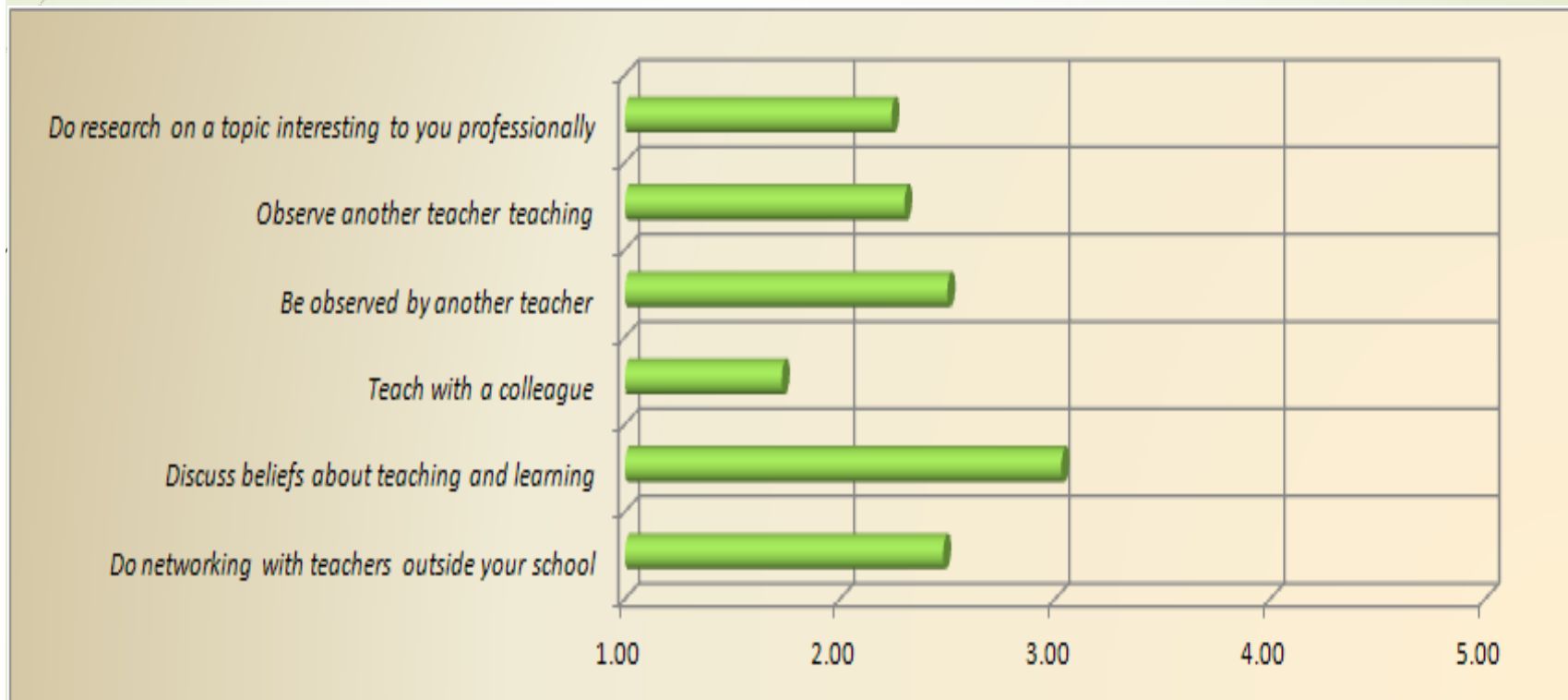
- Strengths of the Malaysian setting:
  - a concise system of a wide range of professional development courses organised by the educational authorities
  - teachers are active in formal TPD activities
  - relatively high prestige of teaching profession
  - favourable assessment of own teaching competences



*The approval of different prestige elements by the teachers, related to teaching profession. Four-item Likert-scale, N=467.*

## Findings of the survey

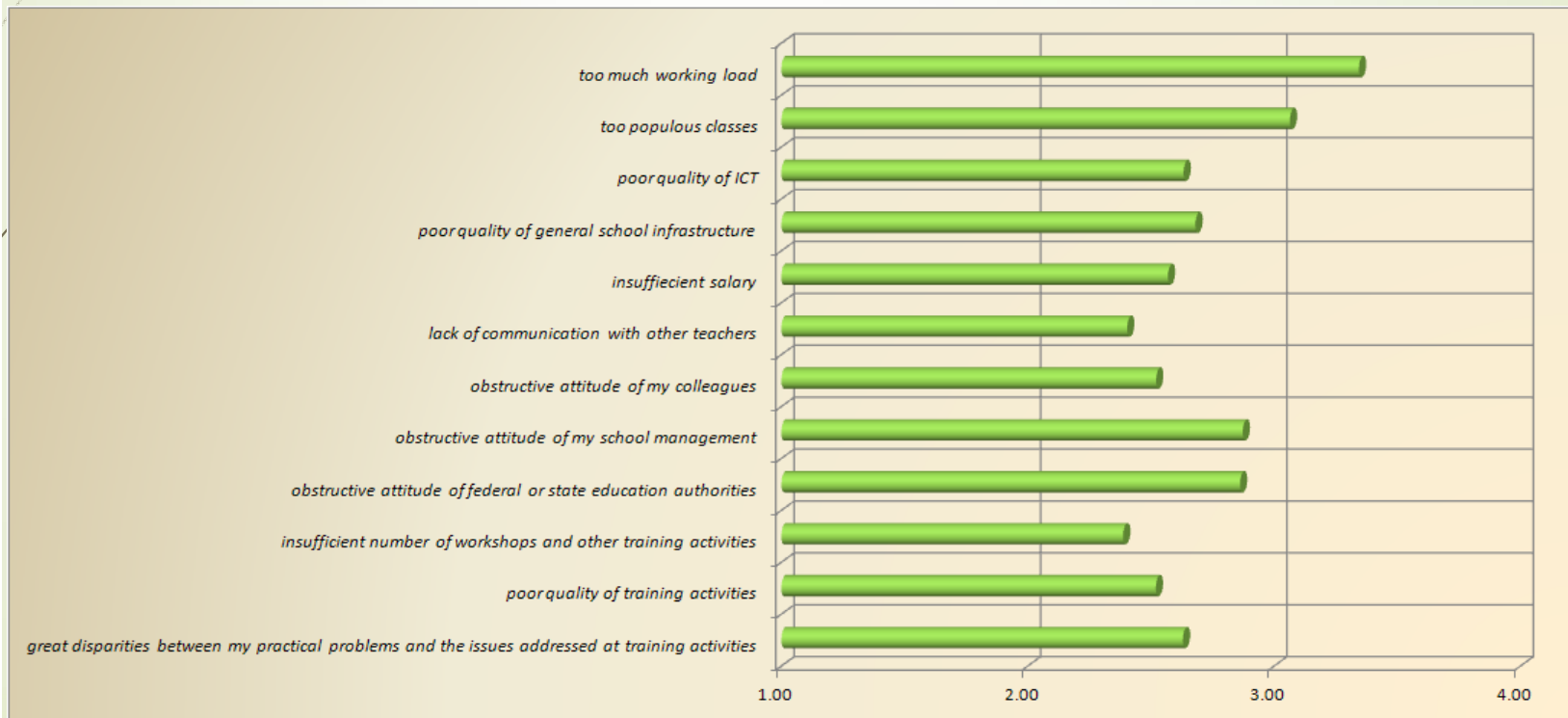
- Weaknesses of the Malaysian setting:
  - a TPD system focused on formal activities rather than fostering a balanced co-operation between formal and non-formal teacher learning
  - low frequency of collaborative teaching and mentoring




Frequency of non-formal TPD activities of the respondents. Five-item Likert-scale, N=467.

## Findings of the survey


- Further weaknesses of the Malaysian setting:
  - excessive working load
  - too populous classes
  - conflicts between teachers and the school management / educational authorities



Obstacles of professional development as perceived by the teachers. Four-item Likert-scale, N=467.



## Findings of the survey



This pattern suggests that the career choice of teachers is a result of personal devotion rather than rational decision.

## Directions of further research

- ▶ review of the good practices of TPD
  - ▶ successful micro-level initiatives in the field of teacher learning
  - ▶ a thorough analysis of the respective case studies available globally
  - ▶ a new concept of workplace learning could be built, based on the current problems and needs of practicing educators, rather than a mere transmission of generalised ideas and approaches originated outside the respective school setting
- ▶ investigation of the experiences, ideas and opinions of teachers about the current national TPD policies
  - ▶ a qualitative study inspired by the holistic concept of TPD
  - ▶ to identify the possible ways to create a more TPD-friendly working environment
  - ▶ the involvement of teachers into the planning of new policies
  - ▶ their active participation in the phase of implementation
  - ▶ the opportunities to build a more trustful attitude towards educators by school administrations and educational authorities





Thank You

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