

Best Practice

Professionalising Veterinary Paraprofessionals

Strengthening the initial training of veterinary paraprofessionnels (VPPs)

Objective : To professionalise the initial training of veterinary paraprofessionals through targeted support for practical teaching and an entrepreneurial approach. This strategy aims to align the skills of newly qualified VPPs with international standards and with the needs of the labour market, thereby ensuring a high-quality veterinary network.

Method	Outcomes	Stakeholders
1. Support for clinical and practical training in partner institutions: a. Assess the needs of training institutions in terms of supplies, equipment and training b. Train the trainers (skills development) c. Procure educational resources and equipment for practical teaching d. Experience-sharing between institutions 2. Support for the organisation of work placements: a. Identify what is required to organise work placements and welcome students b. Provide support for students and the organisations hosting placements c. Develop a work placement guide and establish partnerships	Improvements in practical teaching, by means of: Increasing the number of hours of practical training, thanks to the availability of equipment and the training of teachers. Developing educational tools and making them available. Strengthening links between partner institutions by organising capitalisation workshops. Improvements in work placements: Signed agreements between educational institutions and veterinary statutory bodies Monitoring indicators: • Number of people benefiting from vocational training • Number of people receiving support for their placement • Number of train-the-trainer sessions in training institutions • Proportion of women among the indicators above • Number of institutions that have received equipment/resources • Number of teaching resources produced	Training institution (Teaching staff and representatives from the VPP training institutions partnering with the project) Technical training expert (EISMV, FAR Network) Relevant government departments (Departments responsible for veterinary services and/or higher education) Relevant professional authorities (Veterinary statutory bodies and other equivalent bodies representing VPPs) Work placement hosts (Veterinary clinics and practices, farms, slaughterhouses, laboratories, NGOs) Project Implementation Unit (P3V Coordinator and Technical Assistant, Focal Points)

Conditions for success

- **Equipment and the expertise to use it:** In order to ensure a tangible impact on student learning, the acquisition of innovative equipment must be accompanied by training in how to use it in clinical and educational contexts.
- **Adaptability to local contexts:** Prioritise context-appropriate solutions, such as using simulation laboratories to address difficulties in accessing animals for teaching purposes, or investing in instructional design to bring about lasting changes in teaching methods.
- **Seize the opportunities offered by digital technology:** The development and use of shared digital resources (such as educational videos or MUPSA [Manual for Use by Animal Health Personnel]) ensures that all VPPs have the same set of minimum competencies and facilitates the dissemination of knowledge.
- **Governance and knowledge transfer:** Establish internal knowledge-transfer mechanisms within educational institutions to enable trained teachers to share what they have learnt with the entire teaching staff (knowledge retention).
- **A collaborative approach:** Involve representatives from the profession from the outset in order to better define priorities and establish close partnerships to improve practical training (supervision of work placements).

Key points

- **Curriculum–work placement alignment:** Ensure that the activities carried out during the work placement are perfectly aligned with the learning objectives and the academic calendar.
- **A stable teaching workforce:** Prioritise the training of permanent (tenured) teachers over that of temporary staff so that the institution can continue to benefit from the experience and expertise gained over the years.
- **Administrative complexity:** A wide range of resources is needed to support training (specialised equipment, training, financial support for students, etc.) so it is important that public procurement is managed carefully. It is crucial to call on procurement experts in order to avoid obstacles and delays in implementation.
- **Gender mainstreaming:**
 - Adapt the organisation of train-the-trainer programmes to remove barriers to the participation of female teachers (mobility, family responsibilities).
 - Raise awareness among organisations providing work placements to ensure that they provide female students with an environment that is suitable, safe, and non-discriminatory.

Recommendations

- **Inter-institutional networking:** Formalise partnerships between local schools and centres of excellence (EISMV) in order to create a standing forum for the exchange of ideas on educational innovations in animal health.
- **Ensuring digital tools remain relevant:** Provide technical and financial support for the regular updating of the digitised MUPSA to ensure it remains aligned with emerging health challenges.
- **Maintenance and renewal:** Support schools in establishing budgetary processes dedicated to maintaining teaching materials, providing regular refresher training for teachers, and reducing gender-related constraints within the curriculum (for example, by creating single-sex boarding schools).

Conclusion

In conclusion, to improve initial training there is a need to both modernise technical facilities and enhance the skills of trainers. By establishing strong partnerships with the private sector for work placements and employing standardised digital tools, the P3V project has enabled VPP training institutions to become drivers of excellence and professionalisation.



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