



Coaching for staff professional Development in education

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# COACHING AND SUPERVISION IN CROATIA

NATIONAL REPORT

**Institution: Education and  
Teacher Training Agency  
(ETTA)**

**Authors: Renata Ozorlic Dominic  
Sabina Maruncic  
Mirjana Kazija**



## CONTEXT

The report presents state of the art in the areas of *coaching* (executive coaching in business) and *supervision* (education and social welfare) in the Republic of Croatia.

“The terms *supervision* and *coaching* indicate formats of counselling to serve the professional development of persons, teams and organisations.” <http://www.anse.at/ecvision/about.html> The key values underpinning both supervision and coaching are voluntariness and confidentiality.

In Croatia, *coaching*, as a method of professional development in business, is present for about 15 years, and coaching services are mostly used and paid for by large companies and corporations. Coaching is done individually, one-on-one, and in the majority of cases the coach is a person trained and certified for coaching.

*Integrative supervision* is systematically present in the education sector for about 10 years – as a result of training of 15 ETTA Senior Advisers, and is available, as a method of professional development, to interested teachers and non-teaching school staff, on demand, free of charge. In social welfare, supervision is also present for many years. Supervisors in both education and social welfare sectors are educated and licenced supervisors, who also conform to formal requirements of work in their sector (e.g. adequate university degree).

## INTERVIEWEES

1. **Certified Coach** with 14 years of experience in executive coaching, the owner of the leading company in Croatia for executive coaching with 15 employees (40-50 coachees). Since 2007, official partner in Croatia of Academy of Executive Coaching AoEC, London (Hereinafter: **1CC**);
2. **Certified Coach** with 8 years of experience in executive coaching (ILM Executive Coach), Since 1990 Director of Studies and the Principal of Linguae Language School since 1990 (Hereinafter: **2CC**);
3. **Licensed Supervisor** with 6 years of experience in supervision, Director of the Centre for Social Welfare (Hereinafter: **2LS**)
4. **Supervisee**, non-teaching education specialist for pedagogy, with 20 years of work experience who works in Secondary Vocational School (Hereinafter: **3SE**)
5. **Supervisee**, clown-doctor, local coordinator with 6 years of experience in Red Noses NGO (Hereinafter: **4SW**)

## 1. Expectations

### COACHING

The sponsors are mostly corporate clients. The key point in defining the goals is 1CC: “sponsor meeting facilitated by the coach – the sponsor says to the coachee: “these are your main qualities/strengths, and these are the main areas for development that I see with you, and my expectations from the process are these and these. The coach then asks the coachee how he/she understood what was said, and the coachee gives his/her perspective on it. The dynamic of the meetings is agreed on, and the coach highlights the importance of sponsor’s support to the coachee in the fulfilment of the set goals.

1CC: “Some 7-8 years ago, the perception of coaching was *Fixing-the-problem* (there was negative perception among employees, if they offer me coaching, this means that I am problematic). Today, it is seen as *Top talent development*, the company wishes to retain them and invests into them (positive perception: you are valuable, so we give you a coach).” In terms of expectations there are no differences between companies and individuals. 1CC “The company wants successful individuals. Individuals want to be successful. Everyone wants the same thing, to be better, and more motivated, to be better at what they do.”

2CC: “The biggest problem is when a company hires a coach for an employer who is not interested in personal development. When coaching is used as a punishment, when managers do not know what to do with an employee, and have unrealistic expectation that coaching can change that person. I find it unacceptable, and with the companies I work with, I have an agreement that coaching is for those who are successful and want more.”

### SUPERVISION

**SOCIAL WELFARE** 2LS: “One of the goals of supervision is the development of professional competences and interpersonal relations. After some time, people tell me: “Yes, that happened, I am different, some things are better.” An expectation is the change in the organisational climate<sup>1</sup> and better communication within the teams. At the end of the supervision process I notice the change, so I assume that this change is also visible in their institutions.” 4SW2: “I expect that, resulting from supervision and coaching, the members of our NGO will better cooperate with one another, and improve interpersonal relations through the guided supervision process, rather than working on as each of us sees fit.”

**EDUCATION** 3SE: “My expectation was to get to know better the colleagues I work with. Our meetings are always formal, official and related to some student-issues. We do not talk enough about ourselves, our wishes, needs, and expectations. On the school level there were no formalized expectations or tasks to do, but supervision made us aware of the need for personal growth.”

## 2. Target Groups

### COACHING & SUPERVISION

Companies sponsor coaching services for their managers. In education, users of integrative supervision are interested teachers and non-teaching school staff, including school heads. 2LS: “Target group are all

<sup>1</sup> According to Bowditch and Buono, “Organisational culture is connected with the nature of beliefs and expectations about organisational life, while climate is an indicator of whether these beliefs and expectations are being fulfilled.”

employed in helping professions: employees in social welfare, NGOs, the Ministry of Justice, education sector.” 3SE: “Composition of our group was a good represent of our school staff, one half were general education teachers and the other half, vocational education teachers, and myself, education specialist for pedagogy.”

2CC: “My clients are mostly business people from large companies, as well as the owners of companies (e.g. painters, musicians, architects, lawyers, HR managers) and language schools. I do *external coaching* with them. In my language school *Lingua* we also use coaching, and I act as *internal coach* there.”

### 3. Main Topics

#### COACHING

1CC: “When an organisation orders coaching, there is a contract with the sponsor (the coachee’s superior. The sponsor defines what the coach should achieve in the coaching process. But it may be the case that the coachee has an issue with the sponsor, and that is the core of the problem. We as experienced coaches know how to handle these situations, help the coachee, not to change his/her boss, but to find ways to successfully cooperate with that boss. Today, HR managers and company owners are aware of the impact of personal satisfaction on productivity, efficiency of employees and their personal relations.”

2CC: “The clients mostly look for self-confidence, better time and/or HR management, improving interpersonal relations, managing tasks. For me, the most difficult thing is when the client does not want to change.”

#### SUPERVISION

**SOCIAL WELFARE** 2LS: “At the first session, I point out that in supervision we deal with professional issues. Personal issues are not acceptable. The topics are mostly: difficulty in working with clients, interpersonal relations, relations with superiors in the organisational hierarchy, the organisation of the work process, communication issues, change management, individual responsibility.”

**EDUCATION** The main topics are interpersonal relations and effective communication with learners, their parents, colleagues and superiors. Becoming aware of individual responsibility and efficient problem-solving. 3SE: “when he/she (a colleague) admits to have a problem with classroom management, or with colleagues – that was very often, even more often than the classroom or learner issues.”

### 4. How it is Organized

#### COACHING

1CC: “There are three parties involved: SPONSOR – the person/company ordering and paying for the service, COACH – the provider of the service, and the COACHEE – the user of the service. There are three phases in the coaching process: Pre-contracting, contracting and mini contracting. The quality of the contracting process has a high impact on the results of the coaching.”

2CC: “I am mostly contacted by HR managers from corporations, and by Directors of smaller companies. I mostly do *business executive coaching*, in English language. Both individual and group coaching, and online coaching. The HR manager and I discuss the developmental needs of the company, we agree on the approach, and the expected outcomes of the coaching. The same persons monitor the coaching process. Six months after the coaching ended, the success of coaching is evaluated in a discussion with the client, his/her superior and the HR manager. Coaching sessions usually take place in the company’s premises (well insulated room with a notification on the door *coaching in progress*) or in my office.

**PRE-CONTRACTING:** 1CC: “a discussion between a coach and HR manager of the company’s needs (e.g. coaching for 10 managers), followed by the offer by the coach (e.g. a cycle of 8 90-min sessions), and acceptance of that offer.”

**CONTRACTING:** 1CC: “the coach sends to HR manager the list of available coaches with their CVs and photos, and the coaches select a coach that they believe will be best for them. Following this, a meeting between the coaches and coaches is organised, as well as the sponsor meeting.”<sup>2</sup> 2CC: “Before signing the contract we have 2-hour session with the future client to check the compatibility. What follows is 3-corner meeting, or 4-corner meeting (coach, client, his/her superior, HR manager). Then, I sign an internal coach&coachee contract, as well as the contract with the company that sponsored the development of their employee.”

**MINI-CONTRACTING:** 1CC: “The dynamic of the meeting and their arrangement between the coachee and the coach.”

1CC: “The highlight is on confidentiality – all parties are informed that there are no reports by the coach to a coachee’s superiors on the content of the discussions in the coaching sessions.” 2CC: “At the end of coaching process, I send a report to the company, stating only the general topics we dealt with in coaching. The process is highly confidential, and the company has no insight into any details, for the protection of privacy and integrity of the client.”

## SUPERVISION

**SOCIAL WELFARE** 2LS: “I am mostly contacted by heads of institutions who ask for supervision for their employees. Sometimes I am contacted by the employees themselves. In some cases, supervision is a part of a project. This means that it was planned as a project activity and the project manager organises supervision. Currently, I also have one individual supervision.” 4SW: “The HR staff or the NGO, make sure that all staff and members are satisfied personally and professionally, and aim at improving the NGOs work. The HR department organises supervision, contacts supervisors, reads references, forwards information to team leaders, who then organise supervision or coaching for their team members. Unless the team initiates the request for supervision, I think that the team leader has to organise it for the team three times a year.”

**EDUCATION** 3SE: “The first time I’ve heard about supervision for schools was in a European project. I offered it at or staff meeting, and about 50% were interested. We sent a written request to ETTA. ETTA Senior Adviser came to the school and gave an introductory presentation. We knew that the cycle is 10 3-4 hour sessions, and a group was formed of 12 participants. We all stayed until the end.” “We had supervision one a month. It was organised during teaching time, so we always agreed to have the next session on a different weekday, at a different time of the day. Substitute teachers were organised for all when needed. We had support from

<sup>2</sup> Sponsor meeting is explained in point 1. Expectations COACHING

other colleagues. The school head did not know much about supervision then, but we had her support. Later she joined a supervision group of school heads. The issue of substitute teachers was never raised, and that is because of the school head's attitude – we needed an empty room for several hours and to organise substitute teachers – without the school head's support that would have been very difficult.”

## 5. Impact on Individuals and Institutions

### COACHING

1CC: “Everybody learns, grows and develops in this process. The main responsibility for the PROCESS is with the coach, and the main responsibility for the CHANGE is with the coachee. The coachee defines what he/she needs and needs to do, in the process lead by the coach.”

2CC: “I evaluate my work on the basis of structured feedback at the end of the coaching process, using 360° method. The impact of coaching is always positive. The teams in companies improve their cooperation and interpersonal relations, the clients become more self-confident, have better listening skills, are have more trust in their associates.”

### SUPERVISION

**SOCIAL WELFARE** 2LS: “In some groups, the supervisees become more self-confident, better at decision-making. There were examples when some resigned from their jobs, and found other jobs, either within the same or in different organisations. “It is important that a person comes to supervision voluntarily, knowing what he/she wants, ready to change, and thinking about what he/she wants to talk about. If the person comes ready and focused, then the change is visible. I believe in the effect of supervision, because I witness it. It is not omnipotent and appropriate for all situations, but it can help with many things. If it is not voluntary, and imposed by someone, it is useless, the supervisee is then passive, in resistance, and does not want to change.” 4SW: “It helps with some issues that we perceive when working with one another, that we do not wish, or do not know how to talk about. It drags them out and leads us to the solution, or our better relations. The benefit for the institution is the improvement in communication in some members prone to conflict. I am an example. I had poor communication, either professional or personal, with my colleagues. I realised that I grow after supervision, and especially after individual coaching. Supervision and coaching teach me how to LISTEN TO others, and HEAR others. Very often I seem to listen, but do not HEAR what they say. That is a huge difference.”

**EDUCATION** 3SE: “We as a team function better. We even opened some issues that we never talked about, e.g. what we are not satisfied with in our work, if we feel excluded from some events. People are more open to say what they disagree with and to share information. Supervision encouraged us to cooperate more, and this soon spread to others, younger and recently employed colleagues, not only to those who took part in supervision. It became our school culture. The greatest benefit from supervision, personal and professional is building better interpersonal relations. In our line of work, it is very difficult to divide personal and professional. Supervision helps me to think, to reflect, to see the other side from a different perspective, and look for alternative solutions. This has given me a dose of tranquillity, and helped me to distinguish between my own and somebody else's responsibility. To see what I can influence, and what I cannot.”

## 6. Effective Ways of Coaching/Supervision from the Perspective of Coach/Supervisor and the Coachee/Supervisee

### COACHING

An effective coach 1CC: “Loves to work with people, one-on-one, has experience with personal development, business experience (e.g. my own experience of running a company with 100 employees), and training in coaching. 2CC: “Life experience and personal development are essential for good coaching. I believe I have grown as a manager too. In my primary work of school director, I am a better listener and have better interpersonal relations with my associates. The same goes for my family and friends.”

### SUPERVISION

**SOCIAL WELFARE** 2LS: “I love supervision because I see changes, not only in my supervisees, but in myself too. It’s a two-way process. There wasn’t a single supervision group from which I didn’t learn something. Where I wasn’t learning together with them.” 4SW (About team supervision): “First time this year we had an anonymous questionnaire called F-360, targeting all the colleagues in contact with someone from the NGO. It is not related to the whole office, but to specific persons, it is targeted. Then the feedback from the questionnaire comes back to that person. If it is about me, the feedback comes to me, and I have direct insight into what my colleagues think of me: in terms of communication, business, clown-doctor issues, or any other area. So, that is the feedback on the quality of our work and communication. And through this feedback, you can see the impact of supervision and coaching.”

## 7. The Limits

### COACHING

1CC: “One of the big misunderstandings is what coaching is. People often mix up the terms coach-trainer-consultant. The coach is seen as someone who gives advice and offers solutions, and that is not the case. This is also a problem with coaches that have experience of being trainers or consultants, and go into coaching for financial reasons. Also, therapists and psychiatrists, for financial reasons, go into corporate coaching. Naturally they “slide into” therapy, and that is not what it should be. They should keep within the boundaries of coaching, coaching IS NOT therapy. On the other hand, I as a coach need to recognize my limits. If I see that something needs attention by psychotherapist or psychiatrist, it’s my ethical, professional and human obligation and responsibility to draw back and suggest to the client whom to contact.”

### SUPERVISION

**LACK OF SUPERVISORS** 2LS: “The act on Social Welfare says that supervision is a right. However, you cannot exercise that right, because there are not enough of us (supervisor). And none of us does only that.”

**FEAR AND MISTRUST** 2LS: “Supervision sounds to people as some sort of control. Someone will check how good or not good am I, and my superior may find it out.” 3SE: “Apart from the lack of knowledge about supervision and its benefits, there is a dose of fear and mistrust. The fear of talking to your colleagues about yourself, your dilemmas, challenges and failures. To admit that I am not good at handling something, and that I do not know how to solve a problem, that is very difficult to adults. It is important than one breaks the ice, and others will follow.”

**ISOLATION AND PREJUDICE** 2LS: “The isolation of some systems and individuals in them. Mistrustful individuals create mistrustful systems. Some systems believe to be self-sufficient. There is also prejudice that helpers, due to their profession, are good at helping themselves, which is not true. When I as a helper know that I need help, this is the sign of my professional maturity.

**LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SUPERVISION** 4SW: “The majority of my colleagues does not know what is supervision. At the beginning, we were mixing it up with group psychotherapy, what is not the same. I still believe that some think it is a kind of psychotherapy.”

**ORGANISATIONAL DIFFICULTIES** 4SW: “I have difficulties in organising supervision sessions with my team, because they are very busy.”

## 8. Main Challenges for the Future

### COACHING

1CC: “As opposed to therapists, in the coaching world there are no formal obligations to collect CPD<sup>3</sup> points, but ICF<sup>4</sup> memberships requires it. I believe, in 5-6 years, if you would wish to work as a coach in corporate world in Croatia, you will be required to be officially certified, and the certifying body will ask you for proof of the CPD. I am STRONGLY against the state over-regulating this profession, opening the path to particular interests, e.g. the chambers of psychologists, and bureaucratization. The countries that had that experience show that it is a disaster – this is not something that needs to be regulated. Coaches work with sane people, who strive for personal growth, and want someone to talk to. The market and international coaching organisations, such as ICF, suffice as a self-regulating body.” 2CC: “A major threat is when coaching is done by people without sufficient education and adequate license.”

### SUPERVISION

2LS: “Luckily, young people have arrived, they have more knowledge and wish to help themselves. They do not want to burnout, and they ask for help, they seek prevention” 4SW: “Now that we know that supervision and individual coaching are, there will be more demand, because people understand how good it is for their relations, within the NGO and institutions they work with. A speciality of our institution is that supervision is mandatory. Perhaps that was one of the reasons for it being misunderstood, because it was not voluntary, but mandatory. This is a challenge, both for the group and the supervisor.”

## 9. Main Observed Differences Between Schools and Companies

Coaching is done individually, one-on-one, and in the majority of cases the coach is a person trained and certified for coaching. There are three parties involved: the sponsor, the coach, and the coachee. The dynamic is 8 monthly 90-minute sessions. The organisation pays for the service, and it is free-of charge for the individual (cochee).

<sup>3</sup> Continuous Professional Development

<sup>4</sup> International Coaching Federation



Supervision, in both education and social welfare is done with closed groups of 8-12 members in education, 6-8 in social welfare. The dynamic is 10-12 monthly sessions of 3-3,5 hours. There is also team supervision, pre-planned as either, a project activity, or as mandatory activity in an organisation defined by its Work Programme. Accordingly, staff of schools and other institutions, for whom supervision is voluntary, are very motivated to take part in it, while some NGO members or project-team members, for whom supervision is mandatory, are reluctant or resist to taking part in supervision, and rarely come to sessions organised for them. In case of public institutions in education and social welfare, the service is free-of-charge for organisations and individuals. In the case of NGOs, it is funded from project funds (e.g. EU-funded projects), and is free-of-charge for individuals.

An interesting observed difference between executive coaching in business and supervision in non-profit sector is the lack of clearly pre-defined goals set by the hierarchy to be achieved by the coachee in the coaching process.