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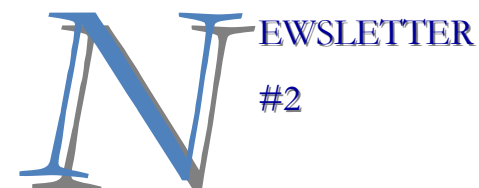
Institute of Economics,
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Republican Institute
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Tomsk State University



Expanding the quality “spirit” of VET

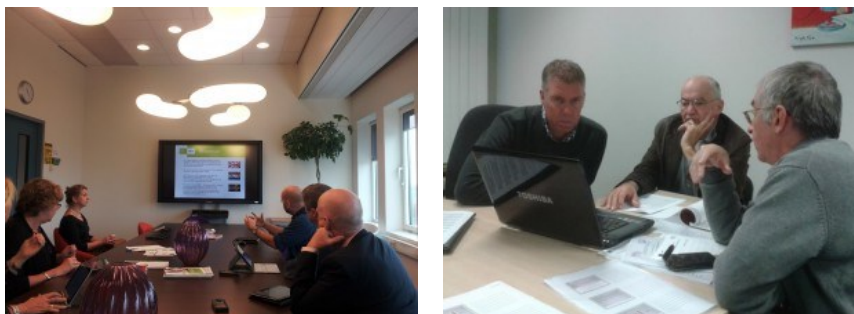
Q & VET

527399-LLP-1-2012-1-SE-LEONARDO-LMP



Outcome of focus groups and interviews in Netherlands

The Dutch contribution to the second part of research in this project was done in different steps. The first part consisted of presentation of the findings at a transnational conference in Vasteras, Sweden on September 26th. During that conference a large workshop was organised for 26 participants (managers, teachers and sector experts) from Cyprus, Great Britain, Greece, Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. In the workshop 6 hypothesis were presented and discussed and participants were asked to come up with recommendations.



In the Netherlands two additional ways of collecting input have been arranged. In terms of focus group work three small follow up sessions have been organised in three different VET institutes, each time with manager as well as teachers. Participants have received the NL report in advance as well as the six hypothesis. They were asked to read the report as a preparation for the session. During the sessions the hypothesis were discussed and the participants have been asked to come up with suggestions to improve implementation and / or describe good practices to improve new quality initiatives.

Additionally 16 participants have been contacted personally for an interview. Main recommendations generated reflect ways to bring together the two different realities in educational institutes: the one of managers and boards, and the reality of teachers. Recommendations address: communication, creating win – win situations and involvement, creating teams, keeping track on initiatives, make clear choices (better do one thing good) etc. Input will be used together with partners input to create a general set of recommendations for managers for the involvement of teachers in quality initiatives.

Best practice: "Common Quality Assurance Framework-VET, a provider online model" (CQAFVET-online)

The aim of the project was to test and finalise already elaborated QA-model by this partnership and transfer the model to an online instrument for self-assessment and quality improvement for VET-providers.



The themes, indicators and levels in the model had to be tested at a wider range among different kinds of VET-providers in order to calibrate the model. The alterations and changes had to be tested by partners in respective country so the model would have a European application and justification. After the finalisation the model has been available online for VET providers in 5 different languages including advice and best practice for improvement of VET quality in their organisation.

However there were standards that were working at a national level, EU (A)VET providers still lacked a common European operational model for QA in (A)VET with common standards - an operational model at provider's level that shared common standards and procedures. Providers across the European Union used various models, standards, criteria and procedures to establish quality in (A)VET. Those differences complicated transparency and created barriers for validation of (A)VET programs and for mobility of learners.

To solve this problem (A)VET providers had to elaborate an operational model that brought into harmony EU policy, national context and policy, and providers own policy, input and effort on QA. That was the goal the project had set itself.

VET teacher seminar in Turkey

28 VET providers from 22 different vocational education institutes

8 Different types of Vet schools:

- 9 VET provider from industry vocational high schools
- 3 VET provider from hotel management and tourism vocational high school
- 2 VET provider from Vocational education center
- 5 VET provider from medical vocational high school
- 2 VET provider from technical and vocational high school for girls
- 5 VET provider from vocational trade high school
- 1 VET provider from evening art school
- 1 VET provider from Multi-programme high school

The participants who joined the seminar were from different districts of Ankara. Almost all of them work in the committee of "total quality management" at their schools.

Average working experience as a vet provider is about 15 years. Percentage of male providers equals 65%.

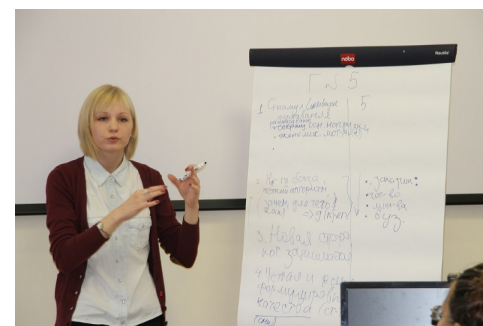


Focus-groups In Tomsk

As part of the project "Expanding the quality 'spirit' of VET (Q & VET)" at Tomsk State University two focus groups were conducted, which were attended by employees from 16 universities of Russia (totally - 26 persons). Each team chose for discussion the hypothesis №5: "Quality initiatives tend to get followed immediately by new ones, creating lots of restlessness within the organization as well as lack of time for good implementation".

After comparison of the discussion results it was revealed that on many positions the opinions of participants are converged, apparent contradictions have not been identified. In two groups the discussion on the following questions was organized: How can teachers / managers create a ground for initiatives and activities in the field of quality? Who exactly (what structures / people) can be a source of initiatives? How to ensure the support from the side of teachers? What is the role of external / internal structures in the conduction of the activities in the field of quality assurance initiatives?

It's necessary to take into account that some solutions, proposed by participants, in our opinion cannot be fully realized in practice, because participants sought to describe some "ideal" in the field of quality assurance of educational initiatives. Also we need to point the specific feature of Russian educational structures - participants noted the existing contradiction between "conservative" - "innovative" norms and attitudes that exist in educational institutions.



Focus groups in Sweden

Methodological approach:

In the telephone interview groups of teachers in Swedish VET programs were asked about their experiences of quality assurance and evaluation practices such as performance measurement, evaluation and review, and the impact on their work and morale. The interview focused on differences and similarities in teachers' and administrators attitudes to QA within the Swedish VET system.



Participants:

The interviewed teacher represented 5 different Folkuniversitetet foundations existing in 12 different municipalities.

Findings:

According to the interviewees the right quality approach:

- empowers, and encourages teachers to look at different ways of improving delivery
- encourages teachers to self-assess and reflect on teaching practices
- creates greater enthusiasm for teaching and learning
- encourages teachers to be more innovative and flexible e) leads to continual upgrading of skills

Resources and support from management::

Most of the teachers commented that the available resources were limited and more were needed. In order to be able to engage with QA, the teacher expressed that following were needed:

Teacher need time release to update skills, release hours to develop modules, release to attend meetings

Teachers need professional development opportunities in the form of short-day training sessions and in-service training on quality assurance training, and strategic planning training

Teachers need sets of procedures, checklists, guidelines, and implementation kits for QA

Quality initiatives and teaching:

Discussions with teachers identified many factors which affected the teacher's view of quality and its implementation:

The way in which quality was implemented in the institute has an impact on how teachers feel about it. If it was imposed in a hurry to meet national requirements, there was considerably more resistance.

Many teachers were concerned by the funding issues, perceiving that there exists a 'get costs lower, cheaper is better mentality' which they see as being at odds with the philosophy of continuous improvement.

The role of training programs was identified as an issue: training programs were not de facto delivery. Many teachers felt that the interaction between teachers and students was being ignored and undervalued. At the same time there were high expectations of the role of the programs.

Lack of leadership was a significant issue. In units where the leader was committed to quality, had vision and acted upon it, there was a mood of energy and excitement about the new perspectives. Where such leadership was lacking, there were feelings of weariness and fear of further change.

Monitoring:

The extent to which teachers monitor their performance seems to depend on the attitude of the team and the leadership. There was a consensus that the quality system has had no real impact on the way that teachers monitor their performance.

Teachers tend to monitor their performance by using the data on student learning. They also measure their performance by means such as: class meetings, student feedback or letters of appreciation formal student representative council meetings team meetings, peer feedback, and moderating each other's' classes student demand levels and attendance levels analyses of enrolments, completions.

Final remarks by teachers:

Quality had been implemented from the top down, in the view of some teachers.

Teachers noted the need for balance and a prime focus on teaching. Teachers believe that quality has improved but that respect for the profession has declined: teachers are contributing to that improvement but not gaining status or acknowledgement of their efforts from pupils, parents or policy-makers

Teachers are more positive about QA processes over which they have some degree of control, rather than those that are top-down;

Teachers are in broad agreement about QA processes and their effects but teachers highlight the importance of self-regulation and feel less regulated from above.



The quality of the education service in two good practices.

Expero “I/05/B/F/PP-154171” & Experto 2EU “LLP-LCV/TOI/08/IT/518”

The family of the projects ExPerO finds its foundations in the finding concerning the interest of European education systems towards improving the quality of service education and in consideration of the importance of the stakeholder assessment of the divergence between expectations and perceptions of the quality of the educational service

The application of the methodology developed within the project ExPerO, allows you to locate the areas of weakness and strengths of the educational service provided from the analysis of expectations and perceptions of the stakeholders on the quality of the learning outcomes.

To handle the differences that arise between the expected and perceived quality has been realized a set of tools and strategies, managed by a database in order to facilitate organizational change interventions, especially in cases of "particular strengths" and "failures" of the training initiatives.

The purpose of the project was to create shared values and common *modus operandi* at the European level through the synergy between actors active in different sectors, with multidisciplinary skills in different countries, bearers of a own culture, but at the same time, share the importance of trans-national collaboration.

The focus of development of the project ExPerO2EU, was the study of a new "organizational model" in which social responsibility, "governance" of the system, management of resources, make schools a place of innovation, where entrepreneurship is encouraged, in which is facilitated the transfer of technology.

A model by which it can be defined a new engine for the development of a knowledge-based economy.

This is achieved by evaluating the learning environment together with the result of the learning.

In this context the model ExPerO is innovative because:

- supports the use of multi-disciplinary theoretical approaches through its easy operational applicability
- provides an assessment focused on the results and not only on the process of learning or only on the quality of the service provided,
- focuses on the consideration of the opinions of the various stakeholders considered as a priority in "The Helsinki Communiqué on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training", Communiqué of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission, convened in Helsinki on 5 December 2006 to review the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen Process.

ExPerO has been placed in the context of good practice by the European Network QALLL - Quality Assurance in Lifelong Learning.

Austria: workshop for VET-teachers and managers

As part of the Q&VET project, Quality Austria organized a work-shop with teachers and managers on the topic “Quality Assurance in Vocational Education”. The work-shop took place in the Quality Austria Headquarter in Vienna, on the 8th of November 2013.

The interviewed teachers/managers represented 3 different Austrian Higher Educational Institutes and 3 different Secondary Schools.

Following a presentation by Quality Austria about the project itself and about the outcomes of the online-questionnaire, two groups were formed.

One of the groups discussed the hypothesis: **“Teachers do not like to reflect on their own quality of work or are not willing to accept feedback genuinely”**.

The main findings of the group-work on this topic have been:

Institutionalising of methods:

- **Personal Quality-assurance planning** has to be **institutionalised** like training material, performance evaluation, dates, feed-back questionnaires;
- **Administrative support:** by time-table and evaluation-plan which shows who has to be evaluated by whom and when and how; it should be responsibility of the management to check, if the evaluation plan has been fulfilled
- Quality Management should be **regular feature of the school-conference** about focal points of the school-year, including discussion about the results of the feed-back questionnaire

Culture:

- Students/pupils are customers!!! This should be part of the thinking of teachers
- Teachers should treat pupils with respect and at eye-level; they should have faith on feed-back of students and take them seriously
- Managers should be inspiring example

Communication:

- Positive effective of feed-back for teachers should be pointed out to teachers
- should be institutionalized; like annual appraisal meetings between managers and teachers;
- Reduce administration work for teachers; Quality happens in the class-room



Group-discussions in Belarus

Discussions on the issue of motivating teachers to actively participate in QA-initiatives have been conducted by the RIPO during 4 peer group meetings in September-October 2013, with the total of 112 participants (79 VET teachers/trainers and 33 managers), representing institutions of technical vocational, secondary specialized and higher education from Minsk and other regions of Belarus.

These focus-group meetings were aimed at carrying out critical analysis of the VET quality assurance problem in Belarus and identifying factors that can enhance motivation of VET teachers and trainers to participate in quality assurance activities.

Summarizing the experts' opinions and findings, we identified two groups of factors and conditions, the fulfilment of which would enhance commitment of VET teachers/trainers to VET quality improvement:

Educational policy level - revision of VET / QA regulatory framework towards its democratisation, transparency and debureaucratisation; review of VET quality monitoring norm; ensuring possibility for continuing professional growth and career development of VET teachers/ trainers with the formal recognition of their achievements; modernization of VET curricula, didactical aids and training equipment;

reduction of overall (particularly non-pedagogical) load of VET teachers/trainers; enhancement of teacher's job attractiveness in the society (raising their salary, rating teachers as state officials / (government employees with an appropriate social package and economic benefits) etc.

VET school level - implementation of principles of participative management (participation of teachers at the stage of decision making), development of the school's corporative open and safe culture with a permanent dialogue between teachers and managers based on mutual trust, respect, consideration of the both top-down and bottom-up initiatives, attaching more importance to teachers' self-reflection and self-evaluation than to collection and exposition of formal indicators; balanced distribution of teaching load of a teacher throughout the school year; broader use of tools of socio-psychological and material motivation of teachers (potential of contests, tangible rewards, social benefits etc.); better opportunities for experience exchanges and further training for VET teachers/trainers (study visits, open lessons, upgrading courses, international projects etc.), raising their awareness of best (inter)national teaching practice and QA approaches in VET.

Quality Models of VET in Austria

Despite various provisos, in almost all areas of education – from schools over universities to institutions offering further education – quality management concepts from industry and economics have been in use. Among the most important concepts, which are also used in the field of education, are the following:

- ISO 29990:2010

ISO 29990:2010 is an International Standard for providers of training and further training, which is certifiable and is to the state of the art in conformity to the ISO requirements placed on management systems. The Standard addresses all types of educational institutions. Single trainers, private seminar providers, organizations providing further training with courses, curricula and internal training and further training up to universities. The Standard has some congruent features with other management systems, above all with ISO 9001:2008.

- ISO 9001:2008

This standard specifies generic requirements for a quality management system and is also used by many educational institutions.

EFQM Model for Excellence

The model is a framework for assessing organisations to find out strengths and improvement areas.

- IWA 2 (International Workshop agreement 2)
- AQW (Ausweis für Qualität in der Weiterbildung)
- LQW (Lernorientierte Qualitätstestierung in der Weiterbildung)
- EduQua (Qualität - Transparenz - Vergleichbarkeit in der Weiterbildung)
- PAS 1037 (Publicly Available Specification)
- Local systems as CERT NÖ, Wien Cert, OÖ-EBQS, S-QS
- The VET Quality Initiative – QIBB

Quality Austria GmbH offers system certification and training courses in the area of ISO 29990, ISO 9001 and the EFQM Model.