



NGO

Formare

Studia

2011

Guide for implementing
quality management in
educational organizations

NGO “FORMARE STUDIA”

Guide for implementing quality
management in educational
organizations

Iasi, Romania
2010

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1. Introduction

This guide aims to bring to the attention of people working in the field of education (leaders, staff, and employees) the implementation of quality management in the educational organizations. Thus, in the pages of this guide readers will find the basic elements that can give realistic and usefull image of how to introduce quality management in educational organizations, which are the steps to follow and what efforts are required.

In the European Union, the quality assurance has always been an essential component of competitiveness in all fields. Ensuring quality in education depends mainly on knowing the principles of quality, understanding and adapting their implementation to the particularities of the educational organizations. Education requires teachers/trainers to engage in research and learning, to be able to work in teams, also needs a common purpose that supports both individualism and collectivism as essential for learning and a management dynamicly connected to the environment, which is constantly changing.

The educational organizations / training centers are required to implement quality management in order to create coherence to their actions and to withstand competition, to attract beneficiaries, to form partnerships, to find ways of achieving the intended results and to achieve an effective internal and external communication.

Any changes to organizational level can be achieved successfully only if the staff is prepared for them. The implementation of quality management in educational organizations / training centers is possible only through staff involvement and training regarding the ISO standards and their requirements, the need to implement a quality management in the organization, regarding how, when and with what they may contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the organization and their role in the organization.

NGO Formare Studia believes in the implementation of quality management. For this reason the members of the NGO are persons with experience in educational activities (formal and non formal). Through the activities it organizes it is known in the community as a provider of educational services characterized by quality and reliability.

Chapter 1 **Quality management in education**

Prof. Angela Sava, project team member, AFS

What do we mean by quality?

The importance of education for the development of excellence, expertise and knowledge leading to overall development of a country cannot be undermined. Although there is no consensus over the use of the term “quality” in education¹, because the term is often vague and inconsistent, nevertheless we have to learn to define the quality of education and the productivity of education. Defining quality in education is even more difficult since it deals with the human being. International Standards Organization (ISO) defines quality as being set of characteristics of an entity (**product, activity, process, organization etc.**) that confer to that entity the ability to satisfy expressed and implicit needs of beneficiaries.

Quality management means planning and accomplishing coordinated activities in order to guide and control an organisation in which regards quality. **TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM)** is an integrated effort designed to improve quality performance at every level of the organization. TQM is the process of changing the fundamental culture of an organization and redirecting it towards superior product or service quality².

Quality management system of an organization must be coherent:

- must be logical, consequent, and easy to be applied by all staff;
- to reflect current practices applied throughout the organization;
- to be subject to regular review.

Since the quality of an educational institution is determined by the quality of the educational services and processes offered by it, the quality management models practiced by the business world have also been adapted and applied in the context of education, where we can identify (Harris 1994), three common approaches to TQM, namely, customer focus, staff focus, and service agreement stance.³

The operation and development of institutions / educational organizations are made based on values and principles, known and assumed by all significant stakeholders.

¹ Mark, R. (2004) Quality Management in lifelong learning. Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 10:1, 19 - 30.

² Gaither, N., 1996. Production and Operations Management, Duxbury Press, Cincinnati, OH, pp: 7.

³ Feng Jie, Aida Idris ,Education Management: Perception of TQM and Its Effect on Attractiveness of Place of Study, pg 4

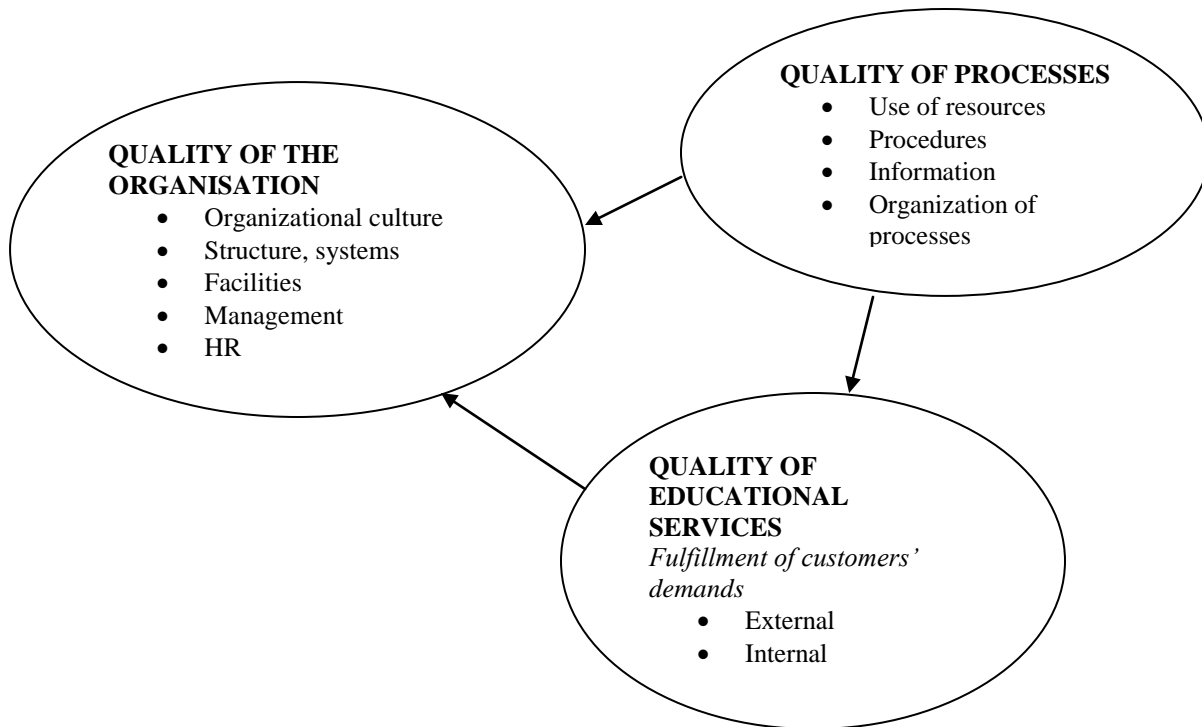


Fig.1 Quality management system

These objectives are achieved through teaching, educational activities, scientific research and various other activities of educational institution.

Basic concepts of quality are:

- Excellence
- Customers trust
- Acceptability Quality Level (AQL)
- Efficiency
- Division of work

Quality management system (QMS)

The concept of **quality management system (QMS)** could be defined like a set of organizational structures, responsibilities, procedures, means and resources that lead to the achievement of quality of the educational services delivered, at all levels referred to quality standards.

The **standard** represents a description of the requirements, such as rules or results to be accomplished, which define the compulsory minimum level to be achieved through an educational activity.

The benchmark is represented by a description of demands that define the optimum level for achieving an activity by an organization who delivers educational activities, based on good practices existing at national, European, international level.

To define the quality of educational processes a detailed analysis is needed, depending on the particularities of each range of activities, customers' needs, expectations and perception of educational services.

Quality is also influenced by the manner in which quality is perceived by managers and teachers.

Thus, the following categories of perception with regard to the quality of educational process can be found⁴:

- Managers perceiving differently the customers expectations and quality specifications;
- Differences between service quality specifications and real service delivery conditions;
- Differences in delivering educational services and what is communicated to the customers;
- Differences between customers expectations and managers perception on the quality of the services.

The differences between managers perceptions of customers expectations and quality specifications can be diminished by setting correct quality standards. For this, managers of educational institutions can do the following:

- Verifying the degree in which quality is defined from the customers' point of view;
- Management skills for the educational staff, auxiliary and administrative staff in order to deliver quality educational services;
- Clear communication of the quality standards components to clients;
- Increase openness to proposals coming from their own employees with regard to the improvement of the quality of the educational process;
- Clear responsibilities directly measurable in relation with quality of services;
- Measuring performance and assuring feed back for motivational systems, promotion and rewarding based on achieved objectives regarding quality;
- Assure that all the employees understand and accept the objectives and priorities of the educational institution regarding quality.

⁴ Parasuraman, Valerie Z., and Leonard L. Berry. "SERVQUAL: A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Customer Perceptions of Service Quality." *Journal of Retailing* 64, no. 1 (1988): 12–40.

The differences between service quality specifications and real service delivery conditions can be reduced by ensuring that the performances of educational services correspond to the standards set by the educational institutions. This can be done through:

- Clarifying the role of each participant in the activities that compose the educational service;
- Assuring that each one understands the role it has to fulfill in achieving responsibilities of its job in satisfying customers' expectations;
- Assuring the preparation and improvement of staff qualifications;
- Supporting the educational staff in achieving excellent results through the selection of best practices, methods, and equipments;
- Knowing clients expectations, perceptions and problems;
- Training of the educational staff for interpersonal abilities and working under stressful conditions;
- Avoiding the conflict sources between various groups of employees by involving them in the decision making process;
- Training the educational staff to set priorities and time management;
- Measuring the performances of auxiliary and administrative staff and a rewarding system based on quality;
- Encouraging team work.

The differences between delivering educational services and what is communicated to the customers related to these services can be reduced by guaranteeing the quality of the services. This can be done through:

- Involving the employees in the launching of new promotional programs;
- The informative materials that are elaborated by the educational institution must reflect the essential characteristics that are important for the clients;
- Client orientation and information;
- A diverse range of educational services, responding to clients needs.

The differences between customers expectations and managers perception on the quality of the services can be reduced by understanding what it is expected from the clients of the educational institutions.

Setting quality standards for the educational services delivered by an educational institution can diminish these four categories of differences.

Thus, the quality standards of educational services:

- Are considered objectives and targets to be achieved;
- Is a way of communicating expectations;
- Allows the creation of efficient management instruments;

- Are the foundations of evaluation system of the behavior towards clients.

Quality standards comprise two dimensions of quality for client:

- Procedures;
- Human Relations dimension / employees behavior towards clients.

Those related to the **procedures** refers to the delivery of educational services, how the activities take place, procedure through which customers needs will be met.

They refer to the following:

- Level of competences that will be developed;
- Activities flow;
- Flexibility of procedures and activities;
- Anticipating customers demands;
- Communication;
- Customers feed-back;
- Organizing and supervising activities.

The standards regarding the **human dimension** are related to the behavior and attitude of educational staff, as well as administrative personnel in relationship with customers in order to respect:

- Organization climate;
- Interpersonal relations;
- Paying attention to clients;
- Supporting the educational and auxiliary staff;
- Solving incidents and conflict situations.

Quality management (systems, procedures, mechanisms) is an integral and indispensable part of the operation and development of educational organization. As a result, the increase of quality must be followed by all people of the educational organization and in all activities they develop.

Chapter 2 ISO approach in quality management

Mihaela Neagu, project collaborator, AFS

Total quality management involves:

1. Customer focus
2. Leadership
3. Involvement of the employees
4. Process approach
5. System approach to management
6. Continual improvement of performances
7. Factual approach in decision making
8. Mutual beneficiary-supplier relationship

1. Customer focus

The new version of standards passed from the principle of "ensuring product quality" to the principle "of respecting customers and regulators requirements" and to the assessment of customer satisfaction. In other words, the past focus on "product" was replaced with the focus on "client" with all its requirements. Organizations should be aware that short-term and long-term survival is possible by adapting their service to customer needs.

Quality is what the customer wants, not what the institution decides it is better for him.

What can be done:

- Identification of beneficiaries needs and expectations
 - Analyzing the studies related to educational needs at national and regional level.
 - Analyzing the needs of certain target groups.
- Relationship between the needs and the expectations of the organization
 - Needs analysis (SWOT /PEST)
 - Institutional Development Plan (IDP)
- Communication of the needs and expectations of beneficiaries to all levels of the organization

- Setting the communication channels among different organizations: primary school, kindergarten, high school
- Specific measuring actions
 - Using measuring tools: questionnaires, focus groups etc.
- Setting a systematic relationship with beneficiaries
 - Nomination and training of certain employees that must realize and maintain this relationship.
- Assuring a balance between beneficiaries' satisfaction of general needs and their specific needs.

2. Leadership

A leader is that manager which has the ability to induce people to get good results by following certain procedures.

What can be done:

- Adopting policies and strategies according to the needs of all interested parties.
 - Institutional Development Project must be in line with the educational policies but oriented to fulfillment of the needs of all interested parties at organizational level.
- A clear vision on the future of the organization
 - IDP must be known by all the employees in order to be applied.
 - Organizing debates and analyzing employees' opinions
- Identification of simulative and significant purposes for all interested target groups
 - Relationship between objectives and needs of various groups is reflected in the actions and effective implication in their achievement
- Supporting a system of values and culture that promotes equity, morality and honesty
 - Drafting and applying deontological codes
- Constructive action, based on trust - good relationships, coherence and transparency in decision making
- Ensuring resources
 - Distribution of resources according to the needs for achieving tasks
- Equitable rewarding
 - Recognizing individual and institutional merits

3. Involvement of the employees

Effective managers are those who make full use of the real qualities of the subordinate staff, leading and motivating staff to use their qualities in the service of the organization.

Involvement of the employees is the essence of each organization and it implies:

- Understanding the place and role within the team/organization;
- Recognizing and accepting accountability in achieving the organization goals;
- Accepting constraints;
- Forming and developing a performance self evaluation capacity with regard to the goal and set objectives;
- Taking advantage of personal development opportunities;
- Creating a framework which enables exchange of experiences and opinions
 - Internal transparent communication
 - Accepting the roles and individual accountability

4. Process approach

For an organization to function effectively it must identify and lead many interrelated processes.

An activity that uses resources and managed in a way that enables the transformation of input into output data may be considered a process.

Applying a system of processes within an organization, identifying and interacting with these processes and their management may be considered *process-based approach*.

When used in an Quality Management System, process-based approach stresses the importance of:

- 1 - understanding and meeting requirements;
- 2 – the need to consider the value added processes;
- 3 - delivering results in terms of performance and process efficiency;
- 4 - continuous improvement processes based on objective measurements.

The expected results fulfill quality standards if in the approach of the activities and allocation of resources the following steps were taken:

- Systematic description of activities that lead to the achievement a certain task;
- Setting clear responsibilities and accountability for achieving results;
- Analyzing and identifying the necessary components for accomplishing tasks;
- Coherence in action inside each department of the organization and among departments;
- Focus on resources and methodology;
- Evaluating implications, risks and impact of each activities on the beneficiaries, suppliers and all interested parties.

5. System approach to management

Processes link together constituting a system of interrelated processes. The process owners provide interfaces - the links between processes.

System approach to process management involves:

- Structuring the system through specific educational procedures in order to efficiently achieve the objectives;
- Understanding the connection between internal processes and their subsystems;
- Structural approaches oriented through the harmonization and integration of internal processes, for example the harmonization of the curricula;
- Understanding roles and responsibilities in achieving tasks;
- Understanding the limits and constraints of organization's capacities regarding resources;
- Measuring and permanent evaluation.

6. Continual improvement of performances

To all processes a methodology known as "Deming's cycle" or "Plan - Perform - Check - Act"⁵ (Plan, Do, Check, Action - PDCA) may be applied.

Plan - establish objectives and processes necessary to obtain results in line with customer requirements and organization policies;

⁵ Paul Arveson, *The Deming Cycle* ,
<http://www.balancedscorecard.org/thedemingcycle/tabid/112/default.aspx>

Do - implement processes;

Check - monitor and measure processes and product against policies, objectives and requirements for product and report the results;

Act - studying the results and proposed improvements, developing new or modifying existing standards to bring them into line with proposed solutions. Action for continuous improvement of processes and product performance.

Deming emphasized the importance of ongoing collaboration between research and design, production and sales, quality improvement process in the form of a graphical representation that bears his name: Deming's circle.

PPCA (Plan, Perform, Check, Act), is the sequence of activities for improvement, highlighting that it is essential to properly understand and evaluate the consequences before acting

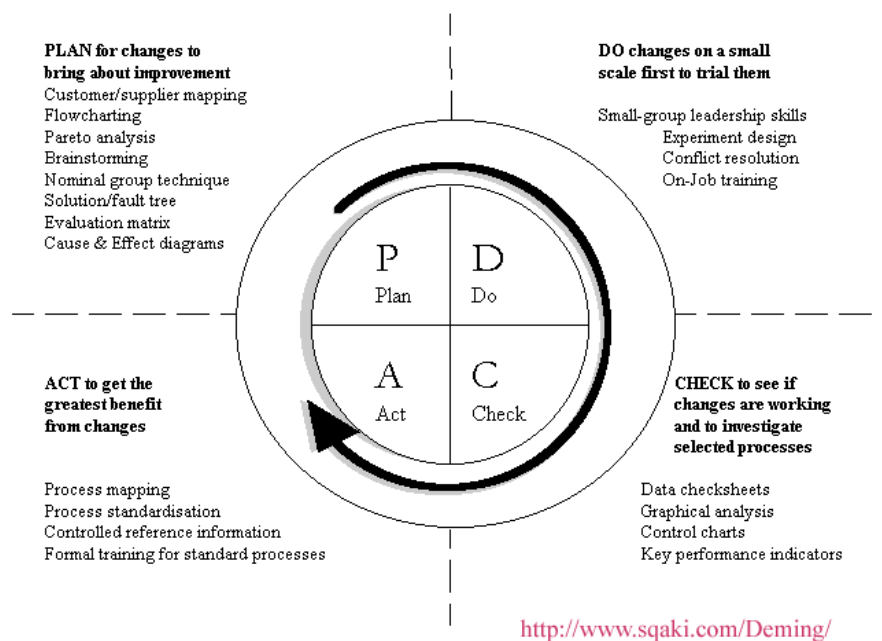


Fig. 2 Deming's circle

What can be done:

- Holistic and global approach of organizational development;
- Training of educational actors with regard to methods and instruments to be used;

- Identification of personal objectives of each organization member and the harmonization with organization's objectives;
- Recognizing and rewarding the performances and improvements achieved.

7. Factual approach in decision making

Decisions based on data analysis

- Ensuring correct and accurate data and information
- Data and information accessibility
- Data and information analysis based on accurate statistical methods
- Taking decisions based on factual data

8. Mutual beneficiary-supplier relationship

Between supplier and beneficiaries the relationship is interdependent and the mutual advantage increases the institutional ability to create and deliver valuable services.

- Setting a balanced relationship with partners based on mutual benefits.
- Sharing resources and expertise
- Identifying and selecting key suppliers
- Efficient communication
- Common goals
- Doing common activities
- Encouraging the realization of common activities

Chapter 3. Quality in non-formal education

Adrian Frentescu, Oana Ichim, collaborators AFS

The concept of non-formal education includes any educational activity outside the formal system, which operates separately or as a feature of some complementary activities, whose ultimate purpose is that of offering an alternative to the same beneficiaries and educational objectives. The beginning of the 21st century is a turning point in the evolution of the concepts of formal and non-formal education which are more and more often the focus of the international educational discourse. In Europe, the initiative to promote school and out-of-school education belongs to the European Council, namely the Committee of Ministers which made a list of recommendations addressed to the governments of member states. The most important document is the Recommendation from April 30th 2003 which stipulates the action directions referring to recognizing the equal status of school and out-of-school educational activity (or *non-formal education*) to that of *formal education* from the point of view of developing the child's personality and social integration. We quote some of the recommendations for member states:

- To reaffirm that non-formal education/learning nowadays constitutes a fundamental dimension of the lifelong learning process, and therefore work towards the development of effective standards of recognition of non-formal education/learning as an essential part of general education and vocational training;
- To promote equal opportunities for all young people, in particular for the socially-disadvantaged groups, by creating equitable conditions of access to non-formal education/learning in order to fully develop its potential with regard to reducing social inequality and social exclusion;
- To actively encourage innovative non-formal education/learning experiences by supporting the effective dissemination of relevant documentation about good practice, training methods and achievements of non-formal education/learning;
- To introduce support measures for non-formal education/learning initiatives aiming to encourage young people's commitment and contribution to the promotion of values such as active citizenship, human rights, tolerance,

social justice, inter-generational dialogue, peace and intercultural understanding;

- To actively engage the non-formal education/learning sector, alongside the formal educational and vocational training systems, in the development of a common European area for lifelong learning;
- To actively use the potential of non-formal education/learning as a complementary means of facilitating the integration of young people in society, by supporting their increased participation, in particular those from transition countries, in relevant European exchange programmes;
- To promote dialogue between actors of formal and non-formal education/learning and encourage better understanding of different approaches concerning non-formal education/learning in the different European countries;
- To make non-formal education/learning a significant element of national youth policies, and of European co-operation in this field;
- To secure sufficient human and financial resources for the implementation and the recognition of non-formal education/learning programmes and their outcomes, with a view to enabling non-formal education/learning to have an adequate space within the learning community;

As a conclusion to these ideas, we can state that school and out-of-school education (non-formal education/learning) represents the place of transferring and putting into practice knowledge, abilities and capacities acquired through the traditional educational system.

Lifelong learning has an important role to play in reducing social inequality and social exclusion, and in promoting active participation in democratic life. Furthermore, non-formal education/learning can contribute to secure all the knowledge and capacities which young people need to succeed in contemporary societies. Therefore, the non-formal educational process must be carried on with the same respect for quality as formal education is.

The national strategy for the development of school and out-of-school education, designed by the Ministry of Education has as its foundation the idea that the formal - non-formal complementary approach ensures the added value of the educational

system. It states clear and coherent objectives correlated to the European educational standards and with regard to the importance of respecting the fundamental values and human rights, the principles of liberty, equality and democracy.

The strategy's goal is to improve the quality of education which is a necessity nowadays in the context of complex changes in family life, job market, community multicultural society and globalization. The quality in education requires the application of the diversity model through differentiated approach and by initiating projects in which students, teachers of different subjects and educational partners representing parents, media and the community.

Within the Romanian educational system, the area of non-formal education (school and out-of-school educational activities) corresponds to the field capable of raising to the challenges of today's society, that is its flexible definition and approach allows a continuous bringing up-to-date of the contents to be learned and of the teaching methods that have the student as their focus of attention, as well as top-quality monitoring and assessment of the products and results of the teaching-learning process. The resulting contexts of this type of education: projects, individual and group activities, subject applications and others allow the possibility of inter-disciplinary, cross-curricula and trans-disciplinary approaches, practicing the abilities and capacities in an integrated manner, the holistic development of personality. The strategy stresses the importance of gathering and diffusion of examples of good practice in the field of non-formal education/learning. One of the principles that stand at the base of the national strategy for education is that of the formal – non-formal interdependence and completion. Education must be focused on values like respect, equality, citizenship, solidarity, truth, freedom, integrity, dignity, honor, honesty, love, trust. In this respect, these values make up the frame in which social norms and rules are established and explained. They stand at the foundation of building attitudes, of the decision making process and strongly influence the behaviour. It is important to identify students, teachers and adults' values in order to find the common grounds and representative values for the communities which are to determine positive changes for making the educational system more effective. Children, parents and teachers together can make school a

pleasant place for everyone, an environment built on communication, respect and flexibility.

The Ministry of Education have stated the following goal/target of the entire strategy: raising the quality standards of formal and non-formal education by correlating the two in order to fully use/exploit students' potential and making them proactive European citizens. In order to achieve this, the following strategic objectives have been defined:

- Acknowledging school and out-of-school education as a fundamental dimension of the teaching-learning process;
- Permanent bringing up-to-date of the contents of learning;
- Strengthening the status of school and out-of-school education as personal development;
- Acknowledging non-formal education as the “practical field” for formal education;
- Developing the European dimension of school, out-of-school and out-of-curricula educational activities through more international cooperation educational programmes;
- Preventing and reducing anti-social phenomena like school abandonment and illiteracy;
- Securing human resources in the field of formal and non-formal education;
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of school and out-of-school education;

The educational process aims at forming and developing capacities, attitudes, beliefs based on acquiring and processing information. The strategy is to be applied not only in the school system but also in its area of influence: family, community, society. Putting existing mechanism and instruments to good use and creating new networks specialized in different subcomponents of school and out-of-school education will raise the quality of education. This process will begin at the lowest level of the school, considering:

- Developing the educative component in planning the teaching activity;
- Correlating the curricula, cross-curricula and extra-curricula dimensions of the educational activities;

- Creating inter-disciplinary teams for initiating, organizing and implementing educational projects;
- Developing educational projects for complementary education.

Meanwhile regional centres of action made of students, teachers, NGO representatives, local administration and community representatives are to be formed. This will turn education into a promoter and agent of progress for the local community. By satisfying young people's needs and interest in knowledge, the educational system will become a resource centre for the society development.

Chapter 4. Encouraging educational institutions to become quality education providers

Teodora Ruginosu, project team member, President, AFS

A key role in promoting quality in organizations is the implementation of a dynamic management, appropriate to the objectives and socio-economic context. Whatever field of activity, size, structure or maturity of an organization, it needs to establish an adequate management framework for success.

In an environment of rapid change as the world today, organizations must be agile, flexible, to respond rapidly to the needs and expectations of the stakeholders, and be able to change at any point. Therefore organizations must measure, must anticipate the needs and expectations of stakeholders, must monitor their experiences and perceptions, must monitor and analyze the performance of other organizations. Information should be gathered from both current and potential stakeholders. This information will be used to establish, implement and review policies, strategies, objectives, targets, measures on short, medium and long term, and will help organizations develop and achieve a balanced set of results regarding stakeholders.

Organizations must know their customers in depth; they must know that these are the final evaluators of their products and services. Also, customer loyalty and market share must be developed in a clear focus on the needs and expectations of the customers (existing and potential customers). Being sensitive to the needs and expectations of current customers, organizations can work effectively to meet them and even overcome them. Monitoring and analyzing customer experiences and perceptions allow the organization to intervene rapidly and effectively where things don't work well.

Leaders must establish and communicate a clear direction for the organization they lead. They must establish the culture, values, ethics and management structure that will give the organization its own identity and attractiveness to stakeholders. Leaders at all levels within an organization must lead and inspire others, must be role model of behavior and performance.

In uncertain times for the organization, leaders must demonstrate consistency and continuity of goals to inspire confidence and commitment to stakeholders. At the same time they must demonstrate the capability of adaptation and realignment of the organization whereas an environment of rapid and frequent changes, creating stability within the organization, which will attract its employees.

Organizations must be based on an efficient management system, designed to meet stakeholder needs and expectations. Existence of a clear set of processes will determine the systematic implementation of policies, strategies, objectives and plans of organizations. These processes must be developed, managed and improved continuously and systematically. Decisions will be based on actual and reliable information on the current and projected performance, the capability of processes and systems, to the needs, expectations and experiences of other organizations. Risks will be identified based on solid performance measures and will be managed effectively.

Appropriate preventive measures must be identified and implemented influencing and maintaining a high level of confidence in relations with stakeholders.

Educational organizations must identify and understand the skills required, both present and future, to implement policies, strategies, objectives and plans of the organization. They recruit their staff and they train or develop it, they offer active and positive support to comply with these skills. By promoting and supporting employee's development the organization ensures their awareness and use of their full potential, prepares them to adapt to the changes, both in terms of organizational change and personal capabilities.

Organizations must recognize the importance of intellectual capital of the personnel and to use their knowledge for the benefit of the organization. They must use their full potential and encourage the active involvement of staff with defined values by cultivating trust, openness and accountability. Full involvement of staff will allow the generation and implementation of improvement ideas.

Educational organizations must continually learn, both from their own activities and from others. They must rigorously compare the performance, both internally and externally. Must capture and share staff knowledge for optimal use of learning throughout the organization. There must be an openness to accept and use ideas from all stakeholders. Staff should be encouraged to look ahead and beyond

present capabilities, to seek opportunities for innovation and continuous improvement that adds value.

The educational organizations must adapt continuously its supply according to the area's specific in accordance with the demand on the labour market.

In a frequently changing environment, the success of an organization depends on the partnerships that develop, so organizations must seek and develop partnerships to provide increased value through optimization of key stakeholder competence. We refer to partnerships with customers, company, suppliers, partners based on clearly identified mutual benefit. The partners will work together to achieve common goals, supporting one another with their expertise, resources and knowledge to build a solid relationship based on mutual trust, respect and honesty.

Educational organizations must adopt a highly ethical approach, must be transparent and accountable to stakeholders, for their performance as socially responsible organizations. They must pay attention to social responsibility and sustainable environmental protection and actively promote them both now and in the future. Organizations should express the values embedded in social responsibility company, through an open commitment to stakeholders. Then they would meet and exceed the expectations and rules of the local community and, where applicable, the global community. Working on social projects mutually beneficial, animating and maintaining a high degree of confidence of stakeholders, organizations will create the desired impact on present and future community, minimizing any negative impact.

Managers of educational organizations must take into account that quality education has the following characteristics:

- It is based on innovation and diversification;
- It is offered by responsible institutions;
- It is promoted by educational leaders;
- Respects the individual autonomy and has at foundation the institutional autonomy;
- It is focused on results;
- It takes place in dialogue and partnership;
- It is focused on customers and recipients of educational services;

- Provides the participation of educational actors and values the human resources;
- Understand the interdependence between suppliers and recipients involved in the supply of education.

External activities:

- Quality Assurance & Quality Enhancement policy and procedures;
- External inspection, Audit & Accreditation;
- Visibility: website, media, brochure, newsletters, newspapers;
- Excellent Public Relation based on good quality of services – to actively inform the public;
- Publications (Reports, online documents), open evenings, educational exhibitions.

Communication with the community is extremely important and can be realized through:

- cooperation with other educational and non-educational organizations;
- opened to change and partnership exchanges;
- Presence to Local, Regional, National, International events;
- Communication: direct communication with citizens, conferences;
- The education institution has to be aware of the community needs.

Proactive involvement of stakeholders

Social responsibility includes involvement of stakeholders in various projects or activities of organizations. Stakeholder involvement is a comprehensive and continuous process between the organization and the people on which the organization's actions have an impact. This includes a series of participatory approaches for each stage of a project. It could be said that stakeholder involvement has become a principle that has to characterize each stage of a project management, from design and planning, to monitoring and evaluation.

Proactive involvement of stakeholders helps to cultivate relationships that may pose a competitive advantage, especially in times of crisis. That is why the partnership between educational organizations and business sector or nonprofit sector may have a strategic component, and it transcends from sponsorship, short-term implementation of a project or image exercise.

Chapter 5 Education, school and family-implementing quality

Prof.Univ.Dr. Anca Colibaba-EuroEd, collaborator AFS

*“Education in its broadest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense **education** is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another.”⁶*

Education is therefore a complex process linked to a wide variety of understandings and even more diverse ways of implementation. Talking about the quality of education may be a goal too difficult to accomplish as it brings in all specificities related to the background, participants and means of educating. However, there is one common point which connects all these – the fact that each qualitative education process requires a set of objectives that need to be accomplished. The quality of the educative process depends on the degree in which these set objectives are being met. Whether or not we agree on what “good” or “bad” education is, does not relate to quality but rather to the perception of outsiders. The only way to measure the quality of education is to be aware of the objectives the process was based on and see how many of those have or have not been accomplished.

This is of course a very general way of looking at education. Still they say that no class is similar to another so we should perhaps be looking at these more general ideas of education instead of going into details. A more general level of discussion may suit more readers and provide them with a wide frame for their interests in education. The narrower the frame is less opinions will fit in it. This article is meant to mark a few general points in the structuring and delivery of education.

1. Education and the present society. – “Give a man a fish and you feed him for one day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” (proverb)

Day to day life helps one learn more than school has ever taught him or her. Many of us come to this conclusion. Some would say this is the way things usually go- you should gain more experience as time goes by from all the things you do or

⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education>

happen to you. School is but the begging of experience, that “lead in” for what will later on follow.

From the very beginning nature has forced mankind to take action in order to survive. Concrete occupations like hunting, building, shaped education into a practical experience that would rather show how it's done than talk about it. However, as time went by and there were less and less of these direct stimuli, people as individuals did not need to worry about practical utilities that were being delivered by the system. They turned to more abstract occupations which required reflection and less practical activities. In time this has resulted in an education system focused on transferring information rather than implementing it. Societies were fairly well delimited and those inside them knew how the system worked. Therefore, there was nothing out of the ordinary to expect, nothing that would go against the rules and the structures that had been taught in school. On leaving school students could most of the times simply apply their knowledge just as it had been transferred to them in school. Nowadays though, school cannot back up students with all the information and most important, with all the skills and abilities they need to successfully function in their profession. Through the globalization process society has once more become “wild” in the sense opening a range of situations caused by the intercultural communication and the differences among these cultures. Education systems now have to provide much more than a set of information. They have to support students' development in relation to the requirements of their society and, at the same time, equip them with the basic skills they would need after graduation. Providing more than “food” for the near future, enabling students to think for themselves and discriminate between particular situations is perhaps one of the most important inputs school can offer.

2. Children, beneficiaries of and participants in education - “*don't limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time*” (Rabbinical saying)

What we all know is that teachers' job is to teach, learners' job is to learn and as long as they do this, education is going to do exactly what it is supposed to – *educate*. Still, the truth is that teaching does not necessarily imply learning. As mentioned before, in order to talk about quality we need to refer to some goals so that we can measure the added value and the extent to which these goals have been met. However, this should not be mainly quantitative as in how much information children have acquired or learned. It would perhaps help to link it to the processing

of the information and to the use it's being put to. To cut to story short: if the acquired information has been applied and processed by the learners, if the intake shows that they have internalized the information, then we can talk about quality of delivery and quality of the delivered product. Teaching theory and abstract aspects should be balanced with teaching useful, practical things that learners are bound to use in the near future rather than in 10 years time. Teaching only for the sake of tradition and canon will surely not equip learners with the skills they need for their existing society continuously changing, reshaping itself and the demands it has for individuals. One way of updating teaching and of making sure that learning does happen is to involve learners in the process of teaching. In other words we should encourage them to knowledge together, in class, discover the rules behind the practice and draw their own conclusions from their learning experience, instead of offering them ready made ideas to memorize and try to fit to their individual background. Transforming ordinary classes in research, knowledge building and focus groups will motivate participants, enhance their active participation and will create an authentic learning background where ideas can be tested and constructive feedback offered. Engaging learners in the teaching will also improve the quality and the relevance of the topics approached and the materials used. Being directly involved, learners will update classes with the aspects that most interest them and will thus help teachers view teaching and learning from the point of view of the beneficiary and not only from that of the coordinator. In the end, teaching is offering a service for a client – the learner, and it is only fair that we offer the client what s/he needs and not what we want to sell - that is if we really want to help.

3. School and family - partnership for education – “*it takes a village to raise a child*” (African proverb)

The two major elements in the process of education are school and family. One cannot imagine making the smallest change in this respect unless there is a good communication channel between the input learners receive from both family and school. The relation between school and family is one of the most important aspects for children's performance and attitude towards school and formal or informal education. In time, this relation has been shaped and reshaped according to the different social changes that have occurred, allowing family and school to take turns in handling decision taking. Nonetheless, there has always been the

need of having both of them actively involved in building an individualised study strategy for learners, to enhance motivation and performance in the long term.

At all times though, family and school are to remember that children, their personalty and interests should be catered for as much as possible without restricting in any way their personal developement. Asking for children's opinion in matters concerning their education and informing the other part of this "bilateral partnership" should become a routine to ensure an updated and relevant educative process. Involving the family in school activities is a means of creating a bound between the two backgrounds making learners feel more comfortable when switching from one to another. Participating in these classes parents can experience the formal teaching their children are a part of and they can therefore have a bird's eye view upon the entire education that their children are receiving.

Who, how, when we educate varies incredibly. High standards for education should none the less be present and updated according to the evolution of society. If we are to equip learners with an authentic survival kit that would help them discover, understand and handle reality we have to place them at the center of our work as educators and start by looking at teaching from their perspective.

Education is never complete but the best we can do is show them how learning is done so they can then do it by themselves according to their field of interest.

Chapter 5 Project management in education

Smaranda Sandulescu, Project Manager, AFS

While programmes and budget support are the preferred modality for EU assistance, projects are still needed in a diversity of areas and for a wide range of circumstances, including for supporting NGOs, emergency and post-crisis interventions, technical assistance, piloting new initiatives, regional projects, investment projects with high transaction costs for governments. In this case, the European Commission makes funding available to selected projects, following competitive Calls for Proposals (CfPs) which are usually used under thematic budget lines (such as for Human Rights, Gender, Environment, Food Security and Co-Financing with NGOs) to provide grant funds, particularly to non-state actors.⁷

The Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) is the European Union's main funding instrument in the field of education and training. The LLP has four sectoral sub-programmes and four so called *transversal* programmes. In addition, the Jean Monnet programme is part of the LLP. It stimulates teaching, reflection and debate on the European integration process at higher education institutions. In order to *foster interchange, co-operation and mobility between education and training systems*, a number of different types of co-operation and mobility activities for educational institutions, their staff and learners are funded by the programme, such as multilateral projects⁸, networks, partnerships etc.⁹

1. What is a project?

Projects are not something new, in fact they are as old as mankind. A project can be defined as a “temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result performed by people, constrained by limited resources, planned, executed, and controlled in order to bring benefits to the target group”¹⁰ (PMBOK

⁷ European Commission, EuropeAid Cooperation Office, *Project Cycle Management Guidelines*, march 2004, vol.1, pg 17

⁸ **Grundtvig Multilateral Projects** develop concrete and innovative results/products, with the ultimate aims of improving the content and delivery of adult education, adult education at a system or policy level, the accessibility of learning opportunities for adults and the management of adult education.

⁹ Holger Bienzle, Eerika Hedman, Ray Kirtley, Vesa Purokuro, Calin Rus, Silvia Wiesinger, Eija Wilen, *Survival Kit Managing Multilateral Projects in the Lifelong Learning Programme*, 2010, pg 9, website: www.european-project-management.eu

¹⁰ Idem 6, pg 7, website: www.european-project-management.eu

Guide 2008, p. 5). As defined by the European Commission, a project is also “a series of activities aimed at bringing about clearly specified objectives within a defined time-period and with a defined budget” (EC, 2000).¹¹

Projects are primarily meant to bring change by the results or products they seek to produce, according to the aims of the organization, so project management always require capacity to plan and manage change.¹²

Projects are also about implementing strategy within an organisation, implementation of a new strategy can introduce very complex change processes and produce high levels of uncertainty, so projects which involve high degrees of uncertainty or change need to be structured and managed differently from those which involve more common changes. A key purpose of such projects is to learn, to explore, to add substance and meaning to the broad outline of the organisation's strategy. Project plans therefore need to be flexible, to allow for changes of direction, exploration of new ideas, and incorporation of new developments.

2. Educational Projects' Management: An Introduction

Project management has nowadays been used in a variety of areas including in education, although with a different approach.¹³ In order to understand project management, one needs to understand the nature of projects.

If, traditionally, between the characteristics of different projects there was not a difference of project management approaches, recently, research has found that educational projects require different project management approaches if quality outcomes are to be achieved and that educational management has to be focused on the purpose or aims of education.¹⁴ Educational Management is a part of management theory and its main characteristics derive from the distinctive characteristics of the educational activity. Due to the high level of complexity, educational activities result in the growth of risks, which require increased carefulness on behalf of the project managers¹⁵. In the teaching process, more often than in any other fields, we need to deal with a combination of scientific data and

¹¹ European Commission, EuropeAid Cooperation Office, *Project Cycle Management Guidelines*, march 2004, vol.1, pg 8

¹² De Lawrence Lipsitz, *The Process of innovation in education*, pg 82

¹³ Idem 9.

¹⁴ Tony Bush, *Theories of Educational Management*, <http://cnx.org/content/m13867/latest/>

¹⁵ Gheorghina BÎRLĂDEANU, PhD, *The Issues Of The Educational Management in The Romanian Educational System Before Graduating High School*, University of Craiova, pg 920, <http://209.51.134.189/~feaaro/images/0036v2-031.pdf>

information about art and culture, so there is a specific informational structure of the management decisions.

Although theories of educational management can be presented in distinct groups, they differ in the models chosen, the emphasis given to particular approaches and the terminology used to describe them.¹⁶ The main theories are classified into six major models of educational management (Bush, 2003) that represent different ways of looking at educational institutions.

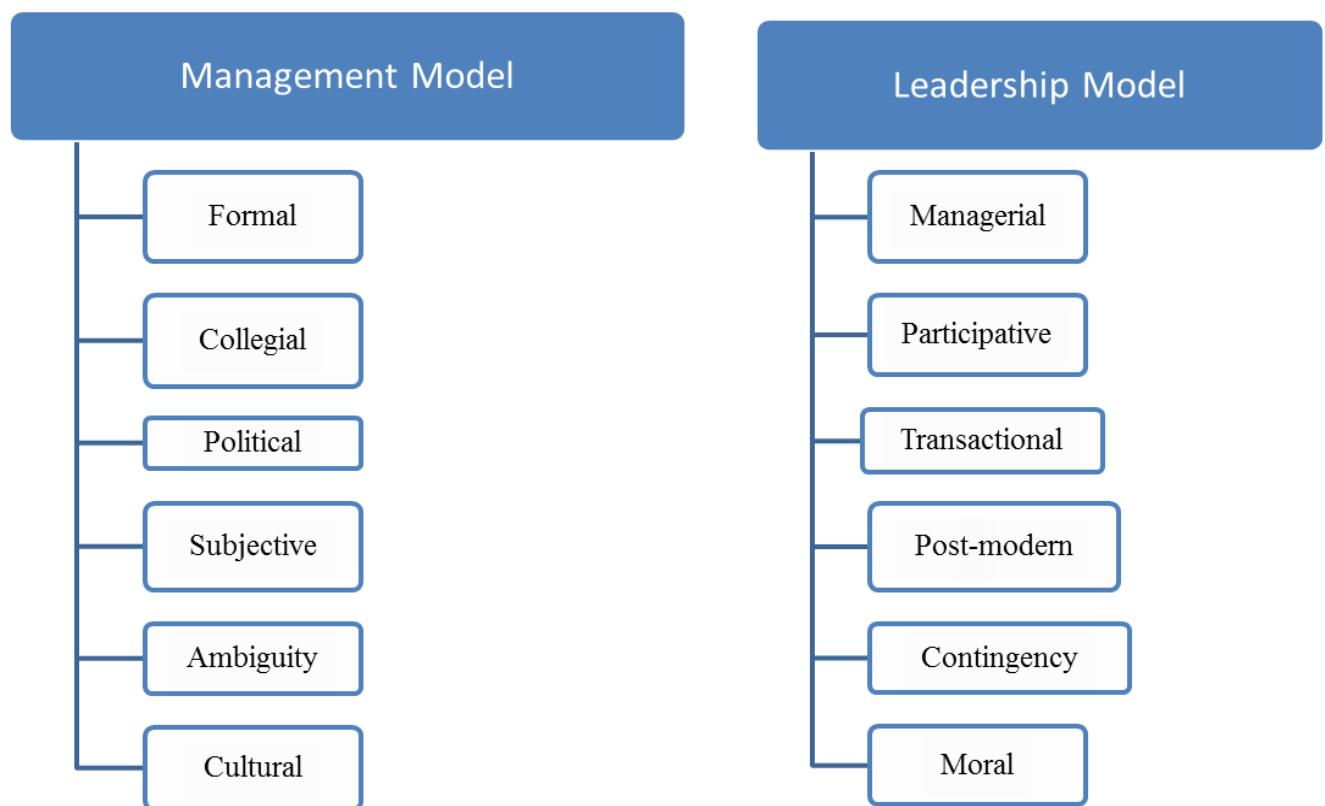


Fig 3. *Types of Management and leadership model, according to Bush and Glover 2003.*¹⁷

3. What are the functions of project manager?

Henry Mintzberg indicates a variety of project manager's work, developing the idea of multiple roles that they have to accomplish. Generally a good project manager should¹⁸:

¹⁶ Tony Bush, *Theories of educational leadership and management*, 3rd edition, pg 31

¹⁷ Idem 13, pg 33

- *Manage*: have general managerial competences, so the capacity to deliver the expected results.
- *Lead: leadership* means capacity to create a vision and to determine changes which bring it into reality, to motivate and inspire the team in the project, to convince people and institutions needed for the success of the project.
- *Communicate*: create effective communication channels and facilitate the information flow is key.
- *Negotiate*: capacity to set up agreements and to mediate conflicts
- *Solve problems*: this is a combination between defining problems and decision-making.
- *Influence (the organization)*: knowing and using the organizational culture and the power relations (formal and informal).

A manager needs to possess a set of managerial competencies comprising a series of three categories of knowledge:

- ***Technical competences***: specific knowledge and skills for the regular tasks.
- ***Interpersonal competences***: how to lead the team during working activities.
- ***Self-development competences***: capacity to identify own strengths and weaknesses in relation to the requested work and to take action for personal and professional development in that area.

4. What is a project cycle?

The ‘project cycle’¹⁹ as defined by the EC manual, is a way of viewing the main elements that projects have in common, and how they relate to each other in sequence. The precise formulation of the cycle and its phases may vary, but the basic components are the following:

- *Programming*. The establishment of general guidelines and principles, defining the thematic focus and outlining the broad ideas of the project.
- *Identification*. Within the programme framework, problems, needs and interests of possible stakeholders are analysed;
- *Appraisal (or preparation)*. All significant aspects of the project are studied, taking into account stakeholders’ views, relevance to problems, feasibility and other issues. Logical or results-based management frameworks, and

¹⁸ Source <http://www.vetserbia.edu.rs/Prirucnici/MP/English/Project%20cycle%20management.pdf>

¹⁹ Source: EC. *Manual: Project Cycle Management*, Brussels, European Commission, EuropeAid, 2001

activity and implementation schedules, are developed and the required inputs are calculated. The outcome is a decision to take the project forward, or not.

- *Financing.* A decision is taken by the relevant parties about whether or not to fund the project, based on the appraisal. Some project cycles refer to this stage as ‘negotiation’ or ‘approval’, and it may involve both the implementing agency and other stakeholders.
- *Implementation.* The agreed resources are used to carry out the planned activities and achieve objectives. Progress is assessed through monitoring to enable adjustment to changing circumstances. At the end of implementation, a decision should be made about whether to close or extend the project.
- *Evaluation.* This assessment of the project’s achievements and impact examines the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. It leads to a decision to continue, change or stop a project, and its conclusions are taken into account when planning and implementing similar projects.

5. What are the benefits of participation in EU funded projects?

For an idea to be transformed in a project it needs to be relevant to priority local needs and consistent with EC policy priorities. When looking to identify a good project idea, one needs to:

- identify project ideas that are consistent EC development priorities;
- assess the relevance and likely feasibility of these project ideas;
- prepare a clear budget proposal
- determine the scope of further work required during the formulation stage for individual projects

Due to the reducing number of funds offered at regional and national levels, the EU funds have become a key source for many NGOs willing to develop projects. Moreover, the EU is the first contributor at the international level each year for non-profit projects.

Through the projects developed the organization aims to create a stronger civil society organization, to develop partnerships and exchange of know-how, improving the quality standards at European level, giving access to information for citizens and disseminating information. Research has shown that, among the main benefits for the organisations participating in EU projects, it can be

mentioned an increase European “outlook”, increased and sustainable co-operation with other EU partner institutions/organisations, a high level of mobility of participants and members of the organisation. They also gain from the improvement of quality of teaching/curricula, teaching/teacher training practice and approaches to learning and management.²⁰

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency is responsible for the implementation of the centralized Actions of the Lifelong learning Programme. It is in charge of the complete life cycle of these projects, from analyzing the grant request to monitoring projects on the spot. It is also responsible for launching the specific calls for proposals.²¹

Depending on the Programme Action, the selection process is initiated in one of the following ways:

- for most Actions, the Programme Guide acts as a permanent call for proposals.
- for some Actions, specific calls for proposals are published.

6. Quality Assurance in Lifelong Learning with a focus on Adult Education

Launched in 2000 in the framework of the Socrates II Programme the Grundtvig Programme aims at giving adult education the same structural status within the programme as higher or school education.²²

Grundtvig is one of the four arms of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), which enables people at all stages of their lives to take part in learning experiences, as well as helping to develop the education and training sector in Europe. The other three funding arms of the LLP are: Erasmus, which focuses on higher education, Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training, and Comenius for schools.

The Grundtvig programme is a significant source of funding for adult educators, their organisations and projects. It funds a wide range of training opportunities for adult education organisations, staff and learners. The following actions are supported:

□ Mobility of individuals which comprises in-service training, visits, assistantships and exchanges for adult education staff, as well as various

²⁰ ECOTEC (2008), *Final Evaluation of the Socrates II Programme 2000–2006: Annex to the Joint Report (C3318)*, p. 103

²¹ Source http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/funding/2011/index_en.php

²² http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/grundtvig/creativity_en.pdf

opportunities for adult learners including attendance at Grundtvig Workshops and participation in Learning Partnerships and Senior Volunteering Projects under the Grundtvig Initiative for Volunteering in Europe for Seniors ("GIVE")

□ Partnership focusing on themes of mutual interest to the participating organisations (□ Learning Partnerships□)

□ Multilateral projects aimed at improving adult education systems through the development and transfer of innovation and good practice

□ Networks of experts and organisations ('Grundtvig Networks') working in particular on:

- developing adult education in the discipline, subject area or management aspect to which they relate
- identifying, improving and disseminating relevant good practice and innovation
- providing content support to projects and partnerships set up by others and facilitating interactivity between such projects and partnerships
- promoting the development of needs analysis and quality assurance within adult education

□ Preparatory visits: a mobility grant to enable a representative from an institution either to attend a contact seminar or a meeting with prospective partners

□ Accompanying Measures : other initiatives aimed at promoting the objectives of the Grundtvig Programme²³

Every adult involved in an adult education organization or program (formal, informal or non-formal) can take part in Grundtvig program, including learners, staff, volunteers and trainers from a wide variety of organisations including colleges, companies, charities, community groups, local authorities etc. All projects involve working with European partners and offer great learning and personal development experiences for those involved.

Quality assurance is a permanent concern for Grundtvig program. Quality is a complex, multi-dimensional and flexible concept which cannot be easily defined. Within the Grundtvig program, the “*Quality assurance is a systematic process of assuring/improving quality in VET and AE using the quality cycle and appropriate methods/methodologies, procedures, tools and indicators.*”²⁴

According to the Global Report on Adult Learning (GRALE)²⁵ four key dimensions of quality in adult education and training can be identified, such as:

²³ <http://www.eurodesk.org/edesk/Infocentre.do?go=1&progId=EU0010000069&show>

²⁴ Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner, Quality Assurance in Lifelong Learning Thematic Monitoring, Assessment and Mapping of Projects, Report of first analysis, http://www.qalll.net/fileadmin/qalll/Reports/QALLL_first_analysis_report_end_March10th.pdf

²⁵ UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. 2009. Global Report on Adult Learning. Hamburg: UIL. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001864/186431e.pdf>

- equity which relates to equitable access to and participation in, all levels of education and training;
- efficiency which relates to levels and distribution of resources and to economical investment of resources to achieve specified aims under given conditions, that is, the ratio of costs to benefits;
- effectiveness which generally expresses means-end relationships in terms of educational outcomes for learners, and the time needed to achieve programme aims.
- relevance, a key dimension of quality in adult education and training, meaning that provision must represent an effective route to and support for, personal and social change and must engender and sustain motivation to participate and support persistence in learning to the achievement of individual goals.

Quality assurance plays a crucial role in the Grundtvig program, so in adult education and trainings, so a number of initiatives were launched.

In order to promote and monitor continuous improvement of national systems of vocational education and training (VET), the Member States and the European Commission established a **European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQAVET)** in June 2009, as a reference tool for policy-makers based on a four-stage quality cycle that includes goal setting and planning, implementation, evaluation and review.²⁶ It respects the autonomy of national governments and is a voluntary system to be used by public authorities and other bodies involved in quality assurance.

Also, with the aim to highlight good practice and to put forward recommendations in order to support cooperation in this field, to identify both immediate priorities for the Lifelong Learning Programme as well as long-term challenges for the next generation of the programme the new strategic framework of the Council of the European Union called “**Quality Assurance in LifeLong Learning with a Focus on Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education**” [QALL] (2009 – 2012) was established. It aims to highlight good practice in quality assurance in lifelong learning by facilitating the networking and mainstreaming of the results and outcomes of previous and existing LLP-funded centralised and decentralised projects in VET (Leonardo da Vinci) and in adult education (Grundtvig).

²⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1134_en.htm

The overall goal is to identify strategies, tools, mechanisms, approaches and activities developed by LLP projects throughout Europe in order to promote quality in adult learning.

Member States are encouraged to use the framework, and develop, by mid-2011, a national approach to improving quality assurance systems that involves all relevant stakeholders. This approach should include the establishment of national reference points for quality assurance, as well as active participation in the relevant European-level network.²⁷

The European Commission supports Member States in this process, particularly through initiatives that support co-operation and mutual learning, testing and by developing and providing guidance material and other information. The Commission will also ensure follow-up through a report every four years to the European Parliament and the Council.

The project also aims to facilitate networking and mainstreaming of results and outcomes of projects in the field of adult education and training, to foster expert and staholder exchange of know how in quality assurance related topics in the field of adult education.

For the period up to 2020 the issue of quality in education and training will continue to be a theme of major concernat European level, as illustrated by the Council Conclusion of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for *European cooperation in education and training* ('ET 2020').

The second of four strategic objectives is *improving the quality and efficiency of education and training in the interests of ensuring the acquisition of key competences by everyone*, while developing the excellence and attractiveness at all levels of education and training that will allow Europe to retain a strong global role.²⁸

Conclusions

NGO FORMARE STUDIA (AFS) is extremely conscious that the funds provided by the European Commission are tax-payers money. We feel therefore that it is our duty to provide the maximum return of European tax-payers money and to run projects that contribute to making a real difference in terms of:

- Community development, education and lifelong learning

²⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1134_en.htm

²⁸ http://www.kslll.net/Documents/Background_Report_Final.pdf

- Innovation, advancement of research
- Social inclusion, accessibility, employment
- Quality

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The guide is produced for the
International Workshop “**Quality Management in Adult Education**”,
2009-1-RO1-GRU13-03349,
held in Iași, Romania, during 1-8 may 2011

This material is realized by NGO Formare Studia with the financial support of the European Commission, DG Education and Culture, Lifelong Learning Programme, and it reflects only the opinion of the authors and not necessary the position of the European Commission.

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