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EDC-QA (33)

PROJECT
EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP :
FROM POLICY TO EFFECTIVE PRACTICE THROUGH QUALITY ASSURANCE
(EDC-QA PROJECT)

Tool Kit Drafting Group
Third Meeting
Ljubljana, 17-18 April 2004

Report

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INTRODUCTION

The third meeting of the Tool Kit drafting group took place in Ljubljana on 17-18 April 2004. The drafting group warmly welcomed Bruno Losito and James Cuthbert. The agenda and list of participants appear respectively in Appendix 1 and 2.

The objectives of the meeting were to :

- discuss and decide on the new evaluation of the EDC-QA project
- review the texts of the EDC-QA tool kit prepared so far and agree on next drafting steps
- discuss in detail the evaluative framework (indicators structure, content and style of descriptors)
- discuss the validation process of the tool kit
- continue the discussion on future developments of the EDC-QA project

II EVALUATION OF THE EDC-QA PROJECT

This item was discussed in the function of management group. The project manager is in contact with the two missing management group members, Ilo Trajkovski and Myriam Karela, informing them and collecting their views on the evaluation issue.

Bruno Losito introduced his draft proposal for the final evaluation of phase 1 of the EDC-QA project (document EDC-QA(32)). He highlighted in particular the following points

- his wish to immediately share and make transparent his interest, experience and ensuing non-neutrality in relation to school self-evaluation issues and challenges
- the aim of the evaluation to reflect on the achievement of the objectives of the EDC-QA project and of its first phase; on possible inconsistencies and their reasons, in the implementation process; on how phase 1 helps to move towards fulfilling the objectives of the whole project, whether phase 1 has been successful in terms of results and impact with a view to preparing the next phase
- the importance of the project processes, for example the relationship between the regional and national levels
- the issue of governments' involvement which is at the same time an objective and a condition of the success of the project
- his proposal to use working methods at a distance, rather than face to face, mainly due to time and financial constraints
- the need to clarify the issue of sustainability and whom to involve in the evaluation process.

Participants thanked Bruno Losito for his comprehensive proposal. In the discussion the following points were emphasised

- the evaluation should check the feasibility of the project from the point of view of the project's implementation, whether the conceptualisation is clear and

consistent, whether and how the EDC-QA project contributes to bridging the policy-practice gap

- the evaluation should be used as feedback for the further development of the project, providing argumentation, in particular for fundraising
- it should consider learning and capacity-building processes, particularly on quality assurance
- it should relate / interview first and foremost the persons directly involved / active in the project and consider the emergence of partnerships in the countries
- the evaluation should include the organisation and results of the seminar to be organised in the Autumn (see item V below) to which the evaluator will be invited; a first evaluation report should be available and presented at the seminar, the final report should be prepared after the seminar

The issue of sustainability was considered in detail :

- the project could be considered sustainable if it has had a systemic impact, if a network, relationships and visibility have been established and will continue
- an important aspect is the institutional context of the project which helps countries to accept and develop quality assurance policies. After the end of the support of the Stability Pact, the UNESCO and Council of Europe frameworks are essential. Given its objectives and ambition, the project cannot be “private”
- an essential criteria is the ownership of the project, to what extent it has identified and developed partnerships with key stakeholders, particularly professionals and bodies in quality assurance, possibly beyond education ministries, whether it is embedded in the QA infrastructure in the countries, how it is linked to policy implementation efforts, e.g. decentralisation policies
- another important criteria is that of utility, to what extent the project is seen, accepted and used as a resource.

Bruno Losito will prepare a revised evaluation plan on the basis of the discussion.

III REVISION OF TOOL KIT TEXTS

- The structure of the EDC QA tool kit remained unchanged and appear in Appendix 3.
- The revised list of indicators and sub themes (bullet points) appears in Appendix 4.
- The drafting group agreed that
 - a final editing will be carried out once all the texts have been agreed to, to secure the coherence of the whole tool kit
 - research and texts produced as background to the tool kit texts, e.g. on indicators by Janez Krek and on evaluation methods by Vedrana Spajic, will be combined as a resource pack and made available especially on the project website (being finalised).

1. **Chapter 4 : what is school development planning and how to do it**

This chapter will cover the following points :

- why school development planning
- how to start school development planning
- who is involved in school development planning; including issues of ownership
- how is it done; including is the role of external evaluation
- how to use the results

A document on school development planning in Ireland will be made available.

2. **Chapter 5 : framework to evaluate EDC**

2.1 **Common considerations**

- A draft list of questions prepared by James Cuthbert and to be used for inspecting citizenship education in Northern Ireland was made available to the drafting group.
- The drafting group reaffirmed that
 - the tool kit will be used for evaluation both internal (self-evaluation) and external (inspection) to the school
 - the indicators are normative. The evaluative framework is not value free, it is based on a vision of EDC presented in chapter 3 and on the policy assumption that EDC is a priority
 - the descriptors correspond to the best possible situation. They are a means to identify, against a four point scale (significant weaknesses in most or all areas; more weaknesses than strengths; more strengths than weaknesses; strengths in most or all areas), those areas where change needs to take place to reach that situation.
- It recognised the existence of redundancies and overlaps in the indicators and their sub themes (bullet points). Nevertheless, that same aspects were treated in several parts was seen, on the one hand, as inherent to EDC and on the other hand, as a possibility to check the validity of the information collected during the self-evaluation process
- The drafting group agreed to write the descriptors in full sentences and in the present tense, and that the indicators' sub themes (bullet points) will structure the descriptors :

Area

Indicator

- sub theme
text
- sub theme
text
- sub theme
text

|
|
|
|

descriptor

However the introduction on how to use the evaluative framework should clearly warn from evaluating each point in detail and spending too much time on the self evaluation.

2.2 Indicator 1

The following issues were raised and agreed to

- detail the substance of each bullet point
- move the texts on community links and governance to Area 3

2.3 Indicator 2

It was agreed to include two sub themes only :

- learning outcomes
- teaching and learning methods (including school community links, relationships and monitoring learning progress and personal development)

The sub theme on learning outcomes should include specific aspects of learning about citizenship.

2.4 Indicator 3

It was agreed to broaden the notion and practice of assessment beyond that of knowledge.

2.5 Indicator 4

It was agreed to change the text of the indicator to

“Does the school have policies relating to the development of a school climate and ethos based on EDC principles, together with implementation strategies?”

2.6 Indicators 5 and 6

It was agreed to merge the two indicators and their sub themes. The new indicator 5 reads

“Is there evidence that school practice and organisational behaviour reflects EDC principles and that there is active participation of students and other stakeholders in school life, policy and decision-making ?”.

2.7 Indicators 7-9

(old numbers before merging 5 and 6)

These indicators need a change in style as described in point 2.1 above.

3. Chapter 6 : how to use the evaluative framework ?

The following guidelines were agreed to :

- the chapter should provide practical guidelines, options and examples. The school is then free to chose how to use the evaluative framework
- as discussed for chapter 5, the evaluation and the report should not cover every single item, but provide aggregate comments
- the chapter should help the users of the evaluative framework (chapter 5)
- identify the relevant evidence for each indicator, i.e. what they need to look for and where, on the basis of the indicators and the descriptors

- collect that evidence through examples of methods
- the chapter should sample indicators and relevant methods and give a flavour on how to do the evaluation, rather than provide ready made answers on all points listed in chapter 5.

The drafting group discussed peer reviews and possible resistances in the Southeast European context. While this is not the only method for collecting data, it was underlined that questionnaires were not always suitable to collect evidence on sensitive aspects such as attitudes and values. On the other hand, peer-reviews presuppose trust in colleagues and a habit of working together and an attention to the affective, “soft sides” of schools.

4. Chapter 7 : guidelines for the development of quality assurance for EDC at systemic level

Chapter 7 is related to chapter 2 of the tool kit in that it broadens quality assurance processes to the system level. The aim of chapter 7 is to present policy options and indicate the need to bring them together in a coherent system.

It will cover the following issues :

- the specific contexts of each country, by setting out questions to prepare a national quality assurance plan
- QA institutions
- legislation, e.g. rights of schools
- accountability, e.g. inspection, national exam, ligue tables, awards
- support.

The use and utility of chapter 7 depends on the finalisation of the regional analysis on QA in education and for EDC, and on achieving partnerships with ministries of education.

5. Tasks and deadlines

The task are summarised in the following table :

Task	Responsibility
chapter 2 : What is quality assurance and why is it important ?	Cameron Harrison
chapter 3 : What is EDC and what does it mean in schools ?	César Birzúa
chapter 4 : What is school development planning and how to do it ?	Cameron Harrison
chapter 5 : Framework to evaluate EDC	
Descriptors for indicators n. 1 and 2	Cameron Harrison
Descriptor for indicators n 3	Janez Krek
Descriptors for indicators n. 4 and 5	Vedrana Spajic
Descriptors for indicators n. 6-8	César Birzúa
chapter 6 : How to use the evaluative framework ?	Vedrana Spajic
chapter 7 : Guidelines for the development of quality assurance for EDC at systemic level	Janez Krek and Cameron Harrison

The following deadlines were agreed to :

- 3 May 2004 revised indicators
- 28 May 2004 . revised chapter 2 (see report of second meeting of drafting group, document EDC-QA (27))
 - . new tool kit texts : chapters 4, 6 and 7
 - . regional analysis
- mid July editing
- mid July-mid August translations

The next meeting of the drafting group will take place

- either in Strasbourg on 5-6 June 2004
- or in Ljubljana on 3-4 June 2004.

IV VALIDATION OF THE TOOL KIT

The drafting group underlined the importance of gathering feedback on the usability of the tool kit particularly from users in the specific Southeast European context.

It agreed that

- the full-fledged trial and validation is part and parcel of the second phase of the project devoted to piloting the tool kit
- at the present stage feedback should be asked
 - through focus groups to be organised with QA experts in Slovenia Croatia and with experts in EDC, decentralisation and a head teacher in Romania. Translation of the tool kit will be carried out via the SEE-EDC nodes.
 - from experts across Europe, such as James Cuthbert, David Kerr, Bart Maes as well as from an inspector and / or a school master.

V NEXT STEPS

The Drafting Group continued the discussion initiated at its previous meeting. Then questions on how to continue the project activities had arisen when considering the objective of chapter 7 on the systemic dimension of quality assurance and its trial in the piloting phase (see the report of the second meeting, document EDC-QA (27)).

The context of the project was considered in detail :

- first of all, the context in Southeast Europe has changed, with a resurgence of instability and changes in governments and educational policies in several countries. Regional cooperation in education is not placed within the framework of the Stability Pact anymore.

- secondly, the national reports have shown that working on quality assurance in the region seems more difficult than initially foreseen. The difficulty of disseminating concepts and practices of quality assurance was underestimated, the willingness of ministries of education to deal with the policy-practice gap and to make quality assurance a priority was overestimated. There are important obstacles in terms of institutions and working culture to introducing quality assurance processes.
- Thirdly, the support of the Council of Europe to the production of the EDC QA Tool Kit and its inclusion, in principle, in the EDC Pack prepared by the Council of Europe in preparation of the 2005 Year of Citizenship through Education was welcomed as it provides a broader European framework for the project. On the other hand, the wish was expressed for further indications on the contents and use of the EDC Pack in the framework of the EDC Year and on the inter-institutional co-operation between UNESCO and Council of Europe.

In this context, the comparative advantage of the EDC-QA project is its awareness of the context in Southeast Europe and its emerging network. In addition, the following needs were identified

- to identify the country needs and possibilities (key stakeholders, innovation centres, where does quality assurance happen)
- to raise awareness and disseminate the concepts and practices of quality assurance in education and for EDC
- to strengthen the involvement of ministries of education, seen as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the implementation of quality assurance
- therefore to stimulate discussions on QA with professionals in Southeast Europe.

It was proposed to continue the project activities, after the finalisation of the Tool Kit, in two parallel tracks :

i) regional awareness-raising, discussion with professionals

The priority activity will be the organisation of a regional seminar in the Autumn 2004 (second half of October) in order to broaden the group of people with an understanding of and to ensure a regional debate on quality assurance issues and processes.

The seminar should involve key people in quality assurance to be contacted through the drafting group, the SEE-ECN nodes, the participants of the SEE-ECN seminar on decentralisation held in Bucharest in February 2004.

The role of the EDC-QA focal points was mentioned and it was proposed that they participate in the seminar on a self-paying basis.

It was agreed to contact ERISSEE (Educational Reform Initiative in Southeast Europe) to examine whether the seminar could be placed in the framework of its 2004 work programme.

The organisation of the seminar will be discussed in detail at the next meeting.

ii) Focused piloting of EDC QA Tool Kit

The piloting of the EDC QA Tool Kit was seen as potentially feasible and successful in the following countries

- Slovenia, where the EDC-QA project and Tool Kit can be introduced in the existing system of school self-evaluation and the launching of an EDC award linked to external evaluation and the use of the EDC QA Tool Kit is being considered
- Romania, where the piloting of the Tool Kit in schools can be included in the research programme on decentralisation and change of organisational culture of schools carried out by the Institute of Educational Research. The Institute would need financial support for translating the Tool Kit (see item IV above) and for publishing the research report.
- Montenegro, which is continuing its educational reform process
- Croatia, should QA be in line with the orientations of the new Minister of Education.

It was underlined that in the piloting phase, the responsibility and initiative should lie with the countries involved, the project playing an advisory role. The continuation of the cooperation dimension among the involved countries, through shared guidelines, common training, exchanges of experiences and empirical observation, was mentioned.

Appendix 1 : Agenda**1. Meeting objectives**

- discuss and decide on the new evaluation of the EDC-QA project
- review the texts of the EDC-QA tool kit prepared so far and agree on next drafting steps
- discuss in detail the evaluative framework (indicators structure, content and style of descriptors)
- discuss the validation process of the tool kit
- continue the discussion on future developments of the EDC-QA project

2. Evaluation of the EDC-QA project, document EDC-QA(32)

- Presentation of the proposed evaluation plan by Bruno Losito
- Discussion and agreement

3. Revision of tool kit texts, document EDC-QA(30)

- In depth review of evaluative framework (tool kit chapter 5)
- Content discussion, chapter by chapter
- Finalisation of texts (drafting tasks and calendar; layout issues; editing; responsibilities)

4. Tool kit validation, document EDC-QA(31), chapter B.III.2

- discussion of validation objectives, methods and calendar

5. Next steps, document EDC-QA(31)

- Exchange of views on future developments and activities

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Appendix 3 : Structure of the EDC QA Tool Kit

- CHAPTER 1 :** What is the tool kit about and how to use it ?
- CHAPTER 2 :** What is quality assurance and why is it important ?
- CHAPTER 3 :** What is EDC and what does it mean in schools ?
- CHAPTER 4 :** What is school development planning and how to do it ?
- CHAPTER 5 :** Framework to evaluate EDC
- CHAPTER 6 :** How to use the evaluative framework ?
- CHAPTER 7 :** Guidelines for the development of quality assurance for EDC at systemic level

Appendix 4 : Revised structure of indicators

Curriculum, teaching and learning

1. Is there evidence of an adequate place for EDC in the school's curriculum and lesson plans?

- Priority
- Co-ordination of EDC activities and programs
- School community links
- Reflection of national priorities
- School based curriculum

2. Is there evidence of pupils and teachers acquiring understanding of EDC dimensions, and applying EDC principles to their everyday practice in school and classrooms?

- Learning outcomes
- Teaching and learning methods and processes (including school community links; relationships; monitoring learning progress and personal development)

3. Is the design and practice of assessment within the school consonant with EDC?

- Transparency
- Fairness
- Sensitivity
- Improvement
- Results of assessment used in school development planning

School climate and ethos

4. Does the school have policies relating to the development of a school climate and ethos based on EDC principles, together with implementation strategies?

- Personal dignity
- Individual responsibility
- Endorsement of values
- Conflict resolution
- Inter-cultural understanding
- Avoidance of violence, bullying and discrimination
- School identity

5. Is there evidence that school practice and organisational behaviour reflects EDC principles and that there is active participation of students and other stakeholders in school life, policy and decision-making?

- Interpersonal transactions and relationships
- Feeling safe
- Responses to violence, bullying and discrimination
- Involvement and ownership
- Structures and procedures
- Communication

Management and development

6. Is there evidence of effective school leadership based on EDC principles?

- Leadership style
- Decision making
- Shared responsibility
- Collaboration and team-work
- Responsiveness
- Communication

7. Does the school have a sound development plan reflecting EDC principles?

- Participation
- Informative and useful self-evaluation processes
- Identification priorities for action, and sound strategies for implementation
- Good working links to professional and organisational development
- Appropriate monitoring and accountability
- EDC as priority within development plan

8. Are available resources well deployed in pursuit of the school's development priorities?

- Financial
- Human
- Time
- Material
- Community