



June 2005

EDC-QA (6) rev 8

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

*Project presentation
and progress report*

Table of contents

Strategic goal and objectives.....	3
Background and rationale.....	3
Project plan.....	4
Activities so far	4
The EDC-QA Tool.....	5
Management.....	5
Work plan.....	6
Progress of EDC-QA project implementation	7

Strategic goal and objectives

The EDC-QA project aims at producing and piloting a specific instrument for quality assurance (QA) for education for democratic citizenship (EDC) in eight countries of Southeast Europe¹. Its ultimate objective is to develop quality assurance systems in education and for EDC in Southeast Europe.

The project's strategy is to combine a systemic approach, regional cooperation, national and local ownership. Its assumption is to ensure the effectiveness of EDC practices by strengthening the processes of governance in education and by improving quality assurance development systems through capacity building. Ultimately quality assurance particularly for EDC is to be incorporated into national educational policies. Thus the project is in line with current quality assurance debates, approaches and practices at national and international level.

The EDC-QA project was initiated within the Stability Pact (Enhanced Graz Process)². It has been endorsed by UNESCO and is financially supported by Norway, UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

Background and rationale

The EDC-QA project provides follow-up to:

- the Stocktaking research on policies for education for democratic citizenship and management of diversity, carried out in 2001 by the Council of Europe as a quickstart project within the Task Force Education and Youth of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe
- the OECD Thematic reviews of Education policies in the countries of Southeast Europe carried out in the same Stability Pact Framework
- UNESCO's Education For All Framework of Action, and particularly the 2000 Dakar Goal n.6³
- the recommendations made by the Ministers during UNESCO's High-Level Conference on Strengthening Cooperation in Southeast Europe held in April 2002
- the Memorandum of understanding between the Ministers of Education and Higher education of South Eastern Europe and the related Action Plan for the South Eastern European Education Reform Initiative adopted in June 2003
- UNESCO's Ministerial Round Table on Quality Education organised in October 2003;
- The Council of Europe 21st session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education held in Greece in November 2003

The EDC-QA project's overall rationale is to respond to the policies – practice gap in EDC in Southeast Europe documented by the above mentioned Stocktaking research by building

¹ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Romania, Serbia and Montenegro (as well as the province of Kosovo), Slovenia

² cf Task Force "education and youth", working group on education for democratic citizenship and management of diversity, see www.see-educoop.net

³ Dakar Goal 6 : improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

strong connections between policy and practice through sound monitoring, evaluation and effective quality assurance processes. Elsewhere in Western Europe, and in other parts of the developed world, benchmarking, evaluation and monitoring, and building integrated and powerful systems of Quality Assurance (QA) are high on the current educational agendas. This is true of both general education policies and EDC specifically. This wider context also invites the possibility of direct integration of patterns of educational policymaking and development in the countries of Southeast Europe into the wider European and international scene.

Project plan

The project is planned to take place at three levels: regional, national and school. The project design is organized into three phases of research and development, and piloting activities. It assumes that in a fourth phase, the new Tool would be introduced at system level, i.e. in all schools and other relevant institutions within participating countries.

Phase 1 : laying the foundations – setting up of researchers’ group; stocktaking study on quality assurance in SEE; international review of quality assurance models; preparation of a EDC specific QA instrument in the form of a Tool; setting up of national EDC QA teams; setting up of regional consortium; regional seminar (exchange of experience and presentation of results);

Phase 2 : training and piloting – preparation, including the production of specific materials and organisation of regional train the trainers course on the QA instrument; organisation of national training courses; piloting the use of the EDC-QA Tool;

Phase 3 : finalisation of the EDC QA instruments - review feedback from piloting activities; preparation of regional and national QA guidelines; preparation of project report; organisation of project final international seminar.

Running through the project are mechanisms for ensuring the ownership of the project by national authorities and practitioners : focal points nominated in the Ministries of Education at the request of UNESCO, a regional consortium, including all EDC-QA focal points, and national EDC-QA teams, involving EDC practitioners, QA actors (e.g. inspectors) and decision-makers at school, local and national level.

Activities so far

The project so far

- discussed extensively and developed an understanding, by the project partners and researchers, of quality assurance systems and their constitutive elements,
- produced national reports on quality assurance in education and for EDC in the involved countries based on a common research instrument, published by UNESCO,
- collected QA models internationally,
- received nominations by Ministries of Education for “EDC-QA focal points” within the Ministries,
- established cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI), the Education Reform Initiative – SEE (ERISEE),

- published, in Spring 2005, the Tool for quality assurance of EDC in schools (EDC-QA Tool),
- held a regional seminar, organised jointly by CEPS and UNESCO with the support of the Council of Europe, to discuss the EDC-QA Tool, in Kranj, Slovenia, on 27-29/30 January 2005,
- created the EDC-QA website, www.see-educoop.net/portal/edc-qa.htm

The detailed progress report is set out in pages 7-11 below. All project products, meeting reports, and contacts are available on the EDC-QA website, www.see-educoop.net/portal/edc-qa.htm.

The EDC-QA Tool

The Tool for Quality Assurance of Education for Democratic Citizenship in Schools focuses on education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and applies the principles and processes of quality assurance to EDC. It promotes school development planning and school self-evaluation. It provides an evaluative framework for schools which includes six quality indicators newly developed for this Tool based on EDC principles. It also considers the requirements for quality assurance of EDC at the level of the education system. The Tool is available on the EDC-QA website, www.see-educoop.net/portal/edc-qa.htm. The content of the Tool is the following :

Chapter 1 : WHAT IS THE TOOL ABOUT AND HOW CAN IT BE USED ?

Chapter 2 : WHAT IS EDC AND WHAT DOES IT MEANS IN SCHOOLS ?

Chapter 3 : WHAT IS QUALITY ASSURANCE AND WHY IS IMPORTANT ?

Chapter 4 : WHAT IS SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND HOW TO DO IT ?

Chapter 5 : FRAMEWORK TO EVALUATE EDC

Chapter 6 : SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING OF EDC

Chapter 7 : TOWARDS A QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF EDC

Management

The coordinating institution of the EDC-QA project is the Centre for Educational Policy Studies (CEPS), University of Ljubljana. Support is provided by a management group, involving experts from the coordinating institution, Croatia, "FYROM", Romania and Scotland /UK and UNESCO, as well as by a project manager and a project assistant.

Work plan

2003	
<i>Phase 1</i>	
February	first planning meeting of project management group
March - September	stocktaking of existing QA studies and practices : - researchers meeting on stocktaking study on QA in SEE - national stocktaking and regional analysis - collection of international QA models UNESCO information /support letter to education ministries and nomination of EDC-QA focal points
November-September	preparation of EDC QA Tool : - enlarged meeting to plan the Tool - meetings of Tool drafting group
2004	
January - September	- meetings of Tool drafting group - drafting and editing of EDC QA Tool
October – December	- feedback on draft EDC-QA Tool - preparation of final draft EDC-QA Tool
2005	
January - February	- regional seminar - evaluation report phase 1
February - March	- publication of English version of EDC-QA Tool by UNESCO - translation and printing of EDC-QA Tool
<i>Phase2</i>	
April - June	- meeting of project management group : planning of phase 2 - regional consortium - preparation of EDC-QA national plans : national EDC-QA forums, - meetings of EDC-QA national teams, - advisory missions
July - September	Training the trainers : - preparatory meeting of train the trainers seminar - preparation of training manual - training seminar
October - December	national trainings : - meetings of national EDC teams - national training seminars
2006	
January - December	piloting of Tool in policies and practices : - meeting of project management group : planning piloting activities - regional consortium - meetings and activities of national teams - national reports
December	- regional consortium : review of training and piloting activities - evaluation report phase 2
2007	
<i>Phase 3</i>	
January - July	- meeting of project management group to plan finalisation of EDC QA regional and national guidelines - preparation of first draft of regional EDC QA guidelines - preparation of national EDC QA guidelines - meeting of researchers' group - meetings of national EDC teams and regional consortium
October	project final report
October - December	finalisation : - international seminar to present the project results - final evaluation report - concluding meeting of project management team

Progress of EDC-QA project implementation

Project launch

1. CEPS received confirmation of funding for the EDC-QA project from Norway (€ 200,000) in October 2002. The attributed resources cover about 4/5 of the foreseen budget of phase 1 of the overall project.
2. The coordination and management of the project was set up with CEPS as co-coordinating institution appointing a technical assistant specifically for the project, and the appointment of the project co-coordinator.
3. The first planning meeting of the project core group took place on 20-22 February 2003 in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Participants discussed and agreed on

- the project implementation process : activity programme and calendar of phase 1; involvement of SEE countries; communication and decision-making,
- the project content : concept of quality in education and for EDC; concept and processes of quality assurance in education,
- activities of phase 1 : stocktaking study on QA in education and for EDC in SEE; international review of QA models; on-going evaluation.

UNESCO participated in this first meeting and announced its endorsement of the project. Not only was this development highly welcomed. It also strengthened the project's strategy to embed it within the ministries of education of Southeast European countries and to foster ministries ownership of the project and of quality assurance development for EDC.

Stocktaking

4. Researchers for carrying out the stocktaking study on QA in Southeast Europe were identified in each of the countries involved in this project in line with the following criteria: (i) his/her previous experience particularly in EDC initiatives and (ii) his/her close relation and cooperation with the Ministry of Education of the country. The group of researchers met on 28-29 March 2003 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. They had in-depth discussions on elements of QA in education and on a draft stocktaking research instrument. Agreement was reached on the research approach and calendar.
5. The draft research instrument was revised in line with the just mentioned discussions. It was finalized following an additional email consultation and sent out to the researchers on 16 April 2003.
6. Researchers were invited to prepare research plans for their respective country stocktaking study. The deadline for the national reports was fixed for 30 June 2003.
7. By a letter dated 11 April 2003, the Chairman of the Stability Pact Task Force Education and Youth informed the project applicants of the second call for proposals

at the beginning of 2002, that the Task Force had finalized its donor coordination and fundraising activities. A letter of support of the EDC-QA project was prepared by the Task Force.

8. UNESCO addressed a letter (signed by the Assistant Director-General for Education, Mr John Daniel) to the respective Ministers of Education of the countries involved in the project informing them in general about its launch, specifically about the stocktaking study, and asking them to nominate a focal point for the project within the Ministry. Nominations were received from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia.
9. An enlarged meeting to discuss the stocktaking study on QA in Southeast Europe and the international review on QA models and to plan the preparation of the instrument for quality assurance for EDC took place in Preddvor near Ljubljana, Slovenia on 8-9 September 2003. It involved the SEE researchers, the author of the regional analysis, and representatives from countries with relevant QA models (Sweden and England and Wales, UK), from SICI (Standing International Conference of Inspectorates) and UNESCO.

At the meeting,

- An evaluation of the research process (preparation of national reports on QA in SEE countries) took place;
 - The initial findings of the stocktaking reports (regional analysis of national reports on quality assurance in the SEE countries) were presented and discussed, allowing for a clearer understanding of the current situation, potentials and obstacles in relation to quality assurance in SEE;
 - The initial findings of the international review of QA models and case-studies from QA systems in Sweden; Scotland, UK; England and Wales, UK; Slovenia were presented and discussed, allowing for a clearer understanding of challenges and issues for preparing EDC specific quality assurance systems;
 - An outline of the QA instrument for EDC, in the form of a Tool, was agreed upon, including their objectives, contents and structure;
 - A review of the nomination process of EDC-QA focal points in each country (cf. point 9 above) was carried out and country-specific strategies were developed where necessary;
 - The follow-up to the national reports and the regional analysis was agreed upon, including discussions in each country between the researchers and responsible persons in the education ministries; translations and publication in paper and electronic forms;
 - The next steps for the preparation of the QA Tool for EDC were agreed upon.
10. The final edited national reports on Quality assurance in education and in EDC in Southeast Europe were published in one volume by UNESCO early January 2005.

Drafting the EDC-QA Tool

11. In line with the decisions taken at the enlarged meeting, a small drafting group was set up including César Birzúa (Romania), Cameron Harrison (UK), Janez Krek (Slovenia), Vedrana Spajic-Vrkas (Croatia). It is responsible for elaborating the QA

Tool for EDC and for liaising with the country researchers with requests for additional national information and comments on draft versions of the Tool.

The first meeting of the drafting group took place in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 22-23 November 2003 with the aim to plan the preparation of the Tool. It discussed in detail the content and structure of the Tool and agreed on the preparation methodologies (eg. length, user friendliness, document resources), the division of tasks and deadlines.

The second and third meetings took place in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 6 – 8 February 2004 and 17-18 April 2004 respectively. The fourth meeting took place on 3-4 June 2004 in Bled, Slovenia. The drafting group reviewed the content structure and the first drafts of the Tool. It discussed in particular detail a draft list of six quality indicators for EDC, as well as their descriptors.

12. A preliminary feedback process of the draft Tool took place in Romania, Croatia, and Slovenia. Comments were also received by international experts. The final *draft Tool on quality assurance of EDC in schools* was finalised end of November 2004.
13. The draft EDC-QA Tool was presented at the expert seminar on human rights education organised in Graz, Austria, on 18-20 November 2004 by the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy and the Stability Pact Task Force Education and Youth.
14. A regional seminar, organised jointly by CEPS and UNESCO, with the support of the Council of Europe, took place in Kranj, Slovenia on 27-29/30 January 2005.

The seminar gathered about forty participants including representatives from education ministries, schools (head teachers, teachers), inspectorates, international governmental and non-governmental organisations, as well as EDC coordinators from Southeast Europe. Its objectives were to present and discuss the draft EDC-QA Tool as well as other products resulting from the EDC-QA project; discuss concepts and practices of quality assurance in education and EDC; draw conclusions for the future development of EDC-QA in Southeast Europe; lay the foundations for regional and national strategies of EDC-QA. The seminar's main features and conclusions were the following :

- Participants were actively involved in discussions through a balanced mixture of working methods : plenary presentations and discussions, case study presentations, buzz groups and working groups.
- The seminar was an intensive learning experience for all those involved, and resulted in the information and reflection of major regional stakeholders about EDC-QA and the EDC-QA Tool as a means to improve EDC in SEE.
- Participants agreed that the EDC-QA approach and the Tool have a high relevance and potential benefit for improving EDC and education in general in Southeast Europe.
- In order to become meaningful at national level, the Tool needs to be not only translated and adapted, but also accompanied by support materials and training modules. These should be piloted in schools as soon as possible and integrated gradually into the educational policies of the region.

- Ministries should become partners and support the next stage but additional funding external to the region is needed. Fundraising for the next stage of the project should continue, based on the quality of the already achieved results and their potential added value; the consistency with common objectives of the Council of Europe and UNESCO; the opportunity of the Council of Europe EDC Year and of the start of the UN HRE plan; the political commitment initiated in the framework of the Stability Pact.

The seminar concluded the first phase of the EDC-QA project.

15. The EDC-QA Tool was published by UNESCO at the beginning of June 2005.

Cooperation with the Council of Europe

16. The Council of Europe participated in the first meeting of the drafting group to discuss cooperation with the EDC-QA project as part of the follow up of its activities on EDC policies and of the 21st session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education held in Athens on 10-12 November 2003.⁴ The Council of Europe agreed to provide financial support to the drafting of the Tool within the context of the preparation of the 2005 Year of Citizenship through Education.
17. The representative of the EDC-QA project's coordinating institution, CEPS, participated in the Council of Europe meetings of EDC coordinators (Bled, Slovenia, 1-4 April 2004, and Dubrovnik, Croatia, 14-16 April 2005) and of the EDC policy group (7-8 June 2004) to present and discuss the drafts of the EDC-QA Tool.
18. The draft EDC-QA Tool was included in the Council of Europe EDC Pack prepared for the 2005 European Year of Citizenship through Education and presented at the launch conference of the Year which took place in Sofia on 13-14 December 2004.
19. The Tool, in its final published version, was distributed to the participants of the Council of Europe conference on teacher training in EDC held in Strasbourg on 15-17 June 2005.
20. CEPS was contracted by the Council of Europe to prepare an institutional overview on quality assurance in education and for EDC, presenting the activities related to this field implemented by the European Union, OECD, UNESCO and several international non-governmental organisations. This overview served as a background document to an inter-institutional discussion forum organised by the Council of Europe on 26-27 January 2004.

⁴ Cf. Stocktaking research on policies for EDC and management of diversity in SEE, 2001; All-European study on EDC policies, 2003; international seminar on EDC policies, Strasbourg, September 2003; 21st session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education on "Intercultural education: managing diversity, strengthening democracy", Athens, Greece, 10-12 November 2003

Other activities

21. The management group decided to change the evaluation of the project and appointed a new evaluator to carry out an end-of phase 1 evaluation.
22. A website of the EDC-QA project was created within the Southeast European Education Cooperation Network, www.see-educoop.net/portal/edc-qa.htm. It contains information about the project, its implementation and products, particularly the EDC-QA Tool, as well as a library of useful resources (web links, documents, models of quality assurance in education and for EDC).