

# **RE-INTEGRATION TRANSNATIONAL EVALUATION OF SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL RE- INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

## **Final Report**

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# 1 Executive Summary

Gerald Heidegger

## 1.1 Introduction

The project „Re-Integration – Transnational evaluation of social and professional re-integration programmes of young people“ was funded by the European Commission through the programme „Leonardo da Vinci II“, Reference Material strand, and lasted from the year 2001 till 2004. It dealt with a severe difficulty to be realised in all European countries. Youth unemployment is unbearably high and the transition from school to work is often hampered by strong obstacles that are due to restricted opportunities in the labour market and not well installed systems of vocational education and training. These problems are exacerbated for young people who are at disadvantage with respect to various features. Among them are troubled families with the concomitant restrictions in developing social and personal competences, in general the strong stratification of society which leaves the lower strata with insufficient opportunities for education and gainful employment, language difficulties for migrants etc. That often results in difficulties in coping with the personal, social and also educational challenges during childhood and adolescence, resulting in problems with maintaining stable social relations and also low achievement in school. This again sets a vicious circle in motion so that the opportunities for these disadvantaged young people to move on in (personal and occupational) life are more and more diminished.

Therefore in all European countries, although to a varying extent, measures have been put into place to re-integrate these young people into the mainstream: schemes for re-integration. However, the success of these measures is usually low which is of course mainly due to the unfavourable general conditions. Still the challenge remains to also improve the quality of these programmes, through evaluation which is aiming not only at selecting examples of good practice, but even more at supporting the respective institutions in further developing their schemes.

For this a transnational perspective can be very useful because it shows, for the individual cultural settings, possibilities of how this endeavour can be pursued in a completely different way. Of course it is not feasible to copy the solutions found in another country because those are closely interwoven with the general societal

conditions. Even so new ideas can be generated from getting acquainted with those foreign frameworks by way of what is now generally called mutual learning.

To support transnational reflection, evaluation and development for re-integration programmes was the overarching aim of this project. It could build on the outcomes of a previous Socrates project (Studies and Analyses) called “Re-Enter- Improving transition from school to vocational education and training for low achieving school leavers” (1999 – 2001). But while the latter project was explicitly restricted to secondary analysis of existing analytical descriptions, including a meta-analysis, the new Leonardo project carried through primary analyses of the whole “landscape” of re-integration programmes, aiming at innovative methods for reflection, evaluation, development and improvement.

A great advantage was that the partnership remained the same for both projects. Partners were the Institute of Education, University of London, Great Britain, the Laboratory of Sociology and Educational Studies, University of Patras, Greece, The Department of Education, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, the Faculty of Science and Technology, University of Lisbon, Portugal, the Higher Institute for Labour Studies, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, coordinated by the Institute of Technical Vocational Pedagogy, University of Flensburg, Germany.

In the following section, the objectives of the Leonardo project are explained in some detail. In the third section, the outcomes of the project are presented, following the sequence of the objectives although of course there is sometimes some overlapping of the research steps.

The main outcome is an interactive tool on CD-Rom called “QSED – Quality through Self-Evaluation and Development”. As a transnational tool it represents the European dimension, but through true interactivity it is adaptable, to the highest possible degree, to the respective cultural conditions by the users themselves. This feature was made possible through an innovative way of programming the tool and represents a result of the project which is much more far-reaching than declared in the proposal. It has been distributed so far in English and German. Greek and Portuguese versions are in the making.

A further outcome is “CRIS – Transcultural recommendations for the improvement of the quality of re-integration programmes”, available in English and to be translated into German soon. The Scientific Report explains the research process

which led to these outcomes, including an extensive critical reflection on the principles of evaluation and concomitant recommendations.

## 1.2 Objectives of the project

The objectives are outlined in the justification of the proposal, including the envisaged results. In the workpackages, they are put into a sequence which governed the progress of the project although of course the actual research and development process had to combine the various steps. They can be summed up as follows.

1. To develop a common understanding for a multi-level exploration of the quality of learning processes and learning arrangements in re-integration programmes, at the same time referring to the socio-economic preconditions and the socio-cultural peculiarities in the participating countries.

This applies to the elaboration of the relation of the three levels (macro-level, meso-level, micro-level), including the interaction between them, that is socio-economic conditions, institutional arrangements and learning and teaching/training/educating processes. In addition, the respective research methodology had to be consented on.

2. To identify, by comprehensive qualitative field research, the general preconditions for successful situated learning processes of the participants where learning is understood in a broad sense (development of occupational, social and personal competences, leading to autobiographical action competence).

For this the concept of situated learning, as specified for the target group in the previous Socrates project “Re-Enter”, is of central importance. Other dimensions like particularly collaborative networks and inclusive organisational structures have proved, during the course of the project, to be equally relevant.

3. To construct lists of criteria for the evaluation of adequate conditions for situated learning and training concepts and processes and their further development, with special regard to the three levels (macro, meso, micro).

These lists of criteria had to be generated in a self-reflective way, based again on extensive field research, employing the method of “Grounded Theory” (Glaser, Strauss). In this way, they are specific to the socio-economic and cultural

peculiarities of the participating countries although exchange between the partners introduced new theoretical aspects by way of mutual learning.

The macro-level is especially important since not only the conditions for models and processes in the single schemes are of relevance. Rather the “landscape” of the programmes implemented in a country has to be analysed as a whole.

4. To assess and improve the validity of the lists of criteria developed according to objective 3 by applying them to different schemes, including in this way new criteria; to design on this basis sets of criteria which are systematically constructed so as not to leave out important features.

The main aim here was to assess the validity of the criteria by finding out if the respective list is comprehensive and to construct a theoretically founded set of dimensions to which they are to be related. In this way an analytical tool was developed which can be used for systematic evaluation

5. To research into the long term effects of participation in re-integration schemes which are based on situated learning and the other features detected as especially important, by investigating the autobiographical competences of former participants; to draw conclusions from that for improving the sets of criteria.

Obviously a causal dependency of the development of biographical competences with respect to the features of a re-integration course which someone has participated in before cannot be detected in a valid way. Nevertheless this touches an issue of extraordinary importance and should therefore be included in the reflection and evaluation of any re-integration scheme.

6. To design a transnational (European) tool for evaluation, allowing for critical reflection on it's principles; to elaborate it particularly for self-evaluation of the schemes in the various countries, thus representing the European dimension; to construct it in such a way as to make it adaptable, as easily as possible, to the respective specific cultural circumstances, thus taking into account the wide variety of cultural, regional and institutional conditions, in this way clinging to the European principle of subsidiarity in the field of (vocational) education and training.

This had to be done through combining the respective national sets of criteria, detecting commonalities and eliminating overlapping criteria.

In order to make the tool as easily adaptable as possible a truly interactive IT-tool on CD-ROM was developed. This feature – connecting directly the European dimension

with stressing cultural specificities – has been emphasised much more than originally envisaged in the proposal because an innovative way of programming true interactivity into the IT-tool was invented during the progress of the project. In this manner a completely new approach towards this connection could be pursued while also taking into account attitudes critical to evaluation in principle.

7. To develop and disseminate recommendations for the improvement of re-integration programmes, based on a theoretical framework of innovative approaches towards re-integration measures in the participating countries and at the same time representing the European dimension.

This was based, on the one hand, on a systematic theoretical reflection of the historical and cultural contextualisation of integrative measures in Europe. On the other hand it was made use of the criteria of the (self-)evaluation tool for the structural, socio-economic and political level, but also for the meso- and micro-level, which had been developed in the course of its construction, following the principles of “Grounded Theory” (Glaser/Strauss).

### **1.3 Results of the Project**

The results are ordered according to the sequence of the objectives which are in the following outlined in an abbreviated version.

#### ***1.3.1 Common understanding for a multi-level exploration of the quality of learning processes and learning arrangements.***

This turned out to be rather difficult on the practical and on the theoretical level alike.

On the practical level the vast differences of the scope and the approaches of re-integration schemes in the various countries were the main obstacles. This becomes obvious through a cultural and historical contextualisation of systems of welfare provision and concomitant VET structures (chapter 3) which were classified in a typology of four main approaches in Europe. Re-integration e.g. into a school-based VET-system, typical for the Nordic countries, is obviously very different from measures advised by a career counsellor in a flexible, strongly market dominated

system. That applies particularly to the high degree of inclusiveness which is aimed at in the former case, in contrast to the factual societal acceptance, although not approval, of a considerable degree of possibilities of social exclusion in the latter case. Other distinctions exist to the Central European “dual system of VET” and the non-formal provision of VET in much of Southern Europe.

But of course all over Europe schemes can be found which aim at supporting the most disadvantaged young people in “moving on” in their life, within VET, gainful employment and in their social relations and personal development.

On the theoretical level, the differences concern the justification of evaluation as such. In a strongly actor-based approach evaluation, even self-evaluation, is seen as an instrument of external control which introduces criteria that can not catch the peculiarities of a very specific course. In a strongly market-based society the question of “value for money” has of course a much higher esteem, and therefore external evaluation according to objectified, measurable indicators is viewed as self-evident. Even if the researchers from the different countries did not, of course, represent the respective dominating approaches it was still indispensable to take into account the opposition between these two approaches which are more or less in variance.

Nevertheless, a remarkably great area of commonalities could also be detected and consented on. First this concerns the importance of the three levels

- macro-level: structural conditions due to socio-economic factors, taking into account cultural diversities;
- meso-level: institutional features of the respective re-integration schemes;
- micro-level: the way practitioners and learners communicate and work together.

Second, six dimensions of criteria which are always of relevance could be commonly defined, even if a lot of the criteria themselves depend heavily on the particular scheme and the cultural setting. For that it was also decisive if the criteria were defined according to a nearly exclusively actor centred approach or following a more generalising method which let more overarching theoretical structures evolve like the one mainly employed in the project, according to the “Grounded Theory” of Glaser/Strauss. The six dimensions mentioned will be explained later, in connection with the tool for evaluation, mainly self-evaluation, called “Quality through Self-Evaluation and Development” (QSED), as described in chapter 6. In order to open up



this approach to the highest possible degree of influence by the actors a “Transnational Reflection and Development Methodology” (TRDM) was developed at the same time which emphasises action research in the strict sense. It avoids the concepts of even self-evaluation and quality management and stresses even more than the QSED the relevance of reflection by the actors. In this way, it may be perceived as a methodology which can be employed for critical reflection on the first mentioned concepts, thus making the users of the QSED aware of the implicit assumptions underlying these concepts.

In this way the two basic approaches mentioned were not superficially reconciled but brought explicitly to the fore. Nevertheless, a very close mutual interaction of them is represented in the results.

The concomitant research methods, also sometimes in variance but at the same time directly related to each other, are outlined in the following sections.

### ***1.3.2 General preconditions for successful situated learning processes***

The partnership was also able to consent on a qualitative field research methodology, as envisaged in the proposal, for investigating this issue. If learning is understood in the broad sense of fostering occupational, social and personal competences, leading to autobiographical action competence, then obviously “hard” indicators which can be measured in an objectifiable way are not adequate. This is very important because funding agencies make the support of the schemes usually dependent on those hard outcomes, like transition rates to the labour market or to “normal” VET-courses, or at least achievements regarding (mostly occupational) competences which can be easily measured. But the development of social and particularly personal competences does not belong to these.

Consequently, the field research employed a host of different qualitative methods, like learning logs or accumulation of opinions of trainers etc., but mostly participative observation, including “shadowing” the learners at their work, and interviews. Because the participants have often difficulties with self-reflexive oral expression, the interviews were carried through in an informal way. Sharing the participants’ work/training experience by co-working with them has proved to be an especially effective approach.

Apart from that it was clear from the beginning that no theoretical presuppositions should be forced upon the investigation of the research field. Therefore a combination of action research and more “observing” research was employed. Action research can be understood as a special version of the “interpretive approach” in the Humanities. It deliberately tries to reduce the distance between the researcher and the “object” because the latter, being a human being, is not objectifiable. “Observing” research, on the other hand, whilst also acknowledging the individual as a human actor, still tries to find out about regularities in human behaviour. This is, in its distinct form, called the “conventional approach”. It is easy to see that the two approaches quoted in No. III. 1 are to be detected here. Accordingly, some partners were inclined more to the one or to the other. But because the conventional methods were applied in an attenuated version common results could be achieved. Although at the outset the focus was more on learning processes of the participants of the schemes the multi-level approach was also dominant from the beginning. Nevertheless, very soon, during the progress of the project, it became clear that the interaction between the three levels was of even higher importance than envisaged. This resulted in applying the three-level approach always and for all inquiries, and laying particular stress on the *interaction* of the levels from the beginning.

That was in accordance with the research plan in the proposal which set out to investigate processes and only to a lesser degree “products” of situated learning, and that means here above all processes of interaction between the three levels. The progress of the project led in this way to a wider concept of adequate conditions for effective re-integration measures which was implemented in the methods for reflecting, evaluating and further developing the whole endeavour of re-integration of young people at risk. The criteria for appropriate prerequisites for situated learning in “Learning Communities Centred on Practice” (LCCP’s), as defined in the former Socrates project “Re-Enter”, have been expanded accordingly. They now include more explicitly the dimensions

- “Collaborative networks of actors” (internal and external);
- “Inclusiveness” (going beyond “re-integrative measures”);
- “Recognition of skills” (thus avoiding to neglect the great influence of assessment).

In addition, the criteria for situated learning in the now more expanded understanding were designed so as to take more explicitly into account the furthering of the combination of occupational, social and personal competences which are supposed to support autobiographical action competence. For instance leisure activities as a main means for developing social and personal competences were now stronger emphasised. “Autobiographical action competence” means the capability of people on the one hand to reconstruct their lives as a sensible succession of stages even if difficult breaks have been experienced. On the other hand, this means that the next thresholds to be surmounted can be viewed as a sequence of challenges that can be met instead of only unsolved problems which linger on in the future.

Representing the important influence of external (political, economic, societal) conditions on the macro-level the dimension “Funding/Administrative Structures” was explicitly constructed, the mentioned influence being very determining also on the meso-level (institutional) and the micro-level (interaction of practitioners and learners). In addition, funding for the participants’ individual surviving was stressed as an important criterion, including assistance for gaining the necessities of life.

Finally, providing opportunities for situated learning in LCCP’s was viewed even more than before as a development process for the whole learning community. This led to implementing “Self-evaluation and Reflection” as the foremost dimension of criteria for situated learning.

### ***1.3.3 Construction of lists for criteria for the evaluation and further development of adequate conditions for situated learning and training/educating concepts and processes.***

The indicators which had been gained through the extensive field research had to be assembled to construct lists which could fit in well with the respective cases. On the other hand, they had to be based on theoretical foundations which, however, should not impose assumptions made beforehand. The obvious choice was to employ the method of “Grounded Theory” which was developed by Glaser/Strauss for ethnographic research and has already for some time expanded its field of application from ethnomethodology to areas like work research. Indeed similarities can be found between researching into the behaviour of an ethnic tribe and the rites prevailing in a working group or, for that matter, in a Learning Community Centred

on Practice (LCCP). The theory is then built up from the bottom and generated through continuous loops of reflection on empirical evidence gained in the participative, collaborative, observing field research that has employed all the methods mentioned above.

Thus, however, it is not only inevitable but also desirable to arrive at lists of indicators which are specific for the case concerned. This is valid even if the indicators are “enriched” and transformed through theoretical deliberations. These transformed indicators were henceforth called “criteria”. In addition, the partners laid different stress on the various indicators leading to a great variety of lists. Most important for that was the fact that it had turned out that from the outset the institutional conditions (meso-level) and the economic, societal and cultural framework (macro-level) needed the utmost attention, particularly the latter being very different for the participating countries.

To expand, from the start, the lists of indicators for evaluating the conditions of processes of situated learning so as to include all three levels at the same time led to the construction of a set of dimensions of criteria where each dimension is subdivided, although in a strongly interactive way, into the three levels.

As a further consequence, it appeared not to be adequate to judge the respective scheme mainly from outside by researchers applying the elaborated criteria. Instead it was seen most appropriate for this task to present the criteria as an instrument which allows all people concerned - practitioners, planners, researchers but also policy-makers and even in part the participants themselves, too – to assess the outer prerequisites and the quality of the processes and concepts for learning and teaching/training/educating themselves. This should be done according to the basic structure of the six theoretically grounded dimensions of criteria with the three levels each, but should be as adaptable as possible to the specificities of the case concerned. That led to the construction of the interactive tool QSED (Quality through Self-Evaluation and Development) and its critical, although closely with it interwoven counterpart, the TRDM (Transnational Reflection and Development Methodology).

### ***1.3.4 Assessment and improvement of the validity of the sets of criteria to be systematically constructed***

The main method for pursuing this task was the construction of the six dimensions of criteria which have been mentioned already in connection with objective 2 and will be explained under the heading of objective 6. The lists of criteria developed for the individual schemes had to be matched with the dimensions so as to find out about missing criteria and to change and expand the scope of the dimensions. This included transnational comparisons, in this way considerably widening the content of the dimensions and revising, through going repeatedly through loops of reflection, their internal arrangements. In this way a *systematic structure of dimensions of criteria* for concepts of and appropriate preconditions for processes of situated learning in “Learning Communities Centred on Practice” (LSSP’s), *focussing on the re-integration issue*, could be arrived at. This represents one of the main outcomes of the project and can be regarded as truly innovative. The structure of the six dimensions allows for the complexity of the transnational re-integration “landscape” as much as possible. This was achieved by bringing the connections between the dimensions to the fore (“horizontal” complexity). In addition the interaction of the macro-, meso- and micro-level for each dimension represents the “vertical” complexity.

The extensive field research has shown that it is more sensible to combine the tasks of evaluating the schemes and developing criteria for their improvement.

After all, besides the strong points it is particularly the weak points of a scheme which should be detected by evaluation and which at the same time should be the focus of improvement.

In addition, the professionals of the schemes themselves are the ones who have to carry through the improvements, in the first place, even if their influence on the overall framework is very limited. Those are determined, on the macro-level, above all by the specific features of welfare provision and the systems of vocational education and training.

Therefore the partnership decided to construct a method which supports particularly the practitioners in discovering the features of their scheme which may need improvements. That is, the method starts off from the institutional or meso-level. But this self-evaluation by the practitioners themselves – always with the conscious aim

of (self-)development – has of course to take into account the outer conditions into which the scheme is embedded (macro-level) as well as the situations, interests and wishes of the individual participants (micro-level). The three-level approach therefore makes sure that the method can also be used by planners and decision-makers. It could and should also lead to reflections about general improvements on the macro-level by policy-makers who, however, have so far often preferred external evaluation to self-evaluation. Obviously, however, this kind of self-evaluation can be combined also with external evaluation. Indeed, this is the method which is mainly employed in evaluation of social work, at least in countries where market forces are still restricted in this field.

There external evaluation which is not connected with self-evaluation of the institution, usually representing the centre of a quality management system, is not viewed as being in concordance with the state of the art. Similarly, methods of quality management which have been adapted for non-profit organisations in the field of social or personal services, like the one of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), always consider self-evaluation to be the basis of all forms of external evaluation which is supposed to take place every fourth year or so. Similar methods have been developed for (self-)evaluation of (also vocational) schools, like the Swiss model “*Qualität durch Evaluation und Entwicklung*” – Q2E. No similar method has been, however, devised so far for the field of the re-integration activities investigated by the project. Such a specific method, to be described in more detail under the heading of objective 6, is actually the main outcome of the project, thus representing a truly innovative result.

### ***1.3.5 Long term effects of participating in re-integration schemes on autobiographical action competence***

Although it proved very difficult to track participants after they had left the schemes a considerable number of cases in different countries could be analysed. Nevertheless, the sample was too small for arriving at conclusions which could have been generalised on the individual level. But anyway, it was clear from the outset that no valid causal connexions could have been achieved, due to the host of intervening variables. This does not mean, however, that this issue could not be included in the methods developed for the self-evaluation of the schemes.

The main outcome of this part of the research was exactly that in most cases no tracking mechanism was found to be installed by the planning bodies on the political/societal level. An exception is given by the career counselling service in the UK, but even there it does not function well in the long run. But to be able to track the former participants is the main precondition for supporting them after they have left the schemes. And the cases analysed showed that all young people who had not managed to return to the mainstream needed this support very urgently. Thus an important criterion for self-evaluation, here for the decision-makers, was established.

This support, called “after-care”, needs however not to be left to the administrative level. Some schemes had constructed a support network on their own, thus representing examples of good practice. Even if these networks comprehend usually only rather loose connections they provide incentives for other re-integration measures to reflect upon the possibilities found there in place and to try to develop similar initiatives. Among the “nodes” of such a network are not only labour agencies and career services etc. as well as institutions responsible for social care. Equally important are more informal partners like sports clubs or youth groups maintained by e.g. churches. In this way after-care is a very relevant criterion on the meso-level where the practitioners can, via self-evaluation and reflection, try to change things for themselves.

But also on the micro-level after-care is an important issue because it turned out that very often the participants did not feel enough support for getting into contact with the institutions providing social care, and even more so with the informal groups to which they might wish to belong.

Thus this part of the research gave important clues as how to include long term effects into a self-evaluation method. In addition, it provides an example of how the results of the field research were incorporated into the self-evaluation tool.

***1.3.6 Design of a transnational (European) tool for self-evaluation, which is culturally adaptable and allows for critical reflection on the principles of evaluation.***

The main outcome of the project is a self-evaluation tool, which is to be used, in the first place, by practitioners in re-integration schemes: QSED – Quality through Self-Evaluation and Development. It aims at supporting the practitioners in improving their scheme, relying on common discussion and reflection on features which should be changed. Obviously this process of continuous quality improvement can also be used in connection with external evaluation in a way which was outlined above. In addition, because the tool employs the three-level approach described, it also relates to the structural level and contains statements which point out power relations in society that on their part strongly influence the setting of the whole “landscape” of re-integration schemes in a country, but also the conditions under which each single scheme has to operate. Therefore the tool can also be used by planners and policy-makers for reflecting about improving the framework conditions of the re-integration schemes in their region or their country. Because the tool has emerged from transnational research and has deliberately retained the different cultural roots it contributes strongly to transcultural mutual learning, thus representing a decisive European dimension. This is true for all three levels, the structural or macro-level, the institutional or meso-level and the individual or micro-level.

On all these levels practitioners, planners and policy-makers can get an overview of the different approaches in the various cultural settings or countries, respectively, and in this way they may get incentives to reflect on rather fundamental changes for their own schemes. This must not, of course mean just copying the solutions of other countries because the respective features are usually closely linked to the whole structure of the educational and particularly the VET system, representing different traditions especially of the pathways of school-to work-transition. Rather, mutual learning means to grasp the underlying ideas of the measures in another country and employing them for transforming the structures and practices in one’s own country.

During this process of reflection it will turn out that some statements and questions do not fit in with the conditions of one’s own country and have to be adapted or completely altered.



In order to allow for that the tool is presented as an interactive IT-tool on a CD to be used on a conventional PC. In contrast to the usual programmes which are also called interactive this tool makes it possible to change it nearly completely, by altering the questions themselves, not only selecting different answers. The only feature to be retained is the basic structure, that is the three levels (macro-, meso- and micro-level) and the six dimensions of the criteria employed. In this way, starting from a common European evaluation framework, representing the European dimension, a special tool for each country and indeed for each single institution can be created by the users themselves. That appears to be a very innovative feature of this result of the project.

The dimensions of the criteria were developed from the field research in a spiral of repeated interpretation of the issues detected, thus employing the methodology of “Grounded Theory” elaborated by Glaser and Strauss, as described in the chapter 5 and 6 about methodology.

The six dimensions are:

- **Self-Evaluation and Reflection:**  
Here the basic aims, possibilities and limitations of evaluation (self-evaluation, perhaps combined with external evaluation) should be reflected upon.
- **Collaborative networks of actors:**  
Here the importance of networking (internal, within the institutions, and external, among different institutions) should be discussed.
- **Inclusiveness:**  
At issue are here the opportunities and limitations of retaining the young people at risk of dropping out as close as possible to the mainstream (including assistance for gaining the necessities of life).
- **Funding/Administrative structures:**  
This relates to the general funding and administrative rules for re-integration schemes as well as for each single measure; in addition, the question of how the individual participants can be supported through adequately organised funding should be dealt with.
- **Situated learning:**  
This has been elaborated as the main means for providing the most adequate learning opportunities for the disadvantaged clients; in particular the task is to

design re-integration programmes in such a way as to promote vocationally oriented competences in close connection with furthering social and personal development.

➤ Recognition of skills/Assessment:

This regards the possibilities and limitations of officially recognizing the often small steps of progression of the participants as well as the balance between the evaluation of progress in personal and social competences and the demands of the funding bodies for assessing objectifiable results.

How to use the tool is explained in the CD at the beginning. Also the main principles which led to it's construction are shortly outlined.

The content is reproduced in chapter 7 of this report. In order to experience the true value of the high interactivity and adaptability the readers are, however, strongly advised to try out the tool on the CD directly for themselves. This outcome of the project transcends considerably the objectives which the partnership had announced in the proposal.

Nevertheless, as is described in the chapter about the critical reflection of the methodology (chapter 5.2) there exist also strong reservations against every form of even self-evaluation the methods of which are prescribed from outside.

Therefore the partnership developed, together with the QSED tool, a methodology which puts the practitioners' views even more into the centre and leaves the way how to deal with the situation of their scheme completely to them as the main actors. It is closely connected to the QSED in applying the same three-level approach where now, however, the individual and the structural level come into view nearly exclusively from the perspective of the practitioners while reflecting upon and further developing their respective re-integration scheme. This is called the "Transnational Reflection and Development Methodology" (TRDM), described in chapter 9. It is based on the above mentioned "interpretive approach" of evaluation and employs the action research methodology in the strictest sense with which this was originally developed. The TRDM can and should be understood as a methodology for critically reflecting upon a tool like the QSED which, although also strongly actor oriented, still retains the claim of having elaborated objective quality criteria based on scientific research.

But because the development of the QSED and the TRDM proceeded in parallel, at the same time and based on the same outcomes of the field research, the basic dimensions for reflection used in the TRDM are identical with the six dimensions for self-evaluation and development employed in the QSED as outlined above.

The TRDM stresses even more than the QSED the critical and emancipatory aspects of reflection and development; for instance with respect to the dimension inclusiveness practitioners often feel in a particular intense way that the mere existence of re-integration schemes which are separated from the mainstream education may lead to the stigmatisation of the participants as low achievers who are to be blamed individually for their failure.

Similarly, for further developing their scheme the practitioners often consider advice from outside as being inadequate for the extremely specific features of their situation. Therefore the role of researchers, even if they are committed to action research in the strict sense mentioned, is regarded as problematic and should be called in question, and an intensive continuous exchange of the views of the practitioners and the researchers should be established. In this sense the TRDM represents a methodology which stresses particularly the emancipation of the practitioners from influences of external power centres.

The second main feature of the TRDM is that it emphasises a phenomenological and hermeneutic approach also even more so than the QSED does. This means that any criteria, not to speak of indicators of quality, are supposed to be forced upon the real situation which is regarded as much too complex to be grasped through so called simplistic criteria. Rather the practitioners and the action researchers, in close co-operation, should try to gain a view of the situation which is as little distorted by suppositions made beforehand as possible. These undistorted perceptions should then be interpreted according to the tradition of hermeneutics, thus being equally as free as possible from assumptions usually accepted as obvious.

The third main factor, making use of methods developed in the tradition of deconstructivism, is linked to the other two but even more radical. Employing the ideas developed in connection with the critical reflection of the methodology the whole discourse about normality of a biographical pathway (here of young people) is called in question. This is embodied in the vocabulary (e.g. “low achievers”) and in the “measures” (like re-integration) which aim at drawing back those young people

to the mainstream. These discourses are formalized in sociological, psychological and last not least pedagogical theories which means that the whole issue of re-integration poses serious questions about power relations and democracy.

Of course, these deliberations have also influenced the construction of the QSED. Therefore the two approaches should be perceived as mutually complementary and not as standing in opposition to each other.

For practical purposes, it is recommended that particularly the practitioners, but also planners and decision makers may use the QSED for evaluation and development. But especially when external experts can be employed for assisting in this procedure they may introduce the critical aspects represented through the TRDM, even more so if they are researchers who follow the principles of action research. The tool QSED is available in English and German while Greek and Portuguese versions are in the making.

### ***1.3.7 Transcultural recommendations for the improvement of the quality of re-integration programmes***

In view of the great diversity of re-integration programmes within the individual countries, but particularly between them, recommendations must be of a more general characteristic which is valid for the more basic features. On the other hand, the transcultural diversity represents also a great advantage because it opens up, by way of mutual learning, the horizon of the single cultural settings for approaches which differ completely from the ones one is acquainted with.

The recommendations are based on the typology of welfare regimes and their concomitant structures of VET and school-to-work transition. This is worked out in chapter 3 (Cultural and Historical Contextualisation of Integrative Approaches). In addition, they are strongly influenced by the results of the empirical field research for the cultural, societal and socio-economic (macro-)level which has been incorporated into the self-evaluation tool QSED. From the latter recommendations also for the meso- and micro-level are reconstructed.

In order to combine the European dimension with the requirement of valuing the cultural differences, a three-dimensional transcultural framework of recommendations has been developed in chapter 12.

The first dimension or direction of analysis is designed according to the typology of welfare regimes and structures of VET and school to work transitions. Four types have been defined:

- the Nordic universalistic welfare regime with a concomitant school based VET structure;
- the employment based welfare regime of Central Europe where VET-systems of alternance between companies and VET schools are prevailing;
- the liberal welfare state, mainly to be found in the UK, where VET provision and school-to-work transition are strongly based on market principles;
- the less institutionalised welfare regimes of the countries of Southern Europe where non-formal ways of school-to-work transition are dominant, at the same time supported by still strong family ties.

The second direction of analysis is identical with the six dimensions constructed for the QSED tool, apart from the fact that “Funding/Administrative Structures” and “Recognition of Skills/Assessment” are here integrated into the other four dimensions. Therefore the main dimensions of the recommendations are:

- Collaboration (of actors and institutions),
- Reflexivity (self-evaluation possibly combined with reflective external evaluation),
- Inclusiveness (as in variance with separating the disadvantaged young people from the mainstream),
- Situated Pedagogy (as defined before).

Thus the basic focus of the recommendations is abbreviated as CRIS – Collaboration, Reflexibility, Inclusiveness and Situated Pedagogy.

These four dimensions depict the most important concerns emphasised by the recommendations for the various cultural settings, but always retaining a transcultural perspective for these fundamental centres of interest. The third direction of analysis is given through the application of the three-level approach: recommendations

- on the macro-level, to be espoused by politics and planning,
- on the meso-level, to be enacted by institutes and programmes,
- on the micro-level, to be realised in educational practice.

Through the second and third direction of analysis 12 “building blocks” of European recommendations are defined. They are applied to the four cultural settings, always employing the transcultural perspective, resulting in altogether 48 areas of recommendations.

The details are to be found in the respective chapter 12 of the report.

The Transcultural Recommendations are available as a separate booklet in English and German.

## 2 Introduction

**Beatrix Niemeyer**

At both European and national levels much emphasis is put on the reduction of youth unemployment and the improvement of school to VET transition. A wide range of interventions have been designed and implemented in the majority of European countries, aiming to help young people to follow on with learning or broader forms of skills development, in order that they can 'reconnect' with the social mainstream of further training and work. These programmes aim to promote the trainability and the employability of the young and to support their social integration, to re-motivate them for training and education, to qualify them for the labour market and to enable them to participate as citizens. In general these programmes are understood as bridges between education and labour market entry. In the following publication these programmes will shortly be called Re-integration programmes. Many of them have developed innovative approaches to vocational education, including new methodologies and didactical means. Quality development, evaluation and self-evaluation in this field are challenging and sensitive topics for practitioners as well as for researchers. By a mutual reflection process, the Leonardo project *RE-INTEGRATION – TRANSNATIONAL EVALUATION OF SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL RE-INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE* has developed an analytical tool for the evaluation of Re-Integration programmes at the European level, taking into account that evaluation criteria cannot neglect national and cultural conditions and may not be imposed against the wishes and expertise of practitioners.

This final report will present the outcomes of the Leonardo-project Re-Integration, focusing on the QSED – Quality through self-evaluation and development tool, which has been developed in close co-operation with practitioners from the field as a tool for reflective self-evaluation of practitioners, planners and decision makers of re-integration programmes for disadvantaged young persons in the participating countries. The following chapters will present and explicate the QSED as well as an extended version of it, the TRDM – transnational reflection and development methodology. They will be explained as a model of evaluation which is strongly stressing the idea of “self-experts”. It is based on the principle of self-reflection and as such can be applied in transnational contexts and on multiple levels of practice,

planning and policy making in the sensitive and important field of support of school to VET transition. This report will further relate the QSED to the ongoing discourse of evaluation in the participating countries as well as to the social and cultural context of re-integration programmes and will provide a framework for transnational application. Furthermore it will discuss specific challenges arising from this subject-oriented approach of self-evaluation and will present implications resulting from this specific type of reflective evaluation on the micro- meso and Individual-level.

This first chapter will inform about the background of the project. It will explain how it has emerged from a continuous process of mutual European research and will contextualise the focus of research in the field of European educational and social policies as well as with reference to educational theories. An overview on the progress of the research community will be given and specific challenges in developing a transnational evaluation tool for re-integration programmes will be identified. Practical and theoretical results will be introduced.

## **2.1 Partnership**

The project could profit from a stable and very active partnership of researchers, which has been working together over a period of 5 years now, since all partners had been active in the previous Socrates project, *RE-ENTER - IMPROVING TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR LOW ACHIEVING SCHOOL LEAVERS* (Evans / Niemeyer 2004). Partners were the Department of Education, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, the Institute of Education, University of London, Great Britain, the Faculty of Science and Technology, University of Lisbon, Portugal, the Laboratory of Educational Studies, University of Patras, Greece, the Higher Institute for Labour Studies, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, co-ordinated by the Institute of Technical Vocational Education, University of Flensburg, Germany. All partners being engaged in a variety of research projects on the EU-level made it possible to profit from a long continuity of the project partnership, which has helped to achieve an extraordinary analytical depth. In addition a continuous link between research and practice was at the core of the project, becoming part of a constant process of formative evaluation within the project partnership. This was achieved in two ways:



1. It has become a habit to have a visit to practical activities in the research field and of the “cases” studied regularly on the agenda of the workshop meetings, which provided a lively experience and insight in complex educational contexts.
2. The partnership was enriched by the collaboration of partner organisations from the practical field of re-integration programmes.

## **2.2 Background of the project – From Re-Enter....**

The Socrates project Re-Enter – Improving transition from school to vocational education and training for low achieving school leavers (11/1998 – 11/2000) was dealing with troubled school to VET transition for people with learning difficulties. Access to vocational education and training is of crucial importance for social integration and a preliminary condition to participate in work and citizenship. All over Europe however a growing number of young people fails to enter the vocational pathway at the first try, for various reasons. Without accomplished training and qualification measures these young bear a high risk of getting disengaged and being excluded. Their integration or re-integration therefore is a major challenge for educational as well as for social politics. Apparently the various specific programmes which have been designed to enhance re-integration of disengaged young are situated in a political field influenced by economy, educational and labour legislation. The target group is a rather heterogeneous one and may reach from teenage mothers to asylum seekers. Consequently programmes are challenged to support biographical development and to enable social and not only economic participation of the young. In spite of the outstanding importance of adequate educational approaches re-integration programmes so far have been exclusively evaluated against their effectiveness. To concentrate on job-placement rates neglects the importance of a holistic, subject oriented competence oriented support.

The Socrates project had focused on concepts of situated learning as adequate pedagogical approach, helping school weary young people to find their way back to education and training. The central research question was: How does situated learning help to improve school to VET transition for young people not adequately prepared for vocational education? Situated learning has been understood as a

specific combination of learning while participating in a meaningful practical activity. During the course of the project a specific framework for situated learning had been developed, which was based on an “expanded” definition of the central features of learning to be

- situated in a meaningful context
- building on practical work experience
- allowing legitimate participation in a community centred on practice
- strengthening competences not deficits in an holistic approach,
- hence being socially, culturally and practically well situated.

These features have been elaborated in a mutual process of learning, different experiences from the participating countries having contributed from different angles with each contribution having as its focus a special feature of the common concept of situated learning and elaborating it against the background of the specific national experiences. During the work process it had become evident that existing programmes and their pedagogical approaches cannot be understood without knowing the educational system and the cultural background against which they have emerged. E. g. what is considered to be “normal” in transition is differing from country to country, depending amongst others on the status of VET in society. E. g. in some countries the pull of labour market is hard and it is easy to find low skilled jobs at an early age, so that vocational education and training seems to be unnecessary from the perspective of the young. In others the educational system establishes hurdles even for the mainstream. The results of re-enter can be summed up:

- target groups are very heterogeneous, differing from country to country
- programmes are socially embedded
- social integration has become more important than the enhancement of employability
- socially culturally and practically well situated learning promotes this type of integration by offering learning opportunities in meaningful contexts of learning communities centred on practice

- outcome oriented evaluation which is concentrating exclusively on job-placement-rates is not considered to be an appropriate means to value the quality of re-integration programmes
- cultural and regional specificities are forming exclusion and integration strategies to a large extent, they need to be sufficiently considered by evaluation tools

### 2.3 ... to Re-integration

The Socrates project Re-Enter by means of secondary analysis has identified the target groups, and the educational approaches of programmes which have been designed to prevent their drop-out, showing the absolute necessity to develop adequate methods for primary research and qualitative evaluation of re-integration programmes on multiple levels. Statistics refer to the target group quantitatively, although by rather formal definitions, showing the pressing need for improved reintegration schemes. But how can the improvement of re-enter programmes through situated learning be assessed? How can a learning process, including development of soft skills and social skills be assessed?

While the Socrates project was restricted to secondary analysis in Re-Integration it was now possible to explore directly the effects on learners and to assess deeper the factors promoting and impeding the implementation of learning communities centred on practice, which during the Re-Enter project have been identified. Based on the commonly developed concept of situated learning Re-Integration has aimed

- to assess the effects of situated learning on the individual (micro) level
- to explore into the long term effects of situated learning in Re-Enter schemes
- to determine factors promoting and impeding situated learning by a multi-level approach.

The declared aim was a **systematic evaluation of Re-Integration programmes applying situated learning on a transnational basis**, including the development of an appropriate tool for a primary evaluation as a preliminary step. The underlying hypothesis states that the quality of Re-Enter programmes is expressed by the learning success of its participants. Presuppositions are that concepts of situated

learning are applied in the learning arrangements of a programme and that learning includes the development of biographical competences – thus valuing the development of social and of vocational competences. Learning is understood in a broad sense including personal development of self and social competences in informal contexts far more than the accumulation of cognitive knowledge.

To improve or, in some cases for the first time, devise methods of evaluating re-integration initiatives for disadvantaged young persons, and supporting operators in the field (policy-makers, personnel in labour agencies, practitioners, etc.) aiming at improving the initiatives has been a complex task, which included to devise a set of qualitative indicators appropriate for the target group where each young person has to be dealt with according to his/her specific biography as well as to work out for each cultural setting, specific advice as to how to improve the initiatives. By way of "mutual learning" between the different countries with their fairly differing training systems the specificity of the Leonardo programme was of great help in achieving the objectives.

## **2.4 The context of the project– What does Re-Integration mean in the participating countries?**

What are the main features, characterising and shaping the field of integration programmes in the countries which participated at this project?

In Germany structural difficulties shaping the problem zones are guidance and counselling systems, strongly oriented towards the labour market and not sufficiently taking into consideration young persons' individual abilities and needs. There are hardly any links between school and labour market, the school does not teach enough about work life and teachers do not feel adequately prepared for the target group. In addition in-built hurdles work against inclusiveness of the mainstream. Young people who have dropped out from the mainstream pathway of vocational education and training are offered a chance to reconnect either by special classes in vocational schools or – more prominent – by a variety of programmes combining work experience and general and theoretical vocational education, aiming to enable the young to take up and complete an apprenticeship.

In Britain personal attributes and competences often count as much as credits or qualification. Furthermore, there is a strong pull of the youth labour market; well-paid low skilled jobs are available, which draw people from training schemes. The consumer culture also contributes to drop-out from training to take up better paid casual jobs, while status and quality of many of the schemes remains low and they are criticised for abuses which use low cost workers and forget about the training aspects.

What choices do young people with no qualifications have in Portugal? In the big cities they survive within a marginal economy system, they can work in family or small enterprises or in low qualified jobs without any permanent or regular work contract. In the countryside the agriculture is an alternative. The motivation to chose VET is not very strong, because there are many alternatives to make a living without undergoing a special vocational training. While in the big cities young males have the chance to earn a living with unskilled or even illegal occupations, the problem is to motivate them for training and education and to reach them by training schemes.

Greece is characterised by a high participation rate in secondary education, but there is a large group of students that have completed the general secondary level education, without any technical or vocational training, and they have not passed the University entrance exams. These young people have no qualifications to enter the labour market, therefore there is a great need to re-enter the educational and training process and acquire qualifications.

Since programmes do have an inner link with the respective national VET systems their structures are of influence on their contents and learning concepts to a large extent. Where work based training is a central element of the VET system (e.g. Germany) programmes offer support for those young who cannot keep pace without additional help, be it for personal or social reasons. They provide a substitute for the training places lacking in the labour market, offer alternative routes or help to continue with VET by showing a comparably caring approach. Where VET is strongly school related (e.g. Finland) another intention of programmes is to promote the work based route as a valuable alternative, with high potential for learning and social integration. But as the case of Finland shows, it is of importance to consider how Re-Enter programmes are linked to the existing VET structures, if and how they can be integrated in the national system of vocational education, if and how their

specific educational approaches can become part of the mainstream education. In countries where it is popular to enter the labour market on the direct way (e.g. Greece) the idea of training and learning as a possibility to escape the trap of poverty and low skilled, low paid jobs is of higher importance. Still, there are very few programmes in Greece, where many small enterprises offer job opportunities without training, thereby integrating young people during a stage of career orientation rather than excluding them. In Portugal education and training is also strongly linked to vocational schools, which shapes the approach of teachers and trainers and educational planners towards the problem of (re-) entering VET. In Great Britain however many options in the big variety of training programmes on offer continue to suffer from a lack of co-ordination and low standards of quality, despite the efforts to mainstream them through the 'foundation apprenticeship' model of youth training.

## **2.5 Challenges to Research – methodological reflections**

Comparative research aiming to assess the quality of re-integration programmes in Europe has to adequately consider the varying integration strategies and how they are rooted in specific social politics as well as the heterogeneity of programmes (concerning differing modes and sources of funding, responsibility, relation to the VET system, duration) and the heterogeneity of target groups themselves and the heterogeneity of the ruling discourses on “disadvantages” and “risks” in the varying national contexts. In this field primary research on European level is still scarce. Especially qualitative explorations regarding the connection of socio-economic circumstances and adequate methods of guidance, training and general support of school to VET transition are lacking. Little is known about the long term effects of VET preparation programmes, the influence of socio-economic and cultural context of modes of school to VET transition, the learning effects on the individual level and about obstacles preventing the implementation of innovative education and training methods. The specific challenges which were faced by the research partnership can be illustrated by the following questions which have been discussed during the first workshop and continuously popped up again on the agenda of reflective meetings.

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluation<br/>How can soft outcomes be measured? How can long term results be attributed to programme's intervention and distinguished from other factors of influence throughout the course of biography?<br/>How to deal with the fact that evaluation can be perceived as control?</li> <li>▪ Practice<br/>How is the relation of researchers and practitioners? How is assured that the outcomes of the research are of relevance for practitioners?</li> <li>▪ EU policies and practices<br/>How to handle the challenge to develop a transnational tool, knowing well about the cultural and structural differences of our nations' VET systems? What is European about our work? How can differences and similarities be adequately taken into consideration? What is the European added value? How is the research field influenced by financial support from the EU (e. g. ESF-funded programmes)? Importance and influence of European money? How are national and international activities connected? In developing an evaluation tool how can unification of cultural differences be avoided?</li> <li>▪ Theorie of situated learning<br/>Is the focus of research on vocational or on social integration? How is the tension between leisure and labour market activities expressed by different integration practices? How do professional paradigms work against collaboration in re-integration programmes?</li> <li>▪ Subject orientation<br/>How to find out about how young people live/experience different pedagogical "treatments" (e.g. from different teachers, in different sections of the educational system), about critical incidents influencing/ stimulating learning or development processes, about the soft outcomes and learning gains of a programme from the subject's perspective?</li> </ul> |
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Table 2.1: Outcomes of the Socrates – Project "Re-Enter"

The intention became to develop an instrument which was useful for practitioners as well as for planners and which was self-applicable. During the course of the project and due to the close collaboration with actors in the field it became clear that we were to meet the need of practitioners for an instrument, which could help to improve their practice by reflecting on the quality of their professional work, which consequently implied to avoid to impose quality criteria but to help to have them elaborated resp. modified in the process of application of the instrument. During the reflective meetings and expert discussions with actors in the field it was made obvious that practitioners needed and wanted support and reflection, and that researchers could help to strengthen their arguments, and to develop strategies and supportive mechanisms helping to have their work better valued.

In summa the project community consented on the following criteria which were to be met by an instrument for the evaluation of re-integration programmes: an adequate tool or procedure had

- to value individual processes of development
- to value subject oriented strategies and forms of support which enhance competences instead of deficits
- to go beyond employability as exclusive quality criterion
- to enhance processes of (self-) reflection
- to develop an instrument which can be applied by all groups concerned on all levels (participants, pedagogues, trainers, decision makers, planners, etc.)
- to develop an instrument for qualitative not for quantitative evaluation
- to value processes instead of outcomes
- to enhance self-evaluation instead of imposing control norms.

The solution was a tool for self-evaluation which can be applied by practitioners, politicians and participants likewise to enforce reflection on programmes and processes of how they are organised and put into practice and ruled on.

Conceptually the project had a double focus and was actually dealing with two levels of evaluation: 1. the evaluation of programmes and 2. the assessment of learning progress. Empirical research in this field faces the problem, that the individual progress or success with learning or development can only be grasped in relation to the individual starting conditions, which are once again quite heterogeneous. Consequently the success of a programme is not only depending on the way how the general intention to enhance trainability and employability is transformed into target-group specific aims and how these aims are realised (organisational, institutional conditions) but also on the individual starting conditions of the participants. In-depth case studies which systematically and analytically grasp the phenomenon on the level of the acting individual were the methodological answer to this challenge. Apart from this in practice more questions arise: how can weak criteria be made assessable/hard? How can persons with low language skills be heard? How can we make them “talk”? How can progress in personal development be detected? What is considered to be progress?

The methodical approach which has been taken was one of a multi-level analysis. Focussing on the evaluation of processes of situated learning on the individual level, the institutional and socio-economic framework conditions influencing and shaping this learning process were systematically assessed, the findings on the individual level were linked back to the other two levels by expert discussions and by means of



formative evaluation as has been explained. The methodological choice therefore was the framework of grounded theory (Glaser/ Strauss) which builds theory generating on continuous loops of reflection of empirical evidence gained in participative, collaborative, observing field research. A more detailed description will be given in chapter 4, however milestones of the research process shall be briefly introduced here.

## 2.6 Milestones – how did we proceed?

In a process of constant mutual reflection we developed and continuously elaborated, tested and refined an analytical framework, which was again tested and improved in expert discussions and criticised by practitioners.

### 1. Starting point: The criteria for well situated learning as they have been elaborated by the Socrates Re-Enter Project:

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
|                    | Towards a definition of a set of criteria for evaluating re-enter initiatives  |
| Individual factors | <p>Re-enter initiatives have to</p> <p>identify how young people perceive their own situation including values and beliefs</p> <p>Identify the <i>learning barriers, incentives and needs</i></p> <p>Take into account of material and social conditions which influence learning, participation and achievement</p> <p>interact with the learners needs</p> <p>Be responsive to learners changing needs, aspirations and expectations</p> <p>work with learners on “personal projects” / development plans.</p> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Institutional factors</b><br/>(education/<br/>training<br/>system)</p> | <p>Re-enter initiatives have to</p> <p>Develop an educational and training programme which the young people would perceive as more <i>relevant</i> to their needs than the conventional school curriculum.</p> <p>help the learners to further develop or reinforce their <i>basic skills</i>.</p> <p>help them to <i>learn how to learn</i>.</p> <p>To develop and reinforce the <i>personal qualities and attitudes</i> that will improve their chances of going on in VET and obtaining employment</p> <p>enable learners to develop the <i>personal and social skills</i> necessary to participate successfully in everyday situations in adult life.</p> <p>Provide the opportunity <i>to sample different occupations and vocational areas</i>.</p> <p>Provide <i>training places and apprenticeship</i>.</p> <p>Provide the students with <i>guidance and counselling</i> in order to provide personal support, advocacy and to help them find appropriate training courses or employment.</p> <p>DO ALL OF THE ABOVE THROUGH SITUATED FORMS OF LEARNING</p> |
| <p><b>Socio-economic factors</b></p>   | <p>Re-enter initiatives have to</p> <p>Ease the transition from school to work life and socialise young people into the world of work.</p> <p>Break down gender-stereotyping.</p> <p>Respond to the needs and aspirations of the local community.</p> <p>Prepare the students to adapt to likely changes in local structures of employment and labour markets.</p> <p>Respond to particular training requirements of employers.</p> <p>Ask for commitments of employers and employers' federations with regard to</p> <p>definition of educational needs,</p> <p>curriculum design,</p> <p>complementary training,</p> <p>assessment</p>  |

Table 2.2: Criteria for situated learning developed in the project "Re-Enter"

**2. Questions left open by the Re-enter project:** Although it has been possible to develop this comprehensive list of criteria for situated learning in re-integrative programmes for persons at the risk of getting disengaged in theory as in practice the Socrates project left us with a another list of new questions for the further research:

- 
- How are learning contexts arranged in a way that they provide meaning to learners?
  - What are the assumptions made in the programmes we research into about cognitive and social processes?
  - What is the balance between instruction given by teachers and trainers and the construction of competences by the learner?
  - Do social and activity learning theories help to overcome the distinction between formal and informal learning?
  - How do the power and authority relations in the community of practice influence learning?
  - To what extent is co-operation and mutual learning of teachers, youth workers and vocational trainers really possible and how does it affect the learning of the trainee?
  - What are the selection mechanisms (explicit and implicit) and how do they influence learning success?
  - Is there an outreach service fitting in with the lifestyle of young people?
  - How does the programme deal with strategies of avoidance?
  - Are there structural co-operative links to other institutions concerned with re-enter, e. g. in the local labour market?
  - HOW DOES ALL THIS AFFECT THE LEARNING PROCESS ?

The Leonardo re-integration project was not designed to solve all these questions, but had to concentrate on those regarding the individual learning success (perceived as a holistic process of development of biographical competences) and how it could be enhanced by the context conditions. With the experience of the importance of cultural differences in the first period research and field access did not only concentrate on interaction but included meso- and Structural-level activities as well. Aiming at the development of methods to assess the positive impact of situated learning approaches on the target groups and to proof the quality of programmes applying situated learning and thereby to enhance this approach to strengthen individual shaping abilities and to strengthen empowerment for participation a first framework of criteria was elaborated in a common process of evaluation of data and experiences from the participating countries.

| Structural-level  | Institutional-level   | Individual-level  |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inclusiveness</li> <li>▪ Actors and Networks</li> <li>▪ Role of Certifications/Qualifications</li> <li>▪ Administrative Structures</li> <li>▪ Labour Market Funding</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Target Group</li> <li>▪ Objectives</li> <li>▪ Actors and Networks</li> <li>▪ Procedures</li> <li>▪ Division of Responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Professional Paradigms</li> <li>▪ Architecture</li> <li>▪ Training received</li> <li>▪ Funding Criteria and Mechanisms</li> <li>▪ Evaluation Systems</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Actual Characteristics of Learners and Programme Practitioners</li> <li>▪ Learning Experiences</li> <li>▪ “Distance Travelled”</li> <li>▪ Pedagogical Processes, including Collaboration and Integration</li> <li>▪ Progress tracking</li> <li>▪ Critical Incidents</li> </ul> |

Table 2.3: Features for a common three-level evaluation approach

### 3. Towards a common analytical framework for situated learning

During the following work period we were searching for situations giving evidence about the impact and effects of situated learning, which can be described in a way (precise and condensed) that they might serve as an analytical tool for evaluation and self-evaluation of actors in the field on themacro-, meso- and Individual-level. At that point of time the sociological term “indicator “ seemed to narrow the focus of our analyses. In another mutual process of reflection a **list of commonly identified problems** had been collected instead..

### 4. List of commonly identified problems

*Principles of good practice - Commonly found problems*

#### 1) Problems rather, but not exclusively referring to the Structural-level:

- What does integration mean in each country?
- Inclusiveness: make trajectories more inclusive / provide alternative trajectories / make mainstream more inclusive / avoid stigmatising projects / find and support heterogeneous pathways
- age: at which age is a young person expected to make an occupational choice?
- cultural traditions of inclusive / integrative practices: in comparison between professions: e.g. in Finland hairdressers are more integrative than car mechanics
- Macro: competition between systems, institutions or programmes

- 
- policy level: accept alternatives, encourage alternative work sites
  - funding: the majority of the programmes chosen is co-funded by the ESF!
  - How can social stereotyping be avoided?
- 2) Problems rather, but not exclusively referring to the Institutional-level:
- How do participants come to a project?
  - Valuing and rewarding competences required for effective teaching this target group
  - develop networks of providers of jobs sympathetic with programmes
  - networks for assessing support structures and resources
  - co-operation with other systems of support, e.g. vocational school AND families
  - level on which programmes are acting on the labour market
  - which corridor of freedom, how much space do teachers have or take themselves to interpret curricula, how flexible are they, how much space do they take for creativity and interpretation?
  - specialist training defined by clusters of pedagogy rather than by deficiencies of target groups
  - overcoming loops
  - conflicting, even contradictory ways on which incentives operate (e.g. UK)
- 3) Problems rather, but not exclusively referring to the Individual-level:
- How do participants come to a project?
  - give young persons a voice
  - different national ways of treating or reacting to strategies of avoidance: e.g. exclusion from programme / reduction of payment / self-control-instruments
  - language problems in two dimensions: foreign language and other social world
  - approach towards students – demands put on them by teachers resp. trainers
  - “people are really shy”
  - importance of presentation sessions for learning success
  - feed back/ self-evaluation, e.g. by filming stilt activities
  - to give meaning also includes to give insight to the hidden curricula, to the work being done, e.g. explain what horse riding activities are good for

- Perspective on drop outs / what happens with drop-outs? significance of drop-out rate is very relative, drop out is not necessarily bad
- What is considered to be success? / broadening definition of what counts as success
- how is progress / moving on to next step initiated, if students feel too comfortable in the programme (re-interpretation: continuity is already a success compared to fragmented life before or compared to dropping out)
- recognise different cultural and ethnic backgrounds in practical ways: prepare different language material!

The next step was to integrate these complex and context depending quality criteria for situated learning into an instrument for evaluation that met the above mentioned challenges. During the process of the re-interpretation of the perception of the evaluation concept during the following work period the central importance of reflection and self-reflection for a sensitive evaluation became clear. Reflection is understood as a specific subject oriented not normative approach of evaluation, and was the chosen way to answer the question: who should use and command on programme's evaluation and the strong pull of practitioners as experts in the field to create something of relevance for their actual work. The QSED- Quality through self-evaluation and development tool (cf. chapter 6) as one of the primary results of the project is an analytical, not a normative tool. It provides a framework that can be used to examine (and improve) re-integration measures in all national contexts. By analysing and linking the different levels, indicators for 'good practice' shall be detected and can be further developed and/or adapted to the specific contexts. Another advantage of this tool is its multifunctionality. It can be used by practitioners as well as by researchers and policy makers or planners. It presents a way of understanding programmes as a part of macro structures and in connection to the experiences and activities of different practitioners. Thus it is a way of constructing a holistic, interconnected understanding instead of a table consisting of disconnected pieces. The model is a contribution to evaluation practices. The aspects of re-integration *processes* and *activity systems* should be re-defined during the evaluation process. Thus the QSED presents an analytical tool to assess re-integration measures. Firstly it distinguishes three different levels (cf. macro, meso, Individual-level):

1. Context: Does the context allow good practice? Does it support it?

2. Activities (programme): How are the activities tuned into the needs of the youngsters, given the context?
3. Actions and experiences: What conditions do the first and second level have to deal with? And: what is the result of the activities?

The QSED is constructed as a complex set of indicators to be applied and further developed by those who use it. It is transformable to multiple levels and contexts and can be used even for transnational comparisons. In addition to the QSED the TRDM – transnational reflection and development methodology was developed as a result of and a tool for further action research in the field of re-integration.

## 2.7 Results

The Leonardo project Re-Integration has led to innovative results in practice and theory, which will be presented in the following chapters. In accordance with the aims indicated in the application it has led to

- QSED-Quality through self-evaluation and development – a multilevel and transnational interactive instrument to enhance a sustainable process of quality assessment of re-integration programmes by practitioners, planners and decision makers which is build on and includes a comprehensive set of indicators for learning success of participants of re-enter programmes and is regarding the socio-economic context of programmes and learners.
- TRDM-Transnational Reflection and Development Methodology as an abstract constructivist model for this type of self-evaluation which can be further applied and refined in the evaluating practice of practitioners.
- information on the effects of re-enter programmes on career biographies over a mid term period .
- recommendations for the improvement of the quality of re-integration programmes based on Collaboration, Reflection, Inclusiveness and Situated Learning - CRIS as a guiding framework for transnational evaluative comparison of re-integration policies and practices.
- Thus the project has contributed to the further development of theories of situated learning in communities centred on practice.

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### **3 Cultural and historical contextualisation of integration approaches**

**Dimitra Kondily and Beatrix Niemeyer**

#### **3.1 Our globalised world and the place of youngsters**

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century we face and live rapid changes which affect the way citizens, values and rights have been conceived till now. The European welfare states have a more consumer oriented relation which is influencing fundamental rights as education, employment and social protection. The citizens' situation within the above mentioned rights determines in a decisive way its own perception of society and determines the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of the individual in the given sociopolitical environment he/she lives in.

The economic, political and ideological context of European welfare states were altered by the globalization of economy and the relative decline of the nation state (R. Mishra 1990) and by changes in the labour market (growth of the service sector) and in the family structures (women's entry into the labour market, demographic tendencies ) along with technological development (G. Esping-Andersen 1990).

Between the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the middle of the '70s industrial societies through Europe and North America developed a range of social programmes and services which further became known as welfare states. By the 60's, across the advanced capitalist world, the state had taken responsibility for a wide range of activities that had previously been provided either by the market or by unpaid labour within the family. These elements of the welfare state tended to include unemployment payments, family benefits, healthcare, pensions etc.

The welfare tradition of each country has an impact on the historical and cultural context concerning Re-integration measures to combat unemployment, and therefore to respond to the particular needs of our target group with regard to the inclusion process. A key word of the youth situation regarding the troubled process of transition from school to vocational education and training is precariousness. Feeling precarious can stem from different experiences:

- a) in relation to the placement into the labour market
- b) from failure of family ties
- c) from leave or exclusion from the educational system /compulsory education

### 3.2 Globalisation and the impact on the different traditions of the welfare state

Employment policies and Re-integration schemes are interpreted within the overall social protection system and the tradition of welfare provisions. For the purpose of our analysis we will use the typology of the so –called three welfare regimes in the book on “the three worlds of welfare capitalism” by G.ESPING-ANDERSEN (1990). Welfare state is a complex of legal and organizational features that are systematically interwoven. It is a label for a certain class of democratic industrial capitalist societies, which are characterized by the state playing a principal part in the welfare state mix alongside with the market, civil society and the family. The author claims that welfare systems in advanced capitalist societies are well classified according to three main types as following:

- **liberal**, (including the welfare system of countries such as the USA, Australia and Canada) which embodies individualism and the primacy of the market, social benefits are not generous and do not offer an alternative to the labour market. The social benefits are directed at low-income categories and are provided on the basis of means-tests. This type of welfare state requires a kind of redistribution but also creates a class of stigmatized and marginalized welfare recipients. There are no strong interventions of the state in ensuring social security while private insurance or pension schemes operate the social insurance system.
- **conservative or employment based** (including most European continental countries such as Austria, France, in our case Germany), which is shaped by the twin historical legacy of Catholic social policy, on the one side and corporatism and etatism on the other side. Distribution of social benefits is regulated on the basis of social needs, the state is the central provider of welfare benefits. Social policy programmes vary greatly according to occupational groups, where each category possesses its own welfare program (health insurance, pension etc) and defends it as the mark of its special status. In that sense, this welfare system does not redistribute income or has an impact on the existing social hierarchy.
- **universalistic or social democratic** type (including all Nordic countries, in our case Finland) directed towards achieving a system of generous universal and highly distributive benefits not dependent on any individual contributions, generally dedicated to full employment.

The criticism on ESPING –ANDERSEN’s analysis is focused on the absence of the gender dimension of the welfare system (women’s employment, family support) (Lewis 1993) and on the neglect of peripheral systems. It is worth mentioning that ESPING-ANDERSEN refers to the social state-market nexus not to the family and it is based on “social security” programmes. The analysis does not deal with social services as such. Social security represents the male side of social welfare, in the form of income transfers, participation in the labour market etc. Social services are

more likely to involve women. As to the concept of income transfers it already involves a gender dimension since it ignores under which conditions women experience welfare institutions as well as to which extent they provide welfare services within the frame of the family (Lewis 1993).

Some authors have further developed typologies with the so-called “Southern or Latin Rim model” in order to include Spain, Portugal and Greece. FERRERA (1996) has introduced a properly European typology, which is based on three dimensions of social security systems:

1. rules of access
2. conditions under which benefits are granted
3. organizational-managerial administration.

This typology responds better to the countries which participate in our project (Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece, Portugal, United Kingdom) and serves the purposes of our specific project. Accordingly four types of states can be distinguished:

#### 1. The liberal model

It is presented in the Anglo-saxon fairly high welfare state covering the following features: Social policy is centred on the individual working in a flexible economy. An important challenge towards modernization is the investment on human /social capital. Social policy is led by the idea of “situations of high risk“ and the principle of social justice rather than social equality. Globalisation, decline in the fordist mode of production and its replacement by more dynamic fragmented post-fordist methods, the associated decline in the importance of “class” and the increasing importance of the “new individualism” flexibility and knowledge society, emphasis on technology and service sector are further features. Unlike neoliberalism, this does not restrain the role of the state to an absolute minimum. But it does imply an important shift which is directed from the traditional social democracy in favour to decentralization, a “social investment state” and a concern for social inclusion rather than equality per se.

#### 2. The employment based model

It is shaped by a strong link between work position (and/ or family state) and social entitlements. Benefits are related to income. Social support systems are financed through contributions; they provide reasonably substantial social benefits. These

insurance schemes are mainly governed by unions and employers organizations (Germany, Belgium). E. g. in Belgium, the mainstream designs a social or welfare active state (Vandenbroucke 1999 et adopted by the government declaration September 1999) instead of the traditional. This active social state is a society with active citizens, a state expecting the active participation of every citizen and “tailored” social protection. It is not an authoritarian state but is characterized by a strong demand for participation. It leaves more space for the mobilization of the social actors. People have rights and duties as well, but the social protection is reformulated by the notions of participation and responsibility. It is similar to the idea of Giddens’ Social Investment State (1998). A main argument is based on the idea that the traditional welfare state deals with allowances instead of providing new chances.

### 3. The universalistic or Nordic type

Here social protection is perceived as a citizenship right. It is characterized by universal coverage and relatively generous fixed benefits for various social risks, which are mainly financed through fiscal revenues. It shows a strong organizational integration (Finland).

### 4. The Southern type

It is characterized by a fragmented system of income guarantees related to work position. There are relatively generous benefits without an articulated net of minimum social protection. Health care is presented as a right of citizenship whilst the services provided remain rather poor and underfunded. We can state a selective distribution of cash benefits and financing, financing through contributions and fiscal revenues, neglect of the gender dimension in social policy (Portugal, Greece)<sup>1</sup>. Widespread clientelism in these countries derives partly from the importance of the family the interests of which often override any other considerations. There is a strong presence of middle-class strata of petty-traders, self-employed professionals whilst a differentiation with regard to the culture and practice of voluntarism is reflecting differences in religious values and the role of the state.

In Portugal Catholicism has played an important role as a provider of welfare services and promoted the subsidiarity pole within society. As a matter of fact it has enhanced the role of the family in welfare delivery. At the same time, it has

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<sup>1</sup> In W. Arts and J. Gelissen “ Three worlds of welfare capitalism or more? A state –of- the-art report” article in *Journal of European Social Policy* , Vol 12 (2) :137-158, 2002 SAGE Publications, London

facilitated the institutionalisation of voluntary action in social protection (Petmezidou 1996). This involvement partly explains the relative strength of the Catholic Church vis-à-vis the state at least until the end of dictatorship regime (1974). The Catholic Church is involved in re-integration activities for young people as well as in VET in the country.

On the contrary the Orthodox Church in Greece, has a strong link with the state (economic and administrative dependence). Its fragmental involvement in the welfare provision conserves the “attitude of a philanthropic assistance”. Another example of this kind of welfare state are the strong clientelistic forms of social organization. Through this function individuals or families can obtain resources through political pressure, so family bounds can be seen as well not only as a traditional characteristic of the southern culture but also as a main component of the statistic/clientelistic forms of social organization consolidated in the post war period. At the same time family ensures the most important role in welfare services for all social groups: older people, unemployed youth, youngsters in educational curricula etc. Another important element is the fragmentation of social insurances with a mixture of compulsory and supplementary funds.

With regard to the unemployment strategies: both countries lack well designed social assistance schemes for young unemployed people. With regard to active employment measures (vocational training youth schemes and subsidized employment) a very low percentage of the GDP in comparison with other EU countries has been spent by Portugal (1999 0,84%) and Greece (0,39%).<sup>2</sup>

We deal with different traditions and social transformations. The challenge for the states of the European Union is to deal with these different experiences of welfare in order to reduce social inequalities within Europe and enhance social Europe through a new social contract involving civil society and the states. Paradigms, good practices, negative experiences to interpret are present and they are going to be taken into account by the European nation mosaic. Opening up channels of exchange involves not only the incorporation of such social experiences but also a different vision of welfare.

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<sup>2</sup> Other authors argue that Mediterranean countries can be situated in the conservative model of Esping Andersen's classification, although they constitute an underdeveloped version of it (for instance Katrougalos 1996 “The South European welfare model: the Greek welfare state, in search of an identity”, *Journal of European Social Policy*, vol. 6,1:39-60). Their welfare underdevelopment is caused by the underdevelopment of their economy, located, as it is, at the periphery of Europe and the instability of democratic regimes.

A synopsis of this chapter is a table which presents the inefficiency of the percentage of social expenditures to combat social poverty and inequality in Greece and Portugal in comparison to the other four countries.

|          | POVERTY RATE             |                         |   |
|----------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Country  | Before social provisions | After social provisions | Indicator of social provisions efficiency |
| Belgium  | 28                       | 16                      | 43  |
| Germany  | 24                       | 16                      | 33  |
| Greece   | 23                       | 22                      | 4   |
| Finland  | 27                       | 8                       | 70  |
| Portugal | 27                       | 20                      | 26  |
| UK       | 33                       | 21                      | 31  |

Table 3.1: Source: Eurostat « The Social situation in the European Union” Brussels, 2002/ newspaper Kathimerini, 7/02/04

### 3.3 Change of concept: From poverty to social exclusion

Social policy discourses in the European Union shifted from “poverty” terminology to a “social exclusion concept” since the early 90’s in combination with the slowing down of economic growth and the full employment, causing an increasing pressure on the welfare state ( Evans 1998). In particular the social exclusion terminology emerges in relation to problems of the modern welfare states such as long-term unemployment and poverty, changes in the family structure, retrenchment of the welfare state. These elements shape the “new poor” of Europe.

The concept of social exclusion appears in France in the early ‘70s as a response to the problem of sustaining social integration and solidarity (Glossaire comparatif, 2002)<sup>3</sup>. It referred to those who could not benefit from social insurance programmes. Young drop-outs were part of the excluded. During the ‘80s the Mitterand’s government introduced the Minimum Income for Social Integration (RMI), a minimum income floor transfer for people who could not benefit from social programmes (Cousins 1999) in order to maintain social cohesion in France and facing the « new problems » ( family structures change, unemployment, gettos etc).

<sup>3</sup> Vocabulaire européen autour de la précarité et de la délinquance des jeunes, term social exclusion. Pays concernés Allemagne,/Belgique/Grèce /Pays Bas, Prototype Mai 2002

In the UK, during Thatcher's government the discourse was centered on the "underclass debate" moving towards the term "social exclusion" imported from France by the New Labour government in the '90s. The connotation changes according to the political, academic and ideological context in which it is being used. The term of social exclusion was first used on the European level in 1989 by the E.U linking social exclusion with the inadequate realisation of social rights in the Green Paper for Social Policy (1993 under the presidency of Jacques Delors). According to this definition, a part of the population is excluded from the social and financial opportunities. In 1990, the European Observatory on national Policies for Combating Social Exclusion was set-up to examine the « social rights of citizenship to a basic standard of living and to promote the participation in major social and economic opportunities in society » (Cousin 1999).

The current definition of the excluded reflects sweeping economic and social changes which took place in Europe during the last 20 years. It is connected with the significant changes in employment structures, perturbation in the traditional life-work trajectories of the individuals, rise of long term unemployment and poverty, a considerable number of people relying on assistance from the state, youth problems etc. The social exclusion framework emerges at a period where the welfare states on the one hand are criticized since they did not succeed to address poverty and social problems, while on the other hand they have created a number of dependent people, relying on welfare benefits. Welfare states were established on the basis of full-employment. The current changes in the employment structure decrease the possibility for the existence of a stable full-employment. The social transformations sustain fragmentations which lead people to the margins of society by breaking links. Social exclusion does not focus on equality of outcomes but on the equal freedom to enjoy the rights of citizenship (Klasen, 1998) such as education, employment, social insurance etc.

### **3.4 Social policies against social exclusion: the integration measures**

According to WILLIAMS (1999), the most important political and philosophical issue of our era is: "How to bridge the commitment to universalism while upholding respect for particularity and differences?" How do we reassert the social in terms of the market-centered society?

The European Union argues in a problematic way, when continuing to perceive social exclusion rather as an individual deficit than as an institutional or a socially constructed obstacle. Positive steps have been made through the implementation of European Programmes such as “Leonardo da Vinci”, “Adapt” etc. The White Paper on European social policy deals with integration in terms of paid work, need for flexible work, as well as reduced social expenditures. Emphasis was given at work, thus in recent years a turning point was reached through coordinated actions and supportive measures related to the project. Apart from helping people to find a job, they were also provided with social assistance, education-vocational training, skills etc. since job creation may not be sufficient to move from the status of social exclusion to social integration.

Integration approaches should not face poverty and social exclusion phenomena as individual problems. As an example, unpaid-voluntary-work, especially for young people should be connected with the social insurance system of each country.

The Structural Funds Framework (ESF) also deals with integration processes in terms of providing opportunities of employment and education for various groups of unemployed people including young people. In the following section we will present the basic elements of the function of labour market in the countries involved.

The operations of those labour markets could contribute to a great extent to solve the social problems which have been previously presented.

### **3.5 Common features in relation to the employment and function of the labour market of the 6 countries**

In the context of the new information society or the knowledge-based society, the introduction of the need for continuing education and on-going enhancement of human capital into policies of the EU points to fruitful links between education and training schemes in order to ensure the social integration of individuals through the access to the labour market. During the latest years, middle 80's till now, continuing education and training systems have led to the promotion of improvement and revitalization of human capital skills and capabilities. Reforms of the education and VET systems in the EU and, of course, the six participating countries have influenced learning methods to a great extent, but without considerably influencing



the different traditions. Each country is tackling with youth unemployment in accordance with EU directives, National Action Plans, ESF and other initiatives. And according to the Lisbon meeting an important emphasis has been given on education and training, modernizing social protection and on a call to all social partners to be more actively involved in the elaboration of Action plans (Lisbon meeting [www.eu.int.org](http://www.eu.int.org)).

Given the wide structural diversity of European educational systems the transition process from general education to VET does not start at the same age for all six countries. In Belgium, the entrance age of young people in initial training is close to the European maximum. According to the extension of the compulsory education up to the 18th years of age, a large number of young people are trained in schools, which they attend after the end of full-time compulsory schooling. VET in Belgium orientates the government to the development of institutions which will operate between school and enterprise, which means the existence of professional integration bureaus. Beyond the age of 24, on the other hand, the proportion of students is lower than elsewhere. In Portugal the proportion of young people under 20 in education is lower than the European average. After 20, the proportion of young people in VET is intermediate. In Greece because of the high level of participation in higher education, the proportion of young people in VET is intermediate up to 22 and lower beyond this age.

Germany and Finland have a high proportion of young people in VET at every age. It is due to the dual system in Germany and the strong linkage between employers and schools who jointly are involved in the provision of training. Another factor are the agreements between social partners in order to define the educational/vocational prerequisites the local markets need.

In Finland however the high proportion of young people participating in VET is due to the fact that training in the school environment predominates. In the UK the philosophy of young people's access to the labour market is the transition from school to work. Finland, Germany and the UK lay emphasis on the certifications and diplomas of VET. Authorities involved in VET deliver such certificates and employers use them in their recruitment decisions.

The impact of networks which is very strong refers to the success of vocational measures and policies in all countries. The difference between the countries is the kind of these networks: networking of the social partners concerning the northern

countries, family bounds and social networks in the South. The UK is a special case, dealing with a big variety of networks and problematic coordination among them.

### **3.6 Excursus: EU most important policy suggestions to tackle youth unemployment**

Based on previous and current experience of the implementation of the programmes against youth's unemployment through the Structural Funds Framework, White Papers on Social policy (1994), Medium Term Social Action Programme (1995-97) as well as research findings, expert committees<sup>4</sup> recommend these elements which must be taken into account:

- 1) Pioneering new thinking, which means active measures through various support services, education, training and work experience. The ESF programmes (20% of the total budget from 1994-99) were designed partly for the occupational integration of young people. The Youthstart strand has implemented diverse projects for young people under 20.
- 2) Bridging the gap between education and work: the EU initiatives focus on three groups of youngsters a) early school leavers, b) young people with no skills or qualifications and c) unemployed.

Emphasis must be given for education and training. Action must be taken for establishing work experience schemes in order to set up counseling systems for individuals. Youth unemployment problems prevail despite higher educational standards in Europe than ever before. Approximately 70% of the young Europeans who do not have jobs enter the upper secondary level of education. 20% of the young Europeans have attained university degrees. On the other side many young people fail to complete compulsory education.

- 3) One in five leave education without qualifications. Over 40% of Europeans SMEs report a shortage of adequate skills as an obstacle to recruitment. Potential employers complain that education is too far removed from the world of work.

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<sup>4</sup> Among others the "European Report on Quality Indicators of Lifelong Learning" based on the work of the Working Group on Quality Indicators. It has already set up 15 Quality Indicators with respect to the quality of education, training and lifelong learning "fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and organization of educational systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity".

Looking to the future, there are two important factors, which will affect youth unemployment. The demographic trend goes towards fewer births, more people over 60 than young people under 20. This fact does not per se solve the problem of demand and supply if the skills are not adequate for the labour market demands.

### 3.7 Re-Integration programmes

Although the question of social integration of a growing number of young people who are in trouble with established transition routes from school to work is of overall concern in all EU member states, the approaches to face this challenge are interrelated to the respective historical, economic and political structures and the specific cultural concept which has emerged from these. The political and educational responsibility for re-integration programmes and moreover the pedagogical approach they promote are shaped by two main factors: by the reigning welfare policy on the one hand and by the established mainstream routes, i. e. the system of vocational education and training on the other.

Building on the above elaborated socio-political contextualisation which distinguished between the Nordic, the employment-based, the liberal and the southern European type of welfare state, four different types of systems for vocational education and training (cf. Heidegger 2004) which are closely corresponding can be identified. They are shaped by the following structural features:

- the school-based VET-system in the Nordic countries with a close relation between theory and practice, but little enterprise experiences, which is constructed and perceived as part of the educational system and consequently claiming a general integrative function but leaves a high risk of youth-unemployment after school;
- the dual system, providing strict structural pathways of alternating in-company training and learning at school. It is situated in between economy and education; because of strictly defined standards and because of a direct dependency on the employment market the access thresholds as well as drop-out rates are comparably high;
- a market based VET-system in the Anglo-Saxon countries which is closely corresponding to market needs and offers a flexible learning and training situated in authentic work contexts, but provides little general education for citizenship and no secured pathways of transition;

- a broad mixture of non-formal access to labour and training in the southern countries rooted in a strong tradition of informal learning in an economy shaped by small and medium sized companies and strong family networks.

Both factors – welfare and VET- structures – reign on the way how alternative trajectories from school to VET and work are provided for young people who are at the risk of social exclusion and determine the definition of disadvantages as well as the pedagogical approach of support programmes. In accordance the following typology of re-integration programmes can be deducted (cf. Pohl/Walther and Evans/Niemeyer 2004), which refers to

1. how the programmes are generally situated in the landscape of education and labour
2. how programmes are legitimised, which are the prevailing paradigms of disadvantages
3. what are the dominating expectations of youth and how youth-unemployment is perceived:

- programmes aiming to open up alternative individual experiences and to broaden the mainstream pathway of schooling, building on the idea of individual personal development with high options for occupational choice to be achieved by general education;
- measures aiming to compensate structural deficits and shortcomings of the apprenticeship market, ascribing individual deficits to participants and with long-term-effects on social participation because of the highly allocating function of the apprenticeship system;
- welfare programmes oriented towards the improvement of employability with a varying part of general and technical education, building on the paradigm of early economic independency leading to a comparably short period of youth;
- by way of extension of schooling and emphasis on work placement, programmes aim to address the shortage of workplaces as well as a lack of training.

As a summary of this chapter an overview of the relation of welfare, VET systems and the social perception of youth is presented in the following table.

| type of welfare state          | refers to                           | principles of welfare and security  | structure of VET system  | responsibility  | risks or challenges   | perception of youth   | perception of youth unemployment   | approach of re-integration programmes  | relation to education and training |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>universalistic</b>          | Nordic states,                      | social protection as a citizenship right  | <b>school based</b>      | VET as part of the educational system with a general integrative approach | school-to-work transition school weariness                        | <b>personal development as civil right</b>                                | paradoxon – not existing, because of youth participating in education not in labour market | <b>broadening of individual alternatives</b>   | broadening the mainstream          |
| <b>employment based</b>        | Central Europe                      | provision of social security strongly linked to gainful employment and work positions   | <b>dual system</b>       | shared responsibility between economy and education legislation           | high access thresholds high drop-out rate shortage of places      | <b>preparation for social and vocation position (allocating function)</b> | resulting from individual deficits in education and from individual social disadvantages   | <b>compensate structural deficits</b>  | institutionalisation of parallels  |
| <b>liberal</b>                 | UK                                  | free individual working in a flexible economy, high potential risk of social exclusion, social justice instead of social equality         | <b>market based</b>      | market driven   | little education for citizenship risky transition                 | <b>aiming at early economic independency</b>                              | culture of dependency  | <b>- improve employability</b>   | bridging function                  |
| <b>under-institutionalised</b> | southern countries Portugal, Greece | fragmented system of income guarantees related to work position high importance of informal structures like families for social inclusion | <b>strong non formal</b> |   | relatively little formal VET lack of formal supporting structures | <b>without clearly defined and accepted status</b>                        | resulting form a lack of formal VET-structures and specific structures of labour market    | <b>extension of schooling promoting job placement (Arbeitsbeschaffungsmaßnahmen)</b> | introduction of formal structures  |

Table 3.2: Typology of re-integration programs in relation to VET and welfare contexts in the participating countries

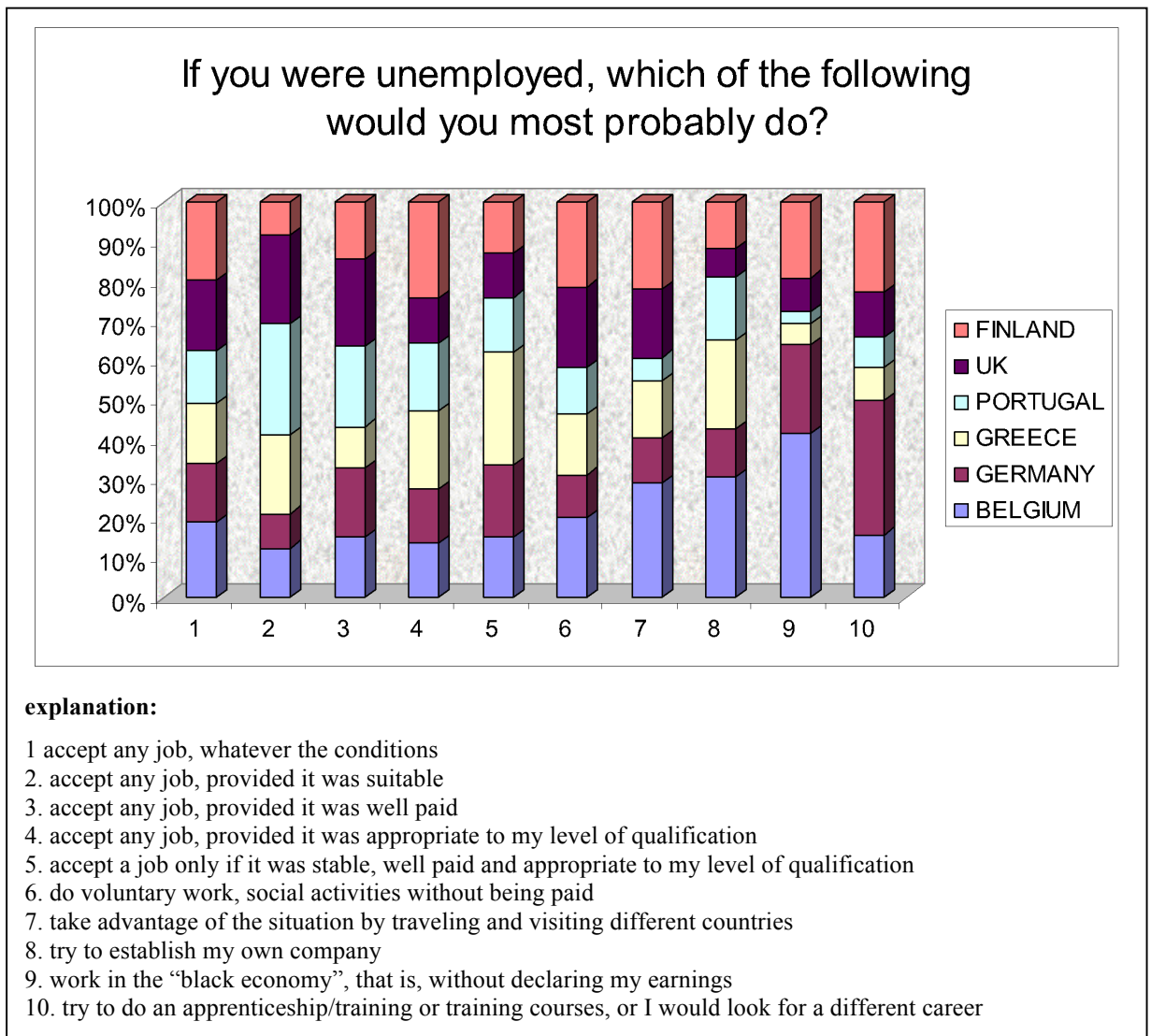
### **3.8 As a conclusion**

In a knowledge based society education and training are among the highest political priorities. Updating and upgrading a high level of knowledge, skills and competencies is considered to be a prerequisite for the personal development of all citizens, and for participation in all aspects of society from active citizenship to labour market integration. The Lisbon European Council (March 2000) set the strategic goal for Europe, of becoming by 2010 “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based society in the world with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. People are Europe’s main asset and should be the focal point of the Union’s policies”.

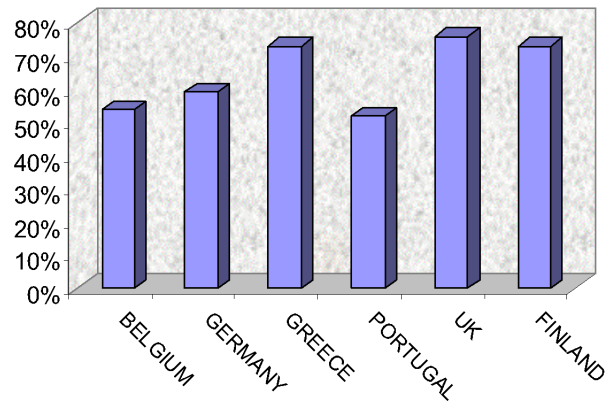
However progress will only come about as EU policies and funding achieve better educational and training standards. All the mentioned factors are essential if we want to build a healthier society based on strong democratic and egalitarian European traditions.

### 3.9 Appendix

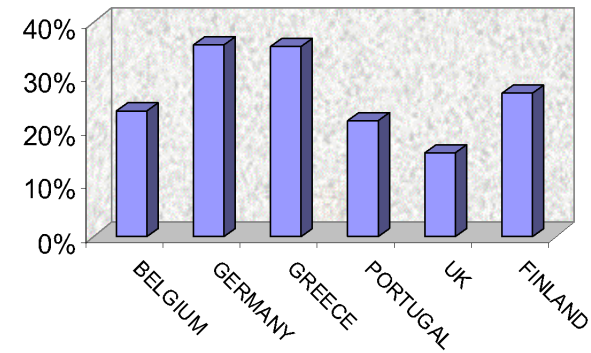
In the following appendix we have elaborated some data provided by Eurostat (March 2002, latest wave on employment and labour market). We are presenting some numbers for further reflection with regard to young people' expectations concerning employment, entrance to the labour market, priorities and life attitudes. The elaboration of data include the six countries of the Re-Integration project: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Finland, Portugal, United Kingdom.



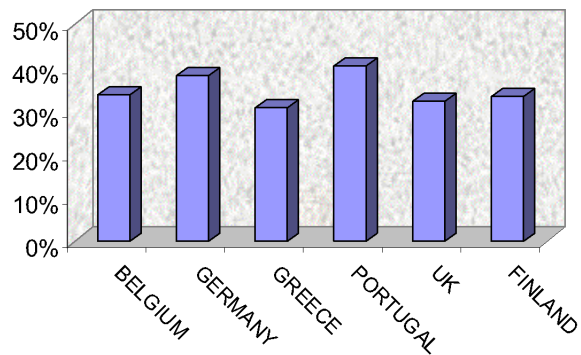
Young people can't afford to move out



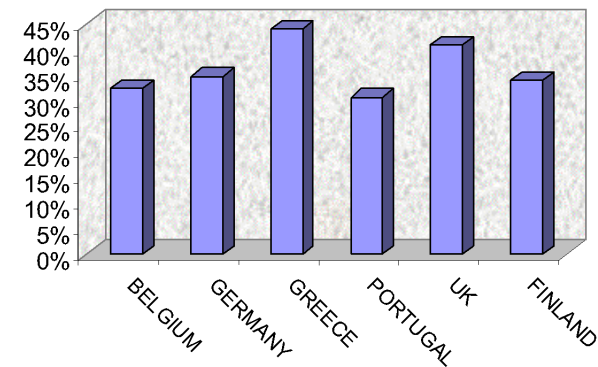
Nowadays, parents don't impose such strict rules on young people in the home, as they used to



Young people want to save up so they can make a good start later

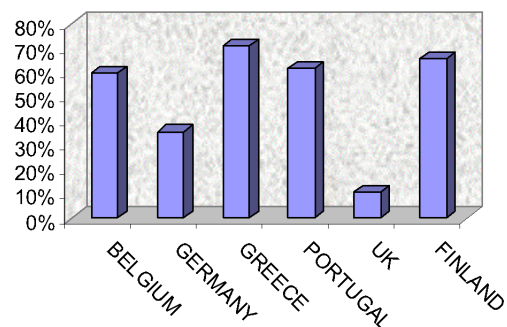


They want all the home comforts without all the responsibilities

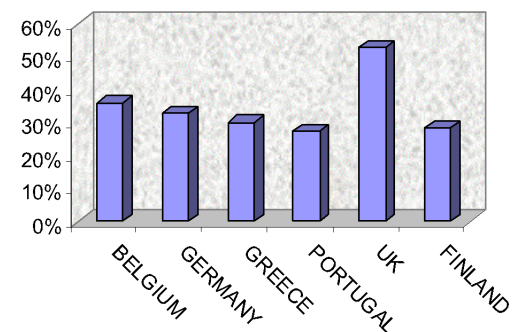




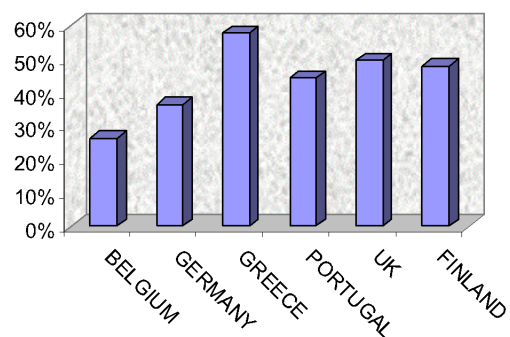
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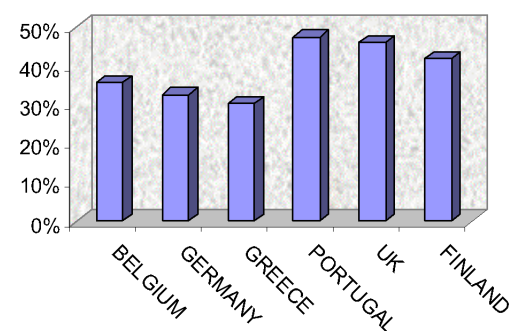
COMMUNIC SKILLS

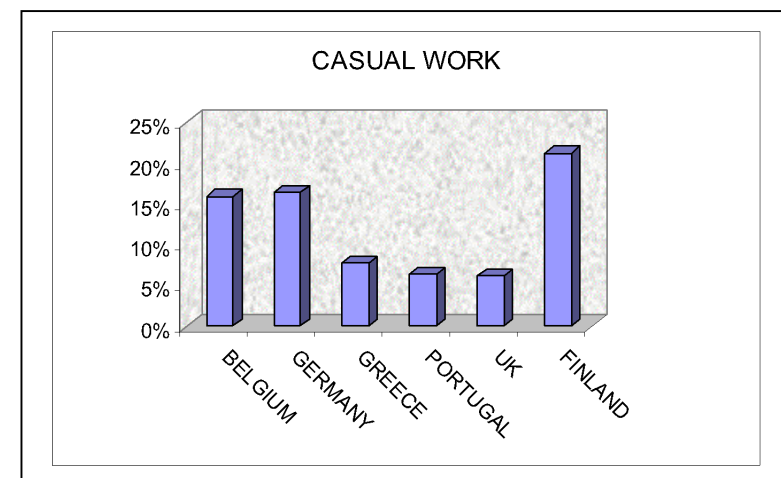
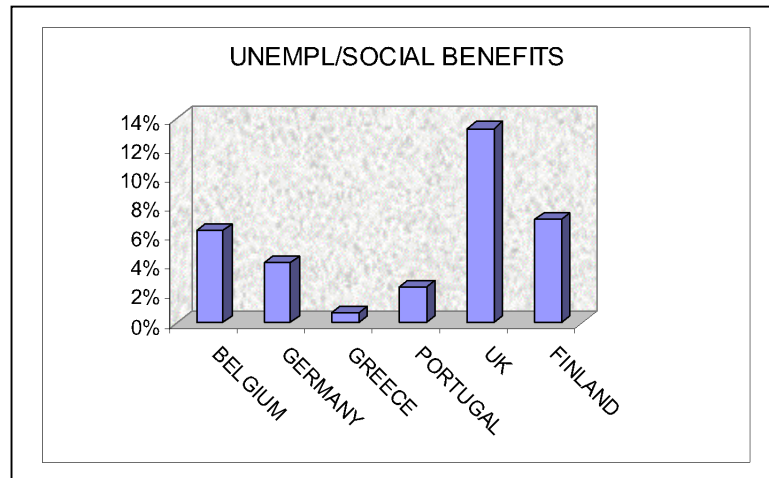
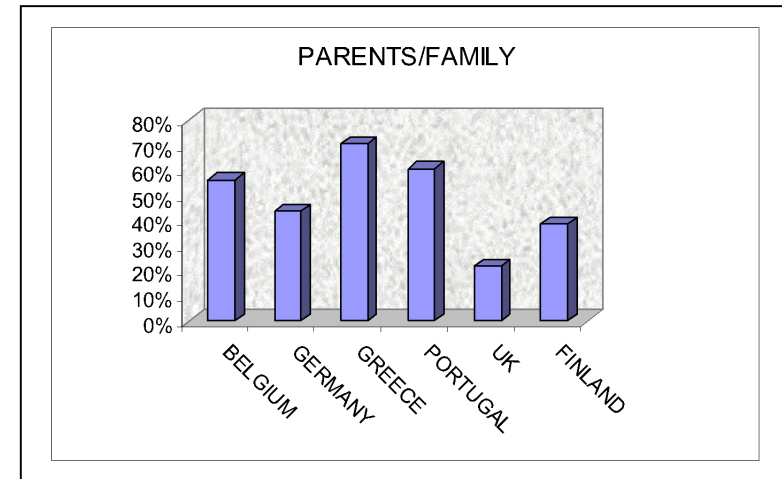
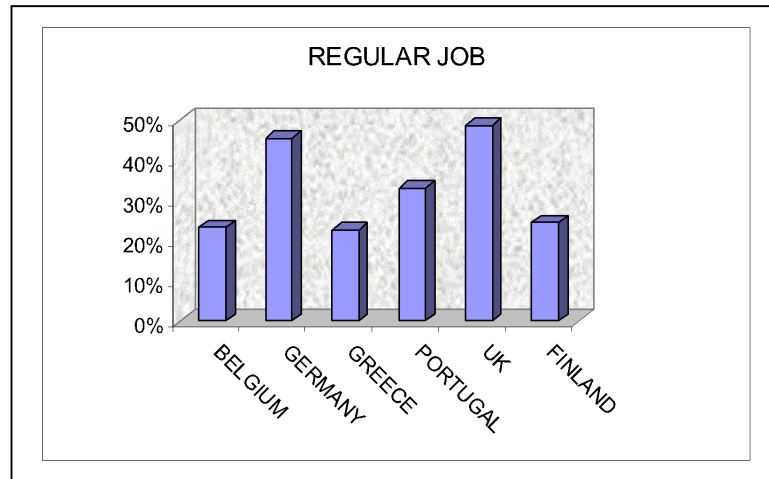


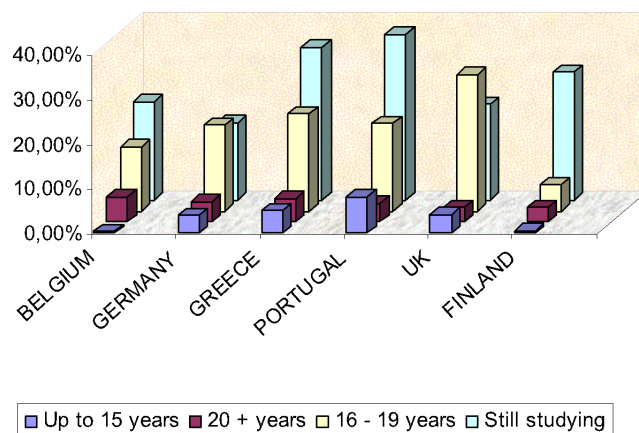
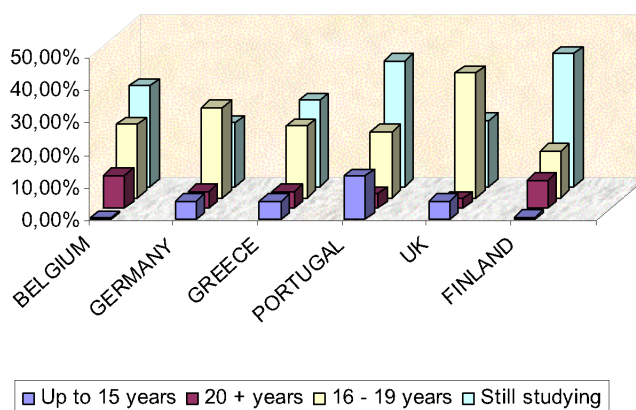
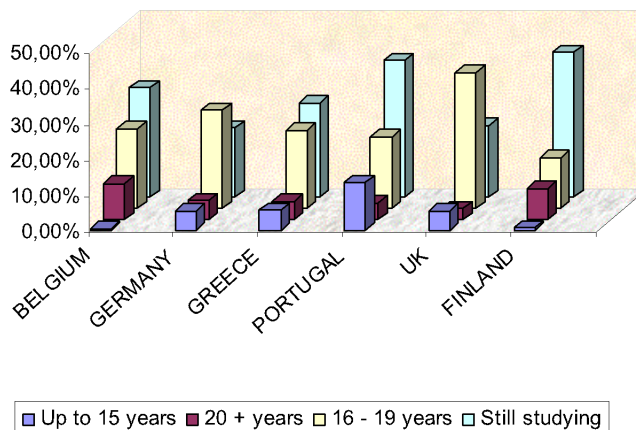
INFO TECH SKILLS

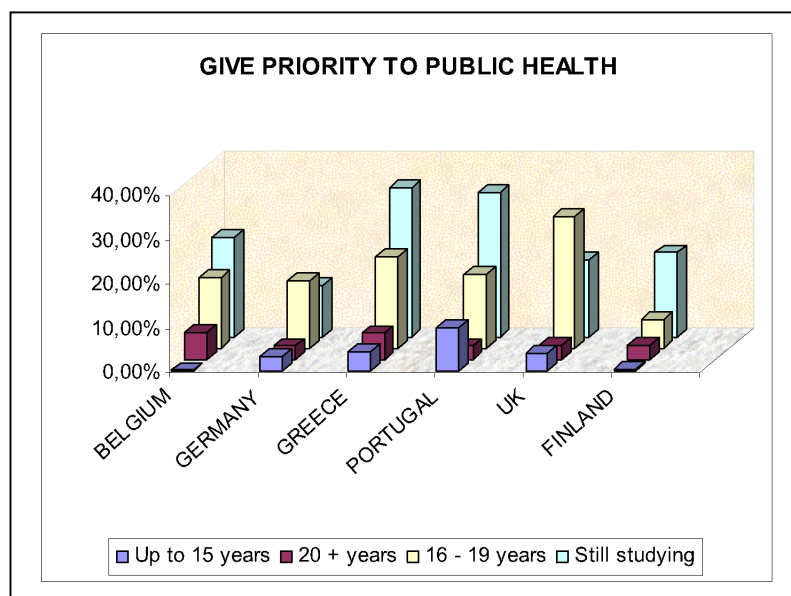
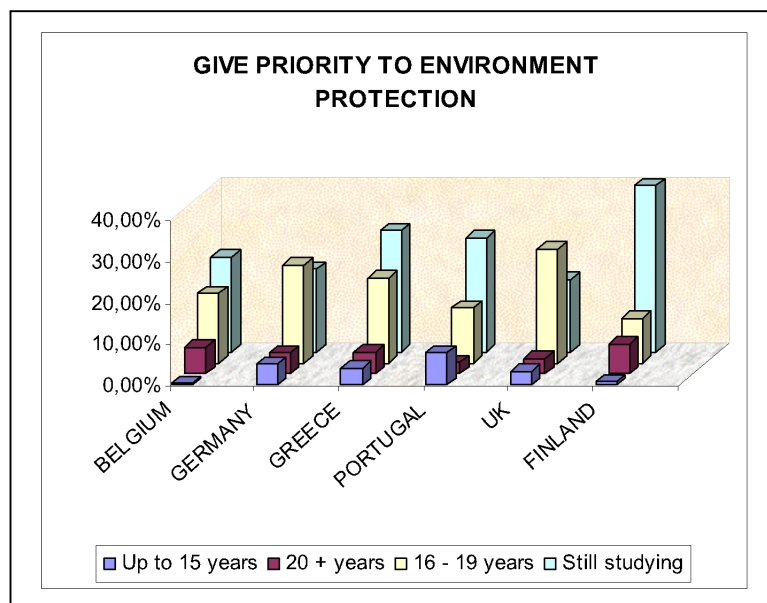


GENERAL EDUCATION





**GIVE PRIORITY TO EDUCATION/TRAINING****GIVE PRIORITY TO EMPLOYMENT****GIVE PRIORITY TO FIGHT CRIME**



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## 4 Contextualisation of evaluation: International and national evaluation discussion

Wiebke Petersen and Eva Lamminpää

### 4.1 Defining contextual evaluation

Contextualisation of evaluation can be understood in different ways, as it is included in the structure of this report. *First of all*, the contextual understanding is possible to achieve by embedding the target phenomenon of evaluation historically and culturally, like it is discussed in chapter two. *Secondly*, contextualisation can be understood related to the understanding of the nature of phenomenon which is evaluated. This is partly explained related to the development of TRDM (=Transnational research and development methodology) in chapter eight. *Thirdly*, in this chapter the focus is on the national and international evaluation discussion.

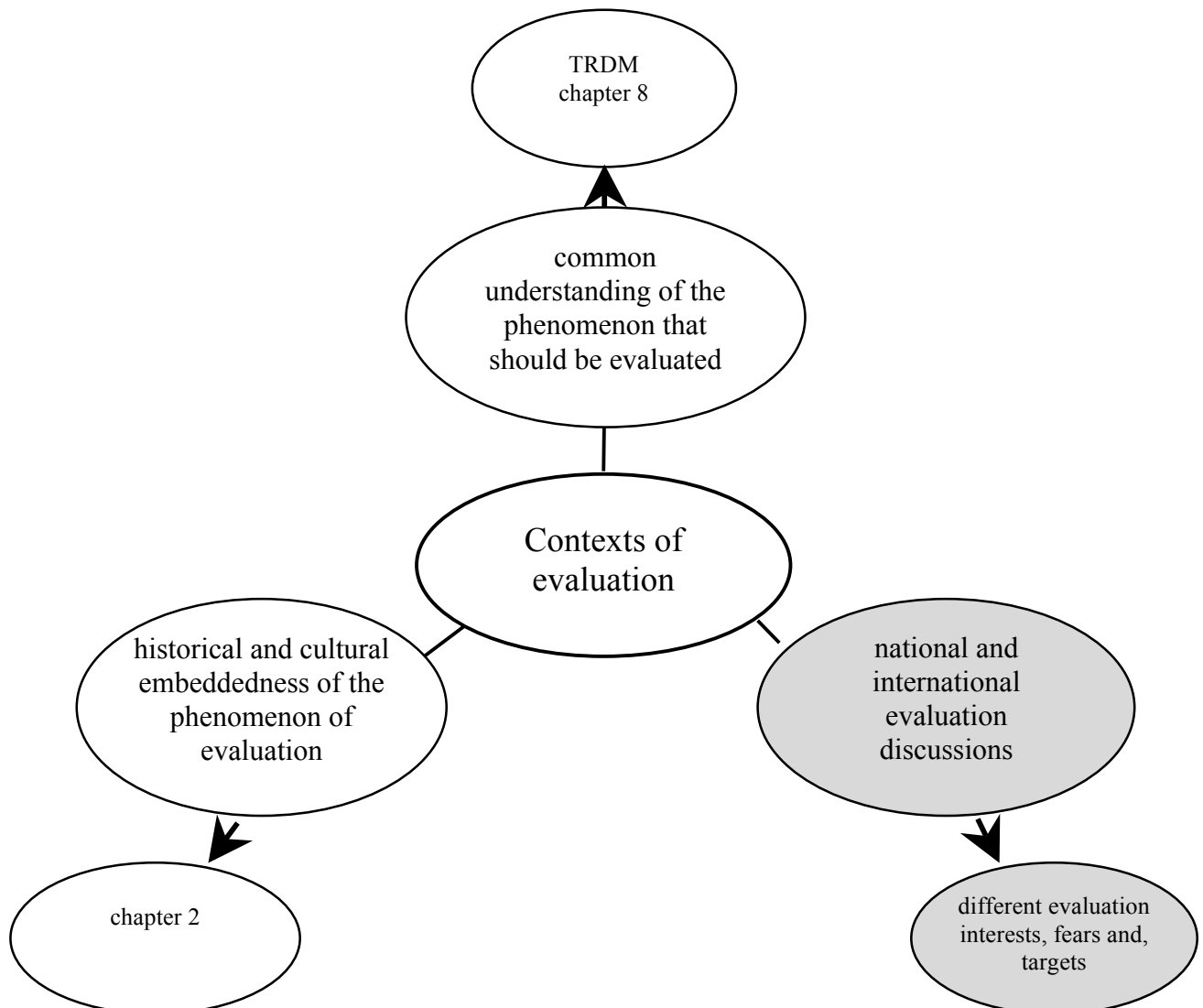


Figure 4.1: Contexts of evaluation

Developing trans-nationally relevant evaluation methodology cannot be accomplished separately from the national and international evaluation discussion. First, national evaluation paradigm and tendencies should be discussed and problematise at the national level. This national discussion also should be re-constructed in international evaluation context (compare to TRDM, Heikkinen & Lamminpää 2002). The aim of this chapter is to give a context for the development of the QSED-tool and for the TRDM development work by clarifying international evaluation collaboration, national evaluation paradigms, and existing evaluation practices of re-integration programmes. The re-construction of national discourses in the international context has been the challenge of the re-integration research practices (Heikkinen & Lamminpää 2002), and the meaning of this level of evaluation context is discussed in this chapter as well.

## 4.2 Transnational evaluation measures

In the international evaluation collaboration the search for indicators and the search for quality management seem to be the two dominating trends. The **indicator centred evaluation approach** has a strong position in the organisation, like OECD or CEDEFOP, probably because of an attempt to enlighten highly structured procedures of these international evaluation projects.

There are also evaluation associations which allow more **innovative evaluation discussion** targeting current challenges of evaluation, like aspects of empowerment or participation, on their agenda (e.g. European evaluation society, The International Development Evaluation Association (*IDEA*), The International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation(*IOCE*)). Even if these different international evaluation projects seem to cover the variety of cultures and national evaluation contexts, etc. The approaches applied by these organisations should not be taken for granted. Evaluation is always contextual and value oriented activity (e.g. Vuorenmaa 2001) which should be discussed during the evaluation process openly. Related to ESF-funded programmes, there are openings into the direction of a new approach of evaluation. The search for measuring soft outcomes (Dewson, Eccles, Tackey, and Jackson 2000) instead of hard indicators is an attempt to find out qualitative and



contextual options of evaluation. This tendency is worth to be considered, especially, related to the prerequisites for this kind of approach of evaluation procedure.

#### ***4.2.1 Three international missions of evaluation: search for all covering indicators, quality management, and best practices***

The international ideologies beyond evaluation practices are often introduced similarly for all the countries. Still there are differences how this context is transferred from international level into the national level. For example, the EU-agendas are obeyed more strictly in Finland than in Sweden related to the ESF-programmes. This is because the objectives of EU-programmes seem to correspond better to the national ones in Finland than in Sweden. The lack of ideological conflicts in Finland is probably enhancing willingness to accept EU recommendations as those are given. (Ollikainen 1999; Lundahl 2002.) Thus evaluation criteria given as a means to enforce EU- level programme goals are probably accepted less critically.

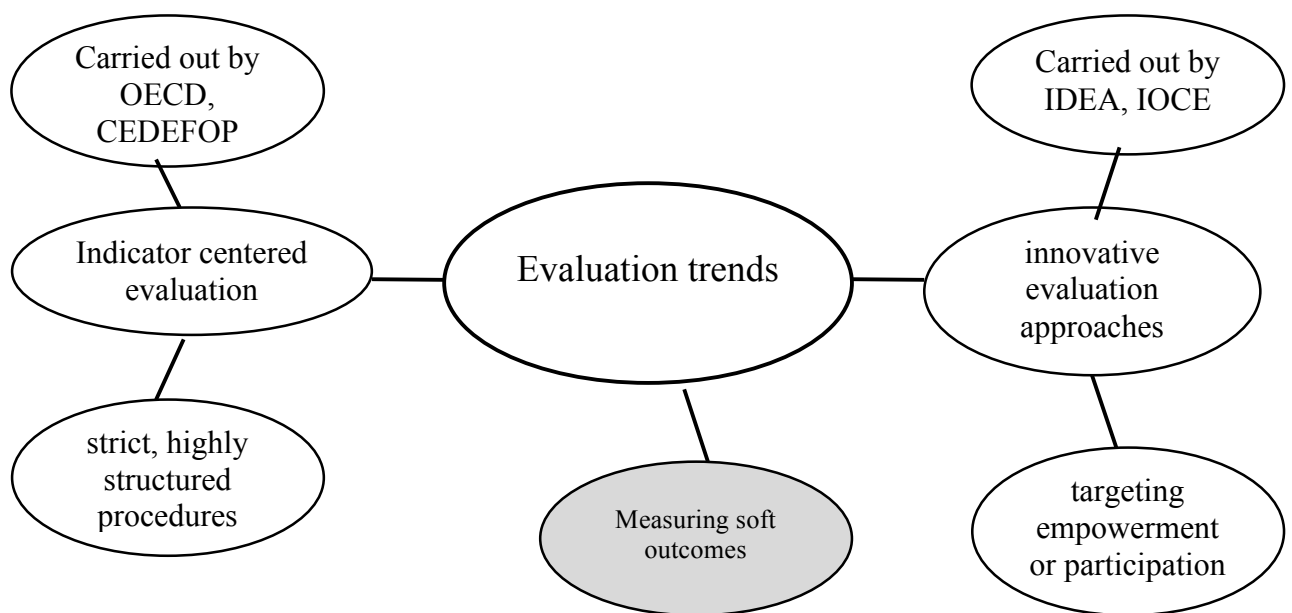


Figure 4.2: Evaluation trends

In Finland, the most visible international evaluation collaboration is carried out under OECD. This international search of indicators is concentrated on looking for trans-nationally meaningful indicators. In Finland, the National Board of Education is

often in charge of these kinds of evaluation projects. At the national level this international collaboration has been summarised as interaction between national and international indicators. National indicators will give supplementary information in addition to the international perspective. (Koulutuksen määrälliset indikaattorit 2001.) The demand of flexibility is taken into account by producing a group of basic indicators and another group of revisable ones, named as innovative indicators.

The production of indicators of education has been elaborated in different OECD-programmes, like International Education Indicators programme (INES), which has produced a lot of comparative material in terms of education. A well-known Program for international Student assessment (PISA) is a huge evaluative procedure with a ten-year-work and involvement of 34 countries. According to the NBE, the publications related to this kind of evaluation work are good references in educational decision making in terms of defining national education and its effectiveness compared to other nations. (Koulutuksen määrälliset indikaattorit 2001; Jakku-Sihvonen, R. & Heinonen, S. 2001).

The quality discussion has been an essential part of international evaluation, which is also concluded as a search for quantitative and qualitative indicators. The quality talk is rooted in the dominance of economical ideas in education sciences in the end of 90s'. One quality management related issue seems to be the search for good examples and best practices. For example, one pilot project on the quality of evaluation consisted on 101 European Schools and it looked for best practices of self-evaluation. (Jakku-Sihvonen, R. & Heinonen, S. 2001.) The best practices discussion is related to the criteria of funding of ESF-programmes too. The challenge of evaluation of the re-integration programmes is especially how to transfer good practices from one programme to another (e.g. Paju & Vehviläinen 2001).

At the moment results of PISA are in the focus of the throughout educational discussion. Related to the Re-integration programmes it is interesting how this kind of international research covers the national variation in a sovereign way. As much as we talk about the high position of Finland in the international ranking list we should discuss what is ignored related to activities in everyday educational practices, like in this situation the re-integration youngsters and activities targeting this group of students. This is important because behind this festive turmoil it is a multilevel question of values, allocation of resources, management, etc. Looking for quality and

best practices is more in the level of activities and educators everyday work than the indicator discussion. Still, the question of goodness as a relative aspect should be presented more often. One important lesson learned from re-integration research was the **contextual nature of good practices**. As an example, it was possible to identify three different cases of implementing networking practices. All three examples of practices are good in their current context but very different from each other. The solutions made in the one phase of programme are not static but revisable on their nature. (Heikkinen & Lamminpää 2003b) Finally it has to be stated that good practice cannot be proved by hard external evaluation standards.

#### *4.2.2 The need of soft outcomes*

The need of meta-evaluation has been noticed in the national evaluation in Finland. This lack of meta-evaluation culture has named as one reason why the conceptualisation of evaluation has been so fragmented. (Vuorenmaa 2001.) This must be also one reason why the dominant practices and paradigms are not questioned. Evaluation reports are just repeating and reproducing the national evaluation paradigm given by the administrative body for the actors of educational practices in schools and programmes.<sup>5</sup> The innovative and reflective process of evaluation is underestimated compared to the results of evaluation process in terms of the duty of reporting. It is not an easy task to achieve meta-evaluation level in international research process but still worthy of trying (e.g. Re-Enter. Improving Transition for low achieving school leavers to vocational education and training 2001)

At the European level it has been implemented a meta-evaluation of ESF-funded projects to analyse the use of soft and qualitative outcomes. The finding was that most ESF-funded projects are aware of the importance of measuring soft outcomes, but they had not developed any systematic means of doing so. When systems had been developed there were a lot of variation and systems tend to be specific to the individual project. (Dewson, Eccles, Tackey and Jackson 2000.) This review and its message about the need of soft indicators were also taken into account when the Re-

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<sup>5</sup> An example for the inefficiency of this evaluation is given in chapter 5.1 in the context of the EFQM under the headline “The EFQM includes good aspects – nevertheless a different evaluation tool is necessary”.

integration project was planned and its goals defined in the beginning. A review of the UK evaluation literature related to the Re-integration programmes (carried out by Karen Evans) focused on the perspective of soft outcomes at the national level. The findings were that usually the evaluation is time or destination oriented, those studies ignore the aspect of personal development (soft outcome) like increase in confidence and motivation. And the quality of learning process is not a focus for evaluation. (Evans 2002.) The evaluation of soft outcomes is usually specific to the individual project and thus subjective (Dewson et al 2000). This kind of person and programme embodied evaluation might be experienced as a too laborious procedure to carry out, which was possible to observe already in re-integration research collaboration (Heikkinen 2003). From the Finnish perspective the soft outcomes -evaluation vocabulary and -approach do not seem to fit in the evaluation paradigm which dominates the field work from administrative level. Still, the practitioners of the programmes seem to value this perspective according to the research experiences. As it is pointed out in the practitioners voices of chapter 9 they have special interest in the evaluation of soft outcomes of the learning process.

This discussion about soft outcomes and distance travelled is often person or pedagogy oriented evaluation. Even if, we talk about the process evaluation which focus on the individual life course in the centre of evaluation, the structural surrounding systems cannot be ignored (Heikkinen & Lamminpää 2002). As much as the soft outcomes are embodied in persons and their life courses the results of the programs are embedded in the historical understanding of the program development and subjective programme goals, as well. Thus, the programme level should not be ignored even if it might be an uninteresting perspective compared to the Individual-level evaluation celebrating personal success stories.

This will be taken into account through the three levels included in both evaluation suggestions: The QSED-tool and the TRDM which will be presented in detail in chapters 6 and 8

### 4.3 National evaluation contexts

#### 4.3.1 National paradigm<sup>6</sup> according to six aspects- Case Finland

A brief national review<sup>7</sup> of 25 evaluation reports gives an impression of the national evaluation context in Finland. The reviewed evaluation reports were concerned with evaluation of VET, ESF-funded, and other kinds of re-integration programmes. The dominating and preferred evaluation frame of reference, vocabulary and conceptualisation were possible to identify in some of these reports more implicitly but in administrative oriented reports the recommendations were explicated directly e.g. as strict models of evaluation which were followed in several evaluation practices (Heikkinen & Lamminpää, 2003).

By comparing the evaluation literature (e.g. Vuorenmaa 2001, Soininen 1997) parallel to the review of evaluation reports, it was possible to identify the following six relevant aspects of evaluation:

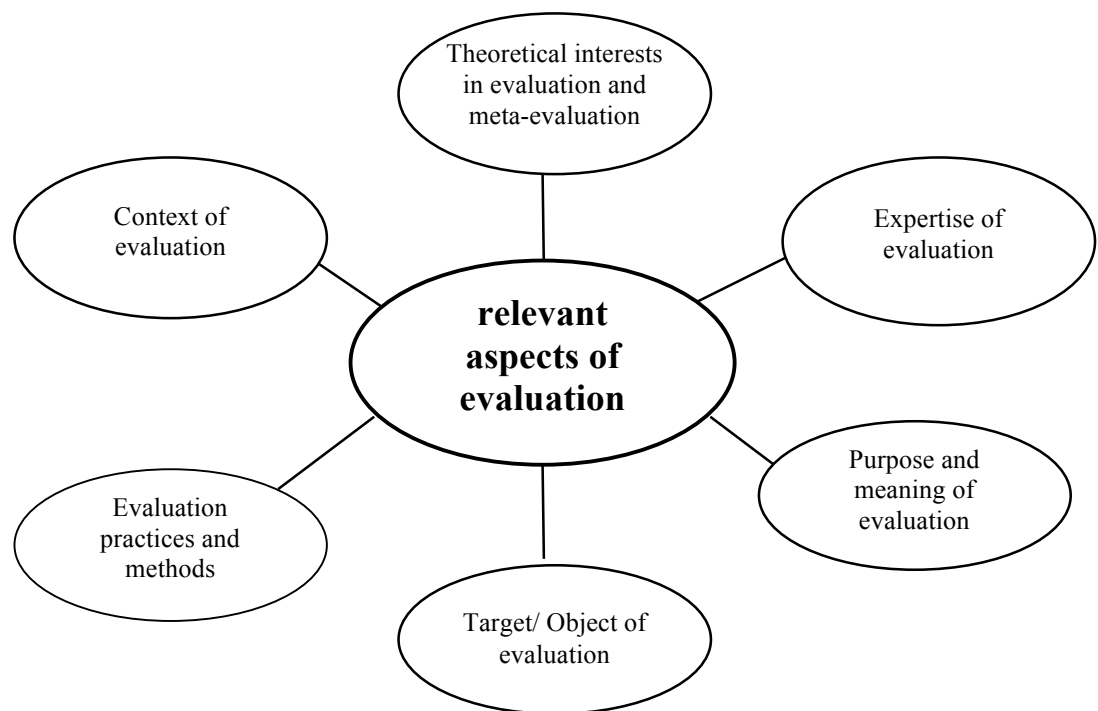


Figure 4.3: relevant aspects of evaluation

These aspects consist the impression of the national evaluation paradigm. In this case it gave a general view of the evaluation of re-integration programmes and this gives a frame of reference for identifying underlying interests, commitments, and policy

<sup>6</sup> Evaluation paradigm as a database which is used to justify the current approach (e.g. methodological choices, and interpretation of results) during the evaluation procedure.

<sup>7</sup>The Reports included are presented in the end.

expectations which are related to evaluation both at national and international levels. (Heikkinen 2003, Heikkinen & Lamminpää 2003)

Vuorenmaa (2001) has introduced four frames of reference which characterise evaluation: evaluation as policy, as a guidance provided by administration, as expertise and expert decision making, and as research. According to the review of evaluation reports, the most visible frame of reference in evaluation work seemed to be evaluation as a guidance provided by administration. This is understandable because of the decentralisation process of evaluation regulated by the law (Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta 630/ 98, 23§: Uusikylä 1999). The latest development of national evaluation of education in Finland is the Educational Evaluation Council (named for a four-year period since 1.4.2003). This council shares the responsibility of evaluation of education with the Ministry of Education. The implementing body of evaluation is evaluation secretariat which works as a department of university. This new system of evaluation aims at enforcing the role of evaluation and developing evaluation to be more independent and collaborative among different stakeholders. (Lyytinen, H. & Hämäläinen, K. 2004.)

There are contrary opinions about the expertise of evaluation in the field. The discussion dimensions vary from pure professionalism to the emphasis of shared practices and empowerment (Vuorenmaa 2001). In the review of the evaluation reports it was interesting to see some openings towards non-professional and shared evaluation practices. Still, the practical implementation of evaluation seems to be the right of professional evaluators who use the other practitioners as informants and the evaluation procedure as evaluation activity is not equally shared practices. One problematic issue might be a difficulty in reporting the shared evaluation procedure. Even if, the evaluation process has been shared among participants this aspect of evaluation practices is not shown in reporting.

The most often mentioned commitments in evaluation are parallel to the quantitative evaluation paradigm and positivism. Evaluation/ evaluator aims to achieve objective information. Objective information are needed in order to monitor development work and support the work according to its programme goals. Thus, the direction of evaluative sight is in the future neglecting the past and the history of the actors and activities. This lack of historicizing aspect is related to the understanding of the nature of phenomenon evaluated. This aspect is hardly discussed in reports and the challenges of contextualisation are not confronted with evaluation practices: *How do*

*we evaluate action, whose goodness is dependent on the context and the history of action?* Heikkinen (2003) has defined that this national ‘hegemonic paradigm’ ignores also the societal, political and economic context of the evaluation and the target of evaluation itself gains hardly any attention.

As a starting point of this review the dominant paradigm was supposed to be articulated in evaluation reports: How is the evaluation established in activities described in these reports. **Especially, the lack of variation and innovative evaluation reveals the expected pattern of evaluation procedure that should fit in the dominant paradigm.** This paradigm defines the limits of good and valid evaluation. These limits are expected to enable effective evaluation and it is not rational to spend time for questioning those. In evaluation practices, like in re-integration process, it was realised that the object of evaluation (re-integration activities and programmes) did not fit in this paradigm, even if at some point of the process it was tried to force into it. The cumulative understanding of the nature of re-integration activities directed the research process towards new perspectives on evaluation. Against this background the self-evaluation tool QSED (Quality through self-evaluation and development) has been developed as a new innovative and interactive evaluation tool which gives practitioners the opportunity to develop their own evaluation instrument. As it will be shown in chapter 6 the QSED- tool and even better through trying the tool on CD-Rom this instrument deals with evaluation and self-evaluation in a completely new way.

#### ***4.3.2 Evaluation of Re-integration initiatives (in Belgium, Germany and Finland)***

Three case countries are briefly introduced in terms of evaluation of re-integration programmes. Firstly, the evaluation of Re-integration programmes in Belgium is introduced. Secondly, one good example of evaluation of re-integration programmes in Germany is presented.<sup>8</sup> Thirdly, evaluation of re-integration programmes in Finland is discussed.

##### **Belgium:**

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<sup>8</sup> See chapter 5.1: the EFQM-Model.

*In Belgium evaluation practices are strictly related to the funding of programmes. Most of the re-integration programmes are funded temporarily by ESF. There are two dimensions of evaluation practices. On the one hand hard figures count in funding oriented evaluation and on the other hand the programme actors are implementing constant multi-professional evaluation in their everyday work. Projects are supported by a project group with multiple professionals. This group ensures a feedback loop during the course of programme. The professionals of the evaluation group are covering different positions related to the activity, still the administrative participation seem to be missing. Also students are asked to give feedback. (email 15.04.2004.)*

*Expectations for evaluation of re-integration programmes in Belgium relate to the need of becoming embedded in formal system and structural financing. There is also a strong need for quality development. When programmes are only temporarily funded they lack continuity and thus the quality suffers (email 15.04.2004). Besides expectations for evaluation there is also a fear for being evaluated. Problems of evaluation are related to the difficulty to appreciate the nature of re-integration programmes when hard outcomes are dominating instead of soft outcomes. (Ruelens 2004.)*

### **Germany:**

*One good practice example of evaluation introduced by German partners was EFQM<sup>9</sup> (=European Foundation for quality management) evaluation system. This system is one possible response towards the challenges in a quality of programme. The logic of evaluation is to recognise places of improvements and to improve the programme according those.*

*E.g At the beginning of a programme the youngsters are described from pedagogues of the programme(the name of the programme has been left out). Resulting of this description is a work programme for the pedagogues, designed as an advice”*

*The evaluation is goal oriented and demands strong commitment from the staff which carries out the evaluation. (Jiménez Laux 2003.)*

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<sup>9</sup> Chapter 5 will give a brief overview on the EFQM evaluation system.



*In Germany there were discussions with pedagogues of re-integration programmes about their expectations, demands and fears related to European evaluation. According to the pedagogues the contextual aspect and interaction are important. In the German context there was a fear of lacking the regional aspects in evaluation, when it is essential in re-integration activities to support young in the area where they live in. There is also a need for national interaction when the interaction between educators and national level is experienced as a problem. The international discussion is said to be relevant but educators doubt the resources for that kind of practice. In the evaluation there are fears about the evaluation increasing the administrative workload and doubts about the standardisation enhancing negative consequences from the student's point of view. (Jiménez Laux 2003.)*

### **Finland:**

*The position of re-integration programmes is non-formal in Finland and the programmes work on local basis based on local decisions. Evaluation is needed to strengthen national collaboration and recognition of programmes. (Meeting 29.08.2001)*

*In Finland there are no special evaluation for Re-integration programmes. When those programmes work in an inclusive way within vocational education and training those are evaluated under the same formal evaluation frame of reference like VET. The evaluation discussion and practices has been included in the evaluation on VET in general which have been described earlier as national evaluation paradigm. This kind of evaluation ignores the characteristics and the diversity of re-integration programmes. The evaluation is based on the vocational competencies and the hard outcomes like qualifications and employability, etc. Which do not appreciate the results related to the individual life course of students or the professional know how and experiences of re-integration actors.*

*In Finland the ESF-funded activity and programmes are reported and evaluated by NBE (also the body of responsible of allocating funding) and also there are several self-evaluation reports of programmes. In these reports it is possible to see the tendency to evaluate (diagnose) students and identify good practices (pedagogy as medicine). The most dominant evaluation discourse seems to be the search of good practices and challenges of transferring these practices from one programme to*

*another. There is a need for multilevel evaluation which considers the programme as an open system searching its place related to institutionalised education.*

#### **4.4 The discussion context, reconstruction of national context in international research collaboration**

The following chapters which present the QSED-tool (Quality through self-evaluation and development) have to be seen against the background discussed above.

Although discussions of aspects like participation, collaboration, empowerment are not new in the field of evaluation and research there are not many evaluation instruments which include participatory strategies or empowerment evaluation. There are contrary opinions in discussions related to the role of evaluator working with programme people in a collaborative manner (Weiss 1998).

Therefore the QSED-tool presents a completely new innovative way for evaluation processes in Re-Integration schemes which is furthermore also feasible with regard to financial aspects and bureaucratic endeavours.

The “Transnational Reflection and Development Methodology” (TRDM), presented in chapter 8, takes up even more the critical aspects referred to above with respect to evaluation and even self-evaluation. It can be considered to represent a methodology also critically reflecting on the QSED, in this way expanding the latter’s scope.

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## 5 Research Methodology

Beatrix Niemeyer and Lieve Ruelens

### 5.1 Research question

The project was designed to contribute to the improvement of the quality of, and the access to, VET systems and qualifications, and to guidance systems, in order to enhance the employability of young people in the labour market. It contributes, in particular, to the reduction of the number of young people who leave the education and VET system without adequate qualification, paying special regard also to the problem of social inclusion. It's central focus has been on an improved quality assessment of re-integration programmes for young persons with learning difficulties. Most of these innovative initiatives have not yet been formally evaluated. The evaluation methods, when they do exist at all, prove to be mostly very poor, building on "hard" indicators like job placement rates or resource consumption, while "soft" aspects like the personality development of programme's participants are neglected as is the quality of the educational and learning setting. E. g. one measurable criterion of the success of a programme is the rate of job placement of it's participants. But this rate says nothing about the educational aim of the programme to enhance action competences that is the ability to act in a vocational and social context by practice oriented learning contexts! Indeed reflective educational approaches building on learning contexts which enhance a holistic development of learners' personality and go beyond vocational learning are a crucial feature of the quality of integration programmes – but they are hard to measure by means of quantitative evaluation. The originality of the Leonardo project is therefore expressed by the objectives of

- developing, for the first time, analytical tools for systematically evaluating the reintegration schemes on a transnational basis and applying a multi-level approach,
- assessing the validity of the tools developed by applying them to different reintegration schemes. Here cultural cross-fertilisation has proved to be extraordinarily fruitful because cultural differences lead to vastly varying indicators for employability and trainability which open up new horizons for the respective national views.

The underlying hypothesis states that the quality of Re-Integration programmes is expressed by the learning and success of its participants. Learning is understood in a broad sense including the development of biographical competences. A second presupposition is that programmes apply concepts of situated learning in learning communities centred on practice (Niemeyer/Evans 2004) abbreviated LCCP's. As has been elaborated during the Sokrates Re-Enter project (1999-2001) learning in LCCP's can be well situated socially, practically and culturally, an appropriate evaluative approach therefore had to consider the interdependent multiple structural, social and cultural layers or levels which are influencing and shaping the pedagogical practice of re-integration programmes. A specific challenge presented the transnational comparability, since re-integration practices and policies are considerably differing in the participating countries. A milestone of the project was to give an answer to the question: How can the improvement of Re-Integration programmes through situated learning be assessed?

## **5.2 Methodological approach**

The declared aim was a systematic evaluation of Re-Integration programmes applying situated learning on a transnational basis, including the development of appropriate tools for a primary evaluation as a preliminary step. Hence the methodological challenge was threefold:

- to find instruments to assess and evaluate processes of situated learning in primary field research
- to identify and adequately consider the factors influencing the pedagogical practice of re-integration programmes
- to care for transnational comparability.

The problem that individual progress or success with learning or development can only be grasped in relation to the individual starting conditions, which are quite heterogeneous, presented a further methodological challenge. Consequently the success of a programme is depending on the general intention to enhance trainability and/or employability and how it is transformed into target-group specific aims. It is further depending on how these aims can be realised (organisational, institutional conditions) and on the individual starting conditions of the participants.



Since obviously mere quantitative evaluation instruments or performance tests of the participants would not have led to a deeper insight into these complex relations, a qualitative multi-level approach combining a variety of qualitative explorative instruments was the adequate methodological option. This implied the agreement on qualitative methods and analytical tools, which were able

- to grasp the quality of learning from the individual's perspective and the long term effects of situated learning and
- to include the related institutional conditions and
- to refer to the socio-cultural peculiarities of the participating countries in an adequate way

Challenged by the heterogeneity of the selected cases (due to differing cultural and socio-economic backgrounds in the participating countries) the choice of qualitative research methods has been approved and it was further decided to refer to the principles of grounded theory (Glaser / Strauss), a methodology which allows to construct a meta-analysis based on qualitative empirical research in the field in a close collaboration with practitioners, including a set of appropriate research tools such as accompanying observation, expert discussions, shadowing of participants, etc.

### **5.3 Research design**

Starting from the individual level in-depth case studies with a selected number of programme's participants were carried out as longitudinal studies in four-steps: (1) interviewing the youngsters at the time of entering the scheme; (2) observing and analysing their abilities during the programme; (3) assessing learning success at the end of the scheme, and (4) carrying out interviews one and two years after the young people have left. Additional information on the participants' development progress has been gathered by interviews with the educational staff. In some of the participating countries rather elaborated instruments of diagnosis are applied in the schemes, so that researchers could profit from rich experiences in the practical field.

A multilevel qualitative research approach has been applied – starting from a broad set of field exploration being appropriate for culture specific settings, including

attending observation, expert discussions, interviews and shadowing young participants at their work- resp. training place. According to the principles of grounded theory (Glaser/Strauss) knowledge and research results were gained through continuous loops of reflection of preliminary results with practitioners. Findings were developed, tested and re-tested in extensive field research including the above mentioned methods. During these processes indicators have been identified which during the workshop sessions have been transformed into an evaluation tool, based on a comprehensive set of indicators of transnational significance. The testing of the indicators, however, was carried out in reflective meetings with practitioners from all levels in the national contexts, i. e. in the social and cultural context into which a successful evaluation tool needs to be transferred and implemented! Thus the project partnership engaged in a process of mutual learning – grounded on a systematically shared experience of the research process and a lived exploration into the research field in each participating country. Researchers and practitioners thus went beyond the level of simple comparison of systems and a set of factors influencing re-integration practices and policies was identified. Departing from the analysis of culturally specific conditions a deeper understanding could be developed which finally led to a transcultural result.

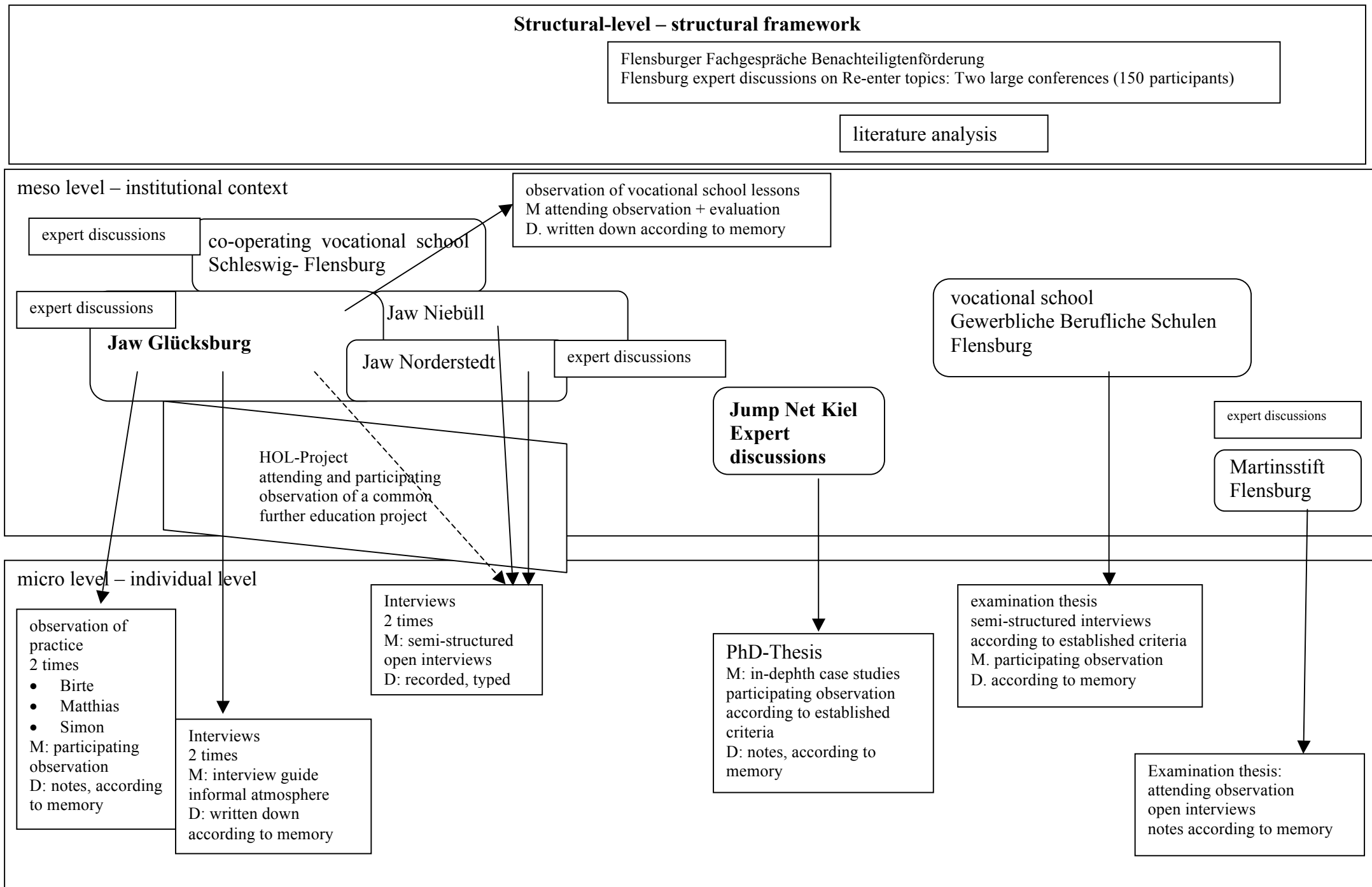
## **5.4 How we proceeded**

Research was carried out in the following steps:

1. Selection of programmes for field research – selection criterion: in accordance with the expanded understanding of situated learning in LCCP's
2. in-depth-case studies with a selected number of programmes' participants
3. mutual elaboration of a set of quality indicators for situated learning in re-integration programmes
4. testing these set of indicators in the national context by means of expert discussions with practitioners and planners in the field
5. mutual development of a basic instrument for the evaluation of re-integration programmes

- 
6. transformation and adaptation of this instrument to the national context, testing and discussing it further in direct collaboration with practitioners from the field
  7. theoretical reflection of the national tools leading to the construction of an instrument for qualitative self-evaluation to be applied in varying cultural settings:  
QSED

The following table shows as an example the construction of the German field access and activities of primary research.



This table shows how the design of the evaluative tool relates to three levels (multi-level analysis):- (a) personal, (b) institutional and (c) socio-economic factors. The originality with respect to existing knowledge was particularly represented by the assessment of the personal factors. To find out about individual learning progress various methods have been discussed. National experiences with learning logs, assessment procedures or attending observations and group discussions have been reported, but in order to achieve comparable results it was consented to carry out interviews. The method of interviewing, however, has to be interpreted in a wider sense. Since the target group, young persons with difficulties in school to VET transition, is not very experienced with self-reflexive oral expression, a) interview guides have been constructed carefully to meet the language and life world of the young; b) interviews have been carried out in a rather non-formal context; c) sharing the participants work/training experience by co-working with them has turned out to be a very effective approach. Interpretation and evaluation of the data material gathered so far has led to preliminary conclusions concerning long-term effects on learners, which have been further tested during expert discussions and in interviews with the educational staff. In addition the extensive field research was complemented by literature studies on situated learning theories.

In a continuous loop of reflection preliminary interpretations of these materials were discussed, critically reviewed and reflected. This process of continuous reflection was not limited to the academic partners but included partners from the field as well and it was carried out during expert discussions with practitioners and planners who are active in the research field. Thus a formative evaluation was integrated into the research process itself and the transferability, i. e. the practical relevance of the research results could be secured. A summary of the project research was discussed at the final conference which led to a fruitful feed back from experts in the field.

## **5.5 Example: Insight into the research process: the Belgian case**

This text reports the methodology of the Belgian contribution to the Leonardo II project ‘Trans-national evaluation of social & professional re-integration programmes for young people’. The following topics will be discussed: research questions, selection of the cases, methods, the use and status of the TRDM developed within this project, the national relevance of this project, characteristics of the re-integration activities and some power and policy issues we encountered during the evaluation process.

### **5.5.1 *Research questions***

The following research questions guided the research activities:

- What are long-term effects of situated learning practice?
- What are good practices of evaluation? Recommendations?
- How do we develop and use a trans-national reflection and developmental methodology (TRDM)?
- What are the recommendations for the programmes based on using this TRDM?

### **5.5.2 *Selection of the cases***

#### *Re-integration in Belgium: What does it mean?*

In Belgium ‘Re-integration’ concerns youngsters between 15 and 18 years old. Since 1983 schooling in Belgium is compulsory up to the age of 18. From the age of 15 (16 if the first two years of secondary education have not been completed) the pupils can transfer to a part-time education system. This system allows youngsters to alternate part-time courses and part-time work. However, large numbers of unemployment (40 to 60%) are registered. To enhance the chances of the youngsters in the labour market the methodology of route counselling was adopted from the Flemish Labour Counselling and Vocational Training Service (VDAB). Route counselling is a method of intensive and individual counselling of the unemployed in a route towards regular employment through different phases. However, not all pupils are ready for regular employment. For them re-integration programmes are developed. Prepaths

are one example of such programmes. Prepaths are the first step in a pathway towards regular employment. Actually they prepare disengaged youngsters for a labour market oriented pathway. Personal and social skills are trained to enhance the youngsters chances on the labour market. In this sense ‘employment’ is not the question yet. ‘Activation’ is the main issue, for a prepath’s target group is not ready nor motivated for regular employment.

In total we selected seven prepaths: two were case-studies, the other five were involved in a process evaluation.

*Selection of two prepaths organised by the youth organisation Arktos: case-studies*

Initially, at the beginning of the project, two prepaths organised by the youth organisation Arktos were selected: one at the part-time vocational education centre ‘Redingenhof’ and one at the part-time vocational training centre ‘Treffen’.

These prepaths were selected as good practices of ‘situated learning’ environments. Besides the importance of work experience and practical action, ample emphasis is put on the social component. These projects provide a holistic approach towards the learner’s personality. Engagement and motivation are preconditions for learning. Learning is not only an individual act but learning processes are emerging from a social context in which they are situated.

Another reason for the selection is the connection of the projects to a complete pathway that capitalizes on the youngsters’ strengths in small manageable steps. In this way the concept of situated learning is connected to ‘route counselling’, a concept that has proven its benefit for the integration of difficult target groups into the labour market. We also consider this concept appropriate for our target group, since it is a method of intensive and individual counselling. We consider the approach of route counselling very suitable to break out of the negative spiral, in which these youngsters are ended up. It is our strong believe that ‘situated learning’ can only improve Re-integration programmes if a structure is provided to guide the youngsters at risk of dropping out.

Another reason for the selection of the cases is the co-operation of different professional experts towards the common aim of vocational and social integration of disadvantaged young persons. A team of trainers, vocational teachers and social workers guides the youngsters throughout their pathway.

The two prepaths initially selected were involved in case study research (see further down).

*Selection of five additional experimental prepaths: process evaluation and project design*

At the beginning of 2003 the Higher Institute for Labour Studies initiated a process evaluation of five experimental prepaths (Vilvoorde, Turnhout, Limburg, Eeklo, Kortrijk). Three of these prepaths were organised by Arktos, the others by VCVL, another youth organisation. The expertise we built in the first phase (case-studies and trans-national cooperation) was used and tested (see further down).

### **5.5.3 Methods**

*Case-studies: the prepath Redingenhof and Treffen*

To study the situated learning processes of the pupils and the factors promoting and impeding the implementation of situated learning we employed the principle of *triangulation*. This means that the research object is being reached from as many angles as possible (Fielding & Fielding, 1986). Beside interviews with the youngsters themselves we gathered information from the teachers, the trainers, and if possible the parents and/or social workers of the institutional residences. A combination of different research methods was used.

### **5.5.4 Intake interviews with youngsters**

All youngsters who were qualified for the Arktos prepaths at the part-time vocational education and training centres Redingenhof and Treffen in February 2002 were interviewed: sixteen youngsters in total. First the questions were answered in writing so this basic skill could be evaluated. The youngsters were assisted filling out the form. Afterwards answers were discussed with the youngsters.

During the intake interviews we tried to map the youngsters past, present and future. The topics of the intake were:

- *Basic information about the school*
- *Contacts of the youngster (parents, institution, court,...)*



- 
- *Personal data* (identification, family structure, living situation, health condition, school career, employment)
  - *About the project* (information, motivations, expectations)
  - *About school* (favourite/less favourite subjects, favourite/less favourite teachers, critical incidents, ...)
  - *About life outside school* (employment, free time, money spending, day structure and consequences of participation, personal elements that should be taken into account)
  - *About family and friends* (importance of family, most important family member, problems (if any), importance of friends)
  - *About the youngster him/herself* (special interests, capacities, personality, characteristics the youngster wants to change, characteristics others want the youngster to change)
  - *About the future* (profession, life within five years time)

#### **5.5.5 Follow-up interviews**

One year after the prepath's intake (eight months after the ending) the youngsters were interviewed again about the prepath and the progress they made on a personal as well as on a professional level during the last year. This moment was chosen because it is a crucial point in the schoolyear (student count, new prepaths and orientation programmes starting).

As there was a lot of 'coming and going' in the two prepaths (especially at Treffen), it was decided to trace all those youngsters who filled out an intake form at the start of the programme February 2002, whether they joined the prepath or not.

Since a lot of the youngsters switched or left school it was not easy to trace some of them. However, if contact was made, they talked openly about the prepath and themselves. This contrasted with their reluctance towards interviews at the start and during the programme. For some it was clearly the progress they were proud of that opened them up. For others, especially the youngest ones, just being older made the difference.

In total ten youngsters were interviewed.

During the follow-up interviews we reconstructed the pathway of the youngsters after the prepath. Then we asked questions about the prepath itself: effects and facilitating and impeding factors. We ended the interviews by re-reading the intake information with the youngsters. For most of the youngsters this was a revealing moment.

### 5.5.6 *Participative observation*

Although the formal interviews (intake and follow-up) with the youngsters yielded sufficient information, we wanted to keep the threshold for the youngsters as low as possible. Therefore we also interviewed them within the context of participative observation. Beside keeping the threshold for the youngsters as low as possible the participative observation revealed direct information about the ‘situated learning environment’. The framework we used to structure the participative observation is presented in table 1. This table is part of the framework developed in the ‘Re-enter’ project (Fripont, Van Valckenborgh & Douterlungne, 2000).

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>A meaningful learning context</i>           | <p>Learning within a <b>meaningful work context</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the things the young person learns and has to perform must be linked to a certain work context with which he or she can identify him/herself</li> <li>- the young person learns while he or she interacts and collaborates with other young people and counsellors relating to the things learned; the things he/she learns are immediately transformed into meaningful action</li> <li>- attention is given to the whole person; his/her experiences in the course of learning (cognitive, emotional, somatic and relational)</li> <li>- the experienced collaborators act as whole persons; they allow themselves to be known as persons, with their own emotions, possibilities and limitations</li> <li>- the context is complex and rich, and reflects the multiple uses to which their knowledge will be put in the future</li> </ul> |
| <i>Space for the young person as a learner</i> | <p>Within the work context, there must be <b>space for the youngster as a learner</b>;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the young person is given specially adapted tasks for the purpose of learning, (e.g. less complex tasks, tasks involving less risks, low costs if he/she commits an error, and with less time pressure); these must always be tasks, however, that have meaning within the work context.</li> <li>- the tasks are sequenced to reflect the changing demands of learning, and certainly not the job demands.</li> <li>- the young person receives special guidance when performing his/her meaningful tasks</li> <li>- the young person is recognised as a learning employee; the employer must have an open attitude to the members of the target group, and give</li> </ul>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <p>them a chance; a mistake must be viewed as an integral part of the learning process and not as a failure on the part of the young person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the experienced employees must also be open to the views of the young people and be willing to learn from them</li> </ul>   |
| <i>The learning content of the working context</i>    | <p>By creating this ‘space’, access is given to the <b>learning content of the work context</b>. This learning content comprises three domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the <i>means</i> which are used in the work context; theoretical knowledge, techniques, skills, tools, ...</li> <li>- the <i>manners</i> in the work context; who is who?, how does one address different people?, how can you work together well?...</li> <li>- insight into the work being done; <i>understanding what the work context stands for</i> and being able to act accordingly ; knowing what behaviour is appropriate and what is not; being able to assume responsibility</li> </ul> <p>Not only does one have to acquire sufficient meaningful knowledge of these three domains, but one also has to know how to deal with them in a creative manner and make one’s own contribution.</p>           |
| <i>Intermediate evaluations</i>                       | <p>Throughout the learning process emotions, learning needs, ambitions, expectations and experiences of meaning will change; there is a need for intermediate evaluations and a flexible way of dealing with these changes</p>  |
| <i>Beyond the own position in the working context</i> | <p><b>Look beyond your own position within the work context;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- make the young person realise what the labour market is like and what his/her place is in it;</li> <li>- teach the young person how to reflect critically upon his/her position in the labour market;</li> <li>- do not let the young person just accept his/her position; rather, let him/her try out new things, explore new opportunities</li> </ul> <p>Together with the young people, regular assessments must take place of where they have come from and where they can go; the young people must have a clear understanding of what they are doing and why.</p>   |
| <i>Beyond the working context</i>                     | <p><b>Be able to experience one’s own contribution to the work context as meaningful action within society + transfer to other meaningful actions within society (both within and outside the labour market):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the work context must have meaningful consequences for the outside world, so that the young person learns what is needed to act effectively in society</li> <li>- being able to experience one’s own role in the work process as meaningful for a broader context</li> <li>– the young people must learn what it takes to participate successfully in our society; basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic), learning how to learn, social and communicative skills, being active citizens who can participate both constructively and with a critical mind in society, health-enhancing behaviour and environmental friendliness.</li> </ul> |

Table 5.1: Framework participative observation ‘situated learning environment’

### **5.5.7 Project group**

A project group supports the programmes. Participants are: the Arktos prepath trainers, the Arktos coordinator, the route counsellors of the part-time vocational education and training centres Redingenhof and Treffen, the coordinator of some bridge projects (another type of Re-integration programme after finishing the prepath this could be a next step on the pathway), and the tutors of two institutional residences (De Wissel, Jeugdoase) of which a lot of residents attend the projects.

The project group discusses the programmes at different levels:

- MICRO- level: the youngsters (profile, progress and follow-up) and programme activities
- Institutional-level: the programme organisation
- Structural-level: the broader context

During the research period we attended five meetings of this project group.

### **5.5.8 Formal interviews/informal contacts with trainers, teachers, route counsellors**

During the research period trainers, teachers and route counsellors were interviewed. Also informal contacts with these actors yielded research material.

During these interviews/ informal contacts questions about the broader context of the programmes were asked.

### **5.5.9 Overall framework: TRDM**

To structure the research material we used the TRDM as it was presented by the Finnish partners at the Jyväskylä workshop (see further down)

#### **Process evaluation: five experimental prepaths**

At the beginning of 2003 we started the process evaluation of five experimental prepaths. The experimental prepaths involved in this research phase were organised by two different youth organisations: Arktos and VCLV. Both organisation use a similar methodology. Although prepaths had been organised for several years and a

general outline of this type of reintegration programmes existed, a more profound concept was needed. Therefore the process evaluation was actually a process of project design. During the process of evaluation we tried to conceive a ‘common concept of prepaths’. To do this we used the TRDM mentioned above (also see further down).

#### ***5.5.10 Questionnaires***

We developed two questionnaires to collect basic information about the projects:

- One questionnaire about the programme at the micro (youngsters and programme activities) and the Institutional-level (programme organisation).
- One questionnaire about the trainers’ opinion about his/her job.

The questionnaires were developed according to the TRDM.

#### ***5.5.11 Meeting with trainers***

During the process evaluation several meetings with the practitioners were organised (five up to now – the process evaluation is not finished yet).

During the first meeting the type of evaluation was discussed. The practitioners and researchers agreed to a process evaluation using the TRDM. After this first meeting the questionnaires were distributed and data were collected.

During the second meeting the data collected according to the TRDM were discussed and the first programme changes were introduced.

During the next meetings this process of data collection and programme development was continued. The TRDM was used as a guideline.

#### ***Round table conference***

Halfway through the process evaluation of the five experimental prepaths a first concept paper about the reintegration programmes was produced. In this paper data from the case-studies and the first phase of the process evaluation were integrated.

The concept paper was presented and discussed at a round table conference (12 September 2003). Practitioners as well as policymakers (field of education and field of labour) were present. During this round table conference emphasis was put on the Structural-level analysis of the Re-Integration programmes.

#### ***5.5.12 Transnational Research and development methodology -TRDM***

During this Leonardo project the research emphasis moved from long-term effects of situated learning practices to the evaluation process itself. A transnational developmental methodology was developed and it became the object of research itself. How did we use this methodology within the Belgian context?

Throughout the project the use and the status of the TRDM changed.

During the first phase of the research it was a good framework to structure all the data we had collected using different methods. In this way, the model mainly served research purposes, although in a 'practical' sense. Based on the analysis recommendations to practitioners and policymakers could be formulated.

During the second phase the TRDM was used in a process evaluation that was a joint initiative of researchers and other actors. First the TRDM itself was discussed with the practitioners. Then both researchers and practitioners decided to use the methodology to guide the design of the programmes. This was a cyclic process:

- information on micro and Institutional-level was collected and discussed according to the TRDM (the Structural-level was only marginally analysed);
- programme changes were induced;
- results of these changes were discussed;
- other programme changes;
- more discussions.

Halfway through this process a concept paper was produced and discussed during a round table conference. At this conference besides practitioners also policy makers participated. This way also the Structural-level was put into the forefront.

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As mentioned above the TRDM was no longer only a research methodology. The ownership of the methodology itself and therefore the results were shared by other actors: practitioners as well as policymakers.

We conclude the following. Within the Belgian context the TRDM, as it was presented at the Jyväskylä workshop, proved to be a good methodology for *analysis* and also *process evaluation* and *programme design*. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that the model takes into account the tension field within which reintegration programmes are organised. On three levels/dimensions (educational and employment system; programme/activity system; activities and experiences of teachers and youngsters) the following topics proved to be relevant:

- Inclusiveness
- Collaborative networks and actors
- Funding mechanisms
- Qualification and recognition of skills and competences
- Administrative structures
- Didactical solutions
- Vocational relevance
- Match educators and students
- Evaluation system

## 6 Quality through Self-Evaluation and Development

Gerald Heidegger and Wiebke Petersen

### 6.1 Existing Evaluation approaches: examples

Evaluation has become an increasing subject of interest in educational non profit organisations during the last years because the idea that institutions which receive public funding should prove their quality is increasing outside but also inside the institutions. Evaluation tools with different approaches have been developed and are used in recent time. Regarding evaluation tools and their conception a development from strongly external evaluation approaches to approaches which combine self-evaluation and external evaluation is remarkable. Self-evaluation is becoming a more and more relevant aspect.

Below three actual evaluation tools for educational institutions will be presented. One is originally derived from an evaluation tool for profit organisations and has then been adapted for non-profit organisations in general. In connection with one of the German best practice examples we had the opportunity to be informed and to observe the adaptation of this tool for Re-Integration schemes. The other two evaluation tools are specially addressing schools. All of them combine self-evaluation and external evaluation but they do this to a different extent and they present different ways of utilisation. This has to be seen in the context of the actual stage of development.

At the end of this chapter aspects which can be learned from the three tools for the development of a European evaluation tool for Re-integration schemes will be listed.

#### 6.1.1 *The EFQM*

The EFQM–Evaluation Tool is a quality management system which follows the TQM<sup>10</sup>-approach. That means that the EFQM-Model is a holistic system of quality management which includes not only the results but also focuses on the processes. The EFQM was originally developed by 14 leading European organisations in 1989. Nestle AG and Renault were two of them. Since the EFQM as a tool addresses especially non-profit organisations which means organisations for which financial

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<sup>10</sup> TQM stands for total quality management.



profit is no (important) target, the main aim is the continuous improvement of quality.

The underlying principle for non- profit organisations to practice evaluation is the conviction as well as the growing societal demand that organisations which are financially supported through taxes over long periods have to prove their quality.<sup>11</sup> This principle is more and more valued by practitioners in educational institutions too.

The aim of this evaluation is the initiation of a continuous improvement of the processes through structured benchmarking. That means that efficiency and the recognised quality of the institution should be developed and improved. The method of benchmarking steams from the economic background and is defined as follows:

*"Benchmarking is the process of identifying, understanding, and adapting outstanding practices from organizations anywhere in the world to help your organization improve its performance." <sup>12</sup> "Benchmarking is a highly respected practice in the business world. It is an activity that looks outward to find best practice and high performance and then measures actual business operations against those goals." <sup>13</sup>*

Based on the EFQM-Modell and its proposed criteria institutions are able to develop their own "stamp of quality".

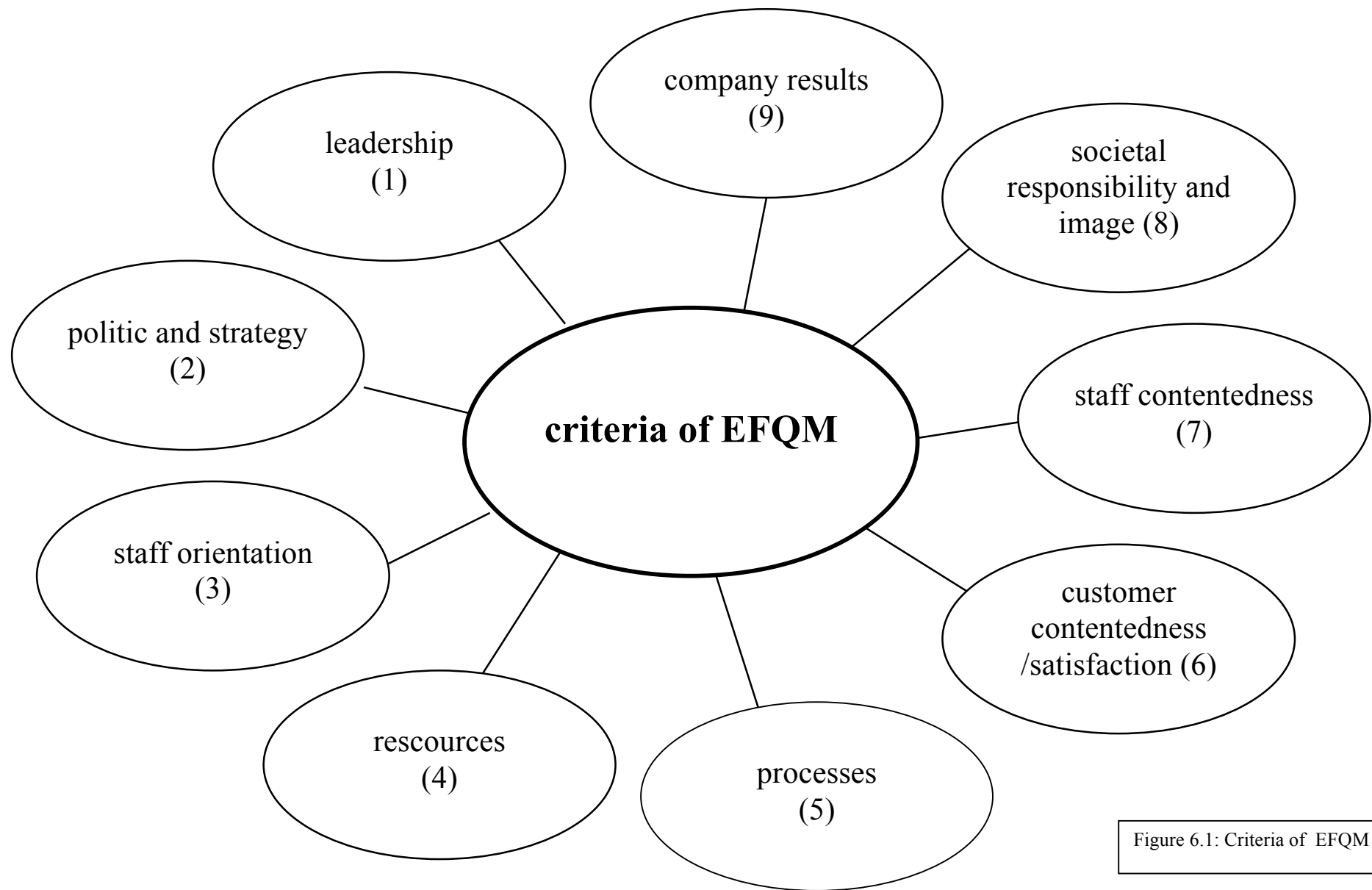
It has to be stated that authors of the EFQM advise potential users to choose two criteria to start the evaluation process with.

The criteria they have to take into account and they could choose from are the following.

<sup>11</sup> In the German case this is established in the Runderlass 12/2002 of the Bundesanstalt für Arbeit.

<sup>12</sup> [www.benchnet.com/wib.htm](http://www.benchnet.com/wib.htm) 6.7.2004

<sup>13</sup> ebd.



The criteria named above are specified more detailed in the concept of the EFQM. In order to give an overview one criterion will be presented including its further specifications: This will be criterion 5:

### **Processes**

This criterion is defined as follows: **How does the institution recognise, identify, carry through tests and improve its processes?**

It is divided into five subsections which deal with the following questions and for which several starting points are given:

5a "How are processes identified which are significant for the company results?"

Starting points could be, how the institution ...

...defines core and support processes (1)

...identifies core and support processes(2)

...values repercussion on the business results(3)

5b "In which way are the processes carried out systematically?"

Starting points could be, how the institution ...

...defines the persons involved in a process and the process leadership(4)

...establishes aims, contents and time related courses(5)

...uses planning and evaluation systems for the leading of processes(6)

...organises relations between the institutions(7)

5c "How are processes tested/ How are aims for improvements established?"

Starting points could be, how the institution ...

...knows about, names and ranks methods of improvement(8)

...uses information from the staff, from suppliers and others for establishing achievement norms, priorities, and aims for improvement (9)

...initiates a continuous improvement process which compares former and recent achievements(10)

5d “In which way are processes improved through innovation and creativity?”

Starting points could be, how the institution ...

...integrates the creative talents of the staff into the improvement process(11)

...discovers and practices new forms, ways, cuts, technologies and philosophies(12)

...changes the organisational structure in order to support innovation and creativity(13)

5e “How are processes changed/How are the changes evaluated?”

Starting points could be, how the institution ...

...uses the feedback from clients, suppliers and others to stimulate innovation and creativity for the leading of processes(14)

...tests new or changed processes and controls their introduction (15)

... informs internally and externally about process changes(16)

...qualifies members of staff in advance(17)

...tests short term results during the process in order to ensure the expected results(18)<sup>14</sup>

Regarding the questions and their starting points in detail it becomes clear that the term processes is meant in a broad sense. It not only includes learning processes but it means all processes which take place in the institution. Also improvement processes and self-evaluation processes are included. The starting points 8, 9, 10 as well as 18 for instance give information for initiating and testing an evaluation system. The starting points 11-13 take up the involvement of staff.

All the criteria mentioned in the mindmap are those chosen and used by one of our prepaths, the “Jugendaufbauwerk”.

They developed their own “stamp of quality” which they call the “JAW Gütesiegel”. This stamp of quality is based on the EFQM- Model and it has the following characteristics:

<sup>14</sup> The definitions and starting points in the frame are a translated section from the list of criteria of JAW-Süderbrarup which has been developed under the leadership of its manager, Holger Delfs.

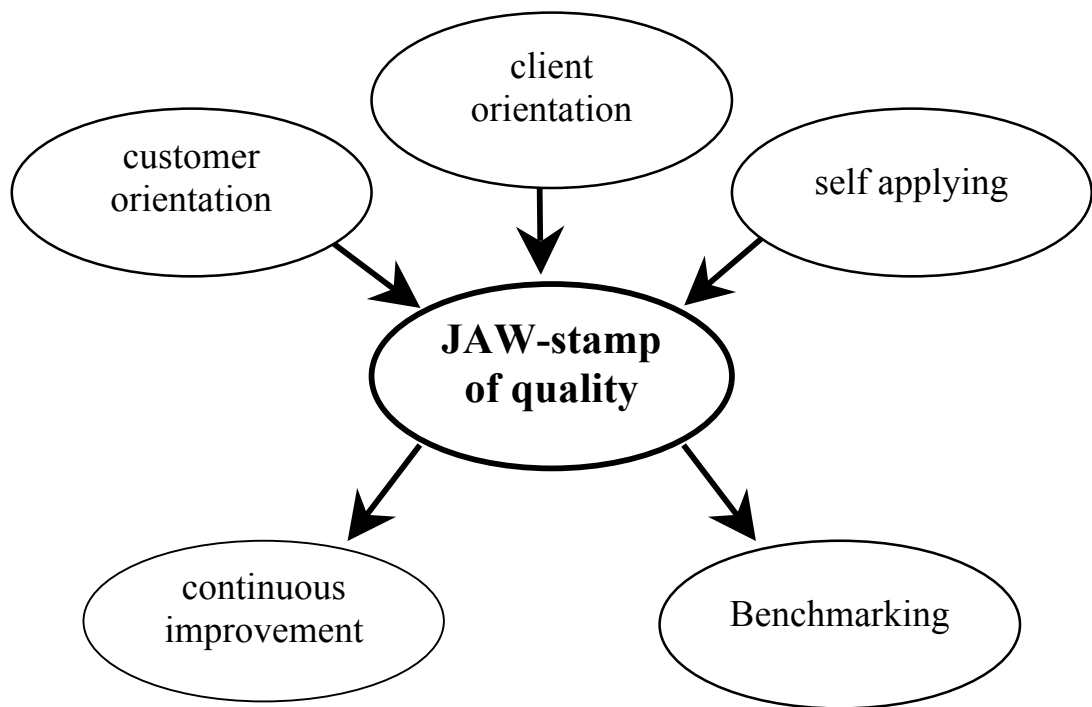


Figure 6.2: JAW-stamp of quality

### Using the EFQM as an evaluation tool

The evaluation of the Re-Integration scheme takes place as a combination of external evaluation and self-evaluation. In the **first step** it takes place through self-evaluation which is based on two selected criteria of the table:....., a description of the pedagogical and the work processes in the different workshops. Furthermore the business results of the last three years are added. This procedure takes place every twelve months. Each time it is possible to choose different criteria.

The **second step** includes the coming in of external evaluators into the institution. These external evaluators belong to a pool of assessors which is built up by all JAW-organisations in the regional state. They work as follows: Firstly they interview members of staff and also trainees with regard to the information they took from the material of the first evaluation step. Secondly they go through all the papers restructuring the information and processes given in the material from the first evaluation step.

In a **third step** external evaluation can take place either through other quality management systems. The application for the *Quality Award of the Economy in Schleswig-Holstein* is one example. A special price for non-profit organisation is

offered every year. Or external evaluation can be demanded from the JAW-Verbund ( Association of all JAWs).

The improvement of the Re-Integration scheme is, according to the leader, not dependent on the feedback of the external evaluators. Through the analysis of the processes new ideas are developed by the staff. Additionally they rethink the established processes. On this basis improvement is going on.

### **Underlying assumptions and targets of evaluation according to EFQM**

The aspect which is central for the evaluation is similar to that in profit institutions: It is the question *“Is the client content with the product which is given?”*. In order to answer this question the customers – in this situation that means the labour office or the social ministry - are not asked directly, but it is presumed that the customer is content if his demands are fulfilled. Therefore the basis of evaluation are the standards demanded and established by the customer. This fact can not be regarded positively from all perspectives, because not all the standards given by the customers are sensible with regard to the Re-Integration process in practice. As an example the finding of long term placements for the trainees can be stressed. According to the standards given by the customer (– the labour office –) a social pedagogue - and not a member of staff with another professional background - in the Re-Integration scheme is responsible for finding a long term placement for a trainee. This demand is dismissing the interests and the attitude of the companies that should be convinced to offer a long term placement. Members of staff in such companies – often these are crafts enterprises – do not like to talk to the social pedagogue. They prefer to clear up the responsibility connected with the placement with persons who have a similar professional background. They are more willing to take in a trainee if they could talk to the master and get information about the skills of the trainee who should be taken on. But because the standards of the customer demand the above named persons to find the placements it is organised according to their demands.

This example shows that in this case the evaluation results can not have any improving influence on the practice of the Re-Integration scheme.

We do not want to judge the EFQM-Evaluation tool in a critical way because in practice the approach of reflecting the processes in several circles seems to work well. Although it is not clearly pointed out in the guide of EFQM self-evaluation

seems to play a major role in the whole EFQM-evaluation in practice. Nevertheless it has to be stated that to some extent the EFQM is an example for the aspect mentioned in chapter 3: Evaluation is often dominated by the national evaluation trends given through administrative bodies. Furthermore EFQM is an European evaluation tool, its design addresses the special customer interests which are based on the national context.

An aspect which appears to be even more problematic is the fact that the careers service focus' mainly on the transition rates of each scheme when it comes to the provision of funding. It is important how many trainees are (re-)integrated into mainstream education, but the contents and the processes which are provided are ignored. Evaluation carried out as well as evaluation results do not seem to play a role for the award of financial support. This situation is calling the value of evaluation into question.

### **Advantages of the EFQM in comparison with other evaluation tools**

The choice for EFQM instead of using quality management systems like ISO 9000ff was made because the EFQM-model has a special focus on non-profit organisations and on evaluating soft skills. For these reasons the EFQM—model is suitable for the JAW which offers Re-Integration schemes for young people who dropped out of the mainstream education for various reasons. Quality management systems like ISO 9000ff have a focus on the precision of products and are therefore not suitable for the institution because the latter 's products are human beings who have to develop mainly soft skills and also “hard” competences. As it is said in chapter 3 soft skills demand a new design of evaluation and a specific type of evaluators. Nevertheless, the EFQM which leaves the evaluation in the first step with the practitioners can be seen as a big step towards the evaluation of soft outcomes.

#### ***6.1.2 Q2E as an example for an evaluation tool for schools***

Below the evaluation tool Q2E which stands for “*quality through evaluation and development*” will be summarized. At some points aspects which are important for the QSED or the TRDM will be taken up. Q2E is an evaluation tool which was especially developed for schools also vocational schools in Switzerland during the

late nineties and which has already been tested successfully by a great number of schools. The Q2E tool combines self evaluation and external evaluation.

It demands a new understanding of quality within schools and it takes up three aspects of quality management in profit organisations and discusses and adapts them to the special situation of schools. These aspects are the following:

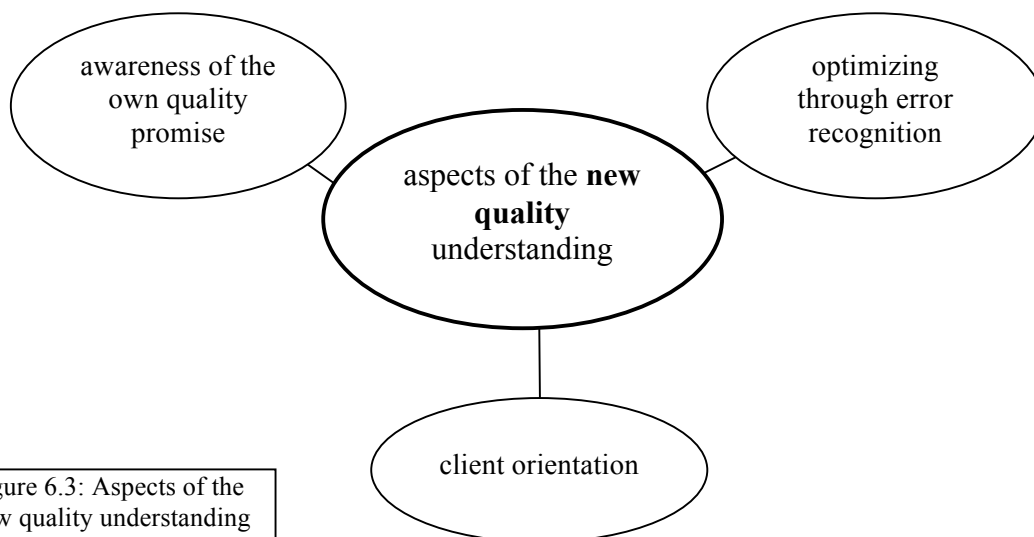


Figure 6.3: Aspects of the new quality understanding

According to the authors of Q2E LANDWEHR and STEINER (2003) these aspects need to be transferred into the new context of schools through redefining them.

If the **awareness of the own quality promise** means to prove and communicate self-established quality demands into an economic context this is an aspect which can not be taken over directly for non-profit organisations like schools in the educational sector. Even for Re-Integration schemes which are in some cases carried out by profit organisations this aspect is not directly transferable. In the educational sector it is important that the practitioners agree on a common approach which recognises the specific convictions of all/most members of staff.<sup>15</sup>

**Optimizing through error recognition and analysis** means to optimize products. While processes continuously change within an economic context it is different for educational processes. In these a definite division between right and wrong actions is not possible.

<sup>15</sup> The TRDM could be the basis for constructing such a common approach or design for a Re-Integration scheme because it provides action criteria which are important cornerstones of Re-Integration at the institutional- and the structural-level. These action criteria can be filled with content and processes according to the convictions of the participating practitioners.



For the understanding of this characteristic within the educational sector LANDWEHR and STEINER suggest that all persons involved should search for quality deficits and possibilities for improvement. A quality discourse should be initiated in which results of the quality research are discussed. This is the basis for improvement in educational practice.

If **client orientation** means to meet client' demands and as a result cause customer contentedness within the economic context this is a difficult aspect within educational systems. The authors of Q2E mention two specific difficulties within this context. Firstly schools or similar institutions have to recognise that their client group includes several subgroups which have different and often divergent demands. Regarding the situation of schools subgroups are e. g. pupils, parents and policy makers. Secondly in some cases client orientation can include to act against the subjective individual aims of the clients. School can not always correspond to the aims of pupils.

### Construction of Q2E

The Q2E mainly includes five quality sections which should be evaluated in schools. These are **input qualities**, **process qualities regarding the institution**, **process qualities regarding teaching**, **output-/outcome qualities** and the section **quality management**. Every section contains three dimensions.

Every school needs a special evaluation tool according to its specific characteristics.

Therefore the quality characteristics are formulated on a medium level of abstraction and complexity.<sup>16</sup>

As an example the following table from the Q2E should be presented as an example:

| <b>Shaping of teaching and learning processes(methodical-didactical arrangements)</b>  | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1)The teacher attaches the importance that aims and intentions of the lessons are understood by the pupils. The learners see the importance of learning aims and contents. |          |          |          |          |
| 2)The teacher arrives at explaining complex learning processes and difficult facts in relation to experiences and knowledge of learners.                                   |          |          |          |          |
| 3)The teacher arrives at initiating the pupils interest for the  |          |          |          |          |

<sup>16</sup> Landwehr (2003): Basisinstrument für Schulqualität, S. 5

|   |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| contents and engaging them for participation.   |  |  |  |  |
| 4)Space of active participation and self-directed learning of the pupils in the lessons is offered  |  |  |  |  |
| 5)The teacher arrives at making the pupils aware of their responsibility for their learning and he supports this through adequate measures. |  |  |  |  |
| 6)The teaching is shaped in a way that pupils could create a strong relation between theory and their own experiences.                      |  |  |  |  |

This table is taken from the dimension “*social relations within teaching*”. The numbers on the right side should be used as points or marks. The institution which uses Q2E has to define by itself if “1” should mean “*completely fulfilled*” or “*not considered*”. The second aspect of the above table should be taken to show the process of use in the institution in detail: “*The teacher arrives at explaining complex learning processes and difficult facts in relation to experiences and knowledge of learners.*”

In order to evaluate this aspect through self-evaluation as well as through external evaluation the understanding of this aspect needs to be specified. Different options of fulfilling this aspect like project teaching or action orientated teaching are possible but not all of them are common and applicable in each school. For this reason it is up to the users of Q2E to establish more specific criteria. Additionally not all of the five sections and their fifteen dimensions are suitable for each school that wants to use Q2E. Furthermore it would be an overtaxing demand for one school to evaluate and to be evaluated through all fifteen dimensions. Therefore the school leader team and the evaluation team of a school are obliged to choose some of the aspects which are suitable for their school and which should be specified further.

In this context LANDWEHR proposes six ways of using the Q2E for evaluation practice<sup>17</sup> which are presented in the following graphic:

<sup>17</sup> Landwehr(2003), S. 6-8.

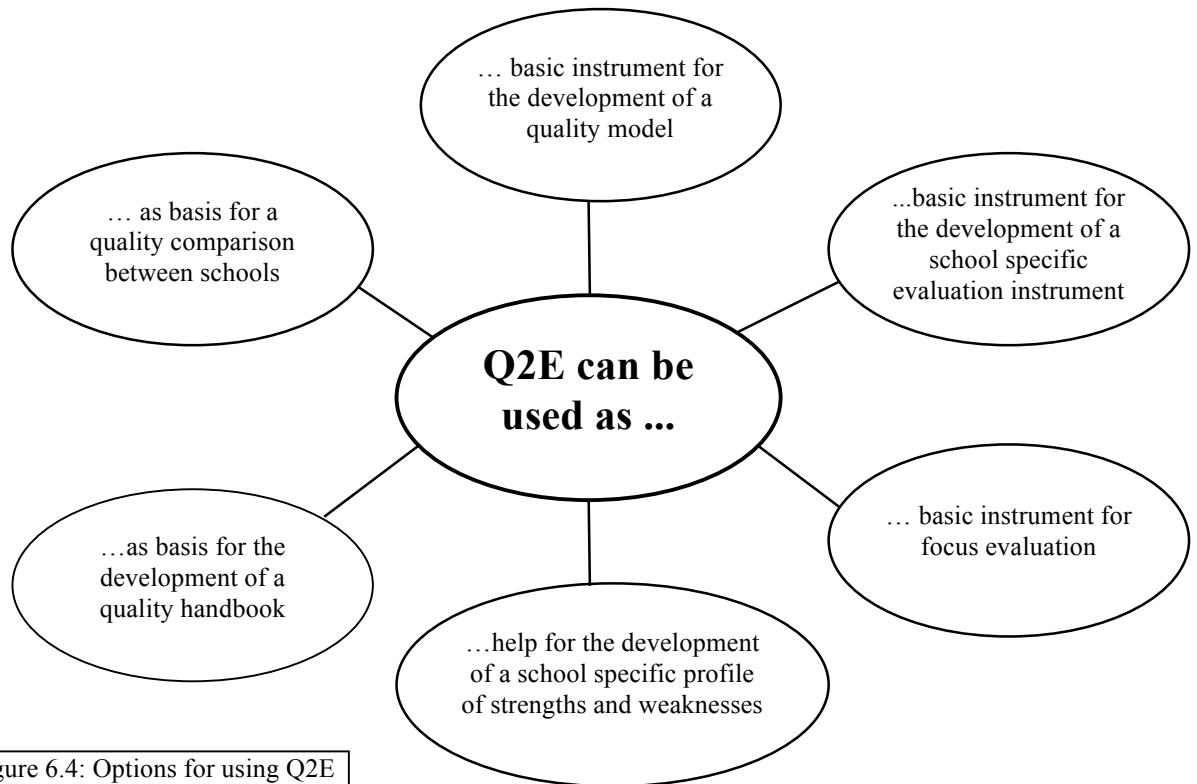


Figure 6.4: Options for using Q2E

In the following the focus will be on aspects of **process qualities regarding teaching**. A second excerpt of the Q2E tool will be presented as an example. Both excerpts belong to the dimension “social relations and class leadership”, one deals with the subject “social relations within teaching” and includes six questions which need to be developed further according to the special field in which the Q2E should be utilized in. The other which is already presented above deals with the subject “Shaping of teaching and learning processes (methodical-didactical arrangements)”. In relation to each excerpt one way of using Q2E should be explained in more detail.

The characteristic “social relations between teacher and pupils” has been chosen because social relations – especially those between staff and participants - are an important aspect within Re-Integration schemes too. Some of these aspects might be transferable to the evaluation tool for Re-Integration schemes if the term “teacher” is replaced by the term “practitioners”.

There are overlaps between the points mentioned in the following table and the criteria and questions which are mentioned under the headline “pedagogy” in the QSED.

Similar to the specifications which are demanded to be developed by the teachers using Q2E the QSED<sup>18</sup> demands users to choose questions from a pool which stands in relation to their specific scheme.

| <b>Relation between teacher and pupils</b>   | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1)The contact between the teacher and the pupils is corresponding with the aims and values postulated in the whole school. The contact is determined by positive expectations. |          |          |          |          |
| 2)The teacher's relation to the pupils is personal, highly regarding, friendly, respectful.  |          |          |          |          |
| 3)The teacher takes time outside the lessons to look after pupils with problems  |          |          |          |          |
| 4)In conflict situations the teacher makes efforts to search for the reasons and avoids convicting somebody as guilty before knowing all details.                              |          |          |          |          |
| 5)The teacher shows understanding if someone gives a wrong answer without intention. Mistakes are taken as learning chances.   |          |          |          |          |
| 6)The teacher is regarded as fair.   |          |          |          |          |

The above table could e.g. be used as basis for focus evaluation. All colleagues or a selected evaluation team of one school choose one or two of the fifteen dimensions because they recognise the significance of these dimensions for the specific situation of their school. In the case of this example the dimension "social relation and class leadership" has been chosen and the aspect "Relation between teacher and pupils" will be regarded and adapted to the specific school situation in detail. The evaluation team has three options. Either they could develop "*questioning items*" for interviews or questionnaires, "*observation items*" for teaching observations, conferences or school events or they could develop "*formulations of questions and criteria*" for the analysis of documents. Using these specific tools data regarding school quality should be collected and analysed. In a next step activities which strive for optimising the results should be planned, introduced into practice and finally evaluated again.

An important aspect which is additionally mentioned by LANDWEHR is that in the cases of some dimensions it might be useful to integrate the target groups into the choice of the dimensions and the further development of the basic instrument as well.

<sup>18</sup> See chapter 7.

According to the different aspects which are mentioned in the above table different further developed tools might be applicable. Regarding the feature “2) *The teacher’s relation to the pupils is personal, highly regarding, friendly, respectful.*” it might be useful to develop questionnaires which offer pupils to give anonymous statements. In relation to the feature “5) *The teacher shows understanding if someone gives a wrong answer without intention. Mistakes are taken as learning chances.*” it might be useful to develop observation items which can be used for sitting in on teaching..

In this special case such observation items could be: If someone gives a wrong answer ...

- the teacher asks the others to contribute
- smiles and gives non-verbal signs which signal that the answer is not correct

A second way of using the Q2E should be presented in relation to the excerpt “Shaping of teaching and learning processes (methodical-didactical arrangements)” which has already been presented above.

This table could be part of the basis of a comparative evaluation between schools.

It could be evaluated to what extend the approach of action orientation is realised in practice. Therefore, firstly the schools which participate in the comparison need to agree about the dimensions and features which should be taken into account. Data regarding the quality of teaching and learning processes will then be identified e.g. through observation of teaching and through analysis of teaching material. Data will be analysed. Finally schools with high quality results should be honoured and used as source or consultant for other schools.

In addition to the mentioned ways the Q2E could be used as basic instrument for the development of a quality model. This option of using the Q2E is presented in very detailed steps by LANDWEHR (2003). He argues that the development of a quality model is an indispensable basis for quality management in schools, because in a quality model the values, norms and standards of a school are established. These are the values, norms and standards which the school has chosen for self and external evaluation. In the quality model it is said “How the school wants to be?” Furthermore it can build the basis for the development of tools for school evaluation.

For instance, questionnaires for parents, pupils and teachers could be developed according to the quality model. In this context it is important to state that the quality

model is not identical with a school profile. A quality model is an internal not an external working tool.

Furthermore such a quality model can be the basis for employee interviews. It defines the frame for external school evaluation and it defines school development targets.

### **6.1.3 EVIT**

EVIT stands for “*external Evaluation Im Team*” and it is an evaluation tool which is on the way to be established in the general schools of the state Schleswig-Holstein in Germany at the moment. During the last two years it has been tested by a few schools in pilot projects. EVIT is strongly linked to Q2E. It combines external evaluation with self-evaluation. The aims of EVIT are defined as follows in the handbook<sup>19</sup>

- schools should take over responsibility for their strengths, their deficits and development requirements
- make sure which effects they have achieved through their work
- give schools input for their development

EVIT offers questionnaires for the different clients of the and persons involved in the school: pupils, parents and teachers. The questionnaires take up contents like “social behaviour” and “communication”. The addressees of the questionnaires answer through ticking one of six boxes with headlines from “often” to “never” or from “completely fulfilled” to “not realised at all”.

Self-evaluation should be carried out continuously through an evaluation team in each school. External evaluation is proposed to be carried out every five to six years.

### **6.1.4 The EFQM and the Q2E include good and challenging aspects – nevertheless a different evaluation tool is necessary**

The EFQM-Model and its use in the JAW-Gütesiegel as well as the Q2E seem to be useful for their utilisation in practice. According to our accompanying observations the EFQM works well and is highly regarded by the members of staff of our best

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<sup>19</sup> Ministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur in Schleswig-Holstein (2003): Externe Evaluation im Team – EVIT - Handbuch für die Pilotphase.

practice examples. Also the description of the use of Q2E give the impression that practitioners appreciate the evaluation tool and especially the options for self evaluation.

Nevertheless there are some aspects which seem of great importance to us and which lead us to developing the basis for a different evaluation tool: QSED which stands for Quality through Self-Evaluation and Self-Development. The reasons for developing a completely new evaluation tool have three dimensions:

Firstly the aims, the contents and the organisation of Re-Integration schemes are different from those in schools and they are different in the European countries. Therefore an European evaluation tool for Re-Integration needs to be broad in order to fit in with all national contexts. Nevertheless it has to include specific criteria which address central aspects of each scheme.

Secondly in relation to these content related aspects it becomes clear that regarding Re-Integration schemes the extent of self-evaluation needs to be extended.

Thirdly the presented tools EFQM and Q2E address mainly the institutional and individual level but they do not stress aspects which are related to the socio-economic context. Especially in relation to Re-Integration schemes which deal with problems of political relevance the socio-economic dimension cannot be excluded.

In comparison with the presented evaluation tools EFQM and Q2E, the QSED has a much stronger focus on self-evaluation. Before presenting the new evaluation tool the critical points which lead to its development will be mentioned in relation to the other two tools which were fruitful and assisting steps on the way to the development of QSED.

Evaluation is a great issue in non-profit organisations in Germany - e.g. large evaluation processes for school evaluation (EVIT – external Evaluation in a Team/Quabs – Qualitätsverbesserung in der Berufsschule) have just completed the pilot phases and will be used in all schools in Schleswig-Holstein respectively in different regional states, especially in Bavaria, within the next three years. But it has turned out that evaluation is always connected with fears of the staff in the institution that has to be evaluated. People are afraid that their work will be devalued, that they will lose funding through the results of the evaluation and that they will lose reputation. This is one reason according to which we suggest that self-evaluation or

better said self-reflection, not external evaluation should be the central focus fostering and initiating evaluation of Re-Integration schemes.

According to our experiences during the Re-enter and the Re-integration research we assume that self-evaluation by using an European tool could be especially fruitful because new aspects, for example regarding the subjects and the work processes that are offered or regarding the institutional organisation, could be taken on. A European evaluation tool - like QSED - always names aspects which seem to be unfamiliar to the practitioners in their national context. Rethinking and discussing such aspects with colleagues might initiate the introduction of new aspects into their Re-Integration scheme then. This process can be understood as mutual learning.

Furthermore we assume that, related to the fact that in none of the countries is a special profession for those working in Re-Integration schemes, the fears to be evaluated are huge.<sup>20</sup>

As a result of the lack of special professional characteristics for staff in Re-Integration schemes judgement is feared especially because the content of evaluation seems broad and difficult to ascertain for them. A clear definition of what a good Re-Integration scheme and a good Re-Integration practitioner are not existing.

Even the existing tool Q2E which already has a strong focus on self-evaluation needs further development regarding self-evaluation for Re-Integration schemes. This is due to the fact that the underlying principles and aims of schools are common in all European countries. In contrast the underlying principles and aims of Re-Integration schemes are different in the European countries as it is pointed out in chapter 2 and in chapter 12 because the countries have different vocational education systems and these have to be seen in relation to different socio-economic systems.

Another aspect that does not only legitimate the development of a different evaluation tool but also demands an extended evaluation tool is the fact that is already mentioned above: Evaluation carried out for example through the EFQM will not face a great number of challenges between the **meso-** and the **macro-level** because tools like the EFQM are customer orientated. For this reason the evaluation addresses the demands of the customer and it is not evaluated if aspects on the **macro-level** disturb the scheme process. As it will be mentioned in chapter 9 some

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<sup>20</sup> In the chapter „Practitioners Voices“ this is partly confirmed.



practitioners have the opinion that rules and regulations on the socio-economic level bother their daily work. In the case of Germany for example the aspect that trainees are assigned to the Re-Integration schemes through the labour office is seen as an obstacle. Within an evaluation that takes into account the customer interests this obstacle would never be identified. For this reason the partners of the project agreed that a different European evaluation instrument is necessary in order to give the practitioners a tool to reflect their schemes themselves. They need a methodology to identify obstacles on the different levels of their schemes and as a result be able to improve the scheme or in an ideal case to engage in influencing the socio-economic level.

#### ***6.1.5 Learning from the EFQM, Q2E for the development of an European evaluation tool for Re-Integration schemes***

The following aspects can be taken from the Q2E for the development of an evaluation instrument for Re-Integration

##### **Evaluation tools designed by researchers ...**

- should and could only be basic instruments which need to provide options for further development and adaptations through practitioners of the specific field.

- should be designed in a way which offers multilevel applications
- should support and demand the self-responsibility of practitioners through the definition of specific common aims.
- should contain information about the start the self-evaluation process

## **6.2 (Self-)Evaluation for Re-Integration schemes**

Following the critical reflection on the existing approaches for evaluation the instrument for the field of re-integration schemes was developed, the “QSED”. As was described in chapter 5 it is based on comprehensive qualitative field research, identifying as a first step the general preconditions for successful situated learning processes of the participants where learning is understood in a broad sense as development of occupational, social and personal competences, the combination of

which leads to autobiographical action competence. The latter means the capability of people on the one hand to reconstruct their lives as a sensible succession of stages even if difficult breaks have been experienced. On the other hand, this means that the next thresholds to be surmounted can be viewed as a sequence of challenges that can be met instead of only unsolved problems which linger on in the future.

The next step was to construct lists of criteria for the evaluation of adequate conditions for situated learning and training concepts and processes and their further development, with special regard to the three levels (macro, meso, micro). These lists of criteria had to be generated in a self-reflective way, based again on extensive field research, employing the method of “Grounded Theory” (Glaser, Strauss). In this way, they are specific to the socio-economic and cultural peculiarities of the participating countries although exchange between the partners introduced new theoretical aspects by way of mutual learning.

The macro-level is especially important since not only the conditions for models and processes in the single schemes are of relevance. Rather the “landscape” of the programmes implemented in a country has to be analysed as a whole.

Afterwards the task was to assess and improve the validity of the lists of criteria by applying the to different schemes, including in this way new criteria; to design on this basis sets of criteria which are systematically constructed so as not to leave out important features.

The main aim here was to assess the validity of the criteria by finding out if the respective list is comprehensive and to construct a theoretically founded set of dimensions to which they are to be related. In this way an analytical tool was developed which can be used for systematic evaluation

In pursuing this task theoretical differences between two main approaches had to be dealt with. In a strongly actor-based approach evaluation, even self-evaluation, is seen as an instrument of external control which introduces criteria that can not catch the peculiarities of a very specific course. In a strongly market-based society the question of “value for money” has of course a much higher esteem, and therefore external evaluation according to objectified, measurable indicators is viewed as self-evident. Even if the researchers from the different countries did not, of course, represent the respective dominating approaches it was still indispensable to take into

account the opposition between these two approaches which are more or less in variance.

Nevertheless, beside the three-level approach (macro-, meso- and micro-level) another central result could be consented on: Six dimensions of criteria which are always of relevance could be commonly defined, even if a lot of the criteria themselves depend heavily on the particular scheme and the cultural setting. For that it was also decisive if the criteria were defined according to a nearly exclusively actor centred approach or following a more generalising method which let more overarching theoretical structures evolve like the one mainly employed in the project, according to the “Grounded Theory” of Glaser/Strauss. The six dimensions mentioned will be explained later, in connection with the tool for evaluation, mainly self-evaluation, called “Quality through Self-Evaluation and Development” (QSED), as described in chapter 7. In order to open up this approach to the highest possible degree of influence by the actors a “Transnational Reflection and Development Methodology” (TRDM) was developed at the same time which emphasises action research in the strict sense. It avoids the concepts of even self-evaluation and quality management and stresses even more than the QSED the relevance of reflection by the actors. In this way, it may be perceived as a methodology which can be employed for critical reflection on the first mentioned concepts, thus making the users of the QSED aware of the implicit assumptions underlying these concepts.

In this way the two basic approaches mentioned were not superficially reconciled but brought explicitly to the fore. Nevertheless, a very close mutual interaction of them is represented in the results.

The critical arguments presented in chapter 5.2 led to a combination of action research and more “observing” research. Action research can be understood as a special version of the “interpretive approach” in the Humanities. It deliberately tries to reduce the distance between the researcher and the “object” because the latter, being a human being, is not objectifiable. “Observing” research, on the other hand, whilst also acknowledging the individual as a human actor, still tries to find out about regularities in human behaviour. This is, in its distinct form, called the “conventional approach”. It is easy to see that the two approaches quoted in the Executive Summary under 1.3.1 are to be detected here. Accordingly, some partners

were inclined more to the one or to the other. But because the conventional methods were applied in an attenuated version common results could be achieved.

The indicators which had been gained through the extensive field research had to be assembled to construct lists of which could fit in well with the respective cases. On the other hand, they had to be based on theoretical foundations which, however, should not impose assumptions made beforehand. The obvious choice was to employ the method of “Grounded Theory” which was developed by Glaser/Strauss for ethnographic research and has already for some time expanded its field of application from ethnomethodology to areas like work research. Indeed similarities can be found between researching into the behaviour of an ethnic tribe and the rites prevailing in a working group or, for that matter, in a Learning Community Centred on Practice (LCCP). The theory is then built up from the bottom and generated through continuous loops of reflection on empirical evidence gained in the participative, collaborative, observing field research that has employed all the methods mentioned above.

Thus, however, it is not only inevitable but also desirable to arrive at lists of indicators which are specific for the case concerned. This is valid even if the indicators are “enriched” and transformed through theoretical deliberations. These transformed indicators were henceforth called “criteria”. In addition, the partners laid different stress on the various indicators leading to a great variety of lists. Most important for that was the fact that it had turned out that from the outset the institutional conditions (meso-level) and the economic, societal and cultural framework (macro-level) needed the utmost attention, particularly the latter being very different for the participating countries.

To expand, from the start, the lists of indicators for evaluating the conditions of processes of situated learning so as to include all three levels at the same time lead to the construction of a set of dimensions of criteria where each dimension is subdivided, although in a strongly interactive way, into the three levels.

In this way the QSED can also be used as the foundation of external evaluation similar to the one described above.

In order to allow for the highest possible degree of adaptation of the European tool “QSED” it is presented as an interactive IT-tool on a CD to be used on a conventional PC. In contrast to the usual programmes which are also called

interactive this tool makes it possible to change it nearly completely, by altering the questions themselves, not only selecting different answers. The only feature to be retained is the basic structure, that is the three levels (macro-, meso- and micro-level) and the six dimensions of the criteria employed.

The six dimensions... of the criteria were developed from the field research in a spiral of repeated interpretation of the issues detected, thus employing the methodology of “Grounded Theory” elaborated by Glaser and Strauss, as described in the chapter 4 and 5 about methodology.

The six dimensions are:

- **Self-Evaluation and Reflection:**  
Here the basic aims, possibilities and limitations of evaluation (self-evaluation, perhaps combined with external evaluation) should be reflected upon.
- **Collaborative networks of actors:**  
Here the importance of networking (internal, within the institutions, and external, among different institutions) should be discussed.
- **Inclusiveness:**  
At issue are here the opportunities and limitations of retaining the young people at risk of dropping out as close as possible to the mainstream (including assistance for gaining the necessities of life).
- **Funding/Administrative structures:**  
This relates to the general funding and administrative rules for re-integration schemes as well as for each single measure; in addition, the question of how the individual participants can be supported through adequately organised funding should be dealt with.
- **Situated learning:**  
This has been elaborated as the main means for providing the most adequate learning opportunities for the disadvantaged clients; in particular the task is to design re-integration programmes in such a way as to promote vocationally oriented competences in close connection with furthering social and personal development.
- **Recognition of skills/Assessment:**  
This regards the possibilities and limitations of officially recognizing the often

small steps of progression of the participants as well as the balance between the evaluation of progress in personal and social competences and the demands of the funding bodies for assessing objectifiable results.

How to use the tool is explained in the CD at the beginning. Also the main principles which led to its construction are shortly outlined, as is described in the following section 6.4.

The content is reproduced in chapter 6 of this report. In order to experience the true value of the high interactivity and adaptability the readers are, however, strongly advised to try out the tool on the CD directly for themselves. This outcome of the project transcends considerably the objectives which the partnership had announced in the proposal.

Nevertheless, as is described in the chapter about the critical reflection of the methodology (chapter 4.2) there exist also strong reservations against every form of even self-evaluation the methods of which are prescribed from outside. Therefore the partnership developed, together with the QSED tool, a methodology which puts the practitioners' views even more into the centre and leaves the way how to deal with the situation of their scheme completely to them as the main actors. It is closely connected to the QSED in applying the same three-level approach where now, however, the individual and the structural level come into view nearly exclusively from the perspective of the practitioners while reflecting upon and further developing their respective re-integration scheme. This is called the "Transnational Reflection and Development Methodology" (TRDM), described in chapter 8. It is based on the above mentioned "interpretive approach" of evaluation and employs the action research methodology in the strictest sense with which this was originally developed. The TRDM can and should be understood as a methodology for critically reflecting upon a tool like the QSED which, although also strongly actor oriented, still retains the claim of having elaborated objective quality criteria based on scientific research.

But because the development of the QSED and the TRDM proceeded in parallel, at the same time and based on the same outcomes of the field research, the basic dimensions for reflection used in the TRDM are identical with the six dimensions for self-evaluation and development employed in the QSED as outlined above.

### **6.2.1 *Transnationality as European added value for the QSED***

In view of the great diversity of Re-Integration programmes regarding cultural and socio-economic context (c.f. chapters 3 and 9) it is obvious that severe thresholds have to be overcome in order to construct a transnational tool. Indeed, it has turned out during the research that already on the national-level the diversity is so great that it is difficult to find common quality criteria. On the one hand, this diversity may represent an advantage because very often it is due to the also different needs of the students and the various contexts, especially regarding the status of the programme (short term or established), the network it is operating in (e.g. close connection with a VET school or rather the local community), the ways of access (students sent by the labour office, picked up through an outreach service) etc. On the other hand, the diversity may be an expression of the fact that the task of re-integrating young people is not valued enough in the respective socio-economic context, and that therefore the “landscape” of various initiatives is developing by chance, without much overall planning. As has been mentioned before, in order to take this into account as much as possible the outcome of the Re-Integration project is twofold. On the one hand the tool “Quality through Self-Evaluation and Development” (QSED), on the other the “Transnational Reflection and Development Methodology” (TRDM).

It is important to notice that the two “instruments” are thought to be connected through a dialectical relation: Although they represent rather different approaches, they are strongly influencing each other and can be seen, in this way, as forming a whole entity together. The TRDM is a methodology which mainly enables actors of a specific programme to analyse its distinct features, reflect upon them and devise developmental orientations and actions for improvement. Transnationality is represented particularly through the fact that the researchers committed to the paradigm of action research, who are engaged in a dialogue with the actors, are members of transnational communities of (research) practice.

The QSED is a tool for enabling evaluation following the three level approach. Its main target is stimulating self-evaluation by the actors on the meso-level in the first place. For that it is of course necessary to evaluate the effects for the learning processes of the participants. But also necessary or possible improvements on the macro-level should be evaluated by the practitioners because very often those are perceived as restrictions. Therefore the tool is also important for planners and policy-

makers. In addition, not only the processes of personal development of the participants should be observed. Rather it is in the interest of the actors, on all levels to also notice the development processes of the programmes (courses, schemes, measures) in order to improve them. This is actually the focus of the objectives of self-evaluation, here represented through the QSED, critically enriched by the TRDM. That makes external evaluation, if it aims at doing justice to the respective programme and not only at measuring outcomes like transitions to the labour market or formal VET, much more effective, also for the practitioners themselves. The transnational commonalities are represented by the fact that the areas put forward for self-evaluation, reflection and development are common for all cultural settings. However, it has turned out during the development of the national systems of criteria in the field research that regularly some areas are much more important than others, dependent on the cultural setting. Some may even appear to be nearly superfluous whilst others may be represented much too little. Therefore the actors are encouraged and challenged to think out their own set of important criteria, only retaining the basic structure of six dimensions and the three levels. The TRDM may open up even a wider horizon.

Nevertheless, the common transnational research process made it clear that there are indeed important challenges and opportunities for inter-cultural mutual learning. This becomes particularly obvious if one looks at the possible transnational interaction of intentions, contexts and “solutions”. To take up the distinction of the four main cultural settings (c.f. chapter 3) important examples are:

a) Influence of the strong non-formal setting:

- on all the other systems:

The role of the family should be taken into account much more.

b) Influence of the market driven setting:

- on the occupation-related and the strong school-based setting:

A combination of strong personal support in a course and of regular work tasters, and the high relevance of leisure activities, combined with a rather “relaxed” work environment in the course should be strengthened.

c) Influence of the occupation-related setting:

- on the market-driven setting, maybe also on the strong non-formal setting:

The role of a rather strict orientation towards fields of a possible future



occupation could support young people's self-confidence and self-esteem.

- on the strong school-based setting:

The role of work-based learning in "real" businesses outside the school could facilitate the school-to-work transition.

d) Influence of the strong VET-school based setting:

- on the market driven, the occupation related and the strong non-formal setting:

The furthering of inclusiveness, trying to keep disadvantaged young people in the mainstream wherever possible, should be considered much more, even if these settings are less favourable for such an endeavour.

The role of education for citizenship could be strengthened.

These mutual influences will be taken into account in the "Transnational Recommendations" (chapter 12).

### **6.3 Introduction to the QSED and it's relation to the "Transcultural Recommendations"**

This is an evaluation tool which aims at helping practitioners to reflect, to discuss and to improve their practice together with their colleagues. The practitioners can use this tool on their own, but we suggest that they rather use it in a small group with two to five colleagues. The following instrument is divided into six dimensions which were considered to be important features for Re-integration schemes by an European Project focussing on the evaluation of such schemes across Europe. Practitioners of Re-integration schemes as well as educational researchers were involved in this project. Each of the six dimensions includes criteria and accompanying explanations which are categorised into three different levels: The structural level, the institutional level and the individual level. These three levels are related to each other, they determine or influence each other in different ways. -Self-Evaluation and Reflection

- Collaborative networks of actors-Inclusiveness

- Funding/Administrative structures-Situated Learning

- Recognition of skills/Assessment

The structural level takes into account the societal conditions, the political conditions and the economic context of Re-integration provision. On this level criteria are formulated as statements or demands. It is obvious that these conditions can not be influenced or changed directly by a

single person or a small group, but the practitioners might have suggestions regarding these conditions which are worth to discuss with others and which could then be put forward to local policy and decision makers.

The institutional level which focus' in detail on the conditions and requirements within the institution which provides a Re-integration course. The criteria in this dimension are formulated as questions which the practitioners can ask and answer themselves. It might be the case that some of the questions are not applicable to their practice or that they might want to change a question or add one. The tool will give them options to do so and to create their own tool. The first of the six dimensions which we think to be very advisable for each user explains these processes further.

The individual level which focus' on the interaction and the relation between the practitioners and the learners of the courses. The criteria on this level are – as on the institutional level - given as questions which the practitioners can ask and answer themselves. These criteria might be those which could be directly influenced by each single practitioner in a course in his everyday work.

For using the QSED-tool for the first time we suggest to work through the first dimension “Self-evaluation and reflection” and to choose one or at a maximum two further dimensions which should be worked through by all but at least by a selected group of practitioners. It is crucial that the use of QSED is discussed with and accepted by all members of staff and that everybody within the team who is interested has access to the tool. Furthermore we suggest to print the “-documents in which they have written in their answers/changes and suggestions.

## **6.4 Relation between the QSED-tool and the transnational recommendations**

There is a strong correlation between the “*transnational recommendations for the improvement of the quality of re-integration programmes*” and the self-evaluation tool *QSED*. **Both** of them use a **three level-approach**, which means that they distinguish between aspects that should be espoused on a structural level, aspects which should be recognised on the institutional level and aspects which should be introduced or raised in practice as it has been described before: The structural level

takes into account the societal conditions, the political conditions and the economic context of Re-integration provision.

The institutional level which focusses in detail on the conditions and requirements within the institution which provides a Re-integration course. The individual level which focusses on the interaction and the relation between the practitioners and the learners of the courses.

**Both**, the recommendations and the QSED take up a transnational context.

But the way of using the transnational context is different in the two documents. Because the recommendations derive their advice for specific settings of the (vocational) education system or specific welfare regimes from the transnational context of the project they are formulated for these groupings of countries, so they include suggestions for rather targeted improvements. In contrast the QSED presents a combination of questions which are sometimes related only to the specific context of some of the countries. The users of the tool can decide themselves if they want to use questions which are not related to their specific context as new input and as a chance for mutual learning or if the questions and statements are not related to their practice and need to be deleted.

Furthermore there is a high correspondence between the aspects Collaboration, Reflexivity, Inclusiveness and Situated Pedagogy in the recommendations on the one hand and four of the the six dimensions of the tool on the other hand: Collaborative Networks, Self-Evaluation, Situated Learning, Inclusiveness, Funding/Administrative Structures and Recognition of Skills/Assessment. In most cases the correspondences between the aspects of the recommendations and the dimensions of the tool are obvious when comparing the terms of the headlines.

Nevertheless they address different target groups, the recommendations address policy makers and planners while the QSED is produced mainly for practitioners in the field of re-integration although the QSED can be used as a tool for reflection by policy makers and planners, too. Against this background they use different approaches to point out the results and outcomes of this project.

While the tool aims at activating the practitioners of Re-Integration schemes to reflect and improve their practice by themselves; the recommendations propose potential changes in a direct manner to policy makers and planners who are in a position of power. Against this background the way of speaking in the two

documents is different. While the QSED-tool invites practitioners to enter a dialogue about the outer circumstances of their Re-Integration scheme, about their institutions and their relation to other institutions and about their ways of dealing with the clients, the recommendations state more clearly which changes and developments seem to be necessary from the point of view of the research team of the Re-integration project.

Through their different approaches and their different target groups the recommendations and the tool can be regarded as two ways of transferring the outcomes of the Re-Integration project and its precursor project Re-Enter in a holistic and constructive way that is involving the target groups and that is asking them to carry on the processes of improvement and evaluation of Re-integration schemes.

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## 7 Text version of QSED

**Gerald Heidegger and Wiebke Petersen**

Below you find the heart of the QSED- Quality through Self-Evaluation and Development- Tool. While the introduction to the tool and the instructions for using the tool are given in chapter 6.3. you have now access to the original statements, questions and explanations of the tool. We strongly recommend to make the endeavour of trying the interactive electronic version of QSED to get an overview on its use in practice. This might furthermore be a more motivating activity because the interactivity is a decisive feature. In addition, the connection between the different parts (questions, explanations/suggestions, answers respectively alteration of the questions) is not easy to discover in the following paper version.

### 7.1 Self-Evaluation and Reflection

#### **Structural-level**

##### **a) Self-Evaluation**

- 1) Self-evaluation and reflection are supported by providing adequate means.
- 2) A budget which covers 10 percent of the overall personnel costs to be designated for the time to be devoted to self-evaluation seems to be adequate.
- 3) An instrument for helping with detecting critical aspects of the re-integration programme in order to look for improvements and further development.
- 4) External experts who assist the practitioners in adapting the instrument to their specific needs, without introducing features of external evaluation.

#### Explanations

To No. 1) Self-evaluation is rightly estimated to be the most effective and democratic means for providing re-integration schemes. But all too often adequate means are not provided. The single most important factor is a sufficient time budget for the actors.

To No. 2) The relatively high budget is advisable because continuous improvement and development is not only the aim of the self-evaluation and reflection but also the

main means for the former which includes not only staff development but also the improvement of all features of the programme.

To No. 3) It is supposed that QSED (Quality through Self-Evaluation and Self-Development), presented here, can be used for this purpose. It should be used according to the general philosophy of Transnational Reflection and Development Methodology (TRDM). In this way it becomes the tool of the institution concerned, but is also always seen in a process of further development: Quality through Self-Evaluation and Self-Development Tool (QSEDTool)

To No. 4) The external experts should assist in this according the principles of active research without introducing a hierarchy of knowledge.

### **b) External Evaluation**

1) If external evaluation is demanded it is necessary that state of the art methods should be applied.

2) External evaluation should be carried out only in close connection with continuing self-evaluation of the scheme by the practitioners, managers and planners of the scheme itself.

3) Processes and indirect outcomes should be valued at least as highly as products, and concrete results, e.g. transition rates to normal pathways, single, easily measurable competences and qualifications gained.

### Explanations

To No. 1) An intensive discussion about that is going on in Europe, based also on empirical research. Mostly it is accepted that the state of the art of evaluation points to a need for self-evaluation every fifth year, combined with external evaluation which however is closely connected to it.

To No.2) If external evaluation is carried through in this way it could reduce the fears of the practitioners and the possibility that a "good picture" is produced only for the sake of getting funding. Otherwise it is bound to be ineffective, a waste of time, and often even harmful.

To No. 2) To use these concrete results as the only indicators for external evaluation, as it is often applied, should be avoided by all possible means. External evaluation using only concrete results does not correspond to the state of art and would endanger the long term effects of the programme.

### **Institutional-level**

- 1) How do we influence the framework of self-evaluation and reflection?
- 2) Do we try to use our external network (cf. Collaborative Networks) to influence the methods of external evaluation?
- 3) How could we improve the evaluation criteria?
- 4) Which criteria are applicable to our practice and important, and which criteria are unimportant or possible superfluous?
- 5) Which criteria are missing?
- 6) How could we initiate self-evaluation and reflection of our practice in an acceptable way for our whole team, involving as many members as possible?
- 7) How could we integrate self-evaluation and reflection into our practice without devoting too much time to it?
- 8) How could we initialize a common discussion process for adapting the criteria list, particularly defining the missing criteria?
- 9) Do we set apart enough time for common discussion processes in different teams for constructing our own QSED tool (QSED T)

### Explanations

To No. 1) In order to introduce a self-evaluation tool for the improvement of the own practice it is crucial that the members of staff discuss the conditions and requirements of self-evaluation. It should be ensured that all practitioners have access to the tool and that they agree about the use of it in practice. Furthermore the time which will be provided for the self-evaluation process and the responsibilities should be defined.

To No. 2) External evaluation is already carried out in one way or another in most of the Re-integration schemes of the participating countries. Such evaluation is often target oriented and focussed on "concrete results" such as transition rates. The



courses and their chances for further funding are often determined by such evaluation results. Because all of the re-integration schemes cope with the problem that these results do not include the real achievements of their work it might be good thing if we were to join forces and try to influence this type of evaluation.

To No. 3) Because the QSED is a European evaluation tool not all of the criteria mentioned will be applicable to our re-integration practice. Therefore practitioners should select criteria seem to be relevant to their situation. They should think about changing questions in order to adapt them to the needs of their practice or about adding questions which are missing with regard to their scheme. Through this process they create their own QSED.

To No. 4) The mentioned criteria might be of differing importance to different re-integration practices. Only the important ones should be taken into account. If criteria give the impression of being superfluous for our scheme they should simply be deleted.

To No. 5) Criteria which are missing but which are important to us should be added.

To No. 6) Self-evaluation and reflection may be a difficult theme to discuss, and will in some cases be regarded with misgivings. Therefore it is important that the whole team working on a re-integration scheme should find a commonly agreed way of introducing self-evaluation. Barriers and fears could be diminished through discussions about the possible merits of self-evaluation and reflection for the further development of the scheme.

To No. 7) Self-evaluation is a time consuming task. Therefore it might be sensible to think of practical ways to integrate self-evaluation into practice as a team.

To No. 8) All members of staff should discuss and finally agree on the way in which the QSED tool should be introduced. For some institutions it might be useful if as a first step a small group of practitioners works through the whole tool and then informs their colleagues about it as a second step. For other institutions it may be better if small groups look at one or two of the eight aspects and make presentations on those aspects to each other in a conference afterwards. There may be other possible ways of doing this too, but whatever method is selected, it is crucial that criteria are discussed and all practitioners are involved in the self-evaluation process to a certain extent.

To No. 9) Constructing ones own tool on the basis of QSED is a demanding task which cannot be completed in one day. It may be important to discuss selected criteria given in this tool in detail. If this were so, groups could work seperately on specific aspects of the said criteria. In any case the time needed must be officially provided.

### **Individual-level**

- 1) Do we try to let the participants take part in the self-evaluation process of the institution?
- 2) Do we explicitly use the self-evaluation criteria when dealing with the participants?
- 3) How should we use our experiences in dealing with the participants for our own QSED?

### Explanations

To No. 1) This may be very difficult to achieve although it is implicit in many criteria, e. g. through asking participants about their feelings.

To No. 2) This cannot, of course, happen continuously, but rather through writing down regularly very short notes about some of the respective observations.

To No. 3) It appears to be advisable to prepare team sessions in collecting relevant experiences by writing down short notes.

## **7.2 Collaborative Networks of Actors (External and Internal)**

### **Structural-level**

#### **a) External Networks**

(Networks between different institutions and between institutions and regional/national / transnational decision makers)

- 1) Communication and co-operation (regarding the target group) between institutions (on regional and national level) and decision makers is supported by:

ministries of employment, labour, education, social affairs, etc..., social partners (unions and employers' organisations) chambers of commerce, industries and crafts labour/employment agencies/exchanges. There should be a standing committee to organise this.

2) Regional networks of re-integration institutions, employers' organisations and unions, chambers of commerce, industries and crafts, vocational and general schools, further education institutions labour agencies, institutions for social counselling agencies for social support institutions dealing with youth support( sports clubs, youth work departments churches and local communities etc.) should be strengthened or established.

3) These networks should strengthen an effective co-operation between different re-integration institutions and the other agencies, as mentioned in No. 2, on a local level in order to provide tailored support for different target groups under changing conditions. This specifically includes aftercare which is very often heavily undervalued.

4) Different re-integration institutions or initiatives should co-operate in order to provide a broad spectrum of different and perhaps rather specific schemes for the various target groups thus avoiding competition.

### Explanations

To No. 1) This is in most countries not well established, but of utmost importance for the further development of the re-integration "landscape". The degree of inclusiveness (especially access to the labour market), the extent of funding, the variety of schemes (vocational orientation and/or more social support) are dependent on agreements with and between these decision makers.

To No. 2) Again these networks are usually not functioning well although they are the basic structures necessary for a comprehensive support of the target group. These networks for interaction and exchange should be officially institutionalised in order to restructure and improve the provision of re-integration continuously.

To No. 3) For re-integration institutions or initiatives, co-operation is necessary on the local level with general schools (in order to provide early support for unsuccessful school-leavers), vocational schools (in order to re-integrate participants into the mainstream, if possible), employers willing to take in participants, labour

and employment offices (in order to organise guidance and financial support), welfare offices (for financial support for the participants during their attendance and after leaving), social counsellors for problems like drugs, HIV/AIDS, homelessness etc., leisure oriented bodies (sports clubs, youth centres run by churches or local communities, and social counsellors employed and responsible specifically for aftercare (looking after participants after they have left the scheme).

To No. 4) A large institution may run many different schemes (more vocationally orientated and/or more oriented to providing general social support for personal growth), but often there are also a variety of smaller, more specialised providers which should try to act, vis-à-vis the funding body, as a group with common interests (which is sometimes referred to as competitive co-operation).

#### **b) Internal Communication and Co-operation**

1) The professional education of the participating professions (see Section 3 Inclusiveness Pedagogical Conditions) contains modules about dealing with re-integration measures.

2) The respective modules (according to No. 1) should be designed so as to reduce the differences in the professional paradigms.

3) Further education for the professionals involved is provided, particularly aiming at enhancing the level of networking between them.

#### *Explanations*

To No. 1) In order to facilitate internal communication and co-operation basic knowledge and competences should be part of the respective curricula for professionalisation, thus contributing to the professional paradigms involved (see section 3 Inclusiveness, Pedagogical Conditions)

To No. 2) For the same reason these modules should explicitly address opportunities, challenges and problems of internal communication and co-operation.

To No. 3) This is highly important because a holistic approach to the support of the young people involved is necessary, as will be analysed in the following chapters of this QSED tool.

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**Institutional-level****a) External Networks**

- 1) The re-integration institutions should aim at building or maintaining and strengthening associations which can lobby within the adequate policy networks. Do we do that?
- 2) How do we contribute to maintaining and strengthening regional networks (cf. Structural-level, No.2)?
- 3) How do we use our local connections to re-integration institutions, employers' organisations and unions, chambers of commerce, industries and crafts, vocational and general schools, further education institutions, labour agencies, institutions for social counselling, agencies for social support, institutions dealing with youth support( sport clubs, youth work departments of churches and local communities etc.) in order to maintain and strengthen networks on the local level for providing tailored support to the target group?
- 4) Do we use this local network in order to provide different avenues of access to our scheme, wherever possible not only officially through the labour exchange or the careers service but also through outreach services which present much lower access thresholds to the young people?
- 5) How do we use our connections with other local re-integration institutions and initiatives in order to take care in designing a broad range of alternatives, well adjusted to the different needs of the target group?
- 6) How do we work against institutional prejudices?
- 7) Do we consciously divide the responsibilities between the actors involved, e.g. with the vocational school and/or the work placement scheme?
- 8) To what extent do we co-operate with other relevant institutions providing services like health care, safer sex education, youth advice, careers service, and drugs aid?
- 9) To what degree do we support alternative routes to the return to mainstream education and training? Are other options like building networks for sports and leisure activities being presented and initiated?

10) Do we collaborate with institutions which offer help with aftercare, that is looking after the participants when they have left the scheme? Do we lay enough stress on this issue which is of extraordinary importance?

### Explanations

To No. 1) Lobbying is often forgotten in the hectic rush to complete daily tasks because it is admittedly, time consuming. This problem can be made easier to overcome by building associations committed to this task.

To No. 2) The task of maintaining networks is often subordinated to that of coping with the daily workload. This natural tendency can be alleviated by allocating this task to an elected representative.

To No. 3) In most cases a lot of informal, personal connections do already exist which are sometimes not valued highly enough, particularly personal relations to prospective employers or social workers in the position to provide aftercare.

To No. 4) In different countries different more official or more unofficial ways of achieving these aims are commonly employed. Here international mutual comparative learning should be very relevant. The understanding of the uses of support through family networks as is common in southern european countries, would be a case in point here.

To No. 5) This can reduce the necessity of competing for money from the funding bodies.

To No. 6) People who work in different institutions or come from different professional backgrounds often regard each others work critically. Teachers do not understand the work processes found in workshops and those running them may not like social workers having long counselling sessions with learners in them. As a result conflicts exist between the institutions as well as between the professional groups and restrict collaboration. This can only be overcome through regular meetings and communication.

To No. 7) School and learning of a school based curriculum should not play a major part in reintegration schemes because school based learning is connected with aversive experiences for the addressees. When choosing work placements it should be taken into account as much as possible that learners need personal assistance,

integration into the community of practice at the workplace, and that they must get the opportunity to experience a variety of work tasks.

To No. 8) This collaboration should be regularly and explicitly strengthened. Especially important is in addition the collaboration with schools, from which many learners have dropped out, in order to provide a direct transfer and exchange information.

To No. 9) This indicator addresses the fact that in most European countries there are not enough work and apprenticeship places for all applicants. As a result even learners who have received the optimal support within a re-integration scheme and who developed regarding their personality their social and their occupational skills do not have a work guarantee. Against this background re-integration schemes also need to prepare them for periods of unemployment, point out and initiate ways in which they can live a meaningful life, even when living on a restricted budget. Therefore other options like building networks for sports and leisure activities should be presented and initiated. Football and basketball meetings as well as cycling tours, bicycle repair and cooking may be examples of appropriate suggestions.

To No. 10) The networks mentioned in No. 9 should be maintained also for aftercare without which the schemes remain futile when people do not get a job or an apprenticeship and cannot return to the mainstream VET-school. These networks are often not well enough organised or funded. Here also collaboration with networks of families should be strengthened, particularly in northern European countries.

## **b) Internal Communication and Co-operation**

- 1) Do we organise the sharing of experiences and work against developing professional prejudices against other groups and professions?
- 2) How do we organize and systematize the transfer of professional competences, taking into account the different professional paradigms?
- 3) To what extent do we share knowledge about support routes for participants during the support process?
- 4) How do we provide an outreach service for picking up drop outs?
- 5) Do we ensure inter-institutional, inter-professional further training for educational actors in the field?

6) Do we have access or do we apply for access to regular supervision of our team work?

### Explanations

To No. 1) Professional prejudices can play an important part in hampering internal communication and collaboration (see also No.8 for 'external networking' ). It may be useful to devote regular meetings explicitly to overcome them. But it appears to be more important to use the opportunities mentioned below in No. 2 to 6 which require collaboration in any case.

To No. 2) The continuous work against division between different professional paradigms should be supported by regular further education courses, based on a new professional education in the future (see Structural-level). These courses should be carried out by the practitioners themselves where members of the different professional groups pass on their knowledge and experiences to the others.

To No. 3) This should be organised in a rather systematic way, e.g. through self-organised regular meetings of all practitioners involved, and dealing with the cases of individual trainees as well. That does not mean, of course, that the unofficial day-to-day exchange of experiences should not also be highly valued.

To No. 4) An outreach service is not always established, often for reasons of lack of funding, but also sometimes because it does not fit into the existing bureaucratic administrative structures. Because it is so important, particularly to the young people who are the most disaffected, it should be discussed if an outreach service can be arranged, even if it is unofficial.

To No. 5) Special professional education which prepares the staff for dealing with the social and vocational re-integration of the target group is important. Therefore inter-institutional and inter-professional further education for all educational actors is crucial and financial support as well as time for it must be demanded and provided. Such further education should also include administrative aspects e.g. regarding the organisation of benefits for the trainees, visits and knowledge of other institutions which offer help and others. The aspects given in this QSED can be used as basis for self-directed finding of needs for further education within a practitioners group through discussion.



To No. 6) Again funding has to be provided for this, as it is very important for the establishment of successful internal collaboration.

### **Individual-level**

#### **a) External networks**

- 1) Do we discuss the various possibilities of the different institutions with the participants?
- 2) To what extent do we take into account the different access routes related to different access agencies of the various participants, including their different thresholds?
- 3) How do we try to enhance the understanding of the participants of the importance of the different tasks of the various institutions involved in the support process, e.g. VET schools, work placements?
- 4) Do we discuss in a sensitive way the inclusion of other institutions like drugs aid etc. (see No.8 meso external) if necessary?
- 5) How do we negotiate alternative routes, including dealing with unemployment in a sensible way (sports clubs etc.) with the participants.
- 6) Do we do that, particularly in connection with aftercare, including institutions offering sensible activities?

#### Explanations

To No. 1) Often it is more by chance that young people enter one scheme or another without regard to which might be more appropriate for them. Because of the administrative hurdles that must be crossed, it may appear to be difficult to transfer them to another scheme. In any case it is important to include the participant concerned in the decision in order to avoid the impression that they are merely the objects of a bureaucratic procedure.

To No. 2) In some cases some of the trainees are sent to the scheme by for example the labour office, and others may have been "picked up" by an outreach service. This influences the way the young people concerned perceive their situation. Because of the pressure of daily work the necessity of personalised support is often not well enough appreciated.

To No. 3) Sometimes participants tend to cling to the re-integration scheme because they find the atmosphere cosy and do not want to leave. Sending them to a work placement may enhance their resistance to the idea of leaving, again giving them the impression of being simply the victim of administrative measures.

To No. 4) Again this is just a reminder not to apply administrative measures without discussing them at length with the people concerned. But most practitioners will be well aware that this is an extremely sensitive area.

To No. 5) One of the main outcomes of the European Leonardo project is that in many cases the meagre opportunities of getting a job or an apprenticeship, even for the participants who are rather successful in the course, are not discussed with them in depth. While this is quite understandable because it affects the identity of the whole endeavour, it appears to be important to take into account the possibility of continuous precarious employment or even long term unemployment. It is necessary to negotiate alternative routes with youngsters while using the local networks to open up opportunities for non-vocational activities.

To No. 6) What has been said in No. 5 is even more important for providing a network for aftercare which has been mentioned already as being of utmost importance. But the teenagers themselves have to be motivated to accept what is offered, and even to look themselves for opportunities for sensible non-vocational activities. It should be kept in mind that even if these youngsters are temporarily not looking for a job they will stay in active life and may well look for work some time later.

## **b) Internal Collaboration**

- 1) Do we ensure there are clear rules for communication with the learners?
- 2) Do we commit enough time and space to reflection on our pedagogical processes and the special cases of individual participants?
- 3) Do we have and use time and space to give each other assistance for reflection on individual pedagogical work?
- 4) Do we address the target group as a team?

Explanations

To No. 1) In order to address the participants as a team and in order to meet the participants' needs it might be sensible to agree about rules for communication with participants. It could be commonly agreed whether for instance the members of staff want to be called by their christian names or surnames.

To No. 2) It might be useful and helpful if ways are found to reflect on pedagogical processes and special cases of learners on a regular basis. A weekly note about each learner from each member of staff who is dealing with him or her might be an opportunity. These notes could be exchanged and used for the documentation of their development too.

To No. 3) Because of the high daily workload, exchanges between colleagues and mutual assistance is often reduced or put off from one day to another. Therefore it might be useful to dedicate specific hours to mutual assistance and mutual reflection on individual pedagogical processes. Half an hour at the end of each day or at the end of every second day might be an opportunity.

To No. 4) As mentioned in No.1 it is important to agree about common rules. Furthermore it is important that all members of staff support each other regarding their work with the participants. They should experience the practitioners as a community which works together for the development of the learners. Additionally, it is important that the learners have no chance to play the practitioners off against each other.

### **7.3 Inclusiveness (Integration into Society, Education-System and Labour Market)**

#### **Structural-level**

##### **a) Societal conditions**

1) All decision makers involved in re-integration policies should commit themselves to inclusive forms of education and support of young people: ministries of education, employment, labour, social affairs, social partners (unions and employers' organisations), chambers of commerce, industries and crafts, labour agencies, employment services

In section 2, External Networks, these have already been mentioned as the main actors for national and regional networking. Networking, as described there, is the most important means for improving the degree of inclusiveness.

2) Although the form of the welfare regime, according to the typology presented in Recommendations for Policy Makers and Planners, differs from one country to another, measures are possible everywhere to enhance the re-integration of disadvantaged young people. These should be strengthened according to the possibilities offered by the dominant regime.

3) In any case efforts should be supported to prevent disadvantaged young people from being excluded from the mainstream (education, VET and school-to-work transition).

4) A separation of disadvantaged young people from the mainstream should always be regarded as temporary.

5) Programmes should be designed in such a way as to facilitate as much as possible the Re-integration into the mainstream. No single person should be regarded as someone who is excluded from the mainstream for good.

6) Nevertheless programmes should explicitly make it a high priority to care for young people who appear for a considerable time not to be able to return to the mainstream.

7) It is indispensable that intensive aftercare is provided for young people who cannot manage to get back into the mainstream, that is continuing in VET school or in an apprenticeship or getting a job in the labour market.

### Explanations

To No. 1) This is of course an issue of high political relevance. In the Recommendations for Policy Makers and Planners a typology of welfare regimes and associated VET systems is presented. Although these differ considerably with respect to inclusiveness in all welfare regimes some activities are established, and more are planned to contribute to the re-integration of disadvantaged young people. See Section 2 Collaborative Networks of Actors for ways in which networking can be enhanced.

To No. 2) It is of course far beyond the scope of this QSED to intervene in changes in the political orientation of the respective welfare regimes. Nevertheless, each regime has its advantages and disadvantages, which can be used as incentives for mutual comparative learning between the actors in different cultural settings.

To No. 3) The respective welfare regime and VET system in a country may not per se be inclusive, in the sense that there are only minimal selective measures channelling people into different streams according to measurable achievements. But even where this is the case it is always an official policy aim to prevent the exclusion of the disadvantaged.

To No. 4) These teenagers are at an age where important social and particularly psychological changes occur in their lives. Everybody knows that many of them can, if adequately supported, surmount heavy obstacles and achieve an amazing personal development. Nevertheless, due to the daily workload this is sometimes not acknowledged well enough.

To No. 5) No.4 is just a reminder of the reasons for that regrettable state of affairs. Administrative measures should be implemented to facilitate the transfer of persons back to the mainstream as soon as it appears to be possible. This is particularly easy if the mainstream education itself tries to keep disaffected youngsters as long as possible in a position of being included, so that they may leave only if there is no other option.

To No. 6) In all too many cases the fate of these young people is unconsciously more or less neglected because this fact endangers the identity of the whole re-integration system and the people working in it. This hampers consciously providing intensive care for the young people concerned.

To No. 7) The extraordinary importance of this aftercare in one of the most relevant results of the European Leonardo project. In most cases much more must be done to provide intensive aftercare. Adequate funding is often missing and the administrative structures are rarely designed in a way to secure a stable network of offerings for aftercare. This point is deliberately mentioned several times elsewhere in this QSED.

**b) Pedagogical Conditions**

1) Re-integration programs should not as their foremost or even less only objective aim at the fastest possible and most direct transition into the labour market or an apprenticeship, because this has proven too often to have rather adverse effects from a more long term viewpoint.

2) Indirect outcomes (especially social and personal development of the participants, and key qualifications) are difficult to assess. They are therefore not apt for use as concrete criteria for external evaluation of the whole scheme, although they may be the main indicator of the quality of the pedagogical processes.

3) In order to guarantee high standards of the pedagogical processes a “culture of self-evaluation” has to be introduced or strengthened within the institution. (see section 1 “Self-Evaluation and Reflection”)

4) To support a culture of self-evaluation a high standard of the competences of the staff is necessary because the practitioners will then feel more secure with regard to critical points.

5) In the long term, the professionalisation of all the actors involved should be structured according to official rules. This appears to be necessary also in order to enhance their standing in the public, relative to other pedagogical professions.

6) In addition continuous staff development should be carried through. The main means for that is self-directed internal continuing exchange of competences in the course of processes of self-evaluation.

7) Self-evaluation should be carried through partly in collaboration with other institutions, in order to avoid becoming blind to one’s own peculiarities.

8) External courses of further education for the practitioners should be provided, but selected according to the necessities discovered during the process of self-evaluation.

9) Typical themes external further education courses are

- dealing with ethnical and cultural minorities and
- meeting the challenges posed by insufficient mastering the official national language.

### Explanations

1. Although integration or re-integration into the world of work is of utmost importance for the target group a shorter and more indirect path is necessary. This is one of the most striking outcomes of the evaluation of the long term effects carried through in this Leonardo project.
2. It should be tried again and again to convince funding bodies that it is short-sighted to use mainly “hard outcomes” (transition rates to the labour market, formal qualifications) as the standard for quality of the programme. In any case it should be avoided to unconsciously “forget” about the truly pedagogical aims of a programme in view of the external pressure.
3. Of course the highest possible standards of the pedagogical processes should be guaranteed. Even if the belief in market forces for this objective is growing there is a strong European movement towards using mainly self-evaluation of the institution, often continued with external evaluation about every fifth year.
4. The self-evaluation, if carried through honestly, will often reveal quite a lot of areas where improvements suggest themselves. The practitioners should be supported in acknowledging and improving their competences so that they do not blame their incompetence for that.
5. All too often Re-Integration is viewed by political actors, but also in the public, as a task of low esteem: after all, it deals with low-achievers, and therefore it is often thought that high professional competences are not necessary. But quite on the contrary, this is a very demanding task. But nevertheless in most countries there is no systematic special education leading to officially recognised professional certificates. This could be improved in a way similar to the nursing professions which have gained a considerable standing in some countries.
6. Depending on the organisation of Re-Integration programmes, special education (with a vocational and/or social and personal orientation) should be provided for professional groups like
  - Workshop masters/trainers;
  - Teachers;
  - Social workers;

- Career guidance and counselling personnel. Of course, practitioners working effectively at present should be further supported as much as possible.

7. For this the local networking can be used (see section 2 "Collaborative networks").

Of course, because of the competition often prevailing, this is a difficult issue, although rewarding when successful.

8. External further education is often estimated by the practitioners as being too abstract. Stimulated by questions worked out during the self-evaluation process and carried through in a practice-oriented manner that may be considerably improved.

9. These are obviously enormous challenges for an inclusive education. Basic knowledge about the cultures concerned is often still meagre so that also an empathic understanding cannot be arrived at. In most countries the support of practitioners in addressing these challenges is extremely underfunded. The language problems should be dealt with via special language courses for the participants. But also in a situated way, learning the official language through conversing with peers, while dealing with a work task, is often promising, if supported by the trainers (see Section 5 "Situated learning").

## **Institutional-level**

### **a) Pedagogical Orientations for Re-integration**

1) To what extent do we take over the roles of the carer and the partner as well as the task of leadership?

2) Do we lay out the training in a way that it is attractive to the learners?

3) To what degree do we provide space for one-to-one dialogues between individual learners and individual members of staff?

4) Do we offer the learners the chance to choose one practitioner as a personal mentor?

5) How do we assist teachers in extending their options and possibilities for acting and shaping?

6) How do we communicate with participants in order to make them feel at home?

7) Do we recognise the relevance of family structures, and do we use them to enhance occupational integration?



8) Do we try to create an environment that promotes situated learning processes?

Explanations

To No. 1) As a practitioner in a re-integration scheme it is often necessary to fulfil different tasks according to the situations the learner is in. Especially when a learner enters the course it is often crucial to take over the carer role in order to help the learner to settle in. Regarding their development it is often necessary that the practitioner accompanies the learner as a partner.

To No. 2) The attractiveness of the building and the rooms where training takes place plays an important role in the motivation of the learners to come to their courses regularly. The learners may see a relation between the building and the personalities of the practitioners.

To No. 3) Because participants often have to cope with severe personal problems it is sometimes crucial that there is time and space for one-to-one dialogues between practitioner and learner. Time for such assistance as well as rooms where doors can be shut should be provided by the institution and must be seen as important within the team.

To No. 4) Understanding and trust are the crucial bases for a relationship between a learner and a mentor. Therefore it might be sensible if the participants are obliged to choose their personal mentor within the scheme, regardless of whether this person has a pedagogical or a technical professional background.

To No. 5) If teachers from vocational schools are involved in the re-integration scheme as is typically the case in German re-integration schemes, it is crucial to give them the chance to disconnect their lessons to a certain extent from the curriculum, and to adapt their lessons to the other alternatives available in the scheme. This could mean for example that they integrate their teaching into activities in the workshop.

To No. 6) In communicating with participants it may be sensible to try to adapt ones own language to that of the learner. One important point is that one should not use words which are not commonly used by the learner. Such language might increase the participant's feeling of being an object not a subject.

To No. 7) This is an aspect which is of great importance in mediterranean countries, where self-employment rates are high and there are a lot of small businesses run by

families. In Greece for example many youngsters enter the labour market through working part time in one of the businesses of their families. Boys might help in small garages while girls engage in needle work for tourists. But for reintegration measures in other countries too this indicator is worth taking into account. Youngsters can accompany parents to their work and may be taken on as employees there. If a mother or a father is well settled in his workplace the employer may find options for the young job seeker as well. Of course not all of the parents of the adolescents in the target group are in stable employment, but nevertheless family structures may still be worth using.

To No. 8) This would mean for example that workshops should also include space for theoretical learning and teaching. Teaching situations like the ones common in classrooms in general schools should be the exception, and in any case closely linked to tasks to be fulfilled in the workshops.

#### **b) Assistance in Learning the Necessities of Life**

- 1) Do we provide an environment in which the development of life skills can be supported?
- 2) How do we identify the needs of each learner regarding the development of life skills?
- 3) In what way do we contribute to the financial support to the learners?

#### *Explanations*

To No. 1) This could mean for example that the institution provides a washing machine and a sewing machine for training in doing the laundry or a kitchen for training in doing cooking. Because some of the learners might not have learnt these things in their families, it is important to assist them in learning these necessities, which are crucial for coping with daily life.

To No. 2) It might be sensible to ask learners what tasks in daily life are problematic for them as a first step. Furthermore it is important to observe if the learners have any striking features which point out difficulties, like untidy clothes or clothes full of holes. If they give an emaciated impression it may be sensible to provide daily meals for them before starting to teach them to cook.

To No. 3) A contribution to the financial support of the learner might be made by assisting them in budgeting their money. A large number of the learners may need assistance in budgeting if they receive money once a month. In some cases it might be sensible to pay weekly or even daily benefits in order to ensure that they manage to cope with their budget. In cases where the learners have debts, practitioners need to give specific advice and use the external network in order to find professional advice.

### **Individual-level**

#### **a) Individual Pedagogical Support**

- 1) To what extent do we speak the same language as the learners in order to make them feel familiar?
- 2) To what degree do we accept (and adapt to) uncommon, improper, (unseemly/unmannerly/coarse) behaviour?
- 3) Do we accept that the final products of the learners do not have to fulfill high standards?
- 4) To what extent do we try to match learners in appearance?

#### Explanations

- 1) Using the same language might be support to matching educators and learners, because the learners will only accept the practitioners as carers, partners and leaders if they feel close to them. A common jargon is one characteristic of building a community.
- 2) A lot of the members of the target group attract attention through unusual behaviour. They belch or they spit in public. If this behaviour is punished the learners may not attend the course. Therefore such behaviour should at first be accepted at the beginning of the course. In the long term such behaviour should be reduced.
- 3) The final products which are produced by the learners are often not perfect. This should be accepted because the final product is not the central aim of the production process but the fact that a learner went through the whole process is crucial.

4) In order to contact potential participants it might be useful if the practitioners who work in the outreach service wear clothes which signal that they are not much different from the learners.

**b) Assistance in Learning the Necessities of Life**

1) Do we include domestic activities like cooking, cleaning and washing in our scheme?

2) Do we include maintenance activities like needle work and decorating in our scheme?

3) To what extent does healthy eating play a role in our course?

4) Do we point out and initiate low cost/free leisure activities?

5) Do we provide regular meals if necessary?

Explanations

To No. 1) A large proportion of the learners may have grown up in families who were living in a difficult situation, and they may not have learned how and to what extent domestic activities have to be carried out in a household. Therefore it may be sensible for activities like cooking, cleaning and washing to be discussed and assisted through the practitioners, if there is a need for this assistance.

To No. 2) As with the above mentioned domestic activities, so also other householding activities which are important in every day life may not be familiar to the learners. They might not know how to sew a button to a pair of trousers or how to decorate their flat with wallpaper. These might be two important examples to which you can add others.

To No. 3) Learners often give the impression of not being adequately nourished. Some learners are undernourished others are overweight. Therefore healthy eating should be discussed and practiced in re-integration schemes. A good status of nutrition might also raise the ability for concentration and might reduce the potential for conflicts.

To No. 4) A large proportion of the learners mainly watch TV during their leisure time. They do not participate in sports activities, because they feel excluded through the fact that they lack money. They say for example "I cannot play basketball

because I do not have real basketball shoes!".It is important to point out to the learners that there are leisure activities which cause low or no costs. In the example mentioned for instance the learner needs to be convinced that it is possible to play basketball without buying shoes specifically made for the game.

To No. 5) As already mentioned in the context of No. 3 learners often give the impression of not being adequately nourished. If the level of malnutrition is high re-integration schemes should provide regular meals to such learners, because only a young person who is no longer hungry is able to learn something.

## **7.4 Funding /Administrative structures**

### **Structural-level**

#### **a) Institutions**

- 1)Funding should be provided on a long-term basis in order to maintain for the staff a fairly permanent perspective of working in the institution concerned, so that an identification with its development can grow.
- 2) In many countries the institutions have increasingly to compete for funding in a “market for Re-Integration services”. Lobbying on the regional and even, through institutions’ associations, on the national level will be important.
- 3) Local networking, with the aim of defining different “core activities” for special parts of the target group, could reduce too fierce a competition.
- 4) Funding criteria should be clearly stated by the respective agencies, responsibilities of which should be also clearly defined.
- 5) Funding should not depend mainly on concrete results (transition rates, easily measurable competences and qualifications), but should recognize the quality of the re-integration practice of the institution (through external evaluation based with absolute necessity on self-evaluation).
- 6) Options for entering the labour market or an apprenticeship on a funded basis in the first step are provided.
- 7) The administrative structures should be improved so that long waiting lists and the revolving door effect can be avoided.

8) Broad choices between programmes with different characteristics, including options for uncommon choices should be provided.

9) Aftercare of learners is an important target and should be financed through special funding for this purpose, particularly for maintaining aftercare networks including mentoring and outreach.

### Explanations

To No. 1) Otherwise fluctuations in the staff is inevitable (insecure working conditions). This means that self-evaluation, reflection and creating ideas for further development will not take place in a relevant manner. The developing a high quality for the course or the institution is endangered.

To No. 2) The general education up to the age of 16 is free of charge in all European countries, and the schools are established on a permanent basis. Therefore it might be possible, relatively independent from the respective economic and social policies, to view Re-Integration programmes as a continuation of general education for those left behind. Then chances are that the strong market-orientation of this educational sector might not be carried too far.

To No 3) The importance of networks is a little more dealt with in section 2 “Collaborative (external) networking”.

To No. 4) Otherwise the institutions do not know how to influence them.

To No. 5) This means that the main characteristic for funding a provider should be efficiency criteria according to the quality indicators put forward by the QSED. Also to take the cheapest provider in order just to do something with the participants should be avoided.

To No. 6) Funding could and should be provided, although closely monitored, for enterprises which are willing to take in a member of the target group but cannot afford the adequate support.

To No. 7) Waiting for a placement in a course or a job placement is very frustrating. Transferring young people from one course to the next, and even back again (revolving door effect) should be reduced. Nevertheless, it might be better than leaving the unsuccessful youngsters on their own. This is the reason for the heavy emphasis placed on aftercare.

To No. 8) Funding should also be provided for programmes which do not follow the mainstream of national re-integration rules, e.g. more leisure-oriented activities with low access thresholds. (See vocational relevance.)

To No. 9) Networks must be maintained in order to prevent former participants from falling back into their prior life circumstances. Individual mentors for aftercare should be funded. (See section 2 Collaborative Networks of aftercare )

## **b) Individuals**

- 1) Funding should allow for stable living conditions (sufficiently high) and with regard to time scale (secure for a definite period of time).
- 2) Funding should not be made dependent on individual outcomes during/after the course.
- 3) Funding should not be withdrawn as a means of punishment for behavioural problems etc.
- 4) Funding should be granted in such a way that after the course there are clearly established ways in which the transition to welfare support if(!!!) a participant does not succeed in getting a job or an apprenticeship.

### Explanations

To No. 1) In order to support the development of learners it is crucial to take as much pressure from them as possible. A great number of learners have experienced their financial situation and in some cases that of their family as restricting and very difficult. Receiving stable funding for a limited amount of time might take a lot of fears and pressure from them and gives them more time and motivation for commitment and learning.

To No. 2) Funding for the individual is a basis for the support of the learning and development process. Individual learning and development processes are different regarding achievement and time needed. In order to support the individual development funding should not be made conditional to defined progress steps.

To No. 3) It might not be sensible to put pressure on the learners through holding back training allowances because some of them might already have experienced such

punishment in their families. Against this background such measures could be rather contra productive if it is aimed to reintegrate them.

To No. 4) It is important that a regular benefit which allows to pay the rent and to pay for food is guaranteed for everybody.

### **Institutional-level**

#### **a) Funding**

- 1) Do we know where our scheme is funded from and who is organizing it?
- 2) Do we think about improvements to ensure more stable funding ? for the institution and the participants? What are our suggestions?
- 3) Which other organisations could provide funding for our scheme or for the participants?
- 4) For which activities and initiatives do we need additional funding?
- 5) Do we use networks for trying to ensure funding for those activities, particularly the uncommon ones?
- 6) Do we have clear responsibilities for caring about funding and allocating funds for workshop materials, learning and teaching materials, materials for house cleaning etc.?

#### Explanations

To No. 1) In order to be able to influence the administration of funding this knowledge should be valuable.

To No. 2) This includes using the local and regional networks, including lobbying in the political arena. (See section II ? Networks?)

To No. 3) It might be worth looking at other funding opportunities on the regional, the national and EU-level (including charity organisations established by churches, entrepreneurs etc.).

To No. 4) There might be ideas for activities which cannot be realised because of the limited financial budget. These could be daily activities like horse riding and sailing or activities including several days like a trip to another country.



To No. 5) In order to be able to realise uncommon or extraordinary activities it might be useful to cooperate with other institutions in order to exchange information about funding sources or in order to cooperate regarding the organisation of such activities.

To No. 6) Often not enough attention is paid to these tasks because of the lack of a clear delineation of responsibilities.

## **b) Administrative structures**

1) To what extent is the career office engaging in finding a suitable re-integration scheme for each learner? Do we try to influence these procedures?

2) Do we offer help for clearly defined groups (like teenager mothers, homeless youngsters)?

3) Do we provide an outreach service for picking up drop outs?

4) Have we clearly allocated the responsibilities for the internal and external administrative tasks ? and do we stick to them in an at the same time reliable and flexible way?

5) Do we deal with hierarchies in a transparent manner?

## Explanations

To No. 1) In some European countries the participants are sent to the re-integration schemes through the careers office after they have been registered as unemployed. For the support of the learner's development it is important that the participants needs and the alternatives available in the re-integration scheme are a good match. Therefore it is important that the careers office knows the details of the special alternatives available in each scheme and uses this information for choosing the right scheme for each participant.

To No. 2) Participants come from different backgrounds and they have different problems and needs. With regard to some problems it may sometimes be effective for and supportive of the participants if they come together in groups in which all of them have the same problems and needs. Therefore special help for groups of teenage mothers or homeless youngsters etc. could be offered.

To No. 3) An outreach-service as mentioned before, means a pool of workers who meet potential participants in their social environment, get in contact with them and

offer them the opportunity to join the scheme and attend it on an increasingly regular basis. Such outreach services work successfully in some European countries and in other cases it might be worthwhile considering initiating an outreach service.

To No. 4) As in the case of dealing with the budget, many conflicts within an institution can be avoided by defining clear responsibilities, without putting the team into a straitjacket.

To No. 5) This is also very important for working under agreeable working conditions. As far as hierarchies exist experience shows it to be of advantage to deal with them in an open manner.

### **Individual-level**

#### **a) Funding (more individual)**

1) How do we observe and care for the individual participant's financial situation and do we assist them in organising their finances?

2) Do we offer advice for dealing with bureaucratic tasks like lease contracts, work contracts etc.?

3) To what extent do we assist the trainees regarding housing problems?

4) To what extent do we point out and initiate leisure time activities which are low cost or free?

#### Explanations

To No. 1) A great number of learners have difficulties coping with their financial budgets. Therefore it might be sensible if practitioners observe the financial situation of their trainees. Budgeting money and shopping thriftily might be important subjects within a re-integration scheme.

To No. 2) For a lot of learners it is difficult to deal with bureaucratic tasks because they have problems with reading and writing. Therefore some of them avoid addressing these tasks. In order to help the participants overcome such difficulties it may be possible to assist them by reading the contracts together.

To No. 3) Some trainees may be in danger of becoming homeless. This is an issue which might impede all learning processes. Therefore the practitioners in the re-

integration scheme should assist participants through giving them information about accommodation opportunities and through assisting in the search for a room or a flat.

To No. 4) Because the learners have a low financial budget they often feel excluded from leisure time activities. For this reason it is important that low cost leisure time activities like street basketball, aerobics or football are presented and provided within a re-integration course. Some learners might not want to play a game because they feel that they do not have adequate modern shoes or clothes. In such a case it is up to the practitioners to convince them to play in spite of this.

### **b) Administrative Structures**

- 1) Do we pay enough attention to differences between the circumstances of young people, such as those who are teenage fathers or those with learning disabilities?
- 2) How do we deal with resistance, avoidance and truancy?
- 3) How much do we care that the trainees know about the responsibilities in the institution?

#### Explanations

To No. 1) According to the individual specific needs of the trainees it may prove sensible to ask this question over and over again. Because of the difficult life circumstances of a lot of participants the assistance should be as specific and as individual as possible in order to make the learners feel supported.

To No. 2) Resistance and avoidance of participation in the scheme is often affected by negative former experiences. There should be clear rules how to deal with them, although at the same time it should be adapted to the personal characteristics of each practitioner so that his behaviour is in accordance with his identity.

To No. 3) Because many of the participants have to deal with rather severe social and psychological circumstances clear structures in their social environment will often reduce insecurities.

## 7.5 Situated Learning

### Structural level

#### a) general

- 1) Re-Integration programmes should be designed in such a way as to promote vocationally oriented competences in close connection with furthering social and personal development.
- 2) The main orientation should be situated learning. Especially for disadvantaged young people learning is never exclusively an individual process, but rather more a common undertaking, that is a social process. Above that, theoretical learning should be embedded, as far as possible, in practical tasks.
- 3) Particularly for our clients this means that learning, supported by teaching/training, should encompass four dimensions:
  - learning as experience: providing meaning
  - learning as belonging: participating in a community
  - learning as becoming: developing an identity
  - learning as doing: always aiming at constructing something (tangible product, a theoretical idea), never only taking in knowledge in a receiving manner.
- 4) The team of practitioners should therefore try to build a learning community centred on practice (LCCP) which, of course, must include (all of) the clients.
- 5) The individual strengths, weaknesses and needs of the participants necessitate their being taken care of, an opposition which poses a serious challenge.
- 6) Individualised measures like
  - intake diagnosis at the beginning
  - development planning for each individual
  - written agreements on development objectives are necessary, but should not hamper the building of a learning community.
- 7) Depending on the individual characteristics and needs of the disadvantaged young people, schemes with a stronger vocational orientation (for the more advanced clients) or with a focus on first supporting social and personal development should be established in a balanced manner.
- 8) For reasons of clarity alone, these two prototypes of courses are dealt with separately in the following paragraphs.

### Explanations

To No. 1) The aim of re-integration programmes consists in improving the prospects of the participants of being included in what is regarded as a "normal" career path. For the majority of teenagers this means attending a VET school, doing an apprenticeship or perhaps already getting a job which, however, should offer opportunities for further training. But vocational education and training (VET) alone is often too demanding for the disadvantaged young people. Therefore it should always be combined with activities aiming explicitly at social and personal development. It may even be necessary to at first support this development as such, delaying the preparation for VET, in the strict sense, till the young people have gained more maturity.

To No. 2) Besides supporting social, and via that also personal competences, situated learning aims at alleviating theoretical learning. Particularly also basic competences like reading, writing and application of numbers have proved to be acquired most easily by connecting them with practical tasks. That may mean constructing a CD rack, performing the shopping for the daily common meals according to a fixed budget, planning a tour using bus timetables etc.

To No. 3) The dimensions are taken from the book "Communities of Practice" by Etienne Wenger, Cambridge University Press, 1999. In addition to the points mentioned in No. 2 it is demanded that learning should

- provide or represent meaning (which is not always the case in general schools)
- support becoming a person with a secure identity (which is especially important for our trainees).

To No. 4) This can be achieved by team building during daily work, particularly however by carrying through the self-evaluation proposed here. This encompasses creative improvement of the scheme by all participants and self-directed staff development. Above that, initial and further training of the actors should stimulate thinking out ways to realise situated learning, based on a deeper understanding of its principles.

To No. 5) To meet the challenge of arranging a lot of work in groups and, at the same time, supporting each youngster individually, has to be left to the practitioners sensibility. Intensive exchange between practitioners about their experiences, instead of following fixed rules, may alleviate the situation.

To No. 6) Highly individualised support plans, as put forward recently, might sometimes hamper the team building. It should be noted that a connection to the individualisation of the whole society, which has gotten much publicity for some time can be observed. The intake diagnosis, if carried through with sensitivity, should be supportive, as long as the trainees do not feel they are being treated like psychiatric patients.

To No. 7) Nevertheless, there should be no definite separation between the more vocationally oriented courses and those for social and personal development. Both should include objectives found in the other, but to varying degrees.

To No. 8) Because of the present dominance of short term economic thinking, the slow pace of supporting young people, first by strengthening their social and personal competences, is often not well appreciated. On the other hand, this should never be seen as a last resort for the "hopeless" cases, but as a means of bringing them back again. Nobody should be left behind!

### **b) Vocationally Oriented Learning**

- 1) Re-integration schemes should provide access to different professional fields.
- 2) Re-integration schemes should provide workshops with machines and material which is similar to that in an authentic work environment.
- 3) Re-integration schemes should employ members of staff from different professional backgrounds who possess and provide a horizon of broad experiences.

#### Explanations

To No. 1) Because most of the learners who enter Re-integration schemes do not have an idea in what vocational field they are interested in it is important that the courses provide access to different fields so that the young people could try different fields before they decide which one they are most interested in.

To No. 2) In order to get a substantial impression of a professional field it is crucial to experience typical work tasks as well as the typical environment of the profession. An important part of the surroundings are the machines and the material. Therefore it is important that the learner have access to typical machines and material of a vocational field they might be interested in.

To No. 3) A great part of the impressions which a trainee gets of a vocational field is due to the person who is advising him or her. Therefore it is important that the practitioners who work in the re-integration schemes have a broad experience regarding vocational competence as well as pedagogical competence.

### **c) Social and Personal Learning**

- 1) Activities which aim at motivating and engaging the learners and at raising their self-esteem should be provided through the re-integration scheme.
- 2) Materials, financial and personal budget and workshops for the above mentioned activities should be provided.
- 3) Different aspects of the learner's personality and his needs should be recognised, addressed and supported.
- 4) Diverse activities through which learners come into contact with others who are following the mainstream of education need to be supported in order to overcome exclusion and in order to avoid separation.

### **Explanations**

To No. 1) Because most learners not only have difficulties with the transfer from school to vocational education and training, but rather these difficulties are influenced by general problems with commitment and in being active in a positive, also leisure oriented sense, the overall aim of re-integration should be that they develop commitment, motivation and participation in all kinds of social activities. These could be sports as well as events or just conversation in the context of leisure activities.

To No. 2) In order to initiate activities which aim at engaging, team building and the raising of self-esteem the re-integration schemes need equipment like canoes or stilts, as well as a financial budget which allows them to initiate trips for the learners. Although this claim may seem excessive, it has to be taken into account that the positive effects of such activities may re-integrate the learners and lead them back into the direction of a "normal" career path. As a result money might be saved through the fact that the learners are no longer at so much risk of becoming criminal.

To No. 3) The basic aspect of each re-integration scheme must be that each learner is accepted and addressed with his whole personality. It cannot be the task of a course to support only specific aspects of a person like the development of vocational skills or the development of social skills.

To No. 4) In order to overcome the degree of exclusion from others who follow the mainstream it is crucial that Re-Integration aims at initiating contact between its learners and young people who follow the mainstream. Therefore the networks mentioned in No. 2 (Collaborative Networks of Actors) should be used. The contact should not be reduced to common (leisure) activities which take place occasionally but they should be extended to common learning in workshops and common projects.

### **Institutional Level**

#### **a) general**

1) Do we ensure that the learners are allowed to commit themselves to the Learning Community Centred on Practice at a self-determined speed ? 2) Do we take too much pressure off the learners, and do we thus reduce competitiveness?

3) Do we consciously promote group work and at the same time support the autonomy of the learner?

4) To what degree do we strengthen responsibility and reflection of self-development?

5) How much do we try to ensure that all of us? teachers, instructors, social workers, careers officers etc. ? act as role models and as learning advisers?

6) Do we accept that there are limits to the support we can provide?

7) Do we take into account that learners need personal assistance, social integration and the opportunity to experience various work tasks in their placement when we choose one?

#### *Explanations*

To No. 1) Youngsters need different amounts of time to include themselves into a new group. This time and the extent of their commitment must be determined by the youngster's own will.



To No. 2) This could be achieved through the avoidance of using marks and tests. Individual tests combined with marks should be avoided. At the same time, a balance between demands made and support provided should be aimed at.

To No.3) Group work supports not only social competences, but it furthers also the development of a realistic self-concept, particularly if the success of the group work is assessed also by the group itself, not by the trainer. But, one has also to pay attention to the problem that some trainees may try to avoid joining in the groups work.

To No. 4) Developing a sense of responsibility is one of the main aims of situated learning. This can be enhanced by stimulating reflection on self-development by the learner, particularly also in courses aiming, in the first place, at social and personal learning.

To No. 5) Learning happens to a high degree via following role models. Of course this does not mean that every practitioner must be perfect. To deal with one's own faults in a relatively open manner is at the same time rewarding, and also often rather difficult.

To No. 6) This means on the one hand that practitioners should not try to parent the teenagers all the time, but rather stop doing so at a clearly defined point. On the other hand, it is extremely important to accept that there are indeed limits to the possibilities of support. Otherwise there is a great danger of developing exhaustion and a burn out syndrome.

To No. 7) The main component of some reintegration schemes is to arrange placements for the trainees. In this case it is important that the placements are well chosen and that the trainee's needs and the structure and the staff of the placement fit well together regarding the three above named aspects. In the placement the learner needs a mentor who looks after him and promotes occupational learning. Furthermore all members of staff must be willing to include the learner into their community.

## **b) Vocationally Oriented Learning**

1) To what extent do we provide work environments which are similar to those in the real world?

- 2) Do we offer to produce useful products which have a meaning for the learners?
- 3) To what extent do the products which we offer and produce have a relation to the real world?
- 4) Do we organise small commissions from clients which can be fulfilled by our learners?
- 5) Do we orientate work towards processes?
- 6) Do we promote self-directed discovery of theoretical aspects?

### Explanations

To No. 1) As mentioned in the context of the structural level, the impression of what a profession is about can only be created through an authentic work environment. By this is not meant that learners need necessarily to experience a profession through placements, because although valuable this is often overtaxing for the learners. Rather, or in addition, the learners should be given the chance to experience machines and materials as well as small sized orders in the sheltered workshop of the re-integration scheme. Therefore it is crucial that the workshop contains adequate machines as well as an adviser who belongs to the professional field.

To No. 2) Above all, producing something that is of no use to the learners or the institution, should be avoided, because it will be frustrating for the learners if their products go straight into the dustbin. Additionally such products are not sensible with regard to environmental protection.

To No. 3) It is important that the products which are produced in the workshop have a relation to the real world or a use in every day life because this gives a meaning to creating these products and leads the learners to being proud of the fact that they can produce something which is useful. They will thus feel more integrated into society through their work.

To No. 4) The above mentioned relation between the products of the trainees and the real world could be fostered through organising small orders for clients. In many cases re-integration schemes are not allowed to compete with companies, but there might be options for small orders from public institutions like schools, local authorities etc.

To No. 5) Even though products are central in work processes in the real world the re-integration schemes should not focus on these as their main feature. Re-integration schemes should support learning in different contexts and therefore their main emphasis should be that the learners participate socially, personally and with all their vocational skills in the initiated processes. Keeping the balance between product orientation and process orientation seems to be one of the most difficult tasks in re-integration.

To No. 6) Due to the fact that most of the learners have bad experiences with the understanding of theoretical aspects of curricula, it is crucial to give them options for the self-directed discovery of theoretical aspects of the curriculum. This might motivate them to look for further theoretical aspects related to their vocational field, and it will keep their motivation for dealing with and learning theory high.

### **c) Social and Personal Learning**

- 1) Do we initiate and practice low cost or free leisure oriented activities in our re-integration schemes in order to show possible activities for times of unemployment?
- 2) Do we use the talents of all team members in order to provide opportunities for social and personal learning which are motivating for the learners?
- 3) Do we provide situations of social and personal learning which match with the needs and interests of the individual learner?

### **Explanations**

To No. 1) As long as aftercare for participants of re-integration schemes, who have not yet reached the stage of being re-integrated into the mainstream education is not a normal feature of re-integration in every country, it is crucial that re-integration schemes themselves initiate and practice leisure oriented activities which afford low or no costs, in order to show the learners opportunities for living a meaningful life without employment. If this is not provided the positive developments a learner has achieved will not last long, because the learner falls back into his former situation after the re-integration course.

To No. 2) Talents as well as interests of the practitioners working in the re-integration scheme might be a first source for finding activities which could be

provided for the learners. Talents or interests could be all kinds of team sports as well as cooking or pottering. It is just as important to give the learners the opportunity to choose what they would like to do.

To No. 3) In order to provide activities which are meaningful for each single learner it is important to give learners the opportunity to choose between different activities. Nevertheless the target group of re-integration schemes often tends to decline participating if they expect something to be strenuous. Therefore practitioners are asked to convince them gently to participate in the offered activities. Learners with a low self-esteem might decline the offer to participate in group activities with a leisure background because they fear being excluded by the others. In such cases it might be sensible that learners should be convinced to participate.

## **Individual-level**

### **a) Vocationally Oriented Learning**

- 1) To what extent do we provide an authentic work environment?
- 2) Do we orientate work processes towards products?
- 3) Do we support and assist the development of a learning community centered on practice?
- 4) To what extent do we offer work processes which contain complete actions?
- 5) To what extent do we leave space for own ways and solutions?
- 6) Do we promote reflection of work processes?
- 7) Do we combine vocational activities with leisure oriented activities?

### Explanations

To No. 1) In order to give the learners the feeling of a work placement it might be sensible to provide a workshop that has realistic tools. In addition it is important that they experience the world of work through placements.

To No. 2) Because the world of work focusses on precisely constructed products it is crucial that the products which are produced in Re-integration workshops are valued and that a waste of material is avoided. However the products of the learners should not be valued according to standards which are valid for apprentices.

To No. 3) The learners should not only work in the same workshop but they should develop a community through working together on one product and through social activities.

To No. 4) This means that the learners are responsible for all steps which are necessary for a product: From the idea to the collection of information to the planning to the building to the control and finally to the presentation or to the sale of the product.

To No. 5) Ways of building a product should not be defined strictly, instead learners should find their own way of constructing a product.

To No. 6) Learners should be assisted to reflect on their own work processes as well as those of others, in order to gain confidence in their developed skills and in order to improve them.

To No. 7) As already mentioned under the heading Social and Personal Oriented Learning, it might occasionally be possible to combine activities of both types in one project. The building and steering of a raft for instance.

### **b) Social and Personal Learning**

1) Do we include learners in choosing and planning activities for social and personal learning?

2) Do we propose specific leisure activities to certain individuals in order to support their development?

3) Do we combine social and personal oriented learning activities with vocational oriented activities?

### Explanations

To No. 1) As already mentioned it is essential to include the learners in choosing the activities that are practiced because otherwise they might feel like subjects who are forced to do something. In such a situation activities and the targeted positive developments like team building or the raising of self-esteem must fail. Therefore it is good to establish clear rules within the community which include that all learners should engage in an activity if this is chosen by the majority.

To No. 2) It might be sensible to offer certain activities to specific learners in order to support their development of self-esteem or in order to lead their self-concept in a stable and more realistic direction. For learners who have a low self-concept it might be for example a good idea to visit a climbing garden together with others because they might get an idea of their own abilities after managing the different task there. For learners who tend to grossly overestimate their abilities it might be sensible to bring them to reach their utmost limit on a cycling tour, and to give them the chance to acknowledge that they have reached it themselves.

To No. 3) Not always but on some occasions there may be the opportunity to combine activities of both types with each other. As one project the building of and steering of a raft could be suggested.

## **7.6 Recognition and Assessment of Qualifications and Competences**

### **Structural-level**

1) The features of the re-integration programs depend strongly on the type of welfare regime and the structure of the VET system dominant in a country. But in all cases it is possible to introduce or strengthen officially acknowledged ways of recognizing qualifications and competences gained by trainees.

2) In order to arrive at such an acknowledgement the network of decision makers on the national level, mentioned in section 2 (Collaborative Networks) should aim at reaching an agreement about this issue.

3) This recognition is desirable because it supports the trainees in getting access to the labour market or an apprenticeship or at least it fosters their progression towards or within a VET-school.

4) Because the delay in the progression of the participants will often be only temporary, due to typical problems of adolescence, the system of certificates recognizing their progression should be embedded in an overall system of acknowledging vocational achievements.

5) Every precaution should be taken not to create a separate system of certificates for the low-achievers. For this would mean that the relative exclusion from the "normal" career path would be even endorsed by the official regulations.

6) The assessment of qualifications and competences necessary for gaining such a certificate for the achievement of a "small step" should be adapted to the characteristics of the participants and the features of the re-integration program.

7) This means that even on the level of education and employment structures, as addressed in this subsection, there should be an attempt to recognize progression in social and personal learning.

### Explanations

To No. 1) In the Recommendations for Policy Makers and Planners a typology of four settings regarding the welfare regime and four matching structures of VET systems is presented:

| Type of welfare state                  | matching structure of VET system |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Universalistic (Nordic)                | school based                     |
| Employment based (Central European)    | (dual) system of alternance      |
| Liberal (Anglo-Saxon)                  | market driven                    |
| Less institutionalized (Mediterranean) | strong non-formal setting        |

Because each country represents a specific mixture of types and structures the ways in which to officially recognize achievement will also differ considerably. But because in all settings officially recognized certificates for VET do exist, although to a rather different degree, VET certificates for disadvantaged young people can be introduced everywhere

To No. 2) According to the specific setting applicable, as mentioned in No. 1, decision makers have to design a matching system for acknowledging the progress of disadvantaged young people. This system has to be adapted to the general characteristics of the re-integration programs.

To No. 3) Of course the value of these certificates should not be overestimated because employers and even teachers perceive them normally with caution. The regional and the local networks mentioned in section 2 (Collaborative Networks) should improve that situation.

To No. 4) This embeddeness in the overall system means that the usually relatively small steps which are mastered by disadvantaged young people should be viewed as

indeed being like the steps of a stair case leading towards a certificate acknowledged as equivalent to one that has been gained through the customary pathways.

To No. 5) The certificates regarding the small steps of progression of disadvantaged young people should be systematically matched with the competences and qualifications defined by the curricula of the "normal" pathway so that they can be recognized for them.

To No. 6) It should be considered carefully if the carrying through of written tests is adequate. Above all, employing a marking system as in an ordinary school should be avoided. Instead the assessment should be, as closely as possible, matching the respective didactical methods, like production orientation or teambuilding (See section 5 Situated Learning).

To No. 7) In the conventional curricula, progression in social and personal competences is usually supposed to happen alongside the achievements in the vocational area and is therefore often not explicitly mentioned. This parallelism cannot be taken for granted for the target group. Instruments like a log-book where the practitioners have written down their experiences with the individual participants might be a means of achieving a higher degree of reliability (and objectivity?) in assessing their social and personal competences (or skills).

### **Institutional-level**

- 1) How do we evaluate and assess the skills and competences which the learners achieve while participating in the re-integration scheme?
- 2) Do we evaluate and possibly assess not only basic competences (reading, writing, etc.) and vocational competences, but also social competences?
- 3) Do we apply the different possible methods with explicit consideration of the different objectives (basic, vocational, social, and personal competences) and the diverse groups of trainees?
- 4) Do we evaluate development processes, that is, compare present achievements with the ones formerly determined?
- 5) How sensible does it seem to us to create internal certificates`?



- 6) How could we collaborate with potential employers in order to convince them to recognize such internal certificates?
- 7) Do we check regularly to see if there are certificates which are officially recognized (by the Employment Service, Ministry of Education etc.) which could be awarded?
- 8) Do we include several different practitioners in all of the above, not leaving it to the project leader and a specialized assessor?

### Explanations

To No. 1) Often a combination of methods is employed: More formal methods (questionnaires, tests) with informal methods (observation, informal interviews, evaluating experiences with the work and the behaviour of the learners). It appears that there is no single best way.

To No. 2) It is often thought to be useful to fill in a log-book with very short statements about social and personal competences of the individual participants because it helps one to also reflect on the young people who do not normally attract attention to themselves.

To No. 3) Because of the different aims of the various courses it is obvious that specific methods have to be applied, for example for a long term course focusing on vocational objectives the methods will be rather different from those for a scheme providing mostly job placements and giving young people social and personal support once a week.

To No. 4) Because funding is often based on externally measurable "concrete results" ( e.g. rate of transition to the labour market or an apprenticeship) it may be that the development process of the individuals is not sufficiently appreciated. Many practitioners nevertheless try to evaluate and appreciate these important development processes even if they do not lead to the said "concrete results".

To No. 5) Internal documents which certify specific achievements may enhance the motivation of the participants even if they describe only rather small steps of development. On the other hand one should avoid to overdoing this (sometimes called the diploma disease) because it dissects the holistic approach of support into pieces which can be assessed. Also too large an administrative work load may arise.

To No. 6) If the program has established a network of employers who are willing to take in participants, such agreements may be achieved.

To No. 7) In some countries these certificates are firmly established (in the UK: Skill Profiles, National Vocational Qualifications) In other countries (e.g. Germany) discussions on the political level are still ongoing.

To No. 8) A distribution of tasks is certainly often sensible and necessary. However, all actors should be included in this endeavor in one or the other way, because the assessment of learners influences, often in an occult way, the whole characteristic of the scheme and may endanger its holistic approach.

### **Individual-level**

1) How do we include participants in the process of evaluation and assessment of their achievements?

2) How do we try to convince participants that evaluation, and sometimes assessment, could benefit their progress?

3) Do we try to match the assessment procedures as closely as possible with the education and training processes they are experiencing?

4) To what degree do we use procedures of evaluation and assessment as means of supporting the education and training process?

5) Do we realize that the methods of evaluating and assessing the progress of the participants does often influence, in a very strong but often occult manner, the whole setting of our courses?

6) Do we try to find an acceptable balance between our own ideas about the aims and methods of evaluating the progress of our participants and the assessment demands put forward particularly by the funding bodies?

### **Explanations**

To No. 1) Most participants have experienced assessment procedures which made them feel they had been reduced to objects of measurement. Therefore it should be carefully explained to them what the aims, objectives and rules of the evaluation and assessment are.

To No. 2) It is well known that most participants have mostly experienced a sense of failure due to assessment procedures. Obviously it is important to avoid making them anxious about this issue, even if this is often very difficult.

To No. 3) The education and training processes thought to be adequate for the target group are dealt with in section 5 (Situated Learning). Whatever the practitioners and planners design for their respective scheme, evaluation and testing methods should be constructed as being part of the teaching and learning, not a separate undertaking.

To No. 4) Because the social and personal development of the participants is so important traditional ways of testing and assessing are not adequate. The process of evaluating and assessing development and achievement represents a pedagogical means of stimulating self-reflection on the part of the participants.

To No. 5) It is well known from general school and VET that exams determine to a high degree what is happening in the course, on the part of the students as well as on the part of the teachers and trainers. This effect should be reduced as far as possible because the participants in re-integration courses are particularly sensitive to being made to feel like objects of assessment.

To No. 6) In some programs the main aim is to achieve easily measurable objectives, often only the transition rate to employment or an apprenticeship. Because chances are that most participants will not succeed according to these standards it might be possible that the course will have the adverse effect of frustrating the young people's hopes even more.

## **8 Measuring the long term effects of situated learning**

**Sue Cranmer and Wiebke Petersen**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This report will focus on learners' experiences of Re-integration programmes in order to assess improvements in their vocational, personal and social competencies. Firstly, a brief background to the project will be provided to emphasise the importance of this study. Secondly, a short discussion will focus on issues of retention in programmes. Thirdly, 'distance travelled' will be assessed taking account of learners' needs, their experiences during the programmes and their situations and perspectives after the courses. Finally tentative conclusions will be drawn on the basis of the findings.

### **8.2 Background**

This report is based on work-in-progress in an EU funded project involving research partners in Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece, Portugal and UK. This project builds upon the previous project, Re-Enter, which identified the features of good practice in schemes aimed at preventing young people from dropping out of the education system at the stage of transition from school to vocational education and training. Through meta-review and meta-analysis good practice was identified in the context of situated learning in communities of practice. Within this framework, it was established that the skills and competencies needed by young people are not merely 'instrumental' (for instance, Language, Literacy, Numeracy and the wider Key Skills, such as, communication, application of number, working with others and so on). In addition, they need to develop wider personal and social competencies required to understand and deal with one's own situation such as personality, expectations, difficulties, boundaries, limitations and rejection. (Evans and Hoffman, 2000). Moreover, many of the young people participating in the programmes bring with them 'negative experiences' of education and training in addition to personal problems that need to be addressed before training for the world of work or even career planning can be realised. For these young people, a training programme cannot merely be viewed as preparation for work or transition into the world of work.

Concepts like motivation, confidence, identity, worth/purpose, self-actualisation, potential and empowerment are included in the process of developing competencies in order to move them on. Whilst there is recognition of the importance of these wider personal and social competencies by practitioners, who informally review what can be termed 'soft outcomes' and learning gains, there is little evidence of their systematic evaluation. Also, policy makers and funders more frequently measure the success of the programmes by hard outcomes, such as success in getting a job, a training place and/or qualifications. This makes it difficult for practitioners to justify the time needed to consistently evaluate soft outcomes (*see chapter on Evaluation*).

Being able to identify and evaluate 'distance travelled' by young people participating in Reintegration measures has posed a challenge for our design. In order to address this, we asked both the learners and the practitioners which aspects of the programmes they regard as most important for the development of this group of young people. Furthermore we have taken into account the life circumstances of learners at the beginning of, during and after completion of their courses. By examining the experience of the learner over time, including the dynamics of change in the young person's inner and outer social frameworks, this project represents an advance on previous work in that it addresses directly the criticism that the focus of socially situated learning research has, in concentrating on the contextual shaping of performance, tended 'to obscure the contributions of prior experience to that performance' and has not addressed the effects of moving between context, either horizontally or over time (Damon, 1991).

#### *Learners' needs*

*An important aspect of this project was to establish the starting point of the learners in relation to the following (overlapping) categories:*

*previous achievements (schooling and VET)*

*Social circumstances and general living conditions*

*Reasons for failure to pursue the usual pathway.*

*These are summarised in Appendix 1.*

#### *Issues of retention*

*It would be unrealistic to assess improvements in biographical competencies without providing background information about retention rates on Reintegration programmes. Our data shows that in the case of the UK programmes, up to 60% of*

*young people we attempted to track, left their course before the 6 week point. Yet, exit interviews carried out with the early leavers show that reasons for leaving are not always negative. For instance, on the Gateway programme, 7 out of 17 young people left the programme at the 6 week point. The data showed the following reasons:*

*2 found regular employment*

*1 began a voluntary job*

*1 reported that beginning the course had given her more confidence and determination to look for work by herself. By the 12 week point, she had indeed found work.*

*1 had moved to another part of the country*

*2 had left for extended holidays visiting relatives.*

The findings from the Gateway are reflected by retention rates in the other UK programmes. For instance, in the Finding your Feet programme for unaccompanied Asylum Seekers under 18 years of age, the majority of the young people left the programme within the first few weeks because they were ready to enter the local mainstream college. On the Lifeskills programmes for pregnant teenagers and other young people, about half of the learners left early due to finding jobs. Exceptionally, one woman was asked to leave due to aggressive behaviour combined with drug abuse. Another left due to family and accommodation problems. Two women left just before their babies were due. Two women, who attended most of the course, found work just prior to its completion. Overall, the reasons for leaving were mainly positive in these 3 programmes. The exception was found to be on the New Deal programme. Unfortunately, the majority of the young people being tracked left New Deal before the 6 week point. Again, this was for a range of reasons including family crisis, behavioural problems, lack of attendance and so on. However, it should be noted that the young people who attended up to the 6 week point usually continued for the next year (a year is the maximum length of time allowed on the course) and then successfully transferred to mainstream college programmes. Also, the New Deal Advisor reported that the retention rates for the sample had been much lower than usual.

### 8.3 Situation and perspective after the programme

This section will assess improvements in vocational, social and personal competencies ascribable to the programmes for those young people who regularly attended their courses. In order to do this, it was found helpful to draw on the autobiographical action competence model of PETERSEN (2003) which bases on Heinrich ROTH 's (1971) model of action competencies: personal, vocational, social competence. PETERSEN's model will be presented through the following table. It was found helpful because it proposes situated learning as bases for the development of autobiographical action competence.<sup>21</sup>

The model of autobiographical action competence regards vocational, social and personal action competence as three sets with overlaps between each other.

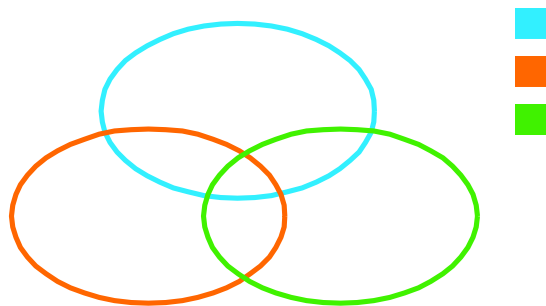
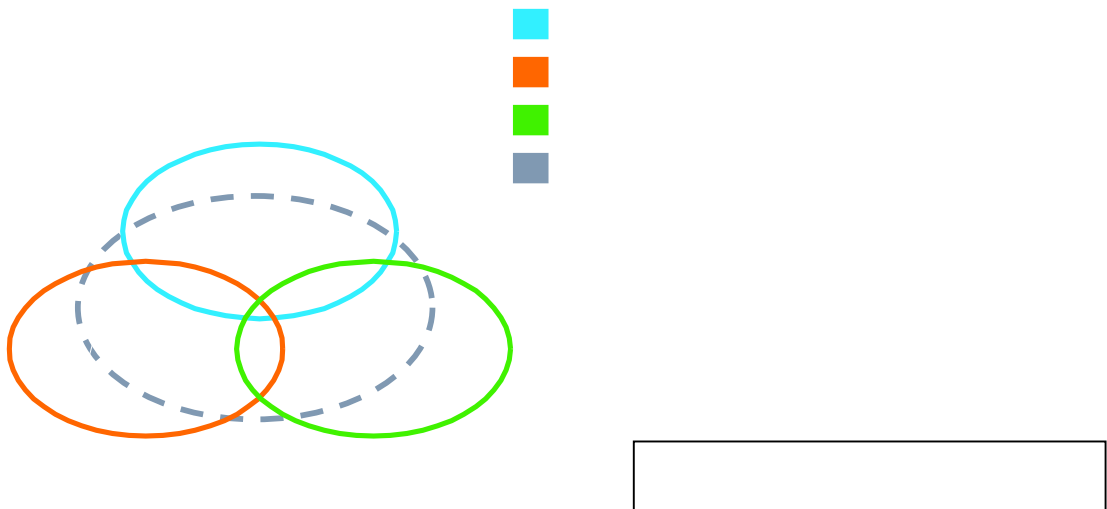


Figure 8.1: The model of action competence

Autobiographical action competence as a fourth set then is situated in the centre of the three sets but has additional aspects as well. It is defined as



<sup>21</sup> Petersen(2003),

Situated learning in Re-integration schemes is regarded as the best way to support the development of autobiographical action competence. Therefore aspects of situated learning are understood as springs of a trampoline while the four competences mentioned above build the spring-board of the trampoline.

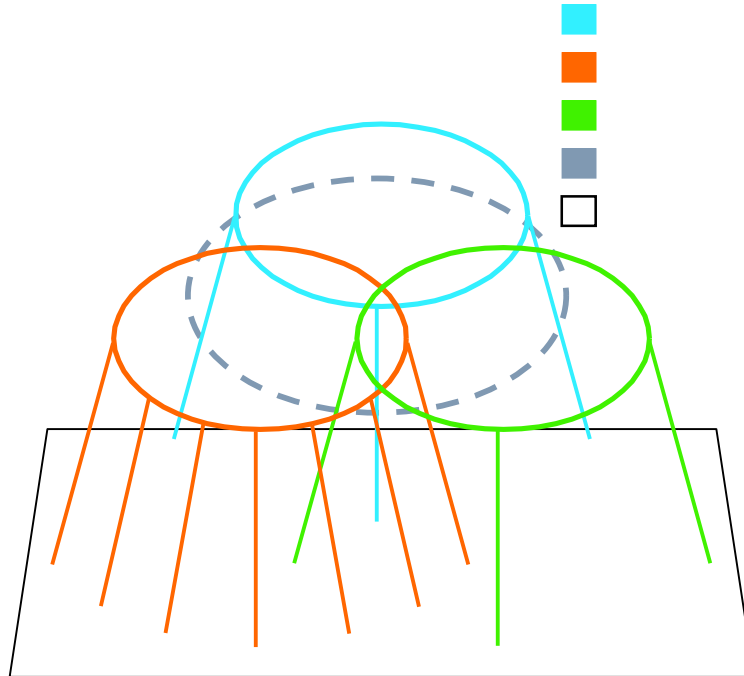


Figure 8.3: Support of autobiographical action competence through situated learning

A very important point of Reintegration practice is how the learner values their developments for themselves. For this reason, this report will mainly focus on learner experience and the soft outcomes and ‘distance travelled’ they attribute to the intervention.

### 8.3.1 *Personal action competence*

[Definition: Developing personal action competence means to develop a realistic positive self-concept.]

From the data, partners sought evidence of improvements in competencies such as taking responsibility for oneself, becoming more autonomous, growth in personal qualities, confidence and self-esteem. These competencies were considered particularly important in times of unemployment and crucial for this target group who are often unable to function at work and in learning environments due to personal problems and unstable family backgrounds. Confidence and self-esteem



may also be low due to most of the youngsters entering the programmes perceiving themselves to have failed in school.

The data shows numerous examples of learners valuing improvements in their personal action competencies:

Taking responsibility for oneself – One learner said that his mother is glad that he has attended the Gateway course, she can see the improvement in his CV and the way that he is applying himself to job search. He said that: ‘She can see I’m more determined to get a job’. (UK)

Becoming active - What they regard in a very positive light is that their joining the programme was the result of their own action, not something they owe to their circle of friends and contacts. (Greece)

Becoming more autonomous – ‘Looking back today, I have to say that the progress I have achieved is due to the help and the patience the training advisers had with me. It took them a lot of time until I had trust to them and until I found a decision by myself. I really have to say thank you to them.’ (Germany)

Growth in personal qualities (anger management) - Eight months after the end of the Reintegration programme one youngster (out of ten we could trace) says the programme helped to change his personality (less aggressive) (Belgium).

Overcoming feelings of failure from school – It has been a surprise for students that they will pass the project year ‘I did not attend at school regularly at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Then I dropped out at the 10<sup>th</sup> grade after 1 and a half days. In a vocational school I stayed 10 minutes. Now (at the beginning of the programme) I had a feeling that I will drop out sooner or later. In fact, this has been going quite well’. (Finland)

Increased confidence through carrying out authentic tasks –

I: Do you feel that you have changed during this programme?

S: You mean during this training?

I: When you compare the time you left the vocational school.

S: Yes, I have changed... now I can do something for these cars.

I: More confident about the work...

S: There are seldom tasks which are so difficult that I had to ask help... sometimes, nowadays. When I started, I had to ask for help almost all the time. (Finland)

Increased self-awareness –the result of theoretical and practical course contents tailored to the individual needs of learners. (Portugal)

From the data, it appears that there are variations in how much young people value the confidence they gain on the programmes. In Belgium, they speak more of their increased vocational and social action competencies whereas in the UK, they mention their increased confidence more frequently. It's difficult to say whether this is the result of the UK programmes greater focus on building self-esteem or that confidence is more highly valued in some countries than others.

Only one youngster says he got more self-assured during the programme and this helped him to be more confident about finding a job too. (Belgium)

Stuart mentioned that the 'Gateway to Work' course had built up his confidence in general and particularly with regard to interview techniques. Looking back at the course a year on, Stuart thought the whole course was designed to build confidence rather than job search. (UK)

In the longer term, having left the programme, it was identified that learners are not well prepared for dealing with times of unemployment. Therefore learners who do not find an apprenticeship or who slide back into unemployment still have problems in dealing with this situation as before and this puts them in danger. They often fall back into their former situation/ their former living circumstances. The possibility that learners will not find future opportunities is not usually addressed within the course content.

There are indications that for Stacey, becoming pregnant at the end of her first programme felt like a good option. She was demoralised by her lack of job success: 'I felt like I was sending off so many applications to people but I wasn't getting anything back. It got me a bit down and that so I just don't know why really'. During a later interview, she says that she's glad she's pregnant because otherwise she would still be looking for work.

Also, to optimise improvements made in personal competencies, there needs to be good conditions for them to last and grow. For example, the young people need to find an apprenticeship place or a work place where they feel welcome and integrated; a stable community to which they belong, a mentor who looks after them and can help them to overcome any problems they may have in the longer term. Otherwise,

learners can find themselves in the situation of ‘revolving doors’ where they move from programme to programme without escaping the cycle.

Having completed the Gateway course, Stuart finds that he is still motivated to look for work but the lack of opportunities are getting him down some of the time. He goes around handing his CV in but sometimes thinks he cannot be bothered. He is undertaking a 6 month placement gaining retail experience in a charity shop which will finish in a month’s time. He will then return to the Job Centre Plus to see what his Advisor suggests. (UK)

Partners in Portugal similarly noted the lack of helpful guidance available to the young people who drop out of the schemes.

Finnish partners recommend that further collaboration is needed between different programmes in order to give learners long term support, especially in the phases of transfer from programmes to vocational schools. A good model of this was found on the Finding your Feet programme in the UK. The programme successfully acts as preparation for the mainstream local college in most cases. Practitioners on the programme and at the college are in frequent contact and between them organise visits, entry tests and interviews. This facilitates easier transfer for the young people.

### **8.3.2 *Vocational action competence***

[Definition: Vocational action competence means to develop the ability to plan actions and to keep hold of this plan and deal according to it.]

To assess improvements in vocational action competencies, the team sought outcomes such as progress in career planning skills, Language, Literacy and Numeracy alongside the wider Key Skills, experience of completing (real) tasks and professional attitudes (such as punctuality) useful to gaining employment.

This aspect of Reintegration is the dominant objective of many of the programmes. It is also more easily and more frequently measured by hard outcomes such as success in getting a job, a training place and/or qualifications. Components of the vocational such as professional attitudes can be the less tangible softer outcomes. Furthermore, progress made towards employment and so on can represent development without a measurable outcome being achieved. This section will focus on the ‘distance travelled’ and assessment of softer outcomes.

The major objective of the prepaths (Reintegration programmes developed in Flanders) is the development of career skills. This is defined as: choice competence, professional attitudes and skills, and career perspective. The young people should gain Language, Literacy and Numeracy skills to move over to a labour market oriented pathway. Within this context improving vocational action competence is important. What do youngsters think about this effect? And do they think they have improved?

All the youngsters value the vocational action competence very highly. For most of the young people, this is what Reintegration programmes should be about. When being asked about the effects of the programme, more or less all of the youngsters refer to this category. Some youngsters mention the tasks they 'learned': taking care of a horse, painting,... Others think it was good they were able to take responsibility, to persevere with the tasks they had started and to be on time. (Belgium)

Although some of the youngsters are able to formulate progress on the vocational action competence, two are clearly disappointed: 'It was all about passing time. I didn't learn anything. And if you don't learn anything, you don't have more chances.' (Belgium)

Young people on the programmes in Greece similarly stress the value of labour-market oriented skills development:

'Teachers answer the questions; they try to teach us more than the obligatory syllabus when they feel that we want to get knowledge in order to be prepared for entering the labour market'. 'When you go for the job interview, these things (he means CV, punctuality, how to introduce yourself etc) will be like a test control, they will be required'. (Greece)

In general the trainees' assessment of the training seminars was positive, whether they had eventually found work or not. What they regarded as valuable was the knowledge they had acquired, the basic IT skills. They were satisfied by the accumulated knowledge and the commitment and professionalism of the trainers/instructors. (Greece)

The programmes in the UK are similarly employment and employability oriented with the exception of the pregnancy course. The courses focus on gaining Language, Literacy and Numeracy and wider Key Skills, job search, action planning and work experience. Many of the individuals are successful in gaining employment during

their courses or shortly afterwards. This is possible through the support of Advisors combined with confidence in their new employment related skills. However, where this hard measure is not achievable, softer indicators can also show progress.

Although Stuart has yet to find paid work, he feels that he has improved his CV and interview techniques (through being filmed and given feedback). He has also gained retail experience in a charity shop. ‘I’m learning quite a lot actually, I’m learning quite a bit.’ (UK)

In Germany, the focus of programmes leading to improvements in vocational action competence are enormous within the vocational fields regarding skills of metal work, cooking or housekeeping. The learners did not develop the same (amount of) skills that an apprentice develops within the first year and most of them cannot use their skills in the same time. But anyway, this is not the target. The learners developed knowledge about their vocational field and they were able to explain how the dough for a pizza is made and how they have to handle the machines in the metal workshop. Also, after ten months in the course most of the trainees were able to deal with given tasks independently. Similarly, learners in Portugal showed recognition of the usefulness of the training programme for their working experience. This was particularly the case where teaching materials and methodologies were individually tailored to the trainees’ needs and experience.

### **8.3.3 *Social action competence***

[Definition: Social action competence means to become firstly a participating member of the group in the Reintegration measure and secondly to (re)integrate into parts of society, which is surely restricted because society is not always willing to let them reintegrate. In detail it means to learn how to deal with conflicts, to have respect against each other, to develop friendships, etc.]

The partners sought evidence of improvements in social skills and relationships in the experience of the learners. It was clear that the social aspects of the courses provide a strong source of pleasure to many of the participants particularly due to their previous isolation as the result of disengagement. This is especially important for this group whose previous learning experiences have usually not been so enjoyable.

It was important for learners to meet other people who had the same problem finding an apprenticeship. Nina: 'I was really glad when I recognised that there were other trainees same age than me at the first meeting for the course. I always thought that I would be the only person who doesn't have an apprenticeship at the age of 19'. (Germany)

It would seem that the trainees become involved and are energised by the courses. They find that they share similar goals and concerns. (Greece)

Working together with the other trainees was a process with lots of difficulties. Nevertheless working and learning together helped them to become more tolerant and to become part of a group. (Germany)

Meeting the young people after ten months of participation in the Reintegration scheme most of them had achieved a lot, gave the impression of having matured, have become part of the community and are able to fulfil work tasks together. Dealing for example with an overcrowded rubbish skip was a task which was managed without any advice from the tutor but by the teamwork of three trainees from the kitchen. The young people themselves did not often mention the importance of the self-directed access to the community but from an observing position it can be seen that trainees who refused to work within the group at the beginning had found their place in the community within the ten month of the course. (Germany)

The number of conflicts went down and it was clear that the youngsters appreciated the social action competence, a valuable part of the programme. Five (out of ten) youngsters tracked, explicitly mentioned results within this category: 'My social contacts improved', 'I learned to cooperate', 'I learned to show respect to persons that are different', 'I learned to understand',... (Belgium)`.

Throughout the whole 16 weeks of the course, one of the tutors put pressure on Stuart to speak and he found this tutor the most helpful. He thinks the increase in his social skills helped him to get a (temporary) post office job. (UK)

Importantly, for this group of young people, the social experience appears to enhance the learning and motivation to attend and engage with the programme and to develop new interests.

Jodie said that the biggest boosts to her confidence had come from the improvements to her English and Maths and the impact of meeting people: 'just being with new

people. A few new people started each month. You got to meet them and started talking to them'. (UK)

Thilan (a refugee) appears to make friends easily, particularly with people from other countries. They then quickly get integrated into his life and facilitate having a go at new pastimes such as tennis and other hobbies. This also helps him to integrate into society generally, not just through having a job. (UK)

The Finnish partners made the point that participating in the group is often one of the most positive aspects of the programme in the learners' interviews. However, the challenge is moving forwards when the project ends particularly for young people who have lost contact with previous friends who are attending the vocational school. Though they appear to feel comfortable in the Reintegration programme, they remain reluctant to move towards integrating into the mainstream (vocational school) community.

#### **8.3.4 *Autobiographical action competence***

[Definition: Autobiographical action competence is a combination of all of the three points above and something that make the learners able to develop own perspectives for vocational and private life i.e. planning one's own life and developing occupational and individual perspectives.]

The partners sought improvements in personal, vocational and social action competencies as detailed above in order to assess autobiographical competence.

In Germany, in relation to the improvements in autobiographical action competence, it has to be stated that the trainees at the JAW programme in Süderbrarup have developed a realistic vocational perspective. A great part of them had to understand during the year that they will not reach the aim of achieving a secondary school leaving exam but they have developed plans regarding the vocational field they want to work in because they had the chance to try different occupational areas. Through discussions with the training advisers and other trainees and through experiences in placements their ideas of their future work were led into realistic directions. Having a realistic idea of which field you want to work in can already be seen as an indicator for developing autobiographical action competence.

However, not all trainees in our research field had developed autobiographical action competence. In a difficult situation were those trainees who started the course with an excessive self-concept and who did not manage to develop a realistic idea of themselves and their chances within the community and in the labour market. In the group of trainees with an excessive self concept there were a great deal of youngsters who dropped out of the course during the year.

Also, analysing the development of autobiographical action competence two years after the course made it clear that account should be taken of the conditions the trainees met after their programmes had ended. It was found to have had an important influence on their further development. In general it can be said that trainees who experience good conditions in the workplace and further support often develop a higher degree of autobiographical action competence but trainees who left the course with a positive perspective and met difficult situations in their vocational and private life did not develop in a similar positive way.

German partners note that one year of participation in a Reintegration scheme is in most cases not enough to support adequate personal, social and vocational competencies development. Most of the trainees would need follow-up by their person of contact from the Reintegration scheme for at least two or three years after finishing the course.

In Belgium, during the follow-up interviews the youngsters were confronted with their original answers. Most of the youngsters said their wishes for the future remained the same. Did the prepath make the youngsters wishes for the future more realistic or specific? Most of the youngsters answered negatively. However, we could identify a change in the tone of communication. During the follow-up interviews, youngsters were much more open and also decisive about their future than during the intake interviews. Did the prepaths bring the youngsters any closer to being re-integrated? Especially at the Centre of Vocational Training (Treffen), the youngsters were negative about this. At the Centre of Vocational Education (Redingenhof), the youngsters were more positive, although they weren't specific in their answers.

In Greece, participants were positive about the programmes they had attended yet realistic about their future opportunities:

They all feel – and this is reflected in the way they talk – that ‘some of what I used to know is coming back. I can talk about myself, I’m waiting to buy a computer, I feel I



learned something'. Above all they have learned where to look for work, their rights as potential employees, and they have received a grant which, for some of them, was a substantial amount, and boosted their confidence. At the end of the seminars they seemed to accept the fact that possibilities for job placements were limited. The expectations of the beginning of the implementation of the Integrated Intervention Programme were changing into a realistic picture of the situation. According to the new data some of them would further change personal strategies. (Greece)

In the UK, equally, there were ambiguities in the success of the programmes. The high drop out rates continue to undermine their success. Whilst those who complete a significant part of the programme do, for the most part, show progress –this can be subtle and invisible to hard measures. A good example would be Thilan whose progress against hard measures would not be explicit, having remained at English level 1 throughout his time on the programme. Yet, it appears that he is progressing overall:

Thilan, a refugee, has improved his English language skills on the New Deal programme. After the programme finished, he continued to study English at the same college whilst acquiring a part-time job as a petrol station attendant alongside his English course. He has also learnt to touch type in English/IT lessons. He feels that all three steps will help him to become a motor mechanic, his ultimate goal. These small gains would go unnoticed by measures of hard outcomes. (UK)

As with the German perspective, it is worth reiterating this point about the post-programme opportunities impacting on the perceived effects of the programme and the conditions needed to further increase autobiographical competence beyond the intervention. Also, it should be emphasised that despite the success of the programme, the young person may slip back into their previous situation unless adequately supported by their own competencies and external structures. A good example of this is Stacey who found that teenage pregnancy presented a better option than continuing to face demoralising rejections to her job applications. Similarly, Stuart who is starting to find his enthusiasm for handing in his CV is waning in the light of the lack of opportunity and hope of success.

## 8.4 Conclusions

The overall conclusion of this dimension of the project is that there is clear evidence that learners perceive improvements in their own vocational, personal and social competencies while attending Reintegration courses. The development of autobiographical action competence becomes obvious in various aspects, e.g. some learners have contacted their family again after a long break, some learners have developed clear perspectives regarding the vocational field they are interested in, some learners have improved their social contacts and some of them just express that they feel more self-assured. These steps of progression which we regard as steps heading autobiographical action competence are observable for practitioners as well as for researchers and in most cases for the learners themselves.

A great support regarding the development of autobiographical action competence might be due to the offers and the different activities of the scheme. We found out that activities which included social and personal oriented learning were experienced as motivating and raised the self- assurance. Also activities which addressed the necessities of life were appreciated. Nevertheless it has also be taken into account that other aspects in the trainee' s life might have positive influence. Therefore it has to be admitted that such soft outcomes are difficult to find and to lead back to specific characteristics of the course the trainee participated in. Against this background it is important to abstract important aspects of reintegration schemes and their role in practice firstly from former participants and secondly from the observations and experiences of practitioners. In this case it is important to involve trainees who passed the course from the beginning to the end and who have been successfully according to so called hard indicators that are provided from the institutional- or structural-level. But it is as well crucial interviewing those who dropped out.

The research situation of the Re-integration project was especially fruitful because the different countries were able to contribute different findings and different orientations of the Re-integration schemes in their country and through this situation a broader perspective on Re-integration schemes and their content and mutual learning were assured.

Against this background we suggest to take another characteristic as central for the evaluation of the success of a reintegration scheme. We suggest to focus on the development of each trainee's self-concept.

If trainees enter the scheme with a low self-concept and if they arrive at increasing their self-concept through practical experiences or through the development of social contacts this can be regarded as a positive long term effect.

If trainees enter the program with an excessive self-concept and they arrive at revising this through practical and group experiences as well as one-to one conversation with advisers this can be regarded as a positive long term effect.

A very important point is the fact if they are able to conserve their self-perspective after the end of the course. This point is often not in the sphere of the trainees own influence because it is due to the conditions they met after the course which are strongly influenced by the socio-economic level.

Additionally it has to be taken into account that – as mentioned above – learners with an excessive self-concept are more likely to drop out of their re-integration scheme.

This data raises further questions and areas for concern in relation to the conditions needed for the young people to optimise their competencies and opportunities in the longer term. What emerged as crucial are the conditions met after the course. Do they find a work or apprenticeship place (UK, B, Ger), are they involved in family business (Gr, P) or do they find work after leaving vocational schools (Fin). These conditions are due to the socioeconomic context of each country and not changeable by learners themselves or by the efforts and the engagement of practitioners.

If the learners meet bad conditions which means that they do not find employment or meet restrictive conditions in their new environment their development is stopping or often going backwards. The quality of conditions that the trainees meet after the course can not be clearly defined in one way for all countries. These conditions are related to the socioeconomic context of each country. In Finland it is important that the learners are reintegrated into the school based VET-system in order to be integrated into the mainstream. In Germany it is important that learners find an apprenticeship place, in Great Britain a long term workplace is enough while in Portugal or Greece a reintegration into the own family and its business is already a great step forward.

Therefore the first step is that mentoring is needed to ease transition to the mainstream where opportunities are available such as an apprenticeship place, further

study and/or work, to provide support with any problems the young person may encounter and help them to succeed. But even more important, is the provision of stable mentoring for those young people who fail to find a suitable opening. Further measures are needed which build on, rather than repeating, the first intervention in order to prevent the young person from becoming despondent and reverting to their former situation and living circumstances.

Furthermore, the findings in relation to 'distance travelled' have raised issues about the lack of acknowledgement by policy makers and funding bodies of the softer indicators of progress as a measure of the success of programmes. Although many of the practitioners systematically evaluate soft outcomes, the time to do so is limited and difficult to justify particularly when their funding is tied to hard outcomes. Yet, as the cases show, development can be subtle for this group of young people and difficult to demonstrate by hard measures. It appears that Reintegration may be best viewed as small steps along a continuum towards the goal of Reintegration for the young people, rather than as a one step intervention with a post-programme sink or swim outcome. For the people involved, these small steps can make a world of difference to the possibility of reintegrating and making a useful contribution to society when the post-programme conditions are supportive to them.

Therefore aftercare options which are related to the reintegration scheme need to be provided. The young people must already be familiar with them when they leave the reintegration scheme so that there is no barrier for them to use aftercare provision. But against our findings from the Re-enter and the Reintegration-Project in none of the participating countries aftercare courses are provided on regular bases. The only fact which was reported is that some learners come back to the practitioners after the course if they are in trouble or if they need assistance.

As already mentioned above aftercare courses should not only repeat what has already been provided in reintegration courses but they should offer the youngsters options for integration, for activities, for building a community and they should fight against social exclusion of every single young person and against their desperation. And beside all these tasks the hope for reintegrating some participants into the mainstream should only be postponed not given up for good. Instead it should be focussed on options for supporting them in times of unemployment. Taking this into account questions about the institutions which might be able to offer aftercare and the activities which are sensible and might be offered in such institutions arise.

Activities which include daily necessities like cooking might be one option. The opportunity to cook and eat with others might be a motivating aspect which lets the post reintegration participants join the offer. Additionally sports like basketball, football or aerobics should be included in such aftercare courses. These sport activities as well as the daily necessities should promote the building of a community in which the participants give each other support. At least the participants should be integrated in a subgroup of society instead of sitting separated in front of the TV at home. In a community in which all members share the problem of being out of work it is easier to cope with this situation because the single person does not longer regard the lack of work as his own stigma. Planning and participating in activities together with other might give them the opportunity to build up networks, to exchange help and expertise and to live a meaningful life. If participant keep being integrated and engaged they save competences which might be important for their future life and future employment options. Against this background one major outcome of the reintegration project is appealing for the initiation of aftercare offers in all European countries. This appeal addressed to policy makers and planners for reintegration in the first place but it addresses practitioners of reintegration schemes as well because it is crucial that they claim for aftercare provision as well. Only if they point out the needs of their target group in public policy makers and planners of reintegration will recognise the requirements for such support.

The participation in aftercare offers should be optional for the target group. Churches or local community centres should offer aftercare activities as well as space for meetings but participants should take over more and more self-responsibility for the activities. In an ideal case they should organise their own networks through which they assist each other in every day's life and in which they organise common leisure activities like football games, aerobic sessions, common cooking and meals or the initiation of video sessions. If a group of people takes over the responsibility for their own aftercare in such a way the task of practitioners working in such initiatives would be to find out people who leave Re-integration without actual further options on the labour market and invite them as well as providing one-to-one assistance and counselling if there is a demand for that.

Finally we suggest the following examples for aftercare activities:

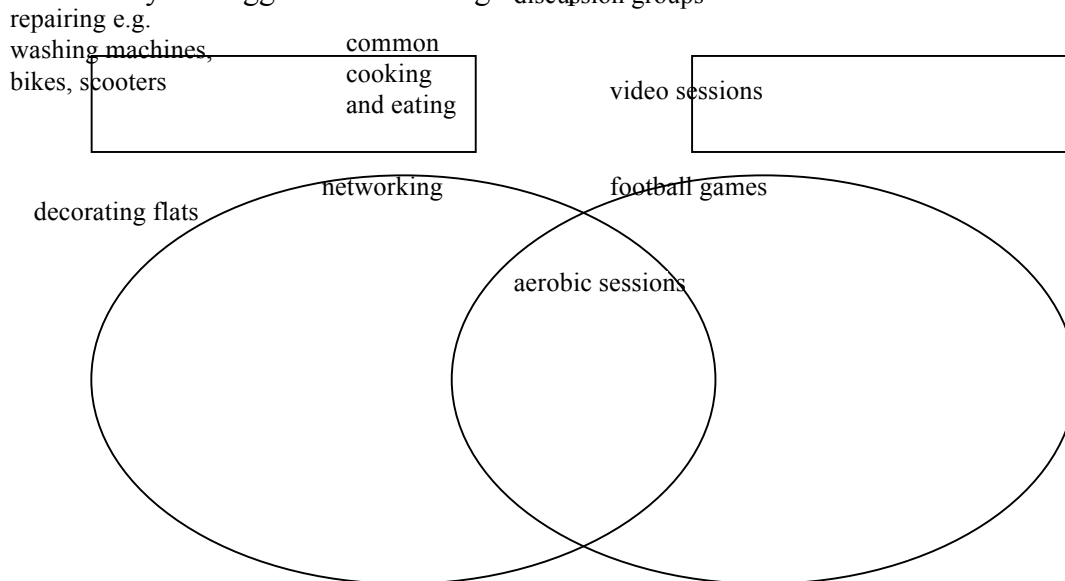


Figure 8.4: Suggestions for aftercare activities

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## **9 Evolverment of Trans-national Reflection and Development Methodology – TRDM**

**Anja Heikkinen and Lieve Ruelens**

The potential of evolverment of TRDM as trans-national innovation related to the conceptions of research-practice-links adopted by the partners during the Re-enter project. The positioning of partners in the project was reflected in the presentation for European education research community in 2003 (Evans & al 2003, 2004). Accordingly, the Portuguese partner was considered to be focusing on the consistency between teachers training and learners training, the Belgian partner was expected to set importance to outreach and access in re-integrative activities. The British partner was assumed to concentrate on conceptual issues and on developing a comprehensive model of situated learning, the German partner on cooperation between professionals and on relations between social and vocational (occupational) integration. The Finnish partner should focus on coherence of the re-integrative activity with existing VET-structures and with its inclusive or excluding effects, the Greek partner on inclusiveness of the European labour market and on the integrative potential of a small business economy related to the target group of the Re-Integration research.

### **9.1 Unwrapping the package: the diversity and complexity of re-integration**

Building on the Re-enter project tempted the researchers to pretend that they shared a common understanding of the objectives and targets of research. In practice this meant commitment to a research and administration led conception of the re-integrative activity. In the planning workshop March 2001 the aims, methods and data collection seemed to be rather open and diffuse. It would have been simple just to develop a list of indicators to test whether the activity meets the criteria of the concept of 'situated learning'. It could have been left to the national policy makers and administrators to decide on the problems to be solved or the deficiencies to be corrected by re-integrative activities. However, engagement with these activities and interaction with practitioners led researchers to questioning whether research does

justice to their intentions and enables the development of pedagogically correct models for evaluation.

In the case of **Portugal**, the separate, holistic education system called “Casa Pia”, targeted to disadvantaged children and youths, has a long history. Vocational and employment training is its crucial element. Through ESF funding the number of shorter, outreaching projects has increased. The autonomy and separate financing of the system makes evaluation and collaboration with mainstream institutions and practitioners a challenge (Oliveira 2002, 2004). In **Germany** re-integrative activity is targeted to disadvantaged youth, who lack an apprenticeship place after secondary school. There is a parallel structure of re-integration classes at vocational schools and re-integration measures at “private” institutions out of school. Both aim at the same target group but are financed from totally different sources and belong to totally different administrative systems: ministry of education and labour agency. Typical school programmes are organised in classes, provide practical work but no “real” work experience, teachers mostly focus on “normal” classes. The aim is teaching technical subjects or to help young people to pass the school leaving examination. The approach mainly considers deficits of the young people – they lack social competences, basic competences in reading and writing and math, they don’t know how to behave or concentrate - cured in an additional year of schooling. Non-school-organisations need to apply for annual funding and the quality of the programme is assessed against a set of indicators. Typically these programmes provide practical technical training, regular social support, individual support strategies and the pedagogical staff works exclusively with this target group. The aim is to enable young people for an apprenticeship and for participation in social life. (Niemeyer 2003).

In **Belgium** unemployed pupils in part-time vocational education are classified as fit to work and employable, fit to work and difficultly employable, unfit to work and willing to work, unfit to work and not willing to work. The re-integration programmes are an answer to the needs of the pupils, 15-18 years old, unfit and not willing to work. To enhance the chances of the youngsters on the labour market the methodology of route counseling is adopted. However, not all pupils are ready for regular employment. For them re-integration programmes are developed. “Prepaths” are the first step in a pathway towards regular employment. Actually they prepare disengaged youngsters for a labour market oriented pathway. Personal and social



skills are trained to enhance the youngsters' chances on the labour market. 'Employment' is not the question yet, 'activation' is the main issue. The Re-enter project criteria for 'learning and working in a meaningful environment' (Re-enter 2001) were:

- \* The learning takes place within a meaningful work context
- \* There is space for the young person as a learner
- \* Access is given to the learning content of the working context
- \* Intermediate evaluations
- \* The youngster looks beyond his/her own position within the work context
- \* The youngster is able to experience his/her own contribution to the work context as a meaningful action within society.

The Re-Integration cases meet these criteria, but their translation to concrete activities proved not to be easy. During the case studies the activities were mainly situated in a free time context, in process evaluation the focus shifted towards activities that were more occupation oriented. (Ruelens 2003).

In the **Greek** context re-integration activities like the Integrated Intervention Programme (IIP) mean mainly the access /integration of all kinds of people who have difficulties in entering the labour market. There are no official strategies to identify young people outside the educational system, nor any programmes specially designed for them. The trainees of IIP have experienced a social rather than an occupational change. They had the opportunity to meet with other young people, share goals, and acquire knowledge and basic skills. They became more realistic since they accept the fact that possibilities for job placements were limited, readjusted personal strategies, re-mobilised personal networks for finding a job or further continue VET, they have learnt where to look for work, about their rights as potential employees, self esteem, capitalisation on their new knowledge. The Re-Integration target group was located in a region, where the population is characterised by 'a type of social exclusion' – hindered access to information and subsequently to the labour market. The involvement of a large number of partners ensures the consensus of the local population. This consensus establishes the conditions for acceptance of the programme on the Individual-level, i.e. the family. This promotes an 'inclusion/integration process' at the community level. Unemployed young people are at the centre of the public dialogue. (Kondyli 2002).

In the **UK** Re-Integration programmes – Gateway, New Deal, LifeSkills - are governmental schemes or initiatives, aimed at preventing young people from dropping out of the education system at the stage of transition from school to VET. In practice there are diverse solutions on who are targets of re-integrative measures and why. In the project cases e.g. the targets were unemployed and drop out youth, refugees or teenage mothers (Evans & al 2002).

In **Finland** the definition of re-integrative and inclusive activity had changed since the Re-enter project. (Re-enter 2001) Although most activities were still dependent on short-term, often ESF funded projects, they had become more targeted and connected to the mainstream education. In administration and evaluation, the activities were now defined as ‘intermediary’ between comprehensive education and VET, as preparatory, preventive or supportive measures for youths at risk of dropping out. The special education expertise – most established in the mainstream education - has become its major paradigm. According to the shared understanding among action research partners, the Re-integration research should enhance national effectiveness and networking in the field of education. Practitioners were seeking the justification of re-integration activity as a part of the educational establishment. Studying students’ experiences was seen relevant as one means of justification. (Heikkinen & al 2003).

During the second international workshop 2001, with practice partners from Belgium and Finland, efforts were made to make transparent partners’ understanding of the project, its aims and methods and of the role of practice partners in the process. The partners were in quite a different phase in developing the national research which made it difficult to find commonalities besides focusing first on students’ learning experiences. The diversification and complication of the research targets and methods caused frictions in the research process: the clear-cut project work-plan had to be unpacked and renegotiated. The phases and outcomes of the rest of the research became more dependent on the process and actors themselves. While researchers had started by diagnostic follow-up of students’ learning experiences, they had to move to relating them to the aims and intentions underlying the re-integrative programmes or activities. Their explication required follow-up of experiences and decisions of practitioners during the activity.

## 9.2 Wider landscape: contextualisation of re-integrative activity and research

According to their different situations and preliminary approaches, partners proceeded to a more holistic elaboration of the context of learners' and practitioners' experiences in different ways. The ways in which re-integration activity became constituted – the pathways of learners and practitioners into the activity, the institutional and actor framework of activity – varied considerably from country to country and from case to case. Re-integration programmes or activities were attempts to solve problems which were different for different actors – students, practitioners, and other actors, including researchers. What was common, however, was that they were struggling with the problems of deviancy: educational low-achievement or disinterestedness, unemployment or employability, social disintegration or misbehaviour. Re-integration was a mainstreaming, normalising activity. The actor network and institutional framework around learners and practitioners was horizontally and vertically complex and often fragmented.

While researchers proceeded to discussions on student interviews with practitioners, they mainly found reinforcement to their own perceptions and experiences. E.g. in Finland, the student perspective was also repeating earlier national research and reports. **Practitioners hoped** for support for their practical development work, **for tools of evaluation** and information about the developmental process. There was an obvious need to widen into multilevel perspective, to include other kinds of practitioners, vocational teachers, study counsellors, school welfare officers, administrative actors, etc. (Heikkinen & al 2003). According to the Belgian partner the definition of actor was first restricted to the practitioners, later policymakers and researchers were included. Practitioners were specified as trainers of the re-integration programme (like youth workers in Belgium). (Ruelens 2002, 2003). The third international workshop in 2002 still focused on discussing descriptions of students' life situation and of their learning experiences, as the basic criteria for the development of evaluation tools for re-integration programmes. The fourth international workshop 2002, with practice partners from Belgium and Finland, together with a visit to the Portuguese case programme, widened the discussion towards development of an evaluation methodology including "meso" or programme/activity level besides students' and practitioners' experiences. An idea of

an analysis “model” as a set of dynamic, developmental criteria for evaluation was developed among partners.

An attempt for a classification of Re-integration project cases may be tried on the basis of the Finnish research design (cf. chapter 2). One criterion is the prioritisation of professional paradigms, which more or less directly connect with the segmentation or fragmentation of policy typical for the actor and institutional context of the activity. (Evans 2004) This connects with the nature of its pedagogical and didactic approach: how does it locate in the continuum between recreation and occupational specialisation. (Ruelens 2004) Another criterion is the degree of integratedness of the activity to the mainstream. This refers to, on the one hand, how an established and connected part it is among educational measures. On the other hand, it refers to the degree of integration between deviant and mainstream learners and practitioners. Both criteria connect to the wider economical, political and cultural landscape; where normality and deviancy for the corrective measures are defined. (Kondyli 2004).

|   | UK       | UK       | UK          | Gr  | Pt       | Be        | D    | D   | D   | Fin    | Fin   | Fin   |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|-----|----------|-----------|------|-----|-----|--------|-------|-------|
| Paradigm/policy                                       | Gate-way | New-Deal | Life-skills | IIP | Casa-Pia | Pre-paths | Jump | JAW | BBS | Kytkin | Tracs | Supra |
| Youth work /recreation                                |          |          |             |     |          | xxx       |      |     | x   |        |       | x     |
| Social pedagogy /social work                          | x        |          | xxx         |     | x        | x         |      | xx  | x   |        |       |       |
| Special education                                     |          |          |             |     |          |           | x    | x   |     | xxx    | x     | xx    |
| Counselling   | xxx      | x        | x           | x   | x        | xx        |      |     |     |        | x     | x     |
| Employment training                                   | x        | xxx      |             | xxx | xx       |           | xxx  |     | x   |        |       |       |
| VET   |          | x        |             |     | xx       | x         |      | xxx | xx  | xx     | xxx   | xx    |
| Unique project  |          |          | xxx         | xxx |          | xx        |      |     |     |        | xxx   |       |
| Project linked to mainstream                          | xxx      | xxx      |             |     |          | x         | xxx  |     | x   | xx     |       | xxx   |
| Established activity                                  |          |          |             |     | xxx      |           |      | xxx | x   |        |       |       |
| Separation of learners&practitioners                  | xx       | xx       | xxx         | xxx | xx       | xxx       |      | xxx |     | xx     |       |       |
| Interaction/transfer between learners & practitioners | x        | x        |             |     | x        |           |      |     | x   | x      |       |       |
| Integration of learners & practitioners               |          |          |             |     |          |           |      |     | xx  |        | xxx   | xxx   |

Table 9.1: Mapping Re-integration project cases according to the type of activity.  
 Prioritisation scale: x - xxx.

The map hardly does justice to the cases or to the diversity of cases in different contexts. E.g. in Finland, the concept of special education may be closer to social pedagogy than special education in other countries. The table still demonstrates the need of searching for relevant criteria for cross-cultural identification of re-integrative activities.

During the research process, the pedagogically innovative potential of re-integrative activity became clear. Experiences of inclusion, belonging, meaningful participation, of being skilled and competent, of realistic self-confidence and the ability to contextualise individual problems, both among learners and practitioners, were related to a complex and holistic pedagogies of care. The new pedagogy could materialise in diverse ways. It could mean multi-professional or multi-paradigmatic networking or new professionalism: in Supra by networking existing expertise, added by youth workers, in Tracs by increasing special education expertise among vocational teachers, in UK cases by networking expertise, added by new hybrid adviser-expertise. (Heikkinen & al 2003, Evans 2004). It could happen through dialogues between re-integration and mainstream actors on definitions and borders of normality, like between Belgian prepathways practitioners and VET teachers (Ruelens 2003), or through successful practitioner pathways into multilevel policy negotiations, like the principal of German JAW entering into regional politics or the Finnish Tracs activist entering into leading position inside the VET institute. (Jiménez Laux 2003, Heikkinen & al 2003).

### **9.3 Revisiting evaluation: no simple answers to complex questions**

The unpacking of the concept of re-integration proceeded into unpacking the concept of evaluation. E.g. by the EU standards ESF funded re-integration programmes are evaluated according to the employability the trainees enjoy at 3 months, 6 months after the end of training, and whether people are still in the same job placement. The Greek IIP programme was evaluated internally by the Institute of Labour in order to readjust if necessary certain initiatives and actions, externally by evaluator for the whole programme and accompanying measures and actions. Furthermore, the trainees and the trainers evaluated the educational syllabus. (Kondyli 2003). In the UK the national evaluation system is focusing on outcomes. Because of the changing nature of activities, practitioners have hardly developed evaluation methods for programmes. Generally there is a pressure, especially in EU funded programmes, to proceed to measuring soft outcomes of education. (Dewson & al 2000, Evans & al 2002).

An example of a reflection and development tool developed to practitioners' needs are the guidelines from the UK partner. It follows the pathway of the re-integrative activity according to the criteria of 'situated learning'. (Evans & al 2004).

A     Prior to entry to the programme

A1     Are clients given an accurate impression of the programme's aims and structure by the Employment and Connexions Services who direct them towards the course? How could this be improved?

A2     When clients arrive at the course providers, do they fully understand their options? How could this be improved?

A3     How well do the Employment and Connexions Services manage clients' transition to the programme? How could this be improved?

A4     How much liaison is possible between the Employment and Connexions Service and the programme trainers before clients enter the programme? How could this be improved?

A5     What steps are taken to encourage clients to turn up on their first day? How could this be improved?

B     Early stages including induction (of the course)

B1     How well are clients supported during the first two weeks of the course? How could this be improved?

B2     How well does the induction meet the needs of clients? How could this be improved?

B3     How much are clients encouraged to draw on the agencies available to them (ie counselling, help with housing, etc)? How could this be improved?

B4     Clients may have negative feelings about their prior learning experiences. Are these addressed in the early stages of the course? How could this be improved?

B5     How well is the environment adapted to clients and the aims of the programme? How could this be improved?

C     Middle stages of the programme

- C1     How well are clients supported during the programme? How could this be improved?
- C2     How well does the programme meet the needs of clients? How could this be improved?
- C3     How much are clients encouraged to draw on the internal support available to them (ie counselling, advice, etc)? How could this be improved?
- C4     Clients may have negative feelings about their prior learning experiences. Are these addressed by the programme? How could this be improved?
- C5     How well does the experience of the programme trainers meet the needs of clients? How could this be improved?
- C6     How well does the training provided for the programme trainers meet the needs of clients? How could this be improved?
- C7     How well are programme trainers able to assess clients' progress throughout the course and feed this back to them? How could this be improved?
- C8     How feasible is it for clients to experience a well-structured and monitored work taster or placement? How could this be improved?

D     Towards the end of the programme

- D1     How well are programme trainers able to assess clients' progress by the end of the course and feed this back to them? How could this be improved?
- D2     How well are clients supported by programme trainers in their transition beyond the programme particularly when no job is available? How could this be improved?
- D3     How well do the options available for clients at the end of programme suit their needs? How could these be improved?
- D4     How much liaison is possible between the Employment and Connexions Services and the programme trainers prior to clients leaving the programme? How could this be improved?



E     After the programme

E1     How well are clients supported by programme trainers from the programme after it has ended? How could this be improved?

E2     How well are clients supported by the Employment and Connexions services after the programme has ended? How could this be improved?

In Belgium a consortium on part-time vocational education already stressed in 1998 the importance of the structural development of prepaths. Six years later no progress has been made. Prepaths are left to the initiative of individual organisations and no structural financing has been provided by the government. Besides this the programmes are not embedded in the broader landscape of the vocational education. However, practitioners as well as policymakers are more and more convinced of the necessity of prepaths. Within this context evaluation is a complex activity. The Structural-level has a huge impact on the meso- and Individual-level. At the meso- and Individual-level indistinctiveness and incoherence exist. The TRDM offered an ideal framework to clean-cut the concept of prepaths for all actors at all levels, as the methodology takes into account the tension field between different levels (micro, meso, macro). (Ruelens 2004). In Germany there are no evaluation tools or indicators for re-integrative activity in schools. Instruments and procedures have been tested and invented for the non-school-programmes – JAWs - by practitioners and through action research during the last 10 years and quality assessment is compulsory since 1999. The task for the Re-Integration project was to see how institutes deal with these evaluation instruments and find out what they think about a trans-national approach. (Niemeyer 2003).

It was obviously too simplistic to develop - externally or through practitioners' feedback - tests for evaluating programmes or activities only on the basis of learners' experiences of 'situated learning'. Especially in the more established cases and in the context of institutionalised education, practitioners of re-integration activities are probably the best experienced experts in diagnosing learning needs and evaluating learning outcomes themselves. Sophisticated national evaluation methods originating from trans-national businesses like EFQM or ISO quality assurance systems have been adopted e.g. in Germany and Finland. Also in EU-funded projects responsible actors need to follow EU-regulated evaluation procedures - Greece, Belgium, Finland. (Jiménez Laux 2003).

The target and intention of Re-integration research required repeated reconsideration. Firstly, some researchers thought that there was no sense in competing with existing evaluation “industries”. Secondly, turning into a process based conception of research, i.e. collaborative reflections on the activities with practitioners and other actors, provoked questioning the hegemonic conceptions of evaluation. The experiences of many learners as well as practitioners reported about scepticism and resistance towards the evaluation criteria and methods. The diagnostic and managerial evaluation reminded learners about their fate as abnormal targets of repeated ‘alternative’ measures in education and employment (Kondyli 2003, Heikkinen & al 2003). A heavy message from all interim Re-integration project reports is that practitioners experience permanent frustration and vulnerability towards micro, meso and macro political fluctuations, which do not take into account their conceptions, intentions and quality criteria for pedagogically proper re-integrative activity. (Jiménez Laux 2003, 2004, Heikkinen & al 2003, Ruelens 2003, Kondyli 2003, Oliveira 2004).

E.g. in Germany some planners and practitioners complain that the plurality of the institutions is eroding and innovative, oppositional and creative models don’t fit in with the actual scheme. They found the criteria from the employment office sometimes unclear and they did not necessarily correspond with the quality of practice. Some supposed that, in the case of external evaluation alone official standards lead to improved documents and instead of innovation to pseudo or virtual quality, hypocrisy and lip service to sponsors. The practitioners are concerned about national and student-specific contextualisation of processes and outcomes (input from system and student). But practitioners agree on the importance of evaluation at the three interacting levels: **Individual-level** - interaction between pedagogue/trainer and youngsters -, **Institutional-level** - collaboration in teams, between programmes, organisation/structuring of programmes – and **macro -level** - legislation and financial support regulations of re-integration “system”, from regional to federal level. Especially there is need for macro (policy) evaluation and recognition of self-evaluation according to self-set criteria. (Jiménez Laux 2003)

The Belgian partnership also moved towards process-led definition of evaluation: alternative pedagogies ask for alternative evaluation methods, evaluation has to respect the nature of the activity. It should contextualise the target, history and degree of establishment of the re-integrative activity. It should allow recognition of

the non-formal or informal, unstructured, flexible, diverse and rich educational outcomes. It should not cause extra (multiple) administration, which does not support development and leads to pseudo-quality. Evaluative activity needs to take tensions (between levels, actors) into account, to make learning and pedagogical activity transparent, to be holistic and not to stick to one level, element or actor. Furthermore, it requires ownership from learners and educators (who are responsible, dependent on outcomes of evaluation) parallel to policy makers and researchers. Among the research team, awareness for processes of self-evaluation did rise: the conception of evaluation became broader. While in the beginning evaluation was seen critical as an instrument to control internal educational processes by outsiders, it can also be seen a) as a means to value educational work and b) to improve professional acting in educational contexts by systematic self-reflection. (Ruelens 2003).

It was important for learners and practitioners that the evaluation should include joint questioning of producing and legitimising normality with the mainstream. The criteria for good re-integrative or inclusive activity should not be given externally, but should allow questioning the criteria of normality and exclusion by the mainstream activity and actors. Also, just like Re-integration project partners had a vested interest in research and administrative politics, the other actors involved in re-integrative activity, especially practitioners and potential professionals, had theirs in lobbying and strengthening their micro, meso and macro political position in organisation of normalising and corrective measures for different problem groups of mainstream educational, social and employment measures.

The characteristics of the evaluation activity under making in Re-integration research could be summarised as:

- it is critical, problematising and dynamic in relation to its target
- it is participatory
- it is developmental and innovative
- it is actor-based
- it is self-reflective/critical and deconstructive
- it is historicizing and contextual (actors & activity).

During 2002, the Finnish action research focused on the challenges of developing the programmes in interaction with the organisational structures of VET, and questioned the factors and contexts affecting the development. Reflections on interviews of

learners' and practitioners' experiences were related to testing the analysis “model” with mainstream actors, including governance. It became explicit that attitudes towards evaluation of re-integrative activities were suspicious and doubtful. Despite its importance, evaluative discussion on re-integrative activity is sensitive to mainstream actors and practices. The following picture shows the “original analytical model”, based on process-led criteria, developed together among researchers and practitioners for structuring the data (analysis), for developing recommendations/process evaluation (reflection) and for (re)designing the activity (development). (Heikkinen & al 2002, 2003).

|  |                      |                             |                          |  |                                  |                             |                             |                                 |                                  |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Education and employment structures                  |                      |                             |                          |  |                                  |                             |                             |                                 |                                  |
|  |                      | <i>networks of</i>          |                          | <i>recognition</i>   |                                  |                             |                             | <i>and</i>                      |                                  |
| Programme/<br>pedagogical<br>activity                | <i>Inclusiveness</i> | <i>Collaborative actors</i> | <i>Funding mechanism</i> | <i>Qualification and recognition of skills and competences</i> | <i>Administrative structures</i> | <i>Vocational relevance</i> | <i>Didactical solutions</i> | <i>Match:educators learners</i> | <i>Assessment and Evaluation</i> |
| Action and experiences of learners and practitioners |                      |                             |                          |  |                                  |                             |                             |                                 |                                  |

Figure 9.2: “Analytical model” developed among Finnish partnership.

A detailed analysis of micro, meso and macro data was carried out through cases Supra, Tracs and Kytkin: the meaning and function of each element crucial for the development of the case activity was reflected from the historicizing perspectives of experiences, of programme and structural characteristics.

When applying the ‘analytical model’, all partners stressed and added criteria which were relevant for their cases. The Greek partner identified power pressures by the social partners in order to promote different interests in evaluation meetings. An evaluator told “the local players played the game as they wanted to, the existing market received some stimulus, and the local population –especially the young –

realized that there are structures, but not jobs for all. This in itself is important". What is missing and is very crucial is the follow up of initiatives. The partners involved do not dispose of a mechanism which can ensure the trainees follow up. It provokes tensions since trainees have no contact at the moment they may need it more. How can policy makers capitalise on previous experiences and evaluations in order to further design projects without sufficient feedback from previous experiences, lacking strategies and disparate information? (Kondyli 2003). In Belgium during the first phase of the research the 'model' was a good framework to structure all the data using different methods. It mainly served research purposes, although in a 'practical' sense. Based on the analysis recommendations to practitioners and policymakers could be formulated. During the second phase it was used in a process evaluation that was a joint initiative of researchers and other actors. First the 'model' (TRDM) was discussed with the practitioners, then both researchers and practitioners decided to use the methodology to guide the design of the programmes. This was a cyclic process: information on micro and Institutional-level was collected and discussed according to the TRDM. Programme changes were induced; results of these changes were discussed; other programme changes were made; more discussions followed. Halfway this process a concept paper was produced and discussed during a round table conference. At this conference also policy makers participated, also the Structural-level was put into the forefront. TRDM was no longer only a research methodology. Practitioners as well as policymakers shared the ownership of the methodology itself and therefore the results. (Ruelens 2003, 2004).

The 'analytical model' was an outcome of collaborative, contextualised reflection of specific re-integrative activity. Nevertheless, a hypothetical conceptual hierarchy between criteria may be suggested, related to the aim of using it as a tool for discussing issues of normality, participation and democracy with the mainstream actors at different levels. (cf. Fraser & Honneth 2004) Normality, participation, democracy as criteria for evaluation & development of re-integrative activity, at the levels of learners & practitioners experiences, of its institutional and cultural (economic, social, political) context:

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Inclusiveness (recognition)  | ↔ | Resources (redistribution)   |
| Qualifications, skills and competences   |   | Funding mechanisms   |
| Vocational relevance   |   | Administrational structures  |
| Collaborative networks: sharing pedagogical concerns between mainstream and ReI actors |   | Collaborative networks: investment in and co-ordination of pedagogically caring work |
| Didactic solutions   |   | Match: educators and learners  |
| Assessment & evaluation with mainstream  |   | Assessment & evaluation: contextualisation   |

The reciprocally critical and reflective polylogical research process (Göller 2000, Wimmer 2003), in different combinations of actors from different levels of re-integrative activity – researchers with students, researchers with students and practitioners, researchers with practitioners, researchers with other actors, researchers, practitioners, other actors together etc., researchers among themselves, among research community, or with practice partners nationally and trans-nationally – led to a parallel transformation of conceptions of re-integration activity, evaluation and research. In the fifth international workshop 2003 analysis “model” was tested together for developing multilevel questions in order to organise the evaluation data collected. The focus of research was moving towards evaluation itself – figured now as trans-nationally applicable reflective and development methodology – TRDM - for re-integration activity. Multilevel, horizontally and vertically complex participation in reflection and development activity did not only lead to harmony and consensus, but opening up questioning of democracy, participation and normality, at micro, meso and Structural-levels. E.g. the Greek partner recognised a complex mixture of power at macro and Institutional-level because the IIP required synergies among so many social partners – Ministry of Labour, Manpower Organisation, unions, professional associations, Federation of Greek Industries, regional MPs, etc. A host of modifications and negotiations have been required before the final formulation of the actions, including the seminars, in order to satisfy the largest possible number of citizens and client relations. The Programme had different target actions like immediate access to the labour market, VET, counselling etc. Actors of the Structural-level exercised pressure on the advisors and professionals who were involved in the implementation of the programme. "Workload was heavy, too heavy for the number of staff employed." Given the delay in the timetable they feel that “although the programme was well designed, it is now out of touch with reality.” Cooperation with businesses was not always satisfactory since every business was

trying to promote its own interest or potential employee etc. Small businesses were reluctant to accept the recommendations of the counsellor concerning the employee they should hire. The local population also had excessively high expectations of the programme which created tensions and imbalances as well. (Kondyli 2003).

Within the Belgian context the TRDM proved to be a good methodology for analysis, process evaluation and programme design, because it takes into account the tension field within which Re-Integration programmes are organised. On the three levels - educational and employment system; programme/activity system; activities and experiences of teachers and youngsters - different topics proved to be relevant. At Structural-level most crucial were inclusiveness to education and labour market, funding mechanisms, collaborative networks, administrative structures and recognition of skills and qualifications. Concerning inclusiveness to the educational system, the prepath had to deal with the negative evolution of the part-time VET system in Flanders. By choosing for this system youngsters are already excluded or “wasted” as one of the youngsters calls it. It is perceived as the lowest step of a cascade system associated with problem groups - disengaged, socially deprived pupils, truants...) - and pupils’ orientations are based on negative grounds after failure. The trainers and educators say “These youngsters are not motivated to work. They just want ‘less school’”, “You only choose for this system if you have no other option left”. The question researchers ask is: ‘How can a programme be inclusive when operating within a system that is characterized by exclusion itself?’ while the Flemish government aims to reduce the number of unqualified school-leavers with 50% by 2010. In part-time vocational system, full-time engagement in re-integration programmes should be recognised in view of a start qualification, but no structural funds are available. Inclusiveness to labour market relates partly to the profile of the youngsters, but also by characteristics of the labor market and the part-time vocational education and training system. The available jobs don’t fit the training or interests of the youngsters and there is no institutional framework for counseling within the system. One problem is the competition between the training systems: youngsters at the part-time VET are not competitive compared to youngsters in other systems that combine learning and working.

Aftercare and continuity are essential to integrate the youngsters, therefore strong collaborative networks and actors that go beyond the programme and part-time VET system is needed, but non-existent. “Once a youngster leaves the part-time vocational



education system all efforts collapse like a jelly.” (Treffen’s coordinator). Concerning funding mechanisms, there is an urgent need for structural funding for case continuity in the practices. Insufficient funding also causes insufficient capacity. The Flemish government’s ambition to reduce the number of unqualified school leavers leads to the role of recognition of skills and competences. Alternatives to the school routes should be valorized, in a modular structure, which lead to a start qualification for every youngster. Concerning administrative structures, the part-time vocational education centre comes under the Ministry of Education and Training, the part-time vocational training centre and the prepath under the Ministry of Culture (youth work). The Ministry of Culture cannot deliver the same certificate as the Ministry of Education and Training and there is a conflict between budget and therefore responsibility and expertise. The Ministry of Education and Training takes up almost half of the total Flemish budget, the Ministry of Culture has a very limited budget for VET, although youth organisations financed by them have the expertise to work with the target group.

At Institutional-level most crucial issues were funding mechanisms and collaborative networks. The programmes are funded by ESF and SIF (city). For SIF 40% of the youngsters has to move on, for ESF besides 60% of the youngsters that has to move on, the participants’ hours’ count. The criterion contains a perverse mechanism: “The prepath is all about ‘activation’. The sooner a youngster can leave the prepath for training or employment, the better. However the fact that the funding is based on the participants’ hours implies we should keep them as long as possible.” A critical point in the organisation of the prepaths is the lack of collaborative networks. At Individual-level the issue of intake or match between students and educators is crucial. The profile of the youngsters enrolling the prepaths is very different. Since an important part of the re-integration programmes is based on teambuilding activities, this is not easy; instead youngsters need a tailored approach. Many youngsters are living in multi-problem families: all energy goes to ‘surviving’ and little energy is left for schooling. Before working towards training and employment personal issues may have to be solved. One reason for the poor collaboration is the conflicting professional paradigms. A teacher said: “The prepath trainer has a different attitude. I think this is a problem if the prepath is organised at school. They should obey the school regulation. For example, youngsters aren’t allowed to leave the school during breaks. And what does he (the trainer) do? During breaks he takes



them outside. Or: the pupils are not allowed to eat or drink in the classrooms and he brings coffee and cookies. Once I passed their classroom. They were all standing on chairs (teambuilding activity). But in my classroom I have to tell them they are not allowed to do that. It is already difficult enough to have them obey a few simple rules, without having this trainer breaking them all. When the prepath was organised outside our school, this was not a problem. It is not that we don't try to find attractive methods for those youngsters, but school is school. Don't forget we have to deal with much larger groups. We also have tests and exams. Those youngsters need a teacher's guidance." Another teacher, social worker with a pedagogical degree, who joined the school team recently, complains about the bureaucracy. Alternative methods are needed to reach youngsters, but other teachers are convinced that 'school' is the solution. "Teachers at this school don't see the value of alternative methods. This should be explained to them." In an interview, another teacher said: "I don't see any results. From what I hear youngsters don't like going to the prepath." and "I don't see what horse riding has to do with work." (Ruelens 2003).

The German partner reported from interesting insight in processes of cross-paradigmatic collaboration of different professionals on the Institutional-level. The official understanding of inclusion equals apprenticeship placement, the most valid integration strategy is successful completion of an apprenticeship. Against this narrow interpretation, researchers tried to hold up the idea of integration as active participation in social life, which should be possible also in periods of unemployment and allow for alternative and individual "careers". Practice has shown that there is only a line between integration, rehabilitation and special education. There are limits to integration on the side of the individuals and on the side of the system, which has not enough apprenticeship places. At present there is a paradigmatic shift going on concerning responsibility for inclusion on the level of legislation/administration (did not affect Re-I research): labour agency neglects the responsibility for the entrance in the labour market and wants to concentrate on adult unemployed instead, economy draws back from apprenticeship system, responsibility for the integration of disadvantaged young becomes delegated exclusively to the state, i. e. the Ministry of Education. (Niemeyer 2003)

Towards the end of Re-integration project, discussions concentrated on the possibilities to sustain re-integrative practices. The focus was on the practitioners: where do they continue after the programme and how do they continue integrative

work in their new positions? The understanding of history and background of practitioners seems to be important for understanding the developing re-integration activity.

## **9.4 Role of research and researchers**

Self-assessment and evaluation has become a common element in dominant conceptions of evaluation. The EFQM, ISO or other evaluation systems seem to provide sophisticated models to be applied in reflection and development of re-integration activities by practitioners or other actors by themselves. Although practitioners have the best expertise, researchers may have a distinctive role, which cannot be delegated either to policy makers and administrators, or representatives of industry or actors themselves. Despite their multiple interests and commitments to other interest groups in society, researchers represent the only body, which could have time, space and expertise for a self-critical mediating function in re-integration activity by making the different positions, intentions and interests explicit for participants. Furthermore, research and researchers are co-constitutors of the framework of conditioning re-integrative activity and experiences of learners and practitioners: they inform policy making at micro, meso and Structural-levels and most importantly, they control the manufacturing – segmentation and fragmentation - of paradigms among professionals and policy sectors.

Both policy makers and practitioners expect researcher to give them concrete help in their work. According to the Finnish partner, by the end of Re-integration research, practitioners found it eyes opening to discuss their programmes from different understanding positions. The research collaboration gave practitioners more realistic perspective and understanding how outsiders can see their programme in a totally different way than they do themselves. Reflective and developmental research process helps actors from different positions achieve better mutual understanding. “I see this as a very good thing and I believe that all kinds of actors will get use of this kind of interaction when we consider issues concurrently at different levels and create the common. When I read these texts it comes into my mind that this I should discuss with you. It enhances thinking that for me it looks like this and you see it in this way, how someone else would understand this. In addition this kind of

interaction, I am fascinated this focus on process how you look for the reasons for development and change, what has affected this process.” (practitioner) “Researcher: I find this interesting that the interviews at different levels show different kinds of understanding how they can use this programme. Practitioner: It is also meaningful that they find the say this has been useful but still they have not been committed to development process.” (Heikkinen & al 2003).

Re-integration activity is so complicated and its aspects can be understood in so different ways that the actual criteria of good activity/practice are impossible to constitute. The relevant “criteria” of evaluation is the understanding the intentions, history, context and process of activity. The forms of achieving and analysing data were overestimated compared to the collective processing and discussions. For the practitioners the proof of results is important in justifying their programmes and position in organisations. The dialogue and shared understanding could reduce the practitioners’ need for justification of their action and positions. For the practitioners the process and interaction in evaluation are more meaningful than limited focus on measurable outcomes. “I see this kind of evaluation activity as a good direction and I believe that different actors get use of this kind of interactive collaboration, when we examine concurrently multilevel aspects and create something common.” “(T)his kind of interaction, I think that the focus on process is fascinating: I mean you are interested in how development happens, what are the effective factors and what is the rationale behind this programme.” (Heikkinen&al 2003).

During 2003, research proceeded to follow-up of students, pathways of practitioners and futures of activities. Discussions with national and trans-national research communities were initiated. Should evaluation be an integral part of emerging pedagogical practice of “new professionals” or new conception in vocational pedagogy? Could the main importance of collaboration with researchers lie in identifying the innovative pedagogical activity and in developing evaluative practices of professionals themselves, which simultaneously support them in micro-, meso- and macro-political descriptions and negotiations of their activity with other actors? By relating to the horizontally and vertically complex, multilayered processes, where normality, participation and democracy are under making, research and researches are able and forced to reinterpret, criticize and deconstruct the vocabularies, theories and discourses of pedagogical power and truth. (Foucault 1989, 2003) In the emerging self-understanding of the project, the emerging conception of re-integrative

activity as innovative pedagogical activity led to discussions on new ways of organising research, research-practice relations and education of pedagogical professionals. (Oliveira 2004) Paradoxically, a fundamental issue for improving the quality of research and education on dynamic and complex activity became their academic establishment. The typical repeated changes of researchers in the EU project partnership caused repeated drawbacks in progress and cumulation of research work.

## **9.5 Trans-nationality**

The most difficult aim of the project was to extend its analyses and interpretations beyond national frameworks. Partners had to question, what was the need for trans-nationality, what did it mean and how could it be implemented. Obviously the project could not provide competitive alternatives for the adopted national evaluative measures, many of which were applications of trans-national bureaucratic or business models. The sixth international workshop 2003 was reviewing evaluation activities and paradigms in partner countries and re-integration cases. All reported on the need of national contextualisation and embedding in the wider educational landscape in developing trans-national reflection and development methodology. The German partner reported that there hardly was any trans-national element in their work. However, practitioners participating in the project and visits to cases brought a deeper understanding of national peculiarities. A valuable trans-national dimension requires that practitioners could learn about their working contexts, to exchange their ideas and commonly reflect on integrative practices. As a trans-national instrument, practitioners considered TRDM as being too abstract and not applicable to their practice, compared to the criteria developed from EFQM and set employment office. (Niemeyer 2003).

The Finnish practitioners and some actors expected TRDM especially to describe and analyse the micropolitical context of re-integrative activity. It should not remain an analytical tool made for practitioners, but be part of emerging professional strategies of practitioners involved in integrative activity. They complained that there was not enough contextual understanding in national reports and in questions raised by using the model. “When I read something [in the 5<sup>th</sup> national report] I was thinking the

state of development of the organisation. It is very significant aspect. It is not possible to evaluate the programme without considering this contextual aspect. I think we should emphasise more the territory where activities are implemented.” Re-integrative and evaluative activity should relate: it is necessary to make explicit the conditions and contexts of reflection and development, well-elaborated evaluation procedures do not make justice to short-term activities and vice versa. Practitioners insist on themselves defining and making visible what they do, who and what they are, i.e. contextualisation, historicisation and enabling participation. They expect further concretisation and close-to-earth elaboration of the methodology among national and international partnerships. The Greek partner stressed need for connection based on exchanges and adaptation to the cultural and political context of each country. This promotes flexibility, benefit of trans-national experiences and transfer of know-how at the national level and helps avoiding policy errors. Reflective comparisons on social transformation promote improvement of infrastructures: advantage can be taken of the positive side of globalisation. (Kondyli 2003). For Portuguese partner trans-nationality is crucial for universities and education of educational professionals: trans-national reflection and development requires professionals and research activities organised in trans-national designs. (Oliveira 2004).

The final conference of the project 2004 was the final attempt to deepen the level of trans-national collaboration. Learners, practitioners, researchers and policy makers were expected to come together, not only to give conventional feedback on the conditions of academic discourse and English language, but through visual and corporeal interaction. Although the idea turned too ambitious given the time and financial limits, participants gained an insight of the potential of such encounters for trans-nationalisation of research and TRDM.

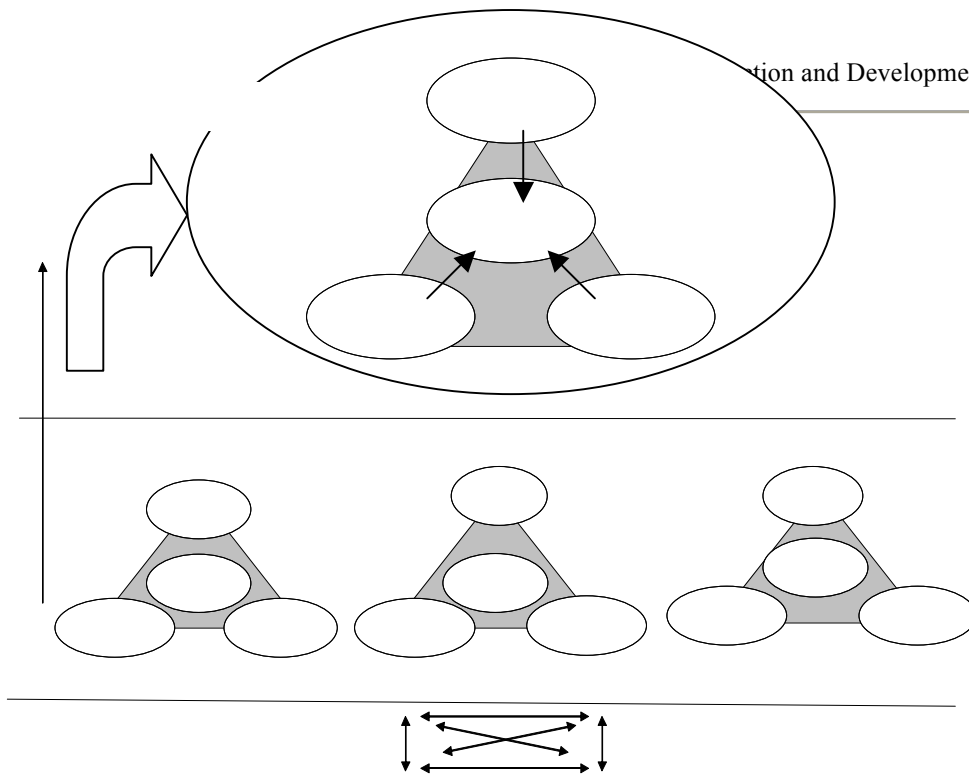
The progress of Re-integration project has been controversial, but suggests about the potential of trans-national projects as co-constitutors of education. While the pressure to develop consensually a trans-national evaluation model led researchers to remain in the prescribed EU policy discourse and in the abstract theoretical framework of situated learning, the focus widened from measuring learners’ satisfaction and didactic performance towards analysing the constitution of re-integration as a transforming activity in certain cultural and political context of organisation, region

and nation. Research methods should enable interaction between researchers and actors both at national and trans-national level. Instead of confirming existing definitions and practices, research should be challenging them. This implies that the process of identifying the activity, the criteria for its change and the way it interacts with changing environment, becomes more important than the factual 'indicators' or 'tools' for diagnosing the quality of activity, which are found during the process.

What comes to the theoretical contribution of Re-integration research, it did generate new conceptual frameworks, and the procedure and findings were validated in multiple national and cross-national ways. However, appropriate institutionalisation is necessary as well for research collaboration as it is for the re-integrative and evaluation activities in order to lead to cumulative, innovative reflection and development. Being a separate project, having researchers changing during years, connecting to trans-national research community sporadically in big conferences like ECER, the history and memory of Re-integration is hard to maintain. Still, it was an example for discussing the shift between national and trans-national policy-making. While the major common element of re-integrative activity was mainstreaming, its trans-national reflection and development could lie in joint questioning of normality, participation and democracy at micro, meso and Structural-levels of education. Claims about the erosion of the nation-state under globalising market capitalism and about the demoralising effects to education and civic life have become common in educational research discourse. (e.g. Brown & Lauder 2001.) The importance of nation-states may not diminish, however, while they are needed as the infrastructure for implementation and legitimisation of trans-national policies. (Kettunen 2001, Heikkinen 2002.) But they may also be sites, where the previous struggles have taken place and left their imprints, and which remind of alternatives for future struggles on normality, participation and democracy in education.

## **9.6 Summary of the characteristics of TRDM**

In Re-integration context TRDM primarily meant a strategic methodology concerning the ownership of an emerging new pedagogy and professionalisation process. It could support actors at different action and political levels to make their experiences and expertise visible and to influence how the pedagogical activity



should be developed in the future. The trans-nationality of methodology requires dialogue among researchers and practitioners across nations/cultures. A basic question is why trans-national evaluation is on the agenda. Reflections should be part of the

pedagogical activity itself and take place among all crucial actors at different levels of action: learners, practitioners of pedagogical activity, mainstream actors and collaborators, policy-makers and researchers.

Figure 9.3: Trans-national reflection and development methodology TRDM

#### List of the crucial aspects of TRDM activity

1. Understanding the activity and intentions of actors
2. Holistic elaboration of context
  - 2.1. Actor experiences and pathways
  - 2.2. Horizontal and vertical complexity of activity
  - 2.3. Embeddedness of activity
3. Multilevel, horizontally and vertically complex participation in reflection and development of the activity
4. Questioning the role of research and researchers
5. Elaboration of trans-nationality.

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## Appendix. Summary on evolvement of trans-national evaluation tools towards Trans-national Reflection and Development Methodology

| Crucial issue                  | National  | Trans-national  |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Research design                | <p>Step 1: Negotiating trans-national framework to national context and frameworks:<br/><i>Administrational</i> approach</p>                                | <p>Step 1: ReI-proposal: developing a trans-national evaluation model/indicators for re-integrative measures and testing the model in different Re-integrative schemes</p>  |
| Methodological starting points | <p>Step 3: Action research<br/>Participatory evaluation<br/>Learners experiences</p> <p>ReI-actors' experiences<br/>Mapping the field</p> <p>V</p> <p>V</p> | <p>Step 2: From results from re-enter project and adopted situated learning testing their applicability through learner-centred research method -&gt; evaluation tools (WorkShops 1-2 (Flensburg, Jyväskylä)</p>                  |
| Evolution in research process  | <p>Step 4: Analysis model (Finland)</p> <p>Process-evaluation (Belgium)</p>   | <p>Step 4: Tensions, attempts to understand differences: WSs 2-5 (Jyväskylä, London, Lisbon, Jyväskylä)</p> <p>Researchers: legitimisation of learner-centred models and theories on ReI and evaluation (politics of academy)</p> |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | Interviews – learners, ReI-actors, practitioners (micro-meso politics)   | ReI-actors: legitimisation of ReI-practice, prejudices towards evaluation (politics, measures, professionalisation)  |
|  | <i>Diagnostic-pedagogical approach</i><br>-> <i>Activity embedded in structures-approach</i><br>-> <i>Collaborative revision of ReI-activity and its evaluation logics</i> |  |
|  |  | Step 5: All: alternative interpretations of and developmental approaches to ReI-activities   |
|  |  | V  |
|  |  | V  |
| The transformation of research context | Step 6: Interim outcomes from researches: learning from the actors and their micro-, meso- and macro contexts  | Step 6: Discussions on ReI as emerging new/redefined pedagogical activity and on strategies of ownership ReI-activity in micro-, meso- and macropolitics beside/instead of evaluation of ReI at micro-, meso- and macro-levels: WSs 5-6 (Jyväskylä 3/03, Flensburg 9/03)<br>Contextualisation of ReI-activity and evaluation also at trans-national / EU-level: why, for whom, which ReI-evaluation tools? |
|  |  | V  |

The transformation of

self-conception of project/research

V

Step 7: Trans-national research and development

methodology – research and projects as platforms...

-> Workshop 7 (Leuven): researchers, policy makers,

ReI learners, actors, practitioners -> paradigms & contradictions: formalisation of activities: no, legitimisation of activities and professionalisation of expertise: yes, political lobbying – bureaucracy & administrative structuring: no, financial support: yes

V

Trans-national activity related to capitalisation of expertise

and explication of professional strategies concerning integrative

pedagogical activity – micro, meso and macro politics of

education from national & cross-national perspective -> education of 'new professionals',

opening spaces for shaping & redefining and renaming the ReI practice -> questioning the

potential of trans-national education practices/professional study programmes, based on

(deconstructive and hermeneutic) action research approach, engaging practitioners,

collaboration between researchers and other 'ReI' actors

## 10 European practitioners' voices regarding evaluation

**Minna Herno, Wiebke Petersen and Lieve Ruelens**

As it is pointed out in chapter 4, evaluation and evaluation targets are due to the national contexts different in the countries which participate in this project. Practitioner's perspectives regarding evaluation in general will be presented in the following. They make clear which different evaluation interests they have and whom they want to address through the results of evaluation. They comment which aims and targets they focus regarding evaluation and they express their fears regarding evaluation. Some of the practitioners - a Finnish and a German practitioner - give their opinion regarding the TRDM and point out potential possible applications.

As a conclusion European interests, addresses, aims, fears and targets regarding evaluation will be summarised in a mindmap.

### 10.1 Practitioners' voices from Belgium

The expectations for non-formal learning are very high, especially within the context of re-integration.

From a negative point of view we could say formal education has failed for specific groups despite the investments in the formal school systems. The way in which formal schooling is organised causes particular groups to loose interest, motivation, self-esteem,... It is necessary to find other pedagogical methods to reach these groups. Non-formal learning, e.g. 'situated learning', offers this alternative.

However, negative reasons for choosing this type of learning would do no justice to its merits and would also devalue the formal education system. Non-formal learning represents more than a second choice for those who dropped out the regular system (formal education). 'Soft' skills such as social and (inter-) personal skills (adaptability, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, problem solving, teamwork, the ability to take initiative, self-esteem, self-assurance...) are best learned in a non-formal learning context. Re-integration youngsters lack these skills and this deficiency prevents them from being included. This way the non-formal learning activities complement the formal learning activities. Even more, non-formal learning activities often support the formal education. Because of the unstructured

nature of the non-formal learning activities, youngsters must play a more active role in the learning process. They learn to take initiative, to take responsibility, to persevere. This in turn raises their self-esteem and self-assurance. These kind of outcomes support the youngsters in their formal learning.

Although non-formal learning, in our case 'situated learning', is more and more considered to be valuable and sometimes even more relevant than formal education, it does not have the same status as formal education (e.g. certification, funding,...). This is due to the lack of transparency of the quality of the practice, the learning process and the outcomes.

#### Implications for evaluation: opportunities and risks

The previous paragraph brings us to the topic of evaluation. The providers of non-formal learning have come to the point where there is a need to have their practices validated and the outcomes of the programmes formally recognized and certified. Besides this there is a need for quality control. A lot of re-integration programmes depend on temporary funding. This way continuity is not guaranteed. In these circumstances it is not easy to develop a qualitative practice.

Although evaluation offers opportunities, there is also strong resistance to evaluation. Indeed, evaluation, as it exists traditionally in the formal education system, is not without risks and should be handled very carefully.

Firstly, traditional evaluation procedures do not apply to the situated learning practices nor to the outcomes of the practices:

The context of the programmes is essential to the situated learning environment. However, traditional evaluation methods do not take the context into account, or at least the context itself is never object of evaluation.

Situated learning aims at 'soft' outcomes, while traditional evaluation uses 'hard' outcome measures. If these measures are used to evaluate the outcomes of situated learning (as it happens today), the outcomes are minimal to non-existent. This hypothecates the recognition of the educational value of situated learning as a full complement to formal education.

Secondly, as described above an important feature of non-formal learning settings is the informality, more precisely the unstructured, flexible and non-evaluative organisation. This way the youngsters' needs can be the primary focus. In relation to re-integration and compared to the formal education, where the system predominates, this is a crucial advantage that risks to be annulled by evaluation. Indeed, practitioners

are afraid that evaluation would formalise the non-formal learning, both in terms of the process and of the system. It is important non-formal learning can keep its richness and diversity, so it can answer to the needs of the youngsters.

Thirdly, linked to the previous point, practitioners fear the extra administration linked to evaluation. Most of them are not used to this and think it is a waste of time.

We conclude alternative pedagogies ask for alternative evaluation methods. The methods must be alternative in this sense that they respect the informal character of the non-formal learning activities. There is also a shift in the object of evaluation: learning environments instead of systems. In this, context is an important aspect.

## **10.2 Practitioners' voices from Germany**

The following statements are parts of a narrative interview with one of the leading practitioners in one of our prepaths:

“Evaluation is not an unknown theme for us – trainers, teachers and social workers in the Reintegration scheme “Jump”.

We ourselves do what you can call “informal self-evaluation” in order to have a clear idea about the quality of our scheme and the progress of our work. Therefore we meet regularly in different circles. For example, once a month a meeting with all the leading social workers takes place. There we discuss general problems of specific schemes or we discuss and agree about changes related to the whole scheme. At some occasions we also discuss how to deal with difficult trainees and we develop a list of measures what to do with them if they misbehave or if we can get into connection with them. On one of the following meetings we exchange our experiences with the measures and rules which we developed earlier.”

“Another example is the regular teacher meeting which takes place every five weeks. All teachers who work in the basic skill courses come together for an hour and they discuss the progress of certain trainees, difficulties with trainees who moan all the time or who do not turn up. They agree about the measures for certain trainees on the bases of their shared experiences. A major achievement was a teacher meeting in which some of the trainers were involved. There the idea was born that the content of the basic skill courses should be related to the professional area the trainees are

prepared for. Especially in mathematics this is very useful because trainees who are willing to work in the retail sector do need other aspects of basic mathematic contents as trainees who want to enter a trade section.

The teachers started to orientate their contents according to the trainees might need for their planned profession and after about six month, they had a meeting about the results of these changes.” They found out that a great part of the learners felt motivated by calculating tasks which are designed in a vocational context.

“Beside of the informal evaluation we are obliged to evaluate the scheme and its special courses according to the outlines of the labour office which are given in the Runderlass 42/96. This evaluation which is organised by some hard indicators is obligatory each year. Then we have to give a report to the labour office in which we say for example how many trainees we got through the whole course, how many trainees got a job after the course, how many trainees got an apprenticeship place after the course.

Regarding these indicators in detail it becomes clear that this obligatory evaluation does not take into account the personal development and the achievements of social skills and social behaviour of the trainees. This is a big problem for us because only hard indicators count for the labour office and the little developments through our work are not recognised, only hard facts count. And it seems a bit contradictory to us that on the one side companies and potential employers claim that the trainees lack social and personal skills and on the other side our efforts to support these skills are not taken into account in evaluation.”

In order to achieve the demands of the labours office we sometimes have to refuse to take a certain trainee on our scheme because from the beginning it is clear that he or she will never achieve what is demanded by the labour office and therefore he or she would not be good for our statistics.

This makes some of us claim for new and special evaluation opportunities for Reintegration schemes. This is also important regarding the comparability of measures from different institutions. At the moment it is only compared which measure gets the better output but the activities provided from the different institutions are never compared. Me personally would be very interested what other schemes provide, what activities they offer and in which way they assist the trainees learning and developing



On the other side— this is what I have to admit – we although fear that our programs might be evaluated by an external expert and I think the staff of other measures does this too. We fear that someone might judge our activities and our approach as not efficient or not good enough. As a result we might not longer be funded in future and we might lose our workplaces. Evaluation of the every day process might come to the result that our work is not professional enough. Somebody might argue that the activities in the workshop do not respond to the definition of action orientation which is outlined in our concept. The difficulties start already when we have to seek for a new person for the basic skill training and when the leader of this section asks the other teachers who are willing to show the new person a lesson or two.

This is a brilliant example for the fact that we all fear that our work is evaluated.

But for sure evaluation of our scheme could help us to point out the specific problems of our work to the persons who decide about our funding and to administrators and to the ministry because sometimes we have the feeling that they do not have any idea what we are doing here and how hard it is in many cases.

But it would have to be an evaluator who knows very well about the problems of our trainees and who takes part for a longer period. I think the external evaluator cannot be a person that is too theoretical because that would not help in any way.

Because I do not think that it is easy to find such a person I think it would be good to get a kind of reflection instrument which helps us to analyse or work by ourselves.

An interesting aspect of evaluation seems to us the evaluation of the trainee's skills at the beginning of the scheme. For about a year we are now collecting examples and experiences how to create an assessment center for the trainees. In such an assessment we would like to find out what a youngster is good in and in which area he or she has difficulties. Such an assessment would give us better options to which professional area we could orientate each trainee. It would help to save time if we could tell directly from the beginning if someone has good motoric skills or not or if someone is good in communication with people he or she does not know. It would also spare a lot of disappointment to the trainees because they would not have to try different professional areas they do not have the demanded skills for.

Lately we had some contact with an other reintegration measure not far away from here. They offer an assessment center to the trainees as a compulsory element of their course. Two of us went there to watch the process in progress but it seemed very time consuming and after a meeting with the head of our organisation it was decided

that such a procedure is not possible for us because the staff has to be trained first – which takes a lot of time and money as well. Secondly the whole assessment procedure is too costly and time consuming. So sadly the opportunity to initiate an evaluation of the trainees is not possible for us.

Regarding the table I have to say that we take some of the proposed aspects into account. I think that especially aspects like “collaborative networks of actors” and “recognition of skills and competences” are very important. These are aspects that should be discussed within the institution. A lot of us would like to let our trainees have certificates for certain skills but even if we would do so these certificates would not be recognised by potential employers. This is an aspect which is in the responsibility of politics and I think we cannot succeed because the social partners are against the introduction of lower professional certificates in most of the occupations. But for sure it would be good if reintegration schemes build networks and if they try to develop their common certificates with common standards. In a long term perspective that might help to give such a certificate a remarkable image.

Another criterion which I like in your TRDM- Model is “treating with avoidance”. This is a critical point within our scheme because we have different opinions how to deal with trainees who have bad timekeeping and irregular attendance. Some of our social pedagogists are very soft, others are very strict and this is a point of conflict because the trainees do not have clear rules when they change their person of contact. But because you do European evaluation I would personally be very interested in how reintegration schemes in other countries deal with attendance problems.

Another important aspect which this table take into account is the fact that the evaluation and the evaluation results should influence the perspective on and the discussion of reintegration in a broader context. For example administrative structures need to be changed for the target group of reintegration schemes. The administrative process that trainees have to go through before they can enter our scheme is huge and in a lot of cases frustrating for the youngsters. This is an aspect which has to be changed in the organisation of the labour office. But that is an aspect of politics and we can not really change anything ourselves.

Only if evaluation in different reintegration schemes would point out that these administrative structures are not efficient we might have the chance of influencing the reintegration politics on a long term bases. But in general I would suggest that your table needs to be specified. Maybe it is a good idea to build several questions to

each headline which ask the users to reflect more concrete. If there is only one word it might to have a meaning to each practitioner and as a result they might not longer reflect about it.

### **10.3 Practitioners' voices from Finland**

In this chapter I will study why it is important and productive to have actual practitioners working together with professors and researchers in a research team. Usually the problem with research and practice is that they don't meet or at least they don't speak the same language. This means that there is no real collaboration between these two. In this Re-Integration project there was a real opportunity to change this old pattern.

My role in this project was defined as that of a practitioner and also an outside evaluator of the process. I am a practitioner because I work at the Tietoteekki-project at the University of Helsinki. The main target of the Tietoteekki-project is to teach, train, support and counsel unemployed people - especially women and young adults - to find a new career within ICT. By giving a chance to learn different kinds of ICT skills both in labour market training and traineeship based learning groups we try to prevent people from dropping out from the Finnish labour market. So I have first-hand knowledge about everyday problems in projects for youngsters in danger of dropping out from the formal systems. I became an outside evaluator in the beginning of the Re-Integration process because there had been changes in the EU project administration and my own Tietoteekki-project was not one of the research targets anymore.

I want to emphasize that my role as a practitioner and outside evaluator is little different from than of the other practitioners in the Re-Integration project, because :

- My background is at the University of Helsinki and because of this I may have somewhat better understand of the language of science and research. Surely I approach practice more theoretically than those with no university background. I also felt very free to say my opinion in the research team, maybe partly because of my background.

- I participated in international meetings three times during the project. Other practitioners did not have this opportunity (partly because of the funding). I also participated practitioners' and researchers' meetings in Finland.
- I was not one of the research targets as other practitioners.
- I had previous knowledge about the backgrounds of the Re-Integration project because I worked in the ESF project called TiekkiTyökkis which was one of the Finnish "good practices examples" in previous Re-Enter project.

My challenge in this project was to bring the practitioners' voice to the international meetings and also add collaboration between practitioners and researchers. This meant different things at national (Finnish) and international level. At both levels I felt that evaluation is a highly important thing in all projects. A trans-national evaluating system would be a good thing, and I wanted to participate in developing it. As I said during the process, my opinion is that developing is evaluating and evaluating is developing. Today's projects unfortunately often see evaluating as something negative. This is natural because administrators are only interested in figures, which creates an atmosphere where evaluating means measuring. Unfortunately, this view-point forgets other human aspects like social circumstances, living conditions, learning experiences, self confidence etc.

### ***10.3.1 Finnish collaboration***

There were several meetings during the Re-Integration process between Finnish researchers and managers and teachers from re-integration projects. In the beginning we discussed expectations we had. Researchers wanted to know to what direction they should be oriented. In the beginning we agreed that one of the aims of the research part should be to have an influence on the national administrators (in vocational schools, city counsellors, employment and social agencies, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education etc.). Of course we also wanted to learn more about youngsters and those actions which would help them to re-integrate in the formal Finnish education system. This kind of open discussion and opportunity to influence the research, creates trust and respect between researchers and practitioners. It also made the research meaningful to the practitioners, because it would make their work more visible to the administrators. My role was not very essential in the Finnish

group, because all the practitioners were motivated and we shared same problems and same opinions.

In open discussions the participants were informed about previous actions. Meetings were held regularly, and national partners also knew all the time, what was discussed in international meetings. Researchers also had meetings with the vocational schools and they tried to help practitioners to reach their aims. I would like to emphasize that something really happened at the school level. We do not know yet if we manage to influence national administrators, but my opinion is that at least the TRDM-model (the Trans-national Reflection and Development Methodology) gives us a tool and an opportunity.

Though the Finnish practitioners got all their information from the work on the international team, I still feel that the international level remained very distant, partly because the lack of participation in the international meetings, but perhaps mainly because the research targets in each country varied so much. The different projects shared too few common features. All the programmes in the Finnish research were closely connected to vocational schools.

### ***10.3.2 International level***

At the international level the first thing to do, was to define what was common in different kinds of research targets, and to define the methodological questions. Each country and each researcher had their own traditions. Everyone wanted to create something useful for the practitioners, but the team had also to remember the administrative and EU level. I found it important to point out that the language and the methods should not be too abstract. Researchers should express their aims and questions in ways for everyone to understand. In practice this means e.g. that if the research team talks about micro and Institutional-level, they should make sure that all practitioners know what they mean. This is why in the TRDM-model uses definitions like educational system and employment system / program or activity system / action and experiences of learners and practitioners. Finnish researchers and I strongly pointed out that research findings should not be defined in advance but totally open. We should look and see what comes up, and then draw conclusions instead of searching for something we want to find.

As the research went on, it gave researchers ideas how the evaluation tool should be built. Of course, the different problems in each country and also different hopes and wishes of different practitioners did not disappear during the process, but formed the openness of the TRDM-tool. I feel that the working of the researchers' team also became more open during the process. At least my own role became clearer and more like that of an expert or a specialist in the field of young unemployed people in Re-Integration programmes.

The practitioners role was also important, when researchers analysed the results of the interviews. Many of the things that came out were more than obvious to the practitioners, but new to the researchers and professors. In this point researchers had to decide which points were important for the research, though they gave nothing new to practitioners.

The working method in the project team at the international level was different from that at the national level. Because there were not many practitioners participating in the meetings, the conversation was led by professors, and practitioners could add their comments and opinions freely. Then the research group decided, how to carry on. I think this is the only way to work together, because someone has to have the leading role in the process and independent research cannot lean too much on individual opinions. A wise group will listen to all the partners and then make wise decisions. Anyway, it would have been more fruitful work, if the same practitioners could have regularly participated international meetings.

### ***10.3.3 Finnish Conclusions***

The product of the Re-Integration process, the Trans-national Reflection and Development Methodology (TRDM), has good chances to work in practice. I have applied the method in the Tietoteekki-project, where it has helped us to analyse all the different aspects which have influenced the project. The TRDM-model shows the connections between different levels. It shows to administrators, how complex systems the projects are dealing with. It gives one solution to the problem that at the moment so many different bodies do the project evaluation: those who give funding, unemployment offices, ministries, EU, etc. A certain project has to react several surveys or inquiries and usually nothing is heard about the results. The project does not get any feedback to know if it is doing well or poorly. The TRDM also helps

projects to build their own evaluating system, because it as such does not suit for self evaluating and developing purposes. That way projects can get direct feedback about their work. At least in Finland one of the main problems with projects is that they are very isolated and alone with their problems and successes.

The TRDM-model gives an answer to two other practitioner problems; it makes the practitioners work visible and also the actions of the administrative level. According to the EU projects and programs should develop administrative structures too. The model also shows that evaluation should be something much more than figures and statistics.

If this Re-Integration research project did not bring up any new aspects about working with highly marginalized young people, it did make many problems visible to the research. Hopefully this is the way to make them visible also to the decision makers around Europe. This project has still one challenge ahead; how to make all these good results familiar to administrators in each country and in the EU. We shall see!

This process showed that practitioners should work more together with researchers. I would even like to extend my idea here practitioners and researchers should also work closer together with the administrators. Projects are learning processes to all participants. For me this was a very interesting distance travelled. Special thanks to all partners in Finland and in Europe.

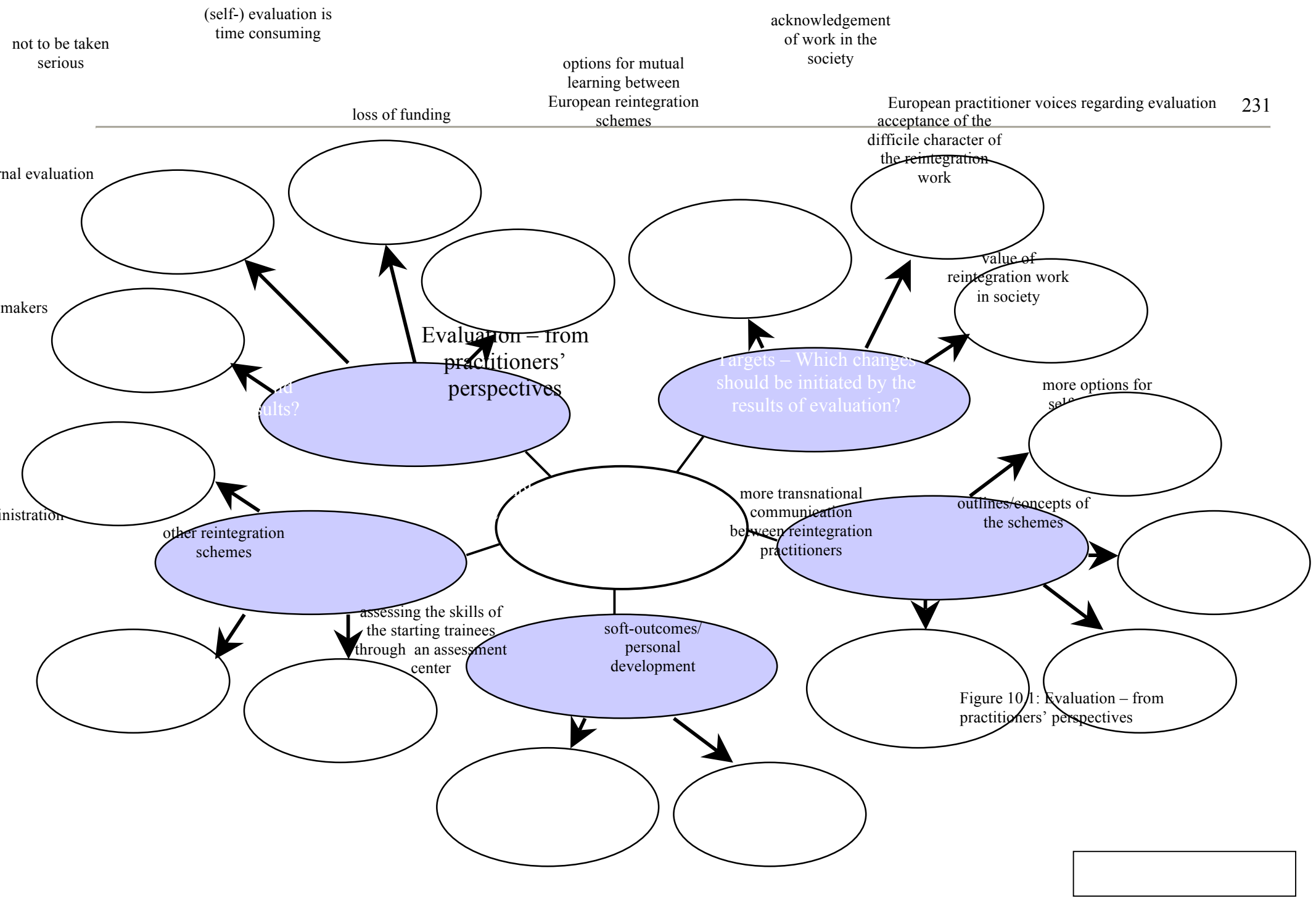
## 10.4 Conclusions

The practitioner voices from the partner countries which are presented in different ways in this chapter show that the national contexts play an important role for the perspective on evaluation. It becomes obvious that evaluation is already a subject which is discussed between the practitioners in most of the Reintegration schemes. Firstly this can be explained by the fact that most of them are ESF-funded and the ESF demands for evaluation. But also national agencies demand for evaluation which means in most cases evaluation of 'hard outcomes' like transition rates.

Nevertheless there are differences in the perspective on evaluation. This becomes clear in detail when we look at the aims, addresses, fears, targets and interests that

are mentioned related to the evaluation as a subject. Surely we have to take into account that the practitioner voices are subjective to a certain extent. Nevertheless they present national aims, addresses, fears, targets and interests. In the following mindmap we summarise all national perspectives together in order to express what tasks a European evaluation tool has to fulfil or better said what aspects a European evaluation tool has to take into account.





The different aims, target, interests, addressees and fears of practitioners have to be seen against the socioeconomic background of each country as it is mentioned in chapter 4.2 and to the fact that Re-integration is situated in different areas of the education system in the partner countries. While in Germany Re-integration schemes are under the head of the labour office they are part of the general education system in Finland. Most German reintegration schemes have to apply every three to five years for an extension of the funding for their course while Finnish reintegration is often an inclusive part of the formal school system.

In relation to the regular application for funding German practitioners and German reintegration schemes have to face the fact that they will only receive further funding if they meet the demands of their client – in most cases the labour office.

Even though the national contexts and the national perspectives on evaluation are different the practitioner voices point out that all practitioners need an instrument for evaluating their work with special regard to soft outcomes. They want to know how they could improve their schemes, which additional assistance might support their learners and what focus they should have regarding the qualification of the learners. Should they focus on social assistance, on personal support or on teaching vocational skills. The insecurity of the practitioners has to some extent to be seen against the background that in non of the participating countries there is a special education for people working in Re-integration schemes. The different professionals who work in such schemes are often not sure about what means to be a “good reintegration practitioner”. Therefore all European Re-integration practitioners need a tool which enables them to reflect the quality of their work. Because the evaluation of the schemes carried out by the funding bodies is in most cases not testing real outcomes but only transition rates, numbers of drop-outs etc., the only answer to the practitioner’ s need is a self-evaluation tool for practitioners in Re-integration schemes like it is presented to the two tools in this final report: The TRDM and the QSED.

The TRDM as an open reflection and development tool offers to be used in practice in all participating countries in different ways according to the specific situations. In order to be able to reflect (R) and develop (D) according to the methodology (M) of the TRDM it is crucial to involve a change agent. An action research process needs to be initiated.

In contrast the QSED provides a pool of questions according to specific aspects which are according to our research more or less important to Re-integration in all of the participating countries. These questions support the practitioners in reflecting their practice, in broadening their Re-integration perspective through mutual learning, in introducing discussions with colleagues and in initiating changes to their practice.

## 11 Collaboration across Professional Paradigms

Beatrix Niemeyer

### 11.1 Introduction

For Re-Integration programmes addressing young people with a troubled transition from school to vocational education and training collaboration is a crucial issue in multiple respects. In view of the young persons participating in re-integration processes partner's experiences have shown that a diversity of learning contexts allowing meaningful and authentic work experiences are most adequate to rebuild the will to learn and to give evidence to the intention of social and vocational inclusion. This variety of learning/training contexts usually cannot be offered by one single institution and cannot be provided by one single person. Within institutes providing re-integration programmes persons from different professional backgrounds work together building a supportive framework for the young participants aiming at a holistic personality development process. The conditions for this type of cross-professional collaboration will be in the focus of this chapter.\*

In all of the partner countries re-integration activities combine learning arrangements and supporting activities of multiple institutions such like vocational schools, companies, social/youth services, etc. The idea of building networks of interinstitutional collaboration therefore has become very prominent. In the field of re-integration it is supposed to optimise the support at offer – for the young individuals who might profit from adjusted support plans and educational approaches as well as for the sponsors who are interested in placing financial support most effectively. Still collaboration in re-integration often suffers from the fact that the different institutions responsible for integrative programmes fall under the legislacy and financial responsibility of different branches of government. Although they are addressing the same target group programmes can be ruled either by the ministry of education or the ministry of labour or the ministry of economy. This not only explains different approaches of education but also determines differences in the working conditions.

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\* The first part (p.2 – 5) strongly builds on Karen Evans' conference presentation given at the Final conference of the Re-Integration project in Leuven on February 28 2004; the description of the Portuguese case study has been provided by Teresa Oliveira, while page 16 – 19 draw from data collected by Eeva Lamminpää in Finland.

Collaboration therefore is a central issue, which is mentioned as a goal of improved re-integration activities and as a central indicator for programme's quality in many of the national re-integration regulations. However, in practice as in theory this goal remains a fairly abstract one, regular structures for collaboration barely exist and communication tends to be difficult among the representatives of different political fields as well as among the actors from different institutional or different professional backgrounds. Still collaboration takes place in teams and networks, which are constructed and maintained by individual persons, who may act according to differing principles and paradigms. How is collaboration put into practice? Which are the challenges which actors from different professional backgrounds meet when they are co-ordinating, communicating and collaborating with each other?

The following contribution will start with the illustration of the specific challenges which arise from transprofessional collaboration on the Individual-level of the acting practitioners by a German example. Building on this outline a different analytical perspective when a Portuguese case study gives evidence of how collaboration across professional paradigms can be overcome by a specific approach of further training which is targeting at the improvement of inter-institutional collaboration; 2. the different types of value of institutional collaboration for practitioners are in the focus of the following Finnish examples and 3. collaboration across professional paradigms will be discussed as an indicator for quality of programmes and suggestions will be made of how this indicator can be applied in a process of self-evaluation, addressing the important question: How can the QSED help in growing the learning community centred on practice (LCCP)<sup>22</sup> for new learning professionals? Thus it will be shown, how the TRDM can be used to explore and analyse different levels and different aspects of collaboration and – if applied in a process of self-evaluation of practitioners, how it may help to develop a common body of experience knowledge and re-integration specific educational theoretical knowledge.

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<sup>22</sup> The concept of the LCCP stands for a specific approach of situated learning in re-integration programmes, cf. Evans / Niemeyer 2004.

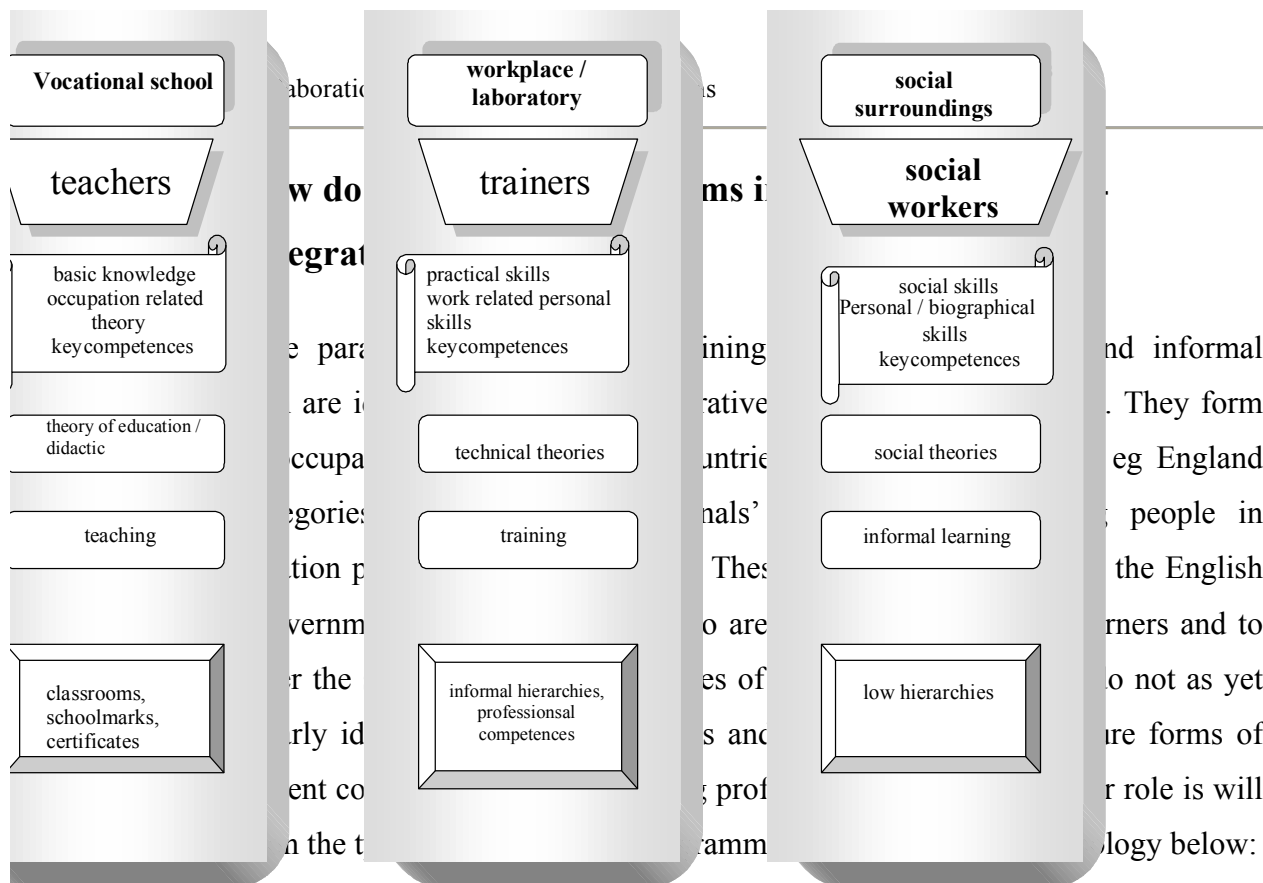


Figure 11.1: Typology of re-integration workers (Niemeyer 2004)

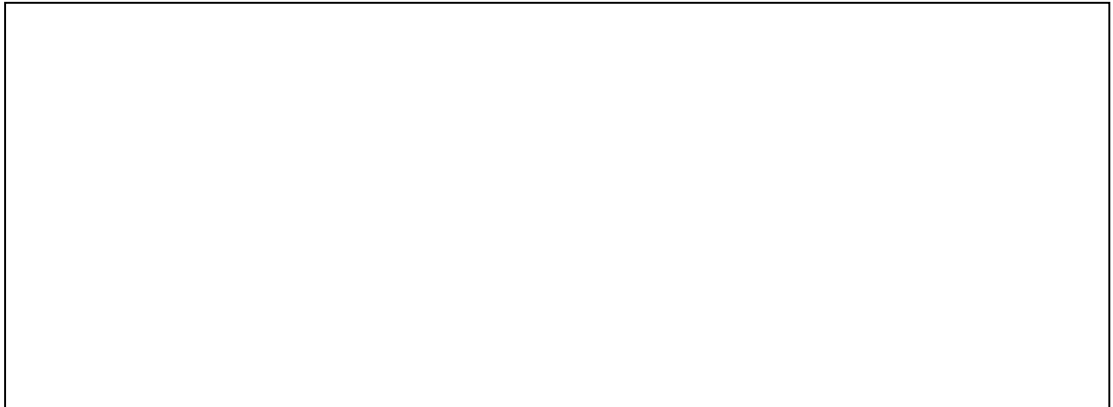
As discussed in Evans and Niemeyer (2004) the three spheres differ with respect to

- the learning environment they use and produce
- the staff, its level of training and the respective working and employment conditions

Our expanded concepts see learning as situated in three ways:

- ✱ 1) in practical activity • the content and aims of learning processes
  - ✱ 2) in the culture and context of the workplace/learning environment • the theories they refer to
  - ✱ 3) in the socio- biographical features of the learner's life • the power relations and hierarchy systems of relevance
- LCPs, learning communities centred on practice, support these forms of situated learning....
- the systems and instruments by which they construct and maintain their professional identity, values and believes
  - different knowledge about the target group
  - different methodological approaches

Our development of the concept of Learning Communities Centred on Practice (LCPs) went beyond the formulations of Lave and Wenger, to take in many aspects of the learning which Lave and Wenger neglect or do not address because their work was not concerned with interventions. In the LCPs, practitioners aim for full engagement in learning through the activities/common tasks of the LCP and subscribe to the following principles:



These ideas about learning both shift the debate and open up new ideas about learning. When an LCP operates ideally, the staff working on the programme (whether teachers, trainers, informal educators or new forms of learning professionals) form an LCP too. They engage in a common process of sharing competence, experience and expertise and 'mutual learning'. When viewed in this way, it can be seen that learning communities centred on practice depend on the structures and culture of the institutions involved, the readiness of the

workplaces/employees to learn and to work across 'old' boundaries; the extent to which their environment supports and gives space to mutual learning, and extent to which the material conditions and terms of contracts allow development over time.

Established career lines within COPS often compete with new forms of collaboration in LCPs. Thus a practitioner joining a re-integration programme may, for career progression purposes, see this as only a temporary step towards an established occupational role in one of the COPS. If people are to make their careers as new forms of learning professionals, and these new roles are to develop and become more professionalised, then the LCPs have to be strengthened. This needs more clarity on what they stand for and what their purpose is.

The central challenge for LCPs is to develop pedagogy for re-integration that links broad experiences of practice to a pedagogical theory which integrates social and vocational learning.

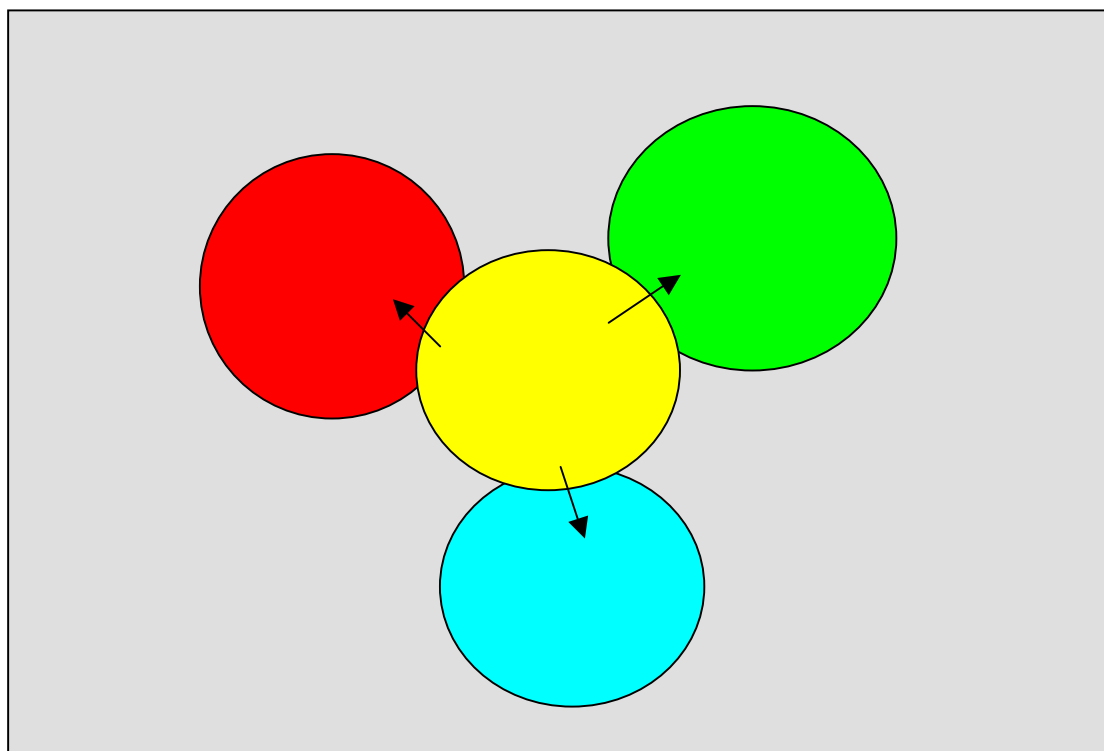


Figure 11.2: Growing an LCP of Reintegration Learning Professionals from existing Communities of Practice : Competition or Collaboration?

In practice, our evidence has shown the realities of lack of collaboration between the actors involved in re-integration programmes, who operate according to the established norms of their domain with little time, space or support for mutual learning. This is compounded by the ambiguities of the roles and professional standing of new kinds of re-integration practitioner, eg role conflicts of 'advisers'.



It is suggested here that focusing on the concrete challenge of developing an identifiable pedagogy for reintegration that links broad experiences of practice to an integrative theory could be a way of growing the LCCP

### **11.3 Transprofessional collaboration as a regular challenge –Lessons from the German case**

How do professional paradigms influence the relationship of practitioners and young participants of the programmes and among practitioners themselves? How do they enhance or impede the support process?

In theory and practice the process of transition from school to vocational education and training in Germany is situated in relation to different sometimes competing spheres of influence (cf. also Niemeyer 2004). Re-integration programmes in Germany are structured and organised in ways which closely relate to the dual system, with the vocational school and school certificates playing a crucial, if not problematic role. Based on the fact that most of the participants' disadvantages are rooted in social circumstances today teachers, trainers and social workers should jointly design programmes, mutually develop support plans and closely collaborate during the everyday practice. Teachers and trainers are expected to integrate methods of social work into their didactical designs. Social pedagogy is no longer regarded as being additional but is intended to be an integral part of programmes, aiming at vocational integration. Besides adjusting the different expectations of employers and young persons the personal biographical development has become one of the first aims of the programmes.

In the field of Re-Enter-Programmes three different professions meet to work together towards the common aim to enable young persons to start and carry through an apprenticeship: social workers, vocational teachers and trainers. Obviously their self images and definitions are rooted in different contexts and follow different logics (Jorgensen 2004). Their didactical approaches are differing, they often work at different locations, they might be employed on different contracts, earn different money have different access to further training to prepare for their specific target groups and bring in different expertise. They all have been trained at different institutions and toward varying educational targets. E. g. this is expressed in the

differing terms by which they refer to their target group reflecting the differing educational relationship: teachers teach pupils, social workers counsel clients and trainers show apprentices how to work properly. Between the three different professions concerned with Re-integration programmes expertise is not systematically shared, mutual learning does not happen on the level of the educational staff, therefore holistic support for the young persons is difficult to arrange. and cross-professional collaboration still remains a distant aim.

The observation and evaluation of a further training project which was carried out in one of the German cases selected for the research of this project gave evidence to the effects of professional paradigms and how these are rooted in the vocational self images of the actors. This further training programme aimed to develop with all members of staff, disregarding their professional background, status or role in the team, an approach towards the young, which is shaped by the transfer of responsibility for learning success onto the learners themselves. The “training” of the trainers actually consisted in a series of reflective meetings and was designed in a way, that forced them to practice an approach towards the young people, which would empower their self-responsibility and self-awareness and enhance self-directed forms of learning in any vocational and social field. The aims of this further training project were to qualify all members of staff – trainers of the vocational fields, youth workers and social pedagogues and teachers of the collaborating schools - to follow a common educational approach towards the young participants of programmes according to constructivist principles as expressed in the practice of action oriented learning. In this case these requirements were interpreted in a way, that everyday practice should be re-constructed in a way which forces the young persons to take the responsibility for their action and enables him / her for self-directed learning. This presupposes a clearly structured social setting, clearly determined rules and clearly formulated learning aims as a stable social framework, in which the young participants position themselves. By acting self responsible they help to keep this social framework up themselves, while in practice very often the educational staff felt responsible to keep up the rules and to care for the solution of social problems. This of course presupposed a principle change in thinking, with reference to the role and to the self-images of the trainers and youth workers and with reference to their approach towards the young. The changing self-image of the educational staff goes along with their changing role in the learning environment:

instead of instruction and demonstration now they ask constructive questions, counsel with learning, accompany the searching for solutions, moderate group situations, or support self-directed learning of the young, in order to act as a learning community centred on practice.

From interviews and participating observation we learned, that these processes are counteracted by lifelong habits, established relations and hierarchies in teams, resistance against the unknown, and the resistance to subordinate professional paradigms under pedagogical needs. Conflicts arise:

- in the group of trainers: with professional standards, e.g. a product should be perfect according to professional standards and values, but to have it produced by learners includes the risk of mistakes and failures
- in the group of social workers (and partly also of teachers) with an established parenting approach, the adult trainer wants to help by stepping in, doing things better, improving, and thereby devalues the practice of learners.

One criterion which was highly influencing the professional educational relationship between trainers and participants has been the vocational identity which was based on technical competences and knowledge (Fachlichkeit). According to the vocational trainers the young were supposed to learn to carry out work tasks well and accurately. According to their self-perception the quality of the work-product indicated the quality of their training – the personal development of the young seemed to be of minor importance to them. Only little space was given to the participants to develop learning strategies by themselves. In a continuous process of reflective meetings this point was worked out, so that one of the participating trainers came to the conclusion: *„Products’ quality only is of secondary importance here - working together with the young, to motivate them, to get them engaged, to collaborate with , this is a totally different story!“*

During the reflective meetings many trainers compared their educational practice with the time they first started to work with re-integration programmes. Thus it became evident, that for many of them it was a severe problem to integrate their technical work standards with the abilities and performance of the participants. Two types of trainers can be distinguished: Type A gets along with young people very well. For him or her it is very important, that the participants work independently and he allows a big variety in problem solving strategies and working methods without

interfering or imposing the “right way”. Learning and development progress and work contentment of the young are the dominating quality indicators. Type B however is strongly relying on technical quality norms and a technical understanding of vocational identity. For him or her it has been necessary to change the attitude towards the young and to re-define the idea of quality during the educational work in a re-integrative programme and it was necessary to learn how technical competences can be used to enhance support processes. Their perspective on the young as well as their idea of competence and quality is strongly shaped by a technical understanding (*Fachlichkeit*). Before all this type of trainer sees himself as carpenter, mechanic, cook, etc. with the quality of the work products being the first criterion of success. As one of them put it: *“In my first year I had to work hard on myself. I had to learn to accept, that it is not accuracy, not punctuality of work that counts, but that the idea of this job is to prepare young persons for vocational education and training.”*

Another example for a structural conflict between vocational identity and educational support can be given from the field of leisure time activities which build a very complex field of learning with a big variety of learning tasks with individually differing challenges – depending on personal biographical stories and social conditions. To care for one’s own physical and psychological well-being can be an aim hard to achieve. Very often this implies to cope with highly problematic family backgrounds of various kinds. Self-responsibility and autonomy in this context are only vaguely defined educational aims. This gives room for broad interpretations of the educational tasks in this field –highly depending on the individual practitioner’s norms and values. Interpretations of their work tasks reach from “entertainment service” to parenting or caring for the well-being of the young or to an instance of social control.

This specific further training project was aiming at the members of staff to develop and commit themselves to a common educational aim and to build a relationship between educational staff and young participants, and to develop a common self image as members of a learning community centred on practice. During the course of the process the value of reflective meetings and in-team-counselling according to common criteria was experienced by all participants. But the further socio-economical or political context as well as general structures of the educational system were not discussed. This included the relationship of the vocational school and the institutes where the programmes were organised. Some of the trainers

explicitly said: „*I don't have any common points with the educational school.*“ While social pedagogues often serve as mediators between both institutes, it still remained an exception that trainers get in touch with the vocational school. There are no regular meetings and no exchange of experiences. The image which trainers have developed of the vocational school is shaped by the (negative) information they get directly from the young, teachers are seen as being unwilling to collaborate. It is evident that professional paradigms are not only influencing on the individual level, but that they are themselves shaped and maintained by institutional cultures and structures, which are working against collaboration and stabilize and continue institutional “isolation” instead.

The evaluation of this further training project has revealed how re-integration practices are situated in a field of tension between technical vocational identity and holistic support of the development of biographical competences, between authentic work contexts and the necessary space and time to learn and reflect and between selection and integration in general. Professional educational action of all practitioners of re-integration programmes is situated in these field of tension. They have to handle these antagonisms, which very often impede collaboration. But - this lesson is to be learnt from this specific case study – they can be overcome by the implementation of self-evaluation and regular reflective meetings and the implementation of a culture of self-reflective team structures.

#### **11.4 Training for transprofessional collaboration – a Portuguese case study**

The following case study also presents a further training project for trainers, but is taken from a country, where vocational paradigms are less dominant. Still it illustrates how trainers' training which includes experiences from different social and institutional backgrounds supports the process of building a learning community centred on practice. The problem of the teachers' and trainers' training for low achieving students in Portugal is an approach, which involves a lot of different aspects and realities, which depend of the contexts, the autonomy of the institutions and the co-operation between the local enterprises, and the preparation and training of the teachers and trainers involved.

Teachers' and trainers' life experiences differ from the low achieving students, and the lack of previous good practices of teaching with these students often lead to the impossibility of implementation of training projects in order to enlarge the low achieving students competencies. Aiming at the participation of the low achieving students reinforces the need for a training of trainers which is based on pluridisciplinary teams with different life experiences. Dealing with low achieving students, the teachers and trainers should be self-critical with respect to their own experience and their academic attitudes. Teaching and training careers can not be understood as "accumulation of cognitive knowledge" (Interim re-enter Report, 2000:7). Pluridisciplinary teams, help teachers and trainers to train for new professional roles.

To fulfil the above demands, teachers' and trainers' training for good practices in this field calls for people who are: reflective; motivated, flexible, and adaptable to different contexts; creative, with capacity to make controlled decisions; responsible; capable of communicating and establishing good interpersonal relationships; able to communicate with diverse cultures; willing to run risks, while knowing how to assess their limits; capable to work in a team and in communities of practice; knowing of the needs of the society and the target group; prepared to include work with low achieving students in their professional project; engaged in their own training; dynamic and with capacity for negotiation and organisation of community activities; willing to undertake life long learning, and considering learning as thinking.

Teamwork in the sense of a LCCP, as learning communities of practice reflects that participation "is not itself an educational form, much less a pedagogical strategy or a teaching technique. It is an analytical viewpoint of learning, a way of understanding learning" (Lave/Wenger 1991:40). In RE-Integration initiatives the concept of learning communities of practice is adopted to teaching, to training and to the learning process, where teachers and trainers, trainers of trainers, and low achieving students could learn from each other.

The great innovation is the intervention – in it's creation as well as in its administrative and pedagogic management – of a social-economic partnership with a strong local implementation, with the support and enrolment of the society. This is a sure warranty of the training articulation with the learning and the needs and interests of the evolving society.

To do that, it is important to adapt teachers' and trainers' discourses to the various communities, equipping them with competence in using concepts and forms of reasoning that characterise the communities where they work. This perspective leads to the questions of what kinds of discourses the teachers and trainers need to establish, to relate to and to motivate the low achieving students.

Oliveira and Frazão (2000) propose systematic *"variations of short term learning activities, working with others, creating problems as pair problems solving, promoting full participation, providing precise feed-back and encouraging self-assessment and reflection by the learner."* (p.5). These factors are important for motivation, to improve self-confidence and for knowledge construction. In line with our reflection about teachers' and trainers' training and their new roles, we argue that training should be organised in communities of practice, as well as the teaching and the learning activities.

### 11.5 A real example in practice

The main goal was to establish a training programme for the significant persons (future trainers) for youth at risk of social exclusion according to their needs.

For the implementation of this programme a network was crucial. Each partner was responsible for a training module and its evaluation. The contents of the training modules were defined at team meetings with the participation of the significant persons-training mediators, and were related to the personal and professional needs of the target group as well the significant persons as future trainers.

The discussion of the programme contents of the training modules took place at team reunion and was based on information gathered on personal and professional needs of young people at risk of social exclusion. Each partner was responsible for one training module, as following:

- FCT/UNL Educational Department: "Adolescent psychology" and "Intervention Projects",
- International Medical Assistance: "Health primary care",
- Centro Social Paroquial Cristo-Rei: "Non structured families",
- Instituto de Reinserção Social: "Legal points of minors protection",

- Câmara Municipal de Almada: "Intercultural aspects",
- Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Almada: "Socio-cultural Animation/Entertainment of young people at risk of social exclusion".

Each partner institution selected five future trainers as trainees (MitarbeiterInnen) to constitute a working team of 20 trainees.

The further training project was coordinated by FCT-UNL Educational Department and involved the following aspects: preparation of a training programme, training methodologies adapted to the trainees group, producing support materials, define contents, objectives and methodology of training. Internal evaluation was carried out in three respects, each one with a specific evaluation tool:

- self evaluation of trainees performance: made systematically at the end of each module,
- overall evaluation of the training programme by the trainees: made at the end of the training programme,
- overall evaluation of the training programme by the trainers: made at the end of the training programme.

All the national partners were involved in the plan and production of the training modules, materials for each module, and in the evaluation. The project's impact in terms of innovation were:

- selection and management of contents made by trainers with field experience,
- giving opportunity to the trainees to elaborate intervention projects according to their personal and professional needs,
- high level of trainees participation on modular training sessions according to their needs,
- production of materials/products by the trainees themselves and production of a realistic intervention project.
- personal and group reflection of the field work, recognition of the training as useful for the field work, recognition of the need to continue training/supervision of the implementation of intervention projects,
- acquisition of new skills: multidimensional identification and characterization of youth at risk of social exclusion, multidimensional response to identified social problems by using the reflective evaluation tool.



- employment/working experience: intervention projects were produced and followed by trainers in the partner's institutions
- the project has met the training and skills needs through the knowledge and work experience of the partners of the national network, who are in contact with disadvantaged young people.

In the evaluation done by the trainees, the following aspects were mentioned:

- theoretical and practical contents were useful and adapted to the needs of the trainees,
- the trainees recognised the usefulness of the training programme for their working experience as non formal guides,
- training materials, methodologies and logistics were considered to be adapted and sufficient to the trainees needs,
- exchange of working experiences was considered to be very profitable,
- open perspectives for future cooperation among trainees(MitarbeiterInnen) in their field work,
- recognition and improvement of self awareness,
- exchange of ideas and practices about training methodologies, contents evaluation tools and establishment of action strategies for the project development within learning communities of practice,
- learning about and from other transnational projects.

We emphasise as an added value the work of the network with participating institutions that have not only political and administrative influence at local level, but also at national level.

The project operated in a range of informal learning contexts and the partners gained direct experience of the effectiveness of such environments and non-traditional actors in supporting, socialising and mentoring young people at risk. The project also highlighted the vulnerability of these learning contexts, which often depended on the personal drive, resources and commitment of certain individuals. The project tested ways of stabilizing and sustaining these contexts by increasing their formality through institution building, creating linkages between formal and informal contexts and services and applying procedures from the formal system to the informal. In some cases these processes increased the formality of the informal and the informality of the formal. Success depended on the responsiveness of the formal

structures to share their expertise, improve their accessibility and increase the provision and quality of outreach services. To strengthen the partnership important issues must be addressed with regard to taking charge, planning, resourcing, organizing and managing the process.

The project reinforced the need for increasing the number of actors, professional and non-professional, who can effectively support young people to make important life choices. It provided a practical, achievable and flexible model that assisted in the identification and training of new actors and the development of an infrastructure to support them in their tasks. Furthermore it addressed important issues with regard to informal learning facilitators such as how to recognize best their capacities and their experiential learning, how to cater for their ongoing development and how to deal with their new status and expectations. The courses facilitated the acquisition of career-related guidance knowledge and skills but the extent to which the intermediaries then engaged in guidance activities, how effectively and to what extent requires further monitoring.

We may conclude, that according to the developed study, we can not disconnect teacher's and trainer's training from the low achieving students learning process. For teachers/trainers as well as for the low achieving students training at school can alternate with the training on the job organised in communities of practice and defined with the participation of all the people involved in the curricular organisations. In all learning projects it is important to have on going communication among the different actors. To implement teachers' and trainers' training in a context of situated learning organised in learning communities of practice we need a

- real engagement of teachers and trainers in their own training (interactive social learning);
- training in context - recognition that teachers and trainers must be located and engaged in context (experiencing significant situations. Managing the concepts, meanings, understandings, beliefs and values);
- training in communities of practice - pluridisciplinary teamwork (organised by the different elements of the educational society with mutual acknowledgement and sharing of their diversified knowledge);
- reflective training (questioning, researching, justifying and reformulating);

- differentiation of training for specific tasks of teachers and trainers as well as the development of their new competencies and roles like tutors, counsellors, mediators, etc.;
- more flexible and non academic training, in graded steps, leading teachers and trainers to reflexive attitudes regarding the possible contribution that the society might demand from them;
- curricular organisation of training in modular structure and project work;
- training outside school at workplace and at social activities to be aware of low achieving students expectations regarding re-enter initiatives;
- development of national networks and transnational projects.

### 11.6 Collaborative networks – lessons from the Finnish case

In the Finnish research process there are three programme cases (Kytikin, Tracs, Supra) which represent different kinds of collaborative networks. Often, the administrative goal of re-integration programmes is said to be *enhancing and establishing collaboration between different sectors and professionals*. During the research process the nature and variation related to this goal has been discussed many times with the actors of these three programmes. The three programme cases revealed different perspectives on collaborative networks. It is possible to consider networks related to the concrete and established structures, the roles of different actors (professional paradigms in change) in networks, what keeps collaboration alive, network as personal capital (justifying own professional paradigm?). In our research the research cases were great examples about the variety of collaborative networks and the variety of different aspects, which depend on the professional pathway of actors as an essential memory base of re-integration programmes.

The nature of collaborative networks or networking seems to be dependent on the place of the programme in the broader organisation, on the place of the programme between different organisations, and/or on the personal relationships of actors. The variety of this concept can be summarised in different perspectives or approaches in terms of collaborative networks. First of all, the focus varies when we talk about collaborative networks related to different re-integration programmes. On the one hand, we can discuss on the level of actors, practices or programmes. On the other

hand, the focus can be on regional collaboration or networks, on collaboration between schools, between different sectors, between programmes or between actors. These different perspectives are overlapping but at one point of the programme history some aspects are more essential than others. As much as the re-integrative activity is in constant change (reacting on its environment) the idea of the most optimal way of collaborating is not stable and collaborative networks are changing during the course of programme.

*In the Finnish context the collaboration reveals the real level of inclusiveness.* Inclusiveness has been accepted as a shared vision on the policy level and by most of the actors. Still, the collaborative structures and practices often show that this vision is not carried into practice. This is possible to perceive in the lack of commitment, which should be an essential aspect of collaborative networks. During the expert interviews with practitioners it showed that the discussion about collaboration revealed the real obstacles of inclusiveness.

**Collaborative networks / practices / actors** considered on the level of the activity system or at the level of personal relationship showed that networking and developing a collaborative network between the programme and VET school is needed in order to achieve vocational appreciation for re-integration activity. In this relationship reciprocity is an essential aspect, which keeps the collaboration alive. Even if reciprocity is a flexible way to collaborate, collaboration needs to be more structured. Hence a common agreement of implementation of collaborative practices and responsibilities enhances the commitment in shared goals.

New programmes are built on earlier programme experiences. Thus programme histories are databases of personal know-how, good practices and programme experiences. The challenge of networking is how to transform this capital.

At the level of students, a good relationship between educators and students is a basis of trust which enables to identify the need of collaborative networks, which are usually part of the competence of practitioners as their personal capital.

One of the programme cases (TRACS) had been a link, which supports collaboration between programmes and VET school. It held a mediating role in a collaborative network of institutions. The examination of **Collaborative networks / practices / actors on the institutional** levels (between schools, between practitioners, local/ regional collaboration/ between other re-integration programmes) has further shown

how collaboration is related to the aspect of inclusiveness. The inclusive way of working happens through personal relations. On the other hand collaboration in terms of resources should be supported and planned in project-kind of work, since personal relationships (reciprocity) are quite a vulnerable basis for collaboration.

In this collaborative process key persons were active: the main collaboration happened between the teachers and the coordinator. Their personal connections and professional histories have had a meaning in the development of the programme.

There is possibility to recognize some kind of unbalance; teachers feel the project as a necessary help in their work and project aims to make itself unnecessary. The development vision is to restructure the project step by step to be part of general VET structures is accepted but there are not enough resources.

The collaborative network is experienced by staff in three ways: information, concrete support as ways of working, support of other professionals (työnohjauksellisuus) and all these activities are said to be important.

In the analysis of these Finnish cases the active dimension of networking processes has been in the focus, revealing as crucial aspects:

- networks supporting educational activities, by enhancing transformations and movements among the practitioners (Individual-level)
- networking as a strategy for the capitalisation of expertise in re-integration activities
- a network as personal capital in flexible use.

It was stressed how networks are depending on personal relationships, how personal experiences are tied to programme histories, so that collaborative processes work as the creation of a common body of experience knowledge. Still, as long as networks are not stabilised by adequate structures and kept up with adequate resources they remain , weak, person depending and occasional – and lack a sustainable perspective. the quality of a network on the meso- or institutional level and it's history therefore also serves as an indicator for the inclusiveness of a national integration policy.

## 11.7 LCP Learning professionals

### 11.7 How can the QSEB help in growing the LCCP for new learning professionals?

The diffuse concept of cross professional collaboration now has been depicted in a multidimensional perspective against three different national backgrounds as well as on different levels of action.

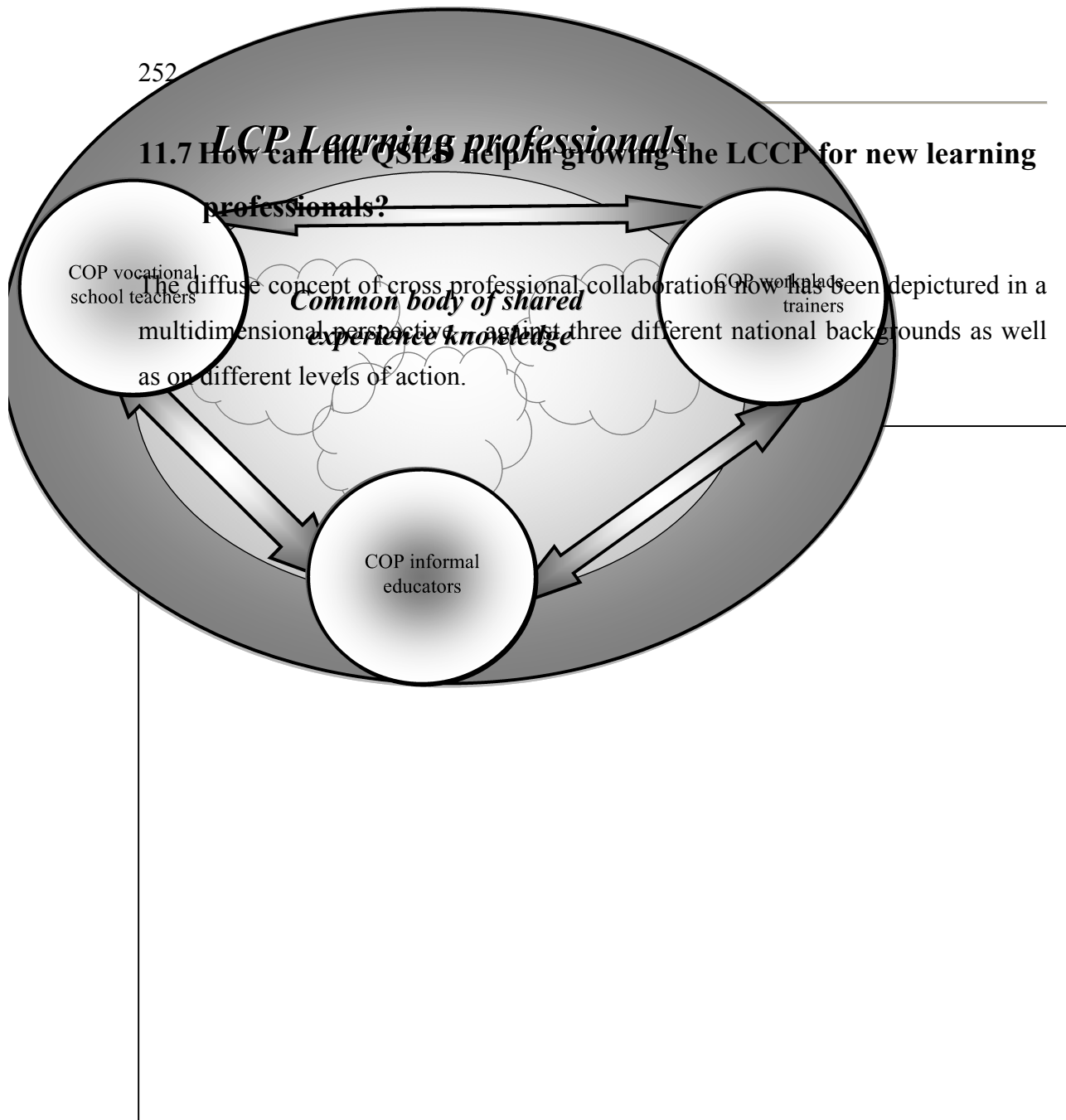


Figure 11.3: LCCP Learning professionals

Generally spoken successful collaboration is shaped by the (Kampmeier 2004) commonalties regarding content and aims, by the personal, material and immaterial resources which are granted to it, by the initiative taken by the collaborating parties as well as by their motivation and interests and furthermore by the culture and structure of collaboration and the dynamics of social processes. Apart from this general framework collaboration, esp. collaboration across professional paradigms is shaped, enhanced or impeded by more complex processes on the individual and on the institutional level.

The German example has focused on the individual level of the trainer-participant interaction. It has shown that professional paradigms can be made evident in a common reflective process of a learning community of practice. Furthermore they

can be overcome in a common self-evaluating process allowing for the exchange of experiences as well as for collaborative counselling (*kollegiale Beratung*). Directed towards the common aim of cross professional collaboration in this case the individual's perspective is enriched, as is the educational approach of the team (LCCP), while its members profit from each other's experience knowledge and in their common reflective processes create a common history and accumulate a common body of experience knowledge. Essential to this process seems a culture of self-evaluation that allows for a certain level of reflectiveness, structures of communication as well as a common agreed aim and common values.

The Portuguese case has slightly shifted the focus on interinstitutional collaboration and the dimension of cross-professional collaboration has been extended, since it was not only referred to professionals but also to voluntary workers active in this field. In this case the profit of cross professional collaboration not only can be identified on the individual level but consists also in the improvement of support structures for young persons with learning problems. Here commitment and the "political and social willingness to tackle the identified problem" are mentioned as essential success factors.

The Finnish case again presents a shift in focus and draws the perspective on collaborative networks as personal capital in flexible use, on the mediating role of collaborative networks and on the process of networking, thus they are integrating the fore mentioned levels.

If we refer these lessons from practice to the theoretical framework of situated learning collaborative networks of actors on micro- and Institutional-level can be perceived as learning communities centred on practice (LCCP). The LCCP appears as a useful model to design effective integrative collaboration: Communities of practice can be identified on the institutional and on the structural level. Learners and trainers and programmes or learning institutions can be regarded as a LCCP; the staff working on a programme, teachers, trainers and social workers, form a community of practice, too. They engage in a common process of sharing competence, experience and expertise. Collaboration then is not limited to the organisation of learning situations and the imparting of vocational qualifications but likewise relates to the structures of the institution in which it takes place. The opportunities (or limits to the same) which an institution offers for a sustainable culture of self-reflection is a

substantial condition for cross professional collaboration. Finally also the persons representing the institutions and being responsible for the planning, funding, researching, of Re-Integration programmes are concerned and involved into these collaborative processes. Well situated learning should aim to link all these levels together and promote being ready to continuously develop, re-new and re-adapt the social body of competence to the development processes of its members. Collaborative networks are building the essential basis for this process. Self-evaluation and self-reflection are an important precondition for this collaborative process of building a common body of experience knowledge.

As illustrated above cross-professional-collaboration has a multitude of levels and layers of problems. How important they are to the actors in the respective re-integrative fields depends on a complex variety of factors. The QSED can be applied as an instrument to initiate and guide or structure reflective meetings in a process of self-evaluation. Thus it builds a framework, giving substance to collaboration as an interactive communication process – and – for the growth of professional knowledge.



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## **12 Transcultural recommendations for the improvement of the quality of re-integration programmes**

**Beatrix Niemeyer**

### **12.1 Which lessons can be learnt from the Re-Integration project?**

The question of social integration of a growing number of young people who are in trouble with established transition routes from school to vocational training or work is of overall concern in the EU member states. The approaches to face this challenge are widespread, a variety of programs have been implemented to bridge the gap between general school and vocational education and work, to support young persons with troubled learning experiences and social disadvantage, to help them to re-engage in learning and training and to provide extra- opportunities where the mainstream is not broad enough. All these types of programs are highly differing in terms of duration, funding and pedagogical targets. They are interrelated to the respective historical, economic and political structures and the specific cultural concept of youth and education, which has emerged from these. The political and educational responsibility for re-integration programmes and moreover the pedagogical approach they promote are shaped by two main factors: the reigning welfare policy on the one hand and by the established mainstream routes of education, i. e. the system of vocational education and training before all on the other. The following table presents a model of the relation between the types of re-integration programs, the types of welfare systems and the types of VET systems.

During the Leonardo project *Re-Integration - Transnational Evaluation of social and professional re-integration programmes for young people* a partnership of researchers from Universities in Finland, Great Britain, Belgium, Portugal, Greece and Germany has in close contact with practitioners in the re-integration field engaged in a process of mutual research and learning. The aim of the project was to gain empirical evidence of the value of situated learning in learning communities centred on practice in making the support with transition from school to vocational education and training more successful from the individual's as well as from society's perspective. This included a series of follow up interviews with selected participants of the programs as well as expert discussions and a continuous process

of exchange of experiences and common reflection with practitioners who are active in the field of re-integration.

However, through the analysis of the diversity of the cases chosen for field research it became obvious, that this diversity presented different cultural concepts

- of youth,
- of education and training,
- of social welfare and in consequence different cultural concepts,
- of the idea of re-integration.

Welfare system and VET- structures reign on the way how alternative trajectories from school to VET and work are provided for young people who are at the risk of social exclusion. They influence the definition of disadvantages as well as the pedagogical approach of support programs. , so that the following typology of re-integration programs can be deducted (cf. Pohl/Walther and Evans/Niemeyer 2004).

Considering the four aspects

1. how the programs are generally situated in the landscape of education and labour
2. how programs are legitimised, which are the prevailing paradigms of disadvantages
3. what are the dominating expectations of youth and
4. how youth-unemployment is perceived the following types of programs can be distinguished:
  - programs aiming to open up alternative individual experiences and to broaden the mainstream pathway of schooling, building on the idea of individual personal development with high options for occupational choice to be achieved by general education;
  - measures aiming to compensate structural deficits and shortcomings of the apprenticeship market, ascribing individual deficits to participants and with long-term-effects on social participation because of the highly allocating function of the apprenticeship system;
  - workfare programs oriented towards the improvement of employability with a varying part of general and technical education, building on the paradigm of early economic independency leading to a comparably short period of youth;
  - extension of schooling and emphasis on work placement, programs aim to address the shortage of workplaces as well as a lack of training.

Based on the key results of the project a framework of suggestions for the improvement re-integration as it is espoused on the macro level of policy and planning (1), as it is enacted on the meso-level of institutes and programs (2) and as it is experienced on the micro-level of educational practice (3) has been developed and will be summed up in the following chapters.

| type of welfare state | principles of welfare policy and social security   | structure of VET system | responsibility  | risks or challenges  | perception of youth  | perception of youth unemployment   | approach of re-integration programs            | relation to education and training |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|------------------------------------|
| universalistic        | social protection as a citizenship right<br>Table 12.1: Typology of re-integration programs in relation to VET and welfare contexts in the participating countries | school based            | VET as part of the educational system with a general integrative approach | school-to-work transition<br>school weariness                        | personal development as civil right                                | paradoxon – not existing, because of youth participating in education not in labour market | broadening of individual alternatives          | broadening the mainstream          |
| employment based      | provision of social security strongly linked to gainful employment and work positions  | dual system             | shared responsibility between economy and education legislation           | high access thresholds<br>high drop-out rate<br>shortage of places   | preparation for social and vocation position (allocating function) | resulting from individual deficits in education and from individual social disadvantages   | compensate structural deficits                 | institutionalisation of parallels  |
| liberal               | free individual working in a flexible economy, high potential risk of social exclusion, social justice instead of social equality                                  | market based            | market driven   | little education for citizenship<br>risky transition                 | aiming at early economic independency                              | culture of dependency  | - improve employability                        | bridging function                  |
| de-institutionalised  | fragmented system of income guarantees related to work position<br>high importance of informal structures like families for social inclusion                       | strong non formal       |   | relatively little formal VET<br>lack of formal supporting structures | without clearly defined and accepted status                        | resulting from a lack of formal VET-structures and specific structures of labour market    | extension of schooling promoting job placement | introduction of formal structures  |

This model serves as an analytical framework for further transnational considerations, but it should be kept in mind that it presents an abstract typology and that in practice mixtures of all types are more likely to occur. Furthermore re-integration programmes aiming to support transition from school to vocational education and training are situated in a field of educational policy and practice that is in constant change and development.

The transcultural dimension of learning does not come to an end with the completion of a research project. It is in itself an ongoing practical process, that allows learning from each others experiences while it is avoiding simple copying as well as strict imposing of norms and structures without consideration of the context. As national integration practices are rooted in their typical cultural contexts this needs adequate identification and consideration, it's specific value shall be acknowledged. The recommendations for the improvement of programs therefore thoroughly

- consider these cultural differences
- meet practitioners needs and
- consider the national peculiarities of the educational and welfare policies approach.

The Leonardo-RE-Integration project was not only directed towards the improvement of re-integration programs with regard to their cultural context, but took as a decisive precondition for the improvement of quality the implementation of sustainable modes and methods of reflection – which finally lead to the development of the *QSED – quality through self-evaluation and development*, which is a tool for self-evaluation of practitioners and planners of re-integration programmes. The implementation of such an instrument for self-evaluation again has to be context-sensitive and cannot be recommended without regard for the cultural embeddings of evaluation. According to our studies the perception of evaluation ranges from control to improvement and the experiences are heterogeneous and based on diverging approaches. Based on the research completed during the Re-Integration project the following contexts of evaluation can be related with the elaborated typology:

Table 12.2: Typology including the contextualisation of evaluation

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| <b>type of welfare state</b>   | <b>structure of VET system</b> | <b>responsibility programmes</b>  | <b>perception of youth unemployment</b>  | <b>approach of re-integration programs</b>   | <b>context of evaluation</b>  |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| <b>universalistic</b>          | <b>school based</b>            | VET as part of the educational system with a general integrative approach | paradoxon – not existing, because of youth participating in education not in labour market | <b>broadening of individual alternatives</b>   | established culture of self-reflection, but little formal evaluation<br>tendency to adapt EU-evaluation approaches                      |
| <b>employment based</b>        | <b>dual system</b>             | shared responsibility between economy and education legislation           | resulting from individual deficits in education and from individual social disadvantages   | <b>compensate structural deficits</b>  | implementation of outcome oriented evaluation instruments in the social work practice<br>little experience with evaluation of schools   |
| <b>liberal</b>                 | <b>market based</b>            | market driven   | culture of dependency  | <b>- improve employability</b>   | tradition of outcome oriented measuring of hard indicators in the field of VET, which is not transferred to the Re-Integration practice |
| <b>under-institutionalised</b> | <b>strong non formal</b>       |   | resulting from a lack of formal VET-structures and specific structures of labour market    | <b>extension of schooling promoting job placement (Arbeitsbeschaffungsmaßnahmen)</b> | evaluation gaining importance in the context of accreditation of nonformal and informal achievements                                    |

Re-integration programs are situated in the interrelated three levels of policy and planning, the level of institutions and structures and the level of practice. Any reflection on the improvement of programs' quality therefore will refer to these three levels in a multidimensional perspective, which also includes the transcultural dimension as well in a context-sensitive way, as far as they adapt the transcultural conclusions to the specific cultural context and take into consideration national peculiarities.

## **12.2 CRIS – Collaboration, Reflexivity, Inclusiveness and Situated Pedagogy**

Based on the project's findings we recommend CRIS – Collaboration, Reflexivity, Inclusiveness and Situated Pedagogy - as a framework for multi-level and transcultural assessment of the quality of re-integration policies and practices. CRIS combines the double focus of the Re-Integration project, since it relates the improvement of learning processes in programs with the improvement of evaluation by stressing the impact of a collaborative framework and the importance of self-reflection.

For Re-Integration programmes addressing young people with a troubled transition from school to vocational education and training collaboration is a crucial issue in multiple respects. In view of the young persons participating in re-integration processes partner's experiences have shown that a diversity of learning contexts allowing meaningful and authentic work experiences are most adequate to rebuild the will to learn and to give evidence to the intention of social and vocational inclusion. In all of the partner countries re-integration activities combine learning arrangements and supporting activities of multiple institutions such like vocational schools, companies, social/youth services, counselling agencies etc. These programs usually are judged against their effects on youth unemployment rates. This approach however neglects educational effects which only become evident in subjective biographies. Therefore evaluation should be implemented as a continuous process of self-reflection on the policy as well as on the practice level. Evaluation is considered as a continuous process of improvement, which is in command of the acting practitioners: self-evaluation through common regular reflective procedures. Inclusiveness as an indicator for re-integration quality reminds of the general aim to open up perspectives and to provide pathways for *all* young persons to actively participate in the society and in vocational training. It presents an overall criterion against especially activities on the macro-level of policy and planning need to be judged. Situated pedagogy describes the overall educational approach which sees learning as a process of becoming, belonging, doing and understanding, thus integrating the four dimensions of identity, community, practice and meaning. this again implies a change in the perspective on learning, learners, teachers, trainers and



on learning contexts, which affects all levels of the educational system related to re-integration.

situated pedagogy

Table 12.3: Multidimensional transcultural framework of recommendations

| <div>inclusion<br/>collaboration<br/>reflexivity<br/>inclusiveness</div> | macro | meso | micro |
|--|-------|------|-------|
|  |       |      |       |
|  |       |      |       |
|  |       |      |       |
|  |       |      |       |

Table 12.3 combines the framework of CRIS with the multidimensional reference levels of the transnational analysis. In relation to this square-model for each of the four types of welfare/VET systems recommendations could be formulated as how to improve collaboration, reflexivity, inclusiveness and situated pedagogy on the micro, meso and macro-level of re-integration activities. However, not all aspects are of the same relevance in all of the countries. The following considerations therefore concentrate on those points which have been identified during the research and reflection process as being typical and relevant for the respective cultural context.

### 12.3 Collaboration

Since re-integration programs are no isolated islands but per se have a intermediating function and present trajectories from school to the labour market they build on collaborative networks of actors and institutions surrounding them, like general and vocational schools, counselling agencies, agents of social support, funding institutions, youth organisations, sports clubs etc. The idea of building networks of

interinstitutional collaboration has become very prominent. In the field of re-integration it is supposed to optimise the support at offer – for the young individuals who might profit from adjusted support plans and educational approaches as well as for the sponsors who are interested in placing financial support most effectively. Still collaboration in re-integration often suffers from the fact that the different institutions responsible for integrative programs fall under the legislacy and financial responsibility of different branches of government. Although they are addressing the same target group programmes can be ruled either by the ministry of education or the ministry of labour or the ministry of economy. On the institutional level collaboration is of importance since the variety of learning and training contexts which is needed to allow for a broad vocational orientation and preparation usually cannot be offered by one single institution and cannot be provided by one single person. Within institutes providing re-integration programmes persons from different professional backgrounds work together building a supportive framework for the young participants aiming at a holistic personality development process.

Collaboration therefore is a central issue, which is mentioned as a goal of improved re-integration activities and as a central indicator for programs' quality in many of the national re-integration regulations. We see collaboration as an essential element of learning communities centred on practice, which can be identified on all levels of re-integration activities and which altogether form the framework that allows for successful participation in learning, development and labour.

However, in practice as in theory collaboration often remains a distant aim. Regular structures for collaboration barely exist and communication tends to be difficult among the representatives of different political fields as well as among the actors from different institutional or different professional backgrounds.

## **12.4 Transcultural recommendations to improve collaboration**

### **1. on the macro level – to be espoused by policy and planning**

- On the policy level an attempt to improve re-integrative politics would include to develop strategies and policies of coordination between the different sectors holding the responsibility for this field of education, e. g. by introducing a standing committee. The aim should be a shared responsibility and this would imply to avoid the installation of competing programs, as it has been the case in the countries with a liberal and also in those with an employment based VET system.
- Social actors should participate actively in the design of Re-integration measures
- There must be open communication channels between educational and economic systems.
- Planning and calculation should acknowledge the fact that successful collaboration needs adequate resources and time for communication and development.

### **2. on the meso level – to be enacted by institutes and programs**

- The gap between general education and vocational education can be reduced by promoting a closer collaboration of institutes on this level. This includes a closer collaboration between general schools and any institution providing vocational education and training.
- It should be possible to allow participants a flexible transition from school to programs and back, which presupposes a constant flow of communication between these institutes and a shared responsibility as well as a basic agreement of the educational aims of the practitioners. This is a general aim for all countries in the project, but needs special emphasis in countries with a weak or little institutionalised VET-system.
- In countries with a strong school component of vocational education and training, the Nordic countries as well as Germany with its strong formal structures and in-built hurdles collaboration between schools and out-of-school- institutes should be encouraged in order to open up broader options of choice and to adjust supportive approaches to individual participants' demands.
- Successful approaches are very much dependent on local networks and coordinated actions. In the southern countries with an economy strongly shaped by SMEs and self-employment coordinating local actions also means to open communication channels between education and economy.

### **3. on the micro-level of educational practice**

- Practitioners can profit from cross-professional collaboration in developing a common body of experience knowledge. This presupposes a systematical, continuous and structured process of collaboration instead of occasional meetings depending on the private engagement of some key actors.

## 12.5 Reflexivity

The establishment of a culture of self-reflection aims at giving all actors in the field of re-integration – young participants, trainers, teachers, youth workers, as well as planners and politicians - a feed back on what are the effects of their actions. Systematic self reflection is a valid means for the improvement of educational processes, and the extent to which pedagogical actions are subject to reflective meetings of professionals is an important quality indicator. Self-reflection can be conceived as a means of self-evaluation, however, there is no unique way to perform it and the methods applied must be sensitive to subjective needs and fears. But there is an overall need for structures and methods which allow to make self-reflection a regular part of pedagogical practice. A major presupposition to this is to put the implementation of evaluation processes and the development of adequate methods as well as the agreement on criteria into the hand of the actors concerned. Methods need to be developed so that they do not add more work or detached administrative tasks, but rather can be integrated into the routine of a learning community in practice.

On the macro-level reflexivity also means to address general problems related to re-integration and discuss the social dimension and long term strategies. this also includes to care for relevant data, to promote research projects and to keep up the dialogue between policy, research and practice.

In the transcultural perspective the general importance of self-reflexive processes needs diversification to meet the diverse cultural settings of re-integration practices. While in countries with a strongly structured VET-system the emphasis of reflection is rather on an internal perspective aiming to value the educational work of the practitioners, in countries with less institutionalised VET structures reflection as part of evaluation also has an important legitimising function for the general acknowledgement of the educational field of VET and re-integration.

## **12.6 Transcultural recommendations to enhance a continuous process of reflection**

### **1. on the macro level – to be espoused by policy and planning**

- The effects of integration policies, hard and soft outcomes, should be regularly assessed by adequate means and reflected in meetings of the collaborative network of actors, e. g. a standing committee.
- In countries with an employment-based social security system (Germany) so far the key indicator for re-integration quality has been the success rate of transition into VET or gainful employment. Considering the limited number of training places this perspective should be broadened – other criteria including the development of biographical competences and the ability to manage one's own biography through periods of unemployment need to be acknowledged, too.
- The perspective on countries with a liberal welfare system and a market led VET- system points to the general contradiction between the two policy approaches which aim at the empowerment of the individuals to manage their biography while at the same time chances to do so in a “normal” way are constantly reduced by a limited job market, short term employment and being unemployed or dependent on social benefits is stigmatised. Actors in the field of re-integration should be aware of how this basic contradiction affects their actions and decisions.
- while VET as well as Re-integration structures are still fragile in Greece and Portugal reflexivity also is of high importance on the policy level, responsible for planning and establishing sustainable structures for social and vocational integration of the young generation. In this context also hard indicators matter, e. g. the social costs of exclusion.

### **2. on the meso level – to be enacted by institutes and programs**

- In the Nordic countries evaluation is perceived by practitioners very critically, there is a dominant fear of control and power abuse connected to procedures of evaluation. In this context it will be important to strengthen evaluation approaches which lead to a growing self-awareness and improvement of practitioners and which promote self-reflexivity as integral part of practice, e. g. in a protected team environment. The fear of control should not be neglected and the related power mechanisms need to be deconstructed.
- Structures and procedures of reflexive processes should be implemented in a way that they take the actors as experts for their situation and do not impose norms and control. Practitioners should stay in command of their experiences and knowledge and reflective meetings should allow them to grow a common body of know-how, i. e. of professional re-integration knowledge.
- This presupposes the provision with adequate resources, in terms of time, financial support and expertise.
- While in the field of social work in those countries with a strong structured vocational system after initial criticism evaluation has become “normal”, it

still remains important to work towards the acknowledgement of integration achievements, which are not measurable, e. g. the development of biographical competences to cope with severe social problems. Qualitative indicators and soft outcomes are often underestimated and need to be systematically valued.

- While there is a long experience with measuring hard outcomes and technical assessment procedures in the UK, in many re-integration programs leisure activities and youth work are an important factor. Self-reflection of participants and trainers / teachers in this field needs to be further developed. The paradigm of the independent individual has led to a rather functional but complex feed-back for learners, from the practitioners side however educational processes should be better valued.
- In the southern countries emphasis is put on the raising of awareness for the learning environment in communities of practice. This includes to develop an understanding of local needs as well as stimulating young people's economic impact as contributors.

### **3. on the micro-level of educational practice**

- Reflexive procedures of self-evaluation should value and reward competences required for affective teaching of this target group.
- Pedagogical evaluation as a crucial element for the improvement of vocational measures means the support and the development of appropriate VET in order to meet the local market needs – especially in the southern countries.
- The success of the projects can be evaluated by the attendance of trainees/or students. This is a criterion of inclusiveness. Not only teachers and trainers but also participants need to have a voice in reflective meetings!

## **12.7 Inclusiveness**

Re-Integration of young people who are in trouble with transition from school to vocational education and training can be perceived as a structural problem, which is indicating barriers, hurdles or holes in the established mainstream pathways. To ask about inclusiveness transcends the predominating perspective on individual deficits of the young and asks for the reasons of drop-out and how it could be prevented.

While programs so far mainly have been valued from a single perspective with the focus being on hard outcomes such as placement or funding rates the transcultural perspective highlights the importance of educational support for a holistic personality development and a sustainable social integration. The criteria of inclusion leads to a thorough re-definition of pedagogical quality. As has been explained in the context of collaboration and reflexivity this starts with the co-ordination of the policy fields

concerned. In the context of re-integration programs it could aim at an integration of social and vocational learning approaches leading to a joint further development of methods, didactics and supportive frameworks.

This includes in practice: the implementation of a situated learning approach as it has been elaborated in the re-enter context and is expressed in the criteria of the QSED; in planning: establish training or further training for practitioners, valuing the educational perspective of training and aiming at an integration of social and vocational approaches and in policies: value soft outcomes, provision of pathways, which open up perspectives.

## **12.8 Transcultural recommendations to improve inclusiveness**

### **1. on the macro level – to be espoused by policy and planning**

- Since drop-out is a general problem for all countries it is of importance to provide stable funding, that allows for secured supportive structures.
- In systems of vocational education and training which strongly depend on the labour market – liberal and/or less institutionalized – it is important that the occupational orientation in the programs matches the needs of the local or regional labour market. Policy makers should take into account regional and or national contexts in order to meet the regional/national needs of the labour market.
- Structures change in a slow way since innovative ideas and initiatives are not sufficient to respond to the social demands for a better social cohesion and jobs for all. Therefore the southern countries claim that re-integration schemes should be designed according to the labour market demands on the one side. That means that occupations which are highly demanded from the labour market should receive special support and promotion in Reintegration schemes.
- Especially in countries with a strongly structured Vet system there is an inherent risk of dropping out because of the in-built hurdles: entrance standards and tests are limiting access, examinations determine further progress into employment, etc. To improve the inclusiveness presupposes more flexibility on the macro- level. The establishing of ever more and different types of integration programs rather results in further segregation and does not improve the inclusiveness of the educational system.
- Guidance and counselling is seen as a key element for a successful transition from school to training and working life, which needs to be further elaborated and diversified in a professional way.
- In the Nordic countries the perspective on education as a citizenship right signifies a real inclusive approach – however after compulsory education



there remains a high risk of unemployment. At this threshold guidance and counselling as well as additional support are demanded.

## **2. on the meso level – to be enacted by institutes and programs**

- In the Nordic countries as well as in the UK and in Belgium and Germany aftercare is important, since living conditions are influencing further development after programs, and support needs to be provided not only in finding a job or apprenticeship at the end of the program but also in staying in the job. This aspect might be less relevant for the southern countries where family structures still are an important part of the social network providing both individual support and interim solutions in times of unemployment.
- Another aspect of general importance to avoid drop out of young persons on their school to VET trajectories is to create closer links between schools (general and vocational) and economy. School based programs should aim to provide more authentic work experience and thereby close the gap between the school and the working world. To learn more about each other and to communicate could help to bridge the gap which is still existing in all countries, although it might be a bit smaller in the market led VET system.

## **3. on the micro-level of educational practice**

- In all countries it is evident that there will be no one-fits-all-solution, since the target groups are very heterogeneous. They may range from persons with severe learning disabilities or those from a migrant family background with “only” language difficulties and others with various kinds of social disadvantages. Resulting from this heterogeneity is the outstanding importance that programs’ aims match participants needs and competences. Therefore procedures of intake diagnosis including a holistic competence assessment need to be elaborated. Individual support plans and career steps are to be elaborated and vocational orientation should match the job market as well as participants’ abilities and interests.
- In countries with a strong formal vocational training the focus of integration programs should shift on personality development to reduce the effect of social allocation. E. g. cultural and sports activities could be systematically offered.
- Where there is still a strong tradition of informal learning this offers good opportunities for young people who have difficulties in formal settings of teaching and training. It is often small enterprises where these young people can start to become more and more engaged. A still rather strong culture of self-employment, especially in the countryside, will also often provide much family support, that is “parenting” in the sense of surroundings which are safe, but also normative and disciplining, possibly sometimes with too little tolerance for non-traditional behaviour which is typical for the target group. But with the perspective on the southern countries with their strong role of the family in social support to improve social inclusion could also mean to allow for economic and social independency.
- Further related to the issue of inclusiveness is the question how programs are linked to the mainstream and how they fit into the respective general system of VET. To improve inclusiveness for the participants’ perspective means to



avoid revolving doors and to care for progress in a career instead. With the perspective on Germany this means that it is important that re-integration projects provide the participants with certificates on learning progress valid for further VET. small steps of progress should be acknowledged, modular programs should be offered.

## 12.9 Situated Learning

Situated learning essentially builds on providing learning contexts that allow for legitimate participation of learners in a community centred on practice. This implies that learners are enabled to perceive their activities as meaningful and to identify themselves as important participants belonging to a community engaged in a useful process of action. On the micro-level the essentials for this goal are to allow for practical action, the understanding of its meaning and for the presentation and valuing of its results. A well situated learning environment allows a participant

- to fulfil a work task by him/herself or together with the community of co-learners
- to work on something that makes sense to him/her
- to present the results of the work process to the community and have their feedback on it.

Learning which is understood as continuous social process can thus be well situated practically, but also needs to be well situated socially and culturally (Hoffmann 2004). Socially well situated learning happens in a supportive and motivating context built by teachers, trainers or other experts and enhances self-responsible development of learners. culturally well situated learning is supported by a structural framework in which the relevant actors on all levels – practice, planning, decision making – define themselves as significant members of a learning community centred on practice. On the meso level this requires teachers and trainers who are prepared to allow this type of experiences, which presupposes a revision of the roles and functions they hold in the of learning arrangement as well as a revision of the methodologies applied.

## **12.10 Transcultural recommendations to enhance situated learning**

### **1. on the macro level – to be espoused by policy and planning**

- The overall perspective on learning as an ongoing social process changes the view on education and re-integration as a whole. It affects the established learning institutions as well as the teaching cultures.
- In countries with a strong school based VET system situated learning challenges the established institutional barriers. Re-integration activities are to provide more authentic working experience and reduce the impact of classroom learning.
- In countries with a strong non formal VET system and little institutionalised VET learning seems to be closer situated in communities centred on practice. However competence assessment and acknowledgement of informal learning need to be further developed.
- Furthermore educational policy could aim to develop training provisions and improve training programs especially, but not only in those countries with less developed systems of vocational education and training.

### **2. on the meso level – to be enacted by institutes and programs**

- Before all further training programs need to be implemented which promote the changed role of teachers and trainers as counsellors. Training should focus to change the perspective on the young participants of the programs to see them as “experts-to-be” and to allow them to take on the responsibility for their learning success, which again presupposes the individual (re-)definition of success criteria.

### **3. on the micro-level of educational practice**

- There must be balance between vocational and individual qualifications
- In a general perspective it will be important to strengthen learners’ self-responsibility, to „discover“ them as personalities and also to accept unusual solutions. Since very often social problems are inhibiting learning success it will be of importance to value the social conditions and the individual coping strategies, which includes to identify social problems as learning/support aims and to take them serious, to encourage the learners and to enable them to grow up.
- Especially in countries where certificates and examinations are crucial entrance attributes to the labour market it is of importance to value also small steps and to encourage by documenting success instead of failure.
- Situated approaches of learning essentially build on action orientation, they make learning productive. Learning is embedded in a working environment. The usability of the outcomes secures trainees to continue the vocational curriculum and to become more responsible. The participation of the trainees in planning, performing and controlling/evaluating of work is essential.

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