



EUROPEAN SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN EDUCATION

Working Group "Quality in Education"

Meeting 20 September 2011

Minutes

Chair: Hans Laugesen (DK; ETUCE)

1. The Chair welcomed colleagues to the third meeting of the working group. The minutes of the second meeting had been circulated beforehand.
2. Charles Nolda introduced the draft report of the working group, which was based on the structure proposed by the Chair at the second meeting. He drew attention to the five necessary characteristics of a viable process of evaluation (clarity; inclusivity; simplicity; consistency; and stability) and emphasised the need to identify added value and the trend in some countries towards self-evaluation, moving from a compliance (or accountability) model to an assistance (or improvement) model. He outlined some basic lessons to follow from experience elsewhere in the introduction of new systems, such as the involvement of stakeholders, including trade unions, in the design of new systems, the need for training and adequate finance, and the willingness to make adjustments in the light of experience.
3. A general discussion followed, opened by remarks by the Chair that nobody was calling for a European system of evaluation, but identifying some guiding principles at European level could be useful at national level. Other points made included the following:
 - It is difficult to consider this issue in some countries except in the context of the financial crisis and the pressures that had created to reduce public expenditure, including in education.
 - A letter from Themis Kotsifakis from the Greek union OLME (who had not been able to attend the meeting) was read out and is appended to these minutes.
 - Evaluation appeared in the context of the crisis to be a political tool focussed on efficiency and profit; nevertheless the draft report seemed to be neutral and thus a basis for social dialogue.
 - Education cuts imposed from outside in Portugal had led to increases in class sizes, with an adverse impact on quality.

- In Denmark, where the recent general election had brought the social democrats back to power with a mandate to increase expenditure on front-line education, the social partners still needed to demonstrate that public money is spent in the best way. Indeed a 25% reduction in the number of Education Ministry civil servants placed more responsibility for policy making on the social partners.
- In Spain and Italy, the picture was bleaker, with cuts being made, despite previous contracts in some cases; representatives of the employers in Italy and the education ministry in Spain expressed sympathy with the remarks of their trade union counterparts.
- In Cyprus, the policy of the ministry is to try to maintain or improve quality despite having fewer resources by reforming the system, principally by delegating more responsibility to school level.

The Chair summed up by saying that however difficult it is to focus in the current climate on evaluation as a means of improving quality it was necessary to do so. He therefore concluded, based on the discussion that, while perhaps there should be more emphasis in the report on the need to identify added value, it should go forward to the ESSDE meeting on 25 October as the recommendation of the Working Group.

4. Bruno Emans then made a powerpoint presentation of the new system of self-evaluation introduced for secondary schools in the Netherlands (see [annex](#)). This provided each school with a template for their own evaluation of their performance based on 20 common indicators for which every school had to account. The results of this new system were: 1) reduced workload; 2) sharper focus on the indicators that matter most; 3) more objectivity and therefore trust and reliability; and 4) shared feeling of ownership.
5. The meeting paused for lunch.
6. Charles Nolda explained the project proposal EFEE had made for an in-depth study in three countries (including the Netherlands and Cyprus) of self-evaluation systems. While the initial project bid had not been accepted by the Commission for technical financial reasons, EFEE were confident that a revised bid to be submitted in the spring of 2012 would be successful and that the project could be completed next year. ETUCE is invited to participate in the project.
7. Ioannis Savvides then made a powerpoint presentation of the proposed new arrangements for evaluation in Cyprus (see [annex](#)). These will cover both primary and secondary schools and were based on the principle of schools setting their own annual objectives and reporting to the Ministry on performance in relation to those objectives. Some of the existing school inspectors would become pedagogical advisors to assist schools. He stressed that in the event of a school not meeting its objectives, the consequence would not be in the form of “sanctions” but more support from the centre.
8. The final presentation (see [annex](#)) was by Hans Laugesen and this related to upper secondary schools in Denmark, where the system is similar to that in the Netherlands (although the number of common indicators in Denmark is 18 rather than 20). The Danish system is based on a simple legal requirement that each school’s website must publish the annual goals and a self-evaluation

of last year's achievements against last year's goals. Also schools have to publish their resource accounts and mandatory user satisfaction surveys. These do not identify individual teachers.

9. In the several questions put to the three presenters, one particularly notable question came from the ETUCE representative from France, in the context of a criticism of the French system that the contribution of the team (as opposed to the principal) appears to be ignored. His question was "Isn't there a connection between school autonomy and the effectiveness of self-evaluation?"
10. Other members of the working group briefly explained their national situations. Some have no self-evaluation systems; others are debating this issue; and in Germany because of the size, diversity and decentralisation of the country it is almost impossible to generalise on this matter.
11. After a full discussion in which most contributed, the Chair closed the meeting by thanking all concerned for their work and confirming that the report would go forward to the ESSDE meeting on 25 October as the Working group's recommendation.

Annexes

- Presentation "Framework for Responsibility" (NL)
- Presentation "School self-evaluation in Cyprus"
- Presentation "Self-evaluation in Upper Secondary School in Denmark"

Appendix

Letter from Themis Kotsifakis, OLME, Greece

"As I have pointed out in our last meeting our belief is that when we are talking about quality in education we should deal with a series of factors affecting it before we reach the evaluation stage.

The factors affecting the quality of education are as follows:

- *Public expenditure on education;*
- *School infrastructure (buildings, logistics, etc.);*
- *Human resources, that is schoolteachers and specialists involved in the teaching process, as well as their education and continuous training;*
- *The social conditions within which schools are functioning.*

However, the teaching process is not neutral. It is influenced by policies implemented by the national governments and the EU. In particular, nowadays under the pretext of the financial crisis an unprecedented attack is being evolved against free, public education and against teachers. The public character of education is damaged and the teachers' industrial relations are being wiped out. There is an attempt to relate our salaries to performance and subjugate education to the market. The pedagogical freedom of teachers is subject to a central ideological control being imposed through personal assessment –guidance."

Annex: List of participants 25/10/2012

Workers	Country	Name	First name	Organisation
1	CY	Savva	Stefanos	OLTEK
2	DE	Hocke	Norbert	GEW
3	DK	Laugesen	Hans	GL
4	EE	Parkel	Vaike	EEPU
5	ES	Redero	Antonio	FETE UGT
6	FR	Ritzenthaler	Albert	SGEN-CFDT
7	IT	Dal Pino	Maria Lucia	CISL-S
8	LU	Ries	Claude	SNE
9	PT	Braganca	Maria Arminda	FNE
10	SI	Modrijan	Sandi	ESTUS
11	EU	Klitzing	Horst Günther	CESI
Employers	Country	Name	First name	Organisation
1	CY	Savvides	Ioannis	Ministry of Education and Culture
2	ES	Boscá Vidal	Joana	General Direction of VET
3	IT	Pontieri	Maria	ARAN
4	NL	Emans	Bruno	VO-Raad
5	EU	Nolda	Charles	EFEE