



## **Working Group 1 – Quality in Education**

*Meeting 8 November 2010*

*Minutes*

Chair: Hans Laugesen (ETUCE)

### **Background**

An orientation paper was prepared for the working group by the ETUCE and EFEE secretariats following earlier discussion in the ESSDE Steering Committee on 28 October (see **annex**). The paper aims to support the working group by clarifying issues and methodology. After three meetings in a period of a year, the WG will aim to present a proposal of action to the ESSDE plenary.

The WG based their discussion on the orientation paper's proposal that the focus of their work should be **the culture of evaluation**.

### **Opening remarks**

Bianka Stege for EFEE remarked on the diversity of the employers, representing both ministries of education and associations of local/regional employers resulting in a heterogeneity of interests and perspectives. She indicated that in a preliminary discussion the EFEE participants in the WG had expressed the view that the WG should discuss evaluation in relation both to individuals and to institutions.

Martin Romer for ETUCE warned against the WG trying to identify so-called best practice models but instead to focus on defining the basic principles that evaluation systems should be based on. What are the requirements that lead to a culture of evaluation that is accepted by all concerned? The expression "culture of evaluation" was, he pointed out, one used by the Commission and for him it meant individuals and institutions asking themselves what are we doing and is it working?

The Chair added that, in a time of economic difficulty, Ministers of Education are dealing with cutbacks and need comparative information to justify investment levels: in this context, it is important to be able to demonstrate a culture of evaluation within education.

## General discussion

Over the remainder of the meeting both before and after lunch most members of the WG spoke, making a variety of points including the following:

- The need for evaluation is not peculiar to education; it applies to all workplaces, although there are of course specific issues in education, such as the relative difficulty of deciding on the criteria of success. Nonetheless, practice in other sectors could be helpful to the WG.
- It is impossible to ignore the experience of the past if we are to avoid some of the mistakes that have been made before, in particular in imposing schemes “top-down”.
- How to give constructive feedback in evaluation is an issue which needs particular attention.
- We need to start by defining shared principles. For whom is inspection undertaken and for what purpose? Is it to improve the quality of education?
- Assessments must be objective. We must look not just at school results in terms of what students learn but also at the efficiency of the process.
- What results from evaluation/inspection should stay internal and what should be published?
- When it comes to the involvement of pupils and parents in evaluation, there are clearly different points of view and a distinction may need to be drawn between involvement in the design of evaluation schemes and their detailed application to individual members of staff in an institution.
- Many commented on the need to avoid bureaucratic systems while acknowledging that sometimes the desire to be fair and objective was the origin of complexity. “We want a system that doesn’t waste our time and actually helps us to improve”.
- The whole system should be looked at, both “bottom-up” and “top-down”.
- A “critical friend” as opposed to a government inspector can be a useful way of bringing outside objectivity into the process in a way that has the support of all stakeholders.
- Room for manoeuvre is needed in systems of evaluation so that they can be adjusted according to local circumstances, or even designed locally rather than centrally.
- Individuals and institutions should be allowed to fail so long as they show willingness to learn from failure: in other words, evaluation processes should not inhibit experimentation and creativity.
- Fair rules are needed for the use of evaluation outcomes; this goes beyond a simple call for “transparency”.
- Evaluation should be a continuous process rather than a series of infrequent snapshots.
- The working group should have access to an overview of the available research on the issue.

## Conclusion

In summing up the meeting, the Chair stated that the EFEE and ETUCE secretariats would work on three issues before the next meeting:

- 1. A short paper on roles and responsibilities of the different types of stakeholders in the evaluation process.*
- 2. A short list of questions (no more than a page) for individual countries to answer before the next meeting concerning their experiences and concerns in relation to evaluation.*
- 3. A list of principles for evaluation systems, taking into account the discussion at the first meeting.*

The first priority would be the second item in order to give colleagues time to reflect before returning their answers to the secretariats before the next meeting.

Those present were asked to inform their respective secretariat of any national developments in relation to evaluation that might be of wider interest.

It was noted that the next meetings of the WG would (probably) be on 21 March and 20 September.

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## Annexes

- Orientation paper (EN and FR)
- List of references

Lists of participants 08/11/2010

<b>Workers</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
1	CY	Savva	Stefanos	OLTEK
2	CZ	La Sala	Zdenka	CMOS
3	DE	Schwiegershausen-Güth	Maya	ver.di
4	DK	Laugesen	Hans	GL
5	ES	Redero Bellido	Antonio	FETE UGT
6	FI	Koivisto	Merja	OAJ
7	FR	Kuntz	Bernard	CSEN
8	FR	Ritzenthaler	Albert	SGEN-CFDT
9	IT	Dal Pino	Maria Lucia	CISL-S
10	LU	Ries	Claude	SNE
11	PL	Obidniak	Dorota	ZNP
12	PT	Braganca	Maria Arminda	FNE
13	SI	Modrijan	Sandi	ESTUS
14	EU	Le Bodic	Anne-Claire	CESI
15	EU	Romer	Martin	ETUCE

<b>Employers</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
1	CY	Savvides	Ioannis	Ministry of education and culture
2	IT	Pontieri	Maria	ARAN
3	LV	Ratniece	Dace	Ministry of education and Science
4	ES	Boscá Vidal	Joana	General Direction of VET
5	SE	Stävberg	Henrik	SALAR
6	UK	Inett	Andy	NEOST/LGE
7	EU	Nolda	Charles	EFEE
8	EU	Stege	Bianka	EFEE