

Cooperation with stakeholders / network / implementation of the validation system by initiating a recognition of our system

As at October 2015

- 1. From "stakeholder strategy" to "stakeholder outreach work"**
- 2. Significant findings of the "stakeholder outreach work"**
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1. From "stakeholder strategy" to "stakeholder outreach work"

The formation of a strong strategic stakeholder partnership is one of the fundamental challenges in the framework of the conCert-project.

ConCert developed an overall strategy for stakeholder involvement plus the accompanying instruments, which are disseminated and perpetuated in the partnership. An important aspect the conCert partners had originally planned to implement the ongoing results into the strategy and forward them to the stakeholders. Thus, the interests of the different stakeholders could be taken into account individually to create a narrow, synallagmatic and synergetic process.

The close participation and implementation structure was supposed to support that the project results go into the next steps, inter alia, of the recognizing bodies in Germany.

Before the start of the project, we conducted discussions with stakeholders who considered / aspired cooperation. In the framework of the discussions with the stakeholders so far, however, attitudes / beliefs and expectations have emerged, which were not 100% foreseeable. External stakeholders have partially changed their position during the project and supra-regional stakeholders, however, have taken very clear positions against the project (e.g. ZDH, DIHK). Furthermore, the stakeholders have also clearly signaled that they want to grant access to vocational training.

Previous experience until about Sept. 2014 showed that our efforts were much more time consuming than planned: A full implementation of the stakeholder strategy was

up to this point not yet succeeded. This reflected, inter alia, in the organization and implementation of the planned series of so-called "thematic meetings", which were planned as a core element. Due to lack of registrations, they could not be undertaken.

The concert partners have intensively discussed how alternative forms of participation for cooperation with the external stakeholders might look like. Accordingly, planned forms of participation have been extensively revised (This happened mainly at the conCert partner meeting in Berlin in November 2014).

Firstly, the potential for optimization of the existing mode of cooperation with respect to the stakeholder strategy is considered (partners among each other).

Secondly, we will also analyze, assess and implement new forms of cooperation with the external parties.

The stakeholder strategy was transformed into "stakeholder outreach work" in order to create closer contacts and adhere the stakeholders more to the conCert cause.

One consideration was, for example, to operate "outreach" stakeholder work, because close and continuous personal contact seemed necessary to adhere the external parties to conCert and further to make them make things move in direction of the desired action changes.

The experiences so far with the complex conCert-topic show that the achievement of a substantive, emotional and continuous working relationship, inter alia, required more targeted and tailored communication, more business travel, more emotional bond etc..

Among other, the NA-BIBB journal on non-formal and informal learning (11/2014) was used to contact the relevant stakeholders in the validation discussion personally – next to the previously acquired stakeholders.

conCert is now working with the updated strategy in order overcome the weak real support from the stakeholders by calling on them. Bilateral conversations and discussion made it possible to obtain necessary information and references. This supported us to achieve a maximum systemic relevance.

2. Significant findings of the "stakeholder outreach work"

During the conversations with the stakeholders, it was overall very clearly expressed that the sinecures are "staked out" in this area. The conCert partners detected significantly different resistances as e.g. some kind of lack of interest from the external partners which that showed great interest in the topic in advance and had offered support in terms of dissemination, project presentations, articles or other. The conCert partners also do not understand why they were not asked to contribute an article in the NA-BIBB journal for non-formal and informal learning (11/2014).

It seemed like the BIBB, despite previous assurances to the contrary, had no great interest in a cooperation (see also the reactions of Mrs. Munchausen and her request for reimbursement of travel expenses).

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Overview and excerpts from reports to a selection of important exchanges with stakeholders as part of the stakeholder outreach strategy

December 2014, Berlin

Meeting with Dr. Knut Dieckmann, Head of Unit, Basic Policy Issues of Further Education, DIHK

- *JL: explains Swiss model; requirement criteria for experts; we only know the private-law Swiss model;*
- *We do not know how the other projects in this area are compatible with our project;*
- *DIHK: since 20 years exists fundamental research on this issue and the BIBB has a long tradition of research here (Frank); this research is mainly about updating of project practice;*
- *The "study group (AG)" (Haug / Hess) has met three times (Dieckmann is a participant); participating are also the social partners, ISS, DIE, Ministry of Health, FBB etc. . → the BMBF wants to fulfill the mandate of the EU Council - the chambers therefore CAN NOT be ignored;*

- There is also a frayed "project landscape";
- our project comes at a very unfortunate time – it should not be worked with "free-floating" projects – the BIBB was probably blind to launch such a project (only 2 out of 10 BIBB-funded projects make it into the mainstream);
- External examination: look for the requirements the individual brings → DIHK-guide, "quality check" to the individual, then admission to the examination, validation in little
- "No one waits for what we are working for in the conCERT project! "
- DIE: Mr. Schrader / Mr. Brandtner → are funded by the BMBF
- Craft has benefited from prototyping;
- BQFG says: "bind equivalence procedure to reference profession" - but there are many unregulated fields;
- The market will regulate (see Witt: in the regulatory sphere, there is no demand) - where is the market? - In the other areas a market is possible ("starting point for the recruitment of the future");
- Dieckmann calls it the myth of "validation" - we do aa supply orientation, but there should be a demand-led approach; he does not see a need in this area; he does not believe that we can compete in the market → we should look where the needs are (occupational fields) and speak with DIE;
- *JL: there is great need in adult education and continuing education - but who wants to pay for it?* Dieckmann: Reprogramming, another type of formatting, e.g. in the online sector, competency profiles for adult educators in 10-15 years (since there would then a unique selling point); Online test - many personality traits prior to professionalism; we should match our work with the compendium of Mrs. Munchhausen;
- Dieckmann speaks of "adaptive learning" as the learning of the future - the pedagogues will disappear in the long term; (where is the action orientation?)
- Comment on the DGB: Patuzzi has no relation to the non-formal / informal learning and comes from Bavaria; the BDA will sing the song of songs of competence assessment for us;
- We should look at why the other projects have failed.
- *KW asks for other ministries involved:* BMAS has promoted (lack of readiness for training), BA: Job Profiling (psychological background); School education – Bundesländer / Federal Countries: Potential Consulting as a new instrument; "Profile Pass" – what is the use of this work - it is less relevant for the labor the market;

- Dieckmann advises us: talk to DIE; EPALE will also venture into this area
- For validation we should necessarily make a needs analysis; for which objectives and professional group are we doing this (e.g. it would make great sense to validate people like Dr. Dieckmann - target groups are not the disadvantaged);
- systems to avoid faulty settings are interesting (*natural* target groups are nonsense);
- Where is the need of companies to hire disadvantaged people (Dieckmann: there is no need);
- To what extent do companies ask such questions, what to do with those people (socio-political question)?

Meeting on 19. December 2014 in Berlin with Mrs. Daike Witt, ZDH - German Confederation of Crafts

Essential aspects and statements by Mrs. Witt:

- Order to the Member States;
- in Germany, there are already a lot of components which we do not call like that - as the main element Mrs. Witt refers to the external examination (conCerte: external examination is just one way - we say we can do it without external examination);
- BMBF "AG (study group)": it exists since two years, she was twice there; the theme is "billowing shapeless through the landscape"; also the responsible bodies and universities take part; ZDH is more a responsible body of formal education;
- ZDH asked the fundamental question, "Who makes use of it" and interprets it that EU means it in an employment market sense; where is the benefit of validation (in case of doubt you will employ the person who is able to do it)?
→ larger companies can do it themselves, the smaller ones not - on the other hand, the smaller enterprises are flexible and favor e.g. "trial work";
- *objection JL: there were different interests - in our model you don't need to go to the test; in addition, we push a bow wave of long term unemployed ahead of us;*
- ZDH has developed the Recognition Act for migrants ("Prototyping"); this is an adequate instrument to continue (reference to the reference profession); advocates the use of prototyping;
- Switzerland has a high amount of documentation in the procedure; the dossier process is too difficult for the disadvantaged - here trial work would be easier (but e.g. in the commercial sector it makes sense);
- many methods already exist, but nothing new, because there were not so many ways - prototyping covers already a lot;
- *JL: (the guidance to) self-evaluation is the focus – we also would qualify after we have recognized gaps;*
- ZDH: the ZDH want to know about the recognition procedure, if the person can do it- it is about the certification of equivalence - the issuing of the same certificate is wrong!
- (FBB-AG; Seidl, education passport; VHS, Hesse-Thiele);

- *JL: explains along the conCert model, that the consultants have to be highly qualified; counseling could possibly take place outside - the quality should be so high that it cannot be done by just anybody (certification);*
- ZdH: OK, but you should not open a new certification market - but she agrees that you need good filters installed here - this is a mandatory component for the ZdH - , this cannot run without qualification analysis;
- That can be different concerning informal learning - depending on how the documenting goes (question for her is always: "Is it useful for the enterprises?") - They make a strong distinction between self- and external assessment;
- .. and ZdH is the best institution that makes this external assessment, as they represent the company practice; the process is also a relief for smaller businesses;
- This point had also been discussed with the BMBF - ZdH can therefore not "participate", because they are partners of the BMBF; they do not want the costly dossier creation in crafts;
- A more exciting question would be: Who would come at all - the number was too small (who is specifically interested in the craft?)
- The target group needs an incredible amount of support - the formation problem is at the end of the chain;
- conCert: for us interest in partial qualification - ZdH: what is the use of partial qualification (the companies do not long for it)? In craft mainly fully qualified are needed; ZdH will not support aspects craft doesn't want;
- But: for the qualification process itself it is certainly beneficial to provide a sense of achievement through "parts of"; for the group that did not make it, partial qualifications important;
- ZdH wants methods that allow a comparative analysis;
- ZdH wants by no means a "equal certificate";
- modularization: ZdH does not believe in modularization; in vocational education, there are so many individual occupations that standardized modules are difficult; Mrs. Witt thinks "learning process" is the best way
- Conclusion: examination and equivalence are the essential points on which we disagree;
- Mrs. Witt likes to remain in contact with us. The work place tutor is irrelevant for her. ZDH battles" for the formal structures -according to its objectives she must always anchor in the formal sector. She finds our approaches very

interesting for the education and training field. She advocates for validation where you need it (e.g. health professionals). One should possibly think "away from recognition". The issue has a total of so many facets.

Meeting on 9 Dec. in Berlin with Mr. Mario Patuzzi, Head of Basic Policy Issues of Vocational Education & Training, Department of Education Policy and Educational Work, DGB Federal Executive

Essential aspects and statements by Mr. Patuzzi:

- the Chamber of Commerce has a quality problem; the quality issues of specialized staff are an important aspect of the DGB; for approval and certification own rules and regulation are necessary;
- all in all the DGB has very different opinions due to the diversity of sectors and their very different objectives; the industry e.g. is more interested in the topic "equivalence assessment", however, the teachers' union more in the topic "competence assessment";
BUT: concerning the procedure, there is mutual consent;
- the union wants in particular quality assurance and a discussion on non-formal and informal learning per se;
- the DGB has worked a lot on the subject DQR (Peter Deubesquel ??? / Gerhard Syben (BAQ Bremen));
- Mr. Patuzzi is not surprised that we so far have met a wall with our stakeholder efforts; there is an "alliance" BMBF / ZDH / DIHK (the competent authorities want to secure parts of the future training market) - quite clearly own (different) interests are pursued;
- Mr. Patuzzi has access to study group; but there has been no meeting for quite some time - he also confirmed our impression that it is a "closed shop";
- Education committee of the DGB: in this committee, the discussion is particularly about the issue on the "left" side of the conCert image and accordingly how this complex is designed; it is not desired that things turn out as in the case of the foreign recognition law (ausländ. **Anerkennungsgesetz**), where partly a rule of thumb method is running - and no one does know how it is received from of the labor market at the end;
- In validating, there is a "delta to the reference profession".
- Chamber of Commerce (IHK) project for the testing of partial qualifications.
- Mr. Patuzzi also underlined the interest to think away from the deficit orientation towards competence assessment. The focus should be the assessment of what people are able to, beyond examinations.
- competence assessment / documentation / certification is → here arises the question of whether you really ever have to go through the external

examination (in our major challenge it goes without external examination - people-oriented approach, which we would like to bring together with the labor market-based approach);

- The regulative debate serves from employers view not to give more instruments in the hand of employees! (but that would be as an approach of the DGB);

Mr. Patuzzi wants to support conCert and sees several common aspects and roadmaps, in which we can support each other. Our intended qualification of expert advisers is very interesting for the DGB in any case!

He will try to place us at the

- Education committee of the DGB (there, however, one issue among many);
- Own workshop;
- He will contact us in case for presentation and/or inputs;
- He is also on the 14 January 2015 in Bonn at the NA, but at another meeting

In summary: very positive discussion, open to further discussions as well as for concrete support (he will take part in our meetings / he looks for ways to participate). He wishes to be informed about the next steps / results of conCert.

3. Intermediate steps / Outlook

We had an agreement with Mr. Hindenberg of the IHK Bonn / Rhein-Sieg for a cooperation in the implementation of the pilot project.

We need to mention at this point to mention once again that there is no legal basis in Germany at the time, which allows the Chamber of Commerce (IHK), to accredit niac officially. This is not possible under the current German Vocational Training Act. The concert project can, intends and will –corresponding to the essence of a pilot project- under its term and its cooperation, in particular with the Chamber of Commerce / Mr. Hindenberg, strive within the legal framework to push the possible processes and implement them where possible.

Mr. Münch, in charge of vocational training and securing of skilled workers, will take part in the expert training. His function includes, inter alia, the responsibility for the audit committees of work place tutors.

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If we find that an aspirant fulfills several areas of competence, he/she will be admitted to the examination for work place tutors, regardless of whether he/she has the formal requirement, which is having completed the training for training and further training pedagogue. If individual examination parts will be waived, they will be examined at the accreditation. This means that in this case the Chamber of Commerce officially recognizes our dossier.

4. Conclusion (final conference)

The final event in Hennef on October 27 marked the end of the two-year project.

The validation procedure, developed from the equivalence assessment procedure in Switzerland, had finalized its first practice test. In a pilot procedure, trained counselors had accompanied six aspirants in achieving the further training degree as "registered work place tutor". They created partly extensive dossiers and submitted those to the experts. The experts also had been trained in the framework of the project.

Mr. Hindenberg of the IHK Bonn / Rhein-Sieg was very impressed by the explanatory power / relevance of the assessments. At a very early stage, the IHK Bonn / Rhein-Sieg had already shown interest in the results of the project. They ensured by constructive criticism, but above all by pushing the results with other CoCs/IHKs, that the project results could convince. Mr. Hindenberg invited to this final event jointly with the project coordinator.

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Mr. Lau, representing the project-coordinating partner VESBE e.V., summed up in his welcoming that the missing reaction of many stakeholders inhibited the project course, but that the "crushing comments" were more than frustrating considering the EU recommendations on the subject.

Mrs. Annen of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education (BIBB) explained the current state of the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired competences in her keynote speech. She stated that the BIBB has been dealing with this issue since a long time; but the recommendations would not yet be implemented.

The project partners presented their work and the results of the work packages:

Mrs. Weertz, managing director of the partner EU WAREHOUSE, explained how the consortium had to change his way of working towards a "stakeholder outreach work" in order to collect as much information as possible, so that the adaptation of the Swiss method could achieve a possible realizable result.

Mrs. Eckhardt-Steffen, managing director of AdA-kit and a representative of the Swiss partner SVEB (Schweizer Weiterbildungsverbands - SVEB), explained the procedure that has been successfully used for decades in Switzerland. Here people have the possibility of a genuine validation that is the recognition of a degree without further separate examination, in case the requirements of the job description may be assessed as "fulfilled" through the dossier. The attitude "validation is possible" is essential in order to approach this challenge.

Dr. Burger, GAB - Gesellschaft für Ausbildungsforschung und Berufsentwicklung München e.V., set out the procedure, how from the examination regulation the requirement profile and thus the areas of action have been developed in step with actual practice. This process was problematic per se, since the examination regulation does not cover the fields of action and therefore the exemplary action areas needed to be "tailored".

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The partner "Die Wille" from Berlin conducted the training of counselors. Mrs. Stertz explained in her presentation the training of counselors who accompanied the aspirants through the validation process. Provocative, she ended her presentation with the thesis: "not to recognize and validate relevant non-formally and informally acquired vocational competences means loss of social and economic resources".

Experts tested the assessment of the dossier in the trial run. Experienced experts stood by the "newcomers". The training (two times two days) was marked by intensive work and new insights. Mrs. Eckhardt, who accompanied the process, evaluated, based on information provided by the aspirants and experts, the time

required for the process. She formulated the question for the panel discussion "How do you assess the efficiency of the validation of education measures?"

The panel discussion was eagerly awaited. Next to Mr. Hindenberg and Mrs. Eckhardt, Mrs. Irmgard Frank from the BIBB, Mr. Erik Hess from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and Mr. Joachim Lapp from the Board of Trustees of the German economy for Vocational Training (Kuratorium der deutschen Wirtschaft für Berufsbildung - KWB) had accepted the invitation. Karin Hogg moderated the panel, discussing in a committed and controversial manner, what the challenge of recognizing non-formally and informally acquired skills means.

Before the event ended, the aspirants received the certificates for the fields of action assessed and fulfilled in the trial run of the validation process.

Mr. Lau handed over the certificates, not without a little side blow at the rigid system - a jar of honey from a Hennef beekeeping was supposed to sweeten the missing official recognition of their achievements.

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