

NEWSLETTER

02 | 2012

October 2012

Editorial

Welcome to the 6th newsletter of the thematic network QALLL

Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives.

Benjamin Franklin

Dear Reader,

The quotation by Benjamin Franklin heading this text seems to have been the maxim of the 39 QALLL good practice projects that have been selected in the framework of our thematic network. You can find all of them in the



QALLL project compendium

[QALLL project compendium](#) that has just arrived fresh off the printing press and will be distributed at the final QALLL conference in Vienna (Nov. 5-6, 2012) as well as during national dissemination events; it can also be downloaded from the [QALLL website](#).

As the *final* conference already implies: QALLL is approaching the end of its project life cycle. A lot

has happened during these past three years. Take a look back and read Carin Daniel-Ramirez-Schiller's 'QALLL results in a nutshell'.

Learn what challenges VET providers in Finland meet these days by reading the interview with Marjut Huttunen, quality manager at the Luovi Vocational College, which Finnish QALLL project partner Katriina Lammi-Rajapuro has conducted.

In this edition's column 'Project in the Spotlight' Marin Gross from Tallinn University in Estonia presents the QALLL good practice project *BAEA – Becoming Adult Educators in the European Area*, which investigated the role of the adult educator and the education and training pathways which lead to this profession.

Furthermore this newsletter issue informs you about new developments in the *European thematic network netECVET*, which seeks to offer practical help for the application of ECVET in transnational mobilities.

QALLL project partners Isabelle Bonnaire from Germany and Ellen Hanselman from the Netherlands report on their national QALLL-related activities.

And finally we would like to give you a taste of what to expect at the final QALLL conference in Vienna!

Wishing you an informative read!

Barbara Höller

QALLL project manager

Barbara.Hoeller@oead.at | www.lebenslanges-lernen.at

In short ...

QALLL results in a nutshell

Quality assurance is a crucial ingredient for the further development of VET and AE: it helps to build and maintain mutual trust, which forms the basis of international cooperation and all transparency instruments like EQF, etc.

October 2012

When QALLL started nearly three years ago its main aims were to:

- identify and highlight Grundtvig and Leonardo da Vinci good practice projects in the field of quality assurance,
- to facilitate mainstreaming of the results
- to promote and support networking and
- to foster cross-sectoral discussion of quality assurance.

Did the network reach these aims? Decide for yourself.

Let us take a look at what has been accomplished so far:

- A project compendium clustering the main products of the identified Grundtvig and Leonardo da Vinci good practice projects has been produced and published widely: both a printed and a web version will be distributed in all participating countries.
- The QALLLitative report analyses the QA projects in depth and gives an insight to everyone interested in successful quality assurance – why it works, when it works.
- Altogether three big thematic conferences and a series of national expert panels and dissemination events have taken place; these focused discussions brought together experts from both VET and the AE sector and led to a series of important outcomes which formed an important basis for the QALLL recommendations.
- During the whole life-span of the project there has been a close cooperation and exchange between on-going European initiatives at system level, especially the EQAVET and the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Quality in Adult Learning.
- The recommendations of the QALLL thematic network, which will be presented at the QALLL Final Conference, constitute the essence of the outcomes of the thematic network. They address both the level of implementation, e.g. VET and AE institutions and practitioners that develop and implement

projects as well as the policy level, e.g. European, national and regional authorities involved in VET and adult education, social partners and policy makers. Hence they are an interface between policy and practice in the field of QA.

- You want to learn more about QALLL and its main project results? Join us at the Final Conference in Vienna and get the QALLL spirit during an interactive journey through all best practice projects, find out about the QALLL potential and how you can contribute to the further development of quality assurance in lifelong learning.

Carin Dániel Ramírez-Schiller

OeAD, Austrian National Agency for Lifelong Learning
Head of Area Transversal Programmes

Carin.Daniel-Ramirez-Schiller@oead.at | www.lebenslanges-lernen.at

QALLL Interview with ... Marjut Huttunen, quality manager in Luovi Vocational College, Oulu, Finland

Questions regarding impact and results of QA are very much key at the moment in Finland. According to a national quality strategy all Finnish VET institutions should have a systematic QM system implemented by 2015. Could you explain what this means in practice from a VET school's perspective?

This means that VET providers now assess their current situation, like how close or far they are from the 2015 aim or what possible gaps exist in their QM systems. Many VET providers have merged recently, so there also is the need to unify the different QM systems and work so that the whole organisation is at the same level or same phase.

October 2012

A discussion is also going on regarding when one can say that the organisation's QM system is "ready". This can be assessed against e.g. the Finnish Quality Management Recommendation for VET, the VET Quality Strategy itself and of course other QM tools (EFQM model, ISO, etc.). At the beginning of 2013 the Ministry of Education and Culture will launch the criteria against which we can evaluate our QM systems.

Quite many VET providers do their development and quality work in partnerships with other VET providers on a regional or national level. New partnerships were established last year and will be established this year to further development of the QM systems.

What are Luovi's next steps to reach this goal?

We have agreed that all our activities reflect the renowned high-grade and Luovi quality, so that quality is integrated to our everyday work. Luovi's quality work is based on Luovi's strategy and QM roadmap.

This includes e.g.

- surveying Luovi's processes and process aims and measures
- electronic documentation of the processes and linking the documents to processes
- further development of outcome measurement in close co-operation with other special needs VET providers and also mainstream VET providers
- building up a data warehouse tool for the handling and performing of the data which we produce e.g. for decision-making and development and reports to different authorities
- strengthening development based on evaluation (self-assessment, internal and external assessments like peer reviews, national VET evaluations, quality award assessments) and feedback results, in other words making sure that we systematically use these results

- implementation of systematic and continuous benchmarking of the outcome measures

In Finland special needs VET schools co-operate actively as a network – also in QA issues. What are the benefits and challenges of this co-operation?

The mission of special needs VET providers is to provide VET for students with special needs and routes to employment and good life. We have seven special needs VET providers in Finland. Each of us is quite small alone, so working together saves resources, helps us to develop and meet our goals. Co-operation also makes us more powerful when discussing with different authorities and decision-makers.



Marjut Huttunen, quality manager

Our co-operation is based on a written agreement, openness and trust. We share our good practices and assess our activities together. This is a very good basis both for common

October 2012

development and also for the development of each organisation.

This spring a peer review of the organisation of international activities of Luovi was conducted. CIMO was involved in it as well, co-developing the criteria and participating as an external expert in the peer review. Luovi has also developed and conducted peer reviews with special needs VET providers and some mainstream VET providers since 2010. What is your motivation to use peer review, your experiences so far, and your future plans for peer review?

We have conducted peer reviews mainly based on the European Peer Review Manual for VET. The motivation is to get feedback from critical friends regarding our own development and also to find issues for common development. The aim is to go through all the quality areas and then decide how we shall continue. Peer Review also fulfils the national requirement to do external assessment. In conducting peer review our main aim, however, is to learn from each other.

What does EU-level co-operation in QA bring along, in your opinion?

It gives a wider perspective to what is going on and what is coming, and also for benchmarking and bench learning for all the participating countries and organisations.



One good example is Luovi's co-operation with the European Platform for Rehabilitation e.g. in QM issues, such as The European Quality in Social Services (EQUASS) and Outcome Measurement

and especially the measurement of the quality of life of our students and clients.

Marjut, thank you very much for the interview!

Marjut Huttunen

Quality Manager
Luovi Vocational College

Marjut.Huttunen@luovi.fi | www.luovi.fi

Interview conducted by Katriina Lammi-Rajapuro, QALLL project partner and programme manager at CIMO, Finland.

Katriina.Lammi-Rajapuro@cimo.fi | www.cimo.fi

QALLL project in the spotlight BAEA – Becoming Adult Educators in the European Area, Oct 09 – Sep 11

The context of adult education becomes more and more complex and complicated and it constantly poses new challenges to the professionalism of adult educators who have to realise their status, roles and competencies and develop their own personal and professional identity.

An expanding understanding of changes in society, in educational policy and the need for lifelong learning brings with it an essential requirement for the professional development of adult educators. Adult educators therefore need specific knowledge and skills, an awareness of their role and identity, competence and qualification that guarantees professional skills since they have an enormous autonomy and freedom of choice in their professional area.

In recent years a new emphasis on the qualification of professionals in education has been championed by the European Union. In particular, the European Commission explicitly "identified the quality of teachers and teacher education as a key factor in securing the quality

October 2012

of education” (Commission of the European Communities, 2007a: 15).

The concern for the need to qualify current adult educators is shared among practitioners and researchers. However, relatively limited attention has been paid to the initial education and training of adult educators-to-be when compared to other fields of education and training (e.g. primary and secondary school, initial vocational education and training, etc.). Furthermore, while a number of national policies emphasise the quality of adult education and training provision relatively limited attention is paid in current policy discourses to initial education and pre-service training of prospective adult educators.

Adult educators, equally to other professionals in education, play a focal role in ensuring quality of teaching–learning processes that take place in a variety of educational settings. This group, however, is in a unique position compared to other professionals in education. Adult educators often have acquired a speciality in the course of their initial studies but often lack formal preparation for teaching adults prior to entering the profession and at its outset. Hence it is worth questioning how prospective adult educators prepare themselves to perform according to high quality standards in a changing working environment.

The BAEA project came into life with the scope of filling in the knowledge gap that we acknowledged when taking into consideration ways in which prospective adult educators acquire professional competencies and qualifications before entering the profession in different socio-cultural contexts.

The BAEA, Becoming Adult Educators in the European Area, was a transnational project which aimed at analysing processes of professional qualification and identity building among adult educators-to-be. BAEA was a project that provided opportunities for a dialogue and information exchange between researchers, practitioners in the field of adult education and training and policy makers.

The projects’ **aim** was to investigate: Which social and cultural factors influence the individual formation of initial competences and qualifications in the field of general adult education, vocationally-oriented adult education and liberal education? Which factors influence the construction of a professional identity among adult educators-to-be? How may adult education policies and initial education and training practice affect professionalisation processes in the field of general, vocationally-oriented and liberal education?



BAEA project team meeting

The key **premise** of the project was that individuals exist in multiple, multi-layered and interacting contexts, thus we focused on the interaction between adult educators-to-be and the structural conditions which characterise the wider socio-cultural context in which they act. The project was designed as a comparative study. It was qualitative in its approach and multidisciplinary by design.

In the initial phase of the project four national reports were produced which gave an overview of existing opportunities for education and training for adult educators as well as policy analyses on how these opportunities are shaped. These national reports were put together into a comparative synthesis report. Furthermore, the national reports served as a basis for the Delphi study report. At the end of the project both Delphi and the synthesis report were merged into a handbook for adult educators. By involving

October 2012

different fields of expertise in adult education and conducting a range of activities (from desk research to handbook development, receiving feedback from all the actors involved along the process) the project team aimed to provide a full picture of the situation for initial education and training for adult educators-to-be as well as materials that can be used by researchers, policy-makers and practitioners.



BAEA project team meeting

Project **outcomes:**

1. **National research reports.** The reports provide insights into opportunities existing for initial education and training for adult educators-to-be as well as an analysis of policies that frame the national contexts.
2. **Synthesis research report.** The report presents synthesised results from secondary and field research activities carried out at the national level. Furthermore, it contains a comparative, cross-country analysis and policy recommendation which derived from the analysis.
3. **Delphi study report.** The report illustrates the findings from a Delphi study that involved key actors in the field of adult education policy and practice at the national level.
4. **Handbook for adult educators-to-be.** The handbook is a practical tool for sustaining the process of designing,

managing and implementing initial education and training of prospective adult educators.

Project partners:

- Danish School of Education, University of Aarhus, Denmark
- Tallinn University, Estonia
- Linköping University, Sweden
- Popular University of Rome, Italy
- SUHRS – The Multidisciplinary University College of Copenhagen, Denmark
- Estonian non-formal adult education association, Estonia
- Brunnsvik Folk High School, Sweden

For further information visit the project [website](#).

Marin Gross

Tallinn University Estonia
Lecturer

Marin@tlu.ee | www.tlu.ee

Thematic Network

“NetECVET: Working together to understand and implement ECVET”

NetECVET is another European thematic network of 14 national agencies of the Lifelong Learning Programme co-financed by the European Commission. Its focus lies on actions within the programme Leonardo da Vinci. NetECVET started one year after QALLL in January 2011 and will organise its final conference by the end 2013.

The most important outcome of the project will be a web-based toolbox for VET practitioners offering practical help for the application of ECVET in transnational mobilities.

According to the European roadmap member states should create the necessary conditions to adapt measures for gradual implementation of ECVET, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training in 2012.

Actually some countries have already carried out national pilot initiatives like FINECVET in Finland in order to support the application of ECVET in its vocational education and training system for transnational mobility. In Germany DECVET was initiated to develop and test standardised systems for the accreditation and recognition of learning outcomes.

What is ECVET?

The European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) helps individuals who are trying to acquire a VET qualification to move between countries and gain access to lifelong learning. It does so by making it easier to transfer, to have recognised and to accumulate assessed learning outcomes. (source: CEDEFOP)

On the European level the second generation of ECVET pilot projects started in 2011 and ECVET is one of the strategic priorities for innovation projects under Leonardo da Vinci. But there is still reticence towards the use of ECVET components on a large scale.

There is still a great demand for information, examples and models in the ECVET implementation process. Different surveys have shown that the majority of VET providers have heard about ECVET but that their level of knowledge is very basic and that only very few have practical experience.

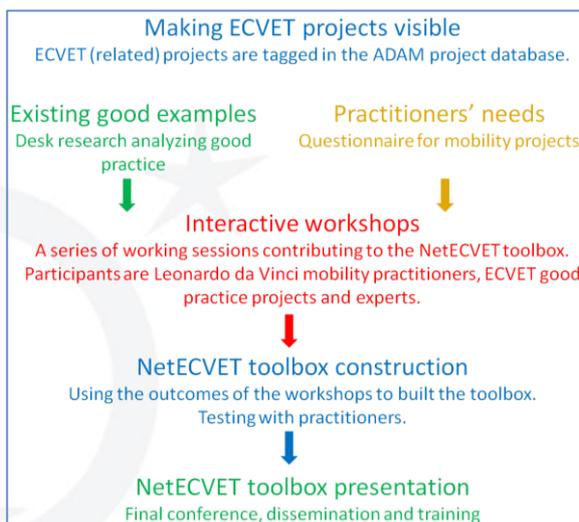


NetECVET workshop

In order to meet these challenges NetECVET will develop an ECVET toolbox which will support and guide VET practitioners through the process of applying ECVET. This toolbox will offer a wide variety of solutions starting with tailor-made approaches and ending with concrete examples and models.

The toolbox will contain information regarding national preconditions, existing mobility units, activities at sectoral level and required partnership functions and it will provide templates e.g. for "memoranda of understanding" or for "learning agreements".

Besides the development of the toolbox NetECVET will also prepare and train VET professionals by providing training materials in order to support the self-tutoring of VET schools or companies in how to use the toolbox.



NetECVET Milestones

October 2012

Like QALLL, NetECVET went through various phases on its way to design user-friendly up-to-date tools.

In the beginning the project tried to take stock of the broad range of projects exploring and testing ECVET components and principles. For the second phase NetECVET analysed these projects in depth and presents those which support ECVET more fully. They have either developed or are developing approaches or solutions for the validation and documentation of the description of learning outcomes and the definition of units. Some also provide models for memoranda of understanding or learning agreements.

Over the course of seven European workshops taking place in 2012 representatives of these projects will bring together their findings and recommendations regarding ECVET.

For more information on [NetECVET](#) visit [ECVET projects on ADAM](#) – the project and product portal for Leonardo da Vinci.

Find further information on [ECVET](#), visit [ECVET Pilot Projects](#) and the [CEDEFOP](#) website.

Astrid Terreng

OeAD – Austrian National Agency for Lifelong Learning

astrid.terreng@oead.at | www.lebenslanges-lernen.at

Sibilla Drews

NetECVET network coordinator
German National Agency "Education for Europe" at BIBB –
Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training

Drews@bibb.de | www.bibb.de

What's happening (I) DEQA-VET Annual Conference

"Education Republic of Germany: On the Way to a Culture of Quality Assurance in Education" – this was the motto of the fourth annual symposium of the German Reference Point for Quality Assurance in

Vocational Education and Training" (DEQA-VET).

More than 150 national and international experts came together in Bonn on September 13th/14th, 2012 in order to discuss the current situation of quality assurance in the different education fields in Germany.



4th DEQA-VET Symposium

In the past few years the German education landscape of the Federal Republic was characterised by several discussions about quality assurance of teaching and learning results.

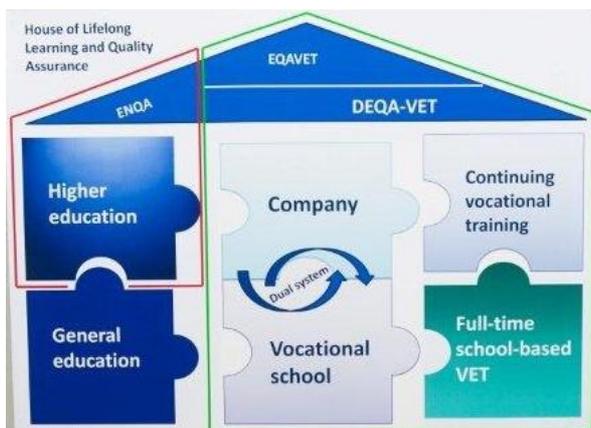
Until recently these debates were mainly held on a regional level, i.e. within the borders of the federal states and on a sectoral level, i.e. in different education segments (secondary school/vocational school and universities). Since PISA a further development can be observed: Debates about quality assurance now take place on a federal level and even synchronously and diachronically in several federal states independently from national discussions.



4th DEQA-VET Symposium

October 2012

At the symposium it was the first time that an attempt was made to develop a mutual understanding of quality assurance across all educational fields. Furthermore the house of lifelong learning and quality assurance was presented.



House of Lifelong Learning and Quality Assurance

The main message of the symposium was: With an increased orientation on the competences it is now possible to concentrate more on communication across the different education fields with the aim to agree on quality goals and practices.



4th DEQA-VET Symposium

Many participants took the chance to inform themselves about the German situation and to exchange information and opinions with experts of the so-called [EQAVET](#) process. For the first time an "International Forum" in English was part of the programme.

A comprehensive documentation (in German) of the symposium can be found on the [DEQA-VET website](#).

Thomas Gruber
DEQA-VET

Gruber@bibb.de | <http://www.deqa-vet.de/>

What's happening (II) Teams as a starting point for Quality Assurance

The Dutch NLQAVET project is one of the five selected national projects that deal with the implementation of EQAVET in the member states.

The main pillars of the project are:

- an inventory of quality assurance at provider level,
- to stimulate a culture of quality assurance at team level with pilot projects

The inventory consisted of three parts:

- the policy regarding QA at provider level
- the implementation of QA at provider level
- the perceived impact of QA at provider level

If you want to read more about the inventory you can find a short English summary [here](#).

The culture of a team or organisation is an important pillar when it comes to improving the quality. Within the NLQAVET project 4 pilot projects worked on improving their quality culture at team level.

The project resulted in an online web tool where you can read how you can work on a quality culture at team level in order to improve the quality of education and training.

The web tool provides the opportunity to learn about the results from three perspectives:

October 2012

- through the 'stories' of the pilot projects, including experiences and reflection by the pilot projects
- by getting to know the reference framework that formed the basis for the project and the decisions that were made within the pilot projects
- by going directly to the part that gets you going, here you can find the ingredients that are important when working on a culture of quality assurance at team level. A toolbox can also be accessed from where you can directly find the interventions used within the teams to work on QA at team level.

The web tool will be available from December 1st of this year (www.nlgavet.nl); unfortunately the website will only be available in Dutch.

Do you want to learn more? It is always possible to contact us via info@eqavet.nl.

Ellen Hanselman

QALLL Project Partner
CINOP International Agency, the Netherlands

EHanselman@cinop.nl | <http://www.cinop.nl>

Outlook

Final QALLL Conference – Reaching QALLLity

With the end of our three-year project life span drawing closer we are putting on our final conference in Vienna on November 5th to 6th, 2012. The event shall act as a forum that allows participants to inform themselves about European trends in the field of quality assurance in vocational education and training and adult education as well as to effectively network with fellow participants from all over Europe.

The QALLL final conference promises an exciting blend of workshops and interactive presentations. Participants will be invited on a journey through European good practice as Leonardo da Vinci and

Grundtvig QALLL projects will present themselves and their products dealing with quality assurance methods and tools for vocational education and training and adult education.

Another central aspect of the event is – like during the two previous conferences – dialogue, exchange and networking amongst all participants, for which time and space but also innovative methods will be employed. Invited are professionals in education and training from both VET and AE, Leonardo da Vinci und Grundtvig project promoters, social partners, decision-makers involved in education as well as representatives of European, national and regional authorities.

The Europahaus Wien with its baroque palace, orangery and well-equipped seminar rooms will provide an ideal location for the final QALLL event.

You are interested in the final conference? Write us: qalll@oead.at

Barbara Höller

QALLL project manager

Barbara.Hoeller@oead.at | www.lebenslanges-lernen.at

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views of the authors only. The Commission cannot be held responsible for the information contained therein.

oead
Nationalagentur
Lebenslanges Lernen
National Agency for
Lifelong Learning

**Austrian National Agency
for Lifelong Learning**

A-1010 Wien | Ebendorferstraße 7
T +43 1 534 08-692 | F +43 1 534 08-699
www.lebenslanges-lernen.at