

Experience Report

In the context of the QuaG-project the isw GmbH has the task to familiarise educational service providers as well as scientists with content, aims and duties of the quality guidelines.

This includes also to assume the partner's experiences and notes, which fits to improve the quality guidelines themselves and to align them to the practical requirements and demands of the educational service providers. To achieve the aims of the QuaG-project it is also important to inform the practitioners of the educational institutions "on the spot" about the norm DIN ISO 29990:2010 "Learning services for non-formal education and training — Basic requirements for service providers", its basic specifications and its meaning for learning service providers and their clients.

The previous course and the results of relevant information meetings, conversations and discussions on the occasion of regional workshops, conferences and discussions with educational researchers show the following:

- 1) Just at this moment, adequate quality management systems for learning service providers on the field of non-formal education and training are important for securing the educational institutions' productive capacity and their competitiveness. Their role as a "compass" for planning, developing and implementing learning services is demanded all the more because the majority of learning service providers meets challenges, which innovative accomplishment is crucial for their existence.

These challenges are especially:

- the strong **decline in public funding**, which a lot of institutions experience as dramatic and radical. It often leads to cuts in terms of staffing, learning resources and other infrastructure, which endangers certainly a quality-oriented creation of learning services.
- the needs for a **demographically suitable human resource development** in the light of an increasing shortage of qualified employees. This shortage is influenced by the processes of population decrease and the reversion of the previous relation between the inflows into the labour market and the outflows from it. Naturally, a demographically suitable human resource development is primarily a problem of the companies in industry and trade. But it also concerns the educational service providers, which operate in the field of occupational qualification, in two ways: in form of enterprise's changing needs and demands on learning services and in form of a changing clientele of training measures for unemployed persons. Expressions of this are the turning to long-term unemployed persons and other disadvantaged groups of people on the employment market as well as the necessary changes (generally in terms of deepening, improvement, focussing concerning the aims, ways and instruments) of learning services to meet the requirements for workforce.

These changes include:

- an effective combination of the training of unemployed with measures of personal and organizational development in SMEs
- a closer alignment of learning to the conditions and needs of adult learning and to the requirements of the training for a re-entry into the labour market
- the implementation of the competence orientation of the qualification, the promotion of job-related operational competence through methods of a competence-enhancing teaching, training and self-guided learning

- a consistent practical orientation of training to increase its methodically and didactic value to the educational process and to provide a measurable increase in practical skills
- a gradual development of the ability to act (the development of personal skills) of the unemployed, acquisition of the "maturity for further education" (training-readiness)
- development of motivation to learn through the creation of concrete space for shaping
- securing the sustainability of the qualification efforts by post-care after ending the qualification phase
- a stronger networking between the learning service providers and all relevant actors in the fields of labour market and economic policy, social and educational policy etc.

In this context it should be noted that individualized approaches to learning, coaching and training as well as the linking of unemployed person's qualification with specific measures for human resources and organisational development in enterprises, increases the demands on the educational qualifications of the teachers. Hence the need for a continual learning process of the teachers themselves. Learn-service suppliers as well as other staff in charge in the fields of the employment market and educational policy need to consider this.

In the field of vocational training, social and educational administrative and control tasks as well as requirements in terms of consulting and media development, coordination and net-working, etc. step increasingly to the side of the concrete professional guidance of the participants. The mission to respond to those increasing demands with training programs for training staff, cannot alone be left to the teachers concerned, but requires the attention of the management of the educational institutions. To qualify the staff and to respond to its individual conditions and demands, it is needed a foresighted design of the institution's qualification plans and their professional implementation.

In this context, it matters to create the appropriate framework for a largely self-directed, self-organized learning of the educational professionals, which meets the requirements of the sophistication of their work and opens up scopes for reflection and exchange.¹

- 2) The international norm DIN ISO 29990 is appreciated as a service standard for learning services. Especially is accentuated the successful connection between the **universality of its scope** and the reference to **the learning services' specialty**. Especially for educational service providers linked to the economy, the belonging of the norm to the "ISO group" is an additional positive fact.

On the contrary it is deplored, that the learning service providers, due to the requirements of the AZWV, already use generally other quality management systems and concentrate their activities in the field of quality assurance on their implementation. Albeit it is accepted, that the norm DIN ISO 29990 contains incitements and impulses for the quality management of those institutions too.

- 3) Under the above-mentioned conditions of demographic change and the related problems of the shortage of skilled workers, the aim of the project QuaG - to promote in a specific way, the internationalization of education services - gains a new dimension: Using the means of vocational training, more and more it matters to support the recruitment of **foreign skilled workers** for the German economy. A condition for the success of the re-

¹ See thereto Weiß, Reinhold: Professionalisierung durch non-formales Lernen, in: BWP. Berufsbildung in Wissenschaft und Praxis, 6/2011, p.3.

cruitment of additional foreign workers is to increase the attractiveness of Germany as an immigration country "by establishing a comprehensive culture of welcome".²

This necessitates to give a higher attention to the aspect of **intercultural competence**

- of executives and employees, especially in small and medium-sized companies
- and
- of the staff in those fields of public administration, which are involved in efforts for recruiting.

Here is an increasingly important field of activity opened for learning service providers. An effective quality management for an intercultural education may contribute significantly to its successful treatment.

- 4) All in all it proves to be very important to continue sensitizing learning service providers to quality management, especially for the demands of quality management in the context of the internationalization of learning services.

This became apparent when learning service providers in the environment of the isw GmbH began to cooperate with South Russia. A central moment of success was and still is here the purposeful planning and implementing of single cooperation-steps and -measures under consideration of the cultural dimensions and their differences in Germany and Russia.

In everyday-practice educational institutions follow often action and behavior patterns, which are characteristic for small and medium-sized companies in general: daily business eclipses strategic deliberations, directed to medium and further perspectives. This applies in particular to the implementation of requirements of quality management in vocational training. Against this background, the sensitization of service learning providers for quality management in the internationalization of its services and supply is sometimes quite difficult. At this point exists obviously a "deficit of conviction"³.

For the practical project work hence can be concluded that the quality management in line with the "quality guidelines" is not to regard isolated from all remaining assignments and problems of corporate development of educational institutions. There is always to try to make visible the relationship of the quality management with their overall development.

² Bundesagentur für Arbeit (ed.): Perspektive 2025: Fachkräfte für Deutschland, Nürnberg, Januar 2011; p. 14f.

³ To read more about the term "deficit of conviction" (germ. "Überzeugungsdefizit") and its practical consequences for cooperating with small and medium-sized companies: Prognos AG: Endbericht. Recherche und Darstellung betrieblicher Demografieprojekte, Berlin 2010, p. 61.