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Quality culture through effective instruments for Teachers and trainers

Research report The Netherlands WP5

Project Partners: ECABO and Landstede

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Content

1. Introduction	3
2. General situation of Quality Assurance and Culture in Vocational Education and Training in the Netherlands	4
3. Quality approaches at ECABO and Landstede	7
3.1. General information on quality systems and quality approaches.....	8
3.2. How ECABO tries to enhance Quality in Vocational Education and Training	9
3.3. Inventory of initiatives to use European quality tools	9
3.4. Best practices and instruments that work for quality improvement	10
3.5. General information on quality systems and quality approaches in Landstede.....	10
3.6. Quality in Landstede teams	11
3.7. The use of European quality tools within Landstede	11
3.8. Best practices/instruments that work for quality improvement in teams.....	12
4. Case Studies in ECABO and Landstede	13
4.1. Teachers perspective on quality assurance and quality culture of own organisation	13
4.2. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threads of quality assurance and quality culture by teachers perspectives	14
4.3. Best practices used by teachers to measure quality	15
4.4. Recommendation from teachers' perspective for development of quality	15
4.5. Recommendation from Work field perspective for development of quality.....	16
5. Recommendations for designing the toolkit products following the research outcomes in country report.	16
References	18

1. Introduction

The aim of the EU project QUAL4T is to enhance quality management, assurance and particularly quality culture. Within VET Institutions quality management is often initiated by the management. Partly teachers, trainers and teams are involved in quality assurance, development and improvement. The quality management system is sometimes not related to the needs of teachers and trainers and leads to the situation that quality management and assurance is seen as a burden or an obstacle to their work and teaching. Therefore, the idea of the project is to develop and test tools that support the development of a culture of quality that reaches and influences the actions of teachers and trainers so that they can improve the quality of learners' experiences in VET.

The aim of the project is to provide a toolkit and a practical guide in partner languages, with ready to use instruments for teachers, trainers, quality staff and mentors, to improve the quality of education. Therefore, we intend to:

- develop a quality improvement culture in line with the recommendations of teachers and trainers in VET
- learn from partners' proven quality culture instruments and adapt them for other consortium organisations
- connect management and teachers through a management brochure
- provide an approach with supporting products that can be used by VET providers across the EU to improve outcomes of learners.

The aim of the report is to get an insight into the different quality approaches of the partner countries and institutions. The report provides basic information on the development of the toolkit products. These products will be based on the needs and best practices that the teachers describe in the case studies.

In the first part of this report the general situation of quality assurance in VET education in the partner country will be described. Different quality approaches used in the VET organisations in the partner country, the initiatives to use EU quality tools and the best practices within the country will be described. In addition to the general description of the situation in the country, the results of the case studies conducted in the partner institutions will be described. These partner institutions are four centres for vocational education, one body responsible for systems and policies, one university and one body providing guidance, counselling and information services relating to lifelong learning. This chapter will contain their perspective on quality assurance in their organisation, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of institution's quality assurance/culture by teachers' perspectives, best practices used by teachers and recommendations from teachers' perspective for development of quality. As a conclusion the report will give recommendations on the development of the toolkit products following the results of the report.

This national report describes the situation on VET in The Netherlands and the different quality management systems that are used in VET. The Case study was conducted within Landstede Group and ECABO. Within the case study, 19 teachers, one teacher team (5 persons) and 8 workfield mentors have filled in questionnaires. Questions on the quality culture in their own organisation, their understanding of what quality is, the methods toward quality management in the organisation and the methods they use themselves for measuring and assuring quality were asked. The teachers and trainers are all working within one of the about 50 teams to be found within the 7 VET locations of Landstede Group. For the workfield mentors another questionnaire has been used. The interview guide for the data collection consisted of questions concerning quality culture of the respective institutions, the quality management and assurance within each institution, the trainers' or teachers' individual methods to assure and develop quality and their recommendations for quality management. Additionally, sociodemographic data like gender, age and taught subjects were collected. The findings of case studies conducted between December 2013 and January 2014 will be provided in this report.

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coordinator. The project partners are Politeknika Ikastegia Txorierra in Spain, Westminster Kingsway College in the United Kingdom, Stichting ECABO in the Netherlands, Julius-Maximilians-University in Germany, CIOFS-Formazione Professionale in Italy and IDEC SA – Consultants – high technology applications – Training in Greece.

2. General situation of Quality Assurance and Culture in Vocational Education and Training in the Netherlands

The educational system¹ in the Netherlands

The general aim of the Dutch educational system is to give everyone a good opportunity for education and prepare for independence and responsibility in life. The education system in The Netherlands is coordinated by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on national level and on regional level by municipalities. Education in the agricultural sector is funded and coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Full-time education is compulsory from the ages of 5 to 16. From the age of 16 until 18 students are obliged to attain a starting qualification that is sufficient for entrance at the labour market. In general, the system is divided into two educational streams, the general education and the vocational education stream.

Introduction to the VET System in the Netherlands

Different organizations and different stakeholders on different levels play a role in the organization of VET. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science lays down the conditions for education. The provision of the VET programs is decentralized and organized by the ROC's², because of the strong regional orientation of VET.

Other partners are:

a. VET schools / ROC's: There are 43 regional, multi-sectoral VET providers (ROC'S) and also 2 specialist training centres that provide education for specific branches or industries. Furthermore, there are 11 agricultural training centres funded by the Ministry of Economic affairs. VET programmes are also offered by private funded schools. When their education is acknowledged, the inspectorate of education will monitor its quality. The Dutch Association of VET Colleges (*MBO Raad*) represents all ROC's. The private VET institutes are represented by the *NRTO*. Both, public-funded and non-public-funded schools need to fulfil the criteria established by the Ministry of education.

b. S-BB: Since 2012 VET and labour market are organized in *SBB*³. Their main task is to set up a revised, flexible qualifications structure for VET with significantly less qualifications than the existing one. This is work in progress.

c. Centres of expertise: The 17 centres of expertise are organized according to the different branches of industry and function as sector councils for VET. They are connected by their central role in the labour market and support over 220,000 accredited work placement firms for training places for over 500,000 students yearly.

Quality in vocational and adult education

"Freedom of Education"⁴ is an important principle in Dutch educational legislation. This constitutionally secured right entitles everyone to found a school/institution that meets their religious, ideological or educational convictions. Where possible, parents can also decide which school their children will attend: a publicly-run or privately-run school. Both receive state funding.

However, government does impose conditions on teaching. After all, our education is funded by taxpayers' money. For this reason, schools must comply with acts and regulations known as

¹ Source: www.eqavet.eu/gns/what-we-do/implementing-the-framework/netherlands.aspx+&cd=4&hl=nl&ct=clnk&gl=nl - adapted

² Regionale Opleidings Centra (regional education centres = schools)

³ Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market

⁴ Source: www.onderwijsinspectie.nl - adapted

*Statutory Regulations*⁵ and with the education acts⁶. The same constitutional law also lays down those teaching needs to be inspected.

Quality assurance in VET in the Netherlands

Quality in and of education is a 'hot item' in the Netherlands. We are proud on our educational system and consider its quality as 'good', but improvement is always possible. Therefore, we embrace EU implementations as EQF, ECVET, EQARF, EQAVET and so on, that gives us cause to work pro-active on enhancing quality in VET.

Overall, the main actors in charge of quality assurance are the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science through the Inspectorate of Education as well as the VET providers themselves.

Dutch VET providers are left a high level of independency in the design and implementation of their individual quality assurance system. However, they are evaluated externally by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education.

The annual report of institutions is the starting point for external evaluation of the quality under the responsibility of the Inspectorate of Education. The concept of quality assurance in VET is a legal requirement, that stipulates⁷ that ROC's⁸ are obliged to set up a quality assurance system for their institution and they have to ensure that, in as much cooperation as possible with other institutions, a regular assessment of education is undertaken including measures and instruments to safeguard that the teaching staff maintains their competences.

A Inspectorate of education

VET institutions are monitored by the Inspectorate of Education that is responsible for the external assessment of the quality assurance of the VET providers.

The renewed Inspection Framework for VET⁹ aims to assess the quality of VET providers and programs and supports the institutions to comply with the minimum quality standards. It applies to publicly funded VET institutions, private VET institutions providing VET recognized programs and exam institutions.

The rationale behind this framework is a shift from focusing on just the output of the education / examination to a focus on the quality assurance and the output of the education / examination. In addition there is a shift in focus from quality assurance assessment at program level to institutional level. Both are assessed now: this allows the Inspectorate to hold the institution as a whole responsible for unsatisfactory or weak quality assurance.

Seven assessment areas

This Inspection Framework consists of the following seven assessment areas:

1. educational processes,
2. examination,
3. student success (diplomas/early drop out),
4. quality assurance,
5. compliance with legal requirements,
6. quality of teaching staff and
7. financial stability.

These assessment areas are sub-divided into aspects and indicators against which the inspectorate measures the quality of the ROC's, its programming and teaching staff. Furthermore, the Inspectorate monitors the quality of the examinations independently of the quality of education.

⁵ Compliance with these regulations is a prerequisite for government funding.

⁶ for VET and Adult Education: the law WEB- BES.

⁷ Article 1.3.6 of the WEB

⁸ ROC: Regionaal Opleidings Centrum (translation: Regional Educational Centre's or VET)

⁹ 1 January 2012: Toezichtskader BVE 2012, which introduced four main changes compared to the previous frameworks:

- an increased emphasis on quality assurance, i.e. quality assurance is now one of the 7 main assessment areas;
- Quality assurance is assessed at institutional level and at program level;
- Triennial inspections as opposed to annual inspections; and
- Intensive monitoring of unsatisfactory or weak performing schools.

The Inspectorate's way of working is risk-based, which means that the inspections will increase when a ROC is at risk of low quality of education. A report is issued which should be used to make amendments to its quality assurance system or to set new objectives for future development. The Inspectorate will carry out a follow-up visit in the subsequent year and monitor if the required improvements are met.

Generally, the Inspectorate carries out inspection visits every three years to assess the quality assurance of ROC's. Besides that, extra inspection can be carried out when signals¹⁰ from "elsewhere" give reason to that.

Every year they carry out inspections at one third of the institutions and per VET 1 to 5 programmes of education. If the quality assurance is at risk, supplementary ad-hoc inspection visits may be undertaken.

When the ROC doesn't show enough improvement, the Ministry has the possibility to:

- Give financial sanctions like recovery or freezing of funds;
- Give an official warning;
- Withdraw the license to provide education or exams

This assessment is conducted annually based on a sample of programs of each publicly funded school in order to judge whether the examination instruments meet the national requirements. Central in this assessment is the appropriate level of examination and the reliability of the examination.

The Inspectorate publishes the monitoring reports regularly as well as the report "State of the Art of Education in the Netherlands" on its website.

B Peer learning and peer assessment - quality circles

In different organizations and different networks, ROC's and quality assurance coordinators work together on peer learning, audits and professionalization. The most important ones are mentioned here:

- **MBO-Council National Quality meetings**¹¹ All VET providers cooperate in these national meetings that take place at *MBO-Raad* office in *Woerden* and are quarterly organized. From all VET providers one representative is invited to participate and vote about subjects when needed.
- **Network MBO15** In this network almost half of the VET providers cooperate. This network is called Quality Network¹² MBO15, and is partly funded by MBO15, a project from the Ministry of Education in February 2011, based on a plan of Action¹³ for the period 2011 – 2015, implying that quality must improve.
- **Kwaliteitsnetwerk MBO** Another network of quality assurance was launched by a number of VET providers in 2010. *Kwaliteitsnetwerk-MBO*¹⁴ aims to review all its member ROC's every three years. The external review on a ROC's quality assurance system is performed by an audit team of four people, led by an independent auditor. The ROC will publish the report's conclusions and the quality profile of the organization.
- **Kloostergroep** A quality network of 6 VET providers that work together, for instance on auditing at team level (peer review) and audit professionalization. Landstede is member of this quality network.

C External Quality Assurance Assessments

- **JOB-monitor**¹⁵ The JOB Monitor is an external quality assurance assessment tool and is coordinated by "*Jongeren Organisatie Beroepsonderwijs (JOB)*", a national interest organization for VET students financed by the Ministry. This organization coordinates a student satisfaction survey (two-yearly) called the "JOB Monitor" and measures how satisfied VET students are with VET education. On the basis of this Monitor, a report is issued which draws on the satisfaction

¹⁰ complaints, unsatisfactory of students and media

¹¹ In Dutch: MBO Kwaliteits Platform

¹² www.mbo15.nl

¹³ Actieplan mbo "Focus op Vakmanschap 2011-2015" Policy letter Ministry

¹⁴ www.kwaliteitsnetwerk-mbo.nl

¹⁵ www.job-site.nl

of VET students on: competences acquired; information provided; participation; choice of career guidance; traineeship; school facilities.

- Suggestions are made on how to improve the quality of education. The information is used by both ROC's as well as the Inspectorate; both attach great importance to the JOB Monitor.
- ROA monitor¹⁶ A self-assessment tool used by the ROC's, that monitors the number of students finding a job after their graduation in VET.
- Two new monitor instruments are to measure both the satisfaction of companies (BPV-monitor) and the satisfaction of teachers.

D Other actions for quality

Benchmark initiative of *MBO Raad*: a yearly monitor of the financial results, in which student success rates of ROC's are included. The aim is to give insight in the financial results of the sector on individual ROC level, so institutes can compare results and learn from that in their own situation.

Furthermore, transparent and objective information about the quality of educational programs and the chances and perspective on the labour market is very important for students to select the right education.

S-BB publishes leaflets on this based on the research by Centres of Expertise.

Latest developments

Policy letter '*Focus op vakmanschap*' (footnote 9). The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science issued this policy concerning measures to strengthen the effective and accessible provision of VET programs the 2nd April 2012. It concerns the implementation of improvements on macro-efficiency in VET and will be executed during the next years:

- The revision of the national qualifications structure for VET. This is work in progress, its deadline was postponed.
- The intensification/shortening of programs; EQF 1 program entered without diploma; modernization of funding (per 1-8-2014). More measures follow: e.g. strengthening student participation in schools.
- Quality Assurance is reassessed based on advices and discussions with students, teachers, Board Members, other sectors representatives, politicians. etc;
- Focus on Standards in Examination: quality improvement of examination systems through improving quality assurance in procedures.
- Focus on further professionalization of VET staff - priority area: professionalization of educational staff and competency of management; quality improvement of HR policy; entry routes for staff and performance pay. *MBO-15 Quality Plan* will monitor implementation.

Overall, the VET sector in the Netherlands is characterized by strong partnerships which include educational institutions and the social partners. Both, institutions and social partners, can initiate to introduce new occupations or qualifications or renew existing qualifications.

The importance that is attached to stakeholder input in the quality assurance system is demonstrated by the fact that one of the indicators in the Inspection Framework assesses the opinion of stakeholders vis-à-vis the VET institution, their involvement in the design of the Practical Vocational Training Protocol (*BPV-Protocol* which is further described) and the educational programs.

3. Quality approaches at ECABO and Landstede

ECABO

¹⁶ www.roa.unimaas.nl - Research Centre for Education and the Labour market

3.1. General information on quality systems and quality approaches

Organization

Already for many years, the ECABO organization holds the ISO 9001 certificate¹⁷. This standard sets out the criteria for a quality management system. The standard is based on a number of quality management principles including a strong customer focus, the motivation and implication of top management, the process approach and continual improvement. Using ISO 9001:2008 helps ensure that customers get consistent, good quality products and services, which in turn brings many business benefits.

However, realizing that this system of quality assurance was remote and unknown to the personnel, ECABO started to turn around this system: not the norm is applied to the organisation, but the work processes of the organisation are translated to the norm. To be able to do that all business processes in the organization have been described; this blueprint offers a clear picture of the coherence of activities that run ECABO, the connections between processes, overlap, or lack of connection. It now forms the structure to design new routines for setting up and monitoring annual (sector) plans, internal audits, making of complaints- and customer- reports, organize customer ratings and tracing and tracking improvement measures. Result is that the quality system now is recognizable and applicable for the personnel and teams.

As ECABO is a public organization, resorting under the Ministry of Education, the Inspectorate¹⁸ supervises the public part of the organisation and demands that the services / products provided can be specified, for example, demonstrated and substantiated with customers reporting; our activities are linked to national regulations

The Inspectorate's requirements are consistent with the management system; this connection also forms an impulse to really manage with the system. Annual external audits help us to keep on track and not deviate from this, as does the management information (total organization and per sector team).

Other measures to improve quality of the organization are: employee satisfaction investigation performed once every two years¹⁹; entering national annual competition 'best place to work ranking'²⁰; continuous professionalization of staff (in-/external workshops, courses, study, presentations, conferences, master classes, a.s.o.).

Of course the systems are based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle²¹.

Products / services

As the 'Centre of Expertise on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market' for the economic/administrative, ICT and security professions ECABO is carrying out the following legal tasks for the Ministry of Education:

- Accreditation and assistance of work placement companies;
- Development and maintenance of the qualifications structure;
- Labour market research.

Next to these legal tasks, we provide services; we have built many tools to support quality improvement for the entire area for which we are responsible. We shared these with other Centres with the purpose to make it a jointly used product. In close cooperation with *S-BB* we now have a '*BPV-protocol*' – criteria²² for the accreditation of a work placement company with clear descriptions of the roles of the different partners: ROC, training company, student, learning goals. In line with this national *BPV-protocol* we have drawn up SLA's (Service Level Agreements), to make the collaboration between ROC and ECABO concrete on a number of issues. Minimum criteria for accrediting a training company are:

- The work matches with the education of the student
- There is an expert practice trainer available for guidance of the student

¹⁷ ISO = International Organization for Standardization; www.iso.org

¹⁸ For more info on the Inspectorate see part 1 of the national Netherlands report.

¹⁹ overall satisfaction scores 8.0 for 2012

²⁰ In the annual national "best places to work rankings 2011" ECABO stood on place 16.

²¹ Or: plan, do, monitor, assess and review

²² one of the recommendations from; [Youth employment: Commission proposes standards to improve quality of traineeships 04/12/2013](http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2011&furtherNews=yes)

- The workplace is safe

3.2. How ECABO tries to enhance Quality in Vocational Education and Training

“How quality is perceived by VET ‘communities’ directly relates to the purposes and functions they cater for, in their respective contexts. At micro level, quality is ‘in the eye of the beholder’ and VET quality can be perceived differently by each individual, her/his family, peers; teachers/trainers and employers²³.”

In this way the ETF describes the different communities that judge quality of our products.

ECABO’s comprehension of ‘quality in VET’ is achieving our mission: a balanced labour market for all. ECABO wants to attribute to the deliverance of the inflow of sufficient and well-educated personnel by means of a balance in education, work based learning and labour market, with the result that:

- Students choose a promising profession fitting their talents, but also with perspective
- Companies hire qualified persons with sufficient practical knowledge and the ability to excel
- Employees continue to grow in their personal development and work

For ‘our’ qualifications we have made many products and tools to enhance quality of learning for the pupil in the school and training company: national examinations (standards); courses; curriculum build assistance; mediation for practice (guest) teacher; professional field excursions for teachers; careers information and guidance; intake/progression info for students; practice tasks (book); pupil’s learning tracking system/tool (for mentors); courses for mentors, and so on.

We built/supported creation of websites to give support/tools to improve quality and to meet virtually with peers: mentor www.stagebegeleiden.nl; www.stagewerkt.nl; accredited training companies: www.stagemarkt.nl; information on HE www.deassociatedegree.nl; info- on VET www.mbowijzer.nl; examinations www.explain.nl, www.svpb.nl/, www.exth.nl/, www.ebfs.nl/ , www.vcaexamenbank.nl/; in school practice ROC www.stichtingpraktijkleren.nl/.

Therefore ECABO very regularly does research on “customer satisfaction” per: Qualification ²⁴; Level (EQF 1 to 5); Per customer-group (branch, student, school, mentor, training company); Product (tool, et cetera); Work placement (companies), in order to improve our services. Furthermore, ECABO researches: Development within a profession (match profession - content qualification); Trend watch – yearly update on the development of supply and demand on the domestic labour market, that might influence professions in our domain; Labour market research per qualification per region and nationally; Destination of “our” VET graduate²⁵; Need for follow up study EQF-level 5 in our domain; (self) assessment tools a.s.o.

To create and support a good quality work placement abroad and increase the number of students experiencing a transnational work placement ECABO financed a pilot in Spain (Barcelona)²⁶: an ECABO employee finds adequate training companies and is available for further guidance and support for sending school, company and student. As this is very successful another city has been added: Madrid. The organization is now independent.

No doubt this list is not exhaustive.

3.3. Inventory of initiatives to use European quality tools

ECABO assisted in building the NLQF, the Dutch translation tool for EQF – with the same levels ! The NLQF/EQF levels are mentioned on the qualification documents. It is quite difficult to imagine any quality system without the cycle. We (have) participate(d) in meetings, conferences and seminars on EQAVET, ECVET, EQARF in the Netherlands and abroad. At this moment, the tools do not have added value for our activities, but we do support its use.

²³ ETF = European Training Foundation www.etf.europa.eu/.../HIGHER%20QUALITY%20V... , nr 5

²⁴ <http://www.ecabo.nl/international/vocational-education-netherlands/qualification-profiles/>

²⁵ <http://www.ecabo.nl/arbeidsmarkt/specifiek-onderzoek/>

²⁶ <http://www.barcelonastudents.net> ; <http://www.madridstudents.net>

ECABO is member of and participates in the *Euro Apprenticeship*²⁷ association, an EU funded organization, with the goal to create and give tools for Learning mobility, transnational work placement. So far the organization considers the Dutch practices on work placement too much, too extensive and not applicable in other countries. We keep trying!

Next to this we follow with great interest the developments in the organization *European Alliance for Apprenticeships*²⁸

3.4. Best practices and instruments that work for quality improvement

ECABO is not directly involved with students, especially not in the school/classroom situations. Our courses, support and instruments are directed on those who service VET in all its elements. It may be possible to 'translate' these for target groups, perhaps as this project is evolving we will know more on that.

If you see the listing of supporting instruments, and also we learned - again - from the research (see 4) a good, open, cooperative relation between the school and the work placement company / mentor is of the utmost importance. So be open, bring guest teachers, those who work in the taught profession, into the school and lessons; as a teacher go and familiarize yourself with the profession in today's practice – former personal work experiences from 5, 10 or more years ago have long been expired. Please, work together.

Landstede

3.5. General information on quality systems and quality approaches in Landstede

Within Landstede Group, Landstede VET(MBO) is just one part. For instance, Secondary Education is also belonging to Landstede Group.

"Landstede MBO offers courses in Harderwijk, Raalte and Zwolle. Students learn in one of the 13 areas of vocational education. Within these contextually rich learning environments, participants can follow (competence-based) targeted vocational educational programs, but also familiarize themselves with the programme, and make initial general choices for a profession or field, tailor their individual learning pathway and ultimately qualify. There are learning facilities at different levels and participants can enter or leave the program at several points during the year. Learning at countryside associations is part of the Talented Development pathway: developing people's talents so that they can become valuable members of society. The professional image and career prospects of students are the starting point for all of our student's learning pathways (comparable to secondary education).

Learning in practice is an important cornerstone, for example through creating work placements and teaching departments at our partners' facilities or working on external assignments in project teams. Students can also learn in the areas of Childcare, Welfare & Recycling, and in our own small businesses and shops. Talented development is what makes our training competence-based"²⁹.

Landstede uses the PlanDoCheckAct-cycle to perform her quality improvement. This is used in all levels of the organisation (CEO, management, teams) for all subjects. In the last three years a huge investment has been made in quality approaches, changing the culture into getting teachers more involved in the process in which the quality of education is improved, with the aim of more and better student successes. Professionalization is an important topic in quality (culture) improvement. Therefore Landstede has its own academy for professionalization (*LeerWerkAteliers*) through which teachers/trainers can increase professional knowledge through: workshops, peer learning classes,

²⁷ www.euroapprenticeship.eu

²⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/alliance_en.htm

²⁹ From website Landstede Group - <http://www.landstede.nl/Landstedegroep/Landstede-Groep/Welcome-at-Landstede/Our-activities.html>

colleges, presentations. There are six to eight Tuesday afternoons yearly, for quality improvement of all Landstede professionals. There are no lessons on these afternoons. Quality staff itself also provides workshops on these afternoons.

Every year the director of quality together with the director for planning and control is providing a management information set for each location management. It contains: student satisfaction, early dropout rates, student successes (= number of students that left Landstede with certifications), a comparison of the educational quality self-evaluations of all teams of this location, work field satisfaction, and a comparison of all internal audits and follow up audits after half a year.

A management information set of all internal audits, student successes and complaints is provided for the CEO twice a year.

Monthly, information on early dropout rates are provided on team and management level.

Quarterly, the director of quality provides management information on external audits (Governmental Inspections) and risks to the Supervisors Board of Landstede Group.

Every February/March a general Landstede risk analysis is set by the director of quality, with input of the locations' risk analyses by the managements and quality staff of teams.

In behalf of transparency for the stakeholders (e.g. students, parents and work field) Landstede publishes all Governmental Inspection Reports on her website, together with an introduction.

Governmental inspections take at least place once in three years, follow up audits can take place yearly. If not improved within the set time, Ministry of Education, Culture and Welfare³⁰ can end the allowance to offer a certain qualification.

3.6. Quality in Landstede teams

Teams do not have a team leader in Landstede VET anymore. Every Landstede team has a '*taakhouder*'

(representative specialist) for quality, including all topics concerning qualification, examination and certification. There is also a *taakhouder* for organisation and personnel; the last tasks including professionalization.

All teams follow a team plan, which is part of a wider team toolkit that also includes comparable rates about early dropouts, yearly numbers of certifications, student satisfaction score lists and a team self-evaluation on all topics of educational quality. The last one has to be done with the complete team together, each year in May, before setting aims for a new team plan. Input are several documents amongst which also the yearly written Location plan from the management. This again is based on the (five) yearly Landstede Group vision.

In this electronic team plan (that we use since May 2013) 3 set evaluation moments with the management are included to measure progress and steer, if needed.

Each team is obliged to design a yearly professionalization plan before August of each year, that has to be budgeted for by the location management. The same management approves this plan during a team meeting in October of each year.

The quality specialists of all teams have regularly meetings with the management; management meets once a month with the director of Quality and the CEO in the Quality Council, that has the power to decide on aims, targets and strategy. The director of quality chairs this council.

3.7. The use of European quality tools within Landstede

Landstede uses the Quality cycle as promoted and advised by EU.

Landstede director of quality participated in the preparations for Dutch NLQAVET³¹ advises, based on the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)³² reference tool. She is also expert for NLQAVET in behalf of the Dutch Vocational Education and Adult Training.

³⁰ The Government of the Netherlands – URL: <http://www.government.nl/ministries/ocw>

³¹ NLQAVET and EQAVET Projects; The NLQAVET project is initiated by the National Coordination Desk EQAVET (NCP) - URL: <http://eqavetprojects.eu/projects/nlqavet> approached 07-0102014MK

³² European Commission - URL: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/eqavet_en.htm, approached 07-01-2014MK

Landstede participated in two QALLL project seminars and the formulation of a general advise for the coming years for Quality improvement in VET.

Although ECVET³³ is not yet implemented in The Netherlands in VET, Landstede does pilot with ECVET points in international settings, for instance within the Nurse care qualification. One staff member of Landstede is involved in the Dutch ECVET work group.

EQARF is the abbreviation of European Quality Assurance Reference Framework. The Member States and the European Union established this EQAVET framework to promote and monitor continuous improvement of national systems of vocational education and training (VET). It is a reference tool for policy-makers based on a four-stage quality cycle that includes goal setting and planning, implementation, evaluation and review. Landstede uses as said this quality cycle.

3.8. Best practices/instruments that work for quality improvement in teams

Within the Landstede organisation, these examples can be named as best practices:

- The **Quality 'fan'** - This is a hardcopy instrument that is designed by Landstede quality staff. It is used to inform teams and individual teachers about the educational areas that the inspection is controlling. Each area has its own colour and each indicator its own page. On the front page the portrait of the indicator is published, on the back page you will find the own Landstede instruments that can be used for this indicator and what the Landstede strategy is, concerning this indicator. The quality 'fan' is also reachable as an e-version on laptops, phones e.g. With the quality 'fan' all Landstede instruments are gathered in one instrument.
- The **team toolbox** – This is a digital instrument (based on excel) that can be used by teams to gather necessary information on student success³⁴, the team plan, team-evaluation and self-evaluation.
- **Close working contacts between quality staff and teams** - What also is stated as best practice is the fact that the quality staff goes to a team to advise them. This shortens the distance between teams and quality staff and enlarges the growth of a shared quality culture
- **Group activity: Is Quality my responsibility?** - This is an awareness exercise with a group of teachers/staff about: Who is responsible for the quality in our (team, school, sector). The aim of the exercise is: to conclude together as a group that everyone has his/her responsibility. The group activity has the following process
 - There is a line drawn on the floor;
 - the workshop leader reads a first statement on quality from a paper, or a statement that is shown on a screen (depending of the number of people participating, can also be done with a very big group);
 - each participant takes a walk: to the left or the right side of the line, depending on how they think (yes or no);
 - the workshop leader asks representatives of both parties (one or two people) for an explanation of their chosen position;
 - another person asks to react; people can again change position;
 - The workshop leader gives feedback on the position of everyone;
 - next statement. And so on.This activity that can be done from 10 people onwards together
- **Team activity (3 – 10 persons)** - defining aims (start with a simple sentence, pass through and each person has to improve the aim a bit, following the SMART rules), so you need as many basic sentences as participants). With less people, more rounds.
- **Dream-session about 2025** - At the Landstede location Harderwijk B the Dream-session about 2025 took place. Students dreamt..., guided by team members, management and a representative of the CEO. In two sessions – one with students and one with teachers/management a jump into the education of the future (2025) was made: How does education takes place in 2025? What do students expect? And which two topics/items will have

³³ European Commission – URL: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/ecvet_en.htm approached 07-01-2014MK

³⁴ In NL student success means: the percentages of early drop-outs; number of students that finished educations with a diplom

to stay in their education? Which two topics/items can they do without? Also the e-learning system presentation³⁵ has been introduced and worked with.

- The session with the teachers followed as a reaction on what the students have been presenting. All input has been used for decision making for annual targets.

4. Case Studies in ECABO and Landstede

Case studies were carried out at Landstede and ECABO in December 2013 and January 2014. The questionnaires were filled in by 32 respondents, being 19 teachers and quality staff, one team of 5 teachers, all from Landstede (numbered as NL1, 2, 3) and 8 respondents from the work field (see 4.5 - not further allocated). Extra input was given by three Landstede respondents (NLa,b,c) and in one case the questionnaire was answered by a team of five persons (NL11).

In total 43 questionnaires were set out in Landstede, and 22 to mentors in the work field.

Many Landstede respondents were teachers that were also involved in quality assurance or examination. Three respondents however did not answer all questions (NL7,8,9) or stated that they just started being quality staff member for a team and had to little knowledge about what is expected from them (NL6,12,13).

The four main topics and outcomes of the questionnaires and interviews are outlined below. Furthermore, recommendation from the work field are provided under 4.5.

4.1. Teachers perspective on quality assurance and quality culture of own organisation

As the question: ***What is your institution doing to improve the quality of teaching, training and coaching?*** was an open question, respondents give quite different perspectives once referring to the quality assurance and culture of our organisation. Landstede invests in *professionalization programs* (10x), *Good contact with teams* (6x), Landstede provides effective *instruments* (4x) and *Peer reviews* (3x) have been mentioned most.

Almost all Landstede respondents mentioned the strong Landstede investment in *professionalization* programs to improve quality. 'I know that Landstede for instance can offer you specific training in coaching (NL16)'. And another person responds with: 'There are many professionalization possibilities offered by Landstede (NL18)'

A third of all respondents state that working together in their team or the investment from central quality staff in the teams is a good investigation for quality improvement: 'Our organization supports team quality in general (NL14)' or 'We define what happens and discuss this in the team, finally leading to improvement (NL5). Responses like 'Quality staff of Landstede is very approachable and visits the teams (NL9)' and 'Quality staff organises meetings, meant for *improvement by working together* (NL12)' confirm general quality staff involvement in quality improvement.

Often the support of *good instruments* is mentioned. One respondent specifies also the effective communication between the central quality staff and teachers and teams: 'New instruments are designed when they are needed by us. (NL9)'

A growing awareness for quality improvement by reviewing - both by management or *peer review* by colleagues - is taking place in Landstede. One respondent mentions that: 'Peer review strengthens our way of coaching (NL1a)' and other respondents explain that: 'The management has assessment interviews with their professionals, based also on review of lessons (NLb, NL10).'

There is only one respondent that is responding that the institution is not doing so much to improve quality in teaching (NL6).

Another question was: ***What do you think about the quality culture in your organization?***

56% of the respondents (school) state that quality assurance and culture has been more or less strongly improved, compared with the situation of some years ago.

³⁵ Source: presentation of Mr Dick ter Wee, management Harderwijk, presentain.com/6188, given at strategy day Landstede 2014 (3 February 2014, Zwolle)

One respondent sees a moderate result: 'There is a lot of difference in quality culture within the teams. Quality culture does not yet have the same importance to everyone in a team. Often there is a rustle because of lack of clear communication, or information reaches one 'too late' (NL11).

Most see good results: 'Strongly improved quality culture. I especially saw the growth of collegial consultation. Classroom doors are literally opened during educational activities. This is a very positive change, in my opinion, as it refers to a share culture instead of a screen culture amongst teachers. One is more open for another's influence, sees and hears more from each other. Exchange of ideas (how little as they sometimes are), opinions and feedback is given or shared' (NLb).

Concerning the different levels on which quality assurance takes place, respondents state most of the time that: 'the directors show interest in colleagues and think along in a critical and innovative way.(NL4)' although in another question also was mentioned that it '*would be nice to see our directors more in team meetings*' (NL14).

And: '*To me good quality in education means guiding and coaching the student during his study career in a motivating, inspiring way, respecting one's personality.*(NL8)'

4.2. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threads of quality assurance and quality culture by teachers perspectives

How does your working environment support you in delivering high quality teaching and coaching with continuous improvement?

All respondents but one mention more or less different examples of how the working environment supports them. *Regular consultations* are mentioned four times and also support through 'internal audits, good working atmosphere, clear appointments on paper' is named.

When evaluations are named, not only general student evaluation is mentioned but also structural (coach) lesson evaluation by students.

A respondent states: 'the work environment is highly determined by your own interpretation (NL18)', a very important answer because it points out that every team member has his own responsibility for quality improvement of education!

And another statement is: 'It has become a regular part of our job to work on quality improvement, Quality staff in teams helps focusing. When trying to improve we complete the PDCA-cycle as a whole now(NLa).'

One critical respondent feels only 'obstacles instead of support (NL15).'

How does your working environment prevent you from delivering high quality teaching/coaching with continuous improvement?

Except for some, all respondents mention one or more conditions that should be fulfilled by the institution. *Time* is the condition that is mentioned most: by seven respondents. *Effective communication* is mentioned four times, including that: 'Information should be ready in time and brought to the right people (NL11)' and 'teachers don't always seem to know what is expected of them, this makes them insecure (NL12, NL13).'

And an up-to-date *IT-environment* is mentioned twice by the respondents.

What have you learned from quality assurance in your institute?

Interesting is that all answers are positive now, and many reactions are quite specific, and showing that respondents know what they are talking about! The nicest answer so to say is:

'That quality assurance leads to results, once we decide to do this together (NL14).'

The following reaction is giving a representative input for the own awareness: 'To implement a good quality system you need a long breath and tenacity. Both are essential for ownership on this topic! (NL18).' There is one respondent that just started to work as a quality staffmember in a team. She answers that she is still unsure about what is expected from her.

Some other responses are:

'I would not say learned but I have seen that it is necessary to support teams with quality questions or topics starting at a central steering level. The part that management plays in this is important

(maybe within one team more than with another). It cannot be that there is somehow liberty and lack of engagement on the theme of quality, because teams aim to be result responsible and self-supporting (NLa)

'Using the PDCA cycle and translating it in concrete steps is a very useful and nice occupation. The structural improvements and implementation in your standard way of doing asks for a similar action. Otherwise quality improvement is only ad hoc and cursory improvement, not leading to structural improvement. Examples to improve quality and student satisfaction in a structural way are the self-evaluation and student panel outcomes.(NLb)'

The level of quality care and management sometimes is still low in a team. Our internal audits offer a good overview of risks and also the opportunity to improve as a team by using the format improvement plan. Especially in smaller teams we see that pressure is high and follow up on quality improvement is difficult (NLc)

'The so called Quality 'fan' gives information, structure and hold. The newsletter Languages and Calculating also is a good information source (NL4).'

'That thinking and evaluating together helps. Quality nowadays is beard by the whole organization in a better way. (NL15)'

4.3. Best practices used by teachers to measure quality

As a best practice teachers mention:

- Value the opinion of specific groups (students, work field, teachers. Parents)
- Evaluate also the program
- Use internal audits to show where you can improve yourself as a team
- A good coaching method
- Act only on subjects that you can influence
- Take care of your own health
- Use what is there already
- A good lesson should: have a start and an end; a clear subject; contain more questions asked by the teacher than answers given; be practical; be ended by asking for student feedback (NLa)

4.4. Recommendation from teachers' perspective for development of quality

The following recommendations have been given:

- Set targets that you want to reach (NL5)
- Use each other's professional attitude through intervision and consultation. Use materials that are already there and don't aim to invent new wheels all time (NLc)
- Look after your health, in a way that you can use much energy and passion for the guidance of your students (NL10)
- Listen to you students and your work field (NL12)
- Look around you, be proud and learn. NL15
- Within our institutes' structure, we are very holding back when it comes to the quality of the individual teacher. I don't have high expectations about a team culture that should make it possible to discuss needed individual teacher qualities improvement in the group. This is what the management should work on. I also think that every teacher/coach should critically assess his quality of lessons, and this on-going. Do I possess the basic attitude that is needed, and do I have the time and energy needed to develop the necessary improvements? (NLa)
- The organisation should support improvements in the most effective way; also financial (NL4).
- Address your questions directly to quality staff of the organization. NL14

4.5. Recommendation from Work field perspective for development of quality³⁶

An adapted questionnaire (*uploaded on Huddle*) was sent to mentors / training companies. Twenty-two in total and 8 (= 36%) returned their reactions:

- All of them consider the quality of their work / organization as (very) good and all strive continuously for improvement, not only in their 'main' profession / trade, but also in mentoring / coaching students. Most of the mentors use several ECABO tools and websites and value discussions with the ECABO advisor.
- From the answers it can be concluded that all mentors are very experienced in guiding students in a work placement. It struck me that all mentors seem to be driven not only by professional pride and the wish to pass on knowledge, but especially by some kind of idealism in coaching students, considering their following remarks:
 - *respect for the individuality of the trainee - take them seriously*
 - *give confidence to the trainee*
 - *give the pupil work and responsibilities*
 - *working with pupils needs time, patience and understanding*
 - *I am convinced that everyone can become good at something what he likes.*
- As regards to how to improve quality of vocational education, all mentioned the significant gap between theory at school and practice in professional life. The fact that a profession is taught by persons who have no idea of the professional practice of today itself is (mildly) mocked.
- Some mentors seem to have found slight acceptance of this by having taken initiatives to bridge the gap by participating in school activities: meetings (*on the content of lessons, advice platforms*), assistance in intake students, guest lessons, information on professional attitude; or by having a good relation with a ROC-representative, in which they can bring and get information.
- Further remarks:
 - *Students should be taught a professional attitude.*
 - *Schools/teachers should have a more commercial attitude in their teaching*
 - *Education/teachers should know better what is going on in the business market*
 - *Input from schools on the new enterprise/business/IT is lacking*

5. Recommendations for designing the toolkit products following the research outcomes in country report.

General Recommendations:

- Only build clear instruments
- Be sure that instruments are easy understandable
- Introduce new instruments through a professionalization session
- Keep the door of your class room open, to improve collegial consultation
- Take care of conditions for qualitative good education
- Involve teachers / teams when you want to design effective quality instruments
- Be proud of instruments, documents, formats build by individual teachers. Compliment the individual teacher, and make sure to share the instruments amongst all for use

Recommendations for Landstede instruments and drafts to be used in the toolkit:

- To take the exercise: Is Quality my responsibility? Into the toolkit as this creates the necessary basic quality awareness, and can be used in any team or even with a bigger group of professionals.
- To redesign the 'Dream session 2025' for use in each team or location, because this gives students, teachers and management the opportunity to share a vision for education in their future.

³⁶ Hilde Bastiaannet - ECABO

Specific recommendations based on other internal research:

- As all partners and even all institutes in Europe have to deal with drop-out rates, it could be an excellent idea to create a document in which all project partners share a top 3 action list of best practices that help lowering these rates in their institute or country. This may help other institutes and teachers to find solutions with their group of possible drop outs.
- It may be good to take an instrument/ exercise for teams in the toolkit about how to define SMART targets in their annual team plan, as clear aims mean better targetting.
- It may be a good idea to make a document containing all kind of indicators that teams can choose from for quality improvement.

References

Research:

- A desk research (see footnotes for literature)
- Three questionnaires which were specified after demand: NLa, NLb, NLc and 17 questionnaires: NL4, NL5, NL6 (Landstede Group, NL)
- Eight of the 22 sent questionnaires were filled in by the work field (ECABO)