

REGIONAL TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS FROM SELECTED EXTERNAL EVALUATORS IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPEAN AND MOLDOVAN ECONOMIES

Online research

- **Objective:** To evaluate the trainings needs of external evaluators in seven EQET SEE economies: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Moldova, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia.
- **Instrument:** The questionnaire was developed by the EQET SEE analytical team. Structured in four sections:
 - I. Legal and institutional background and quality assurance
 - II. Quality assurance method
 - III. Communication and
 - IV. Social context

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNCSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Sample

Table 1

Number of answered questionnaires according to the seven EQET SEE economies

	Frequency	Percent
Bosnia and Herzegovina	9	6.0
Kosovo	10	6.7
Republic of North Macedonia	13	8.7
Albania	16	10.7
Serbia	25	16.7
Montenegro	26	17.3
Moldova	51	34.0
Total	150	100.0

Table 2

Years of experience as an external evaluator

N	Valid	124
	Missing	26
Mean		6.96
Std. Deviation		5.22
Minimum		0.42
Maximum		34.00

Table 3

The highest level of education obtained by the external evaluators

	Frequency	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	1	0.8
Health and welfare	2	1.6
Services	4	3.1
Information and Communication Technologies	8	6.2
Business, administration, and law	9	7.0
Arts and humanities	10	7.8
Social sciences, journalism, and information	10	7.8
Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics	13	10.1
Engineering, manufacturing, and construction	18	14.0
Education	54	41.9
Total	129	100.0
Missing	21	
	150	

RESULTS

Quantitative research

- Likert scale from **1** (not at all) to **10** (to a very high extent).
- Arithmetic mean (in a rank between 1 and 10) = 5.5
- The interpretation of the obtained measures is done in relation to 5.5:
 - ✓ Values below 5.5 are considered to point an attitude that does not indicate a particular need for additional training
 - ✓ Values above 5.5 are considered to indicate the presence of a need for additional training
 - ✓ The greater the total measure is than 5.5, the more pronounced the need for additional training/support

I.LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Legal and strategic framework

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Legislation regulating the adult education	140	10	6.19	3.02
Legislation regulating the general education	139	11	6.29	2.97
Official state and lower-level strategies for the development of general education	137	13	6.31	2.85
Legislation/rulebooks regulating code of ethics	145	5	6.39	2.97
Legislation regulating the work-based learning	138	12	6.58	2.93
Legislation regulating the recognition of prior learning	142	8	6.60	2.92
Official state and lower-level strategies for the development of VET education	147	3	6.62	2.93
Legislation regulating equal treatment for everyone regardless of cultural and social background, gender, sexual orientation in education	145	5	6.77	2.87
Legislation regulating the VET education	148	2	6.86	2.94
Legislation regulating data protection	146	4	6.86	2.91
Legislation regulating external evaluation	149	1	7.29	3.03
Legislation regulating quality assurance	150	0	7.48	2.86

I.LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Background of the external evaluation

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
The implementation of work-based learning	142	8	6.95	2.81
Teaching and learning methods	148	2	6.99	2.85
The implementation of practical learning at schools	142	8	7.21	2.76
The effects of school factors on the provision of education	149	1	7.28	2.56
Assessment methods	148	2	7.35	2.76
National quality assurance framework	150	0	7.41	2.81
European quality assurance framework	149	1	8.14	2.07

I.LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Institutional policies

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
The purpose of the external evaluation	149	1	6.66	2.93
The value of the external evaluation	149	1	6.90	2.90
Institutional procedures guiding the appeal process	148	2	7.20	2.55
Institutional procedures guiding the implementation of external evaluation	149	1	7.30	2.69
Institutional procedures guiding the preparation of external evaluation	149	1	7.33	2.70
The impact of the external evaluation	149	1	7.34	2.75
Institutional procedures guiding the reporting on external evaluation	149	1	7.42	2.62
Guiding the enhancement of the quality of external evaluation	148	2	8.09	2.27

I.LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
School climate/ethos	146	4	7.01	2.76
Curriculum	148	2	7.12	2.89
Teaching and learning	148	2	7.27	2.82
Achievements	146	4	7.32	2.77
Management	148	2	7.50	2.46
Student support	146	4	7.55	2.60

II.QUALITY ASSURANCE METHOD

Increased knowledge to improve the reliability of external evaluation

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
The evaluation of the curriculum implementation	136	14	6.88	2.68
Quantitative sampling	133	17	6.88	2.54
Theories behind contemporary research methods	131	19	6.90	2.65
Contemporary pedagogical approaches that support the development of learners	133	17	7.02	2.61
Qualitative sampling	133	17	7.06	2.55
Questionnaire development	135	15	7.16	2.57
Effective teaching and learning processes	135	15	7.18	2.64
Quantitative data analysis	135	15	7.24	2.62
Interview implementation	134	16	7.28	2.54
Indicator development	134	16	7.40	2.66
Qualitative data analysis	136	14	7.46	2.49
Interview guide development	134	16	7.49	2.46

II.QUALITY ASSURANCE METHOD

Improvements in evaluation practice skills

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Understanding of thematic areas and indicators used in external evaluation	134	16	5.68	2.78
Ability to gather relevant data	135	15	6.02	2.64
Ability to connect indicators used in external evaluation with the school reality	134	16	6.16	2.77
Ability to choose the appropriate data collection method	135	15	6.16	2.60
Ability to assess the quality of evidence used for developing reports	135	15	6.51	2.80
Ability to deal with contradictory evidence to make fair and objective judgement	135	15	7.17	2.63

III.COMMUNICATION

Improvements needed in the communication process

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Ability to adjust your communication to a person you are talking to	131	19	5.14	2.89
Oral communication skills	132	18	5.23	3.00
Teamwork and team communication	132	18	5.27	3.08
Ability to adjust your communication to changing circumstances	131	19	5.40	2.95
Knowledge on different communication techniques	132	18	5.49	2.82
Ability to apply principles of assertive and flexible communication	132	18	5.49	3.04
Ability to negotiate	130	20	5.61	3.04
Ability to use non-verbal communication to your advantage	129	21	5.64	2.90
Ability to resolve conflict situations	131	19	5.83	3.01
Leadership and decision making	131	19	5.83	3.08

III.COMMUNICATION

Additional training to improve the communication skills

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Increasing written communication skills	132	18	5.45	3.05
Increasing the quality of written evaluation reports	132	18	6.12	3.04
Formulating high-quality recommendations in evaluation reports	131	19	6.56	2.82
Developing feedback that has a positive impact on school development	132	18	6.59	2.81

IV.SOCIAL CONTEXT

Improvements in knowledge in social topics

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Integration of social equity principles in school context and teaching	126	24	5.61	2.77
Integration of gender equity principles in school context and teaching	127	23	5.75	2.70
Poverty reduction measures available to education institutions/providers	123	27	5.88	2.71
Integration of environmental sustainability principles in school context and teaching	127	23	6.03	2.69
Students/pupils participation in the education process	131	19	6.24	2.92
Inclusive education	127	23	6.24	2.94
Drop-out prevention measures available to schools	130	20	6.30	2.77
School practices regarding the cases of peer violence, cyber bullying, and begging	126	24	6.48	2.87

IV.SOCIAL CONTEXT

Additional training to improve the skills needed in the social context

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
How to communicate with students with disadvantaged background	126	24	6.74	2.68
How to communicate with parents/guardians of students with disadvantaged background	125	25	6.74	2.72
How to communicate to teachers regarding the identified discriminatory practices towards students with disadvantaged background	126	24	6.76	2.62
How to identify and address discrimination practices	128	22	6.78	2.58
How to identify and address negative institutional practices towards students with disadvantaged background	129	21	6.81	2.48
How to communicate to school directors regarding the identified discriminatory practices towards students with disadvantaged background	126	24	6.82	2.58

RESULTS:

Qualitative research

Indicators used in external evaluation that are the most difficult to understand:

- Only 15 external evaluators listed indicators that are the most difficult to understand
- 13 external evaluators answered with the category *not applicable*
- 108 answered that there are no difficult indicators to understand, and
- 14 are missing data.

Students' support (academic mobility of students, students' participation in school life, work with gifted students); management; teaching and learning; school climate/ethos

Indicators used in external evaluation that are the most difficult to assess

- There are 36 listed indicators
- 19 external evaluators answered *not applicable*
- 81 answered that there are no difficult indicators to understand, and
- 14 are missing data.

Students' support, mainly in assessment of students' knowledge, access for disadvantaged groups, students' mobility, employment and active participation; indicators referring on assessment of strategies and policies to ensure the quality of the vocational training program; directors' competence to monitor the quality of teaching and indicators related to the Ethos of the school.

Indicators used in external evaluation that are the most difficult to agree upon

- External evaluators listed 19 indicators
- 24 external evaluators answered *not applicable*
- 90 answered that there are no difficult indicators to understand, and
- 17 are missing data.

Students' support (setting learning goals, achievement); management-leadership skills; teaching and learning (setting learning outcomes); school climate/ethos.

The most challenging aspects of communication with the school management

- There are 51 external evaluators that reported challenges:
- **Knowledge and understanding** *about the process and purpose of external evaluation;*
- **Skills**, *lack of leadership skills, as well as development planning, time management, pedagogical and instructional work;*
- **Attitudes and values**, *faking and avoiding honest answers, giving general, convenient information that would satisfy superiors and not the school community; non-acceptance of facts in the feedback, they don't consider the recommendations given.*

The most challenging aspects of communication with teachers

- There are 51 external evaluators that reported challenges.
- **Knowledge and understanding**, *lack of knowledge of the quality standards, the importance of having preparation for class; regular and analytical monitoring of students' progress respecting the principle of individuality; the need to standardize assessment criteria at the national level, realization of the curricula, their role in ensuring quality in the school, reflection on learning unit.*
- **Skills**, *lack of communication skills, ability to promote their activities, how to adapt the educational process to the needs of the students, time management, improvements in methodological and pedagogical part of teaching, comprehensiveness, and precision.*
- **Attitudes and values**, *lack of honesty and objectivity in conversation; reluctance in formulating answers to concrete (detailed) questions regarding the manner of carrying out the didactic activity; fear of management; lack of openness to communication; unargued resistance to keeping pedagogical documentation and self-evaluation; teacher outcry about extensive administration.*

The most challenging aspects of communication with learners

- There are 40 external evaluators that reported challenges.
- Evaluators confirm that the conversations with students are the most interesting because they share everything that is not included in the school's documents and other evidence provided by the school. But they also agree that there are challenges in communication coming from motivation of the students and their attitudes that they are not the agencies of a change in the schools:
- *Contradiction in answering the questions; insufficient awareness of students about the life and work of the school, lack of motivation/interest; in most cases, the students don't have the skills to participate in discussions/interviews with external evaluators, and their opinion is being indirectly monitored by the teaching staff and school management; they often expect us to know what they mean, they are insufficiently clear and vague in their communication. The emotional impact that blocks free and open communication; lack of responsibility in completing questionnaires seriously and on time.*

The most challenging aspects of communication with parents/guardians

- There are 31 external evaluators that reported challenges.
- Parents' educational level and understanding of the questionnaires, as well as their attitudes and expectations:
- *Misunderstanding and non-objectivity in assessment; insufficient interest of parents in active participation in the life and work of the school; some parents have too high expectations; regular communication and information sharing are essential to address these concerns but it does not apply in technical vocational education; selection of the parents by the school; insufficiently developed mechanisms of genuine involvement of parents in school life and personal relationships with teachers (especially in smaller communities).*

The most challenging aspects of communication with employers

- There are 31 external evaluators that reported challenges.
- *Employers do not provide objective answers but focus on the problems they face; very few employers participate in interviews in the external evaluation process. Thus, it is difficult to obtain relevant information or to have a constructive dialogue; overcoming the reluctance to provide answers to the questions asked during the interviews, especially regarding the motivation to work with the institutions and how to ensure students' access to the equipment they have; The State Educational Inspectorate has no competences for work or evaluation of the work of employers.*

CONCLUSSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

Based on the results obtained from the qualitative and quantitative part of the research (gained on a total of 150 external evaluators coming from the 7 EQET SEE economies), we can conclude that the trainings for the external evaluators should include the following sections and topics:

LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND AND QUALITY ASSURANCE	6.98	QUALITY ASSURANCE METHOD	6.86	SOCIAL CONTEXT	6.35	COMMUNICATION	5.66
Quality assurance	7.27	Increased knowledge in order to improve the reliability of external evaluation	7.16	Additional training to improve the skills needed in the social context	6.76	Additional training to improve the communication skills	6.16
Student support	7.55	Interview guide development	7.49	How to communicate to school directors regarding the identified discriminatory practices towards students with disadvantaged background	6.82	Developing feedback that has a positive impact on school development	6.59
Management	7.5	Qualitative data analysis	7.46	How to identify and address negative institutional practices towards students with disadvantaged backgrounds	6.81	Formulating high-quality recommendations in evaluation reports	6.56
Achievements	7.32	Indicator development	7.4	How to identify and address discrimination practices	6.78	Increasing the quality of written evaluation reports	6.12
Background of the external evaluation	7.24	Improvements in evaluation practice skill	6.29	Improvements needed in knowledge in social topics	6.07	Improvements needed in the communication process	5.48
European quality assurance framework	8.14	Ability to deal with contradictory evidence in order to make fair and objective judgement	7.17	School practices regarding the cases of peer violence, cyber bullying and begging	6.48	Leadership and decision making	5.83
National quality assurance framework	7.41	Ability to assess the quality of evidence used for developing reports	6.51	Drop-out prevention measures available to schools	6.3	Ability to resolve conflict situations	5.83
Assessment methods	7.35	Ability to choose the appropriate data collection method	6.16	Inclusive education	6.24	Ability to use non-verbal communication to your advantage	5.64
		Ability to connect indicators used in external evaluation with the school reality	6.16	Students/pupils participation in the education process	6.24		
Institutional policies	7.24						
Guiding the enhancement of the quality of external evaluation	8.09						
Institutional procedures guiding the reporting on external evaluation	7.42						
The impact of the external evaluation	7.34						
Legal and strategic framework	6.59						
Legislation regulating quality assurance	7.48						
Legislation regulating external evaluation	7.29						
Legislation regulating data protection	6.86						
Legislation regulating VET education	6.86						

When we compare less (3 years and below) with more experienced (5 years and more) external evaluators, we can conclude that they need additional training in the following segments and topics:

	3y and <	5y and >		3y and <	5y and >
LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND AND QUALITY ASSURANCE	7.04	6.82	QUALITY ASSURANCE METHOD	6.94	6.79
Background of the external evaluation	7.37	7.18	Increased knowledge in order to improve the reliability of external evaluation	7.26	7.17
European quality assurance framework	8.33	7.93	Interview guide development	7.86	7.42
National quality assurance framework	7.89	6.93	Qualitative data analysis	7.7	7.47
Assessment methods	7	7.6	Indicator development	7.57	7.27
The effects of school factors on the provision of education	7.54	7.16	Interview implementation	7.67	7.21
Institutional policies	7.26	7.07	Improvements in evaluation practice skill	6.42	6.05
Guiding the enhancement of the quality of external evaluation	8.44	7.71	Ability to deal with contradictory evidence in order to make fair and objective judgement	7.14	7.07
Institutional procedures guiding the reporting on external evaluation	7.65	7.21	Ability to assess the quality of evidence used for developing reports	6.54	6.38
The impact of the external evaluation	6.95	7.3	Ability to choose the appropriate data collection method	6.49	5.88
Institutional procedures guiding the preparation of external evaluation	7.57	7.08	Ability to connect indicators used in external evaluation with the school reality	6.43	5.9
Institutional procedures guiding the implementation of external evaluation	7.57	7.05			
Quality assurance	7.19	7.32			
Student support	7.51	7.67			
Management	7.65	7.23			
Achievements	7.11	7.4			
Curriculum	7.16	7.13			
Legal and strategic framework	6.67	6.2			
Legislation regulating quality assurance	7.81	7.1			
Legislation regulating external evaluation	7.86	6.76			
Legislation regulating data protection	7.03	6.21			
Legislation regulating VET education	7.14	6.39			

	3y and <	5y and >		3y and <	5y and >
SOCIAL CONTEXT	6.5	6.14	COMMUNICATION	5.67	5.54
Additional training to improve the skills needed in the social context	6.75	6.79	Additional training to improve the communication skills	6.46	5.7
How to communicate to school directors regarding the identified discriminatory practices towards students with disadvantaged background	6.83	6.76	Developing feedback that has a positive impact on school development	6.89	6.11
How to identify and address negative institutional practices towards students with disadvantaged background	6.78	6.86	Formulating high-quality recommendations in evaluation reports	7.06	5.93
How to identify and address discrimination practices	6.92	6.74	Increasing the quality of written evaluation reports	6.51	5.69
How to communicate with parents/guardians of students with disadvantaged background	6.81	6.81			
Improvements needed in knowledge in social topics	6.3	5.75	Improvements needed in the communication process	5.38	5.48
School practices regarding the cases of peer violence, cyber bullying and begging	6.51	6.07	Leadership and decision making	6.03	5.58
Drop-out prevention measures available to schools	6.76	6.06	Ability to resolve conflict situations	6.14	5.72
Inclusive education	6.51	6.32	Ability to use non-verbal communication to your advantage	5.31	5.69
Students/pupils participation in the education process	6.51	5.94	Knowledge of different communication techniques	5.81	5.31

Q & A SESSION