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STUDY ON QUALITY OF VET AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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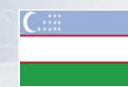
Presentation of key aspects

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Istanbul, 11th May 2014



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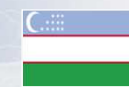
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Objectives of the study (1/2)

1. To define and describe state of art in the existing Quality Assurance systems for VET and HE in Central Asia and the European Union.
2. To identify the main quality gaps in VET and HE as perceived by policy makers, stakeholders and as resulting from statistics and desk research (e.g. unemployment data for graduates, etc.).
3. To identify the focus of the national quality systems and check the relation existing between QA, qualifications and the main transition of education and training systems towards a learning outcomes/competence-based approach in the design, implementation, evaluation of study programmes of VET and HE.



Objectives of the study (2/2)

4. To identify the role of different kinds of competences, and notably key transversal competences, in supporting the long-term employability of graduates and different, innovative approaches to renew curricula in view of this objectives.
5. To identify teachers' and trainers' qualification needs in view of the coherent adoption and implementation of the learning outcomes/competences approach in VET and HE.
6. To produce a set of recommendations for policy makers, institutional leaders and teachers training institutions, containing reference to both existing instruments and cases of good practice, to improve quality of VET and HE -with a focus on employability of graduates, stakeholders involvement, the adoption of a learning outcomes approach and the learning needs of teachers- to move in the direction of modern, competence-based, jointly developed qualifications systems.



Research questions (1/2)

- RQ1 What are the current QA and Evaluation systems in place for HE and VET in each country? Are they referring somehow to ENQA and EQAVET? To which concepts of quality are they mostly referring to?
- RQ2 Who is responsible for what? Which other stakeholders are formally involved in QA and evaluation? Which categories of stakeholders are not officially involved but are able to make their point (e.g. students, industrial sectors representatives, etc.)? Which stakeholders are not involved at all?
- RQ3 Are there well identified quality gaps in the national HE and VET systems? How can they be identified (evidence such as drop-out rates, low employment rates of graduates, unsatisfaction by employers/students, etc.)?
- RQ4 What are the main proposals at stake in terms of quality policy? Are they somehow related to the European HEA or to the European VET policy?



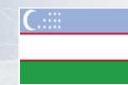
Research questions (2/2)

- RQ5 How important is the clear identification of learning outcomes in the design, implementation, evaluation for study programmes in HE and VET? Are employers, unions, students and other stakeholders involved in the process? How?
- RQ6 Does a national Qualification system exist? Is it actually referred to in the presentation of study programmes? Is it well known by employers? Is it related to the national QA system?
- RQ7 Are there recognised quality gaps regarding the qualification and/or performance of teachers and trainers in HE and VET? What are the measures respectively undertaken to match the gaps? Should other measures be recommended as necessary?
- RQ8 Finally, at system level, what are the connections between VET and HE quality systems? Is there coherence between the two sectors in the approaches towards stakeholders involvement, qualifications and learning outcomes, teachers requirements?



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Methodology and work organisation

Desk Research



Field Research



National Reporting



Validation of National Reports



Integration process





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Highlights from Kazakhstan Report

- HE and VET governed by the same Ministry
- Since 2010 national QA policy with external and institutional standards
- Students and employers regularly surveyed
- Good level of formal involvement of employers in VET organisations
- Strong link with EU, especially in HE
- Strategic impulse to Learning Outcomes approach
- National qualifications framework in progress



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Highlights from Kyrgyz Republic Report

- HE and VET subordinated to different state bodies
- Serious employability issue for HE graduates
- Political impulse to ICT in education
- Different approaches to QA in VET and HE, although some common reference points (competences, connection to labour market, educational standards)
- Permeability not in place, an open challenge
- Strategy for development of education in 2020 (adopted in 2013)
- Lack of QA specialists risks to delay policy implementation



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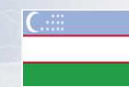
Highlights from Tajikistan Report

- HE and VET governed by the same Ministry
- Major legislation on all sectors of education from 2004 to 2013
- Qualifications of VET teachers and tutor as a problematic issue
- Weak technical equipment
- Decreasing number of HE teachers
- Some convergence in QA regulations in VET and HE (2010), but link still weak in practice
- Increasing internationalisation
- Educational standards in place, but not competence-based



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Highlights from Uzbekistan Report

- HE and VET governed by the same ministry
- Low unemployment rate
- College – Industry system (~ 100.000 employers involved)
- Focus on ICT in education
- Since 1997 relevant legislation on QA and recognised progress
- Still much room for improvement in practice (inclusion, stakeholders, teachers competence, national monitoring of QA implementation, permeability, equipment, internationalisation)



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VET and Higher Education

- More diversity in VET
- More internationalisation in HE
- Different approaches to Quality Assurance
- Pressure towards permeability and convergence
- Different stakeholders involvement traditions



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QA and modernisation processes in the EU - VET developments -

- Huge level of diversity created some difficulties in defining a EU policy for VET
- Copenhagen process and Bruges communique
- Success elements and limitations in EQAVET implementation
- Towards increased integration of EQAVET, ECVET, EQF and other innovation, transparency and mobility instruments



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QA and modernisation processes in the EU - Higher Education development -

- Significant diversity has not prevented internationalisation and common modernisation agenda, more advanced than in VET
- ENQA ESG are a reference worldwide
- A new version of ESG is being proposed
- Progressive shift of attention from study programmes to institutions, as far as they can demonstrate maturity in implementing internal Quality Assurance effectively



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Conclusions: Strengths

- High level of policy attention to education
- Quality, transparency and responsiveness high in the agenda
- Increasing trend towards internationalisation in HE and, to a lesser extent, in VET
- High level of diagnostic capacity



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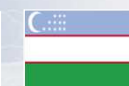
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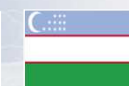
Conclusions: Critical issues and delays

- Strong implementation gap
- Teachers and trainers qualification a core concern
- Old infrastructure for VET (and HE)
- Collaboration between labour market and education, especially HE, is lower than desirable level
- QA still mostly about compliance and input control rather than excellence, outcomes, labour market and students needs
- Difficult scaling-up of pilot projects
- Low collaboration VET-HE
- Permeability HE-VET not yet implemented enough



Recommendations for future action at national and institutional level (1/3)

1. The already started processes for the development of transparent National Qualification Frameworks should be strengthened and accelerated while keeping (or increasing) the involvement of labour market stakeholders in order to offer a clear reference point for Quality Assurance and quality development.
2. The level of independence of Quality Assurance should be increased while, at the sometime, the capacity of HEI and VET providers to organise internal Quality Assurance should be strengthened by training managers and teachers on a permanent, long-term basis including support to project work an institutional level and constantly available on-line courses.



Recommendations for future action at national and institutional level (2/3)

3. The professionalization level of teachers should be massively enhanced (not only to implement Quality Assurance procedures, but to be able to work for a changing society and labour market in collaboration with external stakeholders). The use of ICT and Open Education Resources to this purpose should be systematically explored considering the urgency and the size of the challenge.
4. Learners should be more involved in the Quality Assurance systems of HE and VET, their contribution has provided to be of fundamental value in the European Union experience to guarantee that education systems become more student-centred and less supply-led.



Recommendations for future action at national and institutional level (3/3)

5. Cooperation between VET and Higher Education should be increased, particularly in the field of Quality Assurance, Qualification Transparency, and validation of learning outcomes in view of increased permeability of the two systems for students completing VET or dropping out from one of the two systems (a circumstance quite frequent in the four countries studied).
6. Innovative pilot projects should be thoroughly evaluated and, if their results are good and potentially scalable, should be supported in their further development and generalisation. Frustration deriving from a good pilot project not followed-up may undermine the continuity of the innovation desired and defined at policy level.



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Recommendations for policy dialogue at regional and bi-regional level (1/4)

Criteria for choice:

- Few and very visible
- New (it is easier to start collaborate on new grounds)
- High impact on the identified quality challenges



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Recommendations for policy dialogue at regional and bi-regional level (2/4)

- a large collaboration initiative to professionalise education managers, teachers and trainers making systemic use of ICT and Open Education Resources, with a view to accelerate the implementation of already existing policy developments, but also to create the long-term capacity, at the grass root level, to combine quality assurance understanding and change management capability;



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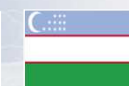
Recommendations for policy dialogue at regional and bi-regional level (3/4)

- the widespread adoption of self-assessment, benchmarking and international peer review, to involve the largest possible number of people in HEIs and VET provider organisations in a large scale quality enhancement and innovation exercise; this will also contribute to accelerate policy implementation and offer the ground to immediately apply the newly acquired competences of the previous point to concrete developments in the education and training organisations;



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Recommendations for policy dialogue at regional and bi-regional level (4/4)

- the development of a Central Asia Network for Quality Assurance, Innovation and Equity, covering both HE and VET, federating the existing bodies responsible for Quality Assurance, Inspection and Accreditation in the four countries and associating them to the main EU networks involved in QA, innovation and equity. This third initiative will complement the previous two by providing the necessary institutional support –at system level- to the effort to improve quality in the provision of HE and VET while participating in innovative and inclusive education policies.



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Thank You

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