Quality, efficiency and equity: the framing elements for funding adult learning

Equipping adults for the 21st Century – Joining Forces for Action on Skills and Competences

Joint conference to implement the Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning and follow-up on CONFINTEA VI

Directorate-General for Education, and Culture of the European Commission (DG EAC) and UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in the framework of the Lithuanian Presidency of the European Union

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Definitions

- **Indicators**
  - **Definition 1**: m**easures of output or processes**. Some indicators can also give an indication of **processes**
  - **Definition 2**: **formally recognised figures or ratios** used as yardsticks to judge and assess performance

- **Indicative descriptors** - 'soft indicators' that reflect **in trends** for achieving the defined objectives

- **Effectiveness -** generally expresses means-end relationships in terms of educational outcomes for learners, and the time needed to achieve them (GRALE 2009)

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Definitions

- **Equity –** relates to equitable access to and participation in, education and training (GRALE 2009)

- **Quality criteria** - characteristics of an adult learning service that determine whether it meets the express and implied requirements of its stakeholders

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Proposed Quality Criteria
TWG on Quality

- Quality Assurance Systems
- Accessibility of adult learning programmes
- Quality of Staff
- Availability of guidance
- Effectiveness of adult learning programmes
- Progression rate from adult learning programmes & utilisation of acquired skills
- Contribution to economic growth
- Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market
- Validation of learning
- Qualifications System

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Examples of quality criteria / indicators related to Equity

Hard Indicator (statistical)	Soft Indicator (indicative descriptors - trends)
• Ratio of accredited providers to population • Overall participation rates • Ratio of vulnerable groups participating	• Range of adult learning programmes • 'Terms and conditions' of participation in adult learning programmes

Staff Quality

Hard Indicator (statistical)	Soft Indicator (indicative descriptors - trends)
• Number of graduates from recognised staff training programmes • % of trainers participating in CPD in adult learning	• % of licensed practitioners is increasing • Public support for CPD programmes is increasing

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Guidance

Hard Indicator (statistical)	Soft Indicator (indicative descriptors - trends)
• Ratio of access points for flexible access to guidance per head of population • Number of annual events & activities at national / regional level to promote adult learning	• Increasing access to / participation in independent guidance over last 5 years • Innovative promotional campaigns increasingly used

Validation

Hard Indicator (statistical)	Soft Indicator (indicative descriptors - trends)
• Number of accredited facilitators of validation • % of accredited assessors per head of population	• Increasing number of accredited facilitators over the last 5 years • Increasing number of access / partial &/or full qualifications through validation

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Key Performance Issues - Finance

- **Level of investment**
- **Efficiency of investment**
- **Effectiveness of investment**
- **Sustainability of investment**
- **Scope of funding system**
- **System Development**

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Examples of Indicators - Finance

Level of investment

Hard Indicator (statistical)	Soft Indicator (indicative descriptors - trends)
• % GDP invested by public sources for economic adult learning • % turnover invested by employers on staff development	• Employers reporting difficulties recruiting skilled applicants • Average number of days training per employee

Efficiency of investment

Hard Indicator (statistical)	Soft Indicator (indicative descriptors - trends)
• Average cost of learning outcomes by subject area and qualification level • Wage premium of workers gaining higher qualifications	• Rate of achievement of qualification outcomes • Participation by non-traditional learners

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Selection of Key Performance Indicators

- Identify limited number of current priorities
- Use relevant indicators which can inform detailed decision making
- Ensure reliable and regular monitoring mechanisms
- Consider both absolute results and trends
- Benchmark against similar or better performers

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Some Equity Considerations

- Eligibility – who is entitled to participate
- Accessibility – what is the take-up rate
- Personal choice – how much freedom for an individual to select learning and learning provider
- Individual needs – what possibilities for additional help according to personal circumstances
- Co-financing – full support for the few versus some help for the many
- Overall impact – collective impact of mechanisms

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