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**INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE
“CHALLENGES FOR HIGH QUALITY OF ADULT EDUCATION”**

**Peer Review Methodology to Assess the Quality
of Adult Education Provision and Offer**

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SOURCES AND BASES OF REASONING

- Grounded on a variety of European surveys and projects (*that, for sure, are partially or entirely well known...*)
- Results of PRALINE project (IT, +Malta, Lithuania and Portugal)

FOCUS OF THE SPEECH

How the PEER REVIEW METHODOLOGY to assess the quality of adult education provision can be useful?

IN EUROPE A LARGE DEBATE IS FOCUSED AROUND THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE SECTOR'S QUALITY GUARANTEES

Characteristics and peculiarities of both the **Adult Learners** and the **Adult Learning sector**, demand continuous effort:

- **to redesign the cognitive framework of the European Peer Review;**
- **to adapt the procedures to Adult Learning.**

Three recommendations...

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERN THREE MAJOR LINES OF
THE EXPECTED DEVELOPMENT OF THE AL SYSTEMS

Recommendation n. 1

Defining a common framework to guarantee the quality
of lifelong and lifewide learning;

Recommendation n. 2

Enhancing the diversification, flexibility and adaptability
of quality assurance methodologies used;

Recommendation n. 3

Supporting the development of a culture of quality in
the AL organizations and institutions.

Common key issues to be discussed

I WILL TRY:

- to answer the question **whether and how** the application of European **Peer Review methodology** adapted to AL sector **can facilitate the adjustment path** towards the objectives set out in those recommendations.
- **to identify some possible areas of implementation**, both at the provider and policy maker levels

Recommandation 1: defining a common framework..

“The lifelong learning approach is gradually making the division between the different education and training sectors obsolete.”

(Panteia Report)

“Beyond the differences related to the specific institutional contexts, the target group or the educational objectives that characterize the different training setting – the approaches to quality assurance in VET and AE are substantially similar.”

(Thematic network QALLL)

It means that

it could be possible to use **also for Adult Education** the quality assurance methods already tested for VET (adapting and developing them further).

K question 1.....

How the European Peer Review methodology adapted to Adult Learning contributes to the fulfilment of this Recommendation?

Key features of learning in adulthood
as well as
some peculiarities of the field of Adult Learning
must be considered to adapt European Peer Review methodology

About specific attitudes of adult learners:

- adult learners are most successful when they find the learning meaningful.
- on the basis of their experience, each adult becomes an important contributor to quality

About some specificities of the AL sector:

- large number of providers in terms of organizational structure, size and operational rules
- a wide range of institutions deliver learning to adults with different needs.
- learning contexts: Adult learning has its own culture and traditions reflected in its diversity, varied age profile, range of delivery methods, teaching and learning styles

Major revision needed to adapt PRM to AL

Quality Areas to be subject to major revision:

- "Learning and Teaching"
- "Information, guidance and registration"
- "Learning outcomes and results"

Also taking into account at least four general dimensions of quality

1. RELEVANCE
2. EQUITY
3. EFFECTIVENESS
4. EFFICIENCY

How to implement the recommendations by policy makers and VET/AL providers?

1. Systematize the framework of the European Peer Review methodology in a transversal way to the different fields of education and training, in order to have a system valid for IVET, CVET and AL
2. Clearly position Peer Review in the larger quality assurance system of adult learning sector in order to ensure further use of Peer Review and its recognition as external evaluation methodology at national and European level.

Recommendation nr. 2. Enhancing the diversification, flexibility ...

“While a common approach to quality assurance in adult learning is needed, its application should not be prescriptive but rather adapted according to the forms of adult learning and their intended outcomes.”

(Panteia Report)

An effective approach should be:

- able to balance the use of self-evaluation and external evaluation;
- capable of including approaches to data gathering both qualitative and quantitative;
- as transparent as possible, easy to use and not bureaucratic;
- able to reflect the work processes and the organization's goals

How the European Peer Review methodology adapted to Adult Learning contributes to the fulfilment of this Recommendation?

Peer Review methodology

- can be easily integrated with other methods and devices
- it can be used as a variant of the external evaluation
- PR framework and its set of criteria and indicators for the evaluation and the continuous improvement of quality **are more sustainable** for organizations that provide not funded training and/or for companies

How to implement the recommendations by policy makers and VET/AL providers?

1. Encourage connections between different policies and instruments in order to create synergies and promote greater transparency and consistency between sectors
2. Consider the possibility of adaptation to the specificities of the organizations and of the educational offer, in order to include everyone in the process of improvement, starting from the sharing of a common framework;
3. Integrate Peer Review methodology with other Quality Assurance methods
4. Support an approach that is adopted on a voluntary basis through institutional and shared forms of recognition and visibility

Recommendation nr. 3. “Supporting the development of a culture...”

“A quality management system (QMS) is a formalized system that documents processes, procedures, and responsibilities for achieving quality policies and objective”.

The focus on quality assurance and management aspects
risks leaving in the shadow the cultural aspects.

A culture of quality as crucial precondition for the successful implementation of a quality management system.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF EXCHANGE BETWEEN TRAINERS AND TRAINEES IS (OR MUST BE...) IN THE HEART OF THE APPROACH TO QUALITY IN TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS

LEVERAGES TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CULTURE OF QUALITY

- A. Strong commitment by the organization's management.
- B. The involvement of staff at all levels in the process
- C. Creating inside the organization an open and collaborative climate
- D. Promoting active participation, giving space to self-determination and self-regulation.
- E. Ensuring that active participation in quality assurance processes become an integral part of the professionalization and the development of staff skills.

European Peer Review methodology and related impact on relevant dimensions of a culture of quality

1. The application of the PR methodology in its different phases is not possible without a strong commitment of and support by the management of the organization involved.
2. The PR Methodology requires for its implementation the active involvement of different roles inside and outside the organization and at every level of the organization.
3. The preparation and realization of a Peer Visit stimulates a process of organizational learning, indispensable for any real change;
4. The PR encourages and promotes the development of competencies of the staff roles involved
5. The PR requires for its application and at the same time it encourages the strengthening of some soft skills (leadership, relational efficacy, teamwork, problem solving, communications etc.)

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS BY POLICY MAKERS AND VET/AL PROVIDERS?

1. Support opportunities for interaction and exchange between VET providers and AL providers
2. Develop quality network among providers, valuing and rewarding initiatives of mutual evaluation among organizations also from different sectors.
3. Promote information and training meetings on the issues of the quality of learning offer addressed not necessarily, or not only, to quality specialists
4. Promote the professional qualification and continuing training of personnel responsible for education and training, in particular on issues of quality assurance and the **consequent recognition of these skills as relevant within their professional profile.**

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



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