

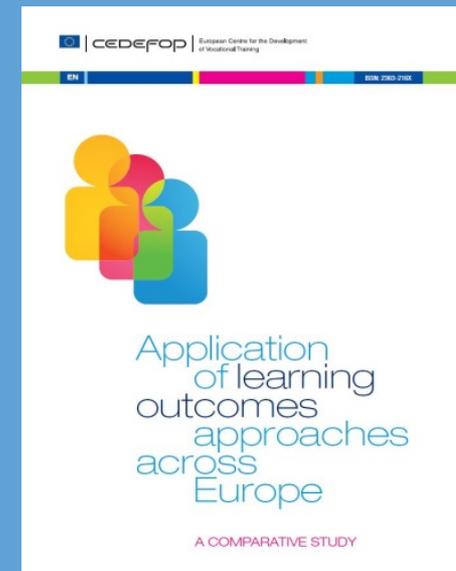


Application of learning outcomes approaches across Europe

The challenges of implementation

Cedefop's comparative study , 2016

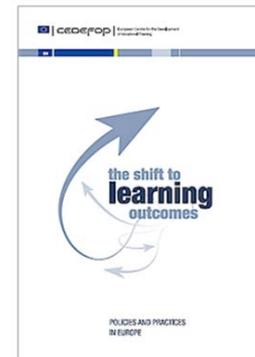
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Aim of the study and research questions

Updated overview since
Cedefop's 2009 publication



- How the shift to learning outcomes is influencing education and training policies at national level (VET, HE, general education, adult education)?
- To what extent LOs approaches are used in institutions educating future teachers?
- Challenges and success factors of implementation



Scope of the study and methodology

- **Comparative overview and analysis in 33 countries**
- **10 case studies in faculties educating future teachers in 9 countries: documentation review, interviews with 2-6 staff members, observations of the teaching lessons, focus groups.**

In total 272 persons were interviewed





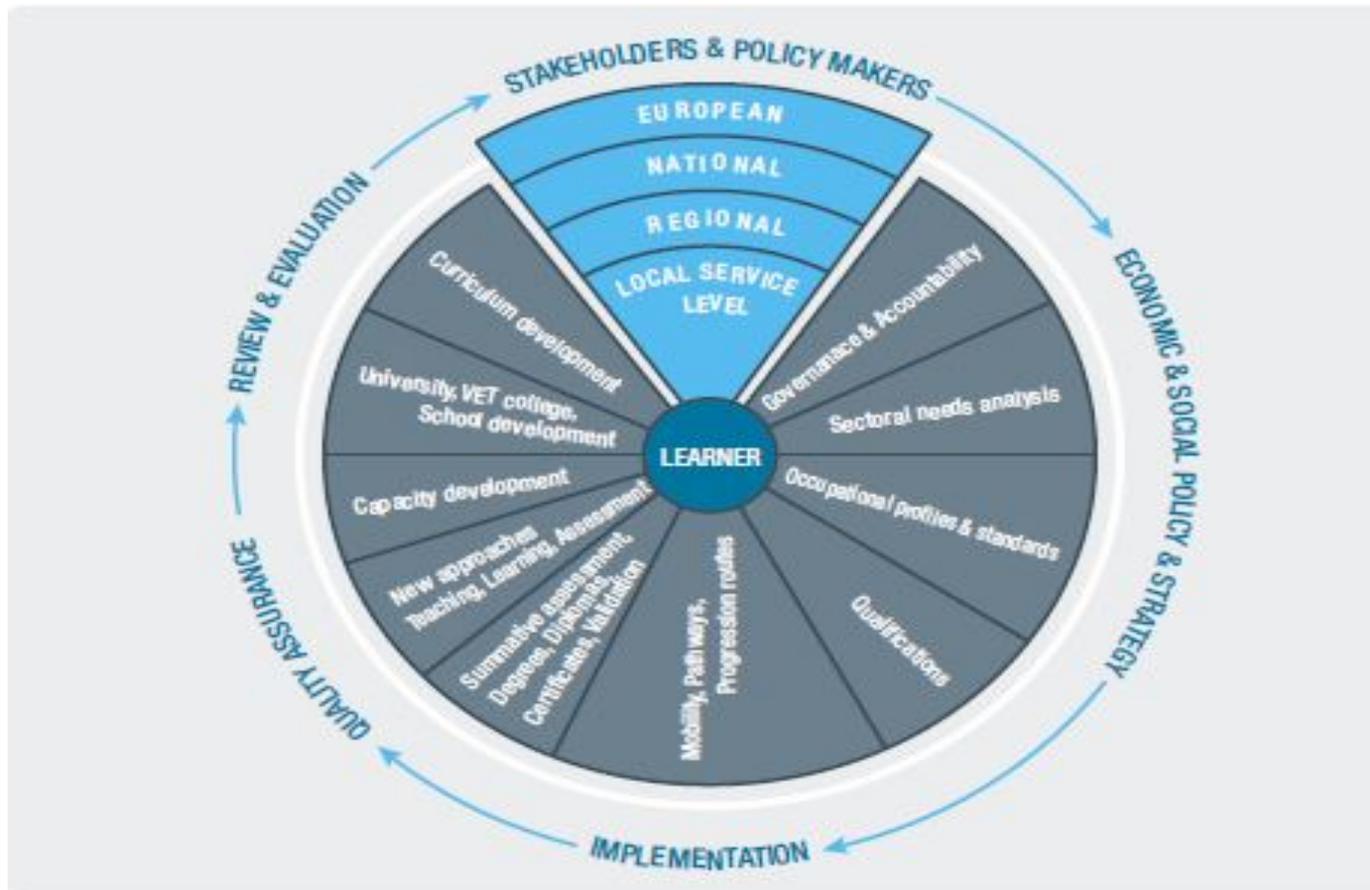
How are learning outcomes defined?



Learning experience
Criterion-based assessment



Users and uses of learning outcomes





Variety of LO's approaches across countries

- **Diversity of learning outcomes approaches (concept, terms) across countries reflecting different origins, national traditions, values and influences**
- **In some countries – learning outcomes and competence-based approaches are used interchangeably**
- **Many countries do not have a single definition or the notion of LO or the same usage across subsystem-common language spanning all education sectors – a challenge**



Learning outcomes catalysts for systemic reforms

- Significant progress in recent years, but uneven across countries and subsystems – different starting points – different speed
- NQFs have been the main driver of progress – increased awareness of stakeholders
- LLL strategies – qualifications reforms - LO approaches – validation of non-formal learning – different patterns in different countries - reinforcing over time
- Key role of European processes, instruments and programmes



Learning outcomes approaches in VET well established

- LOs or competence-based approaches are well embedded in most VET systems
- Many countries involved in VET qualifications and curriculum reforms strengthening LO approaches in recent years
- Outcomes-based VET standards and assessment standards increasingly introduced
- Progressively aligned with NQF level descriptors – work in progress
- Most countries are institutionalising the participation of social partners in standard-setting procedures - sectoral skills councils



Learning outcomes approaches in HE

- Important progress made during the last decade (while lagging behind VET in 2007-09)
- Progress uneven across countries, institutions and disciplines
- European cooperation on qualifications frameworks and quality assurance (accreditation) – an important role
- Pilot projects and programmes – an important role
- Communities of practice and projects like ‘Tuning’ play a role



Learning outcomes approaches in general education

- **General upper secondary education has yet to embrace learning outcomes**
- **In lower secondary:**
 - ✓ Introduction of educational standards, revision of national curricula, less assessment
 - ✓ Increased focus on key competences (key competence framework)
 - ✓ Impact of international assessment (PISA)
- **In Adult education:**
 - ✓ Policies on lifelong learning and validation play a role



Implementation of LOs: some important factors

- **Collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders – vital in all phases – TRUST to be developed**
- **National support mechanisms**
- ✓ Stakeholder consultation, programmes for professional development of teachers; support programmes and incentives, guidelines on writing learning outcomes, monitoring implementation
- ✓ Lack of capacity building for institutions and individuals in some countries
- **Resources**
- **Allocation of appropriate time for stakeholder learning seem to be key: ‘paradigm shift takes time, ‘changes are time-consuming’**





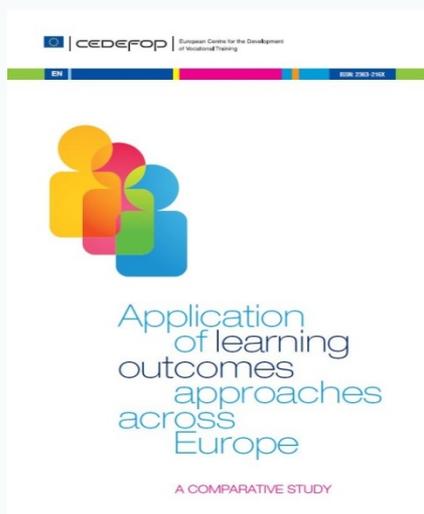
Implementation of LOs: some important factors

- Embedding of LO approaches is a non-linear process – feedback-loops – mutual learning
- Successful policies seem to follow incremental and gradual implementation - PILOTS
- Capacity-building is a key driver of change at the micro level
- Acceptance by teachers and professional development of head teachers and inspectorates, teachers, trainers, counselors and assessors is VITAL



Challenges and possible options

- **Need for further reflection on underlying concepts and taxonomies – when designing learning outcomes**
- **LO approach has implications for assessment: alignment of assessment practices with intended LO still remains challenge in many countries**
- **New innovative assessment approaches are emerging**



**For more information
please visit Cedefop's website**

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu>

