



**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

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## The study visits programme Synthesis seminar

### “Quality and efficiency of education and training: findings from study visits”

1 - 2 February 2010

Quality and efficiency of education and training, which have been in the focus of our seminar in the last two days, are also in the focus of the EU policy agenda for education and training. The seminar successfully summarised the findings and examples of good practice related to the improvement of quality and efficiency in education and training as they have been identified in group reports on:

- the development of key competences, more specifically, of communication in foreign languages and of social and civic competences,
- ensuring high quality of teaching and training, and
- leadership and management of education and training institutions.

During the seminar, participants in three workshops reflected on:

#### **1. Learning to be – challenges to learners**

Social and civic competences that include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence allow individuals to participate in social and working life in increasingly diverse societies. The ability to communicate in foreign languages widens an individual's horizons and contributes to increased awareness and understanding of other cultures. Supporting the development and the acquisition of key competences by all citizens in a lifelong learning perspective constitutes an ambitious and complex task that education and training systems have to tackle.

During the discussion in the workshop, the group agreed that the focus should at all times be on the learner; however, for the learners to be effective, key competences need to be developed by both teachers and learners. Effective learning in school takes place in the context of the learning community that involves the families and the world of work. In such a context, all parties learn from one another and

acknowledge and accept diversity. A 'difficult' situation, a 'crisis' becomes a challenge and an opportunity for change and growth.

## **2. Learning to teach – challenges to teachers and trainers**

Quality of teachers and trainers is the most important school factor affecting student performance. In the context of constantly changing educational environment, teachers should become committed lifelong learners, good learners and 'realistic dreamers'. To support this, teacher training should be coherent from initial training through induction to continuous professional development.

As a result of the discussion in the workshop, the following recommendations evolved:

- student traineeships/placements in schools should be part of university studies;
- induction courses into teaching should combine theory and practice;
- re-professionalization, in-service training at university for mature teachers is an effective way for keeping teachers in the classroom;
- self-evaluation and mentoring are means of improving teaching quality and job satisfaction.

## **3. Learning to lead - challenges to education leaders**

The role of school leaders has changed rapidly because of technological change, economic globalisation and increased migration and mobility. Schools become learning communities to equip young people with knowledge, skills and attitudes and to involve wider communities in the governance of education and training.

School leaders are key agents or change agents to ensure the quality of individual schools or institutions. There is a need to find the right balance between rules formulated at central levels and self-evaluation processes undertaken at school or institutional level.

The discussion in the workshop led to think that effective schools have good and supportive atmosphere for working and learning together. This includes shared and distributed leadership, team decision-making, open communication between the school management, the teaching/training staff and students as well as their parents, employers, etc. Internal evaluation (self-evaluation) is increasingly important for ensuring quality of learning and for further improvement and development of institutions. A proposal for a virtual training programme for "Euro-heads" (newly

appointed school principals) that was developed in the group pointed out to the need to develop 'soft skills' and the emotional intelligence of leaders.

**To sum up**, the findings of study visits on the quality and efficiency of education and training as presented in the group reports and further discussed during the seminar show that the study visits programme gives a substantial contribution to the cooperation and common learning in the field of education and training in Europe; there are strong links of the outcomes of study visits to the issues of the European cooperation in education and training. The discussions of last two days strongly resonate with the [Conclusions of the Education, Youth Affairs and Culture Council](#) (November, 2009) on the professional development of teachers and school leaders that recognised 'the motivation, skills and competences of teachers as well as the quality of school leadership' as key factors in achieving high quality learning outcomes.

Cedefop invites the participants to share the new ideas they acquired during the seminar with heads of their institutions, their colleagues and professional associations. It will be most beneficial if the outcomes of the seminar are communicated to decision-makers at higher levels, for example, to those setting policies at local/regional or even national levels.

Teachers, trainers and school leaders and decision makers should benefit more from the multiple opportunities for sharing good practice and cooperation that the [Lifelong learning programme](#) presents. The study visits programme as well as Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig programmes should be more used for information exchange and continuous professional development.

On 1 February 2010, the call for applications for the first round of study visits (September 2010- February 2011) was launched. The participants are invited to promote the programme and motivate their colleagues to apply.