



## **Managing for @ School of Success**

### **E-book 2 – Schools' Evaluation Executive Summary**

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## A – Context and Objectives

This Executive Summary concerns the ebook which resulted from the material produced (in the working version, without any “treatment”) by the participants and invited guests at the third and fourth Training Events of the Managing for @ School of Success (M@SS) project, with reference 2015-1-PT01-KA201-013059 and financed by the Key 2 of the Erasmus+ of the EU programme.

The main topic of the second year of the project was Schools’ Evaluation, which was also the focus of the two training events, the products of which are presented in this ebook.

Self-evaluation and quality in schools are an imperative of autonomous management, not only due to the need for accountability and responsibility in educational institutions and their agents, but also because self-evaluation and self-regulation play a fundamental role as the school learns to become organisationally mature.

Schools’ self-evaluation allows identification of what is done well and what needs to be improved. In truth, it gives the school an opportunity to learn, provides the school community with tools to correct and improve its functioning; provides educational decision-makers with elements supporting their decisions and provides school users with elements to allow a clearer interpretation of the quality of teaching establishments, guiding choices and interventions.

The aims of this ebook match those of the Training Events in relation to self-evaluation and are the following:

- To share experiences and best practices;
- To promote the knowledge formed and shared by the partner countries;
- To encourage actions and processes to improve the school’s quality, operations and results;
- To create a reference framework and indicators based on partners’ practices.

## B – Revisiting the Main Topics

This ebook is divided in three parts corresponding approximately to the tasks performed by the participants during the training events.

**The first deals with the concepts and topics concerning schools' self-evaluation and includes the presentations made by partners about their view of evolution.**

The work began with a reflection on major themes and the monitoring indicator inventory that headteachers use to monitor both the system's effectiveness and its internal coherence. Among the topics of school effectiveness, appropriate indicators to measure access, dropout and achievement were discussed. Regarding internal coherence, the team discussed the possibility of using indicators on a regular basis to measure transitions between cycles, teachers' adequacy, or resource adequacy. How to measure them? How to deal with them? and What should be included? These were the main questions that opened the session.

The following issue was more centred on each school's aims, devices and practices.

Reading through the presentations, it stands out that **pupils' achievement is the leading concept** driving all the schools' self-evaluation devices presented. Additionally, schools' headteachers presented other subjects closely related with this main concept which can be understood as intermediate variables, such as: classroom teachers' quality, teachers' collaborative work, bullying and indiscipline, learning workload and leadership culture. Figure 1 clarifies these relations and also shows the purpose of this framework which should lead, ultimately, to each school matching national standards and its external evaluation.

Figure 1.



**The second part, entitled “Narrative Memories”, presents the vision, learning, reflection and change processes promoted through the project.**

Entitled Narrative Memories, this chapter aims to present, in a more subjective record, some of the effects of the Managing for @ School of Success project, as they were experienced and reflected on by project participants and how they shaped some headteachers’ visions and management practices. These two objectives are aligned with the main topic of the project for the second year - school self-evaluation, and with the aim of monitoring the project’s achievements.

The use of narratives to understand the international experience of being part of a consortium where the great majority of participants were also headteachers, allowed a reflective and relational “inside view” of what managing a school is all about. The headteacher’s task is a dynamic process characterized by the continuous interaction of thought and action continuously ‘jumping’ from personal, to social and material environments. The results captured these dynamics and testified the coherence between headteachers’ statements and the requirements of self-evaluation.

**The third part of the ebook, “From the narratives to the effects on schools’ self-evaluation” contains a set of key ideas, indicators and evidence inherent to the self-evaluation process.**

This section, entitled “From the narratives to the effects on schools’ self-evaluation” contains a set of key ideas, indicators and evidence inherent to the self-evaluation process. This came from a task performed by participants during the fourth training event of the M@ss project. The aim of the task was not only to identify the key ideas of the main concerns in schools, but mainly, to relate such concerns with indicators (already in use in schools, or not), irrespective of data collection. Furthermore, the task suggested the identification of connections that help to explain the key concerns, their indicators and problems raised by these indicators. This identification allowed a lengthy and deep discussion among participants regarding their practices as headteachers within their cultural environments and organizational regulations.

Two main conclusions of this task could be briefly identified as follows:

1. Schools’ self-evaluation devices struggle with the relevance of indicators. A clear and more effective relation between indicators, their definition and significance seems to be a path to explore in future training events.
2. Schools’ self-evaluation devices shape schools’ concerns regarding both improvement and accountability. Therefore, diagnosis and control are the two aims of schools’ self evaluation, underlying key ideas.

## C – Main Conclusions

Revisiting the objectives, it is possible to conclude that in this year and due to the work done during the training events and the respective tasks performed by participants:

- 1) Participants share experiences and best practices and this gives schools an opportunity to learn, providing the school community with tools to correct and improve its functioning. It helps headteachers in decision-making concerning



schools' evaluation devices and gives school users elements that allow clearer interpretation of the quality of teaching establishments, guiding choices and interventions.

- 2) Furthermore, sharing experience means sharing and increasing both scientific and pedagogical knowledge about schools' self-evaluation, as this was brought by diverse partner countries.
- 3) The "Narrative Memories" illustrate the learning uploaded by participants, as they were able to integrate knowledge acquired into their practices.
- 4) Understanding schools, regarding self-evaluation processes and their principal concerns, was a permanent process of analysis. The intention was to identify the educational policies and general vision of self-evaluation in each partner country. What are each school's strategies to develop educational quality, promote improved results and provide an overall response of quality, from a perspective of integrating the pupil as a citizen equipped with the skills for the 21st century?
- 5) This broad question dominated the second year's discussions among participants. It was not possible to create a single reference framework and indicators based on partners' practices, due to their autonomy and national educational constraints. Nevertheless, identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the self-assessment process, in the different schools, remains as a challenge for other reflections.

## D – Main Recommendations

Self-evaluation is an important task for schools to perform as far as they are autonomous and responsible for the curricula they are implementing. Therefore, and linking this with next theme to run within the M@SS project (headteachers as curriculum makers), it would seem advisable:

- a) To promote dedicated networks among head teachers regarding self-evaluation topics;
- b) To discuss further the longitudinal impact of indicators (their definition and potential) used to map schools' quality;



- c) To give more importance to dissemination of schools' self evaluation both regarding their recipients and the ways of carrying this out, namely recurring to more interactive, tailored and inspiring means of communication.