COMMON SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK (CAF) FOR THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

Public administrations are faced with a variety of challenges, contexts and circumstances, including social problems and social exclusion caused by financial and economic crises, low levels of trust in politicians and public institutions, demographic changes, the rapid development of information and communication technologies and the development of a differentiated civil society with new information and communication needs, which require inclusion in active policy formulation and decision-making.

All Member States have established cooperation between different levels of government and institutions dealing with the quality of universities, public administration institutes and private organisations. Despite all the common features of an established organisational structure for promoting quality, there are significant differences between the actual organisational units of the counties and the way they cooperate with other actors in the field of quality management.

Keywords: *CAF education, public sector, performance.*

1. Introduction

In almost all Member States, quality management training is considered not only very important but also essential for the successful implementation of quality. In some countries, total quality management experts and experts from specific sectors have started to develop CAF versions for their sectors such as local government (Belgium), justice (Italy) and others. In most cases this has been done at the national level.

At some point, the CAF Resource Centre was informed that some countries had developed a CAF version specific to the education sector. First the Belgian French-speaking Community informed about their CAF version on education and training institutions, training. They created a working group of 5 education and training experts who reflected during several meetings on the adaptation of the CAF for their sector. The group was chaired by the national CAF correspondent in Belgium, Jan Marc Dochot. Their work contributed greatly to the development of the CAF in education.

In Norway, Even Fossum Svendsen developed examples and documentation adapted to the education sector at county level. In Portugal the work on developing CAF for the education sector has been done at university level. In Italy there have been experiences of this kind carried out by regional offices in schools in Lombardy and Veneto.

The coordinating group for the development of the CAF model for education consists of the Ministry of Public Administration, the Ministry of Education, FORMEZ, INVALSI (Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement), TQM experts, school managers from the north, centre and south of Italy who were selected on the basis of their experience in using CAF.

The CAF version for the education and training sector is designed for all education and training institutions, at all levels, from pre-school to higher education and lifelong learning in Europe. This document was discussed in Maastricht on 18 February and endorsed by the Innovative Public Services Group (IPSG) - the EUPAN working group responsible for all CAF activities at its meeting in Madrid on 19 and 20 April 2010.

The International Commission on Education for the 21st century characterises education, in its Report to UNESCO, as the essential pillar in the formation of a strong, innovative and democratic society, reaffirming the importance and the role of quality education, and the idea that through education the beneficiaries of education build their own value system through the knowledge they assimilate on a daily basis, that education contributes to reducing discrimination, promotes equality of opportunity and emphasises the development of the necessary skills of the beneficiaries of education so that they can develop their full potential and face the demands of a changing future.

This conceptualisation of education has provided a comprehensive integration and perspective on the importance of the education sector at European and global level, and therefore also on the importance of quality of education. It was concluded that at the level of the learning system, there is a need for a supportive guiding

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structure, a model, to ensure and standardise the quality of the European education sector, to standardise policies and related legislation in the field of quality in education, in order to achieve results and performance in this sector of utmost importance for the present and future society.

2. Adapting the CAF for VET institutions: why?

The CAF was originally designed for use in all areas of the public sector. So it is a tool that may be interesting to apply to the education sector. The year 2010 was the deadline imposed by European education ministers to complete the Bologna process, a process based on the Declaration that triggered the harmonisation of European education in 1999.

The Bologna Declaration committed to promote European cooperation in quality assurance with the aim of developing comparable criteria and methodologies.

Bergen Declaration (2005) - establishing a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on the principles of transparency and quality.

In 2008, a number of CAF national correspondents and/or education experts in different countries - based on the extensive use of the model in the education sector in a number of Member States, as well as subsequent adaptation at national level by Belgium, Italy and Norway - decided to join forces with a twofold objective. On the one hand, CAF experts wanted to increase the number of CAF users, and on the other hand educational institutions wanted to implement harmonised European quality management such as learner-centredness (see London Declaration 2007).

We are in favour of a common European approach in the public sector that is easily accessible and free of charge.

At European level the Innovative Public Services Group (IPSG) - EUPAN has mandated, empowered a working group to develop a CAF version for the education sector based on the experience of the Member States. CAF and education are intended for all education and training institutions, regardless of their level. It ranges from pre-school level to higher education and lifelong learning.

3. What's new?

1. Adaptation of the language - we will use „students" instead of „citizen-customer" and „education and training institutions" instead of „public organisations".

2. Adapting the terminology: creating a glossary of revised terms.

3. Integration of 2 additional documents: an introduction on the use of CAF and TQM and European education policy.

4. The initiative to start a quality approach using CAF must be based on a clear decision from leadership to consultation of all people in the institution. Self-assessment according to the CAF model gives the education and training institution the opportunity to get to know itself better in terms of quality management.

4. Analysis of the CAF Education Model

Criterion 1. Leadership. The behaviour of an institution's leaders can help create a clear and unified purpose. Leaders provide direction to the institution. They develop the mission, vision and values necessary for the long-term success of the institution. They motivate and support people in the institution and act as role models by adopting appropriate behaviour in line with the institution's values.

Leaders develop, implement and monitor the institution's performance management system and review results. They are responsible for improving performance and preparing for the future by making the changes necessary for the institution to achieve its mission. In education and training, leaders are the main interface between the institution and the political sphere, but they also have the role of sharing responsibilities while maintaining unity in the institution. They are responsible for managing relationships with other stakeholders.

In addition to their own values, specific to education, training institutions share a number of common values such as: social and human development through knowledge, training the skills and capacities needed to take up the challenges of the new millennium.

A distinction must be made in the education and training sector between the role of political leadership and those who run the educational institution. The CAF focuses on the evaluation of the management system of the education and training institution rather than on the 'quality' of education policies.

The leaders of an educational institution create the optimal conditions for the institution to adapt to the ongoing changes taking place in society. They do this by looking for opportunities for innovation and modernisation and by actively integrating electronic solutions in administration (e-gov).

Criterion 2. Strategy and planning. Through the effective combination of its interdependent activities, an education and training institution contributes to its overall performance. The institution implements its mission and vision through a clear stakeholder strategy, aligning public education and teaching policies and objectives on the one hand, and stakeholder needs on the other. This strategy is underpinned by continuous improvement in the management of resources and processes and translated into measurable plans, objectives and targets.

The planning and strategy reflect the institution's approach to how to implement modernisation and innovation.

Strategy and planning are part of the PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act), starting with the collection of information on the present and future needs of stakeholders, and by analysing past results and their impact. This includes the use of reliable information, including the perception of all stakeholders.

Feedback from the internal review process is also fundamental to producing the planned improvements in institutional performance.

Identifying critical success factors - the conditions that must be met to achieve strategic objectives - target setting plays a crucial role in ensuring an effective system for tracking and measuring results.

Objectives should be formulated in such a way as to distinguish between outputs and outcomes.

Institutions should consistently and critically monitor the implementation of their strategy and planning and update and adapt them whenever necessary.

Criterion 3. Employees. How people interact with each other and manage resources and availability ultimately determines institutional success. Respect, dialogue, empowerment and a safe and healthy environment are fundamental in getting people engaged and participating in the institution's efforts to achieve excellence.

The education and training institution manages, develops and communicates its competences and potential through the people it has both individually and institutionally to support the strategy and action plan for the effective operation of its processes.

Criterion 3 looks at how the institution links its strategic objectives to its human resources so that these resources can be identified, developed, allocated and managed to achieve their optimal use and intended success.

It follows that particular attention must be paid to the implementation of human resource management so that there are benefits on both sides: for the institution and for the employees.

Employee well-being is an important aspect of management. When education and training institutions create the framework for employees to continuously develop their skills, take more responsibility and initiative, they contribute to the development of the institution. This can be achieved when there is a link between their own performance goals and the institution's strategic objectives and when they are involved in setting the institution's policies on recruitment, training, recognition and rewarding the merits of employees.

Criterion 3 focuses on the ability of managers and employees to actively cooperate for the development of the institution, to break down hierarchical barriers through dialogue, to create an environment conducive to creativity, innovation and suggestions for performance improvement. All these elements contribute to increased employee satisfaction.

The proper implementation of HR policies depends on all leaders and department heads across the institution demonstrating that they care about people and their issues and actively promoting a culture of open and transparent communication.

Institutions may, in assessing their performance, take into account the restrictions on their freedom of action arising from education and training and employment policies.

Criterion 4. Partnerships and resources. The way in which the educational institution through its learning plans as well as the management of key partnerships (especially with learners) supports its strategy, action plans and the effective functioning of its processes. In this way, partnerships are important resources for the proper functioning of the education and training institution.

Alongside partnerships, institutions need more traditional resources - such as financial, technological and material - to ensure their effective functioning. These are used and developed to support the institution's strategy and its most important processes to achieve the institution's objectives in the most effective way. Presented in a transparent way, the Institution can ensure accountability to stakeholders on the legitimate use of available resources.

In an ever-changing society of increasing complexity, institutions are obliged to manage relationships with other organisations, both public and private, in order to achieve their strategic objectives.

Another consequence of this complex society is the need to increase the active role of citizens/customers as key partners. In the world of education and training, citizens/customers are students, or their legal representatives; parents, guardians, etc. The term „citizens/customers" refers to the role of citizens „ranging

between stakeholders and the service user". In this criterion, the CAF focuses on involving citizens in public affairs and in the development of public policies by being open about their needs and expectations.

Public organisations are often subject to constraints and pressures that are far greater than those normally found in the private sector. The ability of public organisations to generate additional financial resources is limited as is their freedom to allocate, or reallocate, their funds to the services they wish to provide. It is therefore essential that they measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the services they provide.

In this respect, sound financial management and the existence of internal control and accounting systems are the basis for proper costing. Even though public institutions often have little influence in allocating resources by demonstrating their ability to deliver more and better services at lower cost, they create the opportunity for innovative services to be implemented more quickly.

An important resource is the amount and quality of information the institution has available. It is therefore important that information and knowledge needs are identified and used to support the strategy and planning review/evaluation process. The institution must provide employees with the knowledge and information they need to work effectively in a timely and accessible manner. The institution must ensure that it provides essential knowledge and information with key partners and stakeholders in line with their needs.

Evaluation:

4.1. Development and implementation of key partnership relationships

4.2. Development and implementation of partnerships with learners

4.3. Financial management

4.4. Information and knowledge management

4.5. Managing technological resources

4.6. Managing facilities

Criterion 5. Processes. How the institution identifies, manages, improves and develops its key processes to support strategy and planning. Innovation and the need to generate increasing value for learners and other stakeholders are two of the main factors in the development process.

Key implications

Every institution's performance is driven by several processes, each process being a set of consecutive activities that transform resources or inputs into outputs or outcomes thereby increasing value.

These processes can be of a different nature:

• Core processes are those related to the mission and purpose of the institution and are essential to the delivery of goods and services;

• Management processes relating to the leadership of the institution;

• Supporting processes for the delivery of required resources.

Only the most important, key processes are subject to evaluation in the CAF.

Identifying, evaluating and improving key processes is effective to the extent that they contribute to the achievement of the mission of the educational and training institution. Involving students and other stakeholders at different stages of the management process taking into account their expectations contributes to the overall quality and reliability of its processes.

In the field of education and training, examples of goods and services include: qualifications such as certificates and diplomas, national and international conferences, lifelong learning programmes, libraries open to the general public. The main outcome for an education and training institution is that an individual has acquired competences and skills - possibly certified ones - and is able to find employment and integrate into society - as well as training through lifelong learning and self-development. In order to achieve this mission (strategic plan), education and training institutions must implement a number of key processes, including:

a) Essential processes:

• the education and training process (structures, programmes, methods, on-the-job, training and apprenticeship, assessments, individual projects, etc.);

• civic process (attitudes, values, citizenship, participation, etc.);

• research and development and applied research processes (extension of study activity, use of institutional quality assessments, basic research, etc).

b) „Support" processes:

• external communication processes (publicity, shows and exhibitions, open days, websites, media, etc);

• staff recruitment process (selection, retention and development of skills, etc);

• administrative management process (registration, enrolment, filing and records management, organisation of courses, etc);

• career guidance and support process;

- budgeting process.

c) Managerial processes:

- measurement or evaluation processes for the various stages of the core and support processes;
- decision-making processes.

Monitoring how these different processes work is important to maintain an overall and integrated view of the functioning of the institution.

Some management and support processes are not always key processes, except in times of crisis or emergency (*e.g.*, violence control and prevention measures, budget preparation, restructuring, etc.).

In the case of support services (resource management), the identification of key processes will depend on how they contribute to the achievement of the institution's core processes and strategy. In all cases, an institution must be able to identify the key processes, which it carries out in order to deliver the expected results taking into account the expectations of students and other stakeholders.

Results

Criterion 6. Beneficiary/client-oriented results. The institution's outcomes are the satisfaction of its citizens/customers - students and other stakeholders with the products/services it provides.

Key Implications

Education and training institutions can have a complex relationship with the public. In some cases, this can be characterised as a customer relationship whereby learners are beneficiaries of education and training services. In other cases, it is characterised as a relationship with the citizen, as the education and training institution defines a framework in which learning is transmitted to members of society (compulsory schooling until the age of 18, leads to socio-professional integration, transmission of values, etc.). As the two cases are not always clearly separable, this complex relationship will be described as a citizen/customer relationship. In the field of vocational education and training, we use the term „learn" in view of the duality of this relationship.

In the case of education and training institutions, the concept of „citizen/customer" includes learners as well as other stakeholders (parents, employers). Education and training institutions provide services in accordance with local and/or central government policy (sometimes within different networks and under different organising authorities), and are accountable for their performance as policy actors. Measurement of learner and other stakeholder satisfaction is usually based on areas that have been identified as important by learner groups and is based on what the institution is able to improve in its specific area. It is important for all education and training institutions to directly measure the satisfaction of learners and other stakeholders in terms of, for example:

- overall image of the institution;
- level of academic qualifications and achievements;
- matching of qualification profiles to the requirements of the educational and socio-economic environment;
- quality of education and training processes;
- transparency of the institution;
- involvement of students and other stakeholders.

Institutions usually use questionnaires or satisfaction surveys, but they may also use other complementary tools such as focus groups.

6.1. Results of measuring citizen/customer satisfaction

6.2. Indicators measuring citizen/customer orientation

Indicators related to the overall image of the institution.

- Number and processing time of complaints;
- Degree of public confidence in the institution (*e.g.*, student loyalty, population growth, number of students taken on by employers, etc.);
- Waiting times in the secretary's office and other departments;
- Document management and processing time (certificates, files and records, student cards, etc.);
- Importance placed on staff training to improve professional skills and communication with students and other stakeholders (number of days, budget, scheduling, etc.);
- Indicators of respect for diversity as well as cultural and social diversity of staff/teacher and learner training;
- Number of ombudsman interventions - where this service exists;
- Opportunities to move to higher levels, to achieve social promotion

Indicators relating to involvement

- Degree of involvement of learners and other stakeholders in the design and content of training and/or design of decision-making processes;
- Number of suggestions received and adopted;
- Implementation and degree of use of new and innovative modalities in dealing with students and other stakeholders.

Indicators related to accessibility within the institution
- Openness and waiting times in different departments, cost of services, quantity and quality of accessible information, website, and importance given to access and facilities, etc.

Indicators relating to transparency of processes :
- Number of complaints and appeals;
- Number and effectiveness of information channels.

Indicators relating to skill levels and achievements:
- Number of students reaching higher education level;
- On-the-job training/placement success rate;
- Employment rate after training;
- Number of learners continuing with lifelong learning.

Indicators of teaching in relation to / training activities and other services:
- Compliance with published service standards (*e.g.*, social and cultural projects, educational projects, quality charter, etc.).

Criterion 7. Employee outcomes. The outcomes of the education and training institution are the achievements in relation to the competence, motivation, satisfaction and performance of its people. The terms 'people', 'staff' or 'employees', indicate all administrative staff, teaching/training staff and psycho-socio-medical, scientific and technical workers.

This criterion refers to the satisfaction of all people in the institution. Institutions usually use surveys to record satisfaction, but they may also use other complementary tools such as focus groups, interviews or exit evaluations. They may also examine people's performance and level of skills development.

Sometimes external constraints can limit the institution's freedom in this area. Constraints and how the institution overcomes or influences constraints should be clearly stated. It is important for all types of education and training institutions to record directly the results relating to the image of the institution's employees and its mission, the working environment, the institution's leadership and management systems, career development, personal skills development and the institution's products and services. Education and training institutions should have a set of internal performance indicators linked to people that measure their performance against people's goals and expectations, their overall satisfaction, their performance, their skills development, their motivation and their level of engagement with the institution.

Consider the results the institution has achieved in meeting the needs and expectations of learners and other stakeholders, by

7.1. Overall people satisfaction outcomes:

Results on satisfaction with leadership and management systems:
- The institution's governance capacity (*e.g.*, goal setting, resource allocation) and communication;
- Rewarding individual efforts and teamwork;
- The institution's approach to innovation.

Results on satisfaction with working conditions:
- Working atmosphere (*e.g.*, how to deal with conflicts, grievances or personal problems) and general culture of the institution (*e.g.*, how to deal with and encourage exchange between different departments, categories, faculties, etc.);
- Addressing social issues (*e.g.*, working time flexibility, work/life balance, health, workplace comfort);
- Equality of opportunity and equity of treatment and behaviour in the institution.

Outcomes related to motivation and job satisfaction and skills development:
- Ability to lead and promote a human resource management strategy, encourage systematic development of capacity and skills and understanding of the institution's goals and objectives;
- Results in people's willingness to accept change;
- Measure of employee involvement in the institution's extra-curricular activities

7.2. Indicators relating to people's outcomes

Criterion 8. Outcomes related to society. Education and training outcomes are the achievement of meeting the needs and expectations of the local, national and international community. This may include the perceived approach of the institution and the contribution to improving the quality of life, the environment and the

conservation of global resources.

Vocational education and training institutions have an impact on society by the very nature of the services they provide and the outcomes of these core activities have an impact on direct and indirect beneficiaries. The analysis of immediate impacts on beneficiaries should be presented in line with criterion 6 (satisfaction of learners and other stakeholders) and criterion 9 (key performance-related outcomes).

Criterion 8 will measure the intended or unintended impact on society, i.e. the overall effects of the institution's policies beyond its primary missions or core activities. In doing so, the analysis will take into account impacts derived from planned objectives as well as unintended consequences, e.g. adverse effects that may have positive and/or negative impacts on society.

Measures cover both qualitative measurement of perceptions and quantitative indicators.

They can be related to:

- Economic impact;
- Social dimension, e.g. people with disabilities;
- Quality of life;
- Environmental impact;
- Quality of democracy.

Evaluation:

Consider what the institution has achieved in terms of impact on society, with reference to:

8.1. Results of social measurements perceived by stakeholders/stakeholders

8.2. Social performance indicators set by the organisation.

Criterion 9. Key performance results. The outcomes of the educational institution consist of the achievement of strategy and planning related to the needs and demands of different stakeholders/stakeholders (external outcomes); and its management outcomes and improvements (internal outcomes).

Key performance outcomes refer to the institution's key measurable achievements related to the institution's short and long-term success. They represent the capacity of policies and processes to achieve the goals and objectives as defined in the institution's strategic plan.

Key performance outcomes can be divided into:

1. External outcomes: measures of the effectiveness of policies and services/outputs in terms of their ability to improve the condition of direct beneficiaries: the achievement of the objectives of key activities' (see criterion 5) in terms of outputs (services and products) and outcomes (results). The 'product/output' of the education and training institution may be the graduation of the student and the 'outcome' is socio-vocational integration (effectiveness),

2. Internal results: measures related to the internal functioning of the institution: its management and improvement of financial performance (efficiency and economy). These measures are likely to be closely linked to policy and strategy (criterion 2), partnerships and resources (criterion 4) and processes (criterion 5).

Assessment:

Consider evidence (e.g. through indicators) to define the objectives achieved by the education and training institution in relation to:

9.1. External outcomes: achievements and outcomes related to objectives

9.2. Internal results

References

- Common Assessment Framework The European model for improving public organisations through self-assessment;
- Comparative Analysis: Quality Management in Public Administrations of the EU Member States;
- Impact assessment report on the measures implemented under SCAP 2014-2020 Pillar IV - Quality Management and Public Services;
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