Development of Quality in VET Schools
by extended self-responsibility:
The project “Self-Responsibility”

Paper for the Fifths Saudi Technical Conference, Riyadh 11 -14/01/2009

The project is intended to modernize vocational education and training schools and institutes of the state of Hessen, Germany. The project started in 2005 and the final evaluation will be in December 2009. 17 VET schools take part and all 17 schools are becoming self-responsible schools.

The project “Self-responsibility” was planned and conducted in six subprojects which are all related to each other. A final evaluation will be in 2009.

Subproject 1: Quality Development
Subproject 2: Quality Assurance
Subproject 3: Organizational Structure
Subproject 4: Recruitment and Staff Development
Subproject 5: Finances
Subproject 6: Educational Offer and Regional Educational Network

Important features of the project “Self-Responsibility” (SR) are:

- “Self-responsibility” is a practically approved project and up to now successfully evaluated.
- It is a model which shows that a school can be changed on its own without the necessity to change the whole educational system.
- The structure of the project which is divided into six subprojects and the responsibility within each subproject shows all necessary elements of a school management system.
- It is a school management process in reality with all the elements of a school management system, ranging from quality over organization to HRM and business plan.
- Extended individual responsibility and greater autonomy are supposed to help the project schools to better meet their educational objectives. As far as possible, decisions are made where they will have their effects.
The improvement of teaching and learning is central to the model project. The development of the schools is closely connected in order to promote life-long learning.

The schools develop their own regionally orientated profile. Because of this, “Self-responsibility” is also a project that strengthens the development of regional educational structures and the Region by itself.

The results of this project may have important effects on the future development of all schools and regions in the state of Hessen. Schools, bodies responsible for schools and school authorities tread new paths to jointly gain experiences how vocational education and training can be improved by self-responsible guidance of the schools.

Each of the six subprojects is a system in its own and a component of a school management system.

**Subproject 1: Quality Development**

**Objective:**

Teaching and learning arrangements are geared to enable self-organized and life-long learning. The various groups of students are supported individually by organizational and special teaching measures and settings.

Available resources in terms of materials, instruments as well as experienced trainers promote the introduction of self-organized learning at the project schools. The schools develop their teaching-learning arrangements, i.e. they decide which arrangements are carried out as “Self-responsibility” (SR) - projects.

The evaluation of these projects is carried out with the help of the quality management system at school and also by a countrywide QM-System.

The subproject Quality Development is a central issue within the model project. Successfull work in this subproject will decisively contribute to achieve the overall objective of developing common models for lessons and learning.
Subproject 2: Quality Assurance

Objective:

The model project schools have introduced a certifiable system of quality management and participate in procedures of external evaluation.

The project schools have decided to introduce and to apply the Swiss quality management system for schools which is called "Q2E" (Qualität durch Entwicklung und Evaluation):

Q2E - quality by evaluation and development

This quality management system meets the complex claims at school and the demand for teachers’ creativity. What distinguishes Q2E, in addition, is the involved design of a feedback culture. Q2E thereby promotes the forming of a school culture in which teachers teach, learn and work together.

Resources in the form of materials, instruments and tool boxes as well as experienced trainers make the introduction of Q2E easier and raise its acceptance as an instrument of quality assurance.
Subproject 3: Organizational Structure

Objective:

The model project schools are provided with a school constitution containing a far-reaching de-regulation of decisions with the decision makers answerable for their decisions.

Aim of the subproject No.3 is to develop a leadership philosophy at school in whose centre there is a school constitution which comprises extensive deregulation of the decisions with the decision makers committed to report. Connected to this is the development of a new leadership culture and the instrument of fractal organization. Then key elements of the cooperation at school can be derived in concepts such as educational leadership, transparency, participation, trust and feedback. In this way subproject 3 turns out to be system-covering, influencing all other subprojects.
Subproject 4: Recruitment and Staff Development

Objective:

Based on a concept of staff development, model project schools make their own decisions on recruitment, further training and promotion of teachers and other members of the staff within the scope of their budget.

Subproject 5: Finances

Objective:

The school is provided with a budget which it manages independently. A fixed percentage of the budget can be transferred from one hand to the other and also from one year to the other and maintained by good management.
Subproject 6: Educational Offer and Regional Educational Network

Objective:

There is a regionally coordinated educational programme which enables schools to offer staff in-service training leading to further qualifications.

For the VET-Schools it is optional to offer educational services in a regional educational network. Educational networks are understood as social organizations of stakeholders which achieve by common objectives and common actions. Educational offers by the network are carried out and will be evaluated. Within the scope of work in this field, VET schools are expected to develop themselves step by step into competence centres in regional educational networks for professional education, training and further education. Such an educational network is designed as a partnership with other regional further education centres, stakeholders as well as private training centres. For this, necessary basic conditions must be created which also include a professional network management. The development of VET schools to competence centres will strengthen the efficiency of the work of regional educational networks. In this field the following objectives are pursued:

- Responsibility of the school for the employment of teachers in the area of further education
- Development of educational services and consultancy
- Cost-covering and market-oriented calculation of further educational offers
- Development of a suitable legal form.

VET schools need a legal form as regional competence centre which includes direct responsibility and flexibility. This is a condition for efficiently taking part in curricular innovation and developing necessary modules in further education. Schools can cooperate with regional stakeholders and if possible, also offer these modules as independent network suppliers, paying attention to the principle of fares covering the full costs. Such educational offers can also be made to external institutions which can incorporate them to their individual further training programs; for this purpose individual contracts can be drawn up.

More about the project you may get on: [www.selbstverantwortungplus.de](http://www.selbstverantwortungplus.de) English-version is available