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SELF EVALUATION IN ADULT LIFE LONG LEARNING

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1. PHILOSOPHY OF SELF EVALUATION

1. INTRODUCTION

The SEALL project is a Grundtvig project aimed at self-evaluation in adult lifelong learning. SEALLL is an acronym title for the name of the project, Self-Evaluation in Adult Life Long Learning. In this article we will give an outline of the basic philosophy of the project. First definitions of adult lifelong learning (ALLL) and self-evaluation (SE) will be given. Secondly we will elaborate on the particular functions that self-evaluation in ALLL may serve. Then the article considers practical application by offering a framework for designing self-evaluations. The basis for the article is to consider self-evaluation in adult lifelong learning as an initiative to involve people in a shared experience in which systematic analysis of, and reflection on, education activities serve as the engine for both individual and collective learning. Important in our approach is the focus on evaluation as a way of active learning; the vital role of dialogues and the inclusion of all parties involved and impacted on.

II. ADULT LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Adult education as a term is used in various ways in different contexts. A glossary developed by Unesco and published by Paolo Federighi c.s. in 1999 states that the objective of adult education goes beyond the boundaries of the school system and of professional training. It includes the entirety of learning activities, including those of an informal or accidental nature, present in work and everyday life (Federighi, Hamburg 1999).
In its Communication " Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality", the European Commission mentions adult education as an entity to be differentiated from schools, higher education, adult education, vocational training, and non-formal (youth) learning (Brussels 2001).
We consider adult education and learning to be the post compulsory education and learning activities. Initial university training, initial vocational training, as well as professional training are excluded. Yet we know that the boundaries between the various kinds of learning are sometimes blurred and we realize that the

challenge often is to create synergy between these subsystems rather than to consider the boundaries between them as fixed.

III. SELF-EVALUATION: A DEFINITION

Self-evaluation of education and, or learning is the process of systematic collection, analysis and exchange of data concerning educational processes of either individuals, groups or organisations (institutions, etc.) in order to facilitate learning among all parties concerned so value judgments and decision-making may be based on evidence rather than on intuition.

Maybe the most critical issue in this definition is the concept of "self". Who may be considered the self that is initiating the self-evaluation? According to the definition we allow any unit to enter into self-evaluation, sometimes including only one group of workers in one institute, sometimes the work of people working in more units or locations at the same time. The only thing to be agreed upon is that all parties consider it a self-evaluation and that they have the same level/unit of analysis in mind.

In order to distinguish it from external evaluation, self-evaluation is seen to be initiated by the organisation, internally organized and self-regulated.

IV. FUNCTIONS OF SELF-EVALUATION

Self evaluation may serve various functions. In this section we mention some of these functions and elaborate them to some extent. However in the end we will choose to focus on self evaluation as a process that supports professional learning of all parties involved and needs to be organised accordingly.

Learning
Self-evaluation focuses on learning, as the definition suggests. The kind of learning referred to is both individual learning and organizational learning. Individuals learn to better understand the situation in which they work and the relationship this has to individual and collective aims. Furthermore, an organisation can learn from the process and the dynamics of the process of self-evaluation. At the same time self-evaluation helps the collective of people involved to enhance their understanding of how they as a collective may operate

more effective and satisfactory. In relation to the process of sharing and dissemination of the results of the self evaluation again a lot of other people will learn from their colleagues. Then they can adopt and adapt these results and this will augment the effects and the impact of the self evaluation

But an organisation is more than a group of individuals - it is an entity in its own right. This entity can also learn from the self evaluation. In an organisation, self evaluation may be used as a continuous management tool. Organisations try to deliver quality. That means satisfying the demands and expectation of participants and stakeholders, both internal and external to the organisation. Self evaluation provides information about the needs of (potential) participants and about the way they assess the services provided. A quality organisation seeks to perform efficiently and effectively. Self evaluation gives information about how to take strategic decisions in these matters.

Both the individual and the collective (or organizational) learning will have an impact so that the quality of work and learning will grow. The innovative capacity of the organization will grow with it. In essence, this implies that those who learn from self-evaluation do better and know how to improve their work and learning.
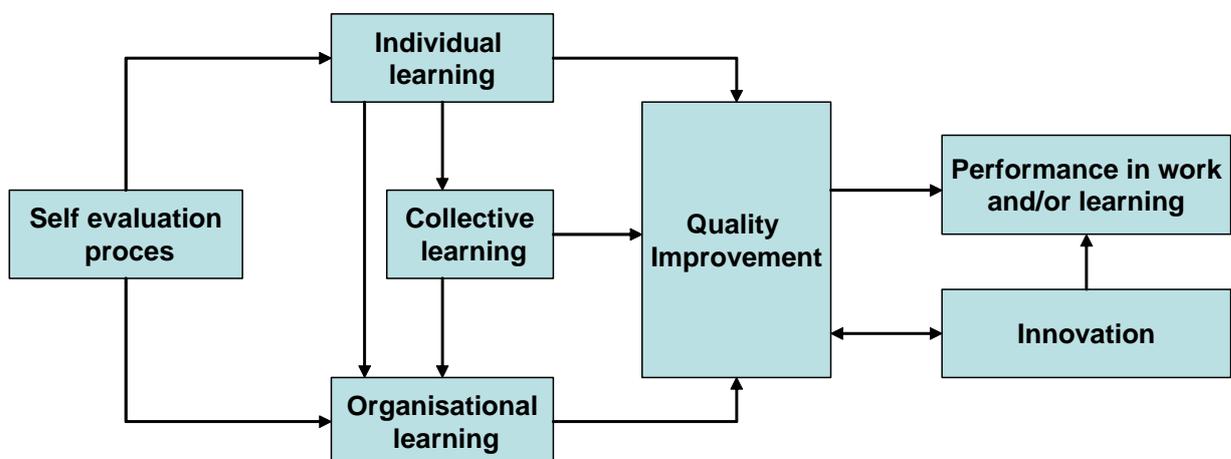
Trouble shooting

During the interaction of looking to the past and trying to direct the future, the organisation can discover issues or problems requiring direct attention. The self evaluation can give more information and data to understand the origin of the problems. The goal of the self evaluation may be to intervene at once and to avoid further troubles without being bothered about sophisticated professional

learning processes. This function of self evaluation is perfectly legitimate and even necessary. Its relevance is almost self evident.

Reducing emotional pressure

In addition to the functions mentioned, self-evaluation also provides people with an opportunity to express them selves, and to share enthusiasm or complaints. It is an outlet for the emotions that are involved in any process of education. As such it may be considered as therapy. It contributes to well-being, reduces frustration and allows for celebration and sharing.

Accounting

Self-evaluation is not only a way to explore the dynamics of ones own education activities; it is also a means to provide evidence of the quality your unit, or organisation provides to the outside world. By performing a self-evaluation a project, an initiative or an organization will be able to account for its actions. Self-evaluation provides evidence that may be used to convince the outside world that things are running well. Funding agencies, the community, authorities may be among those in need of convincing. For this purpose of accounting, self-evaluation may include actions aimed at providing evidence of good practice, good learning outcomes, good effects and relative performance, in comparison with other similar initiatives.

Public Relations

Self-evaluation may include interviews or questionnaires to be administered among various groups of people concerned (students/learners, stakeholders, funding organizations, sponsors, employers etc.) By approaching these groups and agencies with questions one may spread the news about the initiative. As such a self-evaluation has a similar effect to that of a campaign. The news is spread, new clients may be targeted, new markets may be opened and new sponsors may develop an interest as a consequence. In self-evaluation often an element of needs-assessment or making inventories of expectations, is included. Thus the self-evaluating unit seeks contact with its environment. By doing so it raises interests, it becomes more responsive to the needs of its audiences and target groups. This is what some people would refer to as a kind of marketing. It

is a way of approaching clients and raising awareness among clients and providers of their own needs and requirements and provision available. Self-evaluation stimulates marketing and dissemination. These effects are not the primary effects required but rather secondary effects or impact effects. Still, being aware of this may allow people to optimize these indirect results.

As phrased above we will consider the learning processes of individuals and groups as the core process and goals of self-evaluation. The other benefits of self-evaluation we consider to be added value or spin off effects. This choice may be considered the fundament of our self-evaluation philosophy.

V.   SELF-EVALUATION IS A LEARNING PROCESS

If learning is the core of self-evaluation, we will have to realize that a self evaluation might better be organized as a learning process.
Adult educators know that the learning of adults has to meet a number of requirements.
- It has to recognize and adapt to the prior knowledge and experience of the learners;
- It will have to be motivating both for its goals and for its processes;
- It has to challenge and create a sense of confidence at the same time (it is the balance that matters);
- There must be a balance between the learning aspect and the work involved in self evaluation, it must be perceived as feasible;
- It needs to allow for and stimulate self regulated learning as a means and as an end;
- It has to be an active process rather than a receptive process;
- The results of the self evaluation should be used as a part of the organisational learning, more than an individual process
- It provides learners with a richness of opportunities to search and construct knowledge;
- It may better concern personalised knowledge rather than abstract de-personalised knowledge;

- It provides the learner with opportunities for interactive dialogues to check and cross-heck their understanding and to get peer feedback on their progress;
- It has to be reflective in such a way that it provides learners with feedback on their performance as well as on their learning strategies;
- It offers a respectful environment secured by agreements on privacy and ownership;

These requirements will have to be met in order to optimize a process of adult learning. We consider people who evaluate their own work as learners, so the process of self-evaluation has to meet exactly these same requirements. This means self-evaluation must be a motivating, a rich, constructive, social and reflective process. In the following sections some of the implications of this point of view are further elaborated.

VI.   ORGANIZING SELF-EVALUATION AS A LEARNING PROCESS

Motivating self-evaluation

Self-evaluation will motivate us to learn from our experiences. This implies that we need to know the benefits of self-evaluation for ourselves, for our work and for the organisation. We should consider it as a challenge but feel that we are ready for it and able to complete the process effectively. We will have to consider it a worthwhile activity. Learners tend to appreciate variety in activities (writing, listening, talking, visualizing, theorising, sharing, acting, playing…) An important element in motivation is the necessity to change physical activity as well (sitting, walking, moving, playing, using multiple senses)

Too often, people acknowledge the benefits of self evaluation but self evaluation is seen as an additional activity and not as a core part of the business of the organisation. By integrating self evaluation in the daily work of an organisation, it will be much easier to establish the right balance between efforts invested and their effects. Thus self evaluation may be more motivating.

Many evaluations include questionnaires and interviews only and fail to make it the memorable and fascinating event it should if it is used to stimulate professional learning. Our challenge as (promoters of) self-evaluators will be to change this perception and to develop creative, stimulating and strengthening

ways of self-evaluation. For self evaluation to be supportive to the learning of the ones involved, it will have to meet three basic motivational requirements.

- It must be obvious what for what purpose the self evaluation is done;
- It must consist of a variety of activities that are motivating in their own right
- It will have to be clear what one may learn from it
- Preferably it should be clear that the result maybe rewarding in any way

A self evaluative work/learning environment

A "rich environment" was the phrase used earlier is this text. If we consider self evaluators as learners, we should seek to bring them into a rich learning environment in which they are able to learn a lot about the dynamics of the work-learning process they are part of. This means that information about the context, the process, the products and the impact of their actions should be made available and accessible to them. It also implies that information or knowledge arising from other similar cases should be made available to them. People, Internet, databases, documents, facts and figures, information about new trends in disciplines or areas of work (domains), legal requirements, criteria used by inspectorates, critics, or media, etc. may all add to this learning environment. It means that self-evaluation involves information not only about one's own practice but also adds to the knowledge of the wider context, as a comparative frame of reference.

For educators, to understand progress and to be able to assess the impact of their activities, it is vital that they know in which context they operate. Aspects such as legal requirements, strategic decisions, financial aspects, values, history and structure of the organisation may be relevant contextual factors. For example, the presence of voluntary workers in the organisation will have an impact on the results of the self evaluation and the relationship to the learning process. It is only when an awareness of this has been established that it does become meaningful to register, monitor, analyse and value information about ones own work, its results and the impact these have on the organisation. The self-evaluation processes may take place at different levels and stages in the educational process. These different levels and stages may relate to the actual learning processes, to the teaching processes, to the programmes implemented, to the organization, to the leadership and management, to external communication and to external wider context such as the local community. It is important that the evaluator knows and understands the context and work environment. Especially in informal and non-standardised educational

organisations it is very important that the evaluator agrees with the aims and objectives of the organisation and is able to situate the organisation in a wider social context.

Interactive self-evaluation
Information has no meaning; knowledge does. The process of adding meaning is the result of inner or outer dialogues relating to the information gathered. Therefore we consider the process of engaging in dialogues relating to work an essential element within self-evaluation.
In the adult learning education, learning is approached as a process in which dialogues are central. If self evaluation is approached as a learning process, dialogue will be an important part of it.
These dialogues may have different features. Self-evaluation is concerned with understanding the dynamics of ones work so it involves exploration of the situation and the factors influencing the work situation. Understanding the resulting information will only be possible if this information is linked to mutual experiences. In addition, self-evaluation also involves values so it will be a matter of negotiating with others and at times, may lead to debates and sometimes disputes.

The dialogue will ensure that there is further investigation of values and not only of the superficial effects of processes. Self-evaluation deals with matters of difference between conflicting interests and opinions so it is partially regarded as a process of negotiation. In this context, dialogues are used to mediate and explore the educational context, processes, results and impacts, and/or the innovation and development processes within the organization. Dialogues are the vehicle for learning. It is the variety of dialogues engaged in, that determines the richness of the learning process. The more interaction and the more perspectives, the better and the deeper the learning processes are.

A reflective process
Self-evaluation is a process of learning that is highly interactive and reflective. From various sources and from various perspectives all persons involved seek feedback. In this way, they establish a clear and inter-subjective understanding of both the context and the impact of their own role in the process. By gathering data and by analysing it, people provide themselves with feedback on their performance and progress. In addition to this so-called "auto-feedback", there are

other possibilities. Peer feedback is a strong mechanism to help people learn from experience. This is also true for "360 degrees feedback" provided by those in different positions and at different levels in the organisation, including feedback from superiors, subordinates and similar level positions. This 360 degrees feedback provides insight into the dynamics of one's work within the structure of the work organization. Reflection relates not only to one's work with colleagues and superior or subordinate staff, it also relates to the multiple interactions with students, clients, stakeholders, sponsors, funding agencies and the community etc. Reflective practice involves a wide variety of people. By means of interaction and shared analyses of the educational process, the context, effects and impact of the feedback is illuminative and promotes learning among all parties concerned.

Feedback on the work done may be either instantaneous or more long-term. Instantaneous feedback may be given in relation to the learning outputs and the products developed. However, education also has long-term goals. Career development, access to work, organizational change, personal well-being, community benefits etc, may all be among the intended effects. Furthermore, processes are often supposed intended to have long term impact on a vaiety of contexts and stakeholders. This dissemination effect or impact may also be included in the self-evaluation processes.

In relation to this, we should consider the competencies linked with the implementation of self reflection. Pivotal is the 360° feed-back and the extent to which the evaluator intends to share his results and experiences with others. In order to reflect, insight is needed from colleagues in a range of different positions throughout the organisation. The extent to which the evaluator is able to build an image of the subjective information contributed by all the individuals in the organisation will be determine the objective choices to be made later.

## VI.   ORGANIZING SELF-EVALUATION AS A DIALOGUE

Self evaluation, we stated, requires a rich environment that is interactive and reflective. We also emphasised the importance of self evaluation as a dialogue. The reason for that is multiple.
First of all self evaluation itself may be considered a dialogue. It concerns a dialogue explicitly or implicitly between educators and learners, between organisers and target groups, between funders and providers, between providers

and the community etc. It is partly an internal dialogue among all people involved within an educative initiative, or within an organisation. Beside that it is also an external dialogue with the outer world that includes funders, authorities, the community, employers, etc.

Secondly since we consider self evaluation a learning process it involves dialogues that support interactive learning in which learners together explore their experiences and share their views.

In the following scheme we introduce the role of dialogues in the concept of self evaluation as presented earlier in this paper.
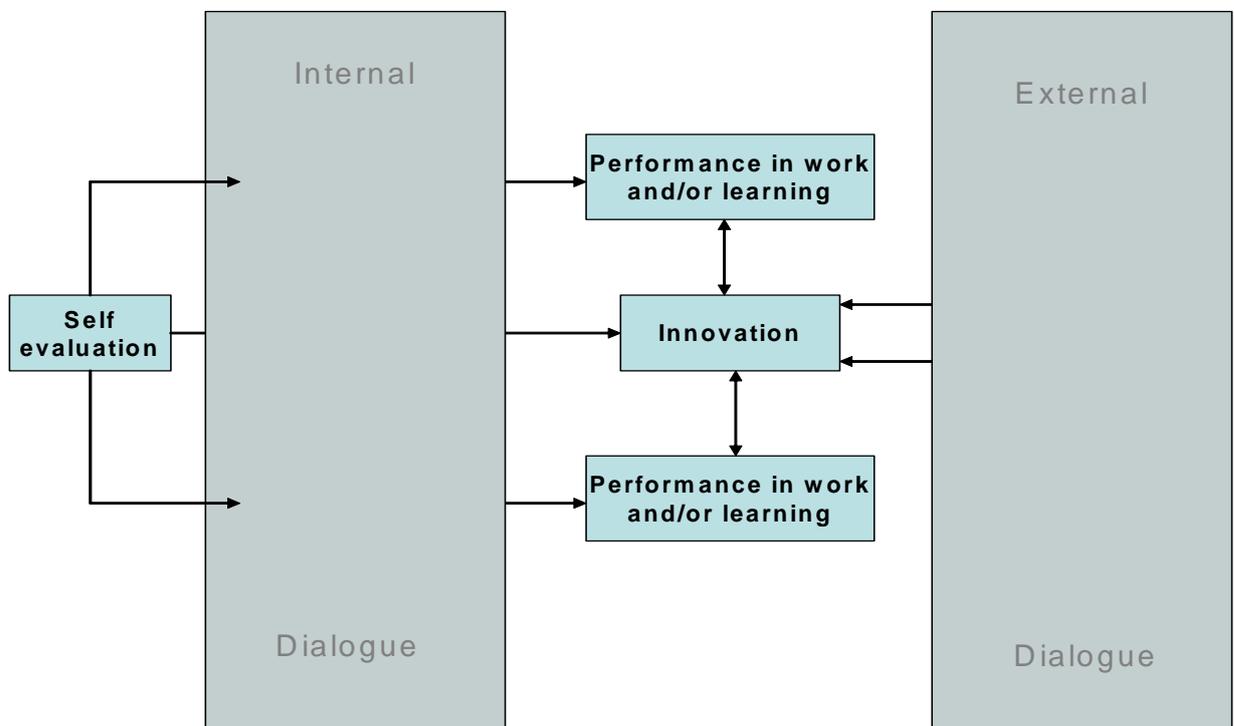
Self evaluations that do not involve interactions in various kinds of dialogues are one-sided kinds of self evaluations and what's more they are poor learning experiences.

It is important to realise that for learning purposes these dialogues will have to be exploratory. The ones participating in such dialogues share their perceptions and try to find explanations for the identified course of events. Self evaluation however also serves other purposes (marketing, accounting. Trouble shooting etc, were mentioned). Such purposes require again other kinds of dialogues.

We distinguish between various kinds of dialogues within two main categories (dialogues among partners and dialogues between parties). Each category is defined in the list below:

Dialogues among partners

Accumulative dialogues

Casual talk in which every day experiences and events are mentioned just to share them and to get to know one another without going in too much depth.

Exploratory dialogues

To explore how things are how they proceed how they work, what is common practice etc.

Dialogues among parties

Persuasive dialogues

To convince others, not to overrule them, but to make them change their minds.

Disputational dialogues

To make your point, to prove your case, to defeat the opponent.

Negotiation

To state the positions, to argue about the relative weight of arguments, interests and advantages, and to reach a kind of agreement on how to deal with all that.

Within self evaluations it is of vital importance to be aware of the fact that most dialogues fail because participants implicitly disagree on the kind of dialogue they are in. If someone tries to convince the other party, while the other party thinks he or she will share some thought to explore a situation, a conflict may arise turning the whole dialogue unintentionally into a dispute. That is why awareness of the categories and the inherent behaviour is important. In many self evaluation processes misunderstandings and arguments are caused by miscommunication about the kind of dialogue one seeks to engage in.

That is why it is important:

- to be explicit about the general goal and about the kind of dialogue you expect;
- to identify the intended outcome of the dialogue;
- to decide on the roles and the procedure;
- to agree on the duration of the dialogue.
- To be aware of and act according to the rules of the dialogue chosen.

Kinds of dialogues	Specific rules
1. Among partners	
Accumulative dialogues Casual talk in which every day experiences and events are mentioned just to share them and to get to know one another without going in too much depth	Ask informative questions Add own experiences Give new information Accept the information given Don't comment other than positive/affirmative
Exploratory dialogues To explore how things are how they proceed how they work, what is common practice etc.	Ask inquisitive questions (how, why, etc.) Try to explain your assumptions/motives Analyse differences and similarities Formulate new hypotheses Make an inventory of shared ideas and optional ideas
2. Among parties	
Persuasive dialogues To convince others, not to overrule them, but to make them change their minds.	Make clear whom you are addressing Show empathy Explain the possible views Specify your choice Explain your position as well as initial your doubts Listen Show some vulnerability Acknowledge the inputs given Re formulate your own view
Disputational dialogues To make your point, to prove your case, to defeat the opponent.	Identify who your opponents are (Identify who your audience is) State your position but include "exchange" Summarise your position briefly Summarise the opinion of your opponent Don't ridicule you opponent (Address your audience directly) Make explicit that you have included some elements from your opponents views
Negotiation To state the positions, to argue about the relative weight of arguments, interests and advantages, and to reach a kind of agreement on how to deal with all that.	State clearly the positions at stake Formulate your position strongly Identify differences of position and of interest Show and emphasise the advantages of your counterpart and your own disadavantages. Don't push your position Be prepared to move towards the other Take time to think things through and don't act impulsively

2. A FORMAT FOR PLANNING SELF EVALUATION

In the SEALLL project we focus on evaluations that promote learning. Evaluation is often seen a retrospective activity. This however does not imply that evaluation only occurs after a process is completed. An evaluation may well take place at any of the stages distinguishable within the project, program or initiative. It may include needs assessment, organizational diagnoses, curriculum evaluation and assessment of learning outputs.

Furthermore, it may refer to various kinds and levels of processes. It may be an evaluation of adult learning, of adult education, of the organizational processes, of innovation processes or of communication processes with the environment.

Explicit evaluation

In discussing evaluation it is possible that evaluation activities have already taken place but they are often not identified as such. We consider it of vital importance that evaluation is an integral part of work, a program or a project. We would also like to emphasise that evaluation requires further effort. Gathering data and processing it is a base-line, but analysing the data and reflecting on it represents significant development above the baseline. The analysis of data, sharing perceptions and opinions, searching for meaningful solutions, innovative ways of following up and a reflection on the value of the processes studied and lessons learnt, both individually and collectively, all takes energy. The extent to which the evaluation will be seen as a learning process may be affected by the time used to implement it. A group discussion for example, may take much more time than a questionnaire. However, the learning impact might be far greater.
The time needed for evaluation and reflection, requires specifically designated moments in time, that are included in the institutional planning or in the planning of projects. This time investment can only be acceptable if the results are translated in concrete actions and if they contribute to innovative actions for the organisation.

Who is the self?

For an explicit evaluation it is vital to be clear about who is the self in the process of self evaluation. The self can be either one person, or it can be a group of people, an organisational unit, an organisation as whole. It is important to define who the self is, so responsibilities and competences may be allocated at the start of the process.

Agreements

In relation to the explicit promotion of the results of the self evaluation, there must also be agreement on the choice of actions and decisions to be implemented. Self evaluation can only give rise to meaningful information if the organisation is aware of, and understands all organisational factors and influences, and the relationship these have between them. To ensure a truthful self evaluation it is important to respect the privacy of participants, their ideas and their inputs.
It is important that the organisation declares the respondents the owners of the data given. So data may not be transferred or revealed to others beyond the audiences agreed upon.

Levels of evaluation

If organisations, or participants in a project, decide to undertake the process of self evaluation, they need to be aware that evaluation may be focussed in a range of different areas or one select area. For example, they may choose to focus on learning activities, or on management issues. To give an overview of options we would like to distinguish between various levels of evaluation. It is helpful to be aware of the levels to select from and combine.

Issues to be evaluated

The issues of the evaluation may be divided in "level-linked" and "not level-linked" issues. The list of levels may be considered as shifting from a classroom focus towards a more organisational/society focus:

- Learning
- Teaching
- Curriculum/program
- Curriculum/program development
- Professional development

- Organisation and management
- Leadership
- Organisation development
- Broader social context

The organisation should take into account that the evaluation of level-linked issues must happen in relation to other levels. For example, the evaluation of teaching issues cannot be implemented without it to professional development, strategy and the context of the surrounding communities.

Apart from levels of evaluation, one may also seek to find another way of focussing. This relates to the not level-linked issues. As examples of alternative focuses for evaluation, we mention a selection made from existing and former projects known to us.

- Equal opportunities
- Self regulated learning skills
- Multicultural issues
- Creative approaches
- Levels of performance in subjects
- Employability

In projects or activities, one cannot evaluate everything. It will be necessary to focus, either from the start or to focus progressively while evaluating ("zooming"). It is important to make very clear choices at the start of the evaluation process: either select several issues in one level or one issue from several levels. Be wise: prioritise!

Goals and related indicators
Once the areas of evaluation (level and focus) have been identified; one has to be aware of the goals of the evaluation

- Improving a current project
- Learning (individually or collectively) to prepare for future initiatives
- Personal learning and professional growth
- Sharing findings and making them more transparent for democratic purposes
- Finding the explanation for arisen problems

It is important for further choices that goals are identified and continuously aimed for. The target group, the method and the information needed will have to be chosen in relation to the goals.

To be able to monitor the progress each of theses goals will need some indicators. If the target is, for example, passing on competencies, the evaluator will need to indicate which competencies, to whom, and within what time frame?

Target group(s)

Evaluation may serve different audiences/target groups. How evaluation is implemented and how it is reported, depends on the target group identified. It is therefore essential to know in advance who is expected to benefit from the evaluation. Identify your choice considering the following options (again not exhaustive):

- Yourself
- Colleagues
- The whole staff
- Learners
- Local authority
- Inspectorate
- Related agencies
- Sponsors, funding agencies
- The wider community

Information needed

Often evaluation focuses on perceptions only: In our view it is very important to make a distinction between

1. describing how things went
2. identifying the context in which it took place
3. describing the process in relation to particular indicators
4. identifying the output
5. developing an inventory of opinions relating to how things developed the way they did and the value the project, the program or the school.

In order to use these categories it is important to distinguish between data about:

- Intentions, expectations and plans;
- Facts, figures, and tangible products;
- Norms and values of those involved;
- Judgments, opinions and evaluations.

Methods and instruments of evaluation
Various methods and instruments may be used for gathering the information needed. We will mention a few of them here and give a brief explanation for each:

- *Questionnaires.* List of questions to be asked to respondents..
- *Observations.* Evaluation data may be gathered by observing the behaviour of the participants (teachers, students, others). It will be necessary to identify carefully which behavioural traits should be observed and what meanings can be deduced from these.
- *Interviews,* oral questionnaire, either structured semi-structured or open. Interviews may be held individually or with groups.
- *Meetings,* Meetings stimulate people to reflect on things and to discuss them. While doing so evaluation implicitly occurs.
- *Snowballing/Delphi,* People may be asked individually what they think of particular things, but it is certainly illuminating for them to hear or read what the same things meant for others. By making a list of the issues raised, or of opinions given, the opportunity is created for others to comment. In this way an overview is created of possible opinions and the support for each of them.
- *Written products.* Writing about ones experiences is a powerful way of reflecting.
- *Presentations,* Telling others what happens in your school or in your project forces you to reflect on this as well. This is also so in relation to the critical questions that may be raised by your audience. Again this method can prove to be a powerful stimulator for learning from experiences.
- Flowcharting, by describing the process of a course or training session using a "flowchart" diagram, it will be possible to reflect not only on the different stages of the process but also on the link between the different stages.

- *Critique/reviews* by internal or external experts/colleagues. Inviting others to come and give their views on what they perceive to be happening in a project, at the school or in a program is a positive way of triggering the internal debate about quality.
- *Unobtrusive measures,* some data may be gathered without requiring assistance from other people. How often do students visit the library, how many parents come to meetings or answer correspondence? By recording secondary information such as the speed at which the chairs in the study room deteriorate will determine the intensity with which the room is used.
- *Reports/minutes.* Some documents are produced even if no evaluation takes place. Nevertheless the may have their function in an evaluation and serve the reflective process that evaluation should trigger. Furthermore the data in these documents may be considered as data for further analysis.

NB.   More about instruments is included in a specific section on tools for self evaluation included as chapter 5.

Organisation of the evaluation process
During evaluations, the participants and impact stakeholders may all have different roles. That is why evaluators should consider how the evaluation will be organised and how each person should be involved. Several roles may be considered:

- Member of the evaluation committee
- Respondent
- Member of the "audience", beneficiary or impact stakeholder
- Evaluator
- Critic
- Stakeholder/representative
- Data processor
- Reporter

Information processing
In the past, the processing of the data appears to be the work only medieval monks were willing to do. Therefore it is wise to prepare for this processing in order to keep things as simple as possible. Choose categories to organise the responses or data collected. It is important to ensure that the process is

transparent and easy. Slow process lead to slow feedback. Slow feedback in turn is usually frustrating and perceived as useless. If feedback is only available after the event, the process often loses momentum.

Identification of criteria/evidence
The evaluator must make a clear distinction between results indicators and process indicators. In the paragraph about goals and targets we explained that indicators need to demonstrate that the self evaluation is contributing to the achievement of agreed targets. These are regarded as results indicators. We also need indicators allowing us to correctly interpretation and analyse the results. For example, if we allow in a questionnaire an answer "not important", this answer can be analysed in two ways: the positive answer is that it is not necessary to answer the question and the issue is okay. The negative answer is that the respondent did not have any positive experience in relation to the issue.

It is compulsory to define indicators so that only one interpretation is possible. It is also important to identify these indicators and criteria in advance so that the discussion in relation to meanings and outcomes limits the possibility of giving rise to confusing interpretations and multiple meanings. This problem cannot be solved completely but good preparation certainly helps.

Analysis/interpretation
It is important to take care in selecting accurate indicators and criteria. Furthermore, by being strategic in selecting indicators for analysis, support for the conclusions may already be gained.

Reporting
Different audiences require different reports. Be aware of whom you are reporting to and what that implies for the format, the level of conclusions and the way priorities are expressed.

Division and allocation of tasks
So far we have identified what is needed. For the implementation to be successful, it will be necessary to agree on who is going to do what. That is the content of this part of the plan devoted to the identification, division and allocation of tasks.

Time schedule

Without a time schedule, any project will fail and therefore, any evaluation will fail. It is important that the time invested in an evaluation does not exceed more than 10 % of the time invested in the development of what is to be evaluated. If there seems to be a need to evaluate even more intensively, we believe enough is already known about where improvements can be made. In such cases it is better to emphasise further development initially, and start evaluating later.

Having decided on all the issues identified in this third chapter, it will be possible to describe the evaluation plan. Many readers may think that this requires an amount of preparation that is unrealistic. Evaluation has so often been considered as an investment with no return but in cases such as this it is important to realise that often the problem has been related to a poorly planned project or enterprise, not with the evaluation process itself. This chapter does not seek to give guidance on evaluations in great depth, to respond to any situation. On the contrary it advocates for evaluation only when needed. It also advocates for focused, efficient and effective evaluations. A carefully designed evaluation plan may simply consist of the elements mentioned above as shown by the titles of the paragraphs (in italics).

Format for planning a self-evaluation

- *Issues to be evaluated*
- *Goals of evaluation and related /indicators*
- *Target group(s)*
- *Information needed*
- *Methods and instruments of evaluation*
- *Organisation of the evaluation process*
- *Information processing*
- *Identification of criteria/evidence*
- *Analysis/interpretation*
- *Reporting*
- *Division and allocation of tasks*
- *Time schedule*

* Privacy agreement

3. MANAGING A SELF EVALUATION

The psychology of the evaluated

Evaluation has a threatening connotation to many people. They perceive it as something that may lead to criticism or to being watched and controlled. In self evaluation all this shouldn't be true, but it is important to be aware of this perception and to pay attention to the fears some people may have. Often these fears are not shown overtly, but rather by protests, negativism or obstruction. Self evaluation aims at a learning process of all parties concerned and all individuals concerned. The learning process is supposed to be a self directed and autonomous kind of learning. It will have to be (made) clear throughout the complete self-evaluation that this is the main goal.
Active participation, strong emphasis on privacy matters, and leaving the analysis and the conclusions to the people, rather than imposing conclusions on them, are important ways to overcome resistance and increase the enthusiasm for evaluation

For whom do you evaluate?

Evaluation is carried out for particular people. An institute for Adult education may start a self evaluation for the teachers, for the leader, for the community, the inspectorate, etc. In all cases the evaluation will serve other audiences or target groups. A self evaluation will seldom serve only one group. However it is important to be aware of the main target group of the evaluation. All parties concerned must know that too. It determines what can and what cannot be revealed. It touches on the privacy matters mentioned, and as such it affects the level of commitment or fear of the people involved. To manage an evaluation well it is important that one is aware of and explicit about for whom it is done.

Keep learning in mind

Evaluations serve as feedback to the individual and collective learning processes. This does not happen automatically. For evaluations to contribute to this learning this should be made explicit. It was stated earlier in "the Evaluation Framework" that evaluation takes something extra. It takes time for reflection. If this time is not taken, if there is no explicit answer to the question what have we learned and what that implies for our future perceptions, opinions and actions, the learning results will evaporate. Trainers know that learners benefit from an approach in which the learning content is announced, is presented and is summarised. This same three step procedure is important in managing a learning focused evaluation. Direct the attention, carry out evaluation activities and then direct the attention again to what insights the evaluation provided you with. After that the implications for further decisions and actions may be considered.

Monitoring versus evaluation

Evaluation can easily turn into a lot of work. The processing of data and the analysis of it all may take loads of time. It is important to try to avoid this. In this matter the distinction between monitoring and evaluation is important. Monitoring is merely registration of things. Keeping a file with data on progress made, presence or absenteeism, drop-out numbers, number of meetings/sessions/classes cancelled, information sent to stakeholders etc. This may all be just filed, not in order to analyse it all in depth, but just to be able to do that once there may be a reason to do so. Monitoring provides the organisation/initiative with a database that may be analysed once problems occur, or complaints are heard, or once significant successes cannot be explained satisfactorily. Evaluation is more than just registering the process. It includes the analysis and the valuation of things. It is best to focus and prioritise as much as possible within evaluation, so it does not turn into something too complex, and at the same time not to limit the monitoring too much. Registering and filing things, provide educators with a rich opportunity for learning at moments of their own choice.

Giving and gaining support

Evaluation is a matter of systematically forming and underpinning opinions and/or personal theories on the course of events in the educational setting one works/acts in. These processes are dependent to a large extent on the perspectives of the various parties concerned. It cannot be denied that there will be a lot of possible conflicts of interests. There will be majorities and minorities in these matters. In order to keep evaluation a challenge for everybody involved, it is important to find a balance between finding support for some views and giving support to others. Thus one might create a mix of initiators (the ones who's views you support) and followers (the ones who's support you have gained) who fulfil these roles interchangeably. By managing an evaluation this way polarisation or frictions between the conservatives and the *avant garde* will not unnecessarily be enlarged.

Task identification and division/allocation

Someone ought to do the dishes. In households it is known that this sentence is not enough to lead to action. For such a message to be effective, it must address a specific person. This is true in dish washing, as well as in evaluation. For the evaluation process to be manageable and efficient, the task must be identified, made explicit, allocated to particular people, estimated in terms of time and included into the planning and schedules of peoples regular work. This is something many evaluators failed to realise. One might say: "evaluation will not be taken seriously, if it is not taken seriously !". It will not lead to action, is no one is appointed to do something with it, and informed about the requirements as for how and when it is expected to be done.

Dealing with representatives, decision makers, stakeholders, target groups, parties concerned...

Presumably it is obvious that among everyone who may be involved in evaluations the need for information will vary tremendously. Representatives want to have their interests served and to have the right to vote, or to have a proportional influence; decision makers would like to be able to make choices between alternative actions (yes/no, go/no go, this way, or that way) stakeholders have the right to know, they wish to be informed.

Other parties concerned may like the evaluation to contribute to their own positions in processes of negotiation on particular issues. These people all have different interest, value positions, access to information, needs etc. As a consequence their involvement will have to be different. In order to manage the evaluation well, it is important to allocate the evaluation tasks in such a way that there will be no role conflicts or incompatibilities between the group one stands for and the evaluation task one is charged with.

Involving people as evaluators, respondents, data collectors, analysts, experts, reporters...

What kinds of involvement do we distinguish between? In the title of this paragraph a number of ways to be active in the evaluation are mentioned.

The evaluator is the one forming an opinion based on the analysis of the issues studied; respondents are just being heard; data collectors administer interviews or questionnaires or serve as observers; analysts go through the data to identify the meaning of the data. Experts are free to give their views from the perspective of their particular field of expertise. Reporters make the process of evaluation and its conclusions accessible to the various audiences. In a self evaluation it is important to try to accomplish a high level of participation. It is vital to see to it, that a deliberate choice will be made to involve the different members of the (educational) community, each into the tasks that suits them best, both from a perspective of expertise, and of interest. The challenge is to find the right match between the kinds of involvement as mentioned in the former paragraph and the tasks mentioned in the present one.

Reporting

Different groups have different frames of reference. They all have their interest positions with their specific interests and allergies. They have their different levels of schooling or experience in school matters. They have their needs for different kinds of information. These are all is reasons why one report for all audiences often doesn't work. Sometimes the differences in needs may be solved by making the report in such a way that it consists of elements that go more or less into the details. A manager's summary followed by an account about what was done and to what conclusions it led, then a more detailed report on implications for the various actors in the school and finally appendices for those who wish to know the details. Sometimes however it cannot be avoided to have different reports for different groups. The management of

the evaluation may all be in vain if this part of the process is not carefully addressed. It often is a delicate matter.

Ethical issues, democracy, privacy, equality, exposure,

Not only reporting is delicate. The whole evaluation includes a lot of matters that are to be taken seriously and that involve ethical issues, or basic values.

It is essential to reach very clear agreements on the rights of all the parties involved in or affected by the evaluation.

We recommend being as explicit as possible about

1. The ownership of the data
2. The accessibility of the data to others
3. The way things will be made public
4. The way the evaluation will deal with anonymity, or not
5. The possible consequences of the evaluation for positions, tasks, responsibilities

Interventions and methods to be used in the evaluation process

The person responsible for managing the self evaluation, will have to organise a number of meetings during the process of evaluation. Since evaluation is basically considered a process of (adult) learning, the opportunities to share thoughts and to sharpen the views in debates, to put feelings into words, to make the positions and the relative minorities and majorities visible, these meetings are vital for an effective evaluation.

For learning to take place, evaluation meetings must be:

- Motivating
- Offering a richness of perspectives, data and options stimuli.
- Giving opportunities to explore, revise, attune ones views and experiences
- Providing a clear picture of what has been the result of the reflections.

This all implies that evaluation must be a challenge, it should be stimulating, highly interactive, a mix of divergent (brain storms) and convergent debates (focused decision making).

4.   EVALUATING A SELF-EVALUATION

Objectivity/inter-subjectivity, representation

Many authors in the field of evaluation state that evaluation is not so much a matter of providing proof that something is working as a matter of making that proof plausible. The methodology available is not sufficient to deal with the complexity of evaluation issues. The number of variables involved, the external factors influencing the objectives of the evaluation, the interaction between all those influences, and the relatively small number of respondents or cases, often make it impossible to provide full proof evidence. Evaluation is done to gain as much understanding as possible of the things that are going on, and the effects they have, but time and resources inevitably limit it.

This is not something just to take notice of. It implies that one has to be very much aware of what data one may collect in an objective way. Furthermore when the objectivity is at stake, there is always the solution of inter-subjectivity. If we have no other way we may decide to ask a number of people and to see what most people give as their judgement on the course of events. In practical terms this means that instead of just using data, one also relies on a panel of judges, a kind of jury.

In composing a panel or a jury it is vital to look at the way in which such a jury represents the community involved. There is not one way of doing thus it will however be clear that it has to be a deliberate and conscious decision, taking into account for whom the evaluation is meant, and what the goal of the evaluation is.

Validity (construct validity and empirical validity)

What is evaluated? Often it seems obvious, but once the discussion about it starts, it appears that different actors have a different understanding of the issues and the concepts under evaluation. Validity is about that. Basically it concerns two major questions:

- What is it we would like to measure/identify/ understand?
- Is what we are measuring/ gathering information about., indeed what we want to know?

An attempt to answer the first question will always involve finding good and shared definitions of concepts, and then finding a theoretical framework to relate them to. This may look quite complicated and rather scientific; it is not necessarily. It just means you have to be clear about what you think is important and why you think that. If this is not clear, the eventual outcomes of an evaluation will not be interpretable. There must be a kind of initial idea with which to compare the eventual outcomes. New knowledge is of no meaning if it has no relation to existing knowledge. If this relation is lacking some superficial learning may take place, but the transfer of experience to other area of work or study will not.

Instruments made or chosen and the debates held about the data, will always have to be looked at critically, asking the central question over and over again: Is this what we think the evaluation

is about? Is this showing us what we wanted to know (irrespective of whether it is positive or negative information)? It is often useful to appoint a kind of devil's advocate to ask such questions as an input whenever that is needed.

Internal consistency of the evaluation activities

The idea behind the evaluation framework is that all the elements in an evaluation plan are derived from each other and show a great coherence and internal consistency. This quality may easily be jeopardised by whatever discussion may turn up during the evaluation. Someone may be appointed to keep an eye on this. A steering group or an evaluation project group could allocate this task to one of the members.

Basically the questions to which one has to pay attention are:

- Is what we are doing still according to the goals of the evaluation?
- Do our methods still support our learning?
- Does the evaluation support our autonomy?
- Is the involvement of everybody still doing justice to our intention to involve various parties?
- Is our evaluation serving the right target groups?
- Are any revisions needed?
- Are these renewed plans still internally consistent?

Efficiency

This quality of an evaluation is probably a very obvious one. It comes down to the issue of what is the cost benefit balance of an evaluation. Are we doing what we can, to reduce the investment of time in executing the evaluation, and yet to provide worthwhile outcomes? We will just give a few examples of items to consider in evaluating the efficiency:

- Is it necessary to involve as many respondents as we do or can we work with samples?
- Is the method chosen for data gathering (Interview, questionnaire, observation etc.) efficient?
- Have we chosen a sensible level of detail in our instruments or in our analyses and our reports?

Often we noticed people were trying to get information just because it was there, not because it is necessary. Evaluation easily turns into something far too big, so be cautious and keep on asking the efficiency question while proceeding. Realise that efficient evaluation gives quicker answers. By doing so the evaluators serve the learning process of the people involved much better. Efficiency definitely is a quality! Quality, not quantity is what matters.

Effectiveness in view of the goals of the evaluation

Often evaluations are quite sophisticated and involve lots of work. Often however they produce a lot of materials but not the real answers to the questions posed. Reaching thus conclusions at the end of an evaluation is highly frustrating and will kill any enthusiasm for learning from the

experience. That is why it is so important to identify some intermediate results we wish to accomplish during the evaluation process. This gives us the opportunity to raise the effectiveness at an early stage in order to avoid eventual disappointment.

- How much of what we want to find out have we revealed so far?
- How does that compare with what we intended?
- What can we do to raise the effectiveness of our next step?

Some people think that it goes too far to include such meta-evaluation elements in the evaluation. They fear it will cost too much time. Reflecting on the effectiveness together with the efficiency however will often save more time than it costs.

Transparent evaluation

Two basic assumptions serve as the basis for our evaluation approach. The first is that evaluation is an element in processes of individual and organisational professional learning. The second is that it will clarify interest positions and serve as a basis for negotiation among all parties involved.

It serves both learning and democracy. For both these purposes the process of self evaluation should be as transparent as possible.

Efficiency and Effectiveness as a learning process

A special focus in the approach chosen is learning as the ultimate process to which evaluation should contribute and by which it should be supported at the same time. Because of the importance of this element in this approach we once more focus on this aspect. The quality of evaluation from this perspective consists of the following:

1. Good self evaluations are motivating events.
   - They include a variety of activities.
   - They have clear goals and purposes known and supported by the people involved and concerned.
2. They provide the people involved with a richness of information or experiences they can benefit from
   - Lots of sources
   - Clearly structured information
   - Involving all senses
3. They provide opportunities for exploration, articulating ideas, experimentation and feedback on these experiences.
   - Opportunities for brainstorms
   - Opportunities for thinking
   - Opportunities for discussing and sharing ideas
   - Safe and secure feedback on initial "theories and actions", meaning feedback on how the facts found related to what people originally did or thought, or both.

5. SELF EVALUATION TOOLS

Kinds of tools (Categories)

Evaluation may be done in many ways and using a variety of instruments and methods. Many of these instruments and methods do exist, but nevertheless in order to fit a particular need these methods and instruments (tools) often have to be either newly developed or revised. Still it is an adequate first step to see if instruments are available that match the needs of those who wish to evaluate their school.

No matter which tool one wishes to choose, the underlying thought will be a kind of list of things one wishes to know. This implies that there will be always a kind of questionnaire behind any evaluation activity. In order to find answers to the questions included in such questionnaires, many options are available. These options include:

- Questionnaire
- Interviews
- Checklists for observation
- Checklist for document analysis
- Any a number of other methods

Interviews and Questionnaires

In order to develop or choose a questionnaire it is helpful to develop a kind of mental map of the thing you wish to evaluate. This implies that a map is made in which all the related factors, influences, concepts, actors, and their interrelation are drawn. From such a map it is possible to derive the main questions one wishes to ask. It reveals the blanks, the doubts, the convictions, the closed and the open questions one has in this field of "study". Based on the inventory of all this it will be possible to set priorities and to decide what questions have to be included in an instrument. There is always a lot more to be known than one can possibly evaluate, so be as selective as possible in selecting the items to be included.

In formulating the questions for a questionnaire or an interview, many pitfalls are present. Pay attention to the risk of posing:

- Suggestive questions (Do you agree that the school leader is the cause of all the problems?)
- Questions leading to a bias given the position of the respondents (Do you think the work load is too high in this school?)
- Questions evoking politically correct answers (Do you invest your energy in students no matter their background, their looks, or their socio-economic status?)

Whenever you want to use questionnaires or interviews as tools have a try-out first in a brief. During this try out you will find out where the sources of misunderstandings or the pitfalls are. First ask a colleague to comment. Comments gain value if they are based on actual experience, so ask them to allow you to administer the tool to them. Then have a dry run, with someone of the target group.

The matrix below shows some considerations for choosing either closed or open questions to be posed either orally or in written form. This is far from exhaustive, but it gives a basis for choosing an adequate instrument.

	Open questions	**Closed questions**
Interview	To gain insight and understanding Administered among a relatively small group of people To form ideas to serve as basis for further investigation	To be able to choose between, or select solutions, options, actions To be used for small to medium sized groups of respondents To reach decisive conclusions or to identify clear options to have a further survey about
Questionnaire	To gain insight and understanding To get a picture of the support for particular ideas or experiences To be administered among medium size groups of people To form ideas to serve as basis for further investigation	To be able to choose between, or select solutions, options, actions To be used for large groups of respondents To get a clear picture of majorities and minorities supporting the issues raised To reach decisive conclusions

Observation and registration

Based on the same kinds of questions it may be possible to identify items to be recorded or registered. If you wish to know the level of participation of learners during classes/meetings; or you would like to know the drop out rates of a school; or the proportion of time trainers devoted to lecturing and other more interactive methods, it will be possible to record these data, or to observe them in practice.

In order to make observations a reliable way of gathering information, it is necessary to define clearly what it is you are looking at. There is a load of books available on how to develop observation schemes properly. It is beyond the scope of this document to go into the detail of all that.

Some questions you will have to keep in mind in either choosing or developing an observation scheme are:

- What do I wish to know?
- What behaviour, or facts, do I have to observe in order to know it?
- How do I define this behaviour in terms of identifiable elements (visible, tangible, otherwise)?
- Do I wish to know whether things happen, or also when they happen and how often they happen?

Compared to other instruments and methods, observation is prone to be subjective unless observers make a prior effort to standardise their observation. By having try-outs, or by having two observers independently observe the same events, you will be able to judge how reliable your instrument is.

By looking at the data and analysing them independently and then comparing the judgements, you may see how valid the tool may be. If what you have observed appears to be related to another thing you consider as a related concept, the instrument proves to be even more valid. If, for instance, the observation of absenteeism appears to show a clear relationship with the outcomes of a questionnaire on school motivation, this supports the validity of the instrument to record absenteeism and, the other way around, the questionnaire on school motivation.

Analysis of documents

Basically the analysis of documents is also a kind of observation. This time the documents are observed rather than behaviour. Again the main point to keep in mind is to be very concise in the definition of what you are looking for in the documents. Again similar things are important.

- Identify what you wish to know
- Determine how that is shown in the document
- Decide how you are going to do the analysis (just a scan, or word by word?)
- Consider whether you would like to know not only whether things are mentioned but also how often, by whom, or in what context

Other methods

The instruments mentioned so far are the most commonly used ones, but they are not the only ones (in order to bring about learning), others are equally valid.

- Thermometer plus immediate feedback, a drawn kind of thermometer on a flipchart to indicate how participants value the event in which they take place. The flip chart is turned away from the people and one by one they pass along the flipchart to mark their position on the line of the "thermometer". You can choose whether you want to identify the dimension on which they score or leave that open. Afterwards you turn around the flipchart and the distribution of positions on the line drawn is visible to everybody and may be discussed and clarified.
- Letter addressed to yourself. Ask people to write a letter to themselves including statements of what they have learned or what they intend to go and do with what they have learned. Actually send these letters to the people involved a few minutes later. It improves both their learning and the impact of the evaluation
- Writing an article about the project/programme. Nothing is more evaluative than to have to present the experience on paper. This requires analysis, comparisons, reflections, formulation, and articulation.

- Presentation. The advantage of a presentation compared to an article is of course the discussion it triggers. The dialogue that follows is one of the richest ways of learning from experience.
- Contribution to a (school) journal, a newsletter. This serves a similar purpose, but now the negotiation element of evaluation gets into focus. It does not only trigger a discussion aimed at understanding, but also aimed at interests, division of power, responsibility, authority etc.
- Creating a web site about the project/programme. The involvement of new technologies adds to the quality of this instrument. Furthermore it serves a similar purpose as writing articles or making a newsletter...
- Self-reflection instruments. There are instruments available that help to reflect on particular aspects of your learning, educating, training, organisation etc. Issues covered by such instruments could be a school climate/ the quality of a learning environment/team spirit/ effectiveness/ leadership etc. After an experiment with new methods, an instrument might be used to see what effect this new approach had on how the school is perceived or what the effects have been on the learning environment.
- Sparring partner/critical friend. Having someone to talk to, to have debates with, to share doubts with, to share your professional kicks with, enriches the learning process enormously. As made clear elsewhere in this document, there must then be a moment when the result of this learning is made explicit and transferable.
- Working with scenarios. One aspect of learning is the ability to do things better in future. Developing future scenarios immediately turns present experiences into options for the future. This facilitates the transfer of what is learned, to future actions, or decisions about the future. It is desirable to develop two or three scenarios rather than one, in order to promote/trigger the dialogue that is needed to provide the rich learning context that makes self evaluation a learning experience.
- Critical incidents method. Reconstruct events from your experience and identify critical moments where you had to decide. Ask others to think about what they would have done in this situation. Describe your choice and compare it with the choices others have made. Identify what it implies for future action.
- Reflective silence STAR (Situation, Time, Actions, Results). It sometimes is very useful to build in silences in the rush, rush, and hectic race of daily professional life. Use these moments to reflect and write down what you wish to remember from the experiences you went through. Consider alternative actions and reflect again on them.
- Learning questions related to personal development plans. Too seldom organisation have the habit of allowing their staff, or promoting among their staff the identification of learning questions. If teachers, trainers, managers and others concerned know what they want to learn, they focus much better on the relevant experiences in their work and make progress. Often the learning goals and objectives of the professionals are left vague and ambiguous. This is counterproductive for effective learning and as a consequence for the organisation's quality and its ability to change.

- 360° feedback. This is a deliberate confrontation of observations/views of a professional with the observations or views of superiors, colleagues, subordinate staff or students. The focus is on the difference of perspective to which the difference in position might lead, in order to understand better the dynamics of the world in which one operates.
- Visualising things either graphically or more creatively. The power of images is often greater than that of words. However this is rarely used in evaluation. Try to visualise things and make them visible, or tangible, or heard in a creative way. This will certainly create a much greater impact.
- Debate, an adversary evaluation procedure comparable with a trial process in court with a jury. This method, which is very stimulating and which creates high commitment, emphasises the negotiation part of evaluation. At the same time it stimulates the motivation to learn. It may be a time consuming approach but it certainly makes evaluation come to life.
- Allocating money as a token of the priorities given to different parts of the project. Dividing money clearly shows the values given to various aspect of schooling. It is a way to operationalise the value given to things. People tend to be willing to fight really hard about money. The fight over money makes it clear where people put their priorities, the debate about why and about the evidence that is what it is all about. This is what provides the learning and the clarification the positions of all parties involved in the school.
- Serving as a consultant in other similar projects. Helping other in evaluation actively is often a very good way to analyse your own situation. Because others want to know what your advice is, you will have to be very explicit about what you think may work out, and what you think won't. Questions will be asked about evidence and the background of your advice. Thus you will have to make up your own mind systematically.

How to construct tools and put them to work

The internal consistency of the evaluation is important. The instruments have to fit into the evaluation plan. That is why it is important to remind yourself once again what information you need.

Instruments and methods need to be clear and concise. Specifically, methods need to be transparent. Respondents need to know what is expected, why this method is appropriate, what the results may be like and how they will be used. So a published plan of action is necessary.

For instruments the formulation of checkpoints or questions needs special attention.

Make sure the items are clear, that they fit the language of the questions you wish to answer with them. It is good to think in advance how the answers will be processed. When appropriate, it is desirable to choose formats and answering alternatives or scoring items that can easily be processed.

Check the instruments you plan to use for the evaluation! It is crucial to have a few others look at the instruments or methods to see if they understand the items/questions. This is not only necessary to improve the items, but also to gain support for the questions asked. Taking part in the construction of instruments improves the commitment of respondents. They will be more

willing to answer and to answer seriously. A pilot with the respondents very often reveals mistakes the evaluator overlooked.

How to evaluate tools - The pilot study

We would like to emphasise again how important it is to have an evaluation of the tools themselves. In many evaluations people find out after having collected information, that what they have got, is not what they expected. That is why a pilot is vital. A try out may reveal timely shortcomings such as:

- Items are not clear;
- Concepts are misunderstood;
- It is not clear how the instrument is to be administered;
- The volume of data to be collected appears to be about to create an insurmountable pack of work;
- Using the instrument may be more time-consuming than anticipated;
- The phrases or activities proposed may cause adverse reactions amongst respondents.

6. SELF-EVALUATION OF CHANGE

Self evaluation may either concern the evaluation of an established practice or the evaluation of an innovation, or change process. Even if a self-evaluation initially concerns an established practice, it usually leads to changes, which then makes self-evaluation part of an on going change process. In this section attention will be paid to the kinds of phases one may go through in evaluation such processes.

Self evaluation must raise the awareness of people of the facts and the value of the (course of) events they are part of. It enables people to learn about their own activities and the changes they wish to implement and it helps them to reflect on them. In order to make explicit what this reflection is about, some basic questions people may ask themselves during a project are included in this chapter.

Diagnosis

For those who intend to reflect systematically on a project and on their own work within it, it is important to realise that an optimal way to do so, is to start with a diagnosis. A project is not good just as it is, unless it fits the needs of the situation, the learners, the teachers and others who are part of it. Self evaluation thus starts even before anything is done. It will have to be an integral part of all the stages you and your colleagues, or you and your students/learners will go through.

Evaluation of the plan

After the diagnosis, a work plan or a plan for change has to be developed. The quality of such a plan again will have to be analysed. This follows the diagnosis and can be called the evaluation of the plan.

Evaluation of the introduction of the plan

Since you probably won't be the only one involved in a project, it is important to introduce the plan to others involved and see to it that they all understand its meaning and its implications. This means that the introduction of the plan will again have to be evaluated.

Probably you now already begin to get bored with the notion of evaluation. Keep in mind however, that the evaluation is nothing more than a set of reflective questions you either explicitly or implicitly pose to yourself or to others. It doesn't necessarily mean a whole series of very formal measurements and analyses. It is more like asking what is the reason to do, what you intend to do? what could be a good way to do it? do others understand what it is all about?

Evaluation of the implementation

After the introduction of your plan, you will start implementing it. Here it becomes important to ensure that things either go the way you intended, or if not, are still done in a way that, on second thoughts, still may be judged to be worthwhile. Not every change of plan is a change

for the worse, is it? Often the evaluation of the implementation has to be repeated a few times until things operate the way you planned, or the way you hoped for. In the beginning new things often show children's diseases. After two or more times they may disappear so then it becomes possible to evaluate the effects.

Evaluation of the results

Finally when you have completed your actions, you may well be curious to see what the results of all your efforts have been. Output evaluation may provide you with answers to those questions. Within the concept of "results" you may distinguish between immediate results such as learning outcomes; effects such as improved chance on the labour market; impact such as improved performance, or transfer meaning effects on the performance of yourself in other settings than the one you were trained for, or even effects on the performance of other people you influence with your new competences.

In order to help you reflect on your plans and your actions, a number of questions are suggested. These or similar questions are to be answered, but not necessarily to be put to others. You will be able to answer some of them yourself, others you will have to pose to others, and again for others you will have to do some investigations. The questions essentially are meant to guide you through the process of thought, you will have to go through to apply effectively the ideas provided in this document. The series of questions provided below is by no means exhaustive. Once you focus on your particular project and activities you will almost certainly want to add a few more specific questions.

Diagnosis (or self-audit)

In order to identify your starting point it is important to ask a number of questions about the situation, the state of affairs as it is. Having done that you will be able to set your own goals and priorities, you will know where you stand and what needs to be done.

- What is the present motivation of participants to work on these subjects/issues?
- What is their present level of exposure to opportunities for such learning?
- What are the main obstacles for the intended learning?
- How would you characterise the various learning styles?
- What is their appreciation of the project issues?
- What level of relevant skills have they already have acquired?
- What do you see as the main deficits/learning problems?
- With whom do they prefer to work?
- What kinds of learning activities do they favour?
- What is their level of study skills or independent learning competences?
- To what extent do they have control over various ICT skills?
- What is the quality of the materials available for learning?
- What is the quality of the ICT resources available?
- What do you feel is the dominant way of teaching in your institute/project today?
- What would the trainers like to see changed?
- What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the present situation?
- What do you consider to be obstacles or opportunities for change or improvement?
- What alternatives do you have in mind when you consider the future of your educational activity or setting? What are the options?
- ………………………………………………………….
- …………………………………………………………..

EVALUATING (THE MAKING OF) A PLAN

The next series of questions are included to help you set up a plan for improving or changing your educating/training and/or maybe that of your colleagues. The questions make you reflect on the necessary ingredients for a successful plan.

- What are the goals and objectives you wish to accomplish?
- What do you intend to do to reach these goals and objectives?
- What is the (theoretical) basis that makes you believe your actions will be effective?
- What specific steps, what elements and what sequence of steps do you have in mind?
- Do you foresee a need for particular tools or facilities and what, if any?
- What time schedule do you intend to stick to?
- How will progress be monitored and evaluated?

- How will the plan be kept up to date?
- With whom are you going to discuss this plan?
- Who will be the people authorised to decide on the plan?
- Is it a good/ a worthwhile/a feasible plan?

INTRODUCING THE PLAN TO OTHERS

You now may have a draft plan for evaluation. This however doesn't mean that others who will be affected by it or who will in any way be part of it, know what your intentions are. Those who take the initiative have a head start, so it now takes time to make the others understand your diagnosis and your plan and consequently it takes time for you as well to gain their support for it. Questions you could ask your audience, or rather your colleagues, are:
- What do you know about the issue and this self-evaluation project already?
- Could you predict the outcome of a diagnosis on this issue in your school/your class?
- Given the goals and objectives of the draft plan, could you indicate how you might contribute to its realisation?
- What might be the obstacles in realising this plan?
- What would be valid and convincing success indicators to you, which would provide you with the evidence needed to prove the success of this plan?
- Please outline an individual plan in which you describe your own part in the project and its evaluation?
- Please, indicate why you think this project is yes/no worth implementing

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

While making the diagnosis and formulating the plan several assumptions were made. Now that the plan is in action, it is important to see if things appear to be the way you anticipated and to observe how your plan is executed. It is mainly a matter of just recording what is happening without bothering much about the interpretation of it. It is just to guarantee that you will have this data available when later you wish to evaluate the whole project.
- Are the circumstances/Is the context the way you expected?
- What is actually happening?
- What activities did (you as) learner/educator/trainer do?
- What materials did you use?
- Who worked together and with whom?
- What were they discussing together, talking about, and negotiating?
- Have any critical incidents/conflicts/highlights/complaints occurred?
- Has ICT been used? How frequently? How effectively?

- To what extent did the learners show active involvement?
- What progress was shown throughout the process?
- Was any support given to you and if so, by whom?
- What were the results, if any, shown in tests or assessments?

IDENTIFYING OUTCOMES

If you change something about the way you teach or in the way you organise things or whatever, in the end you would like to know if it worked out the way you hoped for.
The questions included under the heading 'outcomes', are about just that. What were the results of your efforts? You will certainly have other questions to add here depending on your own priorities.

To what extent did the pupils show enthusiasm for the activities set out for them?
- How much learning progress was shown?
- Were any differences to be observed between various groups (men/women, different backgrounds etc.)?
- What results were observable as for instance?
  - Academic skills
  - Communicative skills
  - Self-regulatory skills
  - Initiative/active participation
  - The quality of written products?
- What was the impact on you as a teacher/trainer/educator?
- What was the impact on the organisation/the education as a whole?
- What evidence for improvement do you observe?
  - ………………………………………………..
  - ……………………………………………….

EVALUATING TRANSFER

So your plan was executed once. However you presumably would like it to be repeated, or you would like it to affect others inside or outside your school/project. Hopefully it proved to be a stone in the water.
- How many people were informed about your activity?
- How many have actually been participating?
- How much interest did your colleagues show?
- How much interest did other people involved show?
- Are there any other activities or initiatives you consider a direct spin off of your project?
- What next?

OVERALL EVALUATION

Having completed the whole project now, you may wish to look back at it and ask yourself whether it paid off. Did you benefit from it personally? What use was it to all parties concerned? How could such a project be made even more valuable? Reflective practice is the phrase used in the introduction of this document. This overall evaluation indeed seeks to promote just that: reflection on the progress made.

- What do you consider to be the most important conclusions to be drawn from this project?
- Looking back at the complete project what do you consider to be your own personal most important learning outcome?
- What do you consider to be the most important reason why people should, or should not participate in projects such as this one?

The project may be over now but self-evaluation will hopefully become embedded in your personal and organisational ethos. Self evaluation will become an integral part of developing, planning, organising, implementing, optimising and changing education, thus helping you to adapt to new requirements of new learners in new times.

MANAGING THE FOLLOW UP OF SELF-EVALUATION

Conclusions must be operational

The self evaluation leads to conclusions. If nothing happens after having reached these conclusions the self evaluation has been in vain. That is why it is commendable to do everything that is within your potential to see that the results, the conclusions, and the decisions made will be turned into reality. That process of making all the things you learned come true is a process that needs special attention. Many publications on evaluation show that it especially this part of evaluation that appear to be ineffective. Books written about his have as their titles names as: the failure of evaluation (Guba1969), utilization focused evaluation; (Patton, 1978), Effective evaluation (Guba and Lincoln, 1981) Five uneasy pieces in the evaluation puzzle (Kirkpatrack 1998). These and similar titles show the battles that were fought to avoid the non-utilization of evaluative data and conclusions. They illustrate how important it is to pay special attention to this last part of the self evaluative process in which things must turned into actions and actions must be effective.

If conclusions are formulated just as such, without being specific about what they imply, or what it takes to translate these conclusions into actions, then nothing will happen. Evaluators may be happy, but their work was executed for no pupose.

Allocation of task

Many of the conclusions reached are often applauded to by many people. However agreements on who is going to take action are often not made. "Someone ought to do something about it" appears not to be enough of an agreement to guarantee action. For that purpose it is necessary to allocate tasks to particular people. They will have to be made, and held responsible for doing something as a consequence of the conclusions reached, and of the decisions made.

Conclusions and decisions must be translated in to action plans. These plans may be considered as innovation plans and will have to be treated as such. That implies that measures will have to be taken to make people acquainted with these plans and support for these plans will have to be acquired. It is vital to see to it, that the ones concerned develop a sense of ownership of these plans.

Once all of this is arranged for and established, it is possible to allocate tasks to the persons concerned.

Time planning
Allocating tasks is one thing; accomplishing them is an other. Having clear deadlines defined, scheduling al tasks into an overall planning enhances the chance of making things come true. Without proper planning things will remain optional, rather than compulsory. There is no need to accomplish today what may be done tomorrow as well. The measures will be taken much easier when it is perfectly clear who is supposed to take them and what's more when they are supposed to take them and what is even more when they are supposed to reach the intended effects. It is obvious that the process after an evaluation again includes evaluative actions to monitor the consequences, the impact and the transfer.

Monitoring progress
As stated in the last paragraph, the follow up process itself will again contain elements of monitoring and evaluation. That is why this whole process is considered to be cyclic. Planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are followed by this follow up process, that leads to refined or changed planning, new implementation, adapted monitoring and evaluation etc. It never stops and in an ever changing society with ever changing demands, needs and wishes, as well as in a society with ever growing knowledge and technology it never should nor could come to an end.

Committment
There is no mechanism as powerful as commitment and social contracts. Having to do something is one thing; knowing that others know you are supposed to fulfil them is another. To make a self evaluation effective it is necessary to make all peopre concerned committed, so they feel an external drive (on top of an internal one) to meet the agreements made.

Rewards
It may seem like childish, but it is very important to reward people involved for their efforts invested in he improvement of educative practice. It may be rewards of various kinds. Rewards one could think of are:
- Freedom to determine ones own approach;

- Financial benefits/salary
- Mobility
- Emoluments
- Opportunities
- Perspectives
- Equipments
- Status
- Etc.

In sum: Operational conclusions allocated to particular persons that are committed and will be rewarded and that are known to be the ones to do what is agreed upon will be successful when their tasks are specified, clearly allocated and related to a perspective of specific accomplishments and forthcoming rewards.

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