

Lower Saxony Regional Conference

“Skills and their Validation in Basic Education”

Minutes of the presentation about Good Practices

A) Vocational education and training

- 1) Increasing skills by assessing skills, Professor Monika Kastner, Alpen-Adria University Klagenfurt (Austria)**
- 2) External examination – the opportunity for future skilled workers, Herbert Rüb, NQE Bremen**

Mr Rosenstein (NA BIBB) welcomes Professor Monika Kastner and Herbert Rüb, who will each present a model and a procedure that focusses on determining skills, advice and support during entry into a professional career and the recognition of professional experience.

Dr Kastner from the Alpen-Adria University Klagenfurt explains the Austrian model of “Increasing skills by assessing skills” (also referred to as KOMKOM, an abbreviation of the German title), which is funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education.

As part of this project, a pilot test for assessing skills and subsequently categorising them within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was created and tested. In particular, this project is concerned with recognising skills at Levels 1 and 2 of the NQF. Trials were carried out to classify skills related to various technical and manual basic qualifications.

Target groups are employees in so-called social enterprises. There are approximately 200 such organisations in Austria, employing around 40,000 people, more than 56% of whom do not possess any qualifications higher than a compulsory school-leaving qualification (Pflichtschulabschluss), secondary modern school-leaving qualification (Hauptschulabschluss) with a negative grade or a leaving qualification from a specialist school (Sonderschulabschluss).

The KOMKOM process aims to link together general and vocational basic education. The goal is to pave the way for people with a Level 1 or 2 NQF certificate into lifelong learning and to help them gain a professional qualification.

As part of this project, determining characteristics were compiled, which were described in relation to everyday life and in simple language, in order to establish attributes concerning literacy and linguistic competence. The model includes elements of both self-evaluation and external assessment. The participants receive individual, specific information about their own personal skills and abilities.

The planned continuation of this project will focus on the classification of apprenticeships at Level 3 of the framework and the programming of additional languages, in order to determine the skills and qualifications of refugees and immigrants.

Herbert Rüb from the Institute for Vocational Training, Labour Market and Social Policy (Inbas GmbH) presents a model funded by the Bremen State Senator for the Economy and the European Social Fund.

The project has the clear objective of creating an individual skill review that takes subsequent vocational qualifications for a profession into account. Skills are determined on the basis of practical experience and activity in relevant fields of work (e.g. people working for vehicle-based suppliers without any vocational training).

Job references are evaluated in order to identify skills and establish the need for qualifications, as well as transferring information from practice to the appropriate training frameworks (samples of work are drawn up along with the requirements of the individual years of training) and interdisciplinary skills are reviewed in order to then put together a curriculum for catching up on technical and interdisciplinary areas of training. The goal is to progress through the so-called external examination. Learners are given supervision throughout the whole process. The providers and institutes of further education offering the qualification's individual modules are obliged to uphold common standards in their programmes. Approximately 50-60 people are accompanied through this programme each year. On average, the qualification takes 1½ years and a person must dedicate 600-900 hours of their time to the programme.

Christine Etz, Agency for Adult Learning and Further Education