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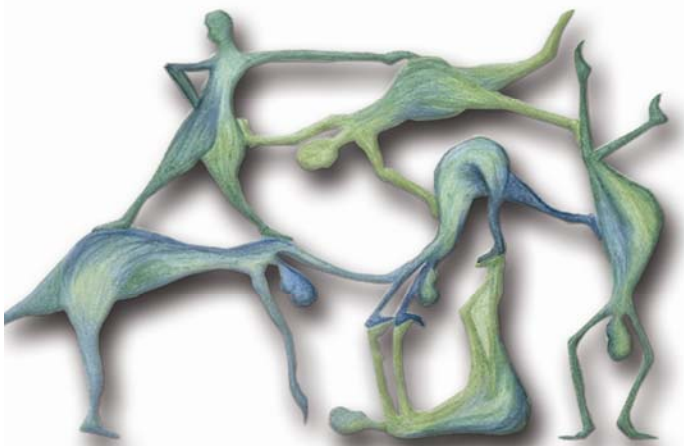
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MOSAIC

Models of Synergetic Activities in Immigrant Counselling

guide lines



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INTRODUCTION

The present document sets out the results achieved by the "MOSAIC" Project in defining some guide lines relative to the activities of welcoming, counselling and accompaniment within the context of adult immigrant education.

The "MOSAIC - Models of Synergetic Activities in Immigrant Counselling" Project has been operative since October 2002 within the context of the Community Programme, "Socrates - Grundtvig 1", in order to define and try out new models, tools and competences in welcoming and counselling for adult immigrants who access education and training systems.

The partners involved in the project are:

- IRES Friuli-Venezia Giulia (I), research and training body, group leader;
- Akademie Oberlingen (D), professional training body;
- FACEPA (E), non-governmental organisation consisting of 15 cultural associations dealing with cultural enrichment and education of adults (particularly immigrants);
- Standing Local Centre for adult education and training¹ of Udine (I), State education and training centre;
- Standing Local Centre for adult education and training of Rozzano (I), State education and training centre;
- Tampereen Aikuiskoulutuskeskus TAKK (FI), professional counselling and training body;
- KLAPEIDA Labour Market Training and Counselling Office (LT), a local public authority that works in the field of adult vocational training and counselling and supervision of schools.

¹ Hereinafter called CTP

The work group is completed by the adhesion of two Swiss institutes, which participate as "silent partners", more specifically:

- ECAP Switzerland Foundation, training and research body;
- SUPSI - Italian Switzerland Professional University School.

Within this organisational context, the document relative to "Guide lines" was entrusted with the task of achieving a synthesis of the main experiences deriving from the various contexts and defining a good practices model.

The discussion within the partenariat which accompanied the definition of the Guide lines contents partially reoriented the said aims. In particular, the presence of a twofold order of problems was highlighted:

- A first element concerns the various methodological and operative reference models for the activity of welcoming and counselling, regardless of the type of user it is aimed at;
- A second element, on the other hand, concerns the problems related to users which the MOSAIC Project intends to address i.e. adult immigrants, with all the specificities which the same involves.

In the light of the said elements, within the context of the common work process on a transnational level, an analysis was carried out above all in relation to the meaning to be assigned to the concept of "guide lines" and the contents of the report. The limited utility of the identification of guide lines particularly emerged, understood as operative indications – or even work tools – valid for all partners, especially as a result of the different institutional and cultural context in which the partners operate.

More than in the identification of guide lines relative to welcoming mechanisms, therefore, the dynamism of the project has concentrated on the refinement of mechanisms of reflection and self-evaluation, which aim at highlighting the centrality – as well as the less than simple applicability – of the quality factor in the welcoming and guidance systems for immigrants who access the education and training services.

In essence, rather than aiming at an identification of solutions or indications that seek to achieve a "universal" value, de facto more theoretical than real, it seemed more useful to

explore the subject of an exchange of experiences, not only through a simple description of what each one realises, but also through the refinement and experimentation of an tool of reflection and self-evaluation on the experience of each partner, capable of highlighting the strengths and weaknesses and possible development lines for practice in relation to the needs/expectations of the actors involved (users, promoters, financiers of the welcoming/training service).

The present document, therefore, above all illustrates (first and second part) the methodological premises and operative indications for the application of an approach based on "training engineering", thanks to the vital contribution of Dr. Furio Bednarz (ECAP) and Dr. Ferruccio D'Ambrogio (SUPSI). The self-evaluation tool proposed (which is amply illustrated in the document relative to the "Tools") does not seek solely to carry out a self-diagnosis function, but also strives to be a tool that aids the comparison and communication of experiences with respect to the various partners. In this sense, it constitutes a premise for identifying good practices, but also weaknesses, which are transmitted to the partners not so much as models to be imitated or cloned but as further elements for common reflection that make it possible to improve and modify one's work practices. The reason why we have decided to use an assessment method derived from educational patterns and adjusted to reception practices is that reception is a key moment of informal learning (a moment in which they get to know something new, meet other people, find their place in a new environment, get ready for a change – in other words, they are trained) and the gateway to the process of life-long learning.

If the subject of quality in training, and the self-evaluation tool proposed, assume a value of a general character, one that is not confined to the specific nature of the group of beneficiaries involved in the MOSAIC project, it is also important to introduce within the reflection a series of considerations linked to the condition of adult immigrants. The third part, organised by Dr. Veronika Martelanc, therefore seeks to integrate the general reflection on the subject of quality in training with some specific considerations linked to the needs of the said category of persons. The section ends with the description of the reception pattern presented by a Spanish partner (FACEPA), called "Multicultural Groups: A method of reception, guidance and counseling of immigrants", one of the most interesting contributions to the project.

Finally, since the autobiographic approach has been mentioned several times throughout the project (and is the subject matter of a specific training activity), we thought it right to attach a very short description of the main features of such approach, with regard to the reception stage. This annex has been written by dr. Carola Bregant, whom we would like to thank.

I PART – QUALITY IN WELCOMING SYSTEMS

1. THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY IN WELCOMING SYSTEMS

No serious discussion of the transferability of models and tools is possible without defining what makes a practice linked to learning a possible example of excellence and above all under what conditions the said example is realistically interesting for *adoption*, and *adaptation* to a different operative context. As a result, hypothesising the diffusion in the form of «*Guide Lines*» of the results of a transnational project, such as the one at the centre of our reflection, implies discussing what determines the quality of a welcoming system. In other words, it involves coming to an agreement as to the determinants of processes and *outputs* quality, before submitting proposals that tend to generalise the adoption of any particular model.

Although it is possible to affirm that training institutions have always been interested in the quality of learning, seeking to measure it mainly *in* and *through* the results achieved by trainees, in terms of knowledge acquired and their practical application, since the 1990s the «engineering-industrial»² approach to the subject of quality (centred on an analysis of products and processes conformity) has also been applied to the field of training, importing with it a theoretical apparatus and tools created in very different contexts, such as those of industrial production and services related to sales operations. Today we can say that, after a certain initial enthusiasm, actors and decision-makers operating in the world of training are agreed in defining both the specificity of context, within which an analysis must be carried out as regards quality, and the need to adopt a plurality of approaches and complementary tools, decisive in achieving the objective of continuous improvement in learning structures.

² On the genesis of quality systems, logic underlying the training actions, interests linked to the application of quality control systems, see the summary in D'Ambrogio Ferruccio, "Application d'une démarche qualité dans une haute école spécialisée", in *Qualité de la pratique, pratique de la qualité*, FPSE-GREOP- Uni Genève, 2003.

However, it seemed important to us to introduce a short excursus on some key approaches to quality, which have been consolidated over recent years (proposing possible models and guide lines to other actors committed to the same field), to highlight how the idea of diffusion is misleading and deceptive when based on the principle of a mechanical transfer of approaches and tools from one context to another. This idea, underlying, in many respects, the approach of numerous communitary programmes and projects, seems to be the result of a translation that has been insufficiently considered within the field of training and *counselling* of quality visions, focusing solely on «objectively measurable» efficiency and efficacy parameters in the learning process. Instead, we would like to demonstrate how we are working within a field (i.e. that of learning) in which the «result» (product) is the fruit of complex interactions between actors, with a profound implication (including affective) for the «client» within the «production», which determines outcomes that are not always «objectively» measurable using the classic indicators of efficacy and efficiency (cost and time of performance). We would therefore like to propose a more articulated and complex approach in relation to the subject of quality and transferability, based on the philosophy which has informed our action.

The arrival of ISO and TQM (Total Quality Management) models in the learning field, and the conquest, on their part, of what has essentially been a brief hegemony in the debate on training quality, for a certain period encouraged a consideration of this question solely from the point of view of diligent and observant «control», in relation to regulations and procedures, by those who offered training or services linked in some way to learning. Within a generally *monopsonic* market, linked to a non marginal extent to public investment, the said reductionism was in part induced by a need for financial institutions to be able to verify that what had been planned in the projects subject to financing had been realised in a rational manner and, in part, by a need for operators to be able to keep each individual element in the structure under control. Essentially, in terms of the said interpretation, when speaking about quality or excellence of training nothing more is meant than viewing training from the point of view of maximum *measurable* efficacy and efficiency. In this sense, quality would be no more than precision of *design*, linearity and smoothness of action, and an absence of any discrepancies or divergences. The processes would be amenable to segmentation, modelisation. Everything would be

transparent and under control, at every moment³. A reassuring but also reductive and mechanistic interpretation.

An emblematic example of this approach can be observed when considering the various attempts in Europe to introduce ISO and TQM models within the field of *ex-ante*, *in itinere* and *ex-post* training systems evaluation, in particular those subsidised by public operators. In Italy, in 1998, ISFOL (Institute for the Development of Worker Training) produced a rigorous and very clear document in relation to this perspective, providing its own manual in support of operators in the field of training projects⁴ quality which clearly outlined the said approach.

Though explored in a manner that duly focused on the specific training aspect, an approach emerged which was conditioned by TQM dogmas (as the said manual defined them). The motivations adopted in support of an introduction of TQM principles are based on the concept of the “certified” and certifiable responsibility of the supplier of services in relation to clients and customers: *within the relatively stable context of the past – it states – the quality of education and training depended almost exclusively on the personal abilities of teachers and trainers (whereas), within a context undergoing rapid evolution, characterised by more complex external performance requests, by an increasing differentiation of training products and by greater client involvement, such individual abilities are no longer sufficient in guaranteeing quality.*

However, the most evident reasons appear to be related to the repositioning of training services within a competitive market logic, and relate to requirements such as:

- supporting a high quality image in relation to clients;
- reducing production costs within a scenario of greater requirements sophistication, as well as reductions in public expenditure;

³ Freely adapted from: Maurizio Lichtner, *La qualità delle azioni formative*, Franco Angeli, Milan, 1999; in pag. 14 and subsequent.

⁴ ISFOL, *La qualità dei progetti di training*,. *Manuale di supporto agli operatori*. Rome, 1998.

- converting training into a leading component in the competitiveness of local production systems, and therefore a tool adapted to the needs of the economy⁵.

The orientation to the subject prioritises research into quality that concentrates on the overall efficacy of the training supplier. This approach reflects the *shifting* underway, within the industrial world, from a quality measurement model based on the verification of product conformity, to that based on process and aimed at preventing non-conformities. Attention has been shifted, in other words, to an organisational capacity for providing “training” goods and services”, which can be measured considering both the final performance of the trainee and the efficacy and efficiency of the supplier⁶.

The attention devoted to the various dimensions through which “the customer” for the training product is expressed is translated within a process context that explicitly explores analogies between industrial production and learning structures, and prioritises the application of TQM precepts, inspired by principles such as:

- preliminary ascertainment of needs and objectives expressed by the clients (almost as though the said operation was abstractly possible in a scientific manner and not the fruit of a long interaction structure)⁷;

⁵ In other words, questioning oneself on the quality of education/training means recognising and being aware of the evolution experienced, over the course of time, by education, which, driven by the economic sector, has been transformed from an “artisan” or liberal sector into an increasingly standardised and rationalised activity. It should be added that the said effects of rationalisation are also accompanied by a more or less declared intention involving cultural “homogenisation”: the standards establish knowledge and existing knowledge of how to do things, with dominant representations thereby prevailing by means of codification; with the risk of yielding to the dictates of a determinist logic instead of leaving space for the logic of an open system. In this regard, compare: De Rosario, “Le tropisme de la qualité en formation” in *La qualité de la formation* FPSE-Uni Genève, 1999. On the division between logics cft. Maurizio Lichner, a work already cited.

⁶ ISFOL, *La qualità dei progetti di training*, cited, considerations taken from pages 58 and subsequent.

⁷ In this sense it can certainly be stated that the basic conception is substantially that of hierarchical learning: the process is constructed, subdivided into stages with relative aims/objectives and didactic modalities.

- correct planning of didactic courses;
- precise respect for the said plan;
- correct monitoring, implemented in order to introduce subsequent processes (and as a minimum adopting principles of continuous improvement).

The underlying vision is the traditional one involving the *life cycle* of the training project, which hypothesises the realisation (in terms of quality) of a linear structure, from an analysis of needs to an evaluation of training results. Within this context of process engineering it is possible to consider as pertinent the application of essential TQM principles, such as process orientation of the quality model, correct focusing on client needs, adoption of preventive measures, quality assurance of internal processes (which progressively becomes the central point of every accreditation system), adoption of a constant improvement approach (which has become, in *Vision 2000*, the philosophy inspiring the ISO system itself)⁸.

Applied with a certain diffusion, within the world of scholastic education, the ISO and TQM models have also been adapted, in recent years, to the more complex world of continuous training. In other situations, there has been an attempt to structure original approaches: one of the most targeted examples is undoubtedly the “eduQua” certification system, introduced in Switzerland to certify, in a homogenous manner (and binding for operators involved in public mandates or financing), the quality of continuous training bodies. The model recognises the specificity of the context, correctly sustaining that the culture, structures, processes and performances of a training institution vary in relation to its goals, dimensions and degree of development and points out how, as a result (...) *quality cannot be evaluated solely on the basis of individual elements, considered*

⁸ The adoption and transfer of approaches to the industrial world conceals difficulties of no little significance. The tendency towards a technical perspective, indicated by some of the classic approaches to quality which have inspired ISO and TQM, makes repeated use of the notion of client and pedagogy by objectives (especially in the taxonomy of Bloom) which tend to transform or reduce the training and learning act to an efficient organisation of means, in which there is a risk of investing considerable energies in continuous refinement of procedural controls.

*separately, since it depends on the optimal coexistence of various elements*⁹. The model (inspired by the principle of certification) does not, however, dispense with a definition of univocal quality criteria, which reformulate a rather standardised approach to the problem, anchoring quality to conditions that are not always pertinent and amenable to planning, such as preliminary and context focusing on general training needs and specific client requirements, the transparent presentation of training offers and pedagogic options (too often evaluated in an abstract manner, without taking public aspects into account), process results in terms of measurable efficiency and efficacy, essentially by means of the performance quality/price ratio, the solidity and transferability of know-how and competences acquired by participants (difficult to verify without taking into account the organisational contexts responsible for the quality of professional performances). The attention duly devoted to the competence of trainers, evaluated through possession of the required qualifications, or personal, social and training group animation competences, as with methodological and pedagogical competences in the training of adults and in their specific field of training, is not matched by an appreciation of the key role of the participant in determining the results of training and the conditions under which the trainee can achieve his goal. In “eduQua” too, the application of quality criteria is expressed by means of appropriate indicators. Minimum standards set the conditions that must be satisfied. However, the institutions are able to choose how to transfer and apply general quality criteria in relation to their specific features and define, within the context of their quality development process, both the indicators that are suitable for particular specificities and precise standards.

The TQM approach to the quality of training enjoyed, during the 1990s, a highly important critical review (together with many complementary stimuli) by means of the contribution of French organisation sociologists, such as Guy Le Boterf and Alain Meignant, to the analysis of learning processes and training project planning. For both of them the privileged reference location is the company context. For Le Boterf, evaluating training from a quality perspective first and foremost implies reasoning in terms of the utility of the

⁹ Cfr. *La certificazione eduQua. Informazioni sulla procedura di certificazione e guida destinata alle istituzioni di training*, BBT / SECO, Berne, 2000.

training act, prior to efficacy and efficiency. However, to achieve the same it is essential to be aware of the highly particular nature of the learning process, which obliges us to overcome the trainer/trainee (or producer/client) dichotomy in delineating the conditions for success which in turn determine the quality of training¹⁰. Le Boterf introduces, with an array of evidence, two aspects destined to play a key role in devising approaches to quality (and the transferability of models) which are less mechanistic and fideistic than those linked exclusively to TQM structures:

1. The verification that learning and professionalisation processes for individuals are the fruit of a *co-production* in which the trainer and trainee constantly interact and in which the client is therefore involved in a fundamental way in achieving the results of the process;
2. An emphasis on the complex affective implications of the training course, which does not deny, but significantly complicates, the utility of optimal processes and flows design, and respect for the planned course.

Evaluating the outcomes and, in the final analysis, the quality of a training practice means (in this interpretation) taking into account a multiplicity of dimensions, interwoven with each other, but not always easy to measure in a consistent manner. Each evaluation is generally applied to different orders of objectives (explicit and implicit), sometimes referring to different subjects (institutions, trainers, participants etc.): there is therefore always a need to balance the verification of results obtained in relation to the objectives set (or shared) by the institutions which promote the training or finance the same, with a verification of the effects of the training course, measured on the basis of participant expectations and motivations. Both these aims require an evaluation as to the merits of the results tangibly obtained through the training. The evaluation can therefore only be based on qualitative indicators regarding the transformations which occurred during the course, measurable both through the perception of the persons participating, and through

¹⁰ *Toute acquisition de capacités, de connaissances ou de compétences suppose une activité d'apprentissage, et donc un investissement personnel (...) ne peuvent être obtenues qu'avec l'engagement des personnes.* Cft. Guy Le Boterf, *De la compétence à la navigation professionnelle*, Ed. de l'organisation, Paris, 1998.

that of the operators involved, with the latter also called upon to reflect and “change” during the project. The complexity of the evaluatory scenario must not be reduced by prioritising a partial view or by looking for improbable synthesis indicators capable of summarising the level of achievement in regard to the various objectives. Rather, one must refer to the various implications of the action launched, the existence of contradictions that are not always easy to resolve and which derive from a need to pragmatically combine the two dimensions previously mentioned, including as regards the economic and political feasibility of any training action.

Le Boterf, in his work in the 1990s, refined some key concepts:

- *Each evaluation must start from the concept of the «utility» of the training action, and place it at the heart of the efficacy measurement of the same. There is not, in training, an abstract utility, but rather a «possible» efficacy, pursued and verified in relation to a system of complex interactions, internal and external, which the participant(s), as well as the organisers and collaborators of the project, must address on a daily basis;*
- *The various objectives of training, regardless of whether they refer to «institutional» interests or to individual expectations of the participant(s), cannot be achieved except through the full involvement and commitment of the persons participating in the training structure; motivation and commitment represent, therefore, key indicators for the success or failure of the training intervention¹¹;*
- *To evaluate the goal of professionalisation of the persons participating, with reference to the labour market sector or those profiles considered functional for the construction of individual professionalisation projects (adult trainer), it is essential that the acquisition of competences matured through training can be translated into practice; a full evaluation can be carried out in this sense only by means of repeated verifications, subsequent to the conclusion of the training course;*

- *The professionalisation course must exploit consolidated growth and experience accumulation modalities* practised by subjects undergoing training. This implies, in our case, the adhesion, formal or informal, but aware, of participants to a *balanced «contract»*, in which the various interests of the actors and the institutions involved¹² are explicitly recognised.

2. FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS IN A WELCOMING EVALUATION SYSTEM

In carrying out an evaluation that takes these indications into account it is necessary to properly define, first and foremost, the *aim of the evaluation*: let's turn therefore to the concept of *training action utility and efficacy*, interpreted in the necessarily twofold dimension of institutional interests and those of the participant(s). The measurement of learning (pedagogic objectives) obviously plays an important role in an evaluatory report drafted at the conclusion of an experience. However, by means of the evaluation, it is essential to try to shed some more light, where possible, over a more extensive and significant visual field, for the purposes of verifying the utility and efficacy of a training course i.e. that of the attitudes to change acquired by the participants and by the institutions involved in the training process itself.

How can one proceed, from this point of view, to the construction of an evaluation system?

We must accustom ourselves to constantly bear in mind two reference points:

- *The results achieved by the persons participating in relation to their expectations,*
- *The opinions expressed by the operators, institutional interlocutors and by the potential users of professional and personal competences of the persons taking part, entering and exiting from the training.*

¹² It is useful to recall how in the psychology of work there is a tendency to differentiate organisational systems of activities in line with two models: mechanical and organic systems. The first tend to consider the subject as a mere executor, the second involve the subject in as complete a manner as possible. Cft. Stella, Quaglino, Prospettive di psicosociologia, Franco Angeli, Milan, 1988.

A correct evaluatory process can be realised when sound integration has been achieved between subjective evaluation of the learning realised by the persons participating and the impact of the training within the institutional context and the local reference labour market.

A correct evaluatory process also requires the activation of an ex-ante, in itinere and ex-post evaluation procedure for the course, based:

- on the verification of the level of initial motivations and competences of the persons taking part, which must be actuated within the context of the initial training phase;
- on the monitoring of training activities and the results gradually achieved in relation to initial general and pedagogic objectives;
- on the verification of the final level of competences and satisfaction of those persons participating in relation to the project objectives, which can be actuated both through the evaluation of learning (exercises and validation of practice sessions), and through an analysis of *participant satisfaction* and an analysis of project impact over the medium term.

The contribution made by organisation sociology is linked to the andragogic perspective promoted in France and Geneva in the 1980s and 1990s, which specifies an approach to quality in the light of *training engineering*. Talking about the quality of training means addressing a series of questions, relative to control of the *output-input* relationship in learning processes and aimed at controlling, in a dynamic way, the correspondence between expected and “real” products of the learning process. Criteria like *pertinence* and *acceptability* occupy a complementary relationship with the classic criteria of *efficacy* and *efficiency*.

This approach does not deny the importance of an analysis focused on objectives and on the correspondence between the objectives and results (efficacy) of learning; nor does it renounce evaluating the organisation of the system and, therefore, the efficient use of means and resources. It counsels caution, however, as regards those risks related to a concept of the quality (or excellence) of training (understood as an objective

to be achieved), measurable through efficacy and efficiency standards or *benchmarks* extractable from the context in which the systems are developed. Almost as though efficiency and efficacy, obtained in other contexts, can be indefinitely extended, changing operative schemes and modalities which have been successfully appraised in various situations. Within the context of training engineering, efficiency and efficacy represent the result of a rational action, but tell us nothing as regards the reasonableness of the system (proof of which is provided by many scholastic and training programmes). An appropriate use of engineering makes it possible, starting from a given context and an aspecific demand, to conceive, analyse and transform training in order to render it optimal.

Only by taking the contexts (macro and micro) into account, and thus also the users of training, can one consider those factors that really come together to determine the quality of a learning process. The question must be posed as to the reason or motivation for learning in order to be able to make any statement as to the pertinence (or congruence) of the system implemented. The question must also be asked as to what the effective utility of the result obtained is (going beyond its coherence with respect to the objectives) in order to be able to define the knock-on effects and applicability (with reference to Le Boterf, we could say the “utility”) of the training. This applies to both training in general and to counselling or welcoming, in particular, which prepares access to training, a fundamental component of a system that is able to take on board participant motivations, concerns and potentiality.

Investigating motivations for learning, an appraisal can be pursued as to the congruence of the objectives set with respect to the real and recognised needs of the individuals directly involved and, in a wider sense, all the actors directly or indirectly implied in the action. Examining the knock-on effects, the question can be posed as to the use which the subjects will make of their acquired competences and knowledge.

An evaluatory process can therefore be developed on a number of levels and generally involves the intervention of various figures.

Firstly, especially in the monitoring phase, attention is focused on the architecture and training project context which it is intended to submit for quality verification (Stroumza,

1997¹³), in this way contributing to improving its consistency in itinere. Within this context the evaluation focuses on an analysis of:

- Training policies adopted (counselling and choices that should be set out in the breakdown or implicitly in the basic project and which can be gradually focused on and specified taking into account the evolution of the scenario and the impact of the training)
- System used (i.e. the modalities of organisation and execution of training)
- Training course (i.e. stages and contents gradually dealt with).

The three dimensions just referred to should be analysed in the light of the various parameters that engineering emphasises as central in an evaluatory analysis of training: useful parameters in measuring the results obtained with respect to the general project objectives (such as *pertinence*, *efficacy* and *efficiency* of training) and parameters (such as *acceptability*, *coherence*, *conformity*, etc.) aimed above all at measuring the quality of the systems and the training process.

Taking into consideration the effects over the mid term of learning in the life and professionalisation trajectories of those taking part, it is possible on the other hand to extend a view of the architecture analysis regarding the training course to include the impact of the action, fundamental in understanding how and to what extent those taking part (and the actors in general involved) can in practice translate the acquisition of competences which are the subject of training. The fundamental impact evaluation parameters generally concern:

- the *pertinence* of the training choices adopted: to what extent the objectives proposed by the project were correct with respect to the problems to be resolved and the needs revealed in the project phase; how and in what direction the scenario evolution, within which the project hypothesised could realise the professionalisation courses, has in time led to a review of some of the said objectives etc.;

¹³ Stroumza J., « Ingénierie de la formation. Une démarche pour concevoir, analyser, évaluer la formation », in *Ingénierie, évaluation e qualité en formation*, Cahier n. 82, Uni

- the *efficacy* of the training, verifiable through a comparison between results obtained in terms of knowledge and professionalisation of those persons taking part and set objectives, in the light of the evaluations expressed by the trainers called upon to encourage learning;
- *acceptability* of training, as an estimate of the degree of adhesion of the various actors to the choices expressed within the project (Stroumza, 1997¹⁴: *...training, like any social structure, mobilises the affectivity of the actors involved: it is effective to the extent to which motivation exists in the participants and commitment in the trainers. Their understanding translates adhesion into targeted goals*).

The application of training engineering principles, which have inspired our exchange of experiences in search of indications and approaches regarding the subject of immigrant welcoming that are truly transferable, has encouraged over recent years the development of quality approaches founded on the exchange of experiences and the construction of practices networks. In place of a logic involving standards and respect for abstract product and process conformity, a dynamic and «bottom-up» idea of quality assurance has been expressed, based on the shared definition of principles and criteria freely discussed and chosen by the actors involved in the system. Learning processes in the latter are evaluated in relation to contexts, participant specifications and dynamics that are expressed in the relationships between actors.

3. TWO CASE STUDIES

Two interesting examples within the said view of shared identification of criteria and quality indicators can be found within the Swiss context and, in particular, in the

Genève, 1997.

¹⁴ Stroumza J., «Ingénierie de la formation. Une démarche pour concevoir, analyser, évaluer la formation», in *Ingénierie, évaluation et qualité en formation*, Cahier n. 82, Uni Genève, 1997. As regards quality and engineering, reference should be made in particular to the publications and files of Greop, in the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Science in the University of Geneva, in particular Cahier N° 82 - 1997, 89 - N° 1999 and the Greop text, «Qualité de la pratique, pratique de la qualité» del 2003.

Experiences¹⁵ exchange platform promoted in 1999 by AOMAS (Association of active measures managers for re-entry within the labour market) and in the network of practices¹⁶ for quality training in favour of weakly qualified clients, promoted in 2000/2001 by Fdep (Foundation for the Development of Permanent Education) within the context of its participation in the Socrates project, «S@ber+».

In the first of the two examples, the exchange of experiences (open to client public structures and active measures organisers) is used as a “certificatory self-regulation” tool and a means to improve performances, on the basis of some principles:

1. quality understood as a subject which training organisers must ensure, providing themselves with indicators within an explicitly “bottom up”¹⁷ logic;
2. Quality implies interaction and mutual comprehension (i.e. dialogue) between actors¹⁸;
3. Complete liberty must be guaranteed organisers in their choice of methods and tools, suitable for achieving the set objectives¹⁹;
4. Organisers must, on the other hand, guarantee maximum clarity in regard to actors concerning the choices made²⁰.

¹⁵ SVOAM / AOMAS, Schweiz. Verband der Organisatoren von Arbeitsmarktmassnahmen, Erfahrungsaustausch - Plattform 2000/ 2001: Qualität in Arbeitsmarktmassnahmen. Schlussdokument, 2001; the active measures represent the group of systems (from welcoming to a balance of competences, to training, programmes of socially useful work) present in Switzerland in favour of the unemployed on the basis of the provisions of LADI, a federal law that regulates insurance against unemployment.

¹⁶ Cfr. the presentation of the network in www.fdep.ch

¹⁷ *Qualitätssicherung und Förderung ist primär Aufgabe der leistungserbringenden Organisationen selbst.*

¹⁸ *Gemeinsames Verständnis: Der Grundsatz 1 verpflichtet die Leistungserbringer, sowohl den Leistungsauftraggebern, den Leistungsempfängern wie den andern Leistungserbringern gegenüber Klarheit über ihr Qualitätsverständnis zu schaffen.*

¹⁹ *Methodenfreiheit: Die Wahl der Methoden, wie Qualität nachgewiesen, gesichert und gefördert wird, ist Aufgabe der leistungserbringenden Organisationen.*

The result can be configured within a quality model aimed as ever at verifying/measuring the achievement of system efficacy and efficiency parameters, whose merits, however, lie (for the purposes of AOMAS) in at least two key factors:

- the centrality attributed to the criterion of adequacy (Angemessenheit), as a revealer of the capacity for continuous improvement guaranteed by the system, rather than pedantic respect for procedures set out in the project planning phase²¹;
- the fact of being constructed in a participatory mode, shared and focusing on undertaking complex interactions between actors which determine the efficacy of the system²².

The quality model proposed by AOMAS, though drawn up by the organisations, has not enjoyed any significant responses on a system level. The commissioning public operator for active measures (SECO, Secretariat for the Economy, and Canton Offices of Employment) has instead opted to restrict organisers to the certification laid down by standard procedures, such as the already cited eduQua system, and any efforts regarding comparison and participation have to an extent remained (in the Swiss experience) limited to the institutional front, impeding the involvement of “clients” in finalising the systems, increasingly determined by restrictions imposed by reference legislation and the relative application regulations.

²⁰ *Transparenz: Die selbstgewählten Methoden müssen für Aussenstehende verständlich und nachvollziehbar sein.*

²¹ *Die Überprüfung der ursprünglichen Planungskriterien anhand der Resultate zeigt, wie angemessen die ursprüngliche Planung aufgrund der gemachten Erfahrung war; sie bildet die Grundlage für eine verbesserte Planung der nächsten Phase: waren die gesetzten Ziele der tatsächlich erreichten Zielgruppe angemessen? Waren die geplanten Prozesse den erreichten Zielen angemessen? Waren die geplanten Ressourcen im Verhältnis zu den tatsächlich durchgeführten Prozessen angemessen?*

²² *Die Qualifizierung von stellensuchenden Menschen im Rahmen arbeitsmarktlicher Massnahmen ist ein Prozess, der auf verschiedene institutionelle und individuelle Akteure aufgeteilt ist. Dies hat sowohl organisationsinterne wie organisationsexterne Interaktionen zur Folge.*

Less ambitious on the institutional front, but probably more advanced and consistent in the application of indications deriving from training engineering, is the proposal from Fdep, which leads to the identification, through a comparison between training practices, of some criteria devised to define the specifications of a quality system²³. The criteria have been enucleated by applying the principles of engineering to an initial nucleus of training practices “par excellence” and using some theoretical comparison and exchange opportunities. Their consistency and utility was then verified, extending the network to a series of projects directed at homogenous publics (albeit active in different contexts). Quality loses, within this approach, a lot of its (presumed) “aseptic” character”, becoming a living tool connected to deontological and “political” values understood in a higher sense e.g. as the correlation between the right to education and citizenship²⁴.

The Charter of the Foundation – which sets out the criteria regarding proximity, polyvalence, participation – became the Charter of quality. In place of rigid standards three criteria come into play which define the physiognomy and modalities of a pertinent system, without prejudicing the analysis of efficiency and efficacy:

- The criterion of proximity (*une éducation de proximité*), which indissolubly links quality of the system and ability to take on board the expectations and resources of “clients/producers”, providing a response to their motivations²⁵;

²³ The model is presented in detail in the interventions by B.Schneider, B. Morand-Aymon and J. Stroumza, in Actes du colloque de la FDEP, *Former pour développer sans exclure*, Chavannes de Bogis, 9 – 10 November 2000; also downloadable from Internet: www.fdep.ch

²⁴ *Promouvoir une formation à la citoyenneté pour le maintien de la cohésion sociale, c'est-à-dire, renforcer les compétences de citoyen des adultes en formation, par une meilleure articulation entre formation initiale et formation continue, entre formation générale et formation professionnelle, par la reconnaissance des formations formelles et informelles, par l'implication de tous les acteurs concernés.*

²⁵ *Training située près des pratiques, de l'expérience et des besoins de chacun, accessible au plus grand nombre, adaptée dans ses buts et moyens aux diversités culturelles de ses acteurs.*

- The criterion of polyvalence (*une éducation polivalente*), which does not artificially segment the individual's need for competence²⁶;
- The criterion of participation (*une éducation participative*), which implies the necessary involvement of learners in the construction of a learning process²⁷.

A quality concept is thereby applied which is understood as an interactive and participatory process, which operationalises, in a manner appropriate to the training context, some innovative aspects which are today present in the predominant quality models in productive organisations (e.g. the evolution of ISO standards in Vision 2000²⁸).

4. THE NETWORK AS A TOOL OF QUALITY

The evolution underway in the debate on the quality of learning systems, as with the experiences we have briefly referred to, highlight the insufficiency of an approach to quality inspired by an identification of abstract standards appropriate for measuring the rationality of processes (efficiency and efficacy), without considering their reasonableness. In this sense, we feel the problem regarding *benchmarking*, as applied to the world of learning, should be reassessed, liberating itself of a number of myths regarding:

- The mechanical transfer of "good practices";
- The diffusion of prototypes and tools in the form of "cloning" of efficient and efficacious learning and process systems outside those contexts in which they have proved to be effective.

²⁶ Training *simultanément générale, culturelle et professionnelle, renforçant les compétences sociales et techniques nécessaires pour assumer les droits et devoirs du citoyen, pour assurer une bonne insertion sociale et trouver un emploi qualifié.*

²⁷ Training management, therefore, *impliquant les apprenants et les formateurs, privilégiant leur autoformation individuelle et collective.*

²⁸ The ISO and TQM approaches are obviously not in contradiction with approaches to training engineering, and can be integrated while maintaining clarity: the first are useful in gathering the macro processes, the second for conceiving, analysing and transforming the training.

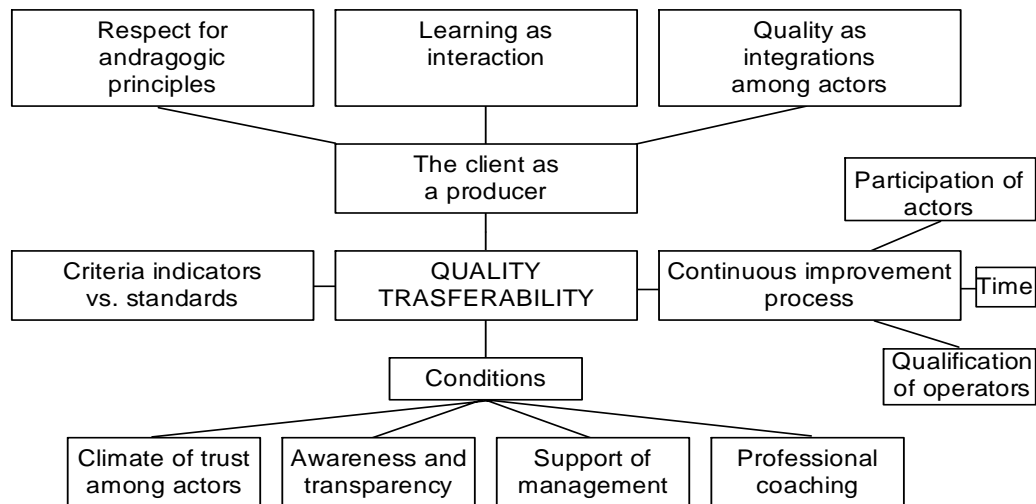
In our project we have tried to approach the problem of recognising and transferring good practices, using the wealth of potential in training engineering, as an essential store of theoretical and technical tools, which can be re-used in a shared manner in different contexts, for the conception, analysis and evaluation of training. The transferability has been interpreted as a “possible” (never taken for granted) product of a network of practices, arranged to exchange and define qualitative *benchmarks*, to adapt to the respective contexts those indications emerging from other experiences after together examining the contexts, conditions and criteria that have determined their validity.

Summarising what has been explored to date, we have sought to apply within the project a description of the contexts and architecture of welcoming systems exhibited in the practices of our partners, in order to be able to analyse, through a specific engineering approach, quality and achieve a sharing of some evaluatory criteria suitable for defining its value. We have not limited our activity to efficiency and efficacy parameters, which permit one to speak about rationality of the system but do not “certify” its reasonableness. For this reason, we have worked together on the criteria of *pertinence* and *knock-on advantages/applicability* in order to determine to what extent the welcoming procedure, in addition to being rationally designed and managed, proves to be pertinent (corresponding to needs) and guarantees coherent uses²⁹ (exploitation of the service obtained on the part of the subject).

We began with the consideration that a welcoming system, as an integral and key part of a training project, can only arise in response to a need or real problems. This appears even more important in the field of adult training. A «welcoming», guidance or learning experience is significant, all the more so for adults, when it allows the subject to construct his own knowledge³⁰.

²⁹ On rationality and reasonableness, see Lichtener M., *La qualità delle azioni formative*, Franco Angeli, 1999.

³⁰ It is worth recalling the distinction between the functionalist approach, which permit the subject to be included and take up a position in various social contexts and the phenomenological approach (the subject constructs the world, the activity is constituent, and there is therefore no objectivity of goals, meanings, knowledge; the latter are relative,



Quality and transferability have been “interpreted” by us, using a conceptual map, which effectively renders the inseparable nature of the two aspects, identifying the possible diffusion of excellent practices:

- At their heart lies a clear identification of the specificity of the learning process, particularly that part realised during adulthood, over a lifespan: a process that sees the client assume the essential role of producer of his own competence, which thereby obliges respect for andragogic principles; a high affectivity and “relationship” content characterises the process and makes it essential to relate quality with the degree of interaction achieved by all the actors involved (a quality procedure mainly co-animated by the actors in the field: trainers and participants);

depending on the relationship of the subject to the context). The phenomenological relationship calls into question the natural relationship between recognised socially codified knowledge (mechanist vision), enhancing the need to consider the fertile integration between subject and environment (organic vision).

- The transferability of a quality practice is essentially possible by adopting guide lines that differ from the mere ascertainment of product “conformity” or pedantic respect, in the process, for project criteria that are the fruit of a sound needs analysis; quality appears to us to be transferable where it is understood as a “continuous improvement process”, which depends on the actors for its realisation, through active participation, with the time available and adequate competences for the task in hand (in the analysis of contexts and needs, in the design and management of systems);
- Transferability requires, in parallel, the presence of suitable conditions: awareness and transparency in relationships between actors, a climate of trust, support on the part of those who are responsible for managing the system, professional *coaching*;
- Finally, it is not the definition of standards, but rather the sharing of (re)interpretable criteria and indicators within their context, that can guarantee the diffusion of quality practices.

Experimented in the field, the “practices network” has proved, as we will explain in greater detail below, to be a place of exchange and analytic sharing, guaranteeing informed reflection and “reappropriative” diffusion (i.e. founded on the analysis, adaptation and concrete experimentation of pertinence and efficacy within the operative context of individual partners) of experiences and tools that are useful in accepting immigrants.

II PART – EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF WELCOMING SYSTEMS

5. CRITERIA AS A SHARED ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

The partners which adhere to MOSAIC are distinguished by common elements (all have set themselves the task of intervening in favour of immigrant counselling, particularly as regards adults), as well as by major diversity: both the aims pursued and the contexts (macro and micro) in which the systems are inserted are extremely heterogeneous. This in turn results in considerable heterogeneity of practices.

Clearly, within such a heterogeneous situation the mere comparison, in terms of action, of results is not possible since the variables at play are too numerous.

The project managers, therefore, have to define an approach that comprises a twofold objective:

- a) Dialoguing and interacting in terms of action i.e. having common categories available in order to interrogate the action (the meta-reflection plan);
- b) Improve, re-orientate the practice in order to satisfy the needs/expectations of the actors implicated (users, promoters, financiers).

The tool that is suitable for such a task is training engineering³¹. This is, by definition, a rational type approach which exploits systems theory.

³¹ “Engineering”, an American term, meaning, in this context, “analysis, conduct, evaluation of projects in any context” (from Raynal, Rieunier, *Pédagogie: dictionnaire des concepts clés*, ESF). It should be recalled that the term engineering is used in two senses: pedagogic engineering (with reference to the study of the training process) and

As such, it is global and tends, starting from knowledge and education science theories, to breakdown the subject of study into simple elements, to then study the relations between the said elements. The selection of significant elements and relations makes it possible to reconstruct a simplified representation of the objective, a simulation or model which thereby permits greater understanding of the genesis, determining factors and effects of the training in question.

In essence, the engineering approach aims at objectifying the perspective those who practice it, obviating its prejudices, posing and validating a number of hypotheses, and exploring the transformation proposals.

As such therefore, engineering lends itself to a number of aims:

- For the training manager: conception, realisation, piloting of the training system;
- For a group of training operators: application of a quality approach;
- For a consultant: evaluation of training;
- For any training actor: better understanding of his own action, revealing its limits and potentiality and defining margins for manoeuvre³².

Quality is the product of an approach that is carried out in regard to the group of training parameters, which makes it possible to analyse training in order to understand its limits and potentialities, correct its erroneous functioning; in other words, it aims at optimising the training in question³³.

organisation engineering (with reference to the study of the organisation in which the system is developed).

³² Stroumza J. "Ingénierie de la formation", in *Ingénierie, évaluation et qualité de la formation*, GREOP FPSE, UNI Genève, cahier 82, 1997.

³³ This vocabulary coincides with that of engineering, cft. Morand – Aymon B. in Cahier n° 89.

It can be observed that the quality procedure implies the training engineering approach, which can in turn imply the study of links (interactions-relations) between architecture and context parameters.

Training engineering is a rational approach which (starting from a given context, from a training demand and from the available resources) makes it possible to conceive, analyse and transform training in order to render it optimal³⁴.

Engineering has an interesting aspect in that it makes it possible to arrive at quality evaluation criteria and it is for this reason that it enjoys an almost natural extension within a quality approach.

The **architecture** of training confers a characteristic form by which, in a given context, a response can be provided (taking into account institutional limitations, cultures, aesthetic sensibility and sensitivity to a common need, in our case welcoming and learning). Within training architecture, 3 levels of parameters are essentially differentiated relative to:

I) training policy (a term that expresses the major training guidelines and options) whose parameters are:

1. training overview (aims, goals, qualifications, public involved);
2. "partnership", which is expressed via the training organisation and management (institutions, persons involved in realising the same);
3. resources (financial, logistical and human).

II) training system (a sort of geographical map of the training): essentially describing the organisation and means devised to realise the training, with the following parameters:

4. access to training (modality of recruitment, admission);

³⁴ Stroumza J. (1997), cited.

5. training public (quantity, heterogeneity, knowledge);
6. trainers committed on the ground (number, qualifications);
7. programme (structures, contents, general strategy);
8. training evaluation (modality of regulation, final evaluation, certification);
9. training piloting (“partnership” management, training institution management modality, programmes management).

III) training process (i.e. pedagogic animation of various phases in the system during the course) whose parameters are:

10. conception of the pedagogic/didactic process (nature and structure of the process);
 11. programming of the various didactic sequences (specific objectives, methods);
 12. process realisation and management (adjustment, balance and evaluations).

The **context** represents a fundamental component in quality evaluation and transferability of a practice. Training cannot be understood without understanding the context within which it is comprised. The knowledge of context, of links that exist between system, architecture and context, constitute one of the essential competences of the trainer.

The general context of the training can be defined on a macro and micro social level, starting with the three dimensions:

- economic: in particular, goods and services implied in the exchange
- political: in particular, relations of power and institutional structures
- cultural: social practices and corresponding ideologies

The macro social context therefore includes:

- economic situation: crisis, expansion, labour market, ...
- political situation: political regimes, parties in power, ...
- cultural context: major ideas of the times (individualism, liberalism, ...).

This context feeds the level of the social micro context in which restrictions are directly expressed that are linked to the welcoming or training action:

- regional, local and institutional context;
- professional and social environment of training actors, participants and trainers.

The prioritised contexts are those elements within the general context that can play a particularly important role in the training and which are therefore identified and viewed as conditions characterising the system (particularly important in order to test their transfer).

Engineering makes it possible to aim at excellence i.e. training will be optimal if, with respect to a given investment, it best satisfies demand, and in that sense, as has been mentioned, it constitutes a tool in achieving the quality approach.³⁵

The measure of quality recalls the need to define criteria and specify the relative **quality indicators**. Numerous works³⁶ agree in their adoption of three macro criteria which make it possible to “measure” and appreciate quality.

1. **Pertinence criteria:** training is considered pertinent if the totality of its specifications, especially its aims, are well adapted to the context in which it is situated, to the needs of its actors and in particular to the public it addresses;

³⁵ See the Dossier: “La qualité de la formation”, in *Education permanente*, N° 126, 1996.

³⁶ We particularly refer to Le Boterf Guy, *Comment investir en formation*, E. d'organisation, 1989; Le Boterf G., “L'investissement – formation passe par l'évaluation”, in *Entreprises et formation* N° 41, 1990; Verouw J., “L'investissement en formation”, in *Education permanente*, N° 95, 1988 cited in Stroumza J. (1997).

2. **Efficacy criteria:** training is considered efficacious if, given its resources, actions and the specifications of its public, it obtains optimum results and in particular sound realisation of aims;
3. **Efficiency criteria:** training is considered efficient if its cost/efficacy ratio is optimal.

The above three reference macro-criteria can be accompanied by at least another five more specific criteria in relation to system and procedure:

1. **Conformity criterion:** compares the practice with set standards (estimates the difference which always exists between what is expected at the start and what is effectively achieved);
 2. **Acceptability criterion:** measures the adhesion of users in the choices applied by the training (takes into account the degree of adhesion of trainers, trainees regarding the set objectives, procedures proposed. Without the adhesion of participants and the involvement of lecturers no training can be efficacious);
 3. **Synchronism or opportunity criterion:** describes the appropriateness of decisions in relation to the problems encountered (highlights the importance of piloting which makes it possible to adapt systems to changes, which can rapidly resolve any problems that arise);
 4. **Compatibility criterion:** estimates the degree of adaptation of training to its context;
 5. **Coherence criterion** is applied to both the global structure of the training (policy, system, procedure) and the individual level. It takes into account the relationship between training objectives, system involved and process realised. Similarly, coherence between the qualifications of the lecturers and methods used, coherence between the cognitive capacity of the participants and the process implemented etc.
- ...

By adopting the training engineering perspective to bring together contexts and system architectures, to evaluate their strengths and critical aspects, it follows that to be efficacious, pertinent and efficient training must at the same time be in conformity, accepted, synchronous, compatible and coherent. The last sub-criteria constitute good

indicators for the first three and are in turn considered as qualitative evaluation priority criteria.

To summarise, in relation to quality control evaluation, a quality approach is a methodology of action that necessarily involves the actors of the action itself, which is concomitant with the action and which provides help with self-evaluation, self-correction and dialogue with the partners involved. The quality approach not only considers the data relative to performance of the action but also, and above all, the specifications of the action itself.³⁷

Having defined the criteria, it is obviously necessary to specify those indicators³⁸ that make it possible to verify how the said criteria can be satisfied. This question is very delicate and recalls the need for careful reflection, since, depending on the choices made, the application of the approach can be transformed into an easy or a complex operation that is difficult to manage. The choice of indicators should be made in the light of the actors, first and foremost the trainers, who will be called upon to apply them. In other words, everything must be sufficiently reasonable (adapted to the availability and possibilities of those who intend to apply the approach) in order avoid the operation becoming an academic exercise involving excessive work, difficult to replicate over time and therefore with continuity that cannot be assured.

In the specific case in question, we have opted for the adoption of indicators deriving from the application of engineering, which makes it possible to rationally choose and adapt the various parameters to match needs and availability.

6. THE CHOICE OF QUALITY CRITERIA IN MOSAIC PROJECT EXPERIMENTATION

On a project level we have proceeded in a spiral manner i.e. on the one hand we asked partners to describe their welcoming procedure, following the architecture parameters;

³⁷ Morand – Aymon B. in Cahier n° 89, pag 47.

³⁸ As regards the choice of indicators, there are various options, including: Roegiers X., *Analyser une action d'éducation ou de formation*, De Boeck, 1997; the works of Greop in the FPSE of Geneva University, in particular, Cahiers N° 82 of 1997 N° 89 of 1999 concerning engineering and training quality.

subsequently, to carry out the analysis and verify its applicability, adhesion, conformity, continuity³⁹, we proposed a series of criteria for partners with their relative indicators.

Criteria of pertinence, efficacy, practicability have been applied, which embody those of engineering; in addition, we have proposed the three most synthetic criteria of proximity, polyvalence and participation, as specified by Fdep, while we have renounced evaluating the efficiency of the systems themselves, given the high a degree of complexity and differentiation of the contexts within which they are implemented.

During the third meeting, experience was pooled and compared. This made it possible to further specify the initial choice and define the most appropriate one for the aims of the project and partners.

Experimentation carried out during the third meeting

We propose, in the following, as an example, what was experimented and discussed during the third meeting.

Pertinence criterion: welcoming is considered pertinent if the totality of its specifications, especially its aims, are well adapted to the context in which it is situated, to the needs of its actors and in particular to the public it addresses.

Two indicators are proposed:

1st indicator: analyses the relationship between the aims of welcoming, resources employed and needs of the actors involved:

		Context			
		User needs	Organiser needs	Mandator needs	...
Welcoming	Programme aims	1	3	5	
	Resources	2	4	6	

Evaluate and describe why, where it is considered adequate or not.

A question corresponds to each box of the matrix.

³⁹ See Roegiers X. (1997), cited.

For box 1 therefore (relationship between aims of the welcoming programme and need of users) the question is: "Are the aims pertinent to the needs of those attending the programme?"

Box 2: "Are the resources (material, temporal, financial, trainers, etc.) available sufficient for realising the aims?"

Examples of answers:

1= positive: for the supply, negative with regard to what concerns the non possibility of adapting the objectives to the specific situation of some users...

2= time resources available too limited...

3= programming times too short ...

4= qualified trainers not easy to find...

5= ...

2nd Indicator: (relative to the system), verifies the adaptation of the welcoming system proposed to adults and their specifications. Questions such as the following were taken into consideration:

		User context	
		Scholastic knowledge, user abilities	Time availability
Welcoming	Access conditions	1	4
	Duration	2	5
	Contents	3	6

Evaluate and describe why, where it is considered adequate or not.

In this case too, a relationship corresponds to each box.

Box 1: are access conditions appropriate for the entrance knowledge of the participants?

Example:

1= limited linguistic knowledge...

2= short time available with respect to some cases ...

3= accessible but extreme heterogeneity of abilities...

4= distance from home

5= favourable time bands...

6= limited duration with respect to objectives ...

Efficacy criterion: welcoming is considered efficacious if, given its resources, actions and the specifications of its public, it obtains optimum results and in particular sound realisation of aims.

Two indicators are taken into consideration:

1st indicator: achieving the objectives is evaluated on the part of the users and operators involved;

Example

a) The users positively judge the achievement of the objective, particularly as regards the definition of the personal project and relative priorities;

b) The operators (trainers) positively judge the implementation of the process; on the other hand, the possibility of verifying the existence or not of the acquisition of competences (autonomy of decision, activation of help) should be improved...

2nd indicator of coherence: verifies the relationship between some internal features of the welcoming.

Welcoming	Aims	Resources	Certification	Access	Structure	Contents	Strategies	Objectives	Evaluation
Aims									
Resources	1								
Certification	2	3							
Access	4	5	6						
Structure	7	8	9	10					
Contents	11	12	13	14	15				
Strategies	16	17	18	19	20	21			
Objectives	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		
Evaluation	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	

Each element is put in relationship to the other, trying to describe what is happening. Information is collected through questionnaires or audit.

Example

<i>Relationship between:</i>	Positive aspect	Problem/element to be improved
1 Resources and aims		Limited resources in relation to the aims: in terms of time and training
2 Certification and aims		
3 Certification and resources		
4 Access and aims	Aims declared on the form	Need to verify the actual comprehension of the language
5 Access and resources		Qualified resources are limited especially in the first informal meeting
6 Access and certification		Certification is not very clear
7 Structure and aims of the programme		Not organised very well
8 Structure and resources of the programme		Human resources and time limits
9 Structure and certification of the programme	No exams	
10 Structure and access to the programme	Simple	
11 Contents and aims of the programme	Pertinent	
12 Contents and resources of the programme		Limited time and duration
13 Contents and certification of the programme		
14 Contents and access to the programme	Clarity of content	Initial comprehension
15 Contents and structure of the programme	Flexibility	
16 General strategy and aims	Coherent with the declarations	
17 General strategy and resources		Limited means for the realisation of specific strategies
18 General strategy and certification		Determine how to evaluate the learning of contents and know how acquired
19 General strategy and access		Improve teaching strategies

20 General strategy and structure	Harmonious	Links with other subject and opportunity to continue further in a subject/area
21 General strategy and contents		Limited time available (length and number of meetings) impeding the use of specific strategies.
22 Objectives and aims		To be checked
23 Objectives and resources		Limited Not enough time available
24 Objectives and certification		Not well defined for a practical evaluation
25 Objectives and access	No barriers	It must be differentiated with respect to professional training
26 Objectives and structure of the programme		Not enough interaction among subjects
27 Objectives and contents		Too heavy with respect to time available
28 Objectives and strategy		Limiting (in some courses it is not possible to use interactive strategies so it's necessary to use frontal lectures)
29 Evaluation and aims		Not clear enough
30 Evaluation and resources		Limited
31 Evaluation and certification		Not clear enough
32 Evaluation and access		Not explicit
33 Evaluation and structure of the programme		
34 Evaluation and contents		
35 Evaluation and strategy		
36 Evaluation and objectives		Testing of individual objectives

Practicability criterion: “is the welcoming procedure «practicable» within the scenario in which it is placed (with respect to the requirements and context in which the actors and interlocutors involved act)?”

Two indicators

1st indicator: Acceptability

Measures the degree of adhesion of the actors to the choices made, objectives, procedures.

2nd indicator : Compatibility

Estimates the degree of adaptation of the procedure to its context i.e. whether the various parameters of the system and the process are adapted, compatible with the features of the context.

Finally, three other criteria have been proposed – proximity, polyvalence and participation – in the form of three questions:

Proximity: “Is the procedure close to the «feelings», experiences and concerns of the persons it refers to?”

Polyvalence: “Is it a procedure that takes the individual as a whole into account and constructs a personal project (professional and private) for coherent training?”

Participation: “Is it a procedure that involves «users» in the definition of the personal training project?”

Proposals for rendering the three PPP criteria more operational

Criterion of proximity: this criterion verifies the degree of proximity of the training, taking into account some elements such as: geographic and financial accessibility, adapted in its aims and means to the cultural diversity of the addressees.

Criterion of polyvalence: education is simultaneously general, cultural and professional, reinforcing social and technical competences in order to be able to carry out citizenship roles (assume rights and duties), to ensure social and optimal participation and access to a quality job.

Criterion of participation: takes into consideration the management of training, actively involving actors (participants/users and trainers), privileging their individual and collective self-training.

Criterion	Proximity	Polyvalence	Participation
Architecture			
Aims	1	9	17
Access	2	10	18
Structure	3	11	19
Contents	4	12	20
Strategies	5	13	21
Evaluation	6	14	22
Trainers	7	15	23
Management	8	16	24

Examples of questions concerning proximity

1. Does the procedure take the training needs and experiences of the participants into account?
2. Does the procedure take the place of domicile of participants into account?
2. Does the procedure take the financial resources of participants into account?
3. Does the procedure take the concerns of participants into account?

Examples of questions concerning polyvalency

10. Does the procedure take the individual as a whole into account?
12. Does the procedure make it possible for the participant to construct his own personal coherent training (professional and private) project?
12. Does the procedure make it possible for the participant to strengthen those competences required for him to act as a citizen, professional?

Examples of questions concerning participation:

- 17 and 20: Does the procedure involve participants in defining the training project?
- 19 and 22: Does the procedure reinforce participants in their autonomy of action, particularly as regards the management of training projects?
- 21: Does the procedure encourage autonomous and group action?

III PART – FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

7. TOWARDS MULTICULTURAL GUIDANCE: EXPERIENCES AT EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

“We are moving towards a multicultural future that requires us to understand persons who are different from ourselves, whatever our culture might be. Developing multicultural awareness is the strategy for our survival as a counselling profession and strategy for our growth in meeting the diverse needs of a multicultural global village”.

Paul Penderson⁴⁰

This final part defines some guidelines for multicultural guidance, which have been inspired by the reading of documents and essays on this subject, as well as by the experience of the MOSAIC project partners.

Multicultural guidance differs from other forms of guidance in the respect that in multicultural guidance the counsellor and the one being counselled either come from different cultures, represent different ethnic groups or speak different languages as their native language.⁴¹

There is an increasing awareness of the need to take into account the cultural diversity among some professionals involved in guidance. Although this is not yet a widespread belief, an increasing number of projects have recognised the importance of multicultural issues and have promoted specific training for practitioners.

An example is the Lima long-distance training project, which has been developed within the Fontana partnership as part of an Integra programme. The long-distance training

⁴⁰ As reported in SINKIL Ayten, Quest for quality educational guidance for refugees, Refugee Education & Training Advisory Service, London.

⁴¹ Definition inspired by METSÄNEN Riitta, Multicultural Counselling, see web site <http://rainbow.cimo.fi>

course aims at providing insight into methodological and didactical aspects of advice and guidance with migrants and refugees, by focusing specifically on three main approaches: intercultural communication and competence, empowerment and networking⁴².

Other interesting activities have been carried out in a European project called “Towards a European RAINBOW – Increasing the Intercultural Awareness among Guidance counsellors” 1999 – 2001. The goal of this project was to plan, build and organise a common European in-service training course on multicultural counselling and intercultural communication for those employment and education authorities who work with guidance and counselling of immigrants and ethnic minorities⁴³.

In some cases the same guidance and counselling practices have been criticised for being rooted too much in European and American – centred principles since the theories related originate from Euro-American culture and consequently reflect the values, morals, customs, philosophy and way of life of these cultures.⁴⁴ Some authors stress that guidance theories and assessment techniques have been developed especially with reference to one group – e.g. white middle-class. Particular attention must be given to assessment. “Lack of attention to the implications of race, ethnicity, and culture limit the utility of traditional approaches to assessment in an increasingly diverse society. The underlying assumptions of traditional assessment, and the methods based on those assumptions often contrast sharply with multicultural perspectives on human functioning (...). Mainstream methods of assessment typically use ‘standard’ perspectives, tools, and norms that are assumed to reflect universal truths about human nature. Taken by itself, this approach assumes that race, ethnicity and culture make minimal difference: ‘we’re all human’, therefore ‘we’re all the same’.⁴⁵

⁴² See: <http://www.uni-saarland.de/z-einr/efb/AHOI/Lima/Base/Chapter1.htm>

⁴³ See: <http://rainbow.cimo.fi>

⁴⁴ METSÄNEN Riitta, Multicultural Counselling, see web site <http://rainbow.cimo.fi>

⁴⁵ MALIK Beatriz, Intercultural competences and strategies in guidance: tools for intervention in schools, paper presented at the IAVEG International conference:

As reassuring as it may sound this approach is hardly convincing.

8. DEFINITION OF CULTURE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Culture is a complex concept and there is a wide range of scientific answers to the definition of culture, as the concept of culture can be looked at and defined from a number of different view points according to the fields or interests of the one looking and defining (in anthropology, in sociology, in psychology, etc).

If we put it simply, culture refers to a group or community with which we share common experiences that shape the way we understand the world. It includes groups that we are born into, such as gender, race or national origin. It also includes groups that we join or become part of. For example, we can acquire a new culture by moving to a new region, by a change in our economic status, or by becoming disabled. When we think of culture this broadly, we realize we all belong to many cultures at the same time.

Since our focus is on practice, it will be useful to have an overview of what cultural differences are made of and what the problems and obstacles might be when dealing with migrants and refugees from different cultural backgrounds.

A very attractive example of how to describe the problem of cultural differences is the model of the “cultural iceberg”. The idea is clear: it shows that culture can be initially defined by the tip of the iceberg which is easy to see, by those characteristics seen “above the water”, like :

- food
- clothing
- houses
- institutions.

The remaining huge chunk of the iceberg hidden below the surface includes the invisible and subtle aspects of a culture such as:

- values
- traditions
- experiences
- behaviours
- perceptions

that define each culture.

For practitioners working in a multicultural environment, it is this subtle area that is most problematic⁴⁶.

We can try to describe some fundamental patterns of cultural differences: ways in which cultures, as a whole, tend to vary from one another. These descriptions point out some of the recurring causes of cross – cultural communication difficulties in guidance and counselling⁴⁷.

Individualism e collectivism

Individualism is the main characteristic of the western culture. The individualist orientation means concentration on the individual, individual decision making and also on individual responsibility. Success is based on ones own skills and efforts. Many immigrants come from cultures where the community is emphasised instead of the individual. In collective cultures responsibility is shared and the good of the community or group always goes before that of the individual.

⁴⁶ See chapter 3 of the Lima distance training package, <http://www.uni-saarland.de/z-einr/efb/AHOI/Lima/Base/Chapter3.htm>

⁴⁷ METSÄNEN Riitta, Multicultural Counselling, see web site <http://rainbow.cimo.fi>

In counselling and guidance, representatives of collective cultures may be misunderstood when they express their dependence on their group. According to western interpretation, individuals who say that they cannot make career decisions without hearing their brother's opinion on the matter, are regarded as immature and dependant. In a collective culture, however, individualism, and looking for one's own interests only, is regarded as rude and immature behaviour.

Verbal expression and silence

In our western culture a verbal and outgoing behaviour is considered an asset. Those who express themselves clearly, are often considered to be ideal clients for the guidance counsellors. In many Asian countries, children and young people have been taught to speak only when they are told to. It may happen that a person from a non western culture will show respect to the counsellor – representing authority – by being silent. Therefore silence should not be interpreted as a sign of little interest, when in fact it may be a sign of courtesy.

Future and past-present orientation

Western people are future oriented: they plan for the future and assume that they will have an influence upon it. Many immigrants are more focused on the present. This may be due to experiences and perceptions where they cannot expect to have much bearing on the circumstances of their own life or an influence upon future conditions.

Openness and intimacy

Western guiding theories like focusing on openness about personal problems. It is assumed that the counsellor, seeing a problem from the outside, may be able to approach and discuss the matter from new and valuable angles.

In many non-western communities it is not acceptable nor considered beneficial to discuss problems with outsiders. It is believed that difficulties reflect upon the situation of

the whole family or group. It is easy to misinterpret a reserved client, thinking that he/she is sabotaging a conversation when the person concerned in fact wishes to be loyal to the group.

Awareness and insight

Psychoanalytic theories assume that the person must realise the reasons behind his/her conflicts to be able to change his/her behaviour. In the Chinese tradition, however, there is a widespread belief that thinking too much about something can lead to trouble. Avoiding uncomfortable thoughts is considered a guarantee of mental health. A guidance counsellor who focuses on problems may therefore be regarded with disapproval and mistrust by a person coming from a different tradition.

Unstructured and structured counselling situation

In western guidance and counselling practice a structured and directive approach is usually avoided. The structure of a session is free and client's interactive abilities are taken into account. The goal is to help clients make their decisions themselves so that they will also take responsibility on and commit to the decisions made. Some immigrants may regard this kind of unstructured guidance and counselling as incompetence, since they are used to so-called advocate culture where a relative, an interpreter or somebody else close to them take care of things and often also make decisions for other, less educated fellow country people. This kind of relationship is also sought in guidance counselling and the client expects a direct answer to or guidance in questions concerning career choices or finding a job.

Expectations in terms of age, gender and professional status

In many cultures older people are traditionally regarded as having greater knowledge and wisdom and are, therefore, given a higher level of respect. Respect translates into how willing people are to listen and seriously consider the information a guidance counsellor is

trying to convey. A young person may have difficulty in being viewed as a legitimate authority.

Gender is also an important consideration in some cultures. The status of women and the roles they are expected to fulfil vary greatly. Dealing with women counsellors, may cause problems for some immigrant men.

Professional credentials, academic qualifications and organisational position are also given more consequence in cultures that are status-conscious. The higher the counsellor's credentials, the more importance will be attached to the guidance she/he provides.

These kind of things should be explained to clients as realities of the host culture.

Still, one must remember that there are differences within cultural groups that may be greater than the differences between the dominant culture and other cultures. The uniqueness of the individual must be respected along with the uniqueness of the cultural group. Giving too much attention to the individual can lead to neglect the impact of the cultural group, whereas giving too much attention to the latter runs the risk of stereotyping the individual as a member of that group and forgetting his or her uniqueness.

It is often a matter of expediency to work with generalisations and stereotypes, especially when working with migrants and refugees from not just one, but many different cultures. More important factors are, whether the stereotypes are based on respect for the other culture (positive stereotypes) or by disrespect (negative stereotypes): while the former can open the door to communication, the latter will inevitably impose sanctions and barriers to effective intercultural exchanges.

9. COMMUNICATION

An essential part of multicultural guidance is obviously an effective and meaningful intercultural communication. The main attribute needed to establishing good communication is of course **language**.

Immigrants who come to a new country often do not speak the local language very well. At the same time the counsellor might not speak the client's language. Guidance and counselling can be unproductive and extremely frustrating for the counsellor and the client alike. Therefore appropriate use of an interpreter is vital to successful communication.

It is also useful to count on advocate interpreters or social mediators – professionals who are knowledgeable of two or more cultures, and have certain skills to act as a “bridge” between the community of reference and the host society. They are usually originally immigrants themselves and have been given a short training in interpreting. The presence of a cultural mediator is useful not only when the client doesn't speak the local language, but also in order to facilitate the communication by creating a welcoming atmosphere, sensitive to cultural differences and difficulties. It is an important help also when clients have been living in the country already for some years. Social mediators not only facilitate communication and mutual understanding between guidance counsellors and clients, but can have other functions, such as:

- to facilitate real access of all groups to community resources;
- to facilitate communication and promote understanding among different cultural groups, and mutual enrichment;
- to fight prejudice, stereotypes, and racism,
- to prevent or regulate conflicting situations,
- to help integrate significant elements of different cultures into the curriculum, and the teaching materials⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ Malik Beatriz, Intercultural competences and strategies in guidance: tools for intervention in schools, paper presented at the IAVEG International conference: Guidance for Education, career and employment, - New Challenges. Berlin, August 29-1 September 2000.

Questions of partiality and protection of privacy may arise, especially when the client is an asylum seeker or a refugee. Therefore, it is very important to stress confidentiality when using interpreters and if the client does not trust the interpreter, he or she must be changed.

Discussions with the interpreter / social mediator before and after counselling might help mutual understanding and may even guide the work done when particular issues have been dealt with.

Before the interview (or guidance session) the interpreter should get a briefing on the case. The counsellor can gather background cultural information from the interpreter / social mediator. After the interview it could be useful to de-brief the interpreter and give him or her the opportunity to vent any feeling that may have come up during the interview⁴⁹.

The role of the interpreter / social mediator is also very valuable for **non – verbal communication**. Non verbal communication is different in different cultures. Making eye contact is not always regarded as a sign of honesty. In some cultures, eye contact can, for example, be interpreted as an erotic message.

Non- verbal communication includes not only facial expressions and gestures; it also involves seating arrangements, personal distance and sense of time.

In some cultures the non verbal way to express things is much more common and much more important than in many European cultures. Non-verbal communication can be something “in which most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the explicit transmitted part of the message.” Therefore, the understanding of the “hidden” messages of non-verbal behaviour in some cultures can be absolutely essential in dealing effectively with members from these backgrounds.

⁴⁹ Lonnon Geraldine and Pickering Elisabeth.

Cross cultural counselling and assessment: equity for N.E.S.B. clients, Conference proceedings “Counselling for equity, an Australian perspective”, 18th – 20th July 1996.

Clear communication and unambiguous expressions helps understanding. It is advisable to bring these kind of

issues in counselling, too, and to explain what different ways of behaving mean.

Another significant issue is communication style. There might be quite a difference between the way a European might describe a problem, than someone from an African background. Some cultures might go straight to the point while others may circle round the topic. The difference between a linear and a more contextual way of expressing things can cause anger, impatience and misunderstanding⁵⁰.

10. MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE OF OPERATORS

Counsellors should be trained to be culturally sensitive and to develop appropriate intervention skills when working in a multicultural context. In other words, counsellors working with immigrants should have special multicultural competence. One basic precondition for individual multicultural competence is the need to allow one's attitudes to be challenged by recognising that the other has the freedom and the right to be different, whatever one's own opinion is. Both partners in the exchange are experts of their respective cultures and should treat each other with mutual respect⁵¹. To respect the client and to be genuinely interested in the person's well-being are essential conditions to win a client's trust, which is a requirement in any successful guidance conversation. To win the confidence of a client, it may be necessary to spend some extra time explaining goals, informing about the process, clarifying the roles of the counsellor and the interpreter and making clear what is expected of the client.

Special multicultural competence basically consists of:

⁵⁰ See chapter 3 of the Lima distance training package, <http://www.uni-saarland.de/z-einr/efb/AHOI/Lima/Base/Chapter3.htm>

⁵¹ See chapter 3 of the Lima distance training package, <http://www.uni-saarland.de/z-einr/efb/AHOI/Lima/Base/Chapter3.htm>

- awareness of the counsellor's own culture and of cultural factors affecting the client's situation, as well as respect for the client's culture
- knowledge about the client's situation and about cultural factors relevant in each counselling situation
- skills to act in different counselling situations and to see the client's situation as a whole that is influenced by both individual and social factors

Sue and Sue have provided a very comprehensive set of competencies that counsellors should have in order to be "culturally skilled" or competent, grouped in three dimensions:

- counsellor awareness of own cultural awareness and biases
- counsellor's awareness of client's worldviews
- development of culturally appropriate intervention strategies.⁵²

This model has been adopted by other authors and is reported in the framework below.

⁵² See Malik Beatriz, Intercultural competences and strategies in guidance: tools for intervention in schools, paper presented at the IAVEG International conference: Guidance for Education, career and employment, - New Challenges. Berlin, August 29-1 September 2000.

11. THE FRAMEWORK OF MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING COMPETENCE

	1. Counsellor's awareness of his/her own cultural values and biases	2. Counsellor's awareness of client's worldview	3. Development of culturally appropriate intervention strategies
A. Beliefs and Attitudes	<p>1. The counsellors are aware and sensitive to their own cultural heritage and value and respect differences.</p> <p>2. The counsellors are aware of how their own cultural background influences psychological processes.</p> <p>3. The counsellors are able to recognise the limits of their competence and expertise.</p> <p>4. The counsellors recognise their sources of discomfort with differences that exist between themselves and clients in terms of race, ethnicity and culture.</p>	<p>1. The counsellors are aware of their negative emotional reactions toward other racial and ethnic groups that may prove detrimental to the counselling relationship. They are willing to contrast their own beliefs and attitudes with those of their culturally different clients in a non-judgemental fashion.</p> <p>2. The counsellors are aware of their stereotypes and preconceived notions that they may hold toward other racial and ethnic minority groups.</p>	<p>1. The counsellors respect a client's religious beliefs and values, including attributions and taboos, because these affect worldview and psychosocial functioning.</p> <p>2. The counsellors respect indigenous helping practices and respect minority community's intrinsic help-giving networks.</p> <p>3. The counsellors value bilingualism and do not view another language as an impediment to counselling.</p>

<p>B. Knowledge</p>	<p>1. The counsellors have specific knowledge about their own racial and cultural heritage and how it affects their definitions and biases of normality-abnormality and the process of counselling.</p> <p>2. The counsellors possess knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, discrimination and stereotyping affect them personally and in their work.</p> <p>3. The counsellors possess knowledge about their social impact upon others. They are knowledgeable about communication style differences and their impact on clients of a minority group.</p>	<p>1. The counsellors possess specific knowledge and information about the particular group that they are working with. They are aware of the life experiences, cultural heritage and historical background of their culturally different clients.</p> <p>2. The counsellors understand how race and culture may affect personality formation, vocational choices, manifestation of psychological disorders, help seeking and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of counselling approaches.</p> <p>3. The counsellors understand and have knowledge about socio-political influences that impinge upon the life of racial and ethnic minorities. Immigration issues, poverty, racism, stereotyping and powerlessness may affect self-esteem and self-concept in the counselling process.</p>	<p>1. The counsellors are aware of institutional barriers that prevent minorities from using different support services.</p> <p>2. The counsellors have knowledge of the potential bias in assessment tools and use procedures and interpret findings keeping in mind the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the clients.</p> <p>3. The counsellors have knowledge of minority family structures, hierarchies, values and beliefs as well as the features and resources of a minority community.</p> <p>4. The counsellors are aware of relevant discriminatory practices at the social and community level that may be affecting the psychological welfare of the population being served.</p>
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<p>C. Skills</p>	<p>1. The counsellors seek out educational, consultative and training experiences to enrich their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally different populations.</p> <p>2. The counsellors seek to understand themselves as racial and cultural beings and seek actively a no racist identity.</p>	<p>1. The counsellors should familiarise themselves with relevant research. They should actively seek out educational experiences that enrich their knowledge, understanding and cross-cultural skills.</p> <p>2. The counsellors become actively involved with minority individuals outside the counselling setting (e.g. community events, social and political functions, celebrations, friendships, neighbourhood groups) so that their perspective of minorities is more than an academic or helping exercise.</p>	<p>1. The counsellors are able to engage in a variety of verbal and non verbal helping practices and pay attention to their culture bound nature while choosing measures.</p> <p>2. The counsellors use interventions for the support of a client, helping him/her to see when problems are due to bias and racism in others and not in a client.</p> <p>3. The counsellors are not averse seeking consultation with traditional healers or religious leaders and practitioners of culturally different clients when appropriate.</p> <p>4. The counsellors use the language requested by a client, and seek an interpreter / social mediator if needed or refer a client to a qualified bilingual counsellor.</p> <p>5. The counsellors are experts in the use of traditional assessment and testing tools and they are also aware of the cultural limitations.</p> <p>6. The counsellors should attend to as well as work to eliminate biases, prejudices discriminatory practices.</p> <p>7. The counsellors take responsibility in educating their clients to the processes of psychological intervention such as goals, expectations, legal rights, and the counsellor's orientation.</p>
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The competencies listed above serve as a frame of reference for those who want to become more culturally sensitive. It should be emphasised that becoming multiculturally competent is not something that can be achieved over a course, it requires years of experience, training, commitment and open-mindedness. Learning about ourselves, for instance, a prerequisite to embracing multiculturalism, is a lifelong endeavour.

“Multiculturalism represents an attitude that can be learned but it takes time and commitment”⁵³.

It should also be remembered that working with immigrants is very interesting, rewarding and increases one’s proportion, but in all its attractiveness, it is also very hard and exhausting. Dealing with people who have come from the remote parts of the world in great need, there is a danger that counsellors become too deeply involved and forget their limits. The great needs of immigrants makes the job very hard because they often turn to the counsellor with their different practical problems. It is therefore necessary for professionals working with counselling of immigrants to receive professional guidance themselves in order to be able to cope with their demanding work⁵⁴.

12. MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE OF INSTITUTIONS

In addition to the cultural competence of individual guidance counsellors we also consider the multicultural competence of institutions, public or private, which work with immigrants or are involved in their integration process, for example training centres, advice and guidance centres run by municipalities, non governmental organisations, etc. Intercultural competence of institutions refers to the capacity of the institutions concerned to adapting their structure and performance to the demands of intercultural encounters.

This competence can be fostered by:

⁵³ Malik Beatriz, Intercultural competences and strategies in guidance: tools for intervention in schools, paper presented at the IAVEG International conference: Guidance for Education, career and employment, - New Challenges. Berlin, August 29-1 September 2000.

⁵⁴ Metsänen Riitta, Multicultural Counselling, web site <http://rainbow.cimo.fi>

- A readiness of management to adapt administrative rules and regulations as much as possible to the needs of immigrants or minorities
- Intercultural competence of the organisation's employees
- Inclusion of members of the minorities as staff members

One of the MOSAIC projects partners, FACEPA, has pointed out some good practices in welcoming immigrants, based on an intercultural approach, specifically referred to guidance and information:

- The basis of an intercultural approach is the *Equality of differences*. Differences must be respected for the development of each culture, but also equal opportunities and possibilities for success for all cultures must be promoted.
- In a democratic and intercultural education system, learners have the right to contribute to the definition of the kind of education they want. Then, there must also be space, for them to participate in an egalitarian way.
- It is necessary that not only administration, but also cultural associations and adult education centres offer guidance and information to immigrants about different ways of participating in social life.
- True inclusion in a new society is promoted through access to and active participation in education, training activities, language learning as well as leisure activities.
- Centres and associations should offer a project in which people can take part and where immigrants and non immigrants can gather together in daily activities and in the classroom.
- The implementation of guidance, information and welcoming processes has to involve immigrants who are already part of the host community. This contributes to better identifying immigrants' needs.

ANNEX I - THE AUTOBIOGRAFIC APPROACH

More and more often, researchers find in the autobiographic method a privileged training device that, through narration and writing about oneself, allows (training) individuals to “assume responsibility”, i.e. to take care of themselves in the present. Written recounting of one’s life (autobiography) and oral narration are becoming techniques widely used in several education and treatment institutions (such as schools, prisons, rehabilitation communities...) as a non-therapeutic and non-directive training tool aimed at activating or reactivating individual or group development processes. This practice contributes to recover those existential, spiritual, relational, cognitive, submerged, dulled, alienated sense traces that are made intelligible by the chaoticity of events and by the superficiality and automaticity that characterise our actions in everyday life.

The use of autobiography is widely spreading in training practices because it usually encourages and supports a self-esteem feeling which lies at the basis of the proactive ability to reassess the personal story of one’s life, both in terms of recomprehension of previous experiences and continuous rearrangement of personal plans. The autobiographic approach is based on a firm belief that human beings are indefatigable subjects in working out interpretative maps of their surrounding environment, in which they act as they trace paths, intertwine stories, make choices, built and rebuilt life contexts, develop narrative and relational identities, play their part in the complex plot of their lives on the world scene.

This method, applied in adult education, allows to better identify the distinctive features in one’s life and rearrange the knowledge acquired in self-training. It focuses on the cognitive processes that adults use in order to remember, reflect, decide, create and imagine, and so it does not investigate into the unconscious dimensions that govern emotional and relational life. In a sense, it reveals mental patterns that have been repressed or are consciously used in personal and professional everyday life. Thanks to

autobiographic and self-cognitive moments, as well as moments of verbal interaction, listening and symbolic-expressive production, individuals taking part in such “self-reflective spaces”⁵⁵ have the opportunity to experience evocative and introspective situations of intellectual work, mind emotions and reinterpretations of their personal/professional autobiographic experiences. Both adults becoming such and adults in becoming need to be more aware of the ways in which their stories have affected themselves and other people.

Autobiographic training is an immediate and seemingly easy way to nurture the adults’ ability to learn from their own experience and become aware that such experience is the most valuable resource they have.

Purposes of autobiographic approach in adult education

1. Helping adults to get to know their way of thinking: this pattern aims at making the training adults to get into the habit of questioning themselves in a reflective way about the processes rather than the effects, products and contents of knowledge. This procedure fosters the comprehension of one's cognitive self and one's relation with knowledge gradually built up by biographic experiences;
2. Self-realization: this means to retrace one's past history in order to rearrange one's identity or parts of it;
3. Giving adults an opportunity to go on learning and discover their educability. Adults often believe that they have nothing more to learn just because they are adults and they fail to think about their ways of acting and functioning, since they give them for granted. Discovering that they have a story and that they can share it and put it in question opens the way to a future that could be different from the present because in self-narration that a new language form is developed;

⁵⁵ “self-reflective spaces”: this term has not been for its being strictly psychological, but because it implies an immediate involvement of people. This point of view starts, changes, faces and is inspired by Jung's psychoanalysis, existentialism and systemic-relational psychology which are interpretation patterns of live and subjectivity based on the development of narration, account, self and mutual understanding.

4. Developing explanatory theories that can give a meaning to the events we experience, to our critical moments, to our problems. These theories must allow to draw conclusions concerning past experiences with regard to the present and the future;

5. Determining changes, new opportunities and thinkabilities both at an individual and a collective level. When we “tell ourselves”, we bring about changes in some structures that characterize a well-defined way of acting and thinking. Adults rarely show a flexibility to changes with regard to what implies an assumption of responsibility concerning one's way of thinking and the discovery of one's independence as a cognitive being.

A brief historical excursus: the reason why the use of autobiographic method has become so important

At the end of the XIX century, there was a need in philosophy to give up idealism and positivism theories, in which the training subjects remained outside the scope of research. Man is not to be considered from an absolute point of view, but in his individuality instead. There is a need to go back to being, not as an abstract entity, but as a single individuality. The idea that lies at the basis of this is that man has not only cognitive functions, he is not only someone who reacts to environmental stimuli, but man is also emotional reason, man perceives problems within himself, man lives, decides, behaves and acts. Decision and action are two essential elements in modern society. It is man who always has the need to give a meaning to life and events and his behaviour depends on the meanings given to things. This change in the way of conceiving man is based on Heidegger's thought, outlined in his book *Being and Time*, in which he tackles the essential problem of truth and finds answers by analysing man and his behaviour. Man is the only being in the universe that can be questioned and can give valid answers – if we are to understand the meaning of existence, we have to investigate into the individual. Man lives in the world and while living with the world, he meets with things and lives with other people. Therefore, he can be understood only by recovering the meaning of his past and individual experience. The idea of past experience is dealt with also by Husserl, who defines it as a whole series of essences that the individual recovers in his conscience through intuition. The process of essence intuition is the result of man's

intentionality and every intentional act concerns the conscience of human beings. The credit of reopening discussion on the method goes to Riceur's sociological research and particularly to the Chicago school, dating back to the 1920s. Since then, a research current has developed within sociological studies that values the use of personal documents, both solicited and unsolicited, in order to obtain more significant and expressive information. These first studies can be classified under the name of "biography", a sort of new sociology that was trying to identify and interpret individual life stories on the scene of history. This difficult change involves a change in the context itself within which biographic material is collected – for instance, the listening method is not optional anymore, but it becomes an integral part of research, almost a guarantee of the research's epistemological, methodological and ethic correctness. The "training to listening" becomes essential to researchers because biography is always a way of interacting with individuals. The autobiographic technique can take the form of an interview, as a sort of complex social interaction and as a system of roles, expectations and rules. At a later stage, it was the autobiographic approach that brought about a real epistemological change and marked the turning point to a "historiographical" sociology, characterized by a schematization and quantification of qualitative data, and to the definition of a "historicity" of man as a questionable subject set in a life context. In this dimension, sociologists have thematized the intersubjectivity of time and memory dimensions, the importance of language and testimony, considered as a comparison between different points of view. The narration of an individual tracing his autobiography is always set in a social context and researchers cannot merely recover or make the individual recollect information belonging to the past, but they must be able to understand to what extent such narration is a way of acting and changing. The autobiographic method is presently arousing great interest in Italy. As far as adult education is concerned, the reference pattern is the "bio-systemic" one developed by Duccio Demetrio on the basis of a careful epistemological reflection on the purposes of adult education research. This pattern, characterized by an "eco-systemic" conception of the world and the human beings, grasps the notion of complexity and systemic-relational paradigm and revises it from a phenomenological point of view. What does this paradigm mean? The eco-systemic conception has given prominence to the environment's role starting with the research in dynamic psychology carried out by K. Lewin. This research focuses on the

idea of field, meant as the area in which a person is situated and its location within the vital space. Lewin aims at assessing the quality of the living environment of people, their relations, their adaptability, their awareness of belonging to a group, whether a primary one (like the family) or a secondary one. To solve the problem of complexity, Demetrio suggests an assembly of different concepts, approaches, backgrounds and paradigms within the qualitative framework of the analysis of phenomena and educational events. Demetrio calls this approach “micro pedagogy” and maintains that in education research multiplicity has to be understood as a constituent part of human beings. Micro pedagogy is a project that concerns the world of adult education. Its research is focused on the everyday aspects of education with a constant reference to life, individual experience and their narration. According to Demetrio, adult education is focused on self-education, i.e. learning how to reflect and acquire an intellectual and creative independence. This way of learning cannot be confined to a form of egocentrism, but it means instead learning to listen to oneself and to other people, to respect them, to accept differences, and is therefore a steady questioning about oneself. According to Demetrio, autobiography is a proper personal space where individuals can tell themselves and others as a way of release. It is a tool that gives events, decisions and emotions an order, a sequence and a meaning of their own.

The main features of autobiographic or narrative approach with regard to reception

Any kind of change requires individuals to experience it, test it, manage it and finally implement it. The trainer/tutor is not only a facilitator of learning and guidance, but s/he becomes also a learning intermediary between knowledge and experience dimensions, in particular through self-reflection processes. Such professional specialists are those who practise activities aimed at the individuals’ growth, self-sufficiency and self-guidance, as well as at enhancing their existential, personal and professional opportunities. Suppose we have to guide an adult towards a specific profession or support him/her in his/her training process. In this case, it is not enough to know which work this person would like to do or what skills (which s/he has to some extent) would allow him/her to practise that profession. We also need to make this individual aware of his/her learning and experience patterns. In other words, it is necessary to combine his/her life plan with

his/her professional one. This can be done by activating a series of reflective processes that involve both the way of thinking/knowing and the way of feeling/living/experiencing. Tutors must be oriented to establish a suitable learning environment and make a diagnosis of individuals' real needs by developing a shared planning method and conducting the new learning experiences with the use of suitable techniques and materials. When using the autobiographic approach with regard to reception, trainers take up an important role as facilitators of the autobiographic experience. Trainers, tutors, educators, workshop conductors are neither teachers of life nor spiritual directors, parents or teachers. They can be all of this or just a part of this, provided they carry out just one task, i.e. facilitating (without judging) a personal narration to be built in the present within the framework of a learning group – a group that learns through narration and through narration works on itself both as a group and as individual members.