Meaning and effect of minimum quality standards for improving the quality of education

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Who is ARACIP?

- Public institution of national interest
- under the subordination of Romanian Ministry of Education
- with juridical personality
- with its own income and expenditure
- founded in 2005
What does ARACIP?

- External evaluation of the quality of education provided by the school educational institutions and by other educational providers.

- It proposes to the Minister of Education standards and performance indicators for evaluation and quality assurance in education. **They are approved by Government Decision.**
... And some results...

External evaluations: public education vs. private education

Year 1: 67
Year 2: 131
Year 3: 378
Year 4: 369
Year 5: 284
Year 6: 362
Year 7: 547
Year 8: 187

Private
Public
The private education in the year 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of schools</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergartens</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary schools</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary schools</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary schools</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post secondary schools</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1089</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Numerical evolution of private schools

School year 1998-1999: 65
School year 2002-2003: 549
School year 2007-2008: 830
School year 2012-2013: 1089
Distribution on development regions
Number of enrollments: 94655
Private sanitary post secondary education (1)

Evolution
Private sanitary post secondary education(2)

Number of schools: 175

Enrollment: 44048

(98 % of the enrollments in sanitary post secondary education)
What does it mean “standard”?

According NLE, the standard

"represents the description of the requirements submitted in terms of rules and outcomes, defining the minimum level required to achieve educational activities.

Any standard is submitted in general terms as a statement, and the result in a set of performance indicators.

The standards are differentiated on criteria and areas of interests".
A. Institutional capacity

B. Educational effectiveness

C. Quality management
What does it mean “quality of education”?

According NLE, \textit{quality of education} 

”it is the set of characteristics of a study program or vocational program and its provider, which \textit{quality standards} and \textit{expectations of the beneficiaries} are met ”.
What does NOT mean “quality of education”(1)?

• Ensuring the school functioning.
• By default and a natural product of the "normal" functioning.
• A set of procedures, immutable, given once and for all times.
• Produced “on order” by the effect of a law or other legal act.
• Imposed on hierarchical way, by the head of the commission, director, inspector, ministry or ARACIP.
What does NOT mean “quality of education”(2)?

- Conditioned by money and material resources, means “unmotivated" by the "lack of money“.

- Provided exclusively through external evaluation.

- Exclusive responsibility of the school.
Which are principles behind the standards?

- National
- Generals
- Identical for public and private system
- Unique for internal evaluation (self evaluation) and external evaluation
- Common for all the educational authorities having the role of evaluation, monitoring and control
- Correlated with the development stages of the school: functioning, development / progress.
Granîng of marks

UNSATISFACTORY

ACREDITATION STANDARDS (all the requirements)- FUNCTIONNING STANDARDS

SATISFACTORY

REFERENCE STANDARDS (one or several requirements)

GOOD

REFERENCE STANDARDS – OPTIMAL LEVEL (all the requirements)

VERY GOOD

INOVATION CREATIVITY OWN DEMANDS

EXCELLENT

Failure to comply with accreditation standards

Granting of marks
An example (1)

Domain A. Institutional capacity
Criterion a) institutional, administrative and managerial structures
Indicator 1 – The existence, the structure and the content of the projective documents (project development plan and implementation plan)
Descriptors / requirements
1.1.1. The project development plan on medium term (3-5 years) exists, having at least the elements set out in the authorization phase.
An example (2)

Domain B. Educational effectiveness
Criterion d) financial activities of the organization
Indicator 32 – Establishment of school budget
Descriptors / requirements
1.1.1. Using at least 25% of the achieved budget of the school for the development of own endowments (space, equipment, materials, auxiliaries used by pupils and teachers)
An example (3)

Domain C. Quality management
Criterion c) objective and transparent procedures for the assessment of learning
Indicator 38 – The existence and application of learning outcomes assessment procedures

Descriptors / requirements

1.1.3. Periodic assessment activities of student satisfaction and / or their parents, and other relevant stakeholders (employers, local authorities, etc.) to school performance, extracurricular activities and general educational activities.
Which is the meaning of the standards?

- political will to grant rights and to establish obligations;
- the certification of the providers' capacity to meet beneficiaries' expectations;
- the protection of beneficiaries;
- the development of institutional culture of quality in schools.
What effect do they have standards (1)?

- Orientations of the school on improving outcomes and well-being of each student.
- Transparency and communication with all stakeholders.
- Efficiency, computerization and reduce bureaucracy in the context of evidence-based decision.
What effect do they have standards(2)?

- Self-assessment tool.
- "Compass" for external evaluation.
- Support for the personal development of students.
- Landmark of bureaucracy and arbitrary interference.
Report regarding quality of education status (ARACIP, 2012)

- 1023 schools evaluated, based on 24 performance indicators
- Representative sample by level of education, residence, subsystem (978 public, 45 private)
Findings

1. inconsistencies internal evaluation-external evaluation, but ...

2. increasing the level of internal evaluation.
3. 10% of the schools having legal personality do not meet accreditation standards ... so need support.

4. poor quality of the teachers: unqualified, substitute teachers, outdated teaching methods, staff turnover (1 of 6 teachers are newcomers, and nearly a quarter are commuters - continuity is positively correlated with student achievement).
5. 90% of schools have equipment on "medium" or "sufficient" level. Number of hours of computer access for each student must become essential indicator on ICT.

6. the quality is lower, about 10%, in rural areas than in urban areas.
7. level of achievement of quality indicators in schools with structures is smaller than in those without structures.

8. „Which school is better?”, after three hierarchies:
- by the merit of each school (progress in relation to specific operating conditions / context and available resources);
- by the periodic external evaluation results (formula: Efficiency indicator x Rating given = Final Score)
- by the degree of achieving the projected objectives.
9. evaluation culture began to gain ground in Romanian schools today.
The research on the culture of quality (ARACIP, 2013)

- **Sample** - 2015 schools și 14689 subjects, of which: 11077 teachers, 2397 pupils, 789 parents/ tutors, 426 representatives of Local Councils.

- **Theoretical model** (of analysis) – Geert Hofstede (4 of 6 dimensions):
  - Power Distance;
  - Collectivism - Individualism;
  - Masculinity - Femininity;
  - Uncertainty avoidance.
Findings of the research:

High distance to power - but going down compared to 2002:
• smaller on schools regularly assessed and having trained staff, than in other schools;
• more pronounced on three subjects (parents, students, representatives of local authorities) and less obvious to teachers;
• lower in urban than in rural;
• lower for women than men;
• regional differences: higher in SV-Oltenia region, lower in NE region.
• teachers of language and communication and humanistic areas are at a low power distance than colleagues in other areas.
Findings of the research:

Ambivalent features on the individualism / collectivism axis, but with a greater orientation towards collectivism compared to 2002:

- tendency towards collectivism lower on schools regularly assessed and having trained staff, than in other schools;
- similar behavior of all 4 groups;
- more pronounced individualism on the young teachers (5-10 years) and on those who teach the arts, physical education and sport, specialized disciplines, and least pronounced on teachers over 50 years old;
- collectivism more pronounced among males than among women and higher in rural areas than in urban;
- regional differences: collectivism higher in SV-Oltenia region, lower in NE region.
Ambivalent features on masculinity / femininity axis, with the same tendency towards masculinity identified in 2002:
• on this dimension there were no differences in schools regularly assessed and having trained staff;
• tendency towards masculinity all 4 groups, stronger for students and parents and low for teachers;
• the greatest tendency to masculinity is manifested to teachers form SV-Oltenia region and the lowest in Center region;
• tendency towards masculinity is more pronounced on rural teachers, and on teachers aged 25-30 years with 3-5 years of work.
Findings of the research:

Strong tendency to avoid uncertainty - but going down compared to 2002:
- lower on schools regularly assessed and having trained staff, than in other schools;
- highest to teachers and lowest to parents;
- highest to teachers in SV-Oltenia region, S- Muntenia region, Bucureşti-Ilfov region, and the lowest in Center region;
- higher for teachers in rural areas compared to urban areas;
- higher on young people under 25 and on those over 50 year.
What will make ARACIP to promote a new culture of quality?

Focus the external evaluation:

- results.

- school's ability to achieve expected results.
• In order to promote the welfare of learners, quality of education assessment will aim:
  - "Well-being" of children / students in school and in the activities organized by the school.
  - Inclusive and friendly character of school life.

• In order to promote learning among pupils, teachers and organization, quality of education assessment will aim:
  - Learning outcomes - value added and the progress of each educable.
  - Progress in qualification and professional development of all staff.
  - Real institutional development and consistency between designed and implemented.
• In order to promote **staff professional development**, quality of education assessment will aim:
  - Teacher evaluation – focused on student achievement as "value added / created" and on the results of their own professional development.

• In order to **recognize the "right to fail"** to capitalize on mistakes by learning, quality of education assessment will aim:
  - Full completion of the "quality circle" and continuous quality improvement results.
In order to focus all activities in the school on achieving learning outcomes, quality of education assessment will aim:
- The results of the students (and their progress) at national and international assessments.
- Further development of graduates.
- Consistency and continuity in institutional development.
For a better school!

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