



SICI NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2021

Introduction

The SICI Executive Committee would like to improve communication with members, especially concerning the implementation of our Strategic Plan. One approach to this is to issue a regular 'News Update', usually produced after each Executive Committee meeting. We would encourage members to respond to the information in this update, and to submit any information that they would like to highlight to other members. Please use the contact details at the end of the newsletter.

Update from the Executive Committee

The activities of SICI have been considerably disrupted as a result of the lockdown. Nevertheless, the Executive committee continued working and has met several times by using digital technologies such as Teams and Zoom. Below you may find a current state of affairs:

- After the SICI General Assembly 2020 in Paris, the new executive committee has met and distributed the roles within itself. Tommy Lagergren (from Sweden) is the new chair and president of SICI. Bart Maes, Belgium, remains secretary general. The other members of the EC are: Gordana Capric, Janie McManus, Hille Voolaid and Herman Franssen.
- The overview of the regional groups is as following:

Hille Voolaid	Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Denmark, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Finland, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine
Herman Franssen/ Janie McManus	England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, the Independent Schools Inspectorate, the Netherlands, Malta
Tommy Lagergren	Austria, Bavaria, Hamburg, Hessen, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Belgium (German speaking community), South Tyrol
Bart Maes/Erik De Bou (ad interim)	Basque Country, Belgium (Dutch speaking community), Belgium (French speaking community), France, Luxembourg, Portugal, Cyprus

Gordana Čaprić	Bulgaria, Kosovo*, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Uzbekistan
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- The EC is glad to invite members to a webinar on **remote teaching and learning** on Thursday February 18 at 15.00-16.40 CET. The **webinar** will be held over MS Teams. You will also receive a separate invitation. If you are interested in participating, please contact the SICI Secretariat at sici@vlaanderen.be

- On regularly basis SICI will organize **Open Forums for National Coordinators**.

- Time: Wednesday afternoon from 14h until 15h (CET)
- Where: Online by MS TEAMS
- Topics: Can be sent to the SICI secretariat until the day before by national coordinators
- Aims:
 - Improving the communication between the national coordinators and the different regional groups (key action 3)
 - Meeting the needs and questions from different members, Interested members could join as appropriate (key action 5)
 - Sharing best practices (key action 6)
 - Exploring and diversifying ways of collaboration and cooperation between members (key action 7)
 - Improving communication and dissemination of SICI's work (key action 8)
 - Discussing ideas and topics to work together with researchers (to organize SICI webinars and workshops, to disseminate research reports, to invite speakers) (key action 1)
 - Providing advice, support and evidence based on the experience of members to enhance the professional learning of inspectors. (key action 2)

The first open forum for national coordinators will take place on February, 24th from 14.00 until 15.00.

1. Questions or/and topics to be discussed
2. Sharing best practices, organizing webinars

Participating is possible by using the following link: [Klik hier om deel te nemen aan de vergadering](#)

- SICI took part in the '**Expert Network on Recognition of outcomes of learning periods abroad in general secondary education**' as peer advisor.
 - o Objectives:
 - Setting up of an Expert Network on Recognition of outcomes of learning periods abroad in general secondary education
 - Carrying out an analysis on the recognition practices in all EU Member states
 - Developing a proposal for a European Framework to support the recognition of outcomes of learning periods abroad, namely guidelines and specific recommendations for the relevant stakeholders
 - Developing the content to feed an informative section of the School Education Gateway website
 - Model training programme on transversal competence assessment of mobile pupils
 - Dissemination

The SICI development officer, Erik De Bou, joined the online meetings of the consortium, EFIL (the European Federation for Intercultural Learning), EIESP (the European Institute of Education and Social Policy) and CESIE (a European Centre for Studies and Initiatives).

- SICI members are invited to the **EPP Hearing on European Education Area** that will be organized on **Tuesday 2 March 2021 (14:00-15:30): "European Education Area: From Vision to Reality"**
 - o 14:00 Opening remarks by Michaela ŠOJDROVÁ, EPP Group Coordinator in CULT, EP Rapporteur for the European Education Area
Presentation by Mariya GABRIEL, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
 - I. European Education Area through the eyes of experts*
 - o 14:15 Paulo SANTIAGO, Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD (TBC)
Tia LOUKKOLA, Director, European University Association (TBC)
Representative of the European Youth Forum
prof. Arnošt VESELÝ, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Social Sciences
 - II. Political questions and answers*
 - o 14:45 Sabine VERHEYEN, Chair of the EP Committee on Culture and Education
Maria da Graça CARVALHO, EPP Group Vice-Coordinator in the EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

Milan ZVER, standing EP rapporteur for the Erasmus+ Programme

Peter POLLÁK, Member of the EP Committee on Culture and Education

- 15:10 Q&A
- 15:25 - closing remarks by Michaela ŠO

Registering at: epp-cult@europarl.europa.eu by Friday 26 February for the link to Webex.

Please find our previous newsletters by clicking on the following link: <http://www.sici-inspectorates.eu/Contact-us/EC-Minutes>.

Request for cooperation and exchange of information

... on 'Reading comprehension and inspection' by the Inspectorate of Education in Belgium – Dutch speaking community

The inspectorate of education in Flanders (Belgium) is interested in reading comprehension. As the results of PIRLS and PISA are declining in Flanders, we are eager to learn from educational systems that succeeded in increasing student outcomes in reading. If you are interested in exchanging experiences/expertise on

- (1) how inspectorates can respond to declining results in international large scale assessments
- (2) how inspectorates can stimulate reading comprehension in schools

please contact the Flemish inspectorate of education (Bieke.DeFraine@onderwijsinspectie.be).

... International cooperation in the Netherlands – international supervision scan

Team International Affairs of the Dutch Inspectorate takes part in several international activities and projects, mainly to learn about the way other Inspectorates (or comparable agencies) have organized their supervision. Momentarily we are doing desk research on several themes related to supervision. We have done desk research and are carrying out interviews with several European inspectorates to gather information about these themes. In the 'Supervision scan' we describe the gathered information about these themes. The main goal of this is to improve our own supervision, but other inspectorates can also benefit from the results. In time, we will therefore translate the a summary of the final report into English.

For this 'Supervision scan' we focus on the following themes:

Remote teaching and learning

We are working on instruments with which we can monitor remote teaching and learning, and maybe eventually process this into our framework. We are researching inspectorates or other organisations that have already worked out instruments with which they can monitor the quality of remote teaching.

Basic skills

In this case meaning literacy and numeracy and social skills. We are looking into inspectorates that have supervision that is focused on these basic skills and how this supervision is modeled.

Curriculum

We are interested in ways to assess the broad curriculum and what the effect this supervision has.

Including stakeholders

We are looking for ways to further improve education through a coordinated, collaborative effort by including other stakeholders than schools/school boards, for example clusters of school boards and external agencies such as, social services, national councils and training providers.

Inter-rater reliability

This theme is about how inspections are carried out in a reliable way. We mean subjects like: evidence gathering, codes of behavior, feedback tools, reviewing reports or evaluations after each inspection (or a sample). But also targeted research into (inter-rater)reliability by a research department.

***** We would like to take the opportunity to address other inspectorates, that have undergone significant changes or want to communicate other relevant information, to write a text and send this to the SICI secretariat for the next newsletter.*****

Members' responses to the COVID 19 crisis

Some words about ...

...The inspectorate update of Bavaria

Schools and the external evaluation of School quality are still highly affected by the Corona pandemic in Bavaria. Teaching within the Schools was shut down in March 2020 for the first time and shortly after the Ministry decided that participation in external Evaluation is voluntary for schools in this situation. It was further decided that reintroduction of obligatory external evaluations depend on the current state of infection.

As the incidence of infection is still high or has returned to high levels, classes often do not take place in attendance currently. We therefore assume that voluntary external evaluations will only take place sporadically throughout the whole school year.

In order to facilitate the implementation in this situation nevertheless, the concept has been adapted so that, for example, some interviews and events that would otherwise take place on site can now be conducted online. Also, some adaptations to the instruments and ratings have been made. Of course rules for hygiene and distance apply for visits on site.

As numerous uncertainty factors continue to exist, a high degree of flexibility and close coordination is currently required.

...The inspectorate update of the Dutch speaking community in Belgium

During the pandemic, each school in Flanders can opt for a support visit from the education inspectorate.

The Education Inspectorate wants to enter into a dialogue with the school about the possibilities of strengthening its quality development, also in this crisis. Through consultation, we put a number of aspects of the OK (reference framework for educational quality) in the spotlight. This is done on the basis of a theme that the school chooses and plans for a period between the autumn holidays 2020 and the summer holidays 2021.

After the school has chosen a theme from our range and a period, it receives a message about the concrete planning. The visit lasts one day and - depending on the pandemic phase - takes place on site (in phase yellow) or online (from phase orange). The school does not have to prepare any documents. The visit ends with a brief report. There is no advice.

The Education Inspectorate is a data-driven organization that includes relevant information in the school's file as one of the sources for the further organization of the audits. In the school file we place, among other things, the screening history, organizational information such as the screening units and other data that we collect during examinations and visits. They are elements within a multitude of information that do not directly lead to an investigation. Each school receive an email with the link to register for a support visit. Those who do not want a support visit do not have to register.

Themes to be chosen by schools:

- **THEME 1: Guidance of vulnerable students**

A changing context as we know it during this corona crisis affects all children and young people, making each of them a potentially vulnerable student. It was and still is a challenge to focus on the guidance of students both in distance learning and during contact lessons. Do you have any questions about this or would you like to discuss this with us? Together we consider how the school designs, manages and evaluates its pupil guidance. We use the operating framework (OK) as a guide and take the role of a supportive, critical friend.

- **THEME 2: Quality development**

Are you well on your way to developing the quality of education in your school? You have already invested a lot in this as a school? Are you running into some obstacles? Can a reflection support you in further determining the direction? We start from the operating framework and enter into a dialogue with you.

- **THEME 3: Teaching practice**

The class teacher makes the difference. Because in the classroom, in interaction with the students, that's where learning takes place. As a school team, how do you ensure a powerful learning environment that is adapted to the changing context? Do you invest extra in differentiation in view of the possibly unequal growth paths of the children? Or do you invest heavily in digital support? Or ... ? No doubt you made interesting choices. In dialogue with you and the school team, we gain insight into your choices. We will initially focus on Dutch or mathematics. In consultation we reflect on your choices, using the OK as a shared framework.

- **THEME 4: Teaching practice 'dual learning'**

We focus on the design of dual programs, starting from the school's own operation. In dialogue we gain insight into the policy and the concrete implementation of 'dual learning'. We test the findings against the expectations from the operating and the supervisory framework. Within this critical reflection and development-oriented dialogue, the school gains insight into its strengths and possible growth opportunities.

- **THEME 5: Teaching practice final attainment levels of basic literacy**

In order to ensure that every young person can fully participate in society, the government also formulated final objectives for basic literacy when modernizing secondary education. We are happy to enter into a development-oriented dialogue with you to discover how you can work with those learning outcomes. From which vision do you work on those learning

outcomes? How do you do it? How do you support the school team in this? During the interviews, we use the operating framework as a guide. We try to support as a critical friend.

- **THEME 6: Teaching practice 'STEM'**

Are you proud of the STEM projects in your school, are you still looking or do you want to discuss some bottlenecks with us? We enter into a dialogue with the OK and the STEM attainment targets as frameworks. We take on the role of a supportive, critical friend.

...The inspectorate update of Bulgaria

The National Inspectorate of Education (NIE) in Bulgaria applies its functions in the inspection process of schools and kindergartens by following the guidelines applied in the current COVID-19 situation on national level, but also the institutional prevention measures in each school and kindergarten.

NIE developed models for inspection in real setting, online environment, and a combined/hybrid model. After the approbation period of online inspections in May - June 2020, we analysed the applicability of the procedures, the criteria and indicators for inspection in an online format. The Handbook for inspections, Inspector's guidelines, "Ready for inspection – guidelines for school and kindergarten principals" were revised and renewed. We have developed a special document - "Protocol for conducting inspections in the conditions of COVID-19". Any special instruments for conducting inspections in an electronic environment didn't apply. We simply reviewed the inspection tools we've already used and removed those of them that could not be carried out in an electronic environment such as meeting with non-teaching staff, for example.

- 65 kindergarten and schools were inspected from October to December 2020 through the combined method – inspectors visited the kindergartens and schools, reviewed classes, observed the kindergarten/school. The interviews with pedagogical staff, parents, students, leading team, working meetings of the inspecting team were carried out via implementing ICT.
- We already are on the preparatory stage for next inspections. Due to some difficulties by interviewing parents which doesn't have electronical devises we plan some changes. Interviews with parents will be led in the institution. Depending on the situation, the lead of the inspection team may decide to do the meeting with the students in the school or in an online format.

...The inspectorate update of Estonia

The numbers of Covid-19 positive diagnosis is growing by the day in Estonia. Many of our schools are already partially exercising distance learning and it seems to be a growing trend at the moment.

The Ministry of Education and Research called all schools and the owners of all schools in the spring and autumn and asked them how the teaching is organized, whether there are any problems and what kind of support and information is expected from the ministry. The aim was also to bring together best practices.

According to the principals, it is most difficult to organize studies when some students are at school and some at distance learning.

If there is a student or teacher in the school who is ill, a particular class is referred to distance learning for a period of time, usually two weeks. We have had a few cases where the whole school is distance learning, because there have been more COVID-19 cases at school. We try to continue with the usual contact learning. However, a number of distance learning courses are offered in many schools, especially in 7-9 grade and upper secondary school.

The problem can arise when several teachers fall ill or are isolated. It is also possible that the teacher teaches from home via the web and the students are in school.

The Ministry publishes operational information on a website where contact information is available both by e-mail and by telephone.

Inspections of schools take place as usual. If the situation changes, we will conduct inspections online. We ask the school to send the documents to the ministry and we will conduct the interviews via the internet. We are prepared to immediately change the inspection process if necessary. At present, we have looked at fewer classes and conducted fewer interviews during inspections.

Website: <https://www.hm.ee/en/spread-covid-19-recommendations-educational-institutions>

...The inspectorate update of Finland

FINEEC implemented an evaluation that investigated the impacts of the emergency conditions on equal and equitable preconditions for learning:

Impacts of the exceptional teaching arrangements on equity: challenges include distance learning skills and support and guidance for learning

The impacts of the exceptional teaching arrangements and the challenges they pose to the realization of equality and equity are similar at the different levels of education. The main challenges are related to support and guidance for learning, the skills required in distance learning and IT equipment.

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre FINEEC implements an evaluation that investigates the impacts of the emergency conditions on equal and equitable preconditions for learning in the different parts of the education system. During the spring, evaluation data was collected through online surveys from education providers in basic education and VET, principals in basic education and general upper secondary education, and teaching and guidance staff in basic education, general upper secondary education and VET. Student surveys were carried out in general upper secondary education and VET. The evaluation will continue until autumn 2020, and the long-term impacts will in future be monitored as part of the National Education Evaluation Plan. The first results of the evaluation were published on 18 June 2020.

The purpose of the evaluation is to produce national evaluation data to assess the direction and extent of the impacts of the emergency conditions. The targets of the evaluation are the impacts on learning, assessment, support, guidance and the wellbeing of children and young people.

According to the education providers, principals and teachers in basic education, the main challenges and impacts are related to the support received from parents and its variability, the IT equipment needed in distance learning, and learning self-directiveness. The lack of contact teaching is estimated to have had the most significant impacts on the realisation of equity among students requiring support and students in language minorities.

There were also challenges in VET regarding how students' equality and equity were realised during the emergency conditions. According to teaching and guidance staff and management, the greatest number of problems have been encountered in work-based learning and demonstrations of knowledge and skills, in supporting the capabilities related to distance learning and in special support. In universities and universities of applied sciences, the transition to distance learning mainly went well. However, during the autumn, it will be important to pay special attention to wellbeing, engaging students back in the student community and the development of the capabilities required in self-directiveness.

The emergency conditions highlighted the flexibility of the Finnish education system as one of its strengths. Very fast, almost the entire education system changed over to using digital solutions in its activities. During distance learning, a variety of operating methods have been developed for teaching and guidance and these can also be taken advantage of in the future. For example, higher education institutions have managed to develop virtual forms of guidance very fast.

Distance learning made self-directiveness a key skill

The self-directive skills required in distance learning and the motivation to learn became the main factors supporting learning during the emergency conditions. Approximately 70% of those teachers and guidance staff in basic education and general upper secondary education who participated in the evaluation found that the lack of self-directiveness and motivation affected learning to some extent or a lot during the emergency conditions. More than one half of the teachers in basic education and general upper secondary education considered giving feedback more difficult or much more difficult during distance learning. Ninety per cent of the teaching and guidance staff in basic education considered interaction with the learners during distance learning more difficult or much more difficult than in normal conditions.

In the student surveys conducted in general upper secondary education, almost one fifth of the students answered that their study skills were not sufficient for studying during the emergency conditions. Almost one half found their motivation to study poor during the emergency conditions, and many found that their studies did not progress well during the emergency conditions. The lack of skills in self-directiveness was also identified as a challenge by higher education students.

A large part of students in VET found studying during the emergency conditions mentally more stressful than in normal conditions. Some of them experienced difficulties with the equipment required for studying and slightly more than one in ten students found their study skills insufficient. The students were the most critical about the amount of feedback they received on their learning and competence. However, it is positive that almost 60% of the students found that their motivation to study was good also during the emergency conditions.

More attention must be paid to the development of self-directiveness and study skills at different levels of education. As the learning environments improve and diversify, the importance of self-directiveness increases. Distance learning revealed that some learners need more support with planning their studies, setting goals for their learning, getting down to doing things, assessing their learning and taking advantage of the interaction and networks that support learning. Learning outcomes evaluations also show that the possibility to direct one's own learning process improves the pupil's learning outcomes.

Support from home was estimated to have an impact especially in basic education

The variable support received from guardians during the exceptional teaching arrangements was considered to be one of the main factors affecting equal preconditions for learning especially in basic education. In approximately one third of the responses given by education providers, principals and teachers in basic education, the respondents reported that the variable support received at home

during distance learning created inequality between pupils. In general upper secondary education, the importance of support received at home was estimated to be slightly lower than in basic education. Learning outcomes evaluations have for a long time indicated the impacts of factors related to pupils' background. The guardians' support and appreciation for education are reflected in the differences in the learning outcomes in basic education.

According to providers of basic education and VET, more resources are needed for support and guidance for learning

A large proportion of education providers, principals and teachers in basic education hoped for more investments and additional resources for the general support for learning, remedial teaching, intensified support and special support during the school year 2020–2021 so that the impacts caused by the emergency conditions can be alleviated. More than 80% of the teachers considered learning support arrangements to be more difficult or much more difficult than in normal conditions.

Slightly under 10% of VET providers and approximately 20% of the teaching and guidance staff in VET reported a lot of challenges or problems with regard to personal guidance counselling and student welfare from the point of view of the realisation of students' equity and equality. All students were not reached during the emergency conditions.

However, the results of the student survey reveal that students in VET and general upper secondary education were satisfied with the support and guidance for learning during the emergency conditions. The majority of the students in both VET and general upper secondary education said that they received enough support and guidance for their studies. On fifth of the respondents in the student survey in VET found that not enough support and guidance was available. However, three in four students found that their studies had progresses in spite of the emergency conditions.

Interruptions to work-based learning in VET – more guidance would have been required for the transition to working life and further studies

Approximately one in five respondents in the student survey in VET had to interrupt work-based learning because of the emergency conditions. However, the majority of them had been able to continue their studies in an alternative manner. Slightly under one half was able to carry out the demonstration of knowledge and skills either at the workplace or the vocational institution, but one third had to postpone the demonstration to a later date and approximately on fifth could not say how the demonstration was going to be organized. According to the student survey, the majority of those estimated to graduate in spring 2020 will graduate according to schedule. Slightly more than one tenth said that their graduation would be delayed and one fifth could not say whether they would graduate according to schedule. Approximately 60% of those in the graduation stage found they had received

enough guidance for transitioning to the world of work and/or applying to further studies, but slightly over one quarter found the received guidance insufficient.

Monitoring of the impacts of the emergency conditions on the strengths of the Finnish education system must be continued

In evaluations implemented over a long period of time, the strengths of the Finnish education system have been the high level of competence achieved through education and its even distribution between regions and language groups. These strengths support the equal achievement of the educational objectives. By international standards, the Finnish education system has succeeded in producing methods that have resulted in the world's smallest differences between schools at the average level of learning. Evaluations implemented in normal conditions show that the majority of students and teachers enjoy working and studying in their workplaces and institutions. In basic education, general upper secondary education and VET, the level of guidance for further studies and career choices is good. The evaluation implemented during the emergency conditions revealed that previously identified problems (e.g. availability of pupil and student welfare) intensified during distance learning. Furthermore, the importance of learning support was emphasized during the emergency conditions because it was not possible to support everyone who needed it. The lack of IT equipment also had a considerable impact on the smooth running of distance learning in basic education and consequently on the educational equity and equality of learners. These intensified problems will determine the greatest support needs for the coming school year 2020-2021. According to the evaluation results, strengthening the support for learning and investing in pupil welfare are the areas requiring the most support and additional resources. Those who participated in the evaluation emphasised the need to monitor the impacts of the exceptional teaching arrangements as the possible impacts that are still invisible may not emerge until during the coming school year.

...The inspectorate update of Ireland

In Ireland, all schools have been closed since Christmas and schools have been expected to make remote learning provision available to all pupils/students in line with their remote learning plan. The priority has been enabling all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable to remain connected with their schools and to continue to progress in their learning. On 11 February, special schools will reopen to pupils who will attend on a 50 per cent shared basis. On 22 February, special classes in mainstream schools will reopen to pupils. Intensive talks regarding the reopening of schools for other categories of pupils are currently under way with education partners.

As in the first term, the Inspectorate continues to adjust its inspection programme in response to changing circumstances. During this term, our engagement with schools will involve support and advice for schools, research and priority inspection activities. As part of the advisory and support work, we have put a dedicated phone advisory service and dedicated email address in place for queries from schools and members of school communities in relation to curriculum implementation in the remote learning context.

We will also conduct a small number of Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections in schools and some other urgent inspections during this term. Inspectors will also continue to contact schools directly where specific issues have been raised in relation to the consistency of provision for remote teaching and learning.

Our research and evaluation work will include surveys of principals, parents and focus groups of pupils/students building on information gathered earlier in the school year about how the system continues to adapt and to identify good practice for dissemination. We are also working on the development of an evaluation model that enables inspectors and schools to evaluate the quality of education provision in a remote learning environment. The development of this model is a collaborative effort with schools.

Further information on our Inspectorate's engagement with schools during this term is available in Circular Letter 0001/2021 at <https://www.education.ie/en/circulars-and-forms/>

...The inspectorate update of Malta

Following the closure of schools in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the DQSE spent 10 to 12 weeks to re-vision its regulatory role in light of the particular circumstances. Amongst other things, the DQSE participated in a number of workshops with other EU inspectorates. This led to brainstorming sessions and internal debates among all DQSE officials towards the development of a way forward which would primarily focus on safeguarding the wellbeing of learners and educators during the current difficult times. The outcome led to the development of hybrid external review models that would contribute to provide guidance to educational institutions on adherence to the COVID-19 mitigation measures as well as maintain visibility of the DQSE's regulatory role and gather data to inform policy makers.

Schools in Malta opened in October, 2020 and they were requested to follow advice and guidelines for the educational sector published by the Ministry for Health. The DQSE observed what was going on in schools, the actions being taken and the advice and guidelines for the educational sector issued

by the Ministry for Health and built on these to propose a 3-tier quality assurance mechanism represented in the graphic below:

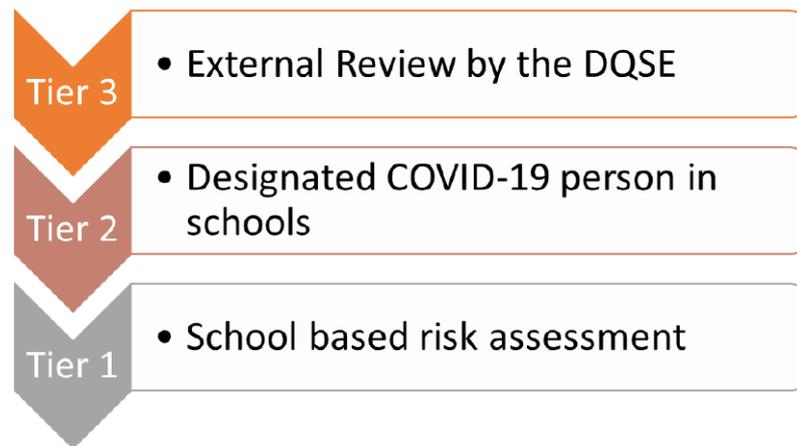


Figure 1: The 3-tier Quality Assurance System to mitigate COVID-19 transmission as much as possible and sustain the schools' efforts to be a safe learning environment for the well-being of learners and their families.

The hybrid external review models for educational institutions, including Childcare Centres, were discussed and agreed upon with major stakeholders namely, the Childcare Centre Providers Association (CCPA) and the Malta Chamber of SMEs as well as the Malta Union of Teachers following consultation with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Education, and regular communication with the School Response Team within the Public Health Authorities. Following consultation and agreement with the stakeholders an implementation plan was developed for the first scholastic term 2020/2021 with the proviso that it can be revised following any developments in the COVID-19 situation.

The external review model developed built on the three tiers described above. The first tier consisted on ensuring that schools catering for learners of pre-compulsory and compulsory school age in Malta and Gozo carried out a school-based risk assessment focusing on COVID-19 mitigating measures. The Government of Malta provided robust financial assistance to all schools and during the summer months, the schools were transformed into safe premises following a school-based health risk assessment report from competent persons. These reports were requested and subsequently evaluated by the DQSE. This was followed by a number of virtual meetings with a selected number of schools. The virtual meetings served as a very effective ice-breaker with schools which were and are still going through a difficult and uncertain time. The meetings were very well received and involved the COVID-19 Liaison person and members of the Senior Management Team. The questions asked during this virtual meeting dealt with the issue of attendance, the learning and teaching going on at school and any learning loss which schools believed was happening at school in the current circumstances and how they were tackling or planning to tackle any issues identified. A number of virtual meetings were followed by an onsite visit to the educational institution. The DQSE compiled an

analysis of this exercise and reported the outcomes to the Permanent Secretary and will be sharing also with the Heads of College Networks and other major stakeholders. The DQSE is in close collaboration with the COVID-19 School Response Team within the Ministry for Health and will keep working through this hybrid external review model evaluating, developing and tweaking as necessary.

...The inspectorate update of Norway

Inspections

Schools have a crucial role for childrens learning, care and development. This role has been even more prominent during the pandemic. We have inspected how some private schools plan, inform, and pay attention to special issues and challenges with school environment during the pandemic.

The Education Act requires that everyone who works at a school, must look for issues or behaviour which indicate that students do not have a safe and good school environment. How the employees at schools should pay attention to this, must be adapted to the concrete circumstances with pupils and the school. The staff must pay extra attention to pupils with special needs. An extraordinary situation, like the pandemic, can lead to more pupils with special needs, or new pupils with special needs then normally.

Strategy

The Government aim to keep kindergartens, schools and higher education open during the pandemic. It is the school owner that is responsible for ensuring that the school is managed in accordance with applicable regulations. The school owner is responsible for establishing internal control procedures which ensure that the environment in the school promotes health, well-being, good social and environmental conditions and prevents illness and injury. The school owner is therefore responsible for ensuring that the school is managed in a way which addresses the need for infection control.

It is necessary to adapt the infection control measures according to the local situation regarding both infection and outbreak management. This is done for schools by dividing the measures into levels using a traffic light model with green, yellow and red levels. The differences between the three levels particularly concern the measures implemented to ensure social distancing.

The «traffic-light» model

Green: The school day will be as normal, but pupils and teachers must avoid hand-shaking and hugging.

Yellow: Whole school classes can be together, and all pupils should have a full time offer at school with normal school days. The school yard could be divided to seperate classes. Pupils and teachers must avoid hand- shaking, hugging and large gatherings.

Red: Pupils will be divided into smaller groups. It could be necessary to limit the number of pupils who are at the school. We can also ask the pupils to meet on the school at different times. They have to keep distance, and pupils will be outside a lot, also in ordinary school-lessons.

Regulations

There has been developed temporary regulations for kindergartens and schools. If the temporary regulation does not regulate otherwise it is The Education Act that applies. The aim is to make sure that children, pupils and grown-ups, as far as possible get their rights fulfilled according to the law, and at the same time as the needs for infection control are fulfilled. Recently there was added in the temporary regulation a wider opportunity to give pupils education at home. The terms are that infection control restrictions make it necessary to close schools or reduce the number of pupils at schools at the same time, or if the school has many pupils absent over time related to covid – 19. Education at home must be given in a way that gives the pupils a good opportunity for getting help, and follow-up during the school day. The school owner must make sure that the education is practically possible and that the pupils have necessary equipment and that teachers can have oral dialog with the pupils during the school day. School owners must report to the regional State office when they decide to give education at home, including the content and rationale for the decision.

...The inspectorate update of Northern Ireland

From 23 March 2020, schools in Northern Ireland closed to the majority of pupils until further notice. A small number of schools remained open for the educational supervision of the children of key workers up to Year 10 and for vulnerable children. In the initial days following this unprecedented announcement of school closures, in a very fast-moving and fluid situation, the ETI liaised with district schools and organisations to provide reassurance and advice where possible. This communication helped also to inform daily incident management team meetings with the Department of Education (DE).

However, as schools embarked on the implementation and development of remote learning, the queries and contact with schools multiplied. To prevent duplication and over-burdening school leaders, a cross-organisational team was established to support principals in the extended period of the crisis. The team was composed initially of colleagues from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), Education Authority (EA), Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) and was extended later to include representatives from Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and Chaidh Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG). Each school was assigned a link officer as a single point of contact with two other assigned officers from other organisations. An information management system was set up using Microsoft Teams by the EA for the effective sharing of information. The system went live on 2 April 2020 when schools were notified of the COVID 19 link officer arrangement in a letter from the EA.

In order to meet the demand for supervised learning for children of key workers and vulnerable children and young people, the Department of Education implemented a system whereby schools could cluster in a collaborative arrangement to ensure there were sustainable arrangements in place across the education estate to provide a sufficient number of places for the children of those key workers who had no alternative. The Department required schools to register their intentions and monitored the proposed and actual number of children and pupils on a daily basis. Registering as a C-19 Cluster provided the appropriate indemnity for schools and staff and the employing authorities and DE have governance responsibility. The chair of governors was to be informed of the building being used in the cluster.

Phase	Total Number of schools allocated a link officer	Number of District Inspectors per phase	Number of Schools with DI as link officer
Nursery	95	10	38
Primary	807	23	268
Post Primary	193	19	77
Special	40	3	34

- The rationale underpinning the establishment of the link officer role is practical and logical: in a period of crisis, to provide a single point of contact for each school and therefore reduce duplication by multiple organisations contacting schools and overburdening principals.
- The cross organisational link officer role provides a basis for co-operation and consistency across all of the sectoral bodies including the EA, CCMS, ETI, NICIE, CnaG and CSSC. The inspectors view this as a sensible approach and see value in the opportunity to work collaboratively with colleagues from the other organisations. A majority report that cooperation has been beneficial for schools.
- The ETI link officer, in all instances, is the District Inspector for the school. Each educational setting therefore has an ETI link officer with pre-existing knowledge of the school and its context. This provided a good foundation of district knowledge to inform support given.
- ETI Link officers have maintained regular contact with their designated schools through a variety of mediums, including: email, telephone and video conference meetings. They report that: relationships with most principals have strengthened during this period; discussions are open and informative; and, that principals value the practical and pastoral support.
- The information obtained through regular contact with principals has ensured that inspectors are well informed about the issues and challenges affecting schools during the pandemic and the impact of the health crisis on education. The ETI Link officers have communicated the

issues and challenges experienced by schools to phase managing inspectors who use it to inform the regular briefings with DE officials and to inform policy advice and guidance.

- Most of the special schools (85%) are supported by an ETI link officer. This ensures that school leaders have access to specialist support for the very particular challenges posed by Covid-19 for this phase and that there is a consistent overview of: the experiences in special schools; the advice given; and, how principals are addressing the challenges.
- The clustering arrangement has been successful in providing supervised learning for children of key workers and for vulnerable children and young people whose individual schools could not provide places to meet demand¹. Governors and senior leaders of settings registered as clusters have been highly responsive to local need and have worked collaboratively to ensure staffing and resources comply with PHA guidelines. Teaching and non-teaching staff have been flexible, for example, combining responsibilities for remote teaching and on-site supervised learning, and providing supervision over holiday periods.
- The Microsoft Teams platform allows cross organisational communication and collaboration in a centralised format. Information from correspondence with schools can be entered on the Master spreadsheet and is retrievable for the purposes of a system overview of, for example, approaches to distance learning. Link officers from across the bodies can see which schools are open to children of key workers and vulnerable children which assists in the prompt resolution of children requiring placement.
- The Master spreadsheet is available to all link officers which ensures District Inspectors can be updated on the situation in their district schools for which they are not link officer.

...The inspectorate update of North Rhine Westphalia

Starting January, 2021, Mrs Claudia Bensen has taken on the responsibilities as Head of Department for Quality Analysis in the North Rhine-Westphalian Ministry of Education.

Due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, external evaluation by the North Rhine-Westphalian Inspectorate is suspended until the end of the current term. However, schools that have already started the evaluation process may volunteer to continue the process until the end of the current term. Currently, about one third of these schools make use of this possibility.

¹ 5 June 2020, 297 schools are in a registered/informal cluster, or would like to be.

...The inspectorate update of Portugal

Pedagogic Assessment in the Secondary School – Monitoring Schools Performance (APES)

In order to oversee the development of pedagogical evaluation in schools in its operation in virtual learning and then back to classrooms, and before the ending of the academic year 2019/2020 (between May and June 2020), the Portuguese Inspectorate visited one hundred both public and private schools. This is particularly significant since there are 810 school clusters (state schools) in the mainland. The programme is called Pedagogic Assessment in the Secondary School – Monitoring Schools Performance (APES).

The aim is to know and to question the practices of assessing and evaluating the learning of secondary school pupils, including the way in which they have incorporated distance learning into the context of a pandemic. It also aimed to contribute to the assessment of learning in secondary education as a participative, rigorous, and reflexive process for all students.

The activity was organized around three themes: I - Organization for the implementation of distance education; II - Operationalization of evaluation; and III – Training. It resulted in the production of a brief report per school, which contained the conclusions of the school visit, systematised into positive aspects to be highlighted, aspects to be improved and other relevant aspects.

A process of triangulation of information coming from school documentation, interviews of school principals and of 3 teachers in each school as well as online questionnaires answered by students from the 11th and 12th grades was developed. Three hundred secondary school classes were involved and around five thousand and three hundred students. The report gathering the conclusions of this action will soon be available on our website.

The analysis of the school reports shows that positive aspects are often related to organisational procedures and/or the establishment of conditions for the development of distance learning, which was essential to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning processes in the context of a pandemic. In fact, this activity highlights a very positive action by schools, namely at the level of carrying out internal training and/or creating support teams so that teachers could quickly use the digital tools adopted in distance learning processes, as well as at the level of responses to students who did not have technological resources, involving partners and municipalities.

As for the aspects to be improved identified in the reports, they are mainly linked to substantial issues of pedagogical assessment, such as the definition and application of evaluation criteria listing specific learning profiles integrating performance descriptors.

They also concern key practices to the effective regulation and adjustment of teaching and learning processes, such as the feedback of useful information to students, the debate on learning outcomes with students, tasks and tools for collecting information.

After the reopening of schools in September 2020, those schools which had underperformed in the scope of APES have had a follow up. Since then, still dealing with the public health crisis caused by coronavirus, schools haven't been closed down except for a few isolated cases that required quarantine.

Organization of the Academic Year

The school visits within the framework of the Activity Organisation of the Academic Year were carried out during the first term of academic year 2020/2021 and the topics examined concerning the pandemic were related to:

- The identification of the learning models (face-to-face, blended and distance education) implemented at the time of the inspections, from pre-school up to secondary education.
- The existence of a plan that provides the protocol and the mechanisms of action necessary for the implementation of each model and any need for transition between them throughout the academic year.
- The definition by the pedagogical council of rules for recording the attendance of pupils covered by blended and distance learning.
- The guarantee, on a face-to-face basis, that specialised responses of reference schools in the field of vision and bilingual education are given as well as the support provided under the National Early Childhood Intervention System.
- The implementation of an action plan especially aimed at carrying out and strengthen the knowledge, skills and attitudes undeveloped in 2019-2020 academic year.
- The development, in the first five weeks of classes, of activities for the retrieval and strengthening of learning, identified according to the work done with each student in 2019-2020.
- The carrying out of activities with the students who benefit from the School Social Action, who are at risk or in danger, signaled by the Commissions for the Protection of Children and Young People and others for whom the school considers ineffective the blended and distance models.
- The face-to-face support to those students for whom selective and additional actions have been mobilized, including those provided by technicians and in specialized units, in the Learning Support Centre.

- The weekly record of developed learning and tasks performed in the context of synchronous sessions and autonomous work (blended model) and synchronous and asynchronous sessions (distance model).
- The collection of evidence of pupils' engagement taking into account the strategies, resources and tools used by the school and by each student.
- The development of a distance learning plan.
- The provision of the content of the synchronous sessions which, for duly justified reasons, students are unable to attend.
- The creation of a mentoring programme and the identification of the number of students involved (mentors and mentor trainees).
- The existence of learning development plans aimed at implementing educational support action for pupils considered to be at health risk. The creation/reinforcement of the health education team, composed of teaching and non-teaching staff, in collaboration with the Health Centre (School Health Team) was observed.
- In addition, the intervention in schools or referral to the competent authorities following complaints received and analysed by IGEC's ombudsman department.

...The inspectorate update of the Republic of Slovenia

In this second wave of Covid-19 pandemic we are doing very similar as we did in first wave in spring of 2020. For the most part, our work is focused on verifying compliance with the measures taken by the government in the fight against the pandemic. Inspectors work five days in the field or at work, and five days from home, so that at the same time there are very few of us present in the Inspectorate's premises. When we are in the field, we check from 6 to 8 institutions, namely whether the employees wear protective masks properly, whether disinfectants are always available, whether schools or kindergartens have floor markings etc. We are also authorized to issue fines if we find irregularities or non-compliance with measures. The usual work of the Inspectorate is now more or less waiting for better days, except if there is something urgent. Communication with principals takes place via Zoom or other similar applications. All inspectors are also tested once a week for possible virus infection.

...The inspectorate update of the Scotland

Inspectorate in Scotland session 2020-2021:

On 2 June 2020, HM Inspectors in Scotland agreed to temporarily suspend the early learning and childcare (ELC) and school inspection programme until it is safe and appropriate to resume. A few areas of inspection continue in place as advised below. Given the ongoing public health guidance and the new tier system put in place by the Scottish Government to suppress the spread of the COVID-19 virus, it remains appropriate at this time to continue to focus on education recovery support.

Ongoing scrutiny work continues as listed below:

Schools consultation work

Under the [Schools \(Consultation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#), Scottish councils are required to have a formal consultation process when they intend to make changes to their school estate. This includes, for example, proposals to close schools or change a school's catchment area. After the consultation period is over, HMIE have a statutory duty to write an independent and impartial report on the proposal. Councils are required to take our recommendations into account as they move forward with their planned changes.

Over the last year we have continued to consider councils' proposals. HM Inspectors continue to undertake a number of activities, currently these are virtual visits rather than in person in line with Covid-safety measures. HM Inspectors have attended virtual public meetings and made virtual visits to the schools affected by the proposal. They have spoken with parents, staff, and children and young people. Following our virtual fieldwork, HM Inspectors send their independent reports to councils, fulfilling our statutory duties.

Colleges and independent schools

Inspectors have also been continuing to provide support to colleges, through our work with the Scottish Funding Council, and to the independent schools' sector through the work of our Link inspectors who liaise and provide support for all independent schools in Scotland.

Special inspections

Inspectors continue to inspect schools where there are any perceived risks, such as within child protection or safeguarding procedures.

Ongoing work and consultation on the promotion of the Gaelic language:

HM inspectors continue to take forward legislative commitments that seek to secure the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland, commanding equal respect to the English language. They support and promote Gaelic language, culture and education. This is expressed well in the Education Scotland's Gaelic Language Plan, and through the delivery of policy advice to government and provision of education resources.

<https://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/BnG-NGLP-18-23-1.pdf>

[gael9-roleofgaeliced1plus2approach.pdf \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

[gael3-advice-on-gaelic-education-eng-nov-19.pdf](#)

COVID-19 Education Recovery

Education Scotland provides a single point of access for educators at all levels to find advice on COVID-19 education recovery. This includes offering key advice from the Scottish Government's COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG), and from other sources approved by CERG. For example, guidance on the phased re-opening of schools in January 2021 can be found here:

[COVID-19 education recovery | National Improvement Hub](#)

Named ES contact

As part of the range of support Education Scotland is providing to remote learning, we have identified [a named contact for each local authority](#). This will allow headteachers across Scotland to have easy access to a single point of contact within Education Scotland. This contact will be able to point headteachers in the direction of Education Scotland resources and guidance, and help them contact with the appropriate teams in Education Scotland to provide advice or support they require.

Support for SQA Exam Diet 2021

Inspectors are working in partnership with the SQA, local authorities and a variety of partners to provide support for schools and practitioners as they take forward quality assurance and moderation for the alternative certification model for the SQA Diet 2021.

Remote learning in Scotland

Schools in Scotland moved into a period of remote learning in January 2021. Education Scotland, including Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE), continues to work well with all stakeholders, including children and young people, families, headteachers and teachers, to ensure that children and young people can participate in learning that is motivating, engaging and meets their needs.

Resources to support staff learners and parents include the Education Scotland Digi learn site. This vast set of resources supports staff and learners with examples of learning activities, educational blogs, cybernet safety and reliance advice and how digital learning can be incorporated into a range of contexts across all learning.

[DigiLearn \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](https://glowscotland.org.uk)

National overview of practice

HMIE continues to engage in a national overview of practice in relation to remote learning. The purpose of this national overview is to learn what is working well and share this widely, to celebrate success and support consistency in the quality and effectiveness of the delivery of remote learning; surface the challenges and/or issues, so that these can be addressed either locally or nationally, as appropriate; and identify what further assistance is required to continue to improve the delivery of remote learning, so that relevant support can be provided at local and/or national level.

Four reports have been published recently on the Education Scotland website. These share helpful information on practice taking place across the country:

[National overview of practice in remote learning: Local Authorities](#); [National overview of practice in remote learning: Schools](#); [National overview of practice in remote learning: Local Authorities: Parents, carers and learners](#), and [National overview of practice in remote learning: Schools, a focus on meeting learning needs, including those with additional support needs](#).

Practitioner support for on-line learning

The following resources are intended to support practitioners in planning and delivering online learning. Education Scotland provides a range of online learning in each curriculum area through Glow and other platforms. Inspectors have been working with local authorities, to determine how they continue to support schools in their work, as well as to children and young people, and parents.

Scotland Learns

In May 2020, Education Scotland launched Scotland Learns; a resource bank of straightforward, open-ended learning activities which are designed to be engaging, and develop children's and young

people's independence in learning. The resource bank of learning activities is aimed at a variety of ages and Curriculum for Excellence levels. There are now over 1,300 learning activities for a variety of ages, almost 300 of these support Gaelic Medium Education. The activities are divided into different sections including: literacy and English; numeracy and mathematics; health and wellbeing and themed learning.

[Scotland Learns | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/national-improvement-hub)

Direct support to local authorities and schools

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education have been working closely with colleagues from across Education Scotland to provide bespoke locality support to practitioners, schools, services and local authorities. This includes working with groups of headteachers on specific aspects of improvement, for example, the curriculum; working with individual headteachers and staff, and working with staff from local authorities, for example, reviewing self-evaluation frameworks.

...The inspectorate update of the Slovak Republic

The Slovak inspectorate started the new school year with a plan to visit schools and gather information how schools were flexible to adjust school educational programs (curricular documents) to distance learning, what are their needs, progress and challenges related to on-line learning provision; how they are prepared to reassess the existing curriculum, with an emphasis on development of key skills.

Due to the pandemic situation a limited number of inspections (follow up inspection) were done and completed at the beginning of October, then schools were closed, and inspection activities were stopped.

Schools were closed except to kindergartens and four grades of the first stage of primary schools. Other schools switched completely to distance learning.

School inspectors do not inspect or supervise distance learning, they have been in touch with schools (principals) via phone or emails; working on their cases, studying files, solving complaints, etc.

During the quarantine period the inspectors have been focused on self-education. With the use of several web platforms:

- they participated in various online webinars on topics related to distance evaluation, quality assurance of education organized by external academics, and experts from The Methodology and Pedagogy Centers etc.,

- and they are regularly met and exchanged information relevant to their professional development, on regional level.

With the aim to assure and stimulate schools to improve the quality of teaching and school leadership school inspectors also prepared PowerPoint Presentations related to different topics with methodical advice, recommendations for teachers and published them on inspectorate website.

...The inspectorate update of the Netherlands

To get a good picture of the current state of education, we collect information about the way in which education is adapting to the circumstances due to the outbreak of Covid19. We are sharing the available information so that the educational field can benefit from it. This information comes from a random and representative sample of schools and school boards in primary education, secondary education, special education, vocational education and higher education. We do not assess or report about individual schools, the research is only meant to give a system wide view.

Although we have not yet completely answered the research questions, we have found a few highlights in each educational sector.

Regular on-site inspections are postponed, but there are some exceptions:

In the beginning of this school year we did carry out a limited number school board inspections at boards which were identified as having possible risks. Besides that some follow-up inspections (e.g. at very weak schools) were carried out. Most activities were carried out remotely, only partly on site (lesson observations). We also held a short version of our quadrennial school board inspections with boards that were not at risk. These inspections were done remotely, and did not contain any judgements.

The planned thematic inspections were adjusted and we developed new thematic inspections that are more appropriate in these circumstances. One of these newly developed thematic inspections is about assessing the quality of remote teaching. All thematic inspections are done remotely.

...The inspectorate update of Ukraine

Since March 12, 2020, in accordance with the decision of the Government of Ukraine, a national quarantine has been declared. Schools were closed, and until the beginning of the summer holidays, students were studying remotely.

In April 2020, the State Service for the Quality of Education of Ukraine (SQE) conducted an online survey on learning in schools during quarantine, which identified the main problems:

- technical problems (insufficient computer equipment, low-quality internet connection and lack of access to it by students and teachers);
- lack of proper communication between teachers, students, and parents, which has led to a significant increase in educational material for self-study.

On May 22, 2020, strict anti-epidemic measures were relaxed. High school students who planned to continue their studies in higher education institutions took the external independent assessment, the main session of which was held a month later than usual (from June 25 to July 17). At the same time, testing took place almost without changes, excluding the mandatory use of antiseptics and personal protective equipment, social distancing (the distance between participants was not less than 1.2 m).

Since August 1, 2020, Ukraine had introduced the division of regions into four levels of epidemic danger of the spread of COVID-19 — "green", "yellow", "orange" or "red". In the territories of regions of the red level of epidemic danger, it was forbidden to visit educational institutions, while the orange level allowed groups of no more than 20 people.

The academic year began on September 1, 2020 in most schools in Ukraine, except for those located in the territories of regions of the red level of epidemic danger. The educational process was carried out in full-time, mixed and distance forms. Schools have introduced mandatory thermometry of employees, the use of antiseptics at the entrance, hand washing after each lesson, while teachers were provided with protective masks and shields.

From January 8 to January 24, 2021, Ukrainian schools were granted the right to choose whether to study remotely or have holidays. Starting from January 25, 2021, students will attend schools again, with keeping to the anti-epidemic recommendations.

The epidemiological situation has also affected the conduct of external school performance assessments (institutional audits). In 2020, 48 schools out of 101 planned were evaluated. Taking into account anti-epidemic measures, SQE has improved the external assessment procedure and conducted 16 institutional audits in a blended format.

In 2021, it is planned to conduct 265 external evaluations of schools' activities and change the inspection procedure to a digital format.

Other information by members

... Cooperation between the inspectorates of Bulgaria and Estonia

NIE was approved to lead an Erasmus+ project “Quality Training and Positive Interaction in Inspection Process “ in partnership with the Ministry of education and research of Estonia, Dutch inspectorate of education and Europrojectconsult – Italy. Due to restrictions the projects activities – job shadowing and training course – are not yet fulfilled, but the participants agreed to prolong the project duration.

... Cooperation between the inspectorates of Bulgaria and the Netherlands

NIE contributed to the research of remote teaching and learning of the Dutch inspectorate with experience sharing on the current inspection activities in Bulgaria and the tools applied.

... Cooperation between the inspectorates of Bulgaria and Ukraine

NIE cooperate with the State Quality Service of Education of Ukraine on the elaborating of procedure for certification of school principals (heads).

... Cooperation between the inspectorates of Portugal and the Netherlands

The Portuguese Inspectorate of Education and Science (IGEC) has cooperated with The Netherlands’ project International Supervision Scan by sharing information about practices concerning the topic Supervision on Remote Learning and Teaching.

... Activities of the inspectorate of Malta

Currently the DQSE has embarked on a Structural Reform Support Programme with the European Commission. This project was initiated in 2018 with the aim of supporting the DQSE develop effective external review processes through the valuable support of SICI and experts from the field hailing from different countries within the European Union. This programme contributed to the development of the National Quality Assurance Framework for educational institutions (0-16 years) and is projected to be disseminated for consultation in 2021. Unfortunately, this programme was impacted with the travel restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic however other ways are being sought to compensate for the unexpected limitations.

... Activities of the inspectorate of Finland

Finland is participating in a national project called Well said. The project is coordinated by Timeout Foundation and The Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE). The aim of the 5-year project is to strengthen the quality of the discussion culture, create safe environments for conversation and to inspire people into a respectful discussion where different opinions and perspectives are heard and welcomed. More information: <https://www.timeoutdialogue.fi/timeout-foundation-and-yle/>

... Activities of the inspectorate of the Netherlands

Evaluation and adjustment of inspection frameworks

Our current research frameworks for primary education, secondary education, special education and secondary vocational education took effect on the 1st of August 2017.

We evaluated these frameworks in 2019 and early 2020 to find out which adjustments are necessary. The principles of supervision (such as the schoolboard inspections, the task of guaranteeing that schools and school board meet basic quality/legislation, stimulating improving beyond basis quality by own ambitions of schools and boards) remains solid.

However, there will be some serious adjustments. These adjusted frameworks will take effect on the 1st of August 2021.

The major adjustments are:

- The developments in the quality of the educational system will become more and more the starting point for our supervision activities at school boards. We will assess what contribution a school board makes to the system as a whole
- In the working processes we will focus more on adjusting the inspection process to the quality of the school board. Inspectors will have more freedom to customize the inspection methods.
- The framework is now being subdivided in quality standards on three levels: the educational system as a whole, the school boards, the schools.
- The standards of quality assurance for schools and school boards have been adjusted. Financial quality and educational quality are being integrated on school board level.

Currently trainings and meetings for inspectors and other staff members are being organized about the implementation of the renewed framework.

******We would also like to ask to keep the SICI secretariat up to date about ongoing activities between members. This will make it possible to create an overview of existing projects and report about them at the General Assembly.******

Updates about projects...

Some words about ...

...The Erasmus+ project “BIBESOIN”



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Current state of affairs:

- The training event in Malta will take place online on 20 and 21 April 2021.
- The training event in Cyprus could take place from 24 until 28 May 2021. It will be decided later if the training event will take place online or on site.
- The transnational meeting could be organized on 6 and 7 July 2021.
- Possible dates for the multiplier event are 8 and 9 July 2021.

Other information

Coming SICI events

Date	Online/on site	Title
18 February 2021 – 15.00	Webinar	Remote teaching and learning
25 March 2021 – 15.00	Webinar	Effects on the pandemic on inspection work
April/May 2021	Basque Country	Webinar or on site workshop?
10 June 2021 – 15.00	Webinar	Formative assessment
September 2021	Finland	Evaluation and quality assurance: national perspectives
18 – 19 November 2021	Sweden	“General Assembly”

You can always find an overview of the SICI activities by clicking on the following link: <http://www.sici-inspectorates.eu/News/Calendar>

Call for projects

...funded by SICI

One of the key actions of the SICI strategic plan is to promote and support partnership and cooperation between inspectorates. A subtheme of this key action is to help fund projects working collaboratively in line with SICI's aims and priorities. Therefore, we would like to inform you about the criteria for funding SICI projects:

SICI can fund projects up to 3000 euros per year for two years in a row.

The EC will make a decision within one month about the application on the basis of the following elements:

1. The project is designed as a multilateral project of minimum 3 members.
2. All participating members co-finance and invest human resources into the project.
3. The project aims at developing or at further exploring an aspect of the SICI strategic plan. The aims are part of a short project description.
4. There is a project budget.
5. A plan for evaluating the project is presented with the application.
6. The dissemination into SICI is planned (Minimum: report in a workshop or GA)

A member of the EC will be appointed as a contact person for the project.

SICI contact details

Please let us know if you have any remarks or questions. Always feel free to submit any additional information, which can be used in the following newsletter.

Email SICI secretariat: sici@vlaanderen.be