QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRESS REPORT

About the project KEYS

The project KEYS aims to valorise achievements from already completed projects, targeted and acquisition of key competences for LLL and thus to provide support to teachers and school educators for implementation of **competence based education**, matching with the requirements of the contemporary life. The project capitalises on the achievements of five Comenius Multilateral Projects implemented in the recent years: KEYTTT, AQUEDUCT, READIT, IDIAL, SUSUTAIN. During the first half of the project implementation period KEYS partners promoted the outcomes of these projects by disseminating them among school teachers and wider target group of educators in new national and international contexts.

The partnership objectives were to:

- Organise four **National Interactive Seminars** to present and disseminate the outcomes form five CMPs: KEYTTT, AQUEDUCT, READIT, IDIAL, SUSUTAIN;

- Collect feedback from the target groups on the *applicability, transferability* and *relevance* of the methodologies;

- Start with the *expert analysis* and cross-examination of the methodologies;

- Collect information for good practices and implemented projects and initiatives for acquisition of key competences;

- Start the organisation of *International Valorisation Conference* in Istanbul to speak up and valorise the achievements of projects and initiatives and to provide space for exchange and networking;

- Discuss the structure of *Teacher Training Course program*, based on the conclusions from the project research and analysis – to provide qualification support to teachers and school educators for organisation and implementation of successful competence based education.

About this report

The aim of this progress report is to summarise the achievements of the project at midterm of the implementation. The report covers a period of 7 months since the start of the project on 1st December 2013 until the end of June 2014. Its content is based mainly on the feedback collected by the members of the project target groups after each National Interactive Seminar and aims to show the impact of the dissemination of the five substrate projects.

The report contains a section with recommendations from the respondents who took part in the project feedback campaign.

KEYS Project activities

1.1. National Interactive Seminars

In the frames of the KEYS project were organised 4 National Interactive Seminars (NIS):

- NIS-Turkey in Izmir, 21 January 2014
- NIS-Italy in Rome, 3 April 2014
- NIS-Belgium in Alden Biesen, 8 May 2014
- NIS-Bulgaria in Sofia, 19 June 2014

The four seminars were attended by approx. 250 educators, which exceeds the expected scale of attendance (set by the application to 140 educators in total). The application form stipulated 35 educators per seminar, which was exceeded in almost all project countries, with the exception of the NIS-Belgium.

Over 75% from the participants in the seminars took part in the project feedback campaign. The feedback was collected with uniform questionnaires, which ensured consistency in the information.

Among the responents, the biggest number were the teachers from middle school (37%), followed by those from primary school (32%) and then the teachers from the high school level (24%). Some of the events (in particular the seminars in Bulgaria and in Turkey) were attended also by teachers in pre-primary school level (3% altogether). 4% of the respondents were educators with varied profile, incl. adult educators, representatives of local educational authorities, research institutes, etc.

From the point of view of the subjects' taught, the most numerous group (21%) was the one of the foreign language teachers (most of which teachers in English). Taking in consideration that the official language of the seminars was English, these teachers had the role of *delegates* whos role was to bridge the language bareer between the lecturers and the school community and to pass further the information after the seminar. The second biggest group of participants (17%) are the teachers in Maths and Sciences. Teachers in humanities (Literature, History, etc.) were relatively few – just 7%. Considerably big number of teachers (13%) did not specify subject area of teaching, which allows the assumption that some of them are teachers in primary school level where there is no subject specification. However, the respondents in that group defined themselves as "teachers"

in contrast to the prevailing part of the respondents in the collective group specified as "Other" (18%) which includes participants with varied profiles, such as: teacher trainers, adult educators, curriculum experts, academic coordinators and other educational specialists who attended the seminars. The group of the headmasters and deputy headmasters represents 10% from the participants in the seminars. Participants with such profile attended all 4 seminars.

The profile of the respondents (respectively, those of the seminar participants) matches the profile of the estimated project target groups, towards which the seminars were shaped and addressed.

The participants in the seminars showed **_high rate of satisfaction_** by the events. The average rate of the events, given by the respondents is as follows: 3,9 points for NIS-Belgium, 4,02 for NIS Italy, 4,5 for NIS-Turkey and 4,59 for NIS-Bulgaria (from 5 points maximum). These results indicate that the expectations of the participants towards the seminars have been met, which is confirmed by the respondents' comments. Many respondents qualified the seminars as "interesting", "very useful" and the presented information as "versatile", "applicable", "helpful".

Important aspect of the analysis of the **impact** of the seminars comes from the answers to the question about the **_"most useful/ important things"_** which the seminars' participants found during the NIS. The answers of this question were quite varied. The overview is not based on the frequency of the answers, although only recurring answers have been considered:

- **The Key Competences**

Although the topic of the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (ref. 2006/962/EC) is not new to the teaching professionals, this is still a topical issue and one of the items listed among the **"most useful/ important things"** from the KEYS interactive seminars. A more detailed look at the participant's feedback reveals that teachers appreciated the _comprehensive_ and in-depth explanation about the key competences framework and about particular competences, placed in the context of the "competence driven teaching and learning" and supported by examples.

- **The various methodologies that were explained**

The feedback from all 4 seminars contain references to the presentation of different / varied / new methodologies as _extremely useful part_ of the program. Although many of these were not completely new to the audience, the approach of putting together methodologies, based on common features (constructivist approach, participatory learning, interactive work, collaboration) and to place them in the context of the _education developing key competences,_ created different perspectives for the educators who took part in the seminars. The fact that the presented methods were supported by examples was also useful for the NIS participants.

- **Teaching resources**

The availability of ready-to-use teaching resources was admired highly by the participants in the seminars. Teachers accept these resources as exemplary support for their practice, which can be used directly or modified and adapted, in accordance to the specifics of the learners they work with. The readiness to adapt resources was explicitly stated by respondents in the different seminars.

- **Examples for collaboration**

The feedback outlined several different types of _collaboration_, which educators listed among the most useful things they have got from the NIS:

a/ international cooperation (_project work_ on international level)

b/ working together as teaching approach (*possibilities to implement some kind of team teaching*)
c/ new types of connection between the "actors" in the classroom (communication / *connection between teacher & students* / students & students / students & community, etc.)

Respondents from all project countries declare that **they can use some of the methods** presented in the frames of the NIS in their practice. This statement is the most supported one (i.e. marked by greatest number of respondents) in all 4 NIS. The second statement, which meets undisputed support by all respondents is that *"Students would enjoy working with some of the proposed methods"*.

These feedback results show that the participants in the four KEYS interactive seminars give positive rate to the presented methods and products, and are **willing to use** them in their practice, even in cases, which require modification and adaptation.

Respondents also declared their general estimation regarding the **educational environments** in their educational institutions. Approximately the same share of respondents from all seminars support the statement **"The presented methods are suitable for the curriculum in my institution"** (15% in TR, 12% in each of the other partner countries).

A possible explanation for the hesitation of some respondents to declare the presented methods "**suitable for the curriculum**" can be found in some comments, which reveal anticipation of difficulties in the implementation, for instance: *"The 40 minute duration of a standard class is sometimes problematic for interactive work"; "[the … method] will require time outside the curriculum hours, for which I'll have to get a special permission"; "I expect difficulties in the application of the […] methods, due to the need of prior training"*.

Although the respondents expressed some reservations, the methods and outcomes of the 5 presented projects are **considered compatible with the curriculum** and applicable in the mainstream of the education process.

This conclusion is further confirmed by the feedback on the question *"In my practice I intend to use ..."*. Most of the respondents declared they intend to use at least 1 or 2 of the methods presented. The choice is usually motivated by the appropriateness of the topics and the content to their educational context; the commentaries mainly state that the chosen methods are *most suitable / most applicable to* the respondent's *practice* and/or *students*; *coherent* with the subject content; *"motivating", "enjoyable", "make learning funnier and more interesting"*. Additional advantage mentioned by a respondent is also that *"the products are well structured – they contain clear, precise and easy applicable steps"*.

In some cases the teachers' initiative to try the new suggestions is guided by the wish to *"break the status quo in the classroom";* to *"allow students to touch the real life and surrounding world"*, even if *"it is necessary to adapt* [the methods] *to the school reality"*.

Many respondents declare they *intend to combine different methods and products.*
*"I borrowed lots of ideas and will adapt them to my students"*
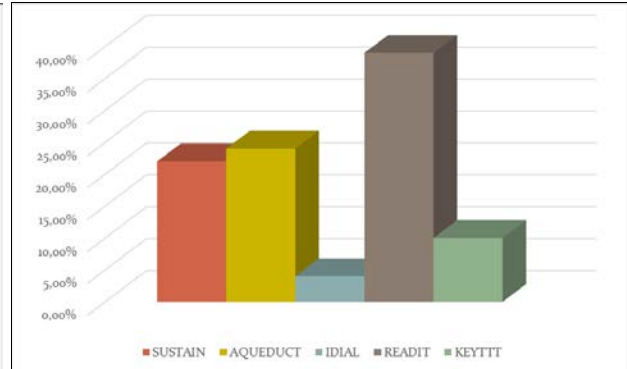*"Some practices I will apply directly and some I will adapt"*
are some of the statements shared by the respondents.

The question, which methods respondents intend to use in their practice is also important with the view of the estimation of the **impact** of the seminars over the project target groups (see fig.1).

fig.1 "In my practice I intend to use ..."
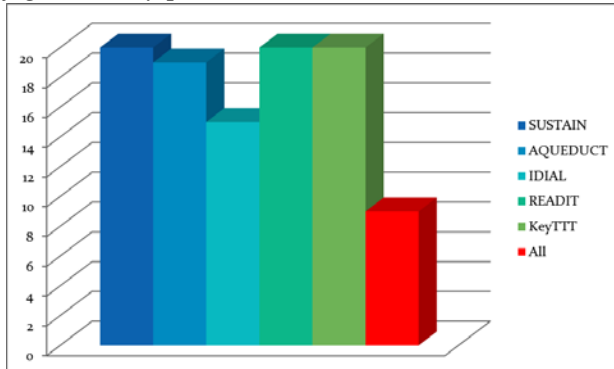
NIS-Turkey

NIS-Italy
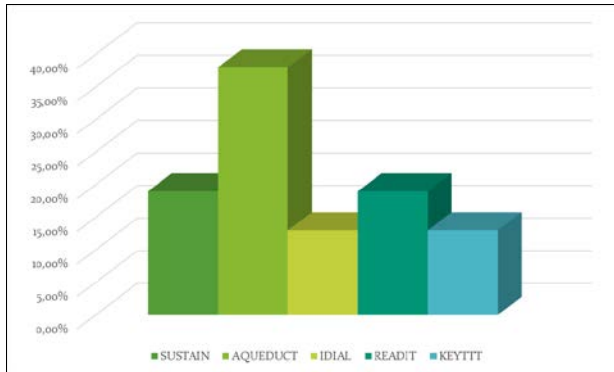
NIS-Belgium
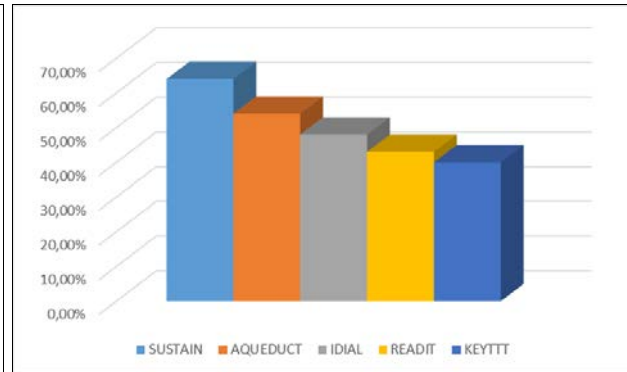
NIS-Bulgaria

The combination preferences between the selected methods are numerous. However, a combined chart with the options given by respondents who *would use 2 of the presented methods* was prepared to highlight possible patterns of cross-implementation and adaptation (fig. 2). Within these combinations, the most often mentioned projects are: AQUEDUCT, SUSTAIN and READIT.

Fig.2 In my practice I intend to use …– combination options for 2 methods

Similarly important for estimation of the **impact** of the seminars over the project target groups is the statement which methods / outcomes respondents would ***recommend*** to their colleagues. The answers to this question are quite similar to the statements regarding the methods *most suited* to the respondent's work.

Interesting perspective to the data brings the analysis of *how many* (from the presented) methods NIS participants intend to recommend to their colleagues. The biggest number of respondents from NIS-Bulgaria (31%) declared they would recommend all 5 methods. At the same time, the second biggest group (20%) was the one of the respondents who will recommend only one of the methods. Among participants from NIS-Italy and NIS-Belgium, the biggest number of respondents (37% and, respectively, 44%) declared they will recommend 2 of the presented methods. The audience from NIS-Turkey showed balanced results with equal share of respondents in both groups – 25% would recommend all methods and 25% would recommend 2 methods. Considerable part of the audience (with relatively similar share in the groups: between 19% up to 24%) declared they will recommend only one of the presented methods.

Regarding the ***methodological support and/or materials*** needed for implementation of the presented methods in the practice, participants in the NIS shared opinion with significant difference. The respondents from 3 of the interactive seminars (in Turkey, Italy and Bulgaria) specified that the most wanted support from their point of view is availability of *"resource materials for students"*. Rating this answer in the group of the choices of "second importance", the NIS participants from

Belgium gave priority to *"Support from the school headmaster"* and *"Training for me and the colleagues from my school"* rated with the same score (20%).

Among the suggested training options, prevailing part of the respondents gave highest rate to the option *"Training for me and the colleagues from my school"* (20% in Belgium: shared top rate / 14% in Turkey: top 2 / 12% in Italy: top 4 / 9% in Bulgaria: rated in the middle).

The overall aims, which the National interactive seminars had within the project context have been fully achieved – approximately 250 educators attended the seminars and the increased awareness about the products and outcomes of the 5 KEYS substrate projects were completed. In *qualitative* terms the aims of the project were also reaches, as indicates the high satisfaction rate given by the participants regarding the events. Over 75% from the participants in the seminars (192 participants) took part in the organised feedback campaign and shared their opinion regarding the applicability, transferability and effectiveness of the methods and products presented to them. The *quantitative* aspect of the feedback was also exceeded taking in consideration that the application foresees feedback from 120 respondents. Furthermore, the 4 National interactive seminars provided platform for discussion between the project promoters and the target groups' representatives on the competence based education, which the analysis of the collected feedback also confirmed.

1.2. KEYS Research Report

In parallel to the NIS implementation and collection of feedback from the project target groups, the project work also span over cross-examination of the methodological grounds of the approaches for competence-based learning, chosen by the implementers of the 5 KEYS basic projects: AQUEDUCT, IDIAL, KEYTTT, READIT and SUSTAIN. The project experts sought to highlight the common characteristics of the **methodologies most suitable for successful competence based learning**.

The draft of the KEYS research report "Key Methodology to Successful Competence Based Learning" is under preparation.

The expert examination of the considered methodologies highlighted the following four common **principles**, which they possess:

1. **Motivation**

   Motivation (from Latin *motus*) is a psychological feature that induces an organism to act towards a desired goal and elicits, controls, and sustains certain goal-directed behaviours. It can be considered a driving force; a psychological one that compels or reinforces an action toward a desired goal. Most methodologies start with a motivation phase. In this phase the learners' interest in the topic is raised, their pre-knowledge is activated, learning objectives are set and the learning process and the assessment of learning outcomes is planned.

2. **Experience**

   In the experience phase the learners have the opportunity to get actively engaged in authentic learning activities in which they have access to realistic settings, can approach the topic in a multidisciplinary way, can see experts at work or consult them, have room for experimentation, feel allowed to make mistakes, have opportunities to show and share emotions.

3. **Demonstration**

   The goal of the demonstration phase is to put the learners in a productive role and present the product or carry out the task they have planned. These products or tasks should be carefully planned by the educator, to make sure they will stimulate the learners to demonstrate the competences the learning process intends to develop.

4. **Reflection**
   Reflection activities should not only be planned at the end of the learning process, but all the way through. This will allow the learners to identify their personal learning needs, to make meaning of all their learning experiences and to assess the quality of their learning process, products and cooperation with peer learners.

Whether the suggested methodologies are applied as such, in a combination or in adapted versions, these four elements are essential *for competence based learning* to take place.

The full text of the research report will be available for download from the KEYS project web-site: http://www.keysproject.eu/.

1.3.   <u>International Valorisation Conference</u>

After implementation of the 4 project meetings, which took place in parallel to the National Interactive Seminars KEYS project partners shaped the general concept regarding the **KEYS National Valorisation Conference** which is scheduled to take place between 16 and 18 October 2014 in Istanbul. The conference host partner will be Doğa Schools.

The following **topics** of the conference sessions have been considered:
   - Key competences for communication in the mother tongue and in foreign languages;
   - Key competences in maths, sciences and technology
   - Developing the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
   - Social and civic key competences
   - Digital key competence
   - Intercultural communication, cultural awareness and expression
   - Learning to learn
   - Developing key competences in different educational environments: early school age, general education, informal & non-formal education
   - Competence based approach to initial teacher education / in-service teacher training
   - Policies encouraging competence based education
   - Assessment of competence based learning outcomes
   - 21st century competences / classrooms

The conference agenda is planned for two days of presentations and workshops. A pre-conference program on 16th Oct.2014 provides an option for a school observation visit.

The speakers at the conference will be educational experts and practitioners from EU member countries, promoters of successful international education projects and practices on competence oriented teaching & learning, project coordinators, representatives from Ministries of Education, relevant educational authorities.

The target audience of the speeches and workshops are school principals, teachers, teacher trainers, students; representatives of educational associations, university departments; teacher training institutions and other educationalists.

A *call for papers* has been prepared and launched as an instrument for ensuring contributions to the conference agenda. Limited number of KEYS project grants are available to cover the costs of promoters of projects / policies / initiatives for participation in the KEYS IntreUnational Conference. The abstract of the suggested presentations, provided by the promoters will be used as a basis for selection of the sponsored speakers who will receive a KEYS project grant.

The following **Criteria for selection of sponsored participants** in the International Valorisation Conference were agreed by the KEYS project partners:

> 1/ Promoters of project / products/ practices / policies related to competence-based learning (teaching) will be considered for sponsorship;
>
> 2/ Promoters of projects which are already finalized and therefore can't cover their costs will be eligible to apply;
>
> 3/ The speech / workshop should match (at least) one of the conference topics, mentioned above;
>
> 4/ Partners will try to ensure at least one speaker per conference topic
>
> 5/ An overall balance of the topics representation will be sought with the view of avoiding too many presentations on one and the same conference topic

The review and selection process of the conference speakers will be carried out by an Expert committee.

The submission of the abstracts is supported by an on-line form, published at the specially prepared conference web-site: http://conference.keysproject.eu.