

# Central Asia Education Platform NEWSLETTER

Newsletter #14 December 2018

A newsletter published by CAEP — a project funded by the European Union's Programme for Central Asia

## Editorial

Dear colleagues,

As the second phase of the CAEP project enters its final stage, we look back at some successful work towards the end of this year while also looking forward to the events that will wrap up the programme of activities in 2019.

We have recently completed the fifth working group meeting, together with the European Training Foundation (ETF), aimed at demonstrating the benefits of 'evidence based' policy making in education. Using hard facts and empirical evidence in the decision making process helps policy makers make well-informed decisions, and provides a solid basis for tailoring educational content to the real needs of both students and the labour market. See page 2 for a report from the meeting in Bishkek.

Early next year three 'webinars' will be held as part of the series planned for this second phase of the project; two on Innovative Teaching Methods (one focusing on Higher Education and the other on Vocational Education and Training) and the other on the Financing of Education Systems and Institutions. Webinars have proved to be not only an add-on to face-to-face meetings, and an efficient way to enable participation of a wider audience in the project, but as genuine forms of sharing best practice and facilitating policy dialogue.



The concluding events for the platform will be a Regional Conference and final Steering Committee meeting in February; both in Brussels and hosted by the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) of the European Commission and the CAEP Team.

The theme of the Conference will be "Strengthening education reforms and employability in Central Asia and the EU", and representatives from project partners Erasmus+ and ETF, the Central Asia countries and lead Member States Poland and Latvia, will be asked to share their views on recent developments in education reform in Central Asia and how cooperation within the region and with the EU has and can continue to strengthen policy dialogue.

The 4th Steering Committee meeting will then conclude the following day by looking at the

achievements of the CAEP project, an overview of lessons learned, and recommendations for future cooperation.

Meanwhile, we wish you all a peaceful holiday period; we look forward to working together to successfully complete this project in the new year.

Christian Wagner  
CAEP Team Leader

### Also in this issue:

[Report from 5th Working Group Meeting on Evidence Based Policy Making in VET and HE](#)



[Outlook on upcoming CAEP Webinars](#)



[FACEA publishes 2017 HERE Activity Report](#)



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## 5th Working Group meeting focuses on Graduate Tracer Studies



A total of nearly 30 participants from Ministries of Education and Labour, agencies and educational institutions from the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and education experts from the European Union, met in Bishkek this month to discuss the transition of students graduating from Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education & Training (VET) to the labour market.

This three-day event was the fifth and final in a series of working group meetings looking at data collection methodologies and evidence based policy making in HE and VET. The event was organised by CAEP in collaboration with the European Training Foundation (ETF), who brought to the table their experiences of the Torino Process project, and was supported by the Ministry of Education and Science for the Kyrgyz Republic.

The aims of this working group have been to:

- Reinforce monitoring functions in CA countries through improving the knowledge and skills of participants
- Share experiences and lessons across countries and with the EU on the evidence based policy making approach
- Create a network in the region which will continue to exchange practices and evidence in the area of VET/Higher education and skills development.

The first three meetings, which

took place in 2017, looked at the different phases of the evidence cycle; the first meeting covered how to identify the policy issues to be explored, the second examined monitoring approaches and tools for generating evidence and data, and the third meeting was dedicated to the analysis of the evidence and data and how to communicate the findings and recommendations.

The fourth and fifth meetings focused on the transition of graduates to the labour market, with this latest one looking specifically at the use of graduate tracer studies to collect data on the transition and how to use that evidence for relevant policy analysis and development.

To prepare for this meeting, delegates met the previous week for a 'webinar' – a web-based seminar, in which the ETF team presented an introduction to tracer studies and the concepts behind evidence based policy making and participants had the chance to put forward issues they wanted raised in Bishkek.



On the first day of the meeting, each of the Central Asia country teams presented what they already knew about HE and VET graduates in their country and discussed the importance of tracing what happens in the transition process to the labour market.

Ms. Diana Laipniece, an education expert from Latvia, then shared the Latvian experience of using tracer studies for VET graduates. At the end of the day, the country

teams started to outline the case study that they would work on for the next two days - to develop a strategy for undertaking and analysing tracer studies in their own country.

The second and third days saw practical sessions looking at different approaches to surveying and measuring graduate transition, as well as group sessions in which the country teams continued to work and present aspects of their case study.

An education expert from Poland also shared their experiences of probably the most advanced tracking system in Europe - the Polish Graduate Tracking System (ELA) - which monitors HE graduates within the labour market.



In conclusion, final country case study presentations were then followed by reflections by each team on the key learnings they wished to take home with them and implement in their ongoing activities. It was found that although each country faced some different issues, across the region there were many similar challenges, such as lack of data on graduates, no centralised mechanisms for the collection and storage of information, human and financial resource issues and political support. The importance of regional cooperation was also noted, due to the movement of migrants between the countries, and the example of the European Schengen Area was discussed.

Liia Kaarloop from ETF said that her main takeaway from the working group was *"the positive attitude of colleagues from all 4 countries to*



learn about evidence-based policy making, monitoring of graduates and tracer studies" and found the "motivation of participants" and the "value of team-work" impressive. ETF's experience of evidence based policy making has complimented the work of the platform in this area and their joint knowledge and expertise has helped the working group participants learn from each other.

There was a general consensus amongst the Central Asia participants of the relevance of the CAEP project to educational reform in the region and individually within their countries, and active support for the continuation of similar cooperation in the future.

Sanjar Kadyrakunov from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic said they would be keen to continue cooperation as the issues would not be "solved overnight" and that it was necessary to "consolidate and develop" the knowledge and experience gained in platform activities.

Nazimjon Siddikov, from the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan stated that, "Each exchange of experience gives impetus to the development of the education system of the Republic. I hope that the Central Asia Education Platform project will develop its next phase and we, for our part, will actively participate and contribute to the better implementation of this project."

As Narkiz Kulmambetov from the Kyrgyz Ministry of Labor and Social Development said; "the devil is in the details". The focus on "accuracy and clarity" in tracking that he took away from the shared experiences of the EU member states has armed them with "knowledge and a strategic vision for the future".

## CAEP Webinars on Innovative Teaching Methods



In January CAEP will organise two webinars on Teaching and Learning Innovation; the first will give an overview of teaching and learning innovation strategies in the EU and internationally, and will focus more on HE, the second will specifically address innovation in VET and the adoption of a Learning Outcomes approach.

Innovative Teaching Methods was identified as a priority area for platform activities during the First Ministerial Meeting of Ministers for Education in Riga in 2015, and confirmed in the Astana Declaration during the Second Ministerial Meeting in 2017. The outcomes of CAEP activities such as the Peer Learning meetings on Qualification Frameworks and Quality Assurance have also demonstrated that although participants are well aware of teaching innovation strategies, there is a demand for further dialogue and knowledge sharing.

The objective of the webinars is to improve policy makers' overall awareness and capacity to stimulate and orient grassroots methodological innovation in teaching in HE and VET, while fostering cooperation at the Central Asia regional level as well as with the EU.

Up to 15 participants from each CA country will take part, representing Ministries of Education and Labour, state agencies, HE and VET institutions, business associations, chambers and companies, education practitioners, and international and donor organisations.

Presentations and case studies will be made by education experts from CA countries and EU member states.

- The webinars will:
- Address the issue of teaching and learning innovation in relation to CAEP policy aims
  - Illustrate the main methodological and technological innovation occurring in the EU and internationally
  - Identify emerging needs and demand for cooperation coming from Central Asia
  - Present good practice examples of policy level initiatives from both CA countries and the EU
  - Present operational strategies to implement methodological innovation at the institutional level, and stimulate exchange on concrete elements of these strategies.

In the lead up to the webinars, a short introductory dossier will be sent to all participants, providing a systemic picture of teaching and learning innovation literature and current policy, and a set of questions will be collected and circulated to be covered during the meeting.

Each webinar will last approximately two and a half hours and will conclude with a summary of preliminary recommendations from the participants for future policy development.

## HERE Activity Report 2017



The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) has published the Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) Activity Report for 2017



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The HERE network is composed of individual experts who promote the modernisation of higher education in the former Tempus Partner Countries. With the support of the Erasmus+ programme, they participate in the development of higher education policies and reforms in their countries and contribute to the training of local stakeholders.

The report presents the HERE training events organised at international level by the EACEA and its contractor, the SPHERE team (Support and Promotion for Higher Education Reform Experts), as well as activities organised at local level in cooperation with the National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) and local stakeholders. It includes 25 national reports on HERE activities and general HE developments in the Partner Countries, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The aim of these reports is to give visibility to the activities and outputs of HEREs and NEOs at national level, and to give inspiration to colleagues in other countries when planning HERE activities. The full report can be found at:

<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/key-action-3-support-for-policy-reform/higher-education-reform-experts-heresen>

## International Education Conference in Turkmenistan

On 13-14 November an International Education Conference was held in Ashgabat as part of the conference organised by the Ministries of Education and of Sport and Youth Affairs of Turkmenistan, **"Education and Sports in the Prosperous Epoch of the Powerful State"**.

A number of the sessions were coordinated by the EU-funded project 'Support to the Education Sector in Turkmenistan' and looked at how the country can cooperate with international organisations to help develop its education sector and its human capital. Representatives from the Ministries of Education and Labour in Turkmenistan, Erasmus+, The European Training Foundation (ETF) and several EU-funded projects joined education experts and delegates from educational institutions and other organisations in Central Asia and the EU.

Topics for presentations and discussions included 'Aligning the Labour Market with Turkmenistan's Social and Economic Goals', 'Quality Assurance of Education', 'The Digitalization of Education and 'Human Capital Development for Finance, Agriculture and Entrepreneurship'. The conclusions and recommendations from the conference will be passed to the Ministries of Education and Labour for consideration.

Further details can found at: <http://education-turkmenistan.eu/conference/>

## "Save the date": Next CAEP events

**24 January, 2019 (date tbc)**

*Webinar on Innovative Teaching Methods in HE*

**25 January, 2019 (date tbc)**

*Webinar on Innovative Teaching Methods in VET*

**1 February, 2019 (date tbc)**

*Webinar on Financing of Education Systems and Institutions*

**13-14 February, 2019 (date tbc)**

*CAEP Closing Regional Conference and Steering Committee Meeting  
Brussels, Belgium*

## In the next CAEP Newsletter issue #15 (March 2019):

1. Report from CAEP Closing Regional Conference
2. Outlook on future cooperation in the region
3. Final outcomes of NURSLING project

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