



SICI NEWSLETTER

JULY 2022

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 SICI Executive Committee met on 21 June 2022. We had hoped to meet in person, however due to industrial action at airports we had to resort to meeting online. We were delighted to welcome Liz Boulton, Ofsted to our meeting. Liz facilitated a workshop focusing on communication strategies. As a Committee we explored a range of different approaches for how we engage with members. We will update you with our plans as this work develops. We took time to review the actions as set out in the SICI Strategic Plan to ensure that we are making positive progress. Finally, we discussed the plans for our next workshop as well plans for the SICI General Assembly.

Member of Executive Committee Expressions of interest

We are inviting expression of interest from individuals to become part of the SICI Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee play a crucial role in the governance of SICI ensuring that the decisions of the General Assembly are taken forward and the priorities set out in our Strategic Plan are delivered to benefit our members. If you would like to express an interest in being part of the Executive Committee please provide a 1 page CV along with a statement (maximum 300 words) outlining the how you can support the work of SICI.

SICI Theme for 2023

Thank you for all your contributions and feedback on the SICI theme for 2023. Following discussion by the Executive Committee we have agreed that we will focus on the theme of “The relationship between inspection and research”. This was a popular theme with members and we look forward to working with you to explore it further in 2023.

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

Some words about ...

...The Erasmus+ project “BIBESOIN”



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



Current state of affairs:

- The IH2EF (Institut des Hautes Etudes pour l'Education et la Formation – Institute for Advanced Studies in Education and Training) hosted the last Transnational Meeting of BIBESOIN project, on December 2021, the 14th and 15th. This last transnational meeting main purpose was to prepare the final report of the project, to add a few elements to the website, including a video, and to prepare the organisation of the multiplier event.
- The 'multiplier event' to inform all stakeholders was organized in France, Poitiers, 16th December 2021, also in and by the institute IH2EF, <https://www.ih2ef.gouv.fr/who-we-are>, in cooperation with all partners.
- On the SICI website you can find all information about the BIBESOIN project: the purpose, information about the partners, all training event and transnational meeting reports and TESSIE (the Toolbox for Evaluation and Stimulation Social Inclusion in Education).
<https://www.sici-inspectorates.eu/Activities/Projects>
- The BIBESOIN project is finished and the final report is already assessed by the Erasmus+ agency.
- In 2023 SICI can start as a 'dissemination' partner in the Erasmus+ project STESSIE (spreading and strengthening TESSIE <https://www.sici-inspectorates.eu/Activities/Projects/TESSIE>) that is already approved and selected for a grant. More information about this new project in next newsletter.

Co-operation between inspectorates

Flanders and Netherlands

Both Flemish and Dutch education are faced with declining basic skills (language and mathematics). As a result, our inspectorates feel a responsibility to contribute to reversing this downward trend. To share experiences and discuss the problems and possible solutions, a conference about basic skills was organized on June 8th in Rotterdam. Dutch and Flemish colleagues met to examine how supervision can contribute to improving results on basic skills and how our inspectorates can reinforce each other in doing so.

We started by discussing possible causes of the decline in basic skills. Most frequently mentioned were:

- shortage of teachers and school leaders
- lack of training and coaching of teachers
- insufficient quality of teacher training
- teachers having low expectations of their pupils
- lack of appreciation for the teaching profession.
- innovative education practices that are not evidence-based
- distance learning due to the corona-pandemic
- overloaded curriculum
- declining reading motivation
- increasingly complex pupil population
- increasing use of digital resources

We then discussed what should be done – on the one hand in schools and educational institutions and on the other hand at the level of the education system as a whole – to eventually improve basic skills. Together we came to some ideas and conclusions, which can be summarized in the following sentences:

Supervision... must be objectively normative, stricter, more consequent and it should focus more on basic skills. Inspectorates must set high standards for quality assurance and data-analysis. Moreover, supervision should focus more on pre-primary education. Finally, we should improve the evaluation of the impact of our supervision.

Inspectors... should be more present at schools, should be trained more frequently in assessing objectively and they have to be able to customize their inspection activities according to the situation.

The educational field... must become more aware of the problems related to basic skills and establish goals and norms. More attention should be paid to professionalization and scientific insights when it comes to didactics and pedagogy. Finally, basic skills should be integrated throughout the curriculum.

The image of education... should be influenced in a positive way through a more appreciative communication style. In doing so, we need to approach various stakeholders in a different way.

We need more insight... into the current level of basic skills and the quality of teacher training courses.

Necessary conditions... are measurement tools for basic skills , effective means of communication and adequate legislation.

The aim of the conference was to jointly look for solutions to reverse the trend of declining basic skills and to identify what inspectorates could possibly contribute. Participants of both organizations believe it is important to agree upon a framework within which basic skills can be assessed. This would help the educational field to determine what is necessary to achieve high quality regarding basic skills. We also think that the added value of supervision should be both of a stimulating and an assessing nature; on the one hand we do research and share best practices, on the other hand we assess quality. Finally, we also share the opinion that the teaching profession should be more attractive and valued than it currently is.

The Flemish-Dutch cooperation has been very useful so far and we are looking forward to work together more often in the future.

Cooperation with Official Portuguese-Speaking African Countries

IGEC has been cooperating with Angola, São Tomé e Príncipe and Cabo Verde within different initiatives.

(i) IGEC was invited to participate in the 3rd mission of the project "National pilot exams - Angola 2022" of the Ministries of Education of the Portuguese Republic and of the Republic of Angola. This project aims at the application of national exams in Angola. It is developed by the Instituto de Avaliação Educativa, I. P. and the Direção-Geral da Educação (through the National Exam Jury) and by Angolan counterpart institutions.

In this 3rd mission it was decided to extend the cooperation to the inspection level, aiming at the supervision and control of the application of national exams. Thus, IGEC participated in a first joint session with all stakeholders and held a presentation session of the activity External Assessment Tests of the Activity Plan for 2022. In this session the Angolan inspectors had the opportunity to get in touch

with the objectives and procedures developed in Mainland Portugal for the supervision of the application of tests and exams, as well as with the resources used in schools visits, which were made available to the Angolan delegation (GISP - Gabinete de Inspeção e Supervisão Pedagógica).

The coordinators of the activity went along the GISP inspectors on a visit to a lower secondary school in Lisbon, where they attended a simulation of an intervention in the practical tests. IGEC participated in the final session to discuss the outcomes of the project and it is planned to continue collaborating with GISP on this project.

(ii) In April, the senior chief inspector and three inspectors from the Inspectorate of Education of São Tomé e Príncipe visited IGEC's headquarters, met the heads of Multidisciplinary Teams and attended a presentation on Pedagogical Evaluation in Secondary Education (monitoring activity), held by the coordinators. They also accompanied four inspection teams in their scheduled interventions.

(iii) The Higher Education Regulatory Agency in Cape Verde (ARES) was involved in the Control Action on Access to Higher Education at the School of Tourism and Hospitality of Seia, and in the Audit of Academic Services at the Miguel Torga Higher Institute in Coimbra. The initiative is part of the cooperation protocol signed between IGEC and ARES on December 2021.

IGEC's inspector teams have integrated the ARES administrator, Elizabeth Coutinho, in the preparatory phases of these actions, sharing methodologies and working resources. The participation, as an observer, of the ARES representative in the intervention phases in higher education institutions resulted in the appropriation of the practical aspects of these IGEC activities.

This collaboration aims to strengthen the implementation of mechanisms to supervise and control the operation of public and private higher education institutions, fostering compliance with quality standards in higher education in Cape Verde.

Networks of practice...

The network of practice: *the approach taken by European inspectorates and evaluation centres to monitor and assess the teaching of English as a foreign language*, has been approved by the Executive Committee. The members are Portugal Mainland (IGEC), Finland (FINEEC), France (IGÉSR), Portugal Madeira (IRE) and Scotland (HMI).

The main goal is to understand the different approaches SICI members take to the evaluation of English as a foreign language. The network will also explore how inspectorates/evaluation centres contribute to the improvement of the pupils' learning experiences and outcomes. In addition, each member will focus on specific objectives for their context.

English has an increased importance in Portuguese educational policies. Recent documents also emphasise the relevance of foreign languages learning. Nevertheless, in May 2017, research was published stating that English was the second subject that scored lower in grades 5 and 6. The Inspectorate of Education and Science (IGEC) believes it to be vitally important to get to know how the English curriculum is being managed by schools and teachers, and to induce effective pedagogical practices in the English classroom that would have impact on the pupils' learning. Therefore, in 2017 IGEC implemented a thematic inspection within the monitoring program – *Curriculum Management: Teaching English to grades 3 to 6*, which we consider innovative. Portugal Mainland prompted this challenge as IGEC has been developing input over the past few years related to the theme and the knowledge about it needs to be deepened.

Outcomes concerning the *development of inspection framework; inspection models; inspection processes; internal quality assurance of inspectorates and the impact of inspection work* are expected.

The network has had 3 online meetings so far in which the network proposal and the initial steps were discussed. The work has started with a comparative review of the members' systems based on the answers provided to 7 questions. The guidelines of the inspectorates/evaluation centres are also being translated so as to share and discuss them for peer review.

Other information

Coming SICI events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Online/on site</u>	<u>Title</u>
28 September 2022	ONLINE	Theme to be defined
17 – 18 November 2022	Ireland	SICI General Assembly

Please note that the SICI workshop in France will be organised as a video-conference on September 28th.

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