



## QualiTools for IT-Trainers

PROVIDING A MANAGER GUIDE FOR ICT AND OTHER TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

### INTERVIEW

with **Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner**, author of the manager guide and representing the project partner **European Peer Review Association** and **Karin Steiner** representing **ABIF**, both commenting on the manager guide



**I: What is the aim of the manager guideline?**

**Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner:** As the title says it shall support to manage the use of QualiTools in institutions of education and training. Its main target group are managers (general managers, QM, programme managers, HR) in training organisations.

**I: What are the most relevant aspects the manager guide refers to?**

**Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner:** It provides an analysis of conditions and challenges for implementing the QUALITOOLS methods (handbook and online database) and shows how they can be overcome. There is no “one best way” because institutions differ so much. But the guideline does provide an overview of elements and methods for introducing QualiTools and gives some practical tips on how to start and what to consider during implementation.



**I: Why do feedback questionnaires quite often not develop or even assure quality in further training activities?**



**Karin Steiner:** Feedback questionnaires are the most often used tool in order to assure quality. Quite often they do not fulfil this goal. Mostly they do not ask after didactic quality and how it can be improved by the trainer. The trainer collects the feedback questionnaires or they are filled out online but quite often does not see the results. And the participants do not know what happens with the results afterwards.

**I: The manager guideline refers to a so-called quality culture in training organisations? What are the characteristics of a quality culture?**

**Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner:** An institutional quality culture is the basis for using the QUALITOOLS methods. It is embedded in traditional QM, but also goes beyond. A quality cultures also uses QM processes, but not in an administrative way. A quality culture puts people at the centre – participants, teachers/trainers, support staff, management etc. – and looks at what they actually do – and not only at what the management handbook stipulates.

**Karin Steiner:** Creating a common quality culture in an organisation has to be a conscious process between trainers and management. It should cover e.g. managers as role models for putting teaching and learning at the centre of the institution's mission and goals. It should support grass-roots quality initiatives and trying out new approaches and reflection. Feedback in the organisation should be

possible between all levels and should also be considered as something positive.



**I: How should organisations proceed when it comes to voluntary or obligatory participation in quality developing activities?**

**Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner:** Given that teaching/training is a profession and complex by nature, obligatory measures to improve what happens in classrooms will have limited efficacy. It is therefore recommendable to favour an approach of voluntary commitment, to engage and motivate teachers/trainers to develop their teaching practices and to create common ground and collaboration among teaching staff.

**Karin Steiner:** Supervision is often not obligatory but voluntary. Plus trainers have to attend it in their spare time. The result is that it is not attended at all. Trainers working especially with challenging groups like the long-term unemployed or educationally disadvantaged groups need to attend supervision guided by an external supervisor. Supervision enables a collegial exchange which empowers them and improves the necessary social skills.



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**Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner:** Even though the teaching/training process remains in the discretion of the teachers/trainers and use of QualiTools is voluntary, supporting activities like e.g. participation in further training and professional development schemes can be made obligatory – giving a clear signal that this is a serious issue for the institution.

**I: How can organisations deal with resistance against changes in the quality culture?**

**Karin Steiner:** Trainers' resistance against supervision, collegial counselling or further didactic training is something organisations will have to deal with. Often these quality developing activities are seen as unnecessary, time-consuming and invading the autonomy as trainers. Convincing trainers is only possible by demonstrating the advantages these measures have.

**Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner:** Professional change management can be a great help. If teachers/trainers are involved in the development of quality criteria and policies, they will be more likely to support changes. In addition, it is always a good idea to start with a small group of "early adopters". When they are successful, others will become interested. This way, QualiTools can spread through the institution.

**I: Your recommendation for institutions who want to use QualiTools?**

**Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner:** Go ahead and try it. But do not forget to offer support – using QualiTools will be a new approach for many teachers/trainers, they will need professional development offers. The most effective, by the way, are those that are close to the daily practice of teachers/trainers like peer feedback, intervision/supervision and professional learning communities.

**Karin Steiner:** In 2017 each partner organisation will offer two workshops for trainers within the scope of our project QUALITOOLS; so this will be a good opportunity to receive training in using QUALITOOLS methods for all trainers and teachers who want to improve their quality in training.



The manager guide is already available online in English.



Website: [www.qualitools.net](http://www.qualitools.net) → see manager guide

## BASIC DATA OF QUALITOOLS

### Project partners:

University of Social Sciences – Społeczna Akademia Nauk - Marta Kedzia (co-ordinator), Emilia Szczygielska

ABIF (analysis consulting and interdisciplinary research) – Karin Steiner, Monira Kerler

European Peer Review Association – EPRA – Maria Gutknecht-Gmeiner

Bridging to the future Ltd (UK) – Chris Woo, Xavier Rodriguez

CECOA – Center for Professional Training in Commerce and Trade (Portugal) – Vanda Vieira & Cristina Dimas

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Znanie – Radosveta Drakeva, Valentina Georgieva

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## EVENT RETROSPECT

On **April, 4<sup>th</sup> 2017** the European Peer Review Association (EPRA) hosted the first international QualiTools Webinar. It had the opportunity to share information about the project “QualiTools for IT trainers” and gave an overview of the different QualiTools methods.



For watching the webinar online, please follow this link:

<http://www.peer-review-network.eu/.../qualitools-for-it-train...>

On **May 31, 2017** a national dissemination conference took place in Vienna, AT. Almost 70 trainers and training managers came to our dissemination event.



The first key note speaker Professor Elke Gruber presented the requirements for quality development in adult education and training.

In a second presentation Elisabeth Steinklammer described the quality standards and activities of the Referees' Academy (the Trainer Academy of the Austrian Union Federation).



Karin Steiner gave an overview on the Erasmus+ project QUALITOOLS and explained why traditional quality management has no effect on the quality of training itself, which quality areas the QUALITOOLS methods handbook covers and why they are important.



[See documentation](#)

Finally Ina Pircher gave an insight into the quality activities at the Vocational College bfi Vienna.

On **June 16, 2017** the first national QUALITOOLS workshop took place in Vienna with 27 trainers working in various further training areas.

See documentation: [www.qualitools.net](http://www.qualitools.net) → see events

# Newsletter

QualiTools for IT-Trainers



Between **June 21-22, 2017** the fourth QUALITOOLS project meeting took place in Birmingham hosted by BtF, represented by our wonderful host Chris Woo.



Aside from discussing plans on future QUALITOOLS multiplier events, we got to know interesting restaurants from all over the world: from Indian to Italian food and also the classical pubs with several varieties of beer.



Moreover, BtF (Bridging to the Future) showed us the Community Center, a social enterprise he manages. It includes the offer of infrastructure for several spare time activities and educational activities. It has a forest school with a garden

where kids can grow vegetables and learn how to also cook them.



## SAVE OUR NEXT DATES:

**QUALITOOLS manager workshop in Vienna: Oct. 10, 2017** held by EPRA

**Next QUALITOOLS trainer workshop in Vienna: Dec.12, 2017** held by ABIF

**Four weeks before ABIF and EPRA will send out an invitation to all our newsletter recipients. The participation is free!**

