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Regionale Bildungslandschaften wirkungsorientiert gestalten

Ein Leitfaden zur Qualitätsentwicklung

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Executive Summary

Access to educational opportunities for all – irrespective of age, socioeconomic status or cultural background – is crucial to a region’s future viability. In upholding this principle, we cannot reduce education to the simple acquisition of knowledge. A sustainable concept of education must involve all learning and development processes relevant to individuals and society at large.

Ensuring equal opportunities in education should be the goal of any educational infrastructure. Doing so involves systematic education and transition management, which in turn requires that effective and efficient networks among educational institutions be established. Reliable education structures derive from a consistent strategy developed, actively implemented and communicated by education professionals within a region. This process implies trust and transparency, as the culture and values embodied in an educational institution must enjoy broad recognition and appreciation. But how can we effectively and transparently shape educational infrastructures? The publication »Impact-Oriented Regional Educational Infrastructures – a Guidebook« helps decision-makers and other stakeholders in education develop appropriate measures. The concepts and practice-based examples presented in the guidebook derive from impact-oriented steering instruments already implemented in eight German cases. These include the seven regions of East Westphalia-Lippe (Bielefeld, Gütersloh, Herford, Höxter, Lippe, Minden-Lübbecke and Paderborn) and the city of Freiburg.

Impact-oriented educational infrastructures rely on evaluation methods and quality development instruments in assuring that an education system effectively targets the development of knowledge and competencies of all individuals within a region. Essential to this process is an open discussion among stakeholders that facilitates mutual appreciation for measures and strategies appropriate to a given region. This discussion should draw upon goal-clarification processes and selected empirical studies of actual projects and plans. This participatory approach can and should be accompanied by a regional

educational reporting process that is based on evidence-based research providing indicators of reform needs and long-term developments within a region.

There are several benefits to this impact-oriented approach. These include, on the one hand, facilitating a broad-based goal-clarification process in which educational values and long-term strategies are negotiated among education experts and other stakeholders and, on the other, generating knowledge relevant to key educational projects and plans. The guidebook is structured as follows:

- The first chapter describes the importance of designing educational infrastructures to facilitate mutual respect among stakeholders while incorporating the strengths of each into the process. The relationship between evaluation and educational reporting processes are also discussed.
- In order to facilitate knowledge transfers to other regions, the second chapter describes the key steps taken in the examples of East Westphalia-Lippe (EWL) and Freiburg.

These chapters are followed by praxis-oriented chapters in which the evaluation methods implemented in EWL and Freiburg are explained.

- Chapter three, which outlines in detail the steps taken to achieve an impact-oriented infrastructure, represents the core of the guidebook. Here we highlight the synergies involved with designing practices and evaluating processes, while warning against common pitfalls. An effective course of action entails identifying stakeholders' benefits, selecting projects for close examination, and determining effective methodologies while identifying the resources needed and those providing them. In addition to describing effective broad-based goal-clarification processes, we also describe how to formulate goals that motivate stakeholders, how to foster effective and efficient planning, and how to implement goals assessment.
- In chapters four and five, we show how evaluation methods and quality development instruments can facilitate the systematic examination of practices. In addition, we highlight results with broader application in structuring negotiation processes among a variety of education stakeholders.
- Finally, in chapter six we provide decision-makers suggestions for developing effective strategies.