

**TƏHSİLDƏ MONİTORİNG VƏ QIYMƏTLƏNDİRMƏ
МОНИТОРИНГ И ОЦЕНИВАНИЕ В ОБРАЗОВАНИИ
MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN EDUCATION**

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**THE EXPERIENCE OF SEVERAL EUROPEAN COUNTRY IN THE DIRECTION
OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF SCHOOLS**

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**MƏKTƏBLƏRİN XARİCİ QIYMƏTLƏNDİRİLMƏSİ ÜZRƏ BƏZİ AVROPA
ÖLKƏLƏRİNİN TƏCRÜBƏSİ**

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ОПЫТ РЯДА ЕВРОПЕЙСКИХ СТРАН ПО ВНЕШНЕМУ ОЦЕНИВАНИЮ ШКОЛ

Abstract. Quality assurance in education involves achieving, maintaining and increasing quality in certain areas. All this is done through the evaluation process. The evaluation process can be carried out in various directions, such as schools, school leaders, teachers and other education workers, educational programs, or the activities of the entire education system. In order to better understand the process of external evaluation of schools, it is considered appropriate to look at the world experience. Therefore, the article examines the experience of several European countries regarding the external evaluation process.

Key words: *monitoring, evaluation, framework document, frequency, quality, education*

Xülasə. Təhsildə keyfiyyətin təmin edilməsi, müəyyən sahələrdə keyfiyyətin əldə edilməsi, qorunması və artırılması məqsədini güdür. Bütün bu proseslər qiymətləndirmə yolu ilə həyata keçirilir. Qiymətləndirmə müxtəlif istiqamətlərə yönəldilə bilər, məsələn, məktəblərə, məktəb rəhbərlərinə, müəllimlərə və digər təhsil işçilərinə, təhsil proqramlarına və ya bütün təhsil sisteminin fəaliyyətinə. Məktəblərin xarici qiymətləndirmə prosesini daha yaxşı anlamaq üçün dünya təcrübəsinə nəzər salmaq faydalıdır. Bu səbəbdən, məqalədə bir neçə Avropa ölkəsinin xarici qiymətləndirmə prosesinə dair təcrübəsi araşdırılır.

Açar sözlər: *monitoring, qiymətləndirmə, çərçivə sənədi, tezlik, keyfiyyət, təhsil*

Аннотация. Обеспечение качества в образовании направлено на достижение, поддержание и улучшение качества в различных аспектах образовательной системы. Все это осуществляется через процесс оценивания. Оценивание может быть направлено на различные элементы, включая школы, руководителей школ, учителей, других сотрудников образования, образовательные программы или всю образовательную систему в целом. Для более глубокого понимания процесса внешнего оценивания школ полезно изучить мировой опыт. В связи с этим статья рассматривает опыт нескольких европейских стран в области внешнего оценивания.

Ключевые слова: *мониторинг, оценивание, рамочный документ, частота, качество, образование*

Introduction

School evaluation is the monitoring of their quality based on predefined standards [1, p. 14]. It can cover a wide range of school activities, including teaching, learning, and management.

There are two main types of school evaluation: external evaluation conducted by evaluators not affiliated with the school and internal evaluation conducted by school staff. Here, we aim to explore and comparatively analyze the practices of several European countries in terms of external school evaluation. Based on conducted research, it has been determined that the process of external school evaluation serves three main purposes [2, p. 12]:

- Evaluation determines expectations regarding school quality (i.e., criteria and standards indicating a "good school");
- The results of external evaluation are shared with stakeholders (school boards/administration, parents, and students), who respond to the outcomes sensitively, creating a strong incentive for improvement;
- External evaluation promotes and encourages the enhancement of intra-school management processes.

After understanding the essence of external school evaluation, let's explore the procedures and directions of its implementation in several countries.

External School Evaluation in Albania

Management/Body responsible for external school evaluation

In Albania, school evaluation is primarily conducted based on the Law on Pre-University Education (2012, 2015, and 2018) and the National Strategy for Pre-University Education 2014–2020 [2, p. 15]. According to the law on Pre-University Education, one of the general principles is that "Educational services must be based on standards and evaluated. Evaluation must be both internal and external," and these ideas are taken as the basis. "The Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (AQAPUE) was established in February 2019 as a merger of the State Education Inspectorate (SEI) and the Institute for Development of Education (IDE). It has a broad mandate covering various areas, including curriculum design, teacher professional development, and the evaluation of school and education system performance. Its

responsibilities in school evaluation include managing the evaluation framework and guidelines and preparing external school evaluators. Additionally, it can conduct risk-based evaluations ordered by the Minister of Education, Youth, and Sports [2, p. 17].

The use of reference standards/framework documents for external evaluation.

The school evaluation framework document of Albania, originally developed in 2011, has been revised to serve as the main reference for both external and internal school evaluations. The 2011 framework document covers seven areas [2, p. 16]: curriculum implementation; teaching and learning; school environment and ethics; student needs; school leadership; human resource development; and student achievement evaluation.

In Albania, external evaluators independently decide which areas and indicators will be the focus of each school evaluation, making it difficult to compare results across schools. These evaluations result in ratings for each examined area and indicator on a scale from one (very good) to four (poor), along with an overall rating [2, p. 16].

The frequency of school visits

In Albania, external evaluation is mandatory by law and is conducted every four years. Responsibility for external school evaluation lies with the General Directorate of Pre-University Education (GD PUE). Evaluators are now located within four new regional directorates in Albania, each of which has 12–16 local education offices (a total of 51) reporting to them and maintaining contact with schools. The quality of external evaluations is monitored based on risk factors [2, p. 16].

Results of External Evaluation

Previously, external school evaluations resulted in verbal feedback and a final report published on the inspectorate's website. Recently, recommendations have also been included in the final report. During the evaluation process, the State Education Inspectorate informs the minister and local education offices about facts discovered. Currently, reports prepared based on these evaluations are not disclosed to the public [2, p. 17].

External Evaluation of Schools in Moldova

Management / Body Responsible for External Evaluation of Schools

The Moldovan education system is based on state education standards that ensure the recognition of national educational documents abroad. The standards set minimum mandatory requirements for various levels and stages of education. The procedure for the development, approval, and implementation of educational standards is determined by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Research (MECR). [2, p. 26]

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Standards/Framework Documents for External Evaluation</i>
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The quality assessment standards were developed by ANACEC (National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research) and are based on national standards related to general education, particularly quality standards for primary and secondary schools. These standards include five dimensions: [2, p. 26]

1. Health, safety, and security (3 standards);
2. Democratic participation (3 standards);
3. Inclusive education (3 standards);
4. Efficiency in education (3 standards);
5. Gender-sensitive education (1 standard).

Each quality standard includes several indicators and evaluation criteria.

<i>Guidelines and Procedures for External Evaluation</i>	<i>Standards/Framework Documents for External Evaluation</i>
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In the Moldovan education system, the structure of the external evaluation process is described through two methodologies: the Methodology for Evaluating General Education Institutions and the Methodology for Evaluating the Management Staff in General Education.

Frequency of School Visits

External evaluation at the general education level is mandatory. The National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research is responsible for this process, which is carried out by its staff and external evaluators. The external evaluation of general education institutions and their management is conducted every five years, usually simultaneously. In addition to this formal evaluation, school principals are also required to submit an annual activity report to the Management and Teachers' Councils [2, p. 27].

Results of External Evaluation

After the evaluation process is completed, the evaluation committee prepares an external evaluation report listing the identified strengths, areas needing improvement, provided recommendations, mandatory areas for enhancement,

and a proposed final decision. The prepared report and final decision are approved by the Management Council and is disclosed to the public [2, p. 27].

External Evaluation of Schools in Serbia

<i>Management / Body Responsible for External Evaluation of Schools</i>

The Ministry of Education, through its Regional School Administrations (RSA) and the Institute for the Evaluation of Quality in Education (IEQE), is responsible for external evaluation in Serbia [2, p. 36]. The Ministry is responsible for the implementation of external evaluations and all related activities, including annual planning, formation of evaluation teams, reporting, and more. Since 2012, external evaluation has been mandatory in Serbia under the Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System. Its aim is to evaluate every aspect of the teaching process in primary and secondary schools. External evaluation is conducted in accordance with national standards. The results of external evaluations in Serbia are not publicly disclosed [2, p. 37].

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Standards/Framework Documents for External Evaluation</i>
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In collaboration with the Standing International Conference of Inspectors (SICI) and the Dutch School Inspectorate, Serbia has developed quality standards for schools [2, p. 38]. These focus on six quality areas: programming, planning, and reporting; teaching and learning; student learning outcomes; student support; ethics; and school organization and management. The quality standards serve as the primary reference documents for both external and internal school evaluation processes.

Guidelines and Procedures for External Evaluation

The external evaluation process is implemented through two main documents. The first is the "Rules on the Quality Evaluation of Institutional Work" (2019), which defines the two types of evaluation (external and internal) and the procedures for conducting them. The second is the "Rulebook on Quality Standards" (2018), which outlines the quality standards used in both external and internal evaluations.

Before visiting schools, the evaluation team collects and reviews school records (e.g., internal evaluation reports, school programs, annual work

plans, school development plans, and previous reports). During the evaluation, which lasts at least two days, the evaluation team meets with the school principal and conducts interviews with support staff, teachers, students, and parents. The team also observes the teaching and learning process in classrooms (at least 40% of teachers, with each session lasting at least 20 minutes). At the end of the process, the results are shared with the school principal. A written report summarizing main data for each standard and providing an overall score is prepared. School principals are required to inform the school community and parents about the results, and the report's findings are disclosed to the public through the website of the Ministry [2, p. 38].

Frequency of School Visits

Evaluations are conducted every six years. However, external evaluations can occur more frequently at the request of school management or the Ministry. Additionally, schools that receive the lowest quality level (Level 1) are re-evaluated after three years [2, p. 38].

Results of External Evaluation

The prepared written report is primarily descriptive and includes recommendations for improvement. The evaluation team provides a summary of main findings for each evaluated standard but does not specify how the school should address specific issues in each area. After the external evaluation, schools are required to create an improvement plan in order to solve identified main problems. This plan is sent to the external evaluator for review and approval. The same consultants are also tasked with assisting schools in implementing their action plans [2, p. 39].

External Evaluation of Schools in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, school evaluation consists of systematic external evaluation by the Education Inspectorate and the publication of school data through online information systems [3, p. 127]. The school evaluation system is based on the availability of a rich set of data on individual schools and a highly developed system for collecting, managing, and analyzing information about school performance. The Education Inspectorate employs a risk-based approach, which results in schools at higher risk of underperformance being evaluated more frequently and comprehensively than others [3, p. 127].

Institutions Responsible for School Evaluation

In the Dutch education system, school evaluation is carried out by several institutions and agencies. School boards are main factors in the evaluation of schools. Although the official owners of schools are public authorities (e.g., municipalities) or non-public entities (e.g., churches or private foundations), they typically do not manage their schools directly but establish school boards as intermediary bodies to carry out management responsibilities. Among other management duties, these school boards are responsible for quality management and internal accountability functions.

The external evaluation of schools is entrusted to the Dutch Education Inspectorate. Although the Inspectorate operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, it is professionally and organizationally independent. The Chief Inspector has the authority to oversee schools [3, p. 128].

Approaches to School Evaluation

School evaluation in the Netherlands is highly advanced, and the Inspectorate's evaluation approaches are continuously reviewed and revised based on emerging needs. From 2002 to 2007, the Dutch Education Inspectorate operated a "proportional inspection" system, where the scope and frequency of external inspections were determined based on the quality of school self-evaluations. However, the Inspectorate found that the results of school self-evaluations did not meet the quality criteria of the 2002 Supervision Framework. Identifying "at-risk" schools involves a cautious desk-based risk analysis using student performance data at the school level, documents submitted to the Inspectorate by schools, and "failure signals" such as complaints or media reports.

If the risk analysis is negative, only a regular "main" inspection is conducted, typically involving a small-scale visit once every four years. However, if a school's quality is deemed weak or unsatisfactory, the school must undergo special inspections over the following years until it reaches the basic quality standard. If no deficiencies are detected during a quality inspection, the school can be reassigned to the basic inspection regime.

If a school demonstrates high-quality self-assessment practices and has already begun addressing identified risks, limited external evaluation may be enough. However, if the quality of education is found to be inadequate, special inspections must be conducted for weak or unsatisfactory quality [3, p. 129].

External Evaluation of Schools in Germany

In Germany, external evaluation of schools is conducted approximately simultaneously across all federal states. However, there are many differences between various state inspectorates. Each inspectorate develops its own criteria and procedures. For example, there are differences between states regarding who receives the report and who is authorized to conduct inspections in schools. However, there are also many similarities among school inspectorates. Most of them use standardized indicators to assess school quality. They employ similar methods for data collection, such as personal interviews, classroom observations, and online surveys.

In some federal states, if a school underperforms, the inspection interval shortens, and the next inspection is conducted in two years instead of the usual four to five years. While other countries make information on school quality publicly accessible, in Germany, only three federal states (Berlin, Hamburg, and Brandenburg) publish a summarized version of inspection reports online, and no federal state releases rankings [4, p. 272].

Reference Standards/Framework Documents for External Evaluation

The approach used by school inspectorates in managing education determines how their staff conduct the evaluation process and which strategies they implement to sustain school inspections as an institution. One of the main factors for school inspectors is school leadership. After an inspection, school leadership is tasked

with negotiating targeted agreements with schools. However, in practice, school leaders often find the inspectors' information to be of limited use. Both school inspectors and school leadership are responsible for monitoring what happens in schools, but they use different monitoring procedures and operate with varying scopes of authority over schools [4, p. 275].

Conclusion

School evaluations in Albania, Moldova, Serbia, the Netherlands, Germany reflect a shared commitment to improving the quality of education. Each country has developed its own framework documents and procedures to ensure that schools meet certain standards. The leadership and bodies responsible for these evaluations play a crucial role in ensuring continuity and accountability in education systems.

The frequency of school visits and the results of these evaluations vary, reflecting the unique educational landscapes and challenges of each country. However, all these evaluations aim to enhance school performance, provide ideas for improvement, and ensure that students receive quality education.

A comparative analysis underscores the importance of continuously improving external evaluation practices. By learning from the successes and challenges of these countries, we can strengthen external evaluation processes and ultimately create a more effective and transparent education system.

Relevance and Practical Importance of the Issue

The relevance of external school evaluation lies in examining whether general education institutions meet predefined standards as assessed by external evaluators. Based on the analysis of the results obtained, a future roadmap is developed for these institutions, and identified risk factors are eliminated.

Scientific Novelty of the Issue

By using the experiences of several European countries examined in this article, it is possible to make additions to the current external evaluation procedures. Studying international practices will contribute to conducting the process more efficiently.

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