

A New Quality Education Initiative in the Middle East and North Africa

Successful kick-off at the 5th MEQA Conference 2013 in Saudi Arabia

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Overview of global engagement of IAQ QiETT

First, a short overview of the IAQ Quality in Education Think Tank (QiETT), which is active world-wide, will be given. After the introduction of the QiETT at the IAQ General Meeting in St. Louis, USA, in May 2010, there have been comprehensive further developments.

Since 2011, QiETT's goal of achieving IAQ's consultative status for UNESCO has been pursued. In May 2012, there was the first official meeting with UNESCO, to which the author was invited to the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris as QiETT's Chairman. Then IAQ submitted application documentation to UNESCO.

"Both developed and developing countries are well aware of the *quality crisis in education* and its development consequences. Most of the education reform programs have education improvement and the enhancement of equity among key strategic objectives" (UNESCO, 2012).² QiETT has put itself the task to take up these challenges.

¹ Roland Jahnke is not only a world-leading expert in Global Business Excellence of the Mail and Logistics sector but also has excellent know-how about quality management in the education sector on a global scale. In connection with the sustainability concept, he is intensively working at a knowledge transfer in the field of Global Sustainable Excellence and stronger cooperation between the business sector and the education sector. Roland is not only comprehensively involved in work done by international organizations. Together with the team of Quality in Education Think Tank (QiETT), he also is highly committed to driving active involvement of national governments as well as national and regional quality organizations so that quality can penetrate the education sector to such an extent that it can be improved significantly.

² UNESCO, *General Education Quality Analysis/Diagnosis Framework (GEQAF)*, Paris, February 2012.

In 2012, QiETT developed a global strategy in order to successively obtain participation of the regional and national quality organizations. The global strategy was presented to the IAQ Members by QiETT's Chairman in the course of the year and discussed at the IAQ General Meetings of the respective regions in the USA, Europe and Asia.

Besides a first active implementation of the global QiETT strategy in the Region Asia Pacific (see below), further cooperations were planned. QiETT has been invited to take part in the 5th MEQA International Conference in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in April 2013 organized by Saudi Quality Council.

In May 2013, a QiETT meeting took place before the ASQ World Conference (WCQI) in Indianapolis, USA, cooperation with the American Society for Quality (ASQ) and other quality organizations for the Region of the Americas were planned. As early as August 2014, there were a first exchange of experience with the national quality organizations in Argentina and a QiETT Study Tour in Buenos Aires.

As early as June 2013, QiETT had the next cooperation opportunities for the Region of Europe. QiETT was invited to the Pre-Congress "Quality Renaissance in Higher Education?" on the occasion of the 57th EOQ Congress of the European Organization for Quality (EOQ) in Tallinn, Estonia. This offered an excellent Forum for also presenting and discussing the QiETT concept in Europe by giving a keynote speech about the topic of "New Global Quality Challenges in Higher Education". In June 2014, EOQ extended the following invitation, namely that to EOQ's General Meeting in Gothenburg (Göteborg), Sweden. There still another keynote speech offered QiETT the opportunity to inform all EOQ Delegates on QiETT's activities directly and comprehensively and offer additional cooperations.

Successful IAQ/ANQ cooperation in Asia Pacific

As early as August 03, 2012, the global QiETT strategy was translated into practice in Hong Kong during the kick-off meeting of the "New Quality Education Initiative in Asia Pacific". This IAQ QiETT Initiative in Asia Pacific was continued in cooperation with the Asian Network for Quality (ANQ) during the ANQ Congress 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand, and during the ANQ Congress 2014 in Singapore. After these successful symposiums organized by QiETT, the next IAQ/ANQ Symposiums are already planned, namely at the ANQ Congress 2015 in Taiwan and at the ANQ Congress 2016 in Russia.

For piloting the program in Asia Pacific, QiETT organized the IAQ/ANQ Symposium 2012 together with the ANQ, the Hong Kong Society for Quality and the City University of Hong Kong under the motto "New challenges: Quality and Sustainability in Education of Asia Pacific". From QiETT's perspective, the "ANQ Way" provides good conditions to support the



Photo: City University of Hong Kong

Figure 1: Participants in the IAQ/ANQ Symposium 2012

Asian region in quality education improvement. IAQ, ANQ and UNESCO have the same visions.

The IAQ/ANQ Symposium took place as a Post-Congress Meeting after the ANQ Congress 2012. At this event, a regional quality organization was actively involved in QiETT's work together with the national quality organizations. In addition to a keynote speech given by Prof. Shoji Shiba, Japan, a panel discussion with representatives of the national quality organizations from all regions of the Asia Pacific Region contributed to success of the symposium (see the program at http://www.hksq.org/anq2012/post_anq.html). As for the key takeaways of the symposium, please refer to the report in the QNewZ Magazine³. You can also find photos of the symposium at <http://www.cityu.edu.hk/seem/120803.htm>.

One important issue of the key takeaways from the IAQ/ANQ Symposium 2012 was that QiETT is continuing permanent on-site exchange of experience with educational institutions ranging from kindergartens, schools (primary and secondary) to universities and institutions of lifelong learning.

As early as November/December 2012, QiETT organized a follow-up meeting in India. In India, there are enormous opportunities for quality improvements in the education sector. The IAQ QiETT Workshop in New Delhi was organized as a Pre-Congress Meeting before the 3rd Global Quality Summit. In addition to listening to interesting presentations and experience reports it was possible to discuss several quality issues in India's education sector. For this purpose, representatives of schools from New Delhi also were present. Moreover, future cooperation of IAQ QiETT with the regional quality organization ANQ was discussed.

In addition, the author gave a keynote speech about *Global Quality Education* during the 3rd Global Quality Summit in New Delhi.

In order to get the first personal impressions of the state in the schools, an *IAQ QiETT Study Tour India* was made on several days before the workshop. During this tour, visits were not only paid to municipal schools in New Delhi but also to rural schools. After the workshop, the Study Tour was continued in a slum in Mumbai.

As a result of the IAQ/ANQ regional quality education initiative in Asia Pacific, there was the *1st International Conference of quality in higher education* in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, from June 06 to 07, 2013. The host of the conference was Astana Medical University in cooperation with the government of Kazakhstan (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Healthcare), the Kazakh Organization for Quality and Innovation Management (KOQIM) and the International Academy for Quality (IAQ QiETT). This conference with over 400 participants was very successful.

In June 2014, QiETT participated in still another conference in Yakutsk, Russia. The conference "Education FORWARD" was organized by the North East University. Besides participants from universities, it was, above all, school teachers that were invited. At the conference, which was attended by 650 participants, the comprehensive concept came off perfectly.

New IAQ/MEQA cooperation in Middle East and North Africa

Before the background of the activities above, which boast very promising developments, QiETT's cooperation with the Middle East Quality Association (MEQA) should also be

³ Roland K. Jahnke, A new quality education initiative in Asia Pacific, in: *QNewZ, Official Magazine of the New Zealand Organisation for Quality*, January/February 2013, pp.11-13.

continued. The first joint activities have already been very fruitful. QiETT has been invited to take part in the 5th MEQA International Conference in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in April 2013 organized by SQC.

As early as before the conference, a QiETT Study Tour had been made in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Among other things, a site visit was paid to the Al-Andalus school. This is a very well-known private school in Jeddah with 3600 pupils (girls and boys). There is an American Diploma awarded. Besides, the idea of quality is driven by advancing excellence in education. There is a relevant accreditation. "Education for Life" is lived as a vision.



Photos: Roland K. Jahnke

Figure 2: Visit paid to the Al-Andalus school in Jeddah

Still another on-site exchange of experience took place at the King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah. On the big Campus, 60,000 students are studying in several Faculties and Divisions. During the discussions, the quality experts of the university gave a comprehensive insight into the Total Quality Program of the university.



Photos: Roland K. Jahnke

Figure 3: Exchange of experience about the quality program of the King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah

As for the subsequent 5th MEQA International Conference, the author had been invited to a keynote speech. Therefore, he could present QiETT's increasing international importance when talking about his topic "IAQ's Key Role in Global Quality Education".

In addition, the author took part in the 1st IAQ work session in the Region Middle East North Africa (MENA). During this Panel Discussion, IAQ Honorary Members Dr. Tito Conti, Dr. H. James Harrington, IAQ President Janak Mehta, Academicians Prof. M. Zairi and Dr. Ayed Al Amri also were involved. This IAQ session was also attached utmost importance to by those participating in the conference.

At QiETT's further cooperation with MEQA, improvement opportunities for Quality Education in the Region Middle East and North Africa should, in a next step, be identified. These opportunities should be fed into new concepts.

Furthermore, options for possible partnerships in the education and business sector should be developed with national quality organizations and governments. Then all deliberations might be incorporated into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).



Photos: Saudi Quality Council

Figure 4: Participation of QiETT in several plenary sessions at the 5th MEQA International Conference in Jeddah

QiETT would like to thank Dr. Ayed Al Amri from Saudi Arabia for the excellent cooperation, which he has, up to now, provided as President of the Saudi Quality Council (SQC) in Saudi Arabia and as Ex-Chairman of the Middle East Quality Association (MEQA). Also we would like to thank Dr Mansour Bin Yousef and Dr. Khalid Alfooty from SQC for their efforts to arrange and facilitate the field visits. The author is really looking forward to a continued constructive cooperation with him even in future.

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