

## EU-Project: Impact of School Inspection on Teaching and Learning (ISI-TL)

### Background

There has been considerable discussion in the policy and research communities about the measures used to promote school development and improve teaching and learning processes. So far, we have no clear models to follow and evidence on particularly the effectiveness of different types of evaluations and school inspections is lacking. The ISI-TL project aims to provide insights into the effects of school inspections and the mechanisms that facilitate these effects, bringing together perspectives from different countries. This knowledge is important in order to develop effective evaluation and inspection practices that contribute to improving education quality for children and youth.

### Facts about the project

- An EU- project within the Lifelong Learning Programme, Key Activity 1 Policy
- The project started in January 2011 and ends in December 2013
- 9 countries take part in the project
- The Mercator Foundation finances the Swiss participation
- The consortium partners collaborate with SICI (the executive committee of the European organisation of school inspectorates), national and local authorities in each of the participating countries

### Research questions

- What characterizes different types of external evaluation and school inspection?
- In what way and to what extent do the different arrangements of external evaluation and school inspection contribute to school development and to improving teaching and learning processes?
- What kind of intended as well as unintended consequences do the different arrangements of external evaluation/school inspection practices have with respect to efforts taken to improve education quality for children and youth?

### Countries / consortium partners

- The Netherlands / University of Twente (coord.)
- United Kingdom / Durham University
- Sweden / University of Gothenburg
- Ireland / Dublin City University
- Austria / Johannes Kepler University Linz
- Czech Republic / Charles University in Prague
- Norway / University of Oslo
- Switzerland / University of Teacher Education Central Switzerland Zug
- USA / Harvard University (third country partner)

### Research design / methods

- Mixed-methods design which implies a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data and the use of analytic strategies which integrate the different types of data (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).
- Case studies of external evaluation practices in four cantons which include analysis of key documents and interviews with school evaluators, school leaders and teachers.
- On the basis of the case studies, program theories of external evaluation practices are developed.
- Quantitative surveys are administered to school leaders and teachers to collect data on changes as a consequence of external evaluation during three consecutive years.

### Data analysis

- Analysis of the qualitative data: a program theory approach is used to reconstruct the underlying assumptions that explain how external evaluation practices are supposed to work.
- Analysis of the quantitative data: The research teams in England and the Netherlands will use a regression discontinuity design to provide insight in the impact of school inspections on teaching and student achievement. The researchers in Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland will use time series and growth models to analyse the changes resulting from school inspections.