

EIPA in conversation with..
Updating CAF Education:
The challenges for education and training centers in the post pandemic
Event date: 18 November 2021 - 13:00 CET
Location: Zoom

Key points:

- Has CAF helped you to overcome the challenges faced during the COVID-19 crisis?
- Which are the good practices implemented by your institutions?
- What are the lessons learned to manage and prepare better the next crisis?

Isabel Soaris

Isabel Soares holds a PhD in Anglo-Portuguese Studies and is Associate Professor (with Habilitation in Literary Journalism) at Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas, Universidade de Lisboa (University of Lisbon-Portugal), where she coordinates the Language School and serves as Vice-President for Quality Management. She was a founding member of the International Association for Literary Journalism Studies and its President between 2016 and 2018. She is a research fellow at the Centre for Public Administration and Policies and the African Studies Centre. Her research areas include: literary journalism, cultural and language studies, imperialism, and, more recently, quality management within higher education contexts.

Luisella Mori

English Teacher at ITCG Fermi, eTwinning and Erasmus + ambassadress

Luisella Mori is an English teacher at ITCG Fermi, a technical school in Pontedera, Italy. She's the coordinator of International Projects at her school, and a member of the school's Digital Team and Quality Evaluation Team. She's been an eTwinning ambassadress for several years, and a teacher trainer both for English teaching and new technologies in education. She's carried out several Erasmus+ projects and partnerships, both in the VET and in the school sector, and she regularly acts as a project evaluator and tutor for the Italian National Agency INDIRE.

She holds a degree in Foreign Languages and Literature, a PHD in French Studies and a specialization in teaching Italian to foreign students. She's been in charge of coordinating a wide range of educational projects both in her own institution and at a regional level.

Carmen Maldonado Lopez

Carmen Maldonado López started working as a teacher in a private high school in Murcia in 1999. In 2006, she achieved to work as an estate secondary school teacher in Granada, where she had previously studied as a child. Five years later, she moved to Alhama de Murcia and, since 2012, she has been in charge of CAF (Common Assessment Framework) coordination at Valle de Leiva High School. She has led, together with the high school headmaster, the Quality Commission since then. In 2013, IES Valle de Leiva received 300+ CAF-Education Certification and, in 2020, it obtained the regional and the national 500+ Certification. Recently, IES Valle de Leiva has been awarded a national prize by the Ministry of Finance and Civil Service.

Block 2 : intro on CAF EDU by Sabina Bellotti/ 13.05-13.10

What is CAF EDU and why it is important at the EU level (data on use)?

CAF in Education is the only personalized version of the CAF model that has been defined at European level among member states that belong to the CAF network. It's one of the areas on which European Public Administrations cooperate informally to exchange experiences and to create and implement projects together.

The general CAF model is a self-assessment tool for public sector organizations and has been developed by the public sector for the public sector.

It is based on the 3 key elements:

- *Principles of excellence*
- *Structure by Criteria*
- *Metrics*

It was discovered that education and training institutions used the CAF model very often (in member states that are very keen on the model) and therefore it was decided to personalize the model.

Why specially in the European Sector?

Because of the Organizational Structure -> simple, no political character, no complex hierarchy and therefore easier application

Culture of assessment and performance evaluation -> Aimed at implementing the mission and required to obtain EU funds.

Why we decided to update CAF EDU (the novelty of CAF 2020)

The CAF model follows a logic of continuous improvement in its components as it is based on examples of best practices of Pas analyzed and shared by National CAF Correspondent of EUPAN CAF Network.

Main changes of last version 'CAF 2020'

- *Simplification of the structure and language of the model for an easier and effective implementation*
- *Changes in sub criteria and examples (198): Improved focus on digitalization, agility, sustainability, innovation, participation and diversity.*

Block 3 : Benefits of implementing CAF EDU / 13.10-13.25

Question: Why did your school decide to use the CAF model and how/what did you improve?

Carmen Maldonado Lopez

Since 2005 we started to do disconnected tasks. For the first time teachers were asked to fill in satisfaction surveys and it was the first attempt to obtain feedback from the educational community. Even though there were great efforts in processing the information, they did not know what to do with the feedback because they did not know how to go further. In 2010 they were introduced to the CAF model and there was light at the end of the tunnel. They found out that a lot of dots were interconnected by using the PDCA Cycle. Now the service and results are implemented in the functioning of the school.

Luisella Mori

A person in the school created a group of people to learn about the CAF Model. The school started to assess itself. They have achieved the ECU label 3 times already (latest in 2018). They could start a process of reflection which contained all the aspects of the school's processes. It was useful to learn how to improve the policy of the activities they do and also to monitor and evaluate the results.

Question: Which benefits did you experience during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Carmen Maldonado Lopez

The benefit is working as a team now. When COVID-19 infections increased, we were able to revise all the processes step by step very quickly. When the restrictions from the government were announced a few days later and schools had to close, we already revised all their processes and adjusted smartly.

Luisella Mori

During the pandemic the CAF model supported the school in dealing with an emergency and unexpected situations. The strategy they used to evaluate and monitor the school activities were useful to immediately adopt strategies to deal with the unexpected.

During the pandemic, the CAF model supported in dealing with the emergency. The strategy used to monitor the school activities were useful to adopt immediately strategies. We set up a group of teachers who wrote down a sort of manual for distance learning: we gave advice to the whole teacher community on how to start organizing distance learning. We also set up a group that supported students and teachers who had problems with distance learning for technical assistance. In a few days we were able to react.

Isabel Soaris

We opted in Education because 1. We are a public institution 2. It's free of charge. And 3. There is a specific autonomous model for education.

The benefit is the flexibility of the model. It's flexible to use on different levels of education and still guarantee the same level of quality. With CAF we have our management system audited and

credited with and by external entities. Quality is essential to monitor all levels of activity. We can periodically monitor and get feedback from the stakeholders our community.

During the pandemic we had to change overnight from face to face to digital models. We are already very dematerialized and digitalized because of CAF so we were very quick in adopting new strategies.

It was great to receive feedback from the community which made us able to adapt quickly and we were instantly on the spot. Flexibility and instant overview that you can get are the benefits we experienced.

Block 4: Expectations for CAF revision / 13.25-13.40

Question: What part of the model do you think should be improved?

Carmen Maldonado Lopez

No clear answer; Despite the fact that all criteria have the same value, and despite the fact that the school considers criteria align to keep performance results as its main goal and they have to be successful. This can be difficult to understand for a school that has a different perspective on external or internal results.

Luisella Mori

Examples in general are not always applicable to other types of organisations and not to schools. Examples could be more in line with the school concepts. They can be more specific to identify with the target.

It would be good to have a digital platform to upload the improvement plan. It would be easier to update the CAF in Education file more often.

Sub criteria on CAF technology management is a little bit cumbersome. The technology aspect should be more transversal.

Social responsibility: it could be good to have some more examples and good practices related to schools in particular.

Isabel Soaris

It needs to be a continuous thing to focus on. People are worried and interested in the conciliation between the private and professional spheres aligning.

They would like the model to go on with the flexibility and address sustainability as also the sustainability at the personal labourer level. We have to live with the responsibility to face the future and to be able to measure the capability to do so. For this we need indicators.

Q&A Session / 13.40-13.50

Block 5: The future of CAF EDU: recommendations and conclusion / 13.50-14.00

Question: Which approach would you suggest new CAF users?...mistakes to avoid?

Luisella Mori

Key words: team, training and communication.

Advice to schools and organisations that want to join the CAF model:

Advice 1 it is fundamental to work with a motivated team who believe in what they do and who are open to change and improvement.

Advice 2: take part in training sessions to learn how to use the model.

Advice 3 :Communication: try to communicate what you are doing within the organization and also external stakeholders. This so that the community is aware of what's happening.They have to be informed.

Isabel Soaris

CAF is our pilar.

Suggestions: Teamwork and communication.

We have a department just devoted for quality to take the pressure of other departments.

That it's communicated well with our community why we are doing this. Why we are asking people to be monitored and surveyed and asked to give feedback so that everyone is on the same track.

Feedback; there should be more intercommunication between models to at least standardize some of the practices and models.

Choose CAF because it's the most approachable and flexible model, and it's internationally used and recognized at the European level so if you want to do something nice that is already structured and implemented with a solid base.

Carmen Maldonado Lopez

Teamwork and communication and usability of the performance.