Application of Blended Learning in the Quality Certified Training for Farmers in Organic Agriculture

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Abstract

A new project had been launched last year called CerOrganic is a Multilateral Project financed by the European Commission that aims to develop and test a quality assurance procedure for the vocational education/training of agricultural advisors/trainers in Organic Agriculture, based on the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF). It is a pilot project of 24-month duration, which started in January 2010. The most important objectives of the project: Determine required qualifications for teaching organic agriculture, and study EQARF requirements to incorporate them into CerOrganic Training of Trainers Program (CerOrganic ToT). Design CerOrganic ToT as an exemplary program providing quality-certified training, then pilot, evaluate and revise CerOrganic ToT using a blended learning approach combining theory and farm practice with online training resources (web portal: http://www.cerorganic.eu). Evaluate and valorise the CerOrganic quality certification procedure (through trials conducted by CerOrganic ToT trainers in their home countries, and develop template quality assurance process. CerOrganic project expects to increase the number of internationally qualified organic agriculture trainers and provide quality trainings and training certification systems that will ease farmers’ transition to organic agriculture. In the CerOrganic Training of Trainers Summer School academic lectures (presentations) and practical sessions (hands-on e-learning material, field visits) on principles, methods and practices in Organic Agriculture will be discussed. In this article we particularly focus on the results of introduction of the applied education methods during the course implementation. Key words: Quality certified training, e-learning, blended learning in OA sector.