

Focus on IAG's work

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Evaluation of the ISSA Academy

Problem

The International Social Security Association (ISSA) is a worldwide forum of social security institutions. Among the services it provides is the Academy, which is integrated into the ISSA's Centre for Excellence.

The Centre for Excellence consists of four elements. The terms of reference are the ISSA Guidelines, which are internationally recognised standards intended to improve the performance of the ISSA's member organisations, and thereby to improve social security worldwide. Their topics include for example prevention of occupational risks, workplace health promotion and promotion of sustainable employment.

Advice and support services for implementation of the Guidelines are a further element of the Centre for Excellence. After completing the programme, members can have the level of implementation of a specific standard in their institution assessed and certified.

The ISSA Academy was founded in 2014 for the purpose of deepening existing knowledge of the Guidelines and facilitating exchange. Through it, the ISSA's members, numbering approximately 340 in 160 countries, have access to platforms for problem-solving, learning and dialogue, and opportunities to acquire knowledge and develop their human resources. The ISSA Academy organizes workshops, diploma courses and in-house training courses in a number of languages to offer them virtually anywhere in the world. This



ISSA event in Geneva in 2018

@ ISSA

is achieved through a wide range of activities conducted jointly with internationally accredited training centres and with local experts and ISSA liaison personnel. In order for the current state of the Academy to be determined and possible scope for improvement identified, the ISSA commissioned an evaluation by the IAG.

Activities

A SWOT analysis had been conducted in 2016 in order to identify strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities offered by the workshop concept. The Academy as a whole was now to be evaluated. The following aspects were of interest:

- What is the current state of the ISSA Academy?
- What are the needs of the ISSA's members, and are they being met?

- What optimization potential exists?

To assess and evaluate these aspects, a mix of different quantitative and qualitative methods was used:

- Document analysis
- Member survey
- Telephone interviews
- Moderated workshop

Various sources of information and statistics for the years 2014 to 2018 were included in the document analysis. For the workshops for example, records were available for all events that had been held up to the time of the evaluation, including their attendance figures, locations, topics, and evaluations of the courses by participants and speakers.

Results of member surveys from previous years were also taken into account in the analysis. The ISSA conducts these surveys every three years. It was therefore possible for questions concerning the ISSA Academy to be added to the membership survey questionnaire in 2018. In addition, 19 telephone interviews were conducted with managers of the participating training centres, internationally active experts, regional liaison personnel and the ISSA team.

Results and use

One of the first results was the creation of logical models for each element of the Centre of Excellence and the Academy, in order to determine the short, medium and long-term goals of the services in question, and how they are interlinked. Logical models can be used to describe and evaluate the mechanisms by which the measures take effect.

Based upon the results of all the analyses, the IAG produced an evaluation report. The results were then presented and discussed at a moderated workshop at the ISSA's main site in Geneva. Together with the ISSA team and its partners, topics for optimization were identified and an action plan for the next two years developed, listing the specific projects, timetables, responsible parties and participants. This included, for example, the determining of measures to improve coordination and communication, proposals for organisation of an alumni network, and development of ideas for facilitating transfer of what has been learned to the member institutions.

The analysis found that the ISSA Academy was meeting its targets and that its activities were closely geared to the needs of its member institutions. Regular dialogue in the face-to-face meetings is conducive to sustained contact and fruitful cooperation.

The evaluation of the ISSA Academy demonstrates well how the results of analysis can be incorporated directly into a process of continual improvement. Acceptance of the results can be increased by the involvement of all parties during collection of the data, evaluation of the results and formulation of the measures.

User group

Experts and individuals with responsibility in the area of social security; providers of initial and further training

Technical enquiries:

IAG, Evaluation and workplace health management section and Corporate responsibility and training section