
Introduction

Vocational training institutions (VTIs) in Latin America and the Caribbean have been making good progress in the development of their quality management systems. They have been applying, basically, three models that are currently highly regarded internationally, (a) the ISO Standards, especially those of the ISO 9000 family, (b) the model of accreditation systems for programmes and institutions, particularly those that have been developed in the sphere of higher education, and (c) the model of national and international quality awards (which in some cases include excellence prizes for school management). VTIs in the region are developing their quality management systems more and more through the application of one or more of these three models.

The aim of this book is to contribute to a greater understanding of the methodologies of these models and how they function, and to examine the feasibility of applying them in the VTIs in the region. To this end, the following subjects will be briefly dealt with:

- a. An overview of the concept of quality applied to educational institutions (chapter 1).
- b. A methodological and functional description of the three models in question (chapters 2, 3 and 4).
- c. An examination of the ways in which the models complement each other, and an analysis of the factors involved in why the institutions might adopt one rather than another (chapter 5).
- d. An analysis of the utility and applicability of the models in VTIs, and the conclusions and recommendations of this study (chapter 6).