



LLL2010:
Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe:
The Contribution of the Education System

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Welcome to the Second issue of the newsletter for the project, Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe: The Contribution of the Education System.

More information on the project can be found on its website at –

<http://LLL2010.tlu.ee/>

Overview of the Project

As part of the Lisbon strategy, the European Union has set the goal of raising the number of adults participating in lifelong learning to 12.5% by 2010. However, the proportion of learning adults in Europe differs widely across countries. The project LLL2010, which forms part of the European Commission's 6th Framework Research Program, is dedicated to identifying the reasons behind these differences and to studying the policies and practices related to adults' participation in and access to lifelong learning in a number of European countries (see project's webpage <http://LLL2010.tlu.ee>).

The project involves researchers from thirteen countries and regions of Europe: Scotland, England, Ireland, Austria, Belgium, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Norway and Russia.

The **objectives** of this project are to:

- Show to what extent the countries differ in terms of patterns of lifelong learning.
- Reveal how these differences depend upon specific institutions and policies of each country.
- Assess the contribution of each country's education system to the development of lifelong learning.
- Trace the ways institutional and policy prerequisites for lifelong learning have been developed in European countries.
- Identify the barriers to participation in lifelong learning in terms of policies, educational institutions, enterprises' practices and potential learners' motivation.
- Identify the best solutions and most successful practices in terms of participation in lifelong learning and to decide to what extent these would be applicable in other countries.

- Propose changes, which would enhance adult participation in lifelong learning and decrease social exclusion.

ways through five subprojects. Detailed information about subprojects can be found from Inaugural Issue of the newsletter and on project webpage.

The LLL2010 research project extends over five years (commencing in September 2005), and these questions will be addressed in various

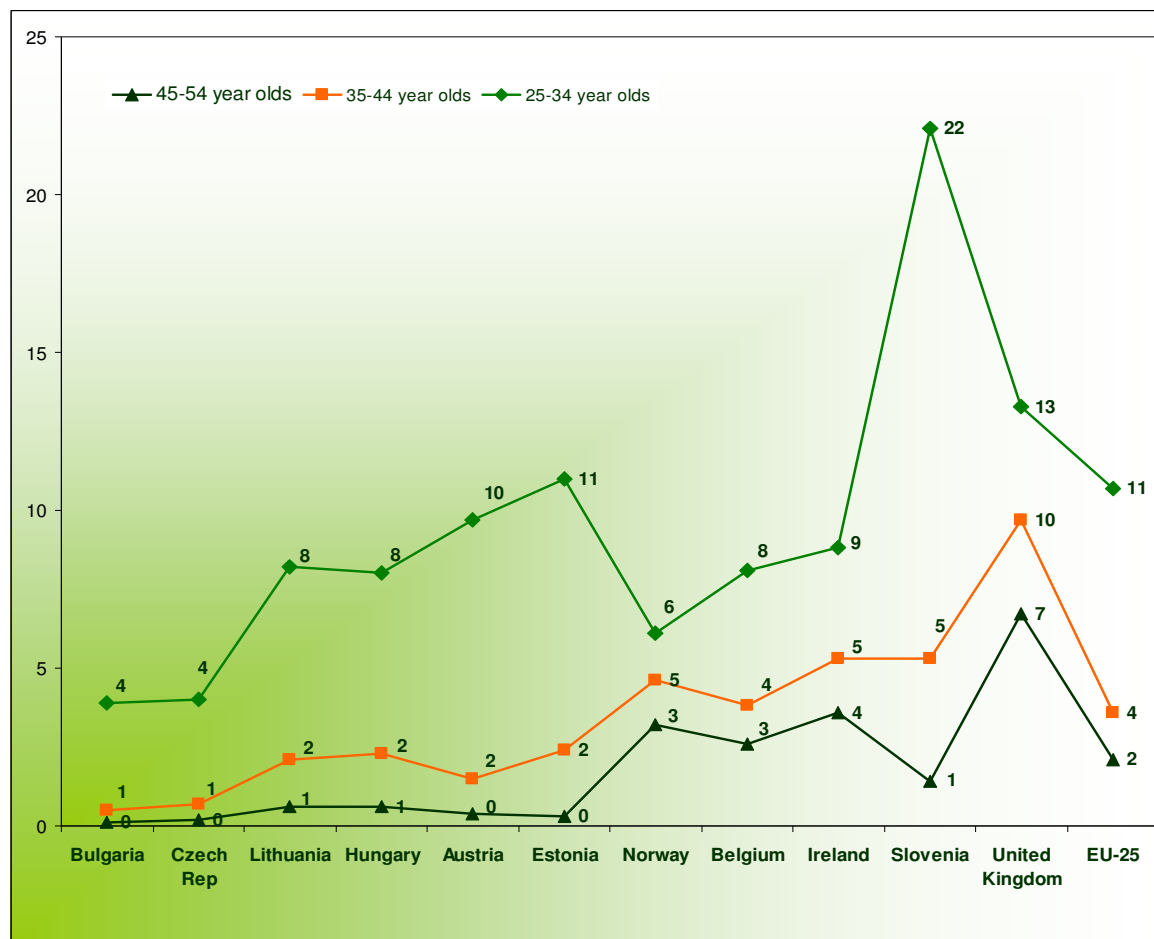


Figure 1. Participation in formal education by age in different European countries, 2005 (%)
Source: Eurostat

With ones age participation in formal education decreases, but as we can see from the Figure 1 there are great differences in this respect between European countries participating in the LLL2010 project. With reference to aging population more attention in European Union documents has been directed towards older persons' participation in lifelong learning. However, according to Eurostat 2005 data we can observe that in EU-25 member states only 2 percent of 45-54 year olds and 4 percent of 35-44 year olds participate in formal education. Respective figures are remarkably higher in United Kingdom. Slovenia is an exceptional case

having highest rate (twice of EU-25 average) of persons aged 25-34 participating in formal education, the percentage of 35-44 year olds is very much similar to western European countries, but participation rate of 45-54 year olds is closer to other eastern European countries. Interesting is also the fact that participation in formal education in Austria resembles more eastern European countries like Estonia, Hungary and Lithuania. However, overall trend is that in western countries participation rate for older age-groups is higher compared to eastern European countries.

Potential Impact

Project is expected to contribute both to competitiveness and cohesion of the EU by (a) developing and carrying out a joint agenda for a better understanding of the tensions between the knowledge-based society, lifelong learning and social inclusion in the context of enlargement of the EU and globalisation, (b) identification of best practices and suggestion of ways for implementation in order to reach the objectives for lifelong learning.

Project Landmarks

In recent months, key recent developments of the project include the completion of the Comparative Report (see below), which was the result of the cumulative work on Subproject 1. In relation to Subproject 3, a pilot survey has been completed within each of the member countries. The results of this pilot have proved effective in finalising a design for the main survey to be completed in 2007.

From March-June 2007 survey of adult learners at ISCED levels 1-5 will be organised in all participating countries. The aim of the survey is to obtain in-depth comparative information about adult learners' perspectives of formal provision for lifelong learning. This includes the expectations and attitudes towards LLL, obstacles to access and support received, determinants of choice behaviour, evaluation of the ongoing training, etc. Different hypothesis about the causes of unequal participation, with special focus on low-skilled and low literate adults, will be tested.

Completion of Comparative Report

Some of the key findings of the Comparative report included;

Typologies of Welfare & Lifelong Learning

Well-established models and typologies of welfare regimes do not provide a sound basis for distinguishing the characteristics of lifelong learning regimes. Their weaknesses in this regard relate both to their failure to provide a clear account of variety in post-communist social policy regimes, and from the specific character of lifelong learning at the interface between social policy and market.

The Importance of National Contexts

Our research strongly suggests that the diversity of national context means that a single model of lifelong learning across the EU is unlikely to be achieved. While a common policy may be encouraged by the Commission, and may lead to significant national policy developments, these will be strongly influenced by national context: institutional, political, social, ideological. Although many countries will be strongly influenced by the EU, they will – consciously or unconsciously – ‘pick and choose’ between different EU priorities.

Balance between Vocational & Non-vocational Lifelong Learning

In general, we found that lifelong learning policies are more strongly orientated toward vocational than non-vocational aims. There was some criticism of the effects of this across several countries, and we would argue for the importance of lifelong learning in the development of social as well as human capital.

Diversity of Approach in Post-Communist Countries

There is significant diversity in approaches to lifelong learning in post-communist regimes. Although a tentative explanation may be sought in different educational traditions, institutional arrangements, and socio-economic developments, we have no settled view at present on how this may best be explained.

Impact of Globalisation

It is clear that the increasing reach of the global market-place is placing intense pressures on many economies and societies. Among its effects are intensified disparities of income, wealth and power. Lifelong learning is often seen as providing a mechanism for addressing some of these problems. However, in general, patterns of lifelong learning appear to reflect, rather than challenge, these inequalities.

The Importance of Labour Conditions

It is clear that labour market conditions are central in defining the nature of lifelong learning in any particular country.

Strategy & Administrative Co-ordination

Several national reports commented on the lack a coherent strategy for lifelong learning, and viewed this as a key weakness. In some

countries, the establishment of a lifelong learning 'task-force', or coordinating body has been on the political agenda, but has yet to be realised. In general, however, one of lifelong learning's attractions (its relevance to a range of policy domains) also presents inevitable problems of co-ordination and overlap between ministries and agencies, official and unofficial. Problems of co-ordination may be made more complex by the involvement of private sector concerns in an often highly marketised sector, and there is some evidence that it is especially problematic in large countries, countries with different systems of education between regions, or countries with marked differences in economic situations or learning opportunities between urban and rural areas.

Better and more integrated involvement of social partners and stakeholders, and an effectively articulated lifelong learning strategy, may play a role in overcoming problems of co-ordination.

Lifelong Learning & Social Inclusion

There is widespread acceptance, at least rhetorically, of the need to address problems of social exclusion through creating (and ensuring wider access to) better learning opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalised groups. However, there are significant differences in approach. Some governments and policies seek to address social exclusion through community-related lifelong learning, but the more common approach is to assume that the key to overcoming exclusion is to ensure the excluded have the capacity to return to employment. The evidence is that insofar as the latter strategy is intended to address inequalities, it has limited success.

There is clear evidence that new opportunities to learn are accessed disproportionately by the already better-educated. This tendency may be exacerbated by increased private sector basis of lifelong learning provision.

Efforts should be made to achieve greater consistency and reliability in gathering and reporting of data on social inequality. Few countries currently gather and report such data in relation to access to lifelong learning.

Lifelong Learning & Ethnic Minorities

Lifelong learning clearly has a particular relevance to ethnic minorities, who are often

disadvantaged by reason of linguistic and other culturally-based sources of exclusion. While we found evidence of concern about exclusion of ethnic minorities, and policies designed to address the needs of particular minorities in various countries, we were also struck by the absence of robust quantitative data about learning provision for these groups, and about its take-up.

Lifelong Learning & Gender

Although women are relatively more successful in much lifelong learning as well as in formal education systems, they appear to be unable to maintain this advantage in the labour market. We suspect this may be because welfare regimes are relatively ineffectual in supporting women's involvement in employment.

Recognising Non-formal & Informal Learning

It is clear that, in many countries, arrangements of recognising informal and non-formal learning are weak. Connections between institutions of formal, non-formal and informal education need to be enhanced, effective qualification frameworks developed. (There is, however, a need to consider whether accreditation discourages some from entering learning; and whether this applies disproportionately to specific social groups.)

Workplace Learning

Evidence is that learning in the workplace tends to be accessed disproportionately by the already relatively highly skilled, and by public sector employees. We would endorse the need for stronger official support and promotion of learning in the private sector, and efforts to ensure that this is not disproportionately restricted to highly skilled workers. The development of effective mechanisms for paid educational leave is also important.

ICT & Lifelong Learning

Many countries recognise that they lag behind international levels of IT literacy, and see overcoming this as important in the quest for economic competitiveness and personal development. This requires not only developing better ICT structures, but also ensuring equity in access to such training. ■

Project Workshops

Workshop in Ljubljana

The third meeting of the project team was held in the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, Ljubljana, Slovenia 6– 8th July, 2006. The discussion covered;

- Subproject 1: Presentation and discussion of the Comparative Report,
- Subproject 1: Feedback, clarifications and suggestions from team members to inform the redrafting of the report,
- Subproject 3: Survey of adults continuing studies in the formal education system: general discussion and questionnaire.

Workshop in Vilnius

The most recent meeting of the entire project team took place in the Centre for International Relations and Studies, **Mykolas Romeris University**, Vilnius, Lithuania 30th November – 2nd December, 2006. Issues addressed included:

- Subproject 1: Reflection on the Comparative Report and how certain aspects of it could be developed in further course of the project,
- Subproject 3: Discussion of pilot survey results further issues relating to the survey, including suggested adaptations to the questionnaire, sampling, methods and non-response.

Joining project members at this meeting were Ms **Agnieszka Litwinska** from Eurostat Adult Education survey team and project Scientific Officer Mr **Marc Goffart** of the European Commission, who provided valuable feedback and input into the progress of the project. Project reviewers Mr **Philipp Grollman** (University of Bremen), Prof. **Dragana Avramov** (Population and social policy consultants) and Prof. **Jacqueline Brine** (University of the West of England) contributed to the project by sharing their excellence and expertise with the team.

Project Video-Conferences

It was agreed to have a video-conference on 26th of January 2007 regarding final version of the questionnaire and sampling design of adult learner's survey.

Second video-conference was held on 15th of March 2007. Mainly two issues were discussed: further developments within SP1 and dissemination strategy. ■

Publications and Events

During the first year of the project LLL2010 the knowledge has been distributed through several mediums:

Scientific articles in journals

- Boyadjieva, P. (2006). Lifelong learning or about the “And” of the second modernity. In: *Beyond disciplinary (self) restrictions*: Sofia, St. Kliment Ohridski, pp. 84-105.
- Downes, C. Maunsell, V. McLoughlin, M. Taljunaite, (forthcoming 2006). Lifelong learning in Ireland and Lithuania: Some examples of Irish policy and practice for Lithuania to consider? In: *Filosofija. Sociologija* (ed. Lithuanian Academy of Sciences), Vol.4.
- Kozlovsky, VI. (2006). Social potential of Life Long Learning and Education in New Russia. In: *The Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*. № 3. (In Russian and abstract in English).
- Kozlovsky, VI., Khokhlova, A., Nevsky, A., Saburova, E. (2006). The development Life Long Learning and Education in modern Russian society: comparative analysis. In: *The Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*. № 4. (In Russian and abstract in English).
- Saar, E. and Helemäe, J. (forthcoming 2007). Estonia on the backdrop of the European Union states: country-specific institutional context and lifelong learning. In *Journal Studies for Learning Society*.

Conference papers

- Boyadjieva, P. (2006). The university as a lifelong learning institution. Presentation at international conference Bulgarian university at the threshold of the European Union: traditions and challenges organized by the New Bulgarian University (10th October, 2006, Sofia).
- Boyadjieva, P. (2006). Lifelong learning in universities: new label for old practices or paradigm change? International seminar Transnational exchange for active aging (19th October 2006, Sofia).
- Kozlovsky, VI. (2006). Innovative potential of Life Long Learning and Education in post-soviet Russia in conference Modernisation in Russia: State and Society at High School

- Economic – State University, Moscow, 4-6th April, 2006. (In Russian).
- Kozlovsky, VI. (2006). From knowledge production (knowledge society) to Life Long Learning Society in contemporary Russia. Presented at G-8 in global world: new approaches in science and education conference, 18th May, 2006. St. Petersburg. (in Russian).
 - Litjens, J. (2006). Lifelong Learning Policies and Practice in Different European Contexts. Conference Presentation. An abstract has been accepted in March 2006 for presenting a paper at EERA (European Educational Research Association) annual conference ECER (European Conference on Educational Research) Transforming knowledge held in Geneva on 13-16th September, 2006.
 - Maunsell, C. (2006). Making Lifelong Learning a Reality for All: Examining the Republic of Ireland's Policy on Adult Education. Paper Presented at the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (F.A.C.E.) Conference, July 2005, University College Cork.
 - Milenkova, V. (2006). Reflecting the Knowledge-based Society in the Context of EU Enlargement: Research on the Labour Market Restructuring, Employment Change and Skills Acquisition in Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia and Macedonia. Presentation of the LLL2010 project at a Round table, organized jointly between the Institute of Sociology (Sofia) and the Centre of Social Research (Vienna) on 18th October 2006, Sofia.
 - Saar, E. and Helemäe, J. (2006). Estonia on the backdrop of the European Union states: country-specific institutional context and lifelong learning. Presentation at the 4th International Lifelong Learning Conference, 3-17th June 2006, Australia.
 - Saar, E., Helemäe, J., Roosmaa, E.-L. (2006). Estonia on the backdrop of the European Union states: country-specific institutional context and lifelong learning. Abstract submitted and approved for the annual conference of European Consortium for Sociological Research (ECSR) in 1-2nd September, 2006 in Prague.
 - Weedon E., Litjens, J., Riddell, S. and Crowther, J. (2006). Lifelong Learning policies in practice in different European contexts. Conference presentation. An

abstract has been submitted by 30th April 2006 and accepted for SERA (Scottish Educational Research Association) Conference 2006 Connecting Communities of Learning on 23-25th November, 2006.

- The paper on typology based on LLL2010 SP1 will be presented at the Keynote Symposium at BERA (British Educational Research Association) Annual Conference September 5 – 8, 2007 in London, UK

First National Dissemination Workshops to Stakeholders

- **In Austria (DUK)**
Salzburg 12-13.12.2006
Workshop: Lifelong Learning Policies – A European Perspective. During special session of this event attention was drawn to LLL2010 and overview of results of SP1.
- **In Belgium, Flanders (HIVA)**
Brussels 19, 20 or 23 April 2007
Dissemination of the LLL2010-project and of the Flemish study “Research into the system characteristics that influence participation in LLL in the EU-15” with main aim to further concretize the policy recommendations that result from the recent European and Flemish LLL-research.
- **In Bulgaria (IS)**
Sofia 27.10.2006
Dissemination workshop in the framework of the National Days of Lifelong Learning offered basic information on the project: objectives of the project, activities under the project, outputs of the project; the findings mentioned in the National Report of SP1 and the Comparative Report of SP1.
- **In the Czech Republic (NTF)**
Prague 6-7.12.2006
“Lifelong learning and its forms – transfer of international experience”. Basic information on the project: objectives, activities and outputs of the project; the findings of the National Report of SP1; the Comparative Report of SP 1.
Ostrava 6-7.03.2007
The key focus of the workshop was introducing the SP3 survey in the Czech Republic. The participants of the workshop were informed about the purposes, hypothesis and methodology of the survey.

- **In Estonia (IISS)**
Tallinn 3.11.2006
 At workshop “Adult education and adult education policy in Estonia: General education in context of adult education” main findings of SP1 National Report were presented
Tallinn 23.02.2007
 Introduction of the LLL2010 project and the results of the SP1 to schools and universities, with focus of the workshop was introducing the SP3 survey in Estonia.
- **In Hungary (TÁRKI)**
Budapest 3.05.2007
 At workshop on Lifelong Learning organised by Ministry of Education, TÁRKI will present summary of statistics, results from previous surveys and the SP3 survey, hypotheses, survey materials and expected outcomes.
- **In Ireland (EDC/CSHD)**
Dublin 30.04.2007
 Dissemination of the National Report on Policy and Practice in Lifelong Learning in the Republic of Ireland. Overview of the progress on LL2010 to date and presentation of the main findings of the SP1 National Report.
- **In Lithuania (STI)**
Vilnius 5.04.2007
 Dissemination workshop and the 5th anniversary meeting of the Institute for Social Research will give overview of the project LLL2010 and the results of SP1.
- **In Norway (Fafo)**
Oslo 20.04.2007
 Presentation of the main findings of SP1 National Report and hearing of comments by employers' association and the civil society representative
- **In Russia (SPSU)**
St. Petersburg 25-26.11.2007
 Preliminary agenda of workshop “Life Long Learning and Adult Education in Russia: experience of researches” includes introduction on practice of Life Long Learning and Adult Education in Russia: theoretical approaches and empirical researches; discussion of Adult Education, Vocational Learning and Post-degree Education in contemporary Russia.

- **In Slovenia (SIAE)**
Ljubljana 17.10.2006
 At adult education colloquium “Participation in Adult Education: Incentives and Barriers” two papers were presented: “Education system and lifelong learning in the international research – presentation of the LLL2010”; “Measures stimulating lifelong learning in selected European countries” based on SP1 results.
- **In United Kingdom (UNIS and UEDIN)**
Edinburgh 26.03.2007
 The workshop will offer basic information on the project and presentations on Lifelong Learning: The Scottish Executive Perspective; Lifelong Learning: Policy and Practice in England; European Policy on Lifelong Learning; A Typology of Lifelong Learning in Europe; A Macro-level Analysis of Participation in Lifelong Learning. ■

Forthcoming Activities

During spring months of 2007 project members will mainly be engaged with the **survey of adult learner** (interviews with adults studying in formal education system and with the representatives of respective schools). For processing gathered data and making comparable results **strategy of analysis** will be developed. More detailed information on the survey will be presented in the third issue of the project's newsletter that is to be issued in June 2007.

In June 2007 **first Working Paper** on Subproject 1 issues is going to be published on the project's website. During the summer months finalised SP 1 report will also be released and available on the website.

Third project **video-conference meeting** will be held on 14th of May 2007 where the agenda of the Krams (Austria) meeting in September 2007 will be discussed and agreed on.

On 4-5th September all project partners meet for the **workshop in Krams** (Austria). The main attention will be on the structure of reports of SP3, launching SP4 (SME's and the participation of workers in formal learning), discussing project publications, reports of the second period and plans for the next 18 months. ■

Participating Institutions

- Department for Continuing Education Research and Educational Management at the Danube University Krems, Austria
- Higher Institute for Labour Studies, University of Leuven, Belgium
- Institute of Sociology, Bulgaria
- The National Training Fund, the Czech Republic
- Citizenship and Learning in Europe Research Centre, University of Surrey, England, United Kingdom
- Institute of International and Social Studies, Tallinn University, Estonia
- TÁRKI Social Research Centre, Hungary
- Educational Disadvantage Centre, Centre for Human Development at St. Patrick's College, Dublin City University, Ireland
- Centre for International Relations and Studies, Mykolo Romerio University, and the Institute of Social Research, Lithuania
- Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research, Norway
- St. Petersburg State University: Department of Sociology, Department of Retraining and Improvement of Professional Skills for Sociology and Social Work, Russia
- Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom
- Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, Slovenia

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