

# LifeLong Learning 2010

Newsletter N° 4, January 2008



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



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**Welcome to the Fourth 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/>

## Conclusions of Subproject 1

Subproject 1, 'Review of Literature and Policy Documents' was the first of five LLL2010 subprojects. It commenced in September 2005 and concluded at the end of 2006. Subproject 1 was coordinated by the University of Surrey, the University of Edinburgh, and the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education.

### Aims

Subproject 1 aimed to review the conceptualisation of lifelong learning and the ways in which it is put into operation across a range of countries in Northern, Central and Eastern Europe. The focal objective was to examine the nature of educational and lifelong learning regimes in each country, along with their changes.

The primary aims of Subproject 1 included:

- Examining the extent to which different models of lifelong learning apply in national and European contexts;
- Developing a typology of policy measures focused on lifelong learning policy;
- Mapping the range of initiatives to encourage the participation of socially excluded groups.

In this issue, aims, methods, and conclusions of Subproject 1 are presented briefly, followed by highlights from an interview with lead team specialists on results of Subproject 1 and how this ties in with future work of LLL2010.

## Methods

The sub-project applies a comparative documentary analysis of approaches to lifelong learning. Through analysing national policy documents and addressing lifelong learning in participating countries, it aims to assess critically the concept of lifelong learning at various levels; to investigate and develop a typology of different policies and initiatives across the countries; and to explore the range of initiatives to encourage the participation of socially excluded groups in lifelong learning. Each team produced a national report and these reports formed the basis for the comparative report.

## Results

The main results indicate a clear trend across Europe to promote lifelong learning as a key means of addressing extensive economic and social changes and of focusing on labour market issues. Despite this general tendency and notwithstanding the consensus about lifelong learning's importance and desirability, this concept is perceived in different, and sometimes contradictory, ways.

For example, the research team found that some countries, with no clear distinction between 'old' and new EU Member States, focus on the human capital aspect of lifelong learning, while others stress its social and personal development aspect. Other dissimilarities regard the approach to the problem of social exclusion through the creation of better learning opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

Translated into recommendations, it has been concluded that the diversity of national context implies that a single model of lifelong learning is not likely to be achieved and that EU common guidelines will be strongly influenced by institutional, social and ideological elements.

## Key Concepts

There are several key concepts that emerge from Subproject 1.

- **Knowledge society** features strongly in all 13 countries. This concept mainly focuses on human capital, which is often viewed as a mechanism for social inclusion;
- Most countries mention **learning organisations** but the emphasis varies between organisations' duty to provide education and training for employees and national structures that support companies' employee training;
- There is less evidence of the **learning citizen**, and interpretation varies. For example, Scotland, England, Estonia and Lithuania stress human capital whereas Ireland, Slovenia and Norway focus on social capital and personal development.
- **Learning cities/regions** are also less used, and often interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, there is an interpretation that learning cities/regions provide the individual with access to learning, such as in Norway. On the other hand, learning cities/regions are interpreted as means of community regeneration for disadvantaged groups, such as in England. The different interpretations are typically linked to regional provision, or decentralisation of learning.

**Further information** on Subproject 1 can be found in:

Comparative Report (2007), 'Lifelong Learning: Patterns of Policy in Thirteen European Countries' published online at the project website <http://LLL2010.tlu.ee>

National Reports from each of the 13 countries can also be found at <http://LLL2010.tlu.ee>

Newsletter 2, published on the project's website offers a briefing of the Comparative Report (2007)

## Interview with team specialists over Subproject 1

Subproject 1 was led by a team of specialists, who served as coordinators for the Subproject, undertaking the analysis and reporting of SP1 findings. In the months that followed the completion of SP1, members of this team were asked to reflect on a number of issues related to SP1, including the research process undertaken in SP1, the interesting (and challenging) issues that emerged in this process and finally, how SP1 relates to the project as a whole.

### Q: What do the findings of SP1 contribute to the rest of LLL2010?

- Findings of SP1 contribute macro level context information that will be useful for all the other SPs;
- SP1 findings provide a policy foundation, which contextualises the later SPs;
- Specifically, the national reports generated in SP1 contribute to SP3;
- The typology contributes – as a starting point – for a revised typology at the end of the LLL2010 project;
- The SP1 comparative report may provide a tool for reflection at the end of the project, particularly as a baseline report and test to evaluate what has changed in terms of policy and practice.

### Q: In the process of doing the research, what issues and challenges arose?

- Developing a framework that would allow all partners to provide relevant information;
- Constructing a framework for the national reports to ensure that these would provide a basis for a comparative report;
- Communicating with all partners in order to set clear expectations of work required and receiving feedback;
- Finding a balance in the different interpretations of what should be in the various chapters in the national report;
- Balancing not only the number of people in the large team, but also the range of national backgrounds, different working patterns (e.g. holidays) and research traditions;
- Interpretation of the research questions for SP1 – and their relationship to the overall aims and objectives of the project.

### Q: What are the most important messages SP1 has for European and national policy?

- The wide range of approaches across the EU;
- The apparent diverging of policy in Central and Eastern European states, within the framework of addressing EU priorities;
- The importance of EU policy in shaping national policies, especially in new member states;
- An indication that there is a strong emphasis on the development of human capital in relation to lifelong learning policy;
- Related to the above point, whilst there was some evidence for social capital/personal development this was far more limited.
- The strong emphasis on vocational training in the New Member States' LLL activities;
- The heavy reliance on market-based delivery, and the relative weakness of regulatory regimes, for LLL;
- Funding regimes were focused on human capital and skills development. This is possibly of concern given that the policy rhetoric places strong emphasis on social cohesion.

## Ad Hoc Group Activities

In Vilnius, the fourth project workshop was held, during which the ad hoc group was introduced. The purpose of the ad hoc group is to secure a horizontal link between all Subprojects and the overall integration and coherence of the project. The main task of the ad hoc group is the development of an overall explanatory framework for lifelong learning for the LLL2010 project, which should constitute a common (theoretical) reference basis for the work within the partnership and also serve as a common point of departure for the different subprojects. Part of this objective is to develop the main guidelines for the intertwining of the micro, meso and macro levels by taking into account the planning and implementation of each subproject, as well as feedback from the European Commission and the scientific review panel (please find more information in Newsletter 3 <http://lll2010.tlu.ee/publications/project-newsletters/>).

The Ad Hoc group delivered its first paper in October 2007 in order to propose an overall framework for the project.

## Articles, Conference Presentations and Dissemination Activities

### Articles and Papers Available Online

#### Working Papers

LLL2010 project team is publishing reports on work-in-progress on website:

<http://LLL2010.tlu.ee/publications/working-papers/>

There are now 15 published papers available in the Working Paper series, including the Subproject 1 Comparative Report (2007) and national reports from each participating country.

Working Paper Number 15, entitled 'Developing a Typology of Approaches to Lifelong Learning in Europe: Varieties of Capitalism and Approaches to Lifelong Learning' was first presented at the symposium on "Lifelong Learning and Social Justice: macro, micro and meso perspectives", organised by British Educational Research Association Conference, London Institute of Education, on September 6.-8., 2007.

In late 2007 and early 2008, two working papers on Subproject 3 and 4 will be published as part of this series.

#### Policy Briefing Papers

Briefing Paper 4 will provide a short overview of ad hoc group activities. It will be published around the end of 2007.

Briefing Paper 5 is focused on Subproject 3 Theoretical Framework and will be published in October 2007.

Briefing Paper 6 will be a background paper on Subproject 4. It will be published online in February of 2008.

### Conference Presentations 2007

- Boeren, E. (2007). Impact of macro-level system characteristics on participation in lifelong learning. Paper presented at Onderwijs Research Dagen (Education Research Days), Groningen. June 2007.
- Carrigan, J. (2007). School for Scandal: Learning and the Penal Experience in Ireland. Paper presented at 4th International Conference hosted by CRL (Center for Research in Lifelong Learning), University of Stirling, Scotland. June, 2007.
- Desmedt, E., Groenez, S., Nicaise, I., & Broeck, G. van den. (2007). Participation in lifelong learning in the EU-15: the role of macro-level determinants. Presentation at European Educational Research Association Conference, Ghent, Belgium, 19 Sept. 2007.
- Groenez, S. (2007). Research into system characteristics that influence participation in lifelong learning in the EU-15. Paper presented at Invitational Seminar 'Lifelong Learning in Europe: Tensions between economic and social imperatives', University of Edinburgh. March, 2007.
- Groenez, S., & Desmedt, E. (2007). Research into macro-level characteristics that influence participation in lifelong learning in the EU-15. Paper presented at Conference of the International Sociological Association - Research Committee on Sociology of Education, Nicosia. May 2007.
- Holford, J. (2007). Citizenship education in lifelong learning: creative tension or fundamental contradiction? Presented at British Educational Research Association Conference, London, 8 Sept. 2007.
- Maunsell, C., & Downes, P. (2007). Strategies for the 'New' Educational Transition: Addressing the lifelong educational needs of young foreign nationals in Ireland". Paper presented at 4th International Conference hosted by CRL (Center for Research in Lifelong Learning), University of Stirling, Scotland. June, 2007.
- Nicaise, I. (2007). The influence of systemic characteristics on participation in lifelong learning. Keynote speech to VETNET Colloquium, European Educational Research Association Conference, Ghent, Belgium, 19 Sept. 2007.
- Riddell, S., Weedon, E., Litjens, J., Crowther, J., Holford, J. (2007). Varieties of Capitalism

and Approaches to Lifelong Learning. Presented at British Educational Research Association Conference, London, 7 Sept. 2007.

and the Research committee in education at the Bulgarian Sociological Association

### Scientific Articles in Journals (2007 and Forthcoming)

- Boyadjieva, P. (2007) "Lifelong Learning as an Institutional Strategy in Higher Education". *Polities* N. 3, Institute "Open Society", (<http://www.politiki.bg>)
- Saar, E. and Helemäe, J. (forthcoming) „Estonia on the backdrop of the European Union states: country-specific institutional context and lifelong learning. *Journal Studies for Learning Society*.
- Ure, O. B. (2007). Lifelong Learning in Norway. A Deflating Policy Balloon or an Act of Piecemeal Implementation? Fafo report 30.

### Dissemination Activities

In addition to articles and conference presentations, there is a variety of dissemination activities aimed at stakeholders at local, national, and European levels. These activities will continue to take place in each of the participating countries. The following information features some of these activities:

In **Austria**, preliminary results of SP3 were presented to a high level expert group responsible for the reform of vocational oriented evening schools in September 2007.

Dissemination in **Norway** has been concentrated on distributing the project leaflet to visitors of the research centre and to major stakeholders in Norwegian lifelong learning, such as the Ministry of Education and Research.

In **Bulgaria**, dissemination activities will involve a presentation of the results obtained in the project at the Bulgarian National Days of Lifelong Learning in 2008. There will also be a briefing of Bulgarian state authorities (Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) with relevant results of the project. The Bulgaria team is also involved with briefing the management structures of the penitentiaries with the results and discussion with them their future educational strategies. Lastly, there is a planned presentation of the project and the results obtain so far at a joint seminar of Institute of Sociology

### Forthcoming Activities

In March 2008, project partners will finish **Subproject 3 survey of adult learner**, **National Reports** on SP3 survey will be ready in August 2008 and **Comparative Report** in the beginning of the year 2009.

In January 2008 (Budapest meeting), the ad hoc group will present a paper on **common LLL2010 theoretical framework**.

Project partners will continue to meet via regularly scheduled videoconferences.

In the beginning of 2008 is the launch of Subproject 4, marked by a paper on SP4 – **Participation of SME's in Continuous Vocational Training**. After agreeing on SP4 methodology, partners will start fieldwork (case studies in enterprises).

January 24-26, 2008, project partners met in Budapest, Hungary for the sixth LLL2010 workshop, hosted by TÁRKI.

The seventh project workshop is planned for 18-20<sup>th</sup> of September 2008 to be held in Prague, Czech Republic, hosted by NTF.

## 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
- The University of Nottingham, 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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