



European Employment Observatory **Review: Autumn 2007**



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Egbert Holthuis (DG EMPL D/2)
Susana Pratt (DG EMPL D/2)

SYSDEM Network

Belgium:

Luc Sels
Steunpunt Werk en Sociale Economie, K.U.
Leuven
Leuven

Bulgaria: Pobeda Loukanova
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Sofia

Czech Republic: Daniel Münich
CERGE-EI
Prague

Denmark: Per Kongshøj Madsen
CARMA, Aalborg University
Aalborg

Germany: Kurt Vogler Ludwig
ECONOMIX Research & Consulting
Munich

Estonia: Reelika Leetmaa
PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies
Tallinn

Ireland: Jerry Sexton
Dublin

Greece: Dimitris Karantinos
National Centre of Social Research
Athens

Spain: Elvira González Gago
Centro de Estudios Económicos Tomillo, S.L.
Madrid

France: Sandrine Gineste
Bernard Brunhes Consultants
Paris

Italy: Giuseppe Ciccarone
Fondazione G. Brodolini
Rome

Cyprus: Louis N. Christofides
University of Cyprus
Nicosia

Latvia: Alfreds Vanags
Baltic International Centre for Economic Policy
Studies
Riga

Lithuania: Boguslavas Gruževskis
Institute of Labour and Social Research
Vilnius

Luxembourg: Roland Maas
CEPS / INSTEAD
Differdange

Hungary: Almos Telegdy
CEU - Central European University / Institute
of Economics of the Hungarian Academy of
Sciences
Budapest

Malta: Manwel Debono
Centre for Labour Studies, University of Malta
Msida

Netherlands: Joop Schippers
VanDoorneHuisken en Partners
Utrecht

Austria: Ferdinand Lechner
Lechner, Reiter & Riesenfelder OEG
Vienna

Poland: Elżbieta Kryńska
IPISS - Institute of Labour and Social Studies
Warsaw

Portugal: Reinhard Naumann
DINAMIA
Lisbon

Romania: Cătălin Ghinăraș
National Labour Research Institute
Bucharest

Slovenia: Miroslav Ignjatović
University of Ljubljana
Ljubljana

Slovakia: Luboš Vagač
Center for Economic Development
Bratislava

Finland: Hannu Kaseva
The Research Institute of the Finnish Economy
(ETLA)
Helsinki

Sweden: Dominique Anxo
CELMs - Centre for European Labour Market
Studies
Gothenburg

United Kingdom: Eleanor Breen
Breen and Partners
London

Croatia: Predrag Bejaković
Institute of Public Finance
Zagreb

Turkey: Hakan Ercan
Middle East Technical University
Ankara

Norway: Knut Larsen
ECON Analyse AS
Oslo

MISEP Network

Belgium: Joseph Remy, Ministère de l'Emploi
et du Travail

Bulgaria: Todor Krastev, Ministry of Labour
and Social Policy
Boyka Gyosheva, Employment Agency

Czech Republic: Miloš Tichý / Stanislav
Beneš, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Denmark: Leif Christian Hansen / Tayyiba
Ahmad, National Labour Market Authority

Germany: Arnold Hemmann,
Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales
Wolfgang Müller, Bundesagentur für Arbeit
Estonia: Nele Labi / Ülle Marksoo, Ministry of
Social Affairs

Ireland: Marie Dempsey, Department of
Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Kevin Quinn, FÁS

Greece: Eirini Kalavrou, Ministry of Labour
Kleoniki Fotiadou, OAE

Spain: Elvira Gonzalez Santamarta / Marina
Garcia Lopez, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos
Sociales

France: Caroline Méchin, DGEFP,
Département synthèses, Ministère de l'emploi
Régine O'Neill, Agence Nationale pour
l'Emploi (ANPE)

Italy: Antonella Buonopane / Pietro
Tagliatesta, Ministero del lavoro

Cyprus: Eleni Kalava, Ministry of Labour and
Social Insurance
Savvas Procopides, Human Resource
Development Agency

Latvia: Imants Lipskis, Ministry of Welfare,
Labour Department

Grieta Tentere, State Employment Service
Lithuania: Rasa Malaiškienė, Ministry of Social
Security and Labour

Inga Buckaite, National Labour Exchange
Luxembourg: Jean Hoffmann,
Administration de l'Emploi

Hungary: Tibor Bors Borbély, Ministry of
Employment and Labour

Oliver Demkó, Public Employment Service

Malta: Edwin Camilleri, Ministry of Education,
Youth and Employment

Netherlands: Martin Blomsma, Ministerie van
Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid
Theo Keulen, Central Organisation for Work
and Income

Austria: Tanja Jandl, Ministry of Economy and
Labour
Gudrun Nachtschatt, Arbeitsmarktservice
Österreich

Poland: Beata Chromińska, Ministry of
Economy, Labour and Social Policy
Marcin Dygoń, Voivodship Labour Office in
Rzeszów

Portugal: Pedro Bogalho, Ministerio do
Trabalho e da Solidariedade
Angela Costa, Employment and Vocational
Training Institute

Romania: Cristina Mereuta, Employment
Department (MLSS)
Sonia Diaconescu, National Employment
Agency

Slovenia: Damjana Kosir, Ministry of Labour,
Family and Social Affairs
Alenka Rumbak, Employment Service of
Slovenia

Slovakia: Roman Brunovsky, Ministry of
Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak
Republic

Finland: Marja-Riitta Pihlman / Marjukka
Piiiparinen, Ministry of Labour

Sweden: Pontus Ringborg, Ministry of
Industry, Employment and Communications
Bengt Härshammar, Swedish National Labour
Market Board (AMS)

United Kingdom: Satish Parmar, Department
for Work and Pensions
Peter Sydsæff, Jobcentre Plus

Croatia: Marina Gašpar-Lukić, Ministry of
Labour and Entrepreneurship

Turkey: Ali Ercan Su, Ministry of Labour and
Social Security
Berrin Karabüber, Turkish Employment
Organisation

Iceland: Frank Fridriksson, Directorate of
Labour

Norway: Ola RIBE, Ministry of Labour and
Government Administration

EEO NETWORK SERVICES

GHK Consulting Limited
30 St Paul's Square
Birmingham B3 1QZ, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 121 233 8900
Fax: +44 121 212 0308
E-mail: eeo@ghkint.com

Director: Gill Whitting

Manager: Caroline Lambert

Editors: Inga Pavlovaite, Michelle Harrison,
Fiona Dearing

This publication is based on articles provided
by the SYSDEM correspondents. National
articles are the sole responsibility of the
author(s).

European Employment Observatory

Review: Autumn 2007

European Commission

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
Unit D.2

Manuscript completed in March 2008

Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission may be held responsible for the use that may be made of the information contained in this publication.



1. © Carl Cordonnier/Dailylife
2. © 123RF
3. © Carl Cordonnier/Dailylife

Europe Direct is a service to help you
find answers to your questions about
the European Union

Freephone number (*):
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*) Certain mobile telephone operators do not allow access
to 00 800 numbers or these calls may be billed.

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet.
It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu>).

© European Communities, 2008
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2008

ISSN: 1725-5376

Printed in Luxembourg

PRINTED ON WHITE CHLORINE-FREE PAPER

Table of contents

Overview of SYSDem experts' national articles on lifelong learning and skills development: a review of trends and policies with a particular focus on gender and age.....	5
--	---

National Articles on learning and skills development: a review of trends and policies with a particular focus on gender and age.....	21
---	----

Member States

Belgium.....	23
Bulgaria.....	27
Czech Republic.....	31
Denmark.....	35
Germany.....	41
Estonia.....	47
Ireland.....	51
Greece.....	57
Spain.....	61
France.....	67
Italy.....	73
Cyprus.....	79
Latvia.....	83
Lithuania.....	87
Luxembourg.....	91
Hungary.....	97
Malta.....	101
The Netherlands.....	105
Austria.....	113
Poland.....	117
Portugal.....	123
Romania.....	129
Slovenia.....	137
Slovakia.....	143
Finland.....	151
Sweden.....	157
United Kingdom.....	163

Candidate countries

Croatia.....	171
Turkey.....	175

EEA country

Norway.....	181
-------------	-----

Overview of SYSDEM experts' national articles on lifelong learning and skills development:

a review of trends and policies
with a particular focus on gender and age

ACRONYMS

ALMP –	Active Labour Market Policies
CVT –	Continuing Vocational Training
EES –	European Employment Strategy
ESF –	European Social Fund
EU –	European Union
ISCED –	International Standard Classification of Education
LFS –	Labour Force Survey
LLL –	Lifelong Learning
NGO –	Non-governmental Organisations
NRP –	National Reform Programme
OP –	Operational Programme
SMEs –	Small Medium Enterprises
UNDP –	United Nations Development Programme

1 Introduction

This executive summary from the European Employment Observatory provides an overview of trends and policies of lifelong learning (LLL) and skills development, with a particular focus on gender and age across the 30 European countries covered by the Observatory (27 European Union (EU) Member States plus Norway, Croatia and Turkey). It is based on articles written by the SYSDem network of national experts from each country.

The executive summary provides an overview of the following issues:

- trends in the participation of adults (25+) in LLL, taking account of age and gender;
- obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in LLL and skills development;
- quality and impact of training; and
- national strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice.

2 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning, taking account of age and gender

Table 1 shows that, in 2006, 9.6% of the population aged 25-64 participated in LLL over the four weeks prior to the survey in the EU-27 countries. Differences between countries are very significant, ranging from the participation rate of 32.1% in Sweden to 1.3% in Bulgaria and Romania.¹ Only seven countries have reached the target of 12.5% participation rate, to be reached by 2010.

The overall LLL participation rate for the EU-27 shows a positive trend, having increased by 35% since 2000. It is significant that the participation rates have increased in most countries covered by the EEO over the last ten years. The increases have been very substantial in some countries, e.g. Luxembourg, Cyprus, Belgium, Spain, and Slovenia. However, the participation rates in these countries were extremely low in the 1990s. The participation rate has fallen in the past years in Latvia and Bulgaria.² However, it is important to emphasise that in some countries (e.g. Spain) there has been an important methodological break in the series, which might have affected the trends.

Table 1 also shows that on average, for the EU-27 in 2006, there are more women than men taking part in LLL (10.4% of women aged 25+ took part in LLL, compared to 8.8% of adult men). Only in three countries (Germany, Greece and Turkey) were there more men participating in training, compared to women.

(¹) However, national data available in Romania show a higher rate of participation in LLL, see the national Romanian article.

(²) Participation has also fallen in Slovakia over the 2002-2006 period. However, the abrupt drop in the participation from 8.5% in 2002 (the earliest year available) to 3.7% in 2003 is difficult to account for. If data for 2002 is discounted, a moderate increase in LLL participation is reported, from 3.7% in 2003 to 4.3% in 2006.

Table 1: Participation in lifelong learning, proportion of population aged 25-64, by sex, comparing 2006 figures with figures for 1995

	TOTAL			FEMALE			MALE		
	2006	1995 ³	Change 2006-1995, %	2006	1995 ⁴	Change 2006-1995, %	2006	1995 ⁵	Change 2006-1995, %
EU-27	9.6	7.1	35%	10.4	7.5	39%	8.8	6.7	31%
Belgium	7.5	2.8	168%	7.6	2.3	230%	7.4	3.3	124%
Bulgaria	1.3	1.4	-7%	1.3	1.4	-7%	1.3	1.3	0%
Czech Republic	5.6	5.6	0%	5.9	5.4	9%	5.4	5.8	-7%
Denmark	29.2	16.8	74%	33.8	18.9	79%	24.6	14.8	66%
Germany	7.5	5.7	32%	7.3	4.8	52%	7.8	6.4	22%
Estonia	6.5	4.3	51%	8.6	5.7	51%	4.2	2.7	56%
Ireland	7.5	4.3	74%	8.9	4.3	107%	6.1	4.4	39%
Greece	1.9	0.9	111%	1.8	0.9	100%	2	1	100%
Spain	10.4	4.3	142%	11.5	4.8	140%	9.3	3.8	145%
France	7.5	2.9	159%	7.8	3	160%	7.2	2.8	157%
Italy	6.1	3.8	61%	6.5	3.6	81%	5.7	4	43%
Cyprus	7.1	2.6	173%	7.8	2.2	255%	6.5	3.1	110%
Latvia	6.9	7.3	-5%	9.3	9.2	1%	4.1	5.1	-20%
Lithuania	4.9	3.9	26%	6.6	5.3	25%	2.9	2.4	21%
Luxembourg	8.2	2.9	183%	8.7	2.3	278%	7.6	3.5	117%
Hungary	3.8	2.9	31%	4.4	3	47%	3.1	2.7	15%
Malta	5.5	4.5	22%	5.6	3.5	60%	5.5	5.6	-2%
Netherlands	15.6	13.1	19%	15.9	12.2	30%	15.3	13.9	10%
Austria⁶	13.1	7.7	70%	14	6.3	122%	12.2	9.2	33%
Poland	4.7	4.3	9%	5.1	4.9	4%	4.3	3.7	16%
Portugal	3.8	3.3	15%	4	3.5	14%	3.7	3	23%
Romania	1.3	0.9	44%	1.3	0.8	63%	1.3	1.1	18%
Slovenia	15	7.3	105%	16.3	7.9	106%	13.8	6.7	106%
Slovakia	4.3	8.5	-49%	4.6	8.8	-48%	4	8.2	-51%
Finland	23.1	16.3	42%	27	17.5	54%	19.3	15.2	27%
Sweden	32.1	26.5	21%	36.5	28.4	29%	27.9	24.7	13%
UK	26.6	19.2	39%	31.2	22.3	40%	22	16.3	35%
Croatia	2.1	1.9	11%	2.1	1.9	11%	2	2	0%
Turkey	2	1	100%	1.6	0.8	100%	2.4	1.2	100%
Norway	18.7	16.5	13%	20.2	16.7	21%	17.2	16.3	6%

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

⁽³⁾ UK=1999, Slovenia=2003, EU-27=2000, Germany=1996, Cyprus=1999, Latvia=2002, Estonia=1997, Czech Republic=2002, Malta=2000, Lithuania=1999, Poland=2001, Slovakia=2002, Hungary=1997, Bulgaria=2001, Romania=1997, Sweden=2005.

⁽⁴⁾ Sweden=1996, UK=1999, Finland=1996, Slovenia=2001, EU-27=2000, Germany=1996, Cyprus=1999, Latvia=2002, Estonia=1997, Czech Republic=2002, Malta=2000, Lithuania=1999, Poland=2001, Slovakia=2002, Hungary=1997, Bulgaria=2001, Romania=1997.

⁽⁵⁾ EU-27=2000, Bulgaria=2001, Czech Republic=2002, Germany=1996, Estonia=1997, Cyprus=1999, Latvia=2002, Lithuania=1999, Hungary=1997, Malta=2000, Poland=2001, Romania=1997, Slovenia=2001, Slovakia=2002, Finland=1996, Sweden=1996, UK=1999.

⁽⁶⁾ However, national data available in Austria paint a different picture of participation in LLL, as described in the national Austrian article.

Table 2 shows the participation rate in any kind of learning activity (i.e. formal, non-formal and informal learning), over the four weeks in 2006 preceding the survey, broken down by age and gender.

Participation rates decrease significantly with age in the EU-27 (from 15.5% for 25-34 year olds, to 4.6% in the 55-64 age group).

This is happening across all the countries covered. However, in some countries the participation rate remains high throughout the age groups, which is consistent with a deeply embedded LLL culture in these countries (e.g. Denmark and Sweden). Importantly, participation in learning decreases significantly in the middle-age groups. Across the EU-27, the rate decreased from 9.7% for 35-44 year olds, to 7.6% in the 45-54 age group.

Table 2: Participation in lifelong learning, proportion of population aged 25-64, by age and sex, 2006

	25-34			35-44			45-54			55-64		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
EU-27	16.3	14.8	15.5	10.8	8.6	9.7	8.5	6.6	7.6	5.1	4.0	4.6
Belgium	12.1	11.4	11.8	8.3	7.7	8.0	6.2	6.5	6.4	3.4	3.7	3.5
Bulgaria	3.8	4.1	4.0	-	-	(0.8)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Czech Republic	9.7	8.8	9.2	6.6	6.0	6.2	4.9	3.5	4.2	1.7	2.2	2.0
Denmark	40.9	37.6	39.2	34.3	24.4	29.3	32.4	20.6	26.5	27.8	15.9	21.8
Germany	15.3	18.1	16.7	6.7	6.4	6.6	5.2	4.9	5.0	2.5	2.6	2.5
Estonia	(15.3)	(9.1)	12.2	(11.0)	-	(7.4)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ireland	12.3	9.0	10.6	8.8	6.1	7.4	7.7	4.5	6.1	4.6	2.8	3.7
Greece	4.9	5.4	5.1	1.4	1.4	1.4	(0.4)	(0.5)	0.4	-	-	-
Spain	17.9	15.3	16.6	11.0	8.9	9.9	8.6	6.2	7.4	5.9	3.3	4.6
France	12.9	12.1	12.5	8.1	7.5	7.8	6.5	6.1	6.3	3.1	2.2	2.7
Italy	13.7	11.2	12.5	5.7	4.9	5.3	4.2	4.1	4.2	1.7	2.0	1.8
Cyprus	12.4	11.0	11.7	8.1	6.3	7.2	5.9	4.7	5.3	(3.2)	(2.2)	2.7
Latvia	16.0	6.6	11.2	11.4	(4.7)	8.1	7.5	-	5.3	-	-	(1.8)
Lithuania	15.7	(7.2)	11.4	(5.7)	-	(3.7)	(3.4)	-	(2.3)	-	-	-
Luxembourg	15.8	12.1	13.9	8.8	8.6	8.7	5.9	5.9	5.9	(3.9)	(2.5)	3.2
Hungary	10.2	7.6	8.9	4.6	2.5	3.6	1.8	0.9	1.4	-	-	(0.3)
Malta	7.9	(10.2)	9.1	(7.3)	(5.9)	6.6	(4.6)	-	(3.9)	-	-	-
Netherlands	24.2	26.1	25.1	17.1	16.4	16.8	13.8	12.1	12.9	8.0	6.3	7.1
Austria	20.8	19.8	20.3	14.4	12.5	13.4	12.8	9.6	11.2	7.0	6.0	6.5
Poland	11.0	10.1	10.6	5.4	3.1	4.2	2.4	1.6	2.0	(0.7)	(0.9)	0.8
Portugal	9.1	8.1	8.6	3.4	3.1	3.3	1.6	1.6	1.6	-	-	0.7
Romania	3.6	3.8	3.7	1.0	(0.6)	0.8	-	-	(0.3)	-	-	-
Slovenia	27.4	26.7	27.0	18.6	13.8	16.2	11.4	8.4	9.9	(6.4)	(4.4)	5.4
Slovakia	7.8	6.7	7.3	4.8	3.6	4.2	3.1	2.4	2.7	1.6	2.0	1.8
Finland	35.4	32.4	33.8	29.8	20.1	24.9	27.1	15.8	21.5	17.0	9.9	13.5
Sweden	39.2	34.4	36.8	37.7	28.2	32.9	36.8	25.8	31.2	31.4	22.3	26.7
UK	35.3	28.6	32.0	32.4	23.6	28.1	30.0	20.3	25.3	24.3	14.1	18.6
Croatia	(7.6)	(6.8)	7.2	(1.7)	(1.3)	(1.5)	-	-	(0.6)	-	-	-
Norway	26.1	23.6	24.8	22.6	18.1	20.3	19.7	15.7	17.7	10.9	10.4	10.6

Source: Eurostat LFS, ad hoc module on lifelong learning 2003. Informal learning is not included in the UK. Data not available for Turkey. Data in brackets lack reliability due to the small sample size. Data for Sweden and Croatia is from 2005.

Table 3 shows the participation rate in any kind of learning activity (i.e. formal, non-formal and informal learning), over the four weeks in 2006 preceding the survey, broken down by the educational attainment status of participants. It is evident that the level of prior educational attainment is a significant determinant

of participation in learning later in life. The table shows that across the EU-27 the participation of the highest skilled people (those with tertiary degree) is five times higher than people with the lowest level of educational attainment (those with pre-primary, primary and lower-secondary education).

Table 3: Participation in lifelong learning, proportion of population aged 25-64, by educational attainment status, 2006			
	Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2 (ISCED 1997)	Upper secondary education - level 3 (ISCED 1997)	Tertiary education - levels 5-6 (ISCED 1997)
EU-27	3.7	8.9	18.7
Belgium	3.0	6.5	13.3
Bulgaria	-	1.3	2.6
Czech Republic	0.9	4.4	16.1
Denmark	18.4	26.8	37.9
Germany	2.6	7.0	12.3
Estonia	-	4.9	11.0
Ireland	2.9	6.6	13.5
Greece	0.3	2.6	3.9
Spain	4.3	11.9	20.0
France	3.1	6.9	14.1
Italy	1.1	9.3	15.6
Cyprus	1.2	5.5	15.2
Latvia	2.4 (2004)	5.9	13.3
Lithuania	-	3.5	9.5
Luxembourg	3.3	9.3	13.1
Hungary	0.7	3.8	7.3
Malta	3.0	(8.1)	18.3
Netherlands	8.2	16.0	22.1
Austria	4.6	12.8	23.8
Poland	(0.6)	3.3	13.1
Portugal	1.3	10.6	10.1
Romania	-	1.6	2.5
Slovenia	(3.8)	14.2	27.1
Slovakia	-	3.4	11.9
Finland	10.6	21.7	32.1
Sweden	18.3 (2005)	28.5 (2005)	45.7 (2005)
UK	16.1	24.2	37.3
Croatia	-	-	-
Norway	-	9.1	19.8

Source: Eurostat LFS, ad hoc module on lifelong learning 2003. Informal learning is not included in the UK. Data not available for Turkey. Data in brackets is unreliable due to the small sample size.

3 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

Obstacles and issues reported in the national articles as preventing further adult participation in LLL are multiple and varied in the countries covered by the EEO. There is a combination of factors on both demand and supply sides of LLL.

In relation to generating further demand for LLL, individuals face a number of important barriers which prevent their further participation in learning and development. The costs of training, both in terms of financial resources and opportunity costs, are one of the key obstacles in e.g. Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey (candidate country) and the UK. Many individuals are also very sceptical about the benefits of LLL and do not view it as a necessity in their careers. This is highlighted in the national reports from Belgium, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway (EEA country), Slovenia and the UK. Low-skilled people, especially, can lack the motivation and have low aspirations to even consider LLL as appropriate to their lives (this is mentioned in the reports from e.g. Denmark, Poland and Portugal). Importantly, many low-skilled people are unable to participate in LLL programmes and courses as they lack the basic skills (literacy and numeracy) necessary to participate, e.g. in Lithuania, Poland, Spain, Turkey (candidate country). In relation to highly-skilled people, a strong emphasis on initial training and a preference for a tertiary degree (reported in e.g. Cyprus, Greece and Slovakia) create significant obstacles to participation in training.

In addition, there is a lack of correlation between participation in training and any subsequent increase in wages in several countries (e.g. Bulgaria, Finland, France, Italy, and the Netherlands). This means that a return on the investment of time and money in training is not visible, thereby decreasing the attractiveness of LLL.

Also important is the fact that many adults simply lack time to participate in training. Difficulties in combining training, work and private life were reported as a significant obstacle to participation in LLL in the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway (EEA country), Portugal and Slovakia.

A further obstacle to increasing participation in LLL is the unwillingness of some employers to support learning activities amongst their employees (e.g. in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, UK). The cost of training is a significant issue, as is reluctance to invest in staff training in industries with a high staff turnover and a lack of awareness of the benefits in training. However, the size of

employer is a significant determinant as small enterprises face particular challenges in financing and releasing staff for training (this was reported in Greece, Italy, Portugal, Sweden and the UK). In France and Germany, employers are mostly focussed on training their highly-skilled employees, which means that lower skilled employees have fewer training opportunities (although arguably they have a greater need for training).

The reluctance of governments and public authorities to support LLL is also a significant obstacle to increasing adult participation. LLL receives little public support in e.g. Germany, Slovakia and Croatia (candidate country). No special financial incentives exist to support participation in learning in, for example, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Slovenia. Indeed, in Estonia employers face an increased tax burden if they want to pay for their employees obtaining education which leads to a degree (although the continuation of this is being debated by policy-makers). In Malta, a small difference between unemployment benefit and minimum wage levels acts as a disincentive for the low-skilled to participate in training which could lead to a job. Even where public support exists, there could be more done to increase adult participation in LLL. For example, in Portugal all employees have a right to 35 hours of training per year (although this right is not monitored to ensure its enforcement).

Some features of the national labour markets also create disincentives for adults to participate in LLL. For example, a significant demand for low-skilled workers in Bulgaria and Portugal means that such workers do not have an incentive to participate in learning and development. Another example relates to the high proportion of temporary workers in Portugal, resulting in employers being reluctant to invest in their training.

The national articles highlight several obstacles in relation to ensuring effective supply of LLL. Importantly, there is a lack of effective systems for information and guidance on LLL opportunities (e.g. in Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and UK). The existing LLL provision is seen as too academic, insufficiently applied and unable to meet the needs of the labour market and employers (e.g. in the Czech Republic, Germany, Latvia, Poland, UK). The existing system of LLL providers and learning opportunities is inadequate, outdated and poorly planned (this was reported in Croatia (candidate country), Greece, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia). The existing provision is also insufficiently targeting groups individuals with special needs, e.g. older workers or low-skilled. This is the case for example in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Norway (EEA country) and Poland.

In addition, LLL systems are reported to lack flexibility to meet the demands of modern workers for flexible learning times, locations and modes of delivery (e.g. in Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands). The complicated structure of LLL systems (e.g. the multiplicity of funders and learning providers) also makes it more difficult for adult learners to access the provision and relevant learning support, as well as rendering LLL systems less efficient than they could be. This is reported in e.g. Finland,

France and Germany. The lack of validation of learning is seen as a significant barrier to increasing adult participation in e.g. Lithuania, Slovakia and Turkey (candidate country). In such cases, potential learners are less inclined to access training as they are unsure about its status and importance in the labour market.

LLL provision also varies geographically; much provision is concentrated in larger cities (e.g. Poland, Slovenia) or in particular regions (e.g. in the North of Italy). This creates additional difficulties for those learners who are not located close to the places in which LLL is provided.

4 Quality and impact of training

This section examines the key factors influencing the quality and impact of education and training for adults. The factors influencing quality are examined first, followed by an overview of the role of ESF in adult education and training. The section then moves on to examine the impact of training. It examines the availability of the evidence necessary to assess impact, and then examines the impact of training for individuals, firms and the wider economy.

4.1 Factors influencing the quality of training

The national articles recognise a variety of systemic problems associated with adult education and training. Systems need to ensure that informal and non-formal learning is recognised and that high quality, robust, quality assured training institutions are in place to deliver adult education and training: educators and training providers need to be appropriately trained and compete on quality rather than price; they need to embrace a variety of learning methods to ensure that the needs of individuals, employers and the economy are met. The expansion of LLL is a policy goal, although it presents the inter-related challenge identified in the Lithuanian article: how to expand adult education and training whilst also ensuring quality.

Several of the articles report on solutions that have been, or are being, implemented to address these problems (see Table 4). It is clear that in many cases ESF has a key role to play in addressing the identified adult education and training system problems.

Country	Problems	Solutions
Latvia	Lack of a co-ordinated training system.	Regional education and training co-ordinators will be introduced tasked with identifying regional labour market needs.
Malta	The lack of a defined policy context for adult education and training. The need for infrastructure to support policy implementation	Introduction of the National Commission for Higher Education and the Malta Qualifications Council.
Portugal	VET system reforms over the past decade	Introduction of certified training centres, trainer training courses and the elaboration of studies to analyse the labour market skills needs and the employability outcomes of different training courses.
UK	Concerns expressed by employers about the quality of training	Introduction of the 'framework of excellence in further education' which provides a single unified framework for assessing and reporting on performance and achievement.

Education and training providers that can deliver high quality education and training are essential. Factors which affect the quality of providers include the following:

- **Providers' orientation towards the labour market:** concerns are expressed that education and training providers are not sufficiently orientated towards the needs of the labour market and use outdated equipment, delivering training which falls short of employers' requirements (e.g. in Bulgaria and Poland).
- **The training methods used:** it is important that the learning experience should not simply replicate people's experience of basic education (this is especially important for people who experienced problems at school) and that it should use web-based and/or distance learning methods, to allow access to training at a time and place to suit individuals.
- **Opportunities for accrediting and / or recognising learning outcomes** are a particular issue outside publicly funded education and training, especially for informal and non-formal education and training providers.

- **A lack of quality assurance and assessment** in terms of the quality of trainers, the training experience and the associated outcomes. Quality assurance is a particular concern for informal and non-formal education and training providers, as quality assurance frameworks typically focus on formal education and training (e.g. Slovakia). The lack of monitoring and evaluation evidence about what works, and for whom, is a barrier to improving training provision.

4.2 The role of ESF in adult education and training

A number of the articles acknowledge the role that ESF has played, and will play, in delivering adult education and training.

Starting with the use of ESF to date, the Portuguese article identifies that ESF has supported the majority of public education and training programmes, while the Greek article identifies that ESF has been paramount in shaping its adult training strategies. In Austria and Finland, funding has been used to reach and support particular target groups.

For the future, evidence of market failure will be used in the UK and the Netherlands as the justification for intervening through ESF. In the UK, ESF will target people without qualifications relevant to their current occupations, low paid people and low skilled women, and firms experiencing skills shortages. A key dimension of ESF in the UK is to support sustainable employment. In other countries, priority is attached to LLL (e.g. Latvia and Romania) and in some countries, ESF provides funding to address systemic problems (e.g. Bulgaria, Estonia and Lithuania).

4.3 Evidence necessary to assess impact

Twelve of the national articles acknowledge that there are problems with the evidence available to assess the impact of LLL and adult education and training. In some cases evaluation activities have been recently introduced (e.g. Cyprus, Italy and Latvia). In other cases impacts and effects are not (regularly) evaluated (e.g. Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Spain). Other barriers to the development of an evidence base include:

- the lack of transparency in the adult education system which is perceived as a barrier to evaluation (Finland);
- the lack of a statistical database to record LLL outcomes (Croatia (candidate country); and
- a complete lack of data (Turkey (candidate country)).

The Hungarian article referred to the creation of two institutions responsible for adult education research and evaluation to address gaps in the evidence base: the National Institution for Vocational and Adult Education and the National Council for Adult Education.

4.4 Impact: benefits from adult education and training and lifelong learning for individuals

Personal characteristics and in-company decision making are key factors that influence the likelihood of a positive outcome for individuals from participation in adult education, training and LLL. Participation in training does not guarantee a job for people who are unemployed, or financial rewards for those entering or already participating in the labour force. The characteristics linked to positive effects of training are identified in Table 5.

Table 5: Characteristics leading to positive training effects

Country	Characteristics
Denmark	Training participants with higher level qualifications report higher benefits than participants with lower level qualifications.
Germany	The effects of training favour men over women.
Greece	Age and qualification level exercise a positive influence on education. Also a positive correlation between labour force participation and training.
Italy	The probability of finding work through the Higher Technical Education and Training Initiatives was higher for men rather than women and people with tertiary qualifications rather than those with secondary level qualifications.
Portugal	The returns on training are greatest for women, experienced workers and low skilled workers.
Sweden	Positive return especially for migrants, particularly women. Positive benefits for men who participated in the 'Knowledge Lift' programme.
UK	Returns to adults are significant and progressive beyond Level 2.
Norway	The accumulated gain (five years post training) for women is greater than the cost of training.

What is noticeable from the French article was the recognition that employers make commercial training investment decisions on the basis of the greatest investment return. In practice this means that little support is offered to "at risk" groups, who may be those who are in greatest need. Such an approach cements the need to provide social support.

In terms of the outcomes of training, the national articles identify the following positive effects:

- an increase in the probability of finding and sustaining work;
- job security;
- increased income;
- Increased productivity / adaptability;
- occupational and personal development and the development of professional competences;
- a route to higher level qualifications.

However, the effects can also be neutral or negative:

- The Swedish article identifies that the short term effect of participating in adult education can be insignificant or negative, though it can lead to future participation in education and training;
- The UK article identified that the returns on training at or below Level 2 were zero or negative whereas reaching Level 2 acted as a stepping stone to sustainable employment and a pathway to achieving higher level qualifications. This is recognised in aims and objectives for ESF in the UK for the current programming period;
- The Norwegian article identified that the accumulated financial gain relative to costs of public training is neutral for men five years post training.

4.5 Impact: benefits for firms

The articles for Denmark, Luxembourg and Norway (EEA country) acknowledge the benefits to firms from having employees participate in LLL, or adult education and training activities. In the case of Denmark, firms that systematically assess their LLL needs tend to be more positive about the benefits. Firms in Luxembourg consider LLL to be a key management tool that enables staff to get involved in company activities, to be rewarded and to facilitate their career progression.

4.6 Impact: policy and economic benefits

Evaluations of the impact of training measures have generated mixed results: some countries report positive effects whereas others report limited, none or neutral effects. Positive effects include reaching particular target groups, such as women and vulnerable groups in Greece (although only 22.3% of those participating in training were in work six months later). Limited results, which tail off over time, were reported in France where the employment rate for unemployed people increased by 1%, one year after training (although the effects of training on employment were imperceptible after 36 months). There was no evidence of positive effects of training on employment prospects in Germany or Norway (EEA country), or on the demand for labour (Latvia). That said, in both Germany and Norway participation in training raises participants' likelihood of securing employment, even if there is no effect on the base unemployment rate. In the case of Norway the duration of unemployment reduces and the turnover of individuals increases.

In Germany and Sweden, the effects have changed over time:

- in Germany early evaluations were critical of the effects of training measures whereas later studies demonstrate positive results; and
- in Sweden, studies in the 1980s and early 1990s showed positive employment and earnings effects, while studies conducted in the late 1990s showed insignificant or even negative effects.

The Danish and UK articles discuss the potential macroeconomic impact of LLL and training, using different approaches (see Table 6).

Table 6: Potential macroeconomic impact of LLL and training	
Denmark	<p>Based on an increase in LLL by one extra day per year per person in the workforce the following impacts are anticipated:</p> <p>An increase in average productivity of approximately 0.8%</p> <p>A reduction in structural unemployment (-0.25%).</p>
UK	<p>The 2006 Leitch Review anticipates that the impact of meeting 'skills' targets (95% of adults achieving functional literacy and numeracy, 90% of adults qualified to at least Level 2, shifting the balance of intermediate skills from Level 2 to Level 3 and exceeding 40% of adults qualified to Level 4 and above) will deliver a potential net benefit of at least EUR 105 billion over 30 years (an annual average of EUR 3.3 billion). Driven by increased productivity and improved employment, productivity growth would increase by at least 10%, leaving the average worker producing EUR 2,350 more output each year by 2020 than would otherwise be the case. The employment rate would grow 10% more quickly than otherwise projected, with at least an additional 200,000 people into work by 2020, helping to move towards the ambition of an 80% employment rate.</p>

5 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

5.1 The development of lifelong learning strategies

Evidence from the national articles shows extensive discussion of, and progress in, the development of LLL strategies. According to the European Commission⁷, 15 of the EU 27 Member States have explicit LLL strategies in place⁸. Seven Member States are identified as developing a strategy and a further five Member States have LLL policies in place, but no explicit strategy^{9, 10}. Norway (EEA country) also has an explicit strategy which is recognised as being both comprehensive and coherent¹¹. Of the candidate countries, Croatia has a LLL strategy in place, and Turkey is in the process of developing a strategy.

However, as Table 7 shows, there is still considerable work to be done to bring the various component parts together within a strategy.¹² Only four Member States¹³ have national qualification frameworks in place, although the majority of Member States are undertaking development work. Progress in devising a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning is a more mixed picture across the countries covered in the accompanying table, in terms of the progress being achieved.

(⁷) COM (2007) 703 Final: *Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation*, Brussels 12.11.2007.

(⁸) Austria, Belgium Fr, Belgium NL, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Slovakia and the UK. The Commission Staff Working Document (SEC, 2007, 1484) accompanying the Communication suggests that seven of these Member States have more comprehensive and coherent strategies (Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Sweden, the UK).

(⁹) Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia.

(¹⁰) France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal.

(¹¹) Identified in the Commission Staff Working Document (SEC, 2007, 1484).

(¹²) It needs to be borne in mind that the process of assessing the countries' progress is complex. Several EEO experts have highlighted that in some countries the assessment of progress could be different. For example, in Ireland the system for validation of non-formal and informal learning is developing. In Malta, both the national qualification framework and the system for validation of non-formal and informal learning are being developed.

(¹³) France, Ireland, Malta and the UK (COM, 2007, 703 Final).

Table 7: Countries' situation in relation to adoption of explicit lifelong strategy, qualifications framework and validation of non-formal/informal learning			
Countries	Explicit national LLL strategies	National qualification frameworks	System for validation of non-formal and informal learning
Belgium fr	Y	D	D
Belgium nl	Y	D	Y
Bulgaria	D	D	N
Czech Republic	Y	D	D
Denmark	Y	D	Y
Germany	Y	D	N
Estonia	Y	D	N
Ireland	D	Y	D
Greece	Y	N	N
Spain	Y	D	D
France	P	Y	Y
Italy	P	D	D
Cyprus	D	N	N
Latvia	Y	D	N
Lithuania	Y	D	D
Luxembourg	P	D	D
Hungary	Y	D	N
Malta	D	D	D
Netherlands	P	D	Y
Austria	Y	D	D
Poland	D	N	D
Portugal	P	D	Y
Romania	D	N	D
Slovenia	D	D	Y
Slovakia	Y	D	D
Finland	Y	D	Y
Sweden	Y	N	D
UK	Y	Y	D
Croatia	Y	D	N
Turkey	D	D	N
Norway	Y	N	Y

Y=country as strategy, framework, validation system in place

D=country is developing strategy, framework, validation system

N=country does not have framework, validation system

P=country has LLL policies in place but no explicit strategy

Source: Draft 2008 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme, Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation, COM(2007) 703 final, 12.11.2007.

The national articles highlight that joining up education and training policy in a LLL perspective involves negotiations between many different stakeholders; it is not uncommon to have to coordinate, and negotiate between, nine or ten different organisations. For example, in Latvia there are nine Ministries and also non-governmental sector representatives involved in the development of LLL strategies and action plans. The planning and coordination of a LLL strategy can be complicated by Ministries and organisations having different understandings and definitions of what constitutes LLL. There may also be a wide range of precursors (to a LLL strategy), reflecting historical responsibilities and divisions of labour at a national level in education, continuing and vocational education and standards/quality assurance, and for different age groups in the population.

The involvement of social partners as key stakeholders is of critical importance in LLL strategy development, although the context for different countries varies, depending on institutional and policy making traditions. On the one hand, all social partners may agree about the central importance of vocational training, but on the other hand, a key question is to what extent these agreements are embedded in policy making. For example, to what extent is vocational training included in collective agreements?

In Bulgaria, for example, the national article points out that all social partners agree about the central importance of vocational training, but clauses on providing vocational training in collective agreements at sector/enterprise levels are rare.

In Malta, according to the national article, the social partners point out that better links are needed between educational institutions and themselves in order to improve the relevance of LLL to the world of work.

Sweden provides an interesting example of a well-developed social dialogue underpinning the *coordination* of LLL. According to the Swedish Government, better coordination of different sectors and policy areas is crucial for effective support for LLL. The national article explains that discussions, with representatives of the labour market partners, are ongoing on the development of LLL and on measures that may need to be implemented. In-service training and other opportunities for employees to develop their skills are important components of LLL in Sweden and they are largely a matter of discussion and agreement between the social partners. Government also recently declared that it is considering researching new means of stimulating employees and employers to put additional resources into LLL at the company level.

In Denmark, the Government and the social partners have been involved in improving both the quality and the magnitude of LLL. There is an emphasis on LLL for the workforce as a whole, not just for the unemployed or those at risk of losing their job; the integration of LLL into collective agreements is important for achieving this. A detailed framework for the financial structure of LLL was signed in October 2007 by the social partners and the Government and the partners have committed to monitor and evaluate LLL reforms and to review them in 2009.

In Belgium, employers, trade unions and the educational sector from Flanders have joined together to support a recent Competency Agenda. The aim is to create a broad social basis for LLL by using a framework based on competencies.

In Finland, a tripartite working group charged with the task of designing a Finnish model of flexicurity is promoting LLL. Adult education reform is regarded as being pivotal to achieving a flexicurity model.

In Romania, the sector committees, which involve members from both employer organisations and trade unions, and which operate under the umbrella of the National Adult Training Board, are directly involved not only in the continuous development of the national system of qualifications but also in the day to day accreditation and evaluation process of vocational training providers.

Attention is also drawn to social partners' own training centres as useful LLL resources, such as in Bulgaria.

5.2 Funding lifelong learning and the role of the ESF

The articles show that committing to LLL and earmarking some resources is one issue, but finding and sustaining a balance in financial responsibility between the state, employer and individual is another issue. For example, in Estonia one of the most heavily debated issues in the country's Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2005-2008 is the development of the financing schemes for adult training and re-training. The lack of financial resources is described as one of the main barriers to training both at individual and enterprise level.

In Germany, financial support includes training vouchers and also a proposed (2008) scheme to promote saving for continuing training. The Federal Labour Agency supports continuing training of more than 12 weeks for the unemployed through training vouchers; this allows trainees to choose between different approved training courses. Currently, further training costs are deductible from income tax, which means that low-income earners do not benefit from this regulation. The new scheme model avoids this effect by providing direct financial support.

Italy also has a system of training vouchers allowing individuals to choose their own training plan and reducing some of the obstacles to participation in training.

Training subsidies can, however, have unintended consequences. The Belgian national article points out that the Flemish government pays half of the training costs on condition that the training is provided by 'recognised training centres'. One downside however is that this subsidy scheme may have made the Belgians more reluctant to pay for their own training.

In the UK, the use of individual learner accounts is an interesting example. The piloting of new learner accounts began in September 2007, through trials in two regions, aimed at people over the age of 19 who wish to gain an intermediate level qualification.

The European Social Fund as a method of co-financing has been a major contributor to the development of LLL strategies and this continues under ESF Operational Programmes for 2007-2013. The newer Member States are faced with the challenge of training stakeholders in how to devise ESF proposals that can deliver effective LLL; the older Member States who have relied on the ESF to finance LLL are concerned about how to re-balance funding with additional internal resources.

One of the key issues perceived by some of the new Member States is not to over-estimate the significance of resources coming from the European Social Fund; rather to try to achieve an optimal balance between external and internal funding.

Evidence from the articles shows that ESF has been used for the following:

- As part of the new Competency Agenda in Belgium (Flanders), the Government is using ESF co-funding to commission an organisation to provide learning networks on competency management.
- Joint financing of courses between Government and ESF in Belgium (Wallonia) meets the demands of companies especially in the case of recruitment difficulties, training courses and support for business creation. ESF also supports vocational training for workers or job seekers, block-release training programmes and systems of information and guidance and the validation of skills and experience required. Support is also provided to training and mechanisms aimed at finding work for unskilled people, the long-term unemployed, those not in work and disabled people.
- In Cyprus, the extension of work to map out the qualifications for about 20 occupations has been agreed, which follows on from a pilot of five occupations. This work is important as it raises the standard of performance expected of the individuals who choose to follow these professions.
- The Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education in Finland have initiated a programme, with ESF support, for 2006-2010 to provide a comprehensive LLL information and counselling service for the adult population. This will be internet-based and a new method of evaluating and monitoring counselling and guidance work will be developed.
- In France, ESF is being used to better anticipate economic change and also to co-finance occupational training policies, developed by sectoral organisations.
- In Germany, one of the LLL measures co-financed by ESF is the creation of regional networks. The Federal Ministry for Education and Research promotes these networks in order to deliver innovative and integrated LLL services. Seventy regions are supported to improve training, self-learning approaches, and transitional adjustments through training.
- In Ireland, LLL activities are dispersed across many different programmes. The FAS programmes with significant LLL

content include: One Step Up - Training for the Employed, which encourages employee training; and Job Initiative, which assists long-term unemployed people to prepare for work. However, steps are currently being undertaken by the government to achieve more co-ordination across different LLL programmes.

- In Lithuania, the main priority in the use of ESF is improvement of the accessibility and quality of education and science projects. These include projects aimed at modernising the infrastructure of institutions for education, vocational training, science and studies as well as for the development of LLL. Structural Funds have enabled the initiation of the national qualification system in order to meet labour market needs, the development of vocational training standards and to support various measures for young people and adults.
- In Malta, Poland, Portugal, Greece and Slovenia, ESF is very important in structuring strategies for LLL, although such strategies are still not sufficiently recognised by the general population. The national articles point out that the contribution of ESF should not be under-estimated.
- In Slovakia ESF has been used to enhance the quality of training by stipulating standard tender procedures, setting eligibility criteria, and promoting partnerships at local and regional levels. ESF supports the project design, development and implementation of an Open System of Lifelong Learning and is therefore directly involved in the creation of LLL policy and legislation.

The impact of ESF could be further improved by:

- Placing a stronger emphasis on training activity plans for companies. In Austria for example, there could be a greater focus on the inclusion of all staff in training measures and activity plans.
- Taking account of new priorities. In Latvia, there are plans to ensure that ESF is used to improve the skills and qualification levels of low-skilled employed people, rather than (as now) to focus on increasing the level of qualifications of unemployed people.
- Contributing to the overall development of human resources with special regard to improving the sustainability of the whole process, as is especially the case in Romania.
- In Slovakia, ESF could be further used to eliminate barriers to adult learning, most importantly in developing mechanisms for early identification of skill needs, introducing quality management, recognition of outcomes, devising information systems, and the transfer of know-how and mutual learning.
- Counselling and guidance for adults is an area of concern in many of the national articles and ESF co-funding could be used for such measures.

5.3 Additional good practice

The national articles contain extensive information about different LLL strategies, approaches and measures. Other good practices identified include:

- Major redevelopment of the tertiary education and research sector in Cyprus, which is creating a culture for attracting funding and substituting the more expensive training previously obtained abroad with domestic university training. The institutions involved will provide LLL opportunities.
- In the UK, far-reaching LLL proposals have been made in *World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England*. The devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are considering the implications of the Leitch Review for their own skills' strategies.
- In Finland, labour market training will increasingly be directed towards those participating in apprenticeship schemes with the best probability of becoming employed in regions with the greatest shortage of labour. Also familiarity with business life for people participating in education and training programmes will be further encouraged.

- The Hellenic Open University in Greece provides a good LLL example through an initiative which strikes the right balance between increasing social demand for courses leading to university certificates and the provision of useful skills for non-traditional learners.
- A major innovation in Italy is the introduction of funds for continuing training which are expected to address the lack of training opportunities for adult employees and in particular for less educated people and older workers. The funds are managed by social partners and available in different sectors.
- Lifelong Learning week in Slovenia was considered an advocacy tool for raising the visibility of adult and LLL and encouraging people to take part in LLL.

Some innovative measures favour particular target groups, such as:

- A project in Austria aimed at migrant employees which encouraged participation by making contact through their migrant community based associations.
- A national programme in Bulgaria for the literacy and vocational training of the Roma community which includes 10 specialist labour offices.

National Articles on lifelong learning and skills development:

a review of trends and policies
with a particular focus on gender and age

Belgium

1 Introduction

The 2000 European Summit in Lisbon set a target to turn Europe into the world's leading knowledge-economy. Since the most fundamental asset of a knowledge-economy is its human capital, one focal point of this target is LLL. This refers to all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective (COM, 2001- 678). In the Joint Employment Report 2006/2007 it is noted that 'the implementation of policies to increase investment in human capital through better education and skills is progressing' (2007:4). Despite this, in most EU countries the actual participation of adults (25+) in LLL has remained stable or has fallen (2007:8). Therefore more insight is needed into the differences between national LLL policies and the effectiveness of these policies. In this article we reflect upon the situation in Belgium.

2 Trends

2.1 The current position, according to labour force surveys

The data that are most often referred to when talking about LLL stem from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Until 2003 LFS participants were asked if they took part in education or training the month before the survey. From 2004, they were asked: (a) if they were students or participants in formal education the month before the survey; and (b) if they attended courses, seminars, conferences, etc., outside the formal education system the month before the survey (Booghman and Stevens, 2004).

Hence the new survey is more explicit and therefore probably more reliable. However, there is a question as to what extent the results of the two types of survey can be compared. For instance Table 1 shows that in 2004 there was a relatively large increase in the number of LLL participants, but it is unclear whether this is the result of effective policy implementation or merely the result of a different form of question.

From Table 1 we can conclude that Belgium is still quite far from the 2010 target set for a participation rate of 12.5%. Although there has been a clear increase in the participation rate, in 2006 the overall participation rate stood at 7.5%, well below the target. Table 1 shows further that inactive people and men in particular rank lowest in LLL participation and only female job seekers score above the target. Additionally Table 1 indicates that younger people participate much more in LLL than older people. As older people are sometimes more in need of training and further education than younger people (computer training for example) these results suggest that it might be wise to target specific groups when promoting LLL.

Regarding other differences across the sub-groups, older data indicate that factors affecting participation in LLL are: the level of education (2.2% participation of lesser educated, against 11.3% for highly educated Belgians in 2002 – OECD, 2007); the region in which a person works (in 2006, 10.4% of the population from the Brussels Region participated in LLL, against 8.4% from the Flemish Region and 5.1% from the Walloon Region); the hierarchical level (managers participate more than twice as much in LLL than blue-collar workers); and the sector (workers in service-oriented sectors participate more in LLL than workers in agricultural or production sectors – Van Woensel, 2006).

Table 1: Participation in lifelong learning

	2002			2003			2004			2005			2006		
Gender	♂	♀	T	♂	♀	T	♂	♀	T	♂	♀	T	♂	♀	T
25-64 Year	5.9	6.0	6.0	7.0	6.9	7.0	8.7	8.5	8.6	8.1	8.6	8.4	7.5	7.6	7.5
Workers															
25-64 Year	6.3	7.5	6.8	7.5	8.6	8.0	9.7	10.5	10.0	8.8	10.0	9.3	7.9	8.7	8.2
Work seekers															
25-64 Year	6.3	8.2	7.2	7.3	8.8	8.0	8.5	11.0	9.7	8.3	13.1	10.7	8.7	12.0	10.4
Inactive															
25-64 Year	4.0	3.6	3.7	5.0	4.1	4.4	4.8	4.8	4.8	5.3	5.4	5.4	5.2	4.9	5.0
Overall															
25-39 Year	8.4			9.5			11.7			11.0			10.4		
40-49 Year	6.0			6.9			8.5			8.7			7.3		
50-64 Year	2.8			3.8			5.0			5.1			4.5		

Source: www.vlaanderen.be

2.2 The current position, according to employers

In 2005 the third edition of the Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) took place. This European survey is conducted every five or six years and it aims to map the training and development efforts of European organisations. In this survey, two types of vocational training are distinguished. Formal vocational training often takes place outside the workplace and is at least partially financed by the employer. Informal vocational training is usually provided in the workplace and includes on-the-job training, job rotation, self-study and attendance at conferences, workshops, seminars, etc.

Results indicated that in 2005, 62.5% of Belgian organisations offered their employees formal or informal training. Interestingly, this indicates a decrease since the 1999 CVTS survey (that recorded 70%), even though the CVTS survey was conducted before the Lisbon targets were set. The 1993 results noted that only 46% of organisations offered training.

The most important determinant as to whether organisations offer training appeared to be the size of the organisation. 51% of organisations with between 10 and 19 employees offer training, 86% of organisations with between 50 and 249 employees and 99% of organisations with 249 to 500 employees offer training. In the 1993 CVTS survey, the figure for organisations with 50 to 249 employees was less than 50%.

Differences in the amount of training offered also relate to differences in the sector. While less than half of organisations in construction and the wood industry offer training, more than 95% of organisations in the gas, water and electricity sector and in the financial sector provide training opportunities. There are no significant regional differences in Belgium.

Of those organisations offering training, 65% offered both formal and informal training, 23% offered only informal training and the remaining 12% offered only formal training. On-the-job training and attendance at conferences, workshops etc., were the most named types of informal training. 60% of the formal training hours mentioned was internal training. In 1999 this percentage was 50%, indicating that organisations are increasingly arranging their own training.

In the CVTS survey, organisations were also asked how many employees participate in formal training. On average 40% of their employees took part in some sort of formal training in 2005, which is slightly below the 1999 figure (41%). There were no gender differences in training participation, but some age-related differences: only 28% of employees aged over 55 participated in formal training. Gender differences were significant in relation to the duration of formal training: while men on average had 33 hours of formal training, women had only 28. The difference was greatest in organisations with more than 1,000 employees (37 hours compared with 27 hours). However, as formal training occurs more with full-time workers and there are relatively more women than men working part-

time, it is unclear to what extent these gender differences can be explained by such factors. In terms of cost, both the 1999 and the 2005 survey indicated that the total amount of money invested in formal training equates to 1.6% of the labour costs.

Of the 37.5% of organisations that did not offer any training to their employees, most indicated that their employees do not need training and that the organisation selects and attracts employees who already possess the necessary skills. Another frequently mentioned reason was the pressure of work and insufficient time.

2.3 Labour force opinions regarding lifelong learning

The importance of the LLL preferences of the Belgian workforce is highlighted in the findings of a CEDEFOP study (Chisholm, Larson and Mossoux 2004). When asked about the main reason for participating in training or education, Belgians often mentioned that training was required and/or paid for by the organisation. They rarely said that it was advised by friends or family. Of the people who did not participate in education and training, 60% of Belgians indicated that they were not interested in it. Only 18% of them would like to participate in education and training; the lowest figure in the EU, suggesting that Belgians are among the most sceptical of LLL in the EU.

Furthermore it is interesting to see that 43% of the Belgian respondents think (incorrectly) that LLL is intended especially for people who did not achieve well at school.

3 Policies

Since adult education is the responsibility of the Communities and Regions, we will distinguish between Flanders and Wallonia.

3.1 Flanders

Lifelong Learning in the Right Direction

LLL became a priority in Flanders around 2000 when the action plan Lifelong Learning in the Right Direction was approved. This action plan consists of initiatives to stimulate LLL in the entire Flemish population. Together with some follow-up plans (e.g. the federal Generation Pact in 2005), the action plan resulted in the following (Euser.eu.org):

- The right to career guidance. The right to outplacement, in particular, seems to have helped those seeking work and it explains their relatively high participation rate.
- Accreditations and the formal recognition of (prior) learning through, for example, modularisation.
- Basic ICT skills for everyone through widespread ICT courses and the integration of ICT in education.

- Training subsidies. The Flemish government pays half of the training costs on condition that the training is provided by 'recognised training centres'. These were very popular: in 2005 214,419 employees asked for training subsidies or cheques (Vandenbroucke, 2007). However, this may have made Belgians more reluctant to pay for their own training.
- Online courses. For three years the Flemish Government has offered online courses which appear to be successful. At the moment the arrangement and responsibility of these courses is being transferred to other organisations.

Competency Agenda

In 2007 another range of measures was written into the "Competency Agenda", which has been approved recently by the Flemish Government and social partners. The aim of the Competency Agenda is to create a broad social basis for LLL by using the more encompassing framework of competencies, including different forms of learning and making explicit the importance of competencies for employability. In the Competency Agenda ten priority measures are stipulated aimed at acknowledging and empowering the capacities of students, workers and jobseekers in order to ease transitions from school to work, from inactivity/work-seeking to work and from one job or function to the next. Employer organisations, unions and the educational sector have all committed themselves to the Competency Agenda, thereby creating the broad basis that is required for attaining its goals.

Several initiatives are currently being initiated by the different stakeholders involved. For example, the Flemish Government with ESF support has published a tender for the implementation of learning networks on competency management. Also, the Flemish Policy Research Centre on Work and Social Economy is running research projects that address priorities of the Competency Agenda, e.g. on informal learning and best practices in competency management. Other initiatives include those aimed at: bridging the gap between education and business life; external career counselling; and the establishment of an expert centre on "Age and Work". The impact of these LLL initiatives on the employability of the Flemish working population should become visible in the next few years.

3.2 Walloon

1. Policies integrated into multi-annual programmes

Walloon regional policies are being integrated into multi-annual plans. For instance, the 'Contrat d'avenir' ('Contract for the future'), which is the long-term policy statement for the region, consists of various strategic plans, one of which is devoted to education, training and research. In addition, one of the priority action plans, known as the "Marshall Plan", was adopted in 2005 to provide additional resources for regional policy in order to meet five priority objectives, one of which is to 'create skills for employment'¹⁴.

Long-term objectives

When the 'Contrat d'avenir' was being drawn up, an estimated 7% of the active population took part in training programmes. The Government's aim was to increase this to 12.5% by 2010, bringing the region into line with the Lisbon strategy targets

"Skills for employment"

The Marshall Plan aims, among other things, to tackle labour shortages by means of ongoing monitoring of the market and by offering additional training places in relevant sectors, to develop language skills by means of a language plan combining immersion grants, training for job-seekers and language cheques intended for companies, and finally to improve training courses leading to a qualification by increasing the availability of training courses and investing more in teaching materials in colleges.

2. The regional training policy

The Marshall Plan reinforces the regional policy, which may be defined by three priorities: training for job-seekers; training for workers; and validation of the skills acquired. These are considered below.

Training for job-seekers

Training for job-seekers is organised by a number of operators, mainly public or publicly funded, and it is coordinated by the public employment service (FOREM). There is specific provision for redundant workers (through collective redundancy) and for those job-seekers furthest from employment (integrated socio-professional inclusion mechanism).

Vocational training is organised mainly by the FOREM and, for the least qualified people, by the bodies responsible for socio-professional inclusion, district boards, regional missions, and social assistance services (CPAS). Sector funds have also set up a training strategy, in conjunction with the FOREM, focusing in particular on low-skilled or unskilled workers.

Training can also take place in work contexts. For instance, 'Entreprises de formation par le travail' (on-the-job training enterprises) arrange for low-skilled or unskilled workers to receive training in an actual work situation. Under the 'Plan Formation-Insertion' (PFI - training-integration plan), job-seekers can receive training in a company, at a very low cost for the employer, and be taken on for a period equivalent to the training course.

⁽¹⁴⁾ For an overview of the Walloon regional policies see www.wallonie.be

Moreover, the Region funds training organised as part of education policy (CEFA Centre d'éducation et de formation en alternance – Centre for Education and Alternating Training) by awarding grants, as well as that run by the Walloon public operator (IFAPME) as part of the initial training programme giving access to the self-employed professions. This operator is also in charge of ongoing training for self-employed workers.

Training for workers

Alongside the training courses intended for workers offered by the FOREM, the Region also supports ongoing training through two other mechanisms. The “retraining credit” offers businesses the opportunity to be reimbursed for internal training expenses linked in particular to retraining for workers or to investments. The training cheque is another means of easing the expense of training in SMEs. These cheques, which companies can purchase for half their face value, can be used with approved training operators. The language cheque, financed by the Marshall Plan, is part of this mechanism. A business creation training cheque has also been developed.

In addition, it is worth pointing out that certain mechanisms focus on both workers and job-seekers. This is the case for adult education (so-called ‘evening classes’, funded by the French-speaking Community), which is organised in the form of modules, and skills centres whose aim is to provide high-tech tools for vocational training, but also for teachers and pupils. These centres are run jointly by the public operators and sector-based organisations.

Making the most of skills

Besides training itself, the Region, is developing a system for the validation of skills aimed at making the most of knowledge acquired through training or vocational practice. Similarly, a system for the validation of experience acquired is intended to promote workers’ access to higher education.

3. Support of the European Social Fund

During the new plan for 2007-2013, ESF will focus on three priorities. The first concerns entrepreneurial spirit and job creation, to be met through ESF co-financing for training courses that meet companies’ needs on recruitment difficulties, and support for business creation. The second priority will include funding for actions to develop human capital and research. This involves vocational training for workers or job-seekers, block-release training programmes and systems of information and guidance and the validation of skills and experience acquired. Finally, the third ESF priority concerns social inclusion and will provide training and other support measures aimed at finding work for unskilled people, the long-term unemployed, those not in work and the disabled.

4 Bibliography

Algemene Directie Statistiek en Economische Informatie (2007). *Vormingsinspanningen van Belgische ondernemingen. Resultaten van de CVTS enquête – 2005*. FOD Economie: www.statbel.fgov.be

Booghman, M. and Stevens, E. (2004). *Levenslang leren: Wie zijn ze? Wat doen ze? Wat drijft ze?* Chapter 14 in: ‘De Arbeidsmarkt in Vlaanderen: 2004 Jaarboek’, Steunpunt WAV: www.steunpuntwav.be

Chisholm, L., Larson, A. and Mossoux, A. (2004). *Lifelong learning: citizens’ views in close-up. Findings from a dedicated Euro-barometer survey*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Communication from the Commission: ‘Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality’ COM(2001) 678 final.

Council of the European Union (2007). *Joint Employment Report 2006/2007*. European Commission: <http://ec.europa.eu/>

Defeyt Philippe, Bouchat, Thérèse-Marie, 2006, *La formation en Wallonie: un nécessaire recentrage de la politique régionale*, Rapport à la ministre de la formation, Namur, mimeo, 30 décembre.

EUROSTAT, 2007, *Labour market policy. Qualitative report. Belgium 2006*. Coll. Eurostat Working Papers and Studies, Luxembourg.

Forem, diverses années, *rapport annuel*.

Gouvernement conjoint Région wallonne – Communauté française, 2005, *Plan stratégique transversal 2. Recherche et formation. Développer les connaissances et les savoir-faire en Wallonie*, mimeo, 30 août.

OECD (2007). *Education at a glance 2007: OECD indicators*. OECD: www.oecd.org

Région wallonne – Communauté française, 2005, *Les Actions prioritaires pour l’avenir des wallons*, mimeo, 30 août.

Vandenbroecke, F (2007) Beleidsbrief 2007 – *Werk (Policy letter 2007 – Work)*. Available at URL: http://docs.vlaanderen.be/portaal/beleidsbrieven2006/vandenbroucke/beleidsbrief_werk.pdf

Van Woensel, A. (2006). *In het lang en in het breed: Levenslang leren in Vlaanderen en Europa*. Steunpunt WAV: www.steunpuntwav.be

Websites

Euser.eu.org: http://www.euser-eu.org/eUSER_eLearningCountryBrief.asp?CaseID=2240&CaseTitleID=1080

Flemish lifelong learning policy: http://www2.vlaanderen.be/ned/sites/werk/leren_home.htm

Vlaanderen.be: http://www2.vlaanderen.be/ned/sites/werk/documenten/euro_vmi_31102007.xls

Bulgaria

1 Trends in adults' (25+) participation in lifelong learning

The participation rate of the Bulgarian population aged 25-64 in LLL is relatively low (1.3% in 2006, according to Eurostat). The rate has remained stable over the last five years.¹⁵ The rates of participation in Bulgaria, Romania (1.3%) and Greece (1.9 %) are those which vary to the greatest extent from the average EU-27 LLL participation rate of 9.6%.

The differences between the relative proportions of people participating in LLL in Bulgaria compared to EU-27 are significant at each age group and are most pronounced amongst people over 35. This age threshold is quite low for an increasingly ageing population. However, the 'low' rate of participation in learning amongst people aged 45-54 is almost equal to the Bulgarian average participation rate.

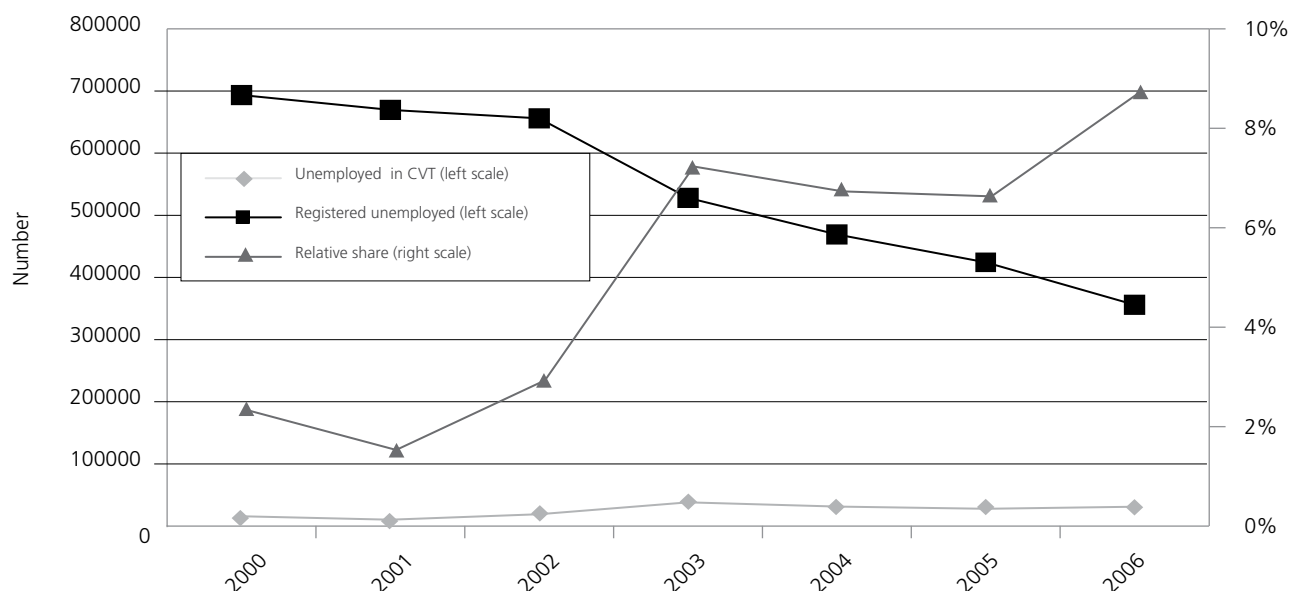
Women and men participate equally in LLL; the relatively high participation of women is perhaps due to their prominence in professional groups that expect continuous training and development¹⁶. The need for women to update their skills after maternity leave is another reason for their active participation in LLL.

Vocational training is the most developed aspect of adult learning in Bulgaria. The proportion of employees in continuous vocational training (CVT) increased from 13% in 1989 to 15% in 2005. The overall change is due to the increased participation of women - from 9% to 13%.

According to the last national representative survey in 2004, 26.8% of the total number of participating companies had organised vocational training for their staff.¹⁷ This share is low and, at the same time, decreasing.¹⁸ 70% of the companies that deliver CVT are medium and large companies.

The number of employed people enrolled in subsidised vocational training offered by the Employment Agency decreased, mainly because of their involvement in restructuring processes. At the same time, unemployed people registered at labour offices show a high interest in such training. However, the changes in the number of those who have participated are not significant (see Figure 1), which could be considered as a sign of a lack of continuous public policies to promote that type of training. Traditionally, the groups most active in vocational training are unemployed up to 40, and women and people with secondary education. The participation of unemployed from the minority groups, more specifically Roma women, and the unemployed people who live in villages and small towns, is especially low.

Figure 1: Unemployed in vocational training



Source: Employment Agency

⁽¹⁵⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/pdf/2007compendium_en.pdf.pdf

The same source of information will be used throughout the first section of this article, unless pointed out otherwise.

⁽¹⁶⁾ These are the occupational groups of "professionals", "technicians and associated professionals", "clerks" and "service workers" and "shop and market sales workers".

⁽¹⁷⁾ Continuing vocational training in enterprises in the European Union and Norway (CVTS2), www.nsi.bg

⁽¹⁸⁾ It was 28% in 1999. "Statistics in focus", Theme 3 - 02/2002, Continuing vocational training in enterprises in the European Union and Norway (CVTS2) and First survey of continuing vocational training in enterprises in candidate countries (CVTS2), www.nsi.bg

To sum up, the level of participation of the population in LLL, CVT and subsidised training is low. The positive trend is the increasing relative share of those in CVT after 2002.

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in LLL and skills development

Labour legislation in Bulgaria does not envisage restrictions in access to LLL and skills development programmes. There are still some well recognised issues that create barriers or certain disincentives.

Recent statistics published by the Employment Agency and other surveys show that employers continue to demand low-qualified workers with less completed education. This devalues the importance of vocational training. Part of the explanation lies in the low innovation rate, the lagging development of technology and belated organisational changes¹⁹. Hopefully, this situation will improve with the higher investment levels associated with Bulgaria attracting direct foreign investments. But up to now, the share of re-invested profit has been low, suggesting that rapid modernisation based on the influx of foreign capital is not occurring.

The lack of sufficient financial resources is the most frequently cited reason for weak interest in vocational training. Traditionally, investment in vocational training is most difficult for small and micro companies. There are, however, positive developments. Employers' intentions are changing due to the necessity to improve their competitiveness²⁰.

The impact of qualifications (and level of education) on labour productivity, and therefore on wages, has not been studied in detail in Bulgaria, although available data do not show significant impact. The lack of impact on wages is something of a disincentive for participation in LLL and, in particular, vocational training. At the same time, a form of 'seniority payments' has been preserved, recognising length of service and professional experience without training. This devalues the efforts of those participating in LLL.

Vocational training is necessary for an ageing population, especially important in Bulgaria where the majority of employed

people are between 35 and 54 years old. Nevertheless, 'investing' in meeting training needs is not a process that can be internalised with the advancement of age, but an attitude that should be developed at a younger age. Hardly any efforts in this area were made during the transition period and now people over 35 do not experience the need for continuous training.

The impoverishment of the population and of a small segment of the middle class also contributes to limited interest in LLL. Despite the nominal increase in household incomes, real income growth is insignificant and the proportion of expenses for 'spare time, culture and education' remains almost constant (3.5% since 2002). This does nothing to encourage interest in paid forms of LLL and in the purchase of goods and services related to the development of personal knowledge and culture.

In Bulgaria, those factors which limit interest in LLL are serious and persistent. Still, changes in employers' attitudes show that in the medium term this position may change as employers are more frequently citing the need for further training, and re-qualification, for their employees.

3 Quality and impact of training

In Bulgaria, there is no regularly conducted research and external evaluation of the quality of skills acquired through vocational training. At the moment, the most frequently cited reasons for dissatisfaction with vocational training are very broad, such as: an insufficient link between training and the practical aspects of jobs; underestimation of the importance of 'learning-by-doing'; insufficient training materials developed for adults and for distance learning; low involvement of employers in curricula development; and unsatisfactory quality of technical equipment used for vocational training. However, there exist some important prerequisites which provide the means to overcome these problems.

Good recent practice includes regular national representative surveys on the professions and the demand for qualifications. The surveys are used to update the list of professions which offer vocational training to the labour market and provide information on job openings available at Labour Offices. Thus, it could be concluded that there is an attempt to achieve a better match between vocational training being offered and the 'nature' of the registered labour demand.

⁽¹⁹⁾ According to the latest survey of enterprises, the highest share of funds spent on employees' training is in "hotels and restaurants" and "transport, communications, and warehouses" sectors. However, only the latter sector can be connected to significant technological changes. <http://www.nsi.bg/Labour/Labour.htm>

⁽²⁰⁾ According to the national representative Survey on Labour Demand (2007), 39.4% of the companies plan to organise on-the-job training; 29.5% will invest in training courses; 22.2% in seminars and 15.6% in knowledge updating. Investment in re-qualifications within the same profession is planned by 12.2% of employers and offering of language courses by 11.2%. One third of employers, however, do not envisage any training for their employees. At the same time, as many as 45.35% of employers cite training as the strategy to help them solve the problems with finding personnel with required skills. www.mlsp.government.bg/

Two other factors have contributed to improvements in the quality of vocational training are: the introduction of unified requirements for vocational training; and a procedure for recognising acquired professional qualifications. The requirements include the introduction of common training framework programmes, a common list of the professions and common procedures for issuing certificates and diplomas. The unification of the specialised terminology for grouping professions was made on the basis of the updated National Classification of Professions (adopted in 2005).

Vocational training for unemployed people is conducted only by training organisations that have been licensed by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). In order to be licensed, training providers have to go through transparent selection procedures, aimed at guaranteeing the quality of vocational training offered.

The *acquis communautaire* in the field of free movement of people and, more specifically, in relation to the mutual recognition of diplomas and qualifications for regulated professions, is broadly implemented. Bulgarian legislation was synchronised with the key EU directives through the amendment of the Law on Vocational Education and Training on the procedures for issuing and approving competences for regulated professions. In December 2006, a list of 75 regulated professions and authorities competent to accredit professional qualifications was adopted.

Important preconditions for improving the quality and efficiency of LLL have been established and are being applied in practice. The positive changes underway are expected to be supported by ESF projects. It is expected that 38,000 employees will be trained to obtain or improve their qualifications. More than 30% of them will participate in programmes to acquire key competences. Innovative changes in the training of employed people are foreseen, all directed at improving competitiveness and facilitating flexible forms of employment. ESF could also usefully contribute to the validation of prior learning; although the concept is known in Bulgaria, it is insufficiently publicised and support for its implementation is lacking. Another valuable contribution could be the development of monitoring systems for training activities and assessment of their quality and impact.

4 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

During the EU accession period, there were substantial changes in the legislation regulating vocational training and, consequently, in the relevant national strategies. Of central importance is the Strategy for Development and Improvement of Continuous Vocational Training 2005–2010. Its objective is the establishment and improvement of the conditions for acquiring, expanding and developing professional qualifications. The European e-Learning Action Plan was put into action with the implementation of the Strategy for Introducing Information and Telecommunication Technologies in Training, 2005–2010. The LLL Development Strategy is to be finalised shortly.

Bulgaria's Employment Strategy was updated at the end of 2007. One of its main themes concerns professional qualifications amongst the labour force and the strategy for investment in human capital is a part of the Operational Programme for Human Resources Development. A problem to be addressed is ensuring appropriate involvement of employers, NGOs, municipalities and other stakeholders in developing projects under this Operational Programme.

Traditionally, employers and labour unions play a part in bodies whose task is to develop national and regional human resource development policies, as well as collective labour agreements. In general, all social partners agree about the central importance of vocational training. Indeed, some of the social partners have their own training centres, e.g. the centre at the Confederation of the Independent Trade Unions and at the Bulgarian Chamber of Industry. However, it is rare for collective agreements to include clauses concerned with the provision of vocational training.

At the end of 2006 and throughout 2007 policy makers, employers and trade unions paid much greater attention to the provision of vocational training. Serious changes are required in the near future, primarily concerning the organisation of its funding and the introduction of public-private partnerships. Because of fiscal decentralisation, municipalities should receive incentives to invest more actively in the development of knowledge and skills. However, there are no established partnerships and the optimal combination of public and private funds for training is lacking. The significance of ESF resources is overestimated and mobilisation of national sources of funds needs to be improved.

Work with groups vulnerable in the labour market provides some positive examples for the application of the LLL concept in the future. A main conclusion is the need for an approach which combines vocational training and further employment, active guidance and motivation, and which respects the specific needs of target groups. A good example is the programme for unemployed people from the Roma minority, including a National Programme for Literacy and Vocational Training and 10 specialised labour offices.

So far, European initiatives have had strong impact on the design and implementation of national strategies for adult training. For Bulgarian policy makers, knowledge of best practices from other Member States is very important, as is having capacity to modify such practices for the specific features of the Bulgarian labour market. So far, experts have participated in EU learning programmes, study visits and discussions on LLL. Bulgaria has the potential to be a partner in these initiatives and to contribute further to their development.

Until now, there has been a focus on improving the employability of unemployed people. People with low levels of education and qualifications and older people, irrespective of their gender, have participated least in different forms of training, even when it could directly affect their employability. In Bulgaria the value of LLL is strongly underestimated and this has a negative impact on the quality and the mobility of the labour force. However, attitudes towards LLL are changing. Employers are expected to accelerate the process, by benefiting from the support of the most recent policies and strategies for human resources development.

5 Bibliography

Study on Access to Education and Training –Tender No EAC/38/04, Lot 1.

By Manuel Souto Otero and Andrew McCoshan, Final Report for the European Commission, C2863/December 2005.

Elka Dimitrova (2007). 'Challenges and Perspectives to the Adult Training System in Bulgaria'. *European Journal of Vocational Training*, Issue 41.

Baev Stoian (2006). *Analysis of the life long vocational training in Bulgaria*. Paper prepared for the Ministry of Education and Sciences. <http://www.minedu.government.bg/>

Loukanova Pobeda and Vassil Tzanovt (2005). *Chapter V: The Vocational Training of the Unemployed, in: The Unemployment in Bulgaria: Macroeconomic Dimensions and Possible Reductions*, Sofia.

Czech Republic

1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the current Czech position regarding the participation of adults in LLL (CŽV), by gender, age and level of education, and aims to identify good practice and assess the impact of training. In doing so, we distinguish job-related training from other forms of LLL, and connect the evidence on LLL to the provision of initial education.

Participation of Czech adults in LLL is extremely low in comparison to the rest of the EU. The participation gap is most pronounced among the less skilled and unemployed people. A key LLL development in the Czech Republic was the adoption of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy in July 2007.

2 Trends in adult participation in LLL

While overall trends in LLL participation can be established on the basis of the LFS, any detailed examination of Czech developments are only possible by using findings from a 2003 survey of LLL participation. Information, on LLL participation during the previous 12 months, was gathered using an add-on module of the Czech LFS and this exercise has not been repeated since. The survey distinguished formal (certified skills, education-degree), non-formal (un-certified courses, mentoring or training provided by companies or institutions) and informal LLL (reading, internet, TV programs, PC use, etc.). A detailed report based on this survey was produced in 2005 by the National Training Fund, NVF (Národní vzdělávací fond), 2005 and detailed tabulations are available from the CSO (ČSÚ) Czech Statistical Office.²¹

On the other hand, the evolution of the participation of adult Czech population in all forms of education (in the previous four weeks) is captured using an LFS-based indicator, which covers formal and informal education, but excludes self-provided forms of education. These statistics have been available since 1998 and were harmonised with EU standards in 2003.

According to NVF (2005), the Czech Republic ranks 21st out of the 25 European countries considered in terms of overall LLL participation rates.²² The overall participation rate is twice as high in neighbouring Slovakia, which has a similar demographic and education structure.

Regarding the structure of Czech LLL, it is clear that participation is particularly low in formal LLL programmes. Only 1% of employed workers aged 25-64 is involved in formal LLL, while informal and self-provided forms of LLL are used by about one fifth of all workers. The available evidence on the sectoral structure of participation in any form of education²³ is highest for workers in 'Real Estate and Financial Intermediation' (at almost twice the average national participation rate), while it is 8% to 10% below the national average for the 'Agriculture', 'Manufacturing', 'Hotels and Restaurants' and 'Construction' sectors. The low rate in the manufacturing sector is particularly important, given its high share in total employment.

The age dimension of participation in LLL is also troubling. Firstly, older Czech people (those aged over 45) hardly participate in LLL at all. This could perhaps be due to the fact that these people obtained their initial schooling under the communist regime and now face low labour demand. Secondly, the LLL gap vis-à-vis the EU average is largest in the case of younger Czech workers (aged 25-34), and this is true for all forms of LLL. One of the explanations for this finding may lie in the Czech LLL education structure. Although the participation in LLL of highly educated Czechs is close to the EU average, less educated Czech people participate much less and disadvantaged people show only negligible participation rates. Therefore, initial education appears to be a strong influence on later participation in LLL.

Focusing on different forms of LLL, only little formal LLL is provided in Czech schools for all population groups. Specifically, only 1% of the largest population group (people with secondary education) is trying to obtain a tertiary degree - five times less than the EU average. On the other hand, the Czech education trend in informal LLL is not very different from the EU average. Perhaps this positive feature of Czech LLL is related to an active role of employers, but more evidence is needed on this issue. In this respect, one should take into account that the proportion of young Czechs achieving at least upper-secondary education is traditionally one of the highest in the EU25.

A related fact is that, compared to most other European countries, the participation of Czech unemployed people in LLL is very low. Indeed, while typical EU LLL rates are similar for employed and unemployed people, the Czech participation rate for unemployed workers is similar to that of the inactive and is about half of that for employed workers. This may be the

⁽²¹⁾ <http://www.czso.cz/csu/2004edicniplan.nsf/p/3119-04>

⁽²²⁾ 42% of the EU25 population aged 25-64 participated in at least one form of education, training or learning activity over the previous twelve months, compared to 29% in the Czech Republic.

⁽²³⁾ [http://www.czso.cz/csu/2004edicniplan.nsf/t/D7002B251E/\\$File/311905.pdf](http://www.czso.cz/csu/2004edicniplan.nsf/t/D7002B251E/$File/311905.pdf)

consequence of the limited scope of retraining services offered by the Labour Offices²⁴ and the fact that the Czech welfare system exerts little pressure on the unemployed. This will change with the tax and benefit reforms of 2008.

Finally, gender differences in participation rates are not similar to those of a typical EU economy. In most EU countries, women are more likely to participate in formal LLL than men and gender participation rates are equal for informal LLL, but Czech women are less likely to participate in informal LLL. Comparing gender participation rates in all forms of education across age groups²⁵ reveals an interesting pattern: amongst those aged over 55, males show significantly higher participation rates, while rates are very similar for males and females aged 35-54.

The only available time series on LLL participation is provided by the LFS (see NVF CES-VŠEM 2006). This measures formal and informal LLL, but excludes self-provided LLL. The participation rate has been 5% to 6% during 2002-2005. This is very low in comparison to the EU-25 average of 9.3% in 2003, and the Lisbon strategy target at 12.5%.

Alternative data sources paint a somewhat more positive picture. Surveys of firms that ask about education of employees (CVTS2 – Continuing Vocational Training Survey) conclude that Czech employers devote as much attention to education of their employees in 2006 as did an ‘average’ EU-27 employer. A similar conclusion was reached in a 2002 Eurostat study.

3 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

The groups that have lower access to LLL are: (a) older women; (b) unemployed people, especially those from disadvantaged groups; (c) low-skilled people; and (d) young workers.

3.1 Obstacles to training

The Czech labour force has one of the highest rates of secondary schooling attainment in the EU and one of the lowest tertiary attainment rates. It is therefore important to consider key obstacles in access to formal tertiary education for adults only with secondary education.

Firstly, there is insufficient supply of flexible (weekend, distant) tertiary programmes for these people, especially in major university cities. Many undergraduate-level programmes are offered as the first three years of a post-graduate programme and are, therefore, too academic and not sufficiently applied. Even though the number of distance and so-called combined tertiary programmes has tripled in size during 1993-2003, it remains very small relative to demand. Access is hard even to standard tertiary programmes in tuition-free public universities, which continue to be highly over-subscribed.

Secondly, in general, employers are not legally obliged to adjust working conditions to allow workers to combine formal education and employment. They must allow for flexible working conditions and even provide pay when additional education is required for the current job (this is the so-called ‘qualification deepening’ in the Labour Code). However, the decision to support formal education is up to the employer, who decides whether a given education programme is or is not necessary for the current job, and few firms are willing to bear the cost of formal education for their workers.

3.2 Relevance of training provided for progressing in the labour market

Retraining is offered for workers registered with Labour Offices. Currently, 30% of all Czech public ALMP funds are spent in the North-Moravian NUTS3 region (Moravskoslezsky kraj) and an additional 14% is allocated to the North-Bohemian region (Ústecký kraj). The ALMP spending in other areas is small. While in retraining, unemployed workers receive a higher unemployment insurance benefit (60% of previous net pay, as opposed to the regular 50%). However, many participants in retraining have had low or no wages before registering, or are repeatedly registered as unemployed, so that this financial benefit is typically small. There are no specific financial incentives provided for employers who provide training and retraining (even though costs of training are included in total company costs), except for the Law on Investment Incentives (č. 72/2000 Sb.), where special support for retraining is provided to new investors (typically foreign companies).

A key group with low LLL participation is low-skilled unemployed people. In general, participation rates in Czech ALMP programmes for unemployed workers with only elementary or apprenticeship degrees are about half of those with higher education.²⁶ Clearly, more of the retraining effort ought to be directed at people with apprenticeship degrees and people with only elementary education. It is also clear that retraining of these less skilled workers needs to be longer and hence more costly than currently provided programmes.

⁽²⁴⁾ Retraining courses offered within ALMP by Labour Offices are typically short-term programmes. 40% are shorter than one month and 75% last less than three months. According to NVF (2005), Czech training courses for unemployed are only about twice as long as those for employed, and they are also short in an EU-wide comparison.

⁽²⁵⁾ [http://www.czso.cz/csu/2004edicniplan.nsf/t/D7002B251E/\\$File/311905.pdf](http://www.czso.cz/csu/2004edicniplan.nsf/t/D7002B251E/$File/311905.pdf)

⁽²⁶⁾ <http://www.vupsv.cz/an238.html>

A small, but important form of support for adult formal education consists of the so-called 'University of the Third Age' programme. It is funded from Czech Government and ESF sources.

3.3 Particular disincentives to training

Adults can participate in formal tertiary (public and tuition-free) education, but only those full-time (non-employed) university students aged below 26 are currently not liable to pay social security and health contributions. However, this is likely to be changed, so that every adult will be free from such contributions during their first enrolment in tertiary education. No legal acts cover access to education of workers over 50, with the (minor) exception of the Employment Code.²⁷

4 Quality and impact of training

There is no systematic evaluation of the quality of LLL programmes in the Czech Republic, except for the accreditation process for formal education programmes. While recent attempts to assess the targeting of ALMP are an important step forward (RILSA, 2007), there are no evaluations of, for example, the effects of retraining programmes. Simple comparisons of employment rates among participants and non-participants in ALMP measures provide little information on their effect, because unemployed workers with different characteristics could be selected (or volunteer) for these programmes.

Until 2006, there was no legal base for certifying skills acquired outside of the formal education system (there were no official exams to verify that a certain level of skill was achieved, irrespective of how it was achieved, and no certification of employer or privately provided training). A new law intended to facilitate the acquisition of further qualifications and LLL came into effect in August 2007. This makes it possible to acquire a generally recognised certificate at a specific professional competence level regardless of how the competence was acquired. The system of certification is still being designed (basing the national qualification system on the European Qualification Framework (EQF)).

There is therefore a need for Government funded evaluation studies that would help identify currently unknown employment effects of existing ALMP measures and provide the information for redesign of existing programmes so that they are better targeted and more effective.

5 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

A key development in LLL was the adoption of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy in July 2007.²⁸ This argues that the initial schooling system is unjust in that access to better schools as well as to LLL is easier for children of well-educated parents, in comparison to equally gifted children of less-educated parents. It remains to be seen whether the Strategy's intention to pay special attention to disadvantaged, young people and women on maternity leave translates into effective policy measures. The Strategy should provide a framework for the implementation of Operational Programmes during 2007-2013.²⁹

ESF funded programs support various specific retraining and education activities, including employer-provided courses. There are as yet no sufficiently informative summaries or evaluations of these many types of activities.

NVF (2006) provides a number of ideas for policy proposals aimed at increasing participation in LLL. Whether these ideas will be implemented as part of the ongoing tax and benefits reform or within the implementation of ESF funded programs remains to be seen.

6 Bibliography

NVF (2005). *Unequalities in the participation of adult population in further learning. [Nerovnosti v účasti dospělých na dalším vzdělávání]*, Working Paper NOZV-NVF č. 1/2005.

http://www.nvf.cz/publikace/pdf_publikace/observator/cz/working_paper1_2005.pdf

NVF (2006). *Education support of senior people [Podpora vzdělávání starších osob]*, Working Paper NOZV-NVF č. 7/2006.

http://www.nvf.cz/publikace/pdf_publikace/observator/cz/working_paper7_2006.pdf

NVF and CES-VŠEM (2006). *Competitiveness Yearbook of the Czech Republic 2006 [Ročenka konkurenceschopnosti České republiky]*. Praha 2006. <http://www.nvf.cz/observatory/2006.htm>

⁽²⁷⁾ Law no. 435/2004 Sb.

⁽²⁸⁾ <http://www.msmt.cz/eu/strategie-celozivotniho-uceni-cr>

⁽²⁹⁾ A related document is the National Programme of Preparing for Ageing of the Population, which argues that more employer provided training is necessary. It is not clear which policies were successfully implemented due to the existence of this national programme.

NVF and CES-VŠEM (2007). *Competitiveness Yearbook 2007 of the Czech Republic [Ročenka konkurenceschopnosti České republiky]*. Praha 2007.

Results of ad-hoc labour force survey module on LLL in 2003 [Výsledky ad hoc modulu 2003 o celoživotním vzdělávání], 2007 ČSÚ.

<http://www.czso.cz/csu/2004edicniplan.nsf/p/3119-04>

MoS (MŠMT) Ministry of Schooling, Youth and Sports (2007). *Life-long Learning Strategy [Strategie celoživotního učení]*, MoS 2007.

<http://www.msmt.cz/eu/strategieke>

Sirovátka, T. a V. Kulhavý, 2007. *Active employment programs in the Czech Republic in 2005: Evaluation of impact on unemployment in 2006 [Programy aktivní politiky zaměstnanosti v ČR v roce 2005: Hodnocení efektů na nezaměstnanost v roce 2006]*, RILSA Praha 2007.

http://www.vupsv.cz/Fulltext/vz_238.pdf

LLL2010, 2007a. *Lifelong Learning Policies in the Czech Republic, LLL2010 SP1, Country Report*, <http://LLL2010.tlu.ee>

LLL2010, 2007b. *Lifelong Learning: patterns of policy in thirteen European countries. A review of lifelong learning policy & practices in Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, England, Estonia, Flanders, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Russia, Scotland, Slovenia*, Working Paper No 16, Project report No 1. <http://LLL2010.tlu.ee>

Denmark

1 Participation in LLL

In Denmark, LLL can be divided into public LLL, which is an integrated part of the public educational system, and private LLL, which is provided by private commercial training companies, private organisations, trade unions, employer's organisations, etc. In 2005 about 1,156,000 people took part in LLL; 883,000 (751,500 aged 25+) in public LLL and 273,000 in LLL provided by private companies and organisations (including trade unions and employer's organisations).³⁰ The overall participation rate is about 40% (the 2005 workforce was 2,845,000). Training provided directly in the workplace is a significant component of LLL. A report of the tripartite commission on LLL and CVT estimated that in 2004 more than 60% of the workforce (employed and unemployed) took part in some form of LLL, including in-house training in the workplace (Trepartsudvalget, 2006a:16).

Public LLL had 45,900 participants in full-time training in 2005 and 34,200 of them were older than 24. In 2004, it is estimated that there were between 33,100 and 43,600 full-time participants in private LLL, while the number of full-time participants in in-house training activities is between 33,100 and 41,300 (Trepartsudvalget, 2006a:16).

An important part of LLL is labour market training and education ('AMU' in Danish). In 2005 the total number of participants in AMU was 560,900 persons, 9,900 of these on a full-time basis. AMU, thus, counts for about two-thirds of the adult participants aged 25 and above taking part in public LLL, but only for one quarter of the full-time participants, thus indicating that this form of training is mainly of a limited duration. In fact, on average, a person takes part in training activities that last a little more than two weeks.

By international comparison, LLL plays an important role in the Danish labour market. According to Eurostat (Labour Force Survey), 29.2% of the Danes aged 25 to 64 stated in 2006 that they received education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. Among the EU-27 this number is only surpassed by Sweden, and the EU-27 average is 9.6%.

Due to the dominance of public LLL and the lack of statistical information concerning private LLL-activities, the focus of this article is public LLL. However, a separate section below also provides some information on the private supply of LLL.

The structure of public LLL in Denmark

Publicly financed adult learning can be subdivided into three main categories:

- adult liberal education (folk high schools, evening schools etc.);
- general adult education (primary and secondary level - or special courses at levels that cannot be precisely indicated);
- vocationally oriented adult education and training from vocational education (VET) level to the highest academic level (continuing vocational education and training - CVT).

The adult education system furthermore 'mirrors' the general educational system in that it is divided into two levels of education:

- basic Adult Education in the form of educational programmes, which give the same competences as ordinary youth educational programmes up to and including the level of vocational education;
- advanced education levels, which are comparable with ordinary education levels, but different from these as regards to organisation and content; short, medium-term and long higher education programmes.

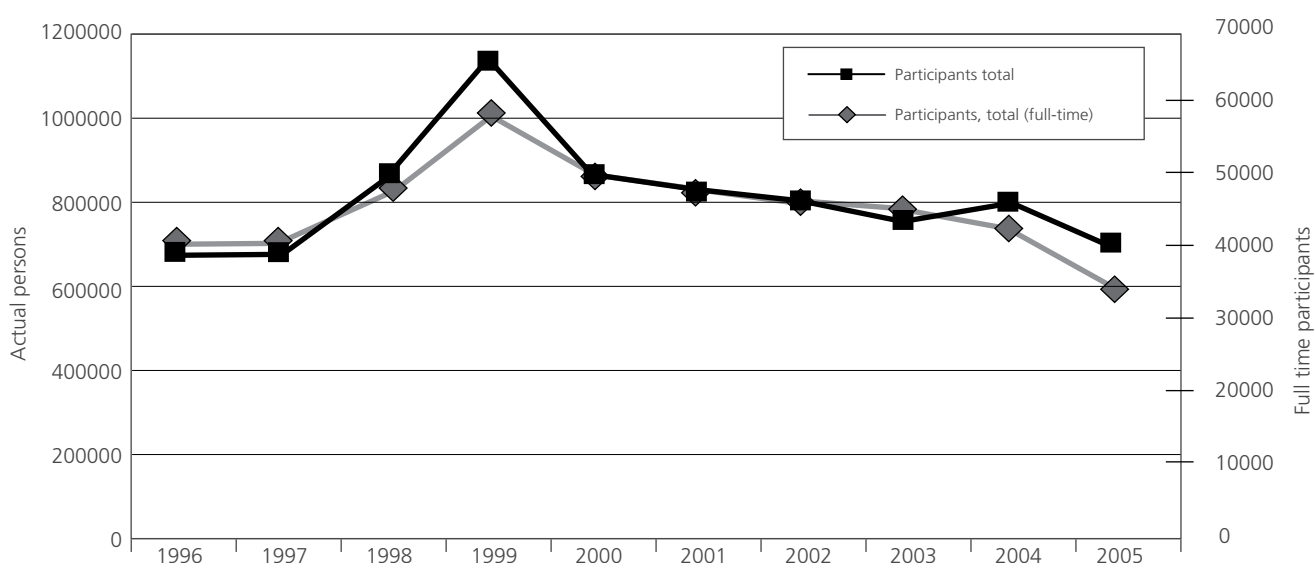
The Ministry of Education administers a major part of the public system of LLL. In the case of specialised institutions for labour market training (AMU), the social partners are strongly involved in the design and implementation of the training activities.

The total cost of the public LLL system amounts to approximately DKK 5,000 million (EUR 671 million), including both the operational costs and the cost of compensation for participants, who are normally paid an amount equal to the unemployment benefit when they take part in LLL with a vocational target. Employers contribute with about DKK 1,000 million to compensate costs to the participants. A fee to cover participation in most education and training programmes is paid by participants or employers, the latter being the most frequent contributor for training with a vocational content.

Participants in public LLL

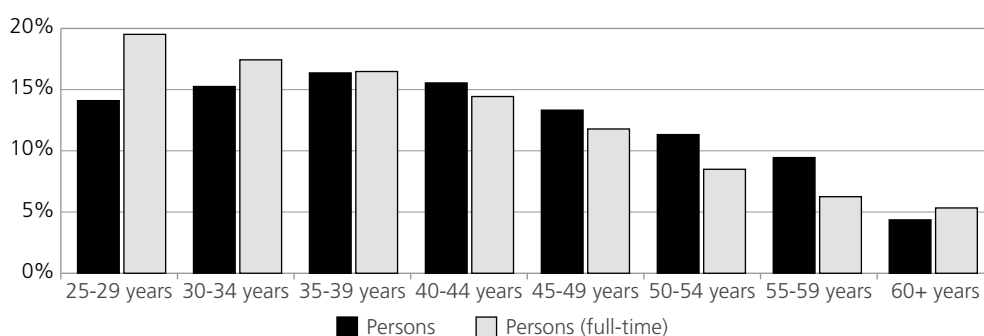
Figure 1 shows the total number of participants in public LLL from 1996 to 2005. Over the period as a whole, the number of participants has remained fairly stable, but peaking in 1999 and seeing a slight decline in 2005.

⁽³⁰⁾ If not otherwise stated, the data in this article are from the databanks of Statistics Denmark. The article also draws on the comprehensive analysis of Danish LLL conducted as part of the work of the Tripartite Commission on Life-Long Learning and Continuing Vocational Training, cf. section 2 below.

Figure 1: Participants in public LLL in actual persons and full-time persons from 1996-2005

Source: Databanks of Statistics Denmark

The majority of the participants are in the younger age groups, from 25 to 34 years old (cf. figure 2). There is also a clear tendency for the share to decline systematically with age. Only about 5% of participants are older than 59 years. By gender, the distribution of the participants is almost even: 51.8% are men and 48.2% are women. Among full-time participants, there is a majority (54%) of women, indicating that women have a tendency to take part in training activities a longer period than men.

Figure 2: Participants in public LLL divided by age, 2005

Source: Databanks of Statistics Denmark

A vast majority of those taking part in LLL are in employment; 74.5% are wage earners and 2.6% are self-employed, whilst 9.6% are unemployed. For those taking part in labour market training (AMU), 82% are employed (including self-employed) and 10.7% are unemployed.³¹

In terms of educational background, 25.7% of public LLL participants have only a basic education, while 6.5% have a secondary education and about 47.3% have a vocational education and the remaining 21.5% have some form of higher education. In specialised labour market training, the proportion of people with basic education and vocational education is somewhat higher.

Unskilled workers have a lower participation rate than other groups. In general, the propensity to participate in LLL increases with educational level. The participation rate is also lower for employees of smaller firms. Furthermore, persons employed in the construction or hospitality sectors have lower participation rates. On the other hand, participation is high amongst employees in large companies and in innovative sectors.

About 45% of the firms in the private sector have not had any employees taking part in formal internal or external training during the last year. The same goes for 11% of the public institutions.

People with reading disabilities participate in LLL to a lesser degree than other people. This is also related to educational background because unskilled people and those with a basic vocational training have a greater incidence of reading disabilities than others. This also applies to people with a foreign background.

Private supply of LLL

The private supply of LLL is mainly from small providers of a wide range of training activities (Oxford Research, 2005). However, a few larger providers dominate the private market. In 2004, about half of the training days were supplied by providers with more than 100 employees. A characteristic feature of the private providers of LLL is their focus on 'softer' subjects like 'management and organisation', 'personal development' and 'cooperation and communication'.

In 2006 about 274,000 people took part in private LLL. The majority of them had further education and were top-level or mid-level salaried employees.

2 Obstacles and issues related to lifelong learning and skills development

As part of the increased political attention to the issues of globalisation and international competitiveness, the question of LLL has been high on the political agenda in recent years. A special Tripartite Commission on Life-Long Learning and Continuing Vocational Training was established in 2004 and it submitted its report in February 2006. Apart from noting the relatively high level of participation in LLL in the Danish labour market, the Commission pointed to a number of challenges related to LLL:

- The weaker groups in the labour market take less part in both formal and informal LLL. They are often unskilled and many have reading or writing disabilities. This group constitutes about one quarter of the workforce.
- About 150,000 adults lack the basic skills that would enable them to take part in modern working life. About one quarter of the workforce – to a varying degree – has weaknesses around reading, writing and arithmetic.
- The weaker groups are also less motivated to take part in LLL and this constitutes an important barrier for upgrading the skills of the workforce.
- Unskilled and skilled workers primarily take part in LLL if the content is directly related to their own work, and if their manager explicitly encourages them to do so.
- A large proportion of organisations, especially in the private sector, has no systematic policy on CVT. This acts as a significant barrier to raising the level of participation in LLL, especially since unskilled workers are more often employed by firms without a systematic policy on further education and training of their employees.

When it comes to the supply of CVT one can also identify a number of weaknesses. Firstly, there is no comprehensive system of information and counselling, which can make it difficult for both employees and firms to get an overview of the broad spectrum of courses on offer. Secondly, the Commission identified a lack of supply of public CVT in specific areas, especially courses that take the special needs of the weaker groups into account.

⁽³¹⁾ The socio-economic status is measured in the last week of November and may therefore differ from the status at the time of entering a LLL-programme.

Based on these observations, the Tripartite Commission made proposals for strengthening CVT and discussed potential reforms in the system for financing public CVT activities (including contributions from the social partners and individual participants). The issue of financing public CVT was a core area in the 2007 negotiations to renew the collective agreements in the private sector; this is discussed further below.

3 Quality and impact of training

Several studies have been conducted to assess the effects of different forms of training on both employed and unemployed persons. The most recent study on the effects of LLL on individuals highlighted several points (Clausen et al, 2005):

- Vocational education and training has a positive effect on the length of employment of participants. For adult education of a more general or advanced nature, the effects are either insignificant or, at least in the short run, even negative.
- For all levels of adult education, participation leads to further participation. Thus, encouraging people to take the first step into further education and training would be likely to raise overall participation rates.
- The majority (77%) of the participants report that they experience professional benefits, an impact that is greatest for those undertaking advanced LLL.
- Participants with a basic education report that they have profited to a lesser extent.

When it comes to the evaluation of the effects of LLL on firms, the following results can be noted (Socialforskningsinstituttet, 2005):

- A majority of firms report that they benefit in general from having their employees take part in LLL. The largest benefits come from internal training, with vocational training provided by public suppliers rated as second.
- Firms that systematically assess their need for LLL tend to have a more positive assessment of the benefits.
- There are no significant differences in benefits for different groups of employees.

Finally, assessments were made by the Tripartite Commission of the macroeconomic effects of LLL (Trepartsudvalget, 2006b:10). The results are based on calculations of the impact of increasing LLL by one day per year, per person in the workforce; this would require a 25% increase in spending on public LLL. The outcome would be an increase in average productivity of approximately 0.8% in the long run and structural unemployment would fall by about 0.25%. The effect on GDP would depend on whether the increase in LLL activities takes place during normal working hours, or in spare time.

4 A promising practice?

There is no doubt that LLL has been high on the Danish political agenda in recent years. The intense debates about globalisation and the steadily increasing economic integration of the Danish economy and the labour market have prompted concerns about the skill level of the workforce. As described above, both the Government and social partners have shown a strong involvement in improving both the quality and the magnitude of LLL. Also, as an important element of the Danish LLL system, one should note the emphasis on LLL for the workforce as a whole, not just for the unemployed or those at risk of losing their job. The integration of LLL into collective agreements is important for achieving this goal.

It is hard to assess the role of the European Union in this context. In itself, the economic support for LLL activities is limited in the Danish case. On the other hand, the emphasis placed on LLL, for instance by the European Employment Strategy, may have had an impact. Thus, the terms of reference for the Tripartite Commission explicitly makes reference to the first Wim Kok Report from November 2003 and especially to its emphasis on the need for both the social partners and the Government to get actively involved in the reform of the LLL systems (Trepartsudvalget, 2006a:7).

As an example – and as the final step in the process initiated by the Tripartite Commission – the social partners and the Government signed an agreement on 12 October 2007, which lays out a detailed framework for the financial structure of LLL for the coming years. The arrangement also contains a clause that the partners will follow the development of LLL closely and meet again in 2009 to evaluate the reforms of LLL that will be implemented from 2008. Thus, there will be a continued focus on LLL in the foreseeable future.

5 Bibliography

Clausen, J. et al (2005): *Effekten og oplevede udbytte af deltagelse i voksen-, efter-, og videreuddannelse på individniveau [The effect and experience from participation in adult and further education]*, Amternes og Kommunernes Forskningsinstitut, København www.akf.dk

Oxford Research (2005): *Det private udbud af voksen-, efter- og videreuddannelse (VEU) [The private supply of adult and further education(CVT)]*, København www.fm.dk

Socialforskningsinstitutet (2005): *Effektanalyse – virksomheder [Analysis of effects on firms]*, København www.fm.dk

Trepartsudvalget (2006a): *Livslang opkvalificering og uddannelse for alle på arbejdsmarkedet – Rapport fra Trepartsudvalget, Bind 1: Den fremtidige voksen- og efteruddannelsesindsats [Lifelong education and training for the whole workforce. Report from the Tripartite Commission, Volume 1: The future of CVT]*, Finansministeriet, København www.fm.dk

Trepartsudvalget (2006b): *Livslang opkvalificering og uddannelse for alle på arbejdsmarkedet – Rapport fra Trepartsudvalget, Bind 2: Kortlægning og analyser [Lifelong education and training for the whole workforce. Report from the Tripartite Commission, Volume 2: Mapping and analysis]*, Finansministeriet, København www.fm.dk

Germany

1 Participation in lifelong learning

The participation rate in adult vocational training declined until 2003 (*Berichtssystem Weiterbildung – BSW 2006*)³²; it was 26% in 2003, compared to 29% in 2000 and 30% in 1997 (Table 1). This corresponds to a decrease of approximately 1.4 million participants. For 2006 the special survey undertaken by Eurobarometer noted a participation rate of 23% for 2006 (*European Commission 2006*). Researchers explain this decline with reference to the savings policy of the public sector and increased cost pressures on firms.

This decrease in LLL was more apparent for employees and self-employed people than for the unemployed. Their participation rates decreased by 6%, while that for unemployed people fell by 1%. Participation rates decreased in all occupational groups, except civil servants.

Continuing vocational training is positively correlated with educational level. Almost half of the professional and management group participated in 2003, compared to 13% of unskilled blue-collar workers. Among civil servants, the participation rate was 59%. Participation declined for all status groups, except professional civil servants. Even self-employed workers retreated from continuing vocational training.

People aged between 35 to 49 years participated the most and people aged 50 to 64 years participated the least. Men participated more frequently than women, but the difference in participation rates decreased from 2000 to 2003.

The average time spent on further vocational training also declined. In 2000 the average participant spent 124 hours on further training – in 2003 it was only 99 hours. As a result, the volume of hours spent on continuing vocational training decreased by 25%, to 1.24 billion hours.

**Table 1: Participation in continuing vocational training
Germany (% of labour force group)**

	1997	2000	2003
Total	30	29	26
Persons employed	42	40	34
Unemployed	12	9	8
Occupational group			
Unskilled and semi-skilled blue-collar workers	17	15	13
Skilled blue-collar workers	35	30	25
Unskilled and semi-skilled white-collar workers	30	27	20
Skilled white-collar workers	49	50	45
Executive employees	56	52	47
Civil servants with lower, middle and upper grades	62	63	59
Civil servants with higher grades	54	56	59
Self-employed	40	43	34
Age			
19-34	33	31	29
35-49	36	36	31
50-64	20	18	17
Gender			
Male	35	34	28
Female	26	23	24
Training hours per year			
Total number of hours (billion)	1.95	1.66	1.24
Average number of hours		124	99

Source: Berichtssystem Weiterbildung 2006

⁽³²⁾ Three major sources can be used to scrutinize trends in training of adults:

- The report system on continuing vocational training (www.bmbf.de/pub/berichtssystem_weiterbildung_neun.pdf) which is the main statistical source on adult training of the German population. It covers general education and vocational training and provides representative data on participation rates comparable over time. The statistics use a broad approach including training participation for private purposes. By further education or training the BSW does not only mean conventional education in terms of seminars and training courses but also informal learning processes through self-learning. Due to long publication lags, data for 2003 are the most recent figures available. The figures might be negatively biased by the unfavourable demand situation on the German labour market at that time.
- The statistics of the Federal Labour Office (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) on training measures for unemployed. This source focuses on active labour market policy (Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2007).
- Another important source is the Vocational Education and Training annual report (Berufsbildungsbericht), published by the Federal Government. This report provides a comprehensive overview on vocational training in Germany, the presentation of policy measures and the official political assessment of training developments (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung 2007a).

Regarding unemployed people, the report on vocational education and training (*Berufsbildungsbericht 2007*) identified 118,762 participants in vocational training in 2006; this represents 2.6% of the unemployed. It is a decrease of 54% on the 2003 level, but an increase of 4% against the very low level in 2005.

For the period 2003 to 2006, the effects of the Hartz Reform have to be considered. This was associated with the reorganisation of continuing training measures and which caused a strong temporary decline. The Federal Labour Office (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit - BA*) attributes the increase since 2005 to the reduction in the number of measures and a stronger orientation towards labour market integration.

17.6% of participants were younger than 25, and 8.4% were 50 or over. While this represents a double share compared to 2005, older workers are still strongly under-represented in training. 20.5% of the participants were long-term unemployed and women accounted for 48.5%. 7% of the entrants into training measures took courses leading to certified qualifications. This corresponds to an increase of 8.5% compared to 2005.

Overall, around EUR 39 billion is spent annually on continuing vocational training. This expenditure is almost equally shared between individuals, companies and governments (www.bibb.de/de/30130.htm#jump01). Employers continue to be the largest group offering continuing vocational training. One third of all participants are taking courses provided by employers. Other courses are at adult education centres (*Volkshochschule*) and private institutions (14% and 11%). Commercial and craft chambers provided continuing vocational training to only 5% of all participants.

This means that continuing vocational training in Germany is employer-oriented. Training courses are short, participation concentrates on well-trained individuals, and courses focus on company rather than labour market needs. This is not what a broad flexicurity concept requires. In contrast, actual continuing training promotes company-specific knowledge, does not provide generally accepted certificates, and is not conducive to external flexibility of the labour force.

2 Obstacles to lifelong learning

Continuing vocational training in Germany is strongly selective. Individuals, companies and governments developed training strategies which were adjusted to the labour market constitution of past decades rather than the decades ahead:

- Individual workers – expecting lifelong jobs – concentrated on in-house careers rather than job hopping. Those without promising career perspectives – like the low-skilled or older workers – did not adequately participate in training.
- German companies focused continuing vocational training on highly skilled workers like professionals and managers, and preferred short-term adjustment-oriented training, rather than training to foster labour market oriented skills. Company training is governed by return on investment strategies and not the prevention of social costs.
- The Federal and Länder Governments stuck to the German (dual and non-dual) vocational training systems which concentrate on initial training rather than the extension of initial training through LLL. No comprehensive system of continuing vocational training was developed.

With this background, the critical assessment made by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) was not surprising: 'Vocational training in Germany performs significantly worse than in other European countries as e.g. in Scandinavia, France or the Netherlands' (*BIBB 2007c*). Until recently, Germany relied on its dual system as a major pillar of vocational training. In a world of rapid technological and economic change, however, this appears to be inflexible and unable to match the skills needs of companies. The major question, therefore, is how to manage the switch from the prevailing approach to a learning society.

The message about the value of LLL has reached individuals, companies, and governments. This is reflected in survey results which indicate that the majority of workers are convinced that continuous vocational training improves job opportunities (*BIBB 2007c*). LLL is also seen as being important by more than half of companies, and governments do not miss opportunities to underline the necessity of continuing training. Actions, however, are different: workers hesitate to participate in training due to high opportunity costs; companies have not developed professional continuing training concepts as in other EU countries; and governments cut education and training budgets. As a result, participation in adult training decreased in Germany instead of extending.

The switch to a learning society is hampered by a complicated federal system of competences and financial burden sharing. While general education and university training is the responsibility of the Länder, dual training is run by the Federal Government. Continuing training is not yet defined as a governmental task and therefore remains a private responsibility with little public support. Without a substantial governmental effort – both institutionally and financially – LLL will not develop to a state comparable to other European countries.

3 Impact of training

While previous evaluations were very critical about the effects of training measures for unemployed people, newer studies in the last ten years confirm a positive impact on job placements. The reorganisation of training measures of the Federal Labour Agency which happened before the Hartz Reform showed positive results. The Hartz Reform reinforced these improvements (*Lechner et al. 2005, IZA 2006, and others*)³³.

The IZA study concluded that public training measures raised the employment prospects of former unemployed participants by 5% (*Schneider, Uhlendorf 2006*). Positive effects can be discerned 22 months after the start of the training and they are stronger for men than for women. The Hartz Reform seems to strengthen positive effects and shorten lock-in periods, although evaluation results are still preliminary.

A surprising result of the evaluation studies is the neutral effect of training measures on unemployment – in spite of the positive employment effect. This is explained by the observation that training measures keep workers in the labour market while those without support would have left to non-employment. Training was obviously able to raise the prospects of a new job but did not reduce the risk of unemployment.

4 National strategies and measures

Measures have been developed to promote LLL through financial support, develop new learning methods (e-learning), create learning regions, and improve the transparency of training markets. Several important measures are presented below:

4.1 Training vouchers (Bildungsgutschein)

The Federal Labour Agency supports training of more than 12 weeks for unemployed people through training vouchers which allow a choice of approved training course and provider. Thus unemployed people have a responsibility to select appropriate training. The approval of training courses and providers is undertaken by the Federal Labour Agency on the basis of institutional quality standards.

The Government expected to enhance the efficiency and quality of continuing training through the training voucher scheme. Competition was to be strengthened among training providers through the choice exercised by potential participants. An evaluation by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (*BIBB 2006*) concluded that the efforts of training providers to attract participants increased quality and training became much

more systematic. However, training providers complained that their workload also increased in response to the additional information demands from participants.

The scheme was introduced in a phase of severe restructuring of publicly supported continuing training. Participation in continuing vocational training decreased from 453,000 to 132,000 between 2002 and 2005, putting a number of training providers at risk. The share of older, long-term unemployed or illiterate participants decreased and short training measures increased. Nevertheless, the BIBB evaluation found positive results.

4.2 Saving for continuing training (Weiterbildungssparen)

The promotion of savings for continuing training will be introduced in 2008 in order to improve the financing of training costs. Currently further training costs are deductible from income tax, which means that low-income earners do not benefit. The new arrangement will avoid this by offering direct financial support:

- *Premium on further training*: the state will cover half of participation costs up to a total of EUR 154 if a person earns less than EUR 17,900 per year (single) or EUR 35,800 (married).
- *Completion of the Capital Accumulation Act (Vermögensbildungsgesetz)*: non-penalised withdrawals from tax-preference savings are allowed for training purposes before the expiry of the retention period. In this way participants can revert to liquidity without losing state allowance.
- *Loan on further education*: without credit check there will be a loan available for every participant with interest rates similar to those of study credits (5.95% p.a.).

The Government especially believes that the premium on further education is suitable for encouraging young people to study further. However, because the premium amount is limited, it will only enable short further training measures.

4.3 E-Learning

The quality of the e-learning courses has improved in recent years: the design of computer-based training (CBT) and courses became much more pedagogical and more web-based training (WBT) is supported by e-tutors. Topics related to computing are by far the most prevalent in e-learning, followed by business science, law and administration.

In order to improve the effectiveness of e-learning, the government is supporting research, development and testing processes through the New Media in Education programme (*Neue Medien in der Bildung, BMBF 2007b*). The aim is to increase participation in further training, support groups with special

⁽³³⁾ In more recent publications Lechner et al. (2007) developed a sceptical view on public training measures, criticising the ineffectiveness of training. The issues raised, however, relate to methodological arguments rather than the interpretation of empirical evidence.

educational needs, and provide education in regions lacking training infrastructure and link further training and work. Participating private firms receive up to half of their project costs, and academic institutions up to 100%.

There were a series of successful projects undertaken prior to 2004:

- Working process oriented training for the IT sector (APO-IT: Arbeitsprozessorientierte Weiterbildung für die IT-Branche): a consolidation of more than 300 courses to 35 certified training profiles.
- Teachware on demand and the development of e-learning methods; programming instruments which allow the creation of multi-media courses, modular training, tutorial courses, and electronic exams.
- Sector-specific training modules: e-learning instruments for the automotive industry, training of mechatronic specialists, construction industry, textiles industry, medical sector, etc.
- E-learning for Master courses in the crafts sectors.
- Creation of databanks on continuing training in order to improve the transparency of training provision.

4.4 Educational guidance

The Federal Institute for Vocational Training developed a database called ELDOC (www.eldoc.info), which assists people interested in e-learning to find adequate offers. The database provides information about the quality of further education offers based on the internet, their providers, the duration of courses, costs, time and effort, education requirements, certificates, etc. The database is increasingly used, showing its effectiveness; currently there are 103 training providers and over 850 courses offered. At least 25 additional databanks were established according to the German product testing foundation (*Stiftung-Warentest*). The chambers of industry and commerce (IHK) and the chambers of trade (HWK) offer comprehensive information and guidance services regarding vocational training.

4.5 Training Act for career promotion (Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz - AFBG)

The law assures the individual legal claim on Government aid when attaining further education measures, which lead to occupational advancement, for instance master classes in craft business or other approved occupations. In the period 2007 to 2010, the Government plans to spend EUR 615 million within the AFBG. In 2005 141,000 people were supported, almost 80% aged between 20 and 35. Thus the AFBG was successful in motivating young people to continue training. Similar programmes are run under the title of 'training for the talented' (*„Begabtenförderung berufliche Weiterbildung“*).

4.6 Learning regions

The Federal Ministry for Education and Research promotes the creation of regional networks for innovative and integrated LLL services. The programme has a volume of EUR 118 million for the 2001 to 2007 period – EUR 51 million from ESF sources. 70 regions are supported to improve training consulting, self-learning approaches, and transitional adjustments through training.

4.7 Collective agreements

In several sectors, social partners agreed on training measures for employees. This includes the right to participate in training and financial support. However, only a small proportion of companies is covered by such agreements, and participation appears to be low.

5 Conclusions

There is great awareness in Germany about the need for LLL. The development of the knowledge society is one of the key elements of the German National Reform Programme. The Deutsche Bundestag made a declaration on LLL, demanding more support and involvement of all actors (*Deutscher Bundestag 2005*). The majority of workers and companies see LLL as important investment for competitiveness and job prospects.

Reality, however, is different. Companies retreated from continuing vocational training, workers hesitated to leave their jobs for labour market oriented courses, and public institutions like the Federal Labour Agency cut training measures for unemployed people by more than half. Germany still has a system of initial vocational training rather than LLL. As a result, participation in continuing vocational training decreased over the last ten years.

Until now, the efforts to develop the knowledge society were based on a multitude of programmes and initiatives. A principal approach towards a LLL system which complements general education and vocational training, however, is not yet visible. Continuing vocational training is still employer-oriented. Training courses are short, participation concentrates on well-trained people, and courses are focusing on company rather than labour market needs. This is not what a broad flexicurity concept requires. In contrast, actual continuing training promotes company-specific knowledge, does not provide generally accepted certificates, and is not conducive to external flexibility of the labour force.

Moreover, German training policies appear to be caught in a net of different competence levels at the Federal and Länder level, and amongst social partners and training providers. Action is governed by a multitude of political and financial concerns. Neither principal reforms nor the extension of financial resources can obviously be achieved by this network.

As it is quite clear that employers cannot be motivated to finance labour market oriented training measures, and workers

are faced with high opportunity costs of training, Germany needs a public system of continuing vocational training. This should include:

- public support for training periods outside firms;
- a modular system of continuing vocational training providing credit points for specific training courses; and
- the opening of universities for continuing training, providing knowledge updates in various subjects.

Of course such a system will need funding. In addition, a reform of vocational training is needed to integrate LLL as a third pillar of the German education and training system, rather than using it as a supplement to initial training. Vocational schools, colleges and universities will have to develop adequate training courses and methods to meet the training needs of adults.

6 Bibliography

Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2007): *Jahresbericht 2006*. Amtliche Nachrichten der Bundesagentur für Arbeit. <http://www.bibb.de/de/30130.htm>

Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung BIBB (2007a): *Gesamtfinanzierung der beruflichen Weiterbildung in Deutschland*. <http://www.bibb.de/de/30130.htm>

Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung BIBB (2007b): *Jahresbericht 2006/2007*, chapter 3, pp. 33-40. http://www2.bibb.de/tools/gesamtverzeichnis/download.php?file=http://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/a12voe_jahresbericht_2006-2007.pdf

Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung BIBB (2007c): *Berufliche Weiterbildung in Deutschland: Derzeitige Situation - künftige Herausforderungen durch demographische Entwicklungen und Veränderungen in der Arbeitswelt*. <http://www.bibb.de/de/30130.htm>

Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung BIBB (2006): *Bildungsgutscheine in der öffentlich geförderten Weiterbildung - Erfahrungen und Auswirkungen*. http://www2.bibb.de/tools/fodb/pdf/eb_35101.pdf

Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (2007a): *Berufsbildungsbericht 2007*, chapter 4, pp. 223-262. http://www.bmbf.de/pub/bbb_07.pdf

Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (2007b): *Neue Medien in der beruflichen Bildung*. URL: http://www.bmbf.de/pub/neue_medien_in_beruflichen_bildung.pdf

Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (2006): *Berufsbildungsbericht 2006*, chapter 4, pp. 248-318 http://www.bmbf.de/pub/bbb_2006.pdf

Deutscher Bundestag (2005): *Rahmenbedingungen für lebenslanges Lernen verbessern – Wachstumspotenzial der Weiterbildung nutzen*; Drucksache 15/5024

Europäische Kommission (Ed.) (2006): *Europäische Beschäftigungs- und Sozialpolitik*. Eurobarometer Spezial 261. Brüssel. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs261_de.pdf

Kuwan, H., Bilder, F., Gnahn, D., Seidel, S. (2006): *Berichtssystem Weiterbildung IX – Integrierter Gesamtbericht zur Weiterbildungssituation in Deutschland*, Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung. http://www.bmbf.de/pub/berichtssystem_weiterbildung_neun.pdf

Lechner and Wunsch (2007a): *What Did All the Money Do? On the General Ineffectiveness of Recent West German Labour Market Programmes*. IZA DP No. 2800. <http://doku.iab.de/externe/2007/k070521p05.pdf>

Lechner and Wunsch (2007b): *Are Training Programs More Effective When Unemployment is High?* IAB

DP No. 7/2007, <http://doku.iab.de/discussionpapers/2007/dp0707.pdf>

Lechner, Miquel and Wunsch (2005a): *The Curse and Blessing of Training the Unemployed in a Changing Economy - The Case of East Germany After Unification*. IAB DP No. 14/2005. <http://doku.iab.de/discussionpapers/2005/dp1405.pdf>

Lechner, Miquel and Wunsch (2005b): *Long-Run Effects of Public Sector Sponsored Training in West Germany*. IAB DP No. 3/2005. <http://doku.iab.de/discussionpapers/2005/dp0305.pdf>

Rürup, B. and Kohlmeier, A. (2007): *Wirtschaftliche und sozialpolitische Bedeutung des Weiterbildungssparens*. Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung.

http://www.bmbf.de/pub/kurzfassung_zur_studie_bildungssparen.pdf

Schneider and Uhlendorff (2006): *Die Wirkung der Hartz-Reform im Bereich der beruflichen Weiterbildung*. IZA DP No. 2255 <http://ftp.iza.org/dp2255.pdf>

Stiftung Warentest (2006): *WeiterbildungsTests*. <http://www.weiterbildungstest.de>

Vogler-Ludwig, K. (2007): *Post-Assessment of the National Reform Programme Progress Report 2007/08 – Germany*, European Employment Observatory

Zickert, K. (2007): *Förderung der beruflichen Qualifizierung durch Weiterbildungs- und Arbeitszeitmanagement - Ergebnisse einer Betriebsbefragung*. IAB DP Nr. 11/2007. <http://doku.iab.de/forschungsbericht/2007/fb1107.pdf>

Estonia

1 Participation in lifelong learning in Estonia

This article provides an overview of the current situation and policies with respect to LLL in Estonia. Research suggests that participation in LLL or education later in life depends critically on earlier education. Poor general education and dropping out of school early reduce the likelihood of participation in LLL. Taking that as a starting point, the discussion below starts off by adopting a broader perspective and giving a brief overview of Estonian progress towards the EU goals for education and training. The main factors determining participation in LLL and policies to support LLL in Estonia are then analysed.

One of the aims of the Lisbon strategy is to increase the per capita investment in human resources. A possible indicator for illustrating progress towards this aim is the percentage of GDP spent on education and training. In Estonia this stood at around the EU-27 average level (5.09%) in 2004. However, spending has decreased from 6.11% in 1999 to 5.09% in 2004 (5.43% in 2003) and is well below the best performing EU countries (Denmark and Sweden), which featured the highest relative spending in 2004 amounting to 8.47% and 7.35% of GDP, respectively. There are no data available on the private and public shares of this expenditure in Estonia.

As mentioned previously, dropping out of school early reduces the likelihood of participation in continuing training. Compared to the EU-27 average, the share of early school leavers is low in Estonia (15.3% in the EU-27 compared to 13.2% in Estonia in 2006), but still above the EU target of 10%. Compared to 2000, the share of early school leavers has slightly decreased, but no clear downward trend can be observed. It seems that boys are more likely to drop out of school (although this is based on a small sample).

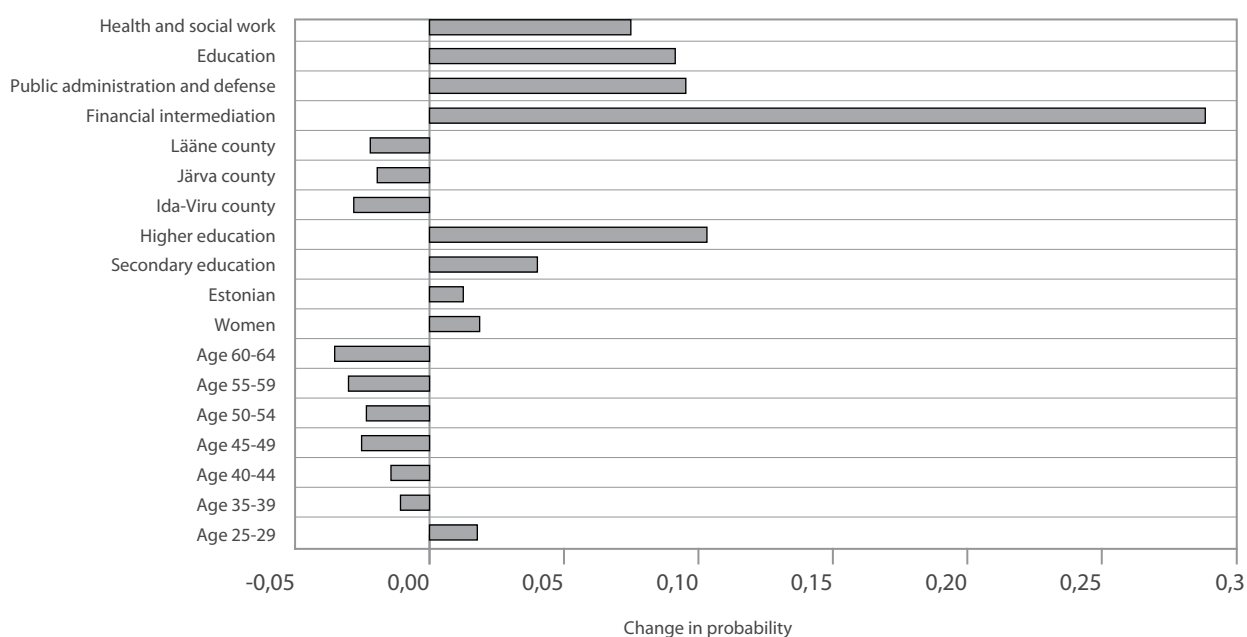
Contrary to dropping out of school, a high level of general educational attainment, capabilities in reading literacy and the availability of scientific specialists, contribute to the economic competitiveness of any country and increase the likelihood of participation in LLL. The aim of the EU for 2010 with respect to general educational attainment is that at least 85% of 22-year-olds should have completed upper-secondary education. In Estonia there has been a slight increase since 2000 and the figure was 82% in 2006, higher than the EU-27 average (77.8%). Estonia is one of the top performers regarding the share of females who have completed upper-secondary education (89.8%), 15.7% higher than the figure for males. Hence, a considerable gender gap can be observed regarding the general educational attainment in Estonia.

Another EU aim for 2010 is to decrease the percentage of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading literacy by at least 20% compared to the year 2000. This implies a decrease from 19.4% in 2000 to 15.5%, as measured with data from the PISA survey. Estonia participated in the PISA survey for the first time in 2006, therefore there are no comparative data available for Estonia. However, the results of the 2006 survey indicate that Estonia was one of the countries where the share of low-achievers in reading literacy was the smallest, with more than 85% of students at level 2 and above (OECD, 2007).

For the development of a knowledge-based society, the EU aims to increase the total number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology by at least 15% by 2010 and to reduce associated gender imbalances. The share of tertiary level graduates in science and technology per 1,000 graduates aged 20-29, was 12.1% in 2005, which is below the EU-27 average of 12.9% and significantly lower than the share in the best performing EU countries (Ireland and France), where the respective shares were 24.5% and 22.5% of all graduates. A relatively small difference between male and female graduates can be observed (13.5% of men compared to 10.7% of women). The main reason behind the considerable increase (of 3.2%) in 2005 compared to 2004 is the impact of higher education reforms, which introduced three-year BA programmes. In 2005, students on the three-year programme and the four-year programme graduated simultaneously, increasing the total and relative share of graduates. Therefore, it is difficult to assess what would have been the growth rate in the respective indicator if the impact of the reform is taken into account and whether this level will be sustained in the longer term.

As in most of the new Member States, in Estonia participation in education and training in general is very low. Only 6.5% of the 25-64 year-olds participated in LLL, which is below the EU-27 average of 9.6% and much lower than the EU target of 12.5% for 2010. Compared to 2001, there has been a small increase of 0.9% in Estonia. The best performing countries in terms of participation in LLL were Denmark and Sweden with 29.2% and 23.1% of the adult population participating in some form of education and training.

Figure 1 shows the factors explaining the probability of participation in LLL of the employed (aged 25 to 64), which is estimated by using a logistic regression model. Only variables with statistically significant ($p < 0.10$) marginal effects are presented and only the results for the employed population are presented. The figure shows that in 2006 older workers and people living in certain counties outside the capital were less likely to participate in LLL. Women, native Estonians, people with a secondary and higher education and employees in financial intermediation, public administration, education and health sectors were more likely to participate. The higher participation rate of employees in the education sector and public administration can be explained by the fact that for these groups training is funded from the state budget. The results confirm earlier findings that younger and better educated individuals tend to participate more in LLL.

Figure 1: Probability of participating in lifelong learning; Marginals effects from logistic regression model³⁴

Source: Labour Force Survey 2006, author's calculations

There are several studies available analysing participation in professional training in Estonia. Most of these seem to indicate that around 20% to 32% of employees participate in continuous vocational education (see for example European Commission (2007); Tamm et al 2005; Statistics Estonia 2005). According to Eurostat, the share of employees participating in continuous vocational education in Estonia is significantly lower than the EU-25 average (24% and 34% respectively in 2005). The results of a study by Statistic Estonia in 2005, which focused on analysing adult training in enterprises, reveal that large firms are more likely to offer training courses to their employees. A lack of financial resources was one of the most important reasons for not providing training courses (Statistics Estonia, 2005). A study by Tamm et al (2005) shows that employed people, women, younger people, those with a higher education and income and Estonians are more likely to participate in training (Tamm et al, 2005). The study by Vöörmann et al (2006) adds that the interest of older workers in further training is modest. The main reasons for this are old age and a lack of financial support. Hence, the results of these studies confirm the results of the regression analysis (presented above) and suggest that younger and better educated people tend to participate more in adult education and training.

Training courses for the unemployed are organised by the Public Employment Offices, which work under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Affairs. However, both the number of participants and the expenditure on ALMP, including different training programmes, have traditionally been very low in Estonia (around 0.11% of GDP in 2006). In 2006 and 2007 only 7,000 and 5,500 people participated in labour market training courses, which accounts roughly for 14% of the total number of registered unemployed in both years (National Labour Market Board, 2006).

2 Institutional context

The centrepiece of the LLL policies in Estonia is adult training. Adult training is regulated by the 1993 Adult Education Act. This defines adult learners by the study load (part-time student); for an adult learner studying is not the primary activity, e.g. he/she is studying in parallel with working, taking care of children or other activities. **Three types of adult education** can be distinguished:

1. *Formal education* acquired within the adult education system. Adults can acquire basic education, secondary general education, secondary vocational education or higher education through evening courses, distance learning, part-time studies or as an external student. For the institutions providing this type of education, the provisions of the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, the Vocational Educational Institutions Act, the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act, the Universities Act and the Private Schools Act are relevant. These types of studies are certified by a certificate or a diploma.
2. *Professional education* and training provides an opportunity to acquire and develop professional, occupational and/or vocational knowledge, skills and experience, and an opportunity for re-training in the workplace or an educational institution. Completion of professional education and training leads also to a certificate.
3. *Informal education* provides the opportunity to develop personality, creativity, talent, initiative and a sense of social responsibility, and to accumulate knowledge, skills and

⁽³⁴⁾ Only the marginal effects that were statistically significant at 90% level are presented.

Base categories are: age group 30 to 34; men; non-Estonians, workers with primary education, living in capital area (Harju county), workers employed in agriculture.

abilities needed in life. Learning takes place in the form of courses, study circles or any other form suitable for learners.

There are a wide range of **training providers** for different types of adult education, for example, state and municipal authorities, private schools which hold an education license, those in public or private law and self-employed people. All vocational education institutions and higher education institutions offer education and training courses to adults, both to individuals and to enterprises. According to Statistics Estonia there were 35 institutions providing higher education and 54 institutions providing vocational education in 2006. Furthermore, according to the media information company Eniro Eesti AS, 369 enterprises are providing training related hobbies and 371 are involved in education and training (Estonian National Observatory 2006).

Public **funding** for adult education through the budget of the Ministry of Education and Research is available for formal education. Professional training is mainly financed by employers and employees with the exemption of public sector workers, whose professional training is supported by the state. For example, funding is set in the state budget for teachers (3% of their annual salary fund) and civil servants (2 to 4% of their annual salary fund). Employees can offset their training costs against their income tax. Non-formal education is subsidised by the Ministry of Education and Research through the funding of the wages of about 45 directors and teachers of non-formal education centres (Estonian National Observatory 2006).

Another form of support provided by the state is the provision of **study leave** for employed people, as stipulated in the Adult Education Act. A person can apply for study leave for formal training on the basis of a notice from a relevant educational institution for the duration of the study session or for at least 30 days in an academic year (additional study leave is granted for completion of the study). The duration of the study leave depends on the level of education. Employers continue to pay the average wage for ten days and then the minimum wage for the remaining days. For participation in professional education and training, a study leave of at least 14 days in a year is granted and an employee continues to receive his or her average wage.

For participation in non-formal education, study leave without pay of at least seven days per year is granted.

Adult training is also financed by ESF. One of the priorities of the 'Estonian National Development Plan for the Implementation of the EU Structural Funds – Single Programming Document 2004-2006' is the development of human resources. This priority consists of four measures:

1. Education system supporting the flexibility and employability of the labour force and providing opportunities for LLL for all;
2. Human resource development increasing the competitiveness of enterprises;
3. Inclusive labour market; and
4. Enhancing administrative capacity.

A total of EUR 53,588,614 was allocated for the development of human resources during the first programming period, of which 25% is support from the Estonian public sector and 75% from the ESF. Around 42% of the resources will be devoted to measure three and 36% to measure one. Around 4% will be invested in enhancing the administrative capacity of the public sector. Hence, the role of ESF in developing LLL in Estonia is very important. However, since most projects are currently running, no evaluations are available yet on the effects of these measures.

The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2005-2008 was approved by the Government in November 2006. The strategy concentrates on widening study opportunities for adults. The aim of the strategy is to 'raise the opportunities for and motivation of the Estonian population to participate in formal, non-formal and informal training with the purpose of improving one's knowledge and skills in accordance with one's own needs and that of the citizenship, society and the labour market'. The strategy aims to increase the proportion of people aged 25-64 in education and training to 10% by the year 2008. The priorities of the strategy are presented in the box below.

Priorities of the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2005-2008

1. Opportunities for lifelong learning have been created for all adults, including people with special needs, to take into consideration the capabilities and needs of individuals.
2. Adult education financing system is transparent allowing access to training for all adults, including those with special needs.
3. The Estonian language skills of the non-Estonian speaking adult residents of Estonia are sufficient for coping in social and working life; they have the possibility to speak their mother tongue and practice their own national culture.
4. A system has been developed to guarantee the quality of adult training; information on the training quality is available for learners.
5. A database on learning and training opportunities has been established for adults; additionally, people can use career services.
6. The professional qualification system is being developed - planned to guarantee the system of lifelong learning and a free movement of the labour force.
7. The public, the private and the third sector have all been involved in the development of adult education and the adult education policy.
8. Adequate statistics are available and surveys are performed on a systematic basis in the area of adult education.
9. The system of recognition of previous learning and working experience (RPLWE) is applied to all levels and all fields of studies.

Source: Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2005-2008

3 Main challenges

To widen the opportunities for LLL, the Estonian Government approved the Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2005-2008 in November 2006. One of the most heavily debated issues in the strategy is the development of funding for adult training and re-training, which was already a priority in the first 'National Employment Action Plan 2000', but is yet to be finalised. As the studies indicate, the lack of financial resources is one of the main barriers to training both at individual and enterprise levels.

Secondly, the development of a universal career counselling and guidance system, through which information on learning opportunities can be provided, has been debated since 2000, but the system is still relatively fragmented. Both of these issues are emphasised in the Lifelong Learning Strategy.

The third important topic, which has been debated for a long time in Estonia, is the need to abolish the special tax on expenditure relating to formal or informal education provided by companies. Together with a 0% corporate income tax rate for re-invested profits, a special tax on collective benefits and individual subsidies (called 'fringe benefits') was introduced. For example, if a company wants to cover the cost of studies of its employees, it must pay a tax, which equals personal income tax (21% in 2008) and payroll tax (33.6% in 2008). The only taxable education is that which leads to a degree, e.g. Bachelor, Master or PhD (which is defined as a fringe benefit). In contrast, fees for separate courses or re-training (a change in qualifications) are not taxable. There have been discussions on the issue, as the costs for degree courses for employers are double the costs of separate or re-training courses. But so far there is no consensus on the way forward.

A significant amount of funds has been available for Estonia through the ESF since 2004 and an appropriate use of these funds is a serious challenge for Estonia. Since most of the projects are currently running, it is expected that participation in LLL will, as a result, increase substantially in forthcoming years. Currently, there are no evaluations available on the effects of these projects.

4 Bibliography

Adult Education Act 21.04.2004 (RT I 2004, 41, 276) 5.07.2004

Estonian Action Plan for Growth and Jobs 2005-2007 – for Implementation of the Lisbon strategy. Available at <http://www.riigikantselei.ee/?id=5864>

Estonian National Development Plan for the Implementation of the EU Structural Funds – Single Programming Document 2004-2006. Available at www.fin.ee

Estonian National Observatory 2006 Detailed Thematic Analysis: Continuing Education and Training for Adults in Estonia. Available at <http://www.innove.ee/refernet/index.php?ptk=4>

European Commission (2007). *Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines including indicators for additional employment analysis.* Available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/docindic_en.htm

Ministry of Education and Research (2006). *Lifelong Learning Strategy 2005-2008.* Available at www.hm.ee

National Labour Market Board, <http://www.tta.ee/index.php?id=408> Accessed on 19 March 2007.

OECD (2007). PISA 2006. *Science Competencies for Tomorrow's World: Volume 1 Analysis*, Paris, 2006.

Statistics Estonia (2005). *Täiskasvanute koolitus ettevõtetes.* Tallinn 2002.

Statistics Estonia.(2007). *Labour Force Survey Data.*

Tamm, A., Einberg, L., Annus, T. (2005). *Töölane täienduskoolitus.* Tallinn 2005/2006

Vöörmann, R., Helemäe, J. (2006). *Older workers' participation in non-formal education as a factor of success in the Estonian labour market.* Vadyba/Management 2006 m. Nr. 2(11)

Ireland

The author wishes to express his appreciation to the Department of Education and Science, the Central Statistics Office and FAS for valuable assistance in the preparation of this report.

1 Introduction

1.1 Relevant background

Before discussing the question of LLL in detail, it is appropriate to describe briefly the overall policy framework in Ireland within which LLL policies are pursued. An important issue is the system of National Partnership Agreements between the government and the social partners, one of the central elements of economic and social policy formulation in Ireland for the past twenty years.

The most recent such accord, entitled "Towards 2016", agreed in 2006, is the seventh in the social partnership process. While it is similar to its predecessors in involving medium-term measures (including the important wage agreement), it also involves, for the first time, a broad long-term economic and social perspectives up to 2016. A central tenet of this agreement is placing the individual at the centre of policy development in assessing the challenges faced as well as the support available to counter these risks at key stages in the life cycle. The stages identified relate to children, people of working age, older persons and those with disabilities. This clearly provides a favourable context within which LLL policies can be promoted and pursued.

1.2 Some general issues

LLL is a difficult area to assess. While the EU does use a very broad single concept in assessing the position across different Member States (see Section 2), there is no clear definition in use within Ireland, nor indeed in many other countries insofar as can be determined. The concept can be extended to embrace a multitude of different activities related to all age groups. However, as the focus of the present study is on people aged 25 years and over, it involves somewhat more concise definition, even though age breakdown in the programme expenditure and numbers of participants is not always available.

While there are measures specifically designed to advance LLL (such as Adult Literacy Programmes or Return to Work Training Measures), some other more widely targeted education and training programmes are also relevant as they contribute to promoting LLL. But it is seldom possible to separate out the LLL component for assessment or measurement in statistical terms. Many of the latter measures, while designed to meet more general requirements, have in recent years have been adapted to give greater emphasis to LLL requirements, mainly by assigning greater priority of access to older participants. Steps are now being taken to co-ordinate all LLL activities, including the appointment of a junior minister with a specific responsibility for LLL.

2 Recent trends in lifelong learning activities

2.1 Concepts

It is possible to derive broadly indicative information on LLL from the Labour Force Survey source by extracting data on respondents' recent education and training experiences. In fact the European Commission has been issuing such figures on an annual basis as part of its Structural Indicators series. The approach used is to define LLL as relating to the number of persons aged 25 to 64 years who indicated that they received education or training during the four weeks preceding the survey interview expressed as a percentage of the total population in the same age group. While this may not be an ideal measure for all purposes, it does provide a reasonable means of comparing the extent of, and trends in LLL across different Member States.

In the EU definition of LLL, "education or training" refers to attendance at courses in the state education system and to other "taught" instruction training of a formal nature. While the latter does not include self instruction or "on-the-job" training, it covers a wide variety of activities not necessarily related to employment, but also pursued for personal or recreational purposes. The inclusion of the latter activities raises questions concerning the comparability of the data between countries.

While the LLL concept used in the EU Structural Indicators relates to persons aged 25 to 64 years, the terms of reference for the present study extend to all persons aged 25 or over, presumably to take account of recent policy trends designed to encourage older persons to remain longer in employment. Thus the latter wider age band is used in virtually all the tabular presentations given in this Paper.

2.2 Long-term trends

Turning first to the EU Structural Indicators data, these indicate that the LLL ratio for Ireland as defined in that series was 7.5% in 2006, less than the corresponding EU25 average which was just over 10%. However, the Irish rate has been rising: it was about 6% in 2003 and as low as 4.5% in the mid 1990s. This upward trend is consistent with the expenditure increases allocated to LLL related measures in recent years, as described in Section 3.

2.3 More current indicators

All of the data quoted subsequently in this Section involve the wider LLL definition specified for this Study. The figures have been derived from the CSO Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) for the second quarter of the years covered (2004 to 2007).

Table 1 shows estimates of the numbers of persons aged 25 years and over who engaged in LLL related activities over the four year period covered classified by type of measure and gender. The overall LLL ratio was 7.9% in 2007. The rate for women was significantly higher than that for men in that year, i.e. 9.7% as against 6.1%. A majority of persons who engaged in LLL activities in 2007 (over 56 %) did so in “taught” instruction type courses, as distinct from courses within the formal education system.

Participation in LLL programmes rose significantly between 2004 and 2007, increasing by almost a third from 6.1% to 7.9% in this period. The upward trend was much more rapid for women than for men, mainly due to a sizeable increase in the number of women participating in taught forms of learning.

Table 1: Persons aged 25+ in Recent Education or Training, 2004-07					
Year	In Regular Education	Taught Learning	Total	Population 25+	LLL Rate
Males			(000)		%
2007	39.7	46.0	85.7	1395.6	6.1
2006	34.8	46.5	81.3	1348.1	6.0
2005	34.8	39.0	73.8	1298.1	5.7
2004	30.4	35.4	65.8	1254.4	5.2
Females					
2007	58.2	80.1	138.3	1426.5	9.7
2006	54.4	75.3	129.7	1383.1	9.4
2005	49.4	62.6	112.0	1342.0	8.3
2004	42.5	48.8	91.3	1306.7	7.0
Persons					
2007	97.9	126.1	224.0	2822.1	7.9
2006	89.2	121.8	211.0	2731.2	7.7
2005	84.2	101.6	185.8	2640.1	7.0
2004	72.9	84.2	157.1	2561.1	6.1

Source : CSO QNHS Second Quarter 2004-2007

An analysis of persons of different age engaged in LLL classified by economic status is shown in Table 2. These data, which relate to 2007, show further a distinction between those in the labour force and the rest of the population.

It is hardly surprising that the majority of persons in LLL measures (just over 70%) were in the labour force. This is also reflected in the LLL ratios as defined, the relevant percentages being 8.6% for those aged 25 years or over in the work force, and 6.1% for economically inactive persons.

Table 2: Persons aged 25+ in Recent Education or Training in 2007, Classified by Economic Status									
Age	In Recent Education or Training			Population 25+			LLL Rates		
	In Labour Force	Inactive	Total	In Labour Force	Inactive	Total	In Labour Force	Inactive	Total
		(000)			(000)			%	
Persons									
25-34	72.3	23.5	98.0	651.8	108.5	760.3	11.1	21.7	12.9
35-44	44.9	11.3	57.6	511.5	116.8	628.2	8.8	9.7	9.2
45-54	30.8	7.5	39.1	413.9	116.4	530.3	7.4	6.4	7.4
55-64	10.7	7.2	18.0	234.4	188.2	422.4	4.6	3.8	4.3
65+	1.4	9.9	11.3	45.0	435.7	480.7	3.1	2.3	2.4
Total	160.1	59.3	224.0	1856.7	965.4	2822.1	8.6	6.1	7.9

Source: CSO QNHS 2nd Quarter 2007

There is very noticeable connection between age and LLL involvement. The final column of the Table shows that, for all persons, the LLL ratios decline steadily with increasing age, from 12.9% for those aged 25 to 34 years to as low as 2.4% for persons aged 65 years or over. This applies to both those in the labour force and the rest of the population.

Finally, table 3 indicates the relationship between LLL involvement and educational level. This association is very marked indeed. The rates are extremely low for those attained only primary and lower secondary level, 1% and 4 % respectively. The rates are much higher for persons who completed second level education and for those obtained qualification in non-tertiary further education, in each case about 8%. After that the rates jump significantly to over 12% for persons with third level diploma awards and to nearly 16% for degree holders. These data point to continuing deficiencies in post-school education/training support for those who are educationally disadvantaged, even allowing for recent improvements (see Section 3).

Educational Level	Males %	Females %	Persons %
Primary or Lower (ISCED 0-1)	1.2	1.4	1.3
Lower Secondary (ISCED 2)	2.8	5.9	4.2
Higher Secondary (ISCED 3)	6.6	9.4	8.1
Further Education (ISCED 4)	5.8	9.7	7.7
Tertiary Diploma (ISCED 5b)	10.4	13.7	12.3
Tertiary Degree (ISCED 5a,6)	13.4	18.1	15.8
Not Stated	6.8	7.7	7.2
Total	6.1	9.7	7.9

Source: CSO QNHS, Second Quarter 2007

3 Programmes designed primarily to promote lifelong learning

This section of the report describes a number of important programmes carried out by the Department of Education and Science (DE&S) and the Employment and Training Agency FAS (listed in Table 4) which primarily address LLL requirements. The nature of these programmes is such that the participants are mainly adults (e.g. on adult literacy courses). There are, of course, as indicated earlier, other measures which contribute to LLL, but it is not feasible to identify their LLL related components.

The particular measures described here are, however, sizeable when viewed in aggregate. The table shows that they involved an expenditure total of nearly EUR 190 million in 2006 and catered for over 90,000 participants. While not covering all LLL activities, they can be regarded as forming the central core of the LLL effort in Ireland, especially insofar as adults are concerned. Furthermore, as the following text shows, expenditure on most of these measures has been increased substantially in recent years, which is indicative of the growing commitment of the government to promoting LLL.

Programme	Expenditure, EUR millions	Number of Participants
Dept Education and Science		
Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)	44	5,400
Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)	17	24,000
Adult Literacy Programmes	23	35,700
Further Education Programme Development	8	-
Community and Other Adult Education Expenditure	11	-
FAS		
Competency Development Programme	40	22,000
Workplace Basic Education	2	1,500
Job Initiative	38	1,800
Return to Work	3	600
Evening Courses/eCollege	2	-
Total	188	91,000

3.1 Department of education and science lifelong learning programmes

1. Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) is a second-chance education and training programme which provides full-time courses of up to two years duration for unemployed people. The Scheme is funded by DE&S and delivered by Local Education Authorities. Participants can pursue subjects at both the lower and higher stages of second level education as well as further education modules.

The programme is restricted to persons aged 21 years or over, and in receipt (for a minimum of six months) of Jobseekers Benefit or Assistance, One-Parent Family Payment or State Disability and Invalidity supports. Participants receive payments from Local Education Authorities which are basically at least equivalent to their welfare payments.

Currently, it involves an annual expenditure of EUR 44 million and caters for some 5,500 participants, a level at which it has remained for some years. About 70% of the participants are women. The scheme is considered to have been effective in opening up learning and progression opportunities for people who have been marginalised by unemployment.

2. Back To Education Initiative

The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI), which is in its fourth year of implementation, is run on a part-time basis. It comprises two strands:

1. A formal strand operated through the State education system; and
2. A community strand, which accounts for about 10% of total activity, in which the individual programmes are run by community groups (mainly NGOs) supported by state grants.

The funding for the entire programme is provided by DE&S, but is implemented through Local Education Authorities.

A particular aim of the BTEI is to raise the skill levels of persons with less than upper second level education through the provision of a range of flexible learning opportunities, particularly with regard to basic education and (where capabilities are adequate) targeting specific skill needs, such as languages, IT, childcare, and other shortage areas.

Other BTEI features involve offering a bridge from literacy to other programmes and developing work-based education and training so that employed people can attend part-time courses and gain qualifications. The measure also aims to combine education and training with family, work and other responsibilities, and address the problems in engaging with hard-to-reach groups (including the unemployed and those not in the labour force).

The BTEI programme provided 8,000 places in 2006 which accommodated 24,000 participants. The budget has been progressively increased since its introduction in 2003 and amounted to nearly EUR 17 million in 2006. Under the terms of the "Towards 2016" agreement, an additional 2,000 places will be provided by 2009.

3. Adult Literacy & Community Education

Funding for Adult and Community Education services, including adult literacy, are provided by DE&S to Local Education Authorities who determine the nature of the services and the manner in which the funds should be spent.

Adult Literacy

Deficiencies in the educational level of older adults have long been a source of concern in Ireland. The OECD International Adult Literacy Survey published in 1997 provided a profile of the literacy skills of adults aged 16 to 64 years. It found that about 25% of the Irish population, or at least 500,000 adults, were found to score at the lowest level used in this study. This compared unfavourably with the other countries surveyed.

Funding for adult literacy programmes has increased significantly over the last ten years, rising from EUR 1 million in 1997 to almost EUR 23 million in 2006. As a consequence, the number of persons catered for annually has increased from 5,000 to over 35,000 during this period. Almost 10,000 non-nationals availed of tuition in English in such programme in 2005, comprising 27% of participants.

Under the "Towards 2016" accord, there is provision for a further increase in literacy student numbers of 7,000 over a three year period to 2009, to bring the total to 42,000 annually.

Community Education

Community education refers to education and learning which is generally outside the formal education sector. It tends to be community-based, with local groups taking responsibility for, and playing a key role in organising courses and deciding on programme content. The funding enables disadvantaged adults to avail of community education at minimal or no cost. This is usually allocated through the provision of teaching hours, or small grants, to a range of community and voluntary groups for educational activities. In 2006 over EUR 9 million was spent by DE&S supporting these activities. This was in addition to the funding provided to community education through the BTEI community strand (see above).

3.2 FAS Programmes with a significant lifelong learning content

1. One Step Up: Training for the Employed

The "One Step Up" programme was initiated in response to the report of the Enterprise Strategy Group "Ahead of the Curve, Ireland's Place in the Global Economy".³⁵ The aim is to encourage employee training in order to increase competency levels and, specifically, to promote an ethos of lifelong learning in the workplace. It does this by providing easy access to a range of learning initiatives such as tutor-led training and e-learning in order to assist individuals to build on their competency levels and obtain a recognised qualification (or a further qualification) within the National Framework of Qualifications. The aim is to ensure that skill and qualification levels in the workforce match present and future human resource requirements for continuous economic growth and competitive advantage.

⁽³⁵⁾ Enterprise Strategy Group (2004). *Ahead of the Curve. Ireland's Place in the Global Economy*. Forfas. Dublin.

The One Step Up initiative is subsidised through two primary funding mechanisms:

1. The Competency Development Programme (CDP) which offers different types of training programmes directed at **various skill levels** of those in employment across multiple sectors. The funding support is provided through the employer.
2. To address the particular priority of literacy/numeracy in the workforce FÁS, in co-operation with the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), has recently established the new *Workplace Basic Education* programme to provide courses for persons at work. These courses include literacy and numeracy and cover a variety of subjects such as communications, computer training and interpersonal skills. They are delivered principally by Local Education Authorities and trade unions.

FÁS significantly increased its services to encourage and assist training for enterprises and people in employment during 2006. Total expenditure amounted to EUR 40 million, compared to EUR 22 million in 2005 and EUR 11 million in 2004. An estimated 22,000 employed persons were trained under the CPD in 2006, in areas such as management, sales and marketing, IT and care. These courses are run by certified training providers. A particular feature is the 'Strategic Alliance' approach, whereby FÁS contracts with social partner organisations and Chambers of Commerce to deliver suitable training courses.

2. Job Initiative

"Job Initiative" is a FAS programme providing full-time employment for people who are 35 or over, unemployed for five years or more, and in receipt of social welfare payments over that period. Total expenditure on this measure in 2006 was EUR 38 million.

The main purpose of the programme is to assist long-term unemployed people to prepare for work opportunities. The measure involves the provision of work experience, training and development opportunities. The programme is sponsored by groups wishing to benefit the local community, namely voluntary organisations, public bodies and those involved in not-for-profit activities. FÁS gives financial support, especially in regard to participant wages. Participants can also retain benefits such as medical entitlements or child dependent allowances.

4 Summary

The following is a brief summary of the more important issues which have been identified in this study.

LLL is being given greater priority in the context of government social and economic policy, particularly as part of the current Partnership Agreement "Towards 2016". This accord places the individual at the centre of policy development by means of a life cycle approach which distinguishes children, people of working age, older persons and those with disabilities. This provides a favourable context within which LLL policies can be promoted and pursued.

It is difficult to measure the extent of LLL, as relevant activities are dispersed across many different programmes. However, steps are currently being taken to achieve more co-ordination across different LLL programmes.

Indicators derived from the CSO Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) and the EU Structural Indicators Series indicate that while the extent of LLL in Ireland is below the EU25 average, it has been increasing steadily over the years.

LLL is correlated with age, with higher participation indicated for the younger age categories in the adult group covered.

A substantial majority of those who participate in LLL programmes are already in the labour force.

There is an even more noticeable connection between educational attainment and LLL involvement. The indicators show that participation in LLL is about four times more likely among those with third level qualifications than for persons with lower secondary levels of attainment.

Substantial increases in Government expenditure on programmes which involve a strong LLL dimension have occurred in recent years in areas such as adult literacy and adult education generally, and in training at all levels for those at work. If this trend is maintained, it should, in time, have a significant impact on the degree of LLL participation.

Greece

1 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

The participation of the adult population in education and training fluctuates at low levels in Greece. In 2006, just 1.9% of the population aged 25-64 participated in LLL activities, comparing unfavourably with the average for EU-27 (9.6 %) ³⁶. In fact, the participation recorded by Eurostat for Greece appears to be the lowest among all EU member states, with the exception of Bulgaria and Romania.

With respect to differences by gender, participation appears to be slightly higher for males than for females (2.0 compared to 1.8% respectively in 2006). As regards participation by broad age group, participation drops with age. The incidence of participation starts at relatively high levels (5.1 % for the 25-34 age group), dropping abruptly to 1.4 % for the 35-44 age group, and from there on, to very low levels (0.4 % for the 45-54 age group). Participation of the older population (age group 55-64) is practically negligible. Irrespective of age, participation of men is slightly higher than of women.

Participation rates broken down by employment status reveal that participation is highest among inactive persons and especially among inactive men and lowest among the employed, with the unemployed occupying an intermediate position. More specifically, the incidence of participation ranges from 1.4% for the employed to 3.1 % for the inactive. Participation by the unemployed has been estimated at 2.2%. Participation rates broken down by status and gender reveal that participation by females is slightly higher than for males in both the employed and unemployed categories and much lower in the inactive category. In this latter category, the participation by males has been estimated at 7.2% against 1.9% for females.

Educational attainment appears to be positively correlated with participation in education and training. Participation ranges from just 0.3 % for those with low educational attainment to 3.9% for those with high education levels. Those with medium education level occupy an intermediate position (2.6%). Regarding gender differences, participation by females is slightly higher than for males in the high attainment category and slightly lower in the remaining categories.

Finally, with respect to changes in participation rates over the years, no clear trend can be established. Participation rates

fluctuated around 1 to 1.2% during 2000-2002, rising to 2.6% in 2003 only to drop again to levels around 1.8 to 1.9% during 2004-2006. For reasons which are not altogether clear, the only category of the population for which rising trend participation can be established is that of the inactive. The share of men in this category and participating in education and training has risen from 4.2% in 2000 to 7.2% in 2006, while the equivalent share of women has risen from 1.1 to 1.9%.

To summarise, this brief statistical exploration has revealed an alarming finding. Participation rates in education and training in Greece are among the lowest in the Community, and show no rising trend over the last few years. The most acute of the observed gaps in participation relate to older workers, persons with low educational attainment and the employed.

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

It is likely that specific features of the Greek society and economy are directly associated with the low participation in LLL recorded in the previous paragraph. For certain historical and cultural reasons, there is a great demand for formal qualifications in Greece, rather than a demand for investments in knowledge (Tsoukalas, 1977). Further, the structure of enterprises and specific institutional arrangements hardly aid the pursuit of training and innovation. The great bulk of enterprises are very small, family run firms, unable to identify training needs and organise training provision. Moreover, the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning continue to remain at the experimental stage.

Consequently, LLL provision in Greece is commonly described as poorly planned. Rather than being based on a careful evaluation of needs, LLL activities have developed in a piecemeal fashion, partly prompted by the availability of EU resources. One of the consequences is that needs in many sectors go unmet, while in other sectors there is a serious overlap in provision by multiple bodies. In relation to groups in the population least likely to access training, current gaps in the provision of LLL relate mainly to educational and training opportunities for the so-called 'non-traditional' learners, i.e. the low skilled, older workers and immigrants. Low skilled workers are still considered as unattractive for training and

⁽³⁶⁾ European Commission, 2007.

the participation of older workers in LLL activities continues to be minimal. In view of the great number of immigrants having arrived in Greece during the last fifteen years or so, an increased effort is required to develop and implement specialised policies towards the needs of this group.

Low LLL participation may be explained by both demand and supply factors. On the supply side, there is abundant evidence that the provision of services for the adult segment of the population is grossly inadequate. The success of the recently established Open University, where the demand greatly outweighs the supply, is indicative of an unsatisfied need for higher education by adults. Such significant unsatisfied need for training has also been recorded by various surveys. According to a recent Eurobarometer survey, 22% of the employed and 18% of the unemployed and the inactive stated that they need to receive training in order to progress in the labour market, yet they are currently unable to participate in training, either because a suitable course is not available or because they lack the incentives to do so³⁷. On the demand side, clear incentives are needed so as to ensure that those who would like to get more education and training (but who currently cannot afford it or lack the necessary time), do so.

With respect to the issue of relevance of training and responsiveness to labour market needs, the identification of training needs remains unsystematic and fragmented in Greece. Current information relies mainly on information from ad hoc employer surveys, while there is little evidence that even this information is taken in account in the planning of training actions. In contrast, a permanent system of forecasting future skill gaps and occupational employment is yet to be established.

3 Quality and impact of training

Although evaluations of training are relatively rare in Greece, there is sufficient evidence that the impact of training on at least one aspect of the issue, that of enhancing employability, is generally low. This, however, may have more to do with the structure of the Greek labour market and less with quality of delivered training.

A study by the Centre of Planning and Economic Research (Kanellopoulos, 2005) has attempted to assess the impact of training on a number of variables, including labour force participation, employability and earnings. Regarding the chances of participating in training, the study has found that age and educational level exercise a positive influence. A positive correlation was also established between labour force

participation and participation in training. However, the study has found that participation in training does not significantly alter the chances of finding a job. This finding has been attributed to rigidities in the Greek labour market. Finally, the study has recorded strong gains when assessing the impact of training on earnings, which are more substantial in the case of men.

Short-term training delivered by the Centres of Vocational Training (KEK) has been the subject of two recent studies. The first of these (Efstratoglou K., 2006), has evaluated training under one of the Measures comprising the Operational Programme 'Employment', which is the main instrument for delivering training to the unemployed. The study has however extended the range of issues examined, to include the institutional framework surrounding training and the likely impact on training of institutions such as the Accreditation Centre (EKEPIS) and the PES (KPA). In conclusion, on the question of whether the measure has benefited those intended to benefit, the study came up with a positive answer. Participation of women, persons from vulnerable population groups and other priority groups in training has been high and this signifies a certain degree of 'policy success'. On the other hand, only 22.3% of those trained between 2000-2003 were found in employment six months after training and only half of them were performing tasks relevant to the training they received. According to the author, the placement rate of trainees is not statistically different from what would be expected in the absence of training. Finally, existing arrangements with respect to the accreditation of training structures appear to have no impact on the quality of delivered training. Policy recommendations include the accreditation of training programmes and trainees' qualifications (instead of accreditation of structures), an on-going system of training providers evaluation (linking payment with results), and the differentiation of spending according to the intensity of the problems facing the unemployed.

Another study (Efstratoglou A., 2007) has presented the results of a recent evaluation of the Centres of Vocational Training, based on the formal evaluation criteria established in 2003³⁸. With respect to participation issues, the study has concluded that training delivered during 2001-2003 has primarily benefited the employed and much less the unemployed. Further, the quality of the training provided was found to be generally low. Just 12.9% of the unemployed receiving training managed to find employment at a later stage.

The importance of ESF in shaping Member States' adult training strategies is paramount, especially in the case of countries exhibiting low investments in education and training. Future ESF contribution could perhaps be enhanced through greater concentration of resources on training of trainers and on training for the low-skilled workers.

⁽³⁷⁾ Special Eurobarometer 215/wave 62.1. The survey has been conducted in 2004 and the results were made public in 2005.

⁽³⁸⁾ The formal evaluation system of KEKs (EKEPIS, 2003) is based on three main dimensions of training: organisational issues, quality of training and placement of ex-trainees.

4 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

During the last few years, Greece has taken measures to modernise the institutional framework surrounding LLL and to close some of the gaps in service provision. These are described in detail in the latest NRP Implementation Report (2007), as well as in the National Report for Education and Training 2010. Greece has set the target of reaching 7% of adults participating in education and training by 2013. Judging, however, by the current levels of participation, it is evident that a huge effort must be made in order to reach this target. Regarding the financial resources devoted to education and training, public expenditure is currently low (4.2% of GDP in 2004, comparing unfavourably with the EU 27 average of 5.1%), but the government has committed to raise this figure to 5%.

Concerning the state of a LLL strategy, recent developments include a new framework law on LLL (Law 3369/2005), the gradual activation of the National System for linking Vocational Education with Employment (Law 3191/2003) and the establishment of Institutes of Lifelong Education within Universities and Higher Technological Institutions (TEIs). In addition, an International University is being established and efforts to create a common accreditation system in vocational training continue. Another important provision involves the development of job profiles. These are currently being developed by special committees, comprising mostly of social partners. Their use in training programmes will be mandatory. Finally, a centre for the development and management of lifelong learning programmes is to be established.

With respect to stakeholders, initial vocational training at the post-secondary level is provided by the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK), a legal entity of public law. OEEK holds responsibility for the operation of public Vocational Training Institutes (IEKs) as well as for the monitoring and supervision of private IEKs. Continuing vocational training, on the other hand, is organised by the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection and provided by Vocational Training Centres (KEKs), which are public and private training organisations having received official accreditation by the National Accreditation Centre of Vocational Training Structures and Accompanying Support Services (EKEPIS). Continuing vocational training is also provided by

OAED (Manpower Employment Organisation). OAED runs 52 vocational training centres, not accredited by EKEPIS, offering continuing training courses for the unemployed as well as for the self-employed and for employed workers (through the Vocational Training Account, LAEK). Continuing training courses, without accreditation from EKEPIS are also provided by a number of Ministries (including the Ministries of Development, Merchant Marine, Health and Welfare) as well as by public organisations. Other important LLL service providers include the Second Chance Schools and the Adult Education Centres, supervised by the General Secretariat for Popular Training and the Hellenic Open University (EAP), supervised by the Ministry of Education³⁹.

With respect to the sharing of responsibilities between the ESF and the national governments, it should be noted that national funds are allocated on the basis of numerous constraints (e.g., budget inertia, legal/procedural constraints which prevent selective funding), which do not apply to Structural Funds assistance. ESF resources could thus be earmarked for the support of new institutional arrangements and the selective promotion of innovative and good practice actions.

The Hellenic Open University (EAP) stands as a good example in the area of LLL, for striking a right balance between increasing demand for courses leading to university certificates and the provision of useful skills for non-traditional learners. Currently EAP is able to cater for only a small minority of applicants, but future plans include expansion. Most of the students are in their thirties, fully employed, and intend to use their certificates for professional advancement (Kokkos A., 2003).

Finally, the role that European initiatives have played in shaping Greece's strategy towards adult training is crucial and should not be underestimated. Stepping up participation in LLL, however, may require additional national measures in the form of incentives for participation. Incentives may involve the provision of statutory training leave schemes that guarantee employees the right to return to their jobs after completing a training course. Similarly, employers could receive grants for sending employees to training.

Experimentation with policies co-financing individual investments in human capital (publicly funded training vouchers and individual learning accounts) constitutes another policy option. First and foremost however, some formal recognition of the acquired skills and competences is needed, possibly through the establishment of a credit transfer system. Part of the high demand for a place in the Open University may be attributable to the knowledge that the qualification to be obtained will be translated into a wage premium at a later stage.

⁽³⁹⁾ For a study on the demand and supply of trainees in Second Chance Schools, see Efstratoglou A., Nikolopoulou V., 2008).

5 Bibliography

Efstratoglou A., 2007, 'Continuing Vocational Training and Evaluation', *Adult Education*, v.11, May-August, Athens.

Efstratoglou A., Nikolopoulou V., 2008, ' Supply and Demand of Trainees in Second Chance Schools', *Adult Education*, v.13, Athens (forthcoming).

Efstratoglou, K. (forthcoming), *Evaluation of Vocational Training for the Unemployed*, KEPE ,Athens.

EKEPIS, 2003, *Evaluation of Centres for Vocational Training*, Athens.

European Commission, 2007, *Indicators for Monitoring the Employment Guidelines (Compendium)*. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/docindic_en.htm

Kanellopoulos, K., 2005, *Economic Dimensions of Adult Training*, Athens, KEPE.

Kokkos A., 2003, 'The Role of the Hellenic Open University in Lifelong Learning in Greece', *Greek Presidency Conference on Open and Distance Learning*.

Tsokalas K., 1977, *Dependence and Reproduction*, Athens, Themelio.

Spain

1 Trends in the participation of adults in LLL

The latest data on lifelong learning in Spain (LFS, second quarter of 2007) shows that a significant proportion of the Spanish population are engaged in learning activities. Specifically, almost 3.15 million people between 25 and 64 have received some kind of education and/or training during the four weeks prior to the poll, which is 12.3% of the total population in that age group.

It is worth noting that:

- Women attended more training and educational programmes than men (13.4% of all women aged 25 to 64 versus 11.1% of men).
- As age rises, participation in lifelong learning decreases. People aged between 25 and 34 are more involved in increasing their skills than older people. 18.9% of total population of that age received training, compared to 12.1% of people aged between 35 and 44, 9.4% of the population aged 45 to 54 or 5.4% of people reaching retirement (55 to 64 years old).
- Previous educational attainment is an important factor for lifelong learning. The higher the level of education, the higher the participation in training and further education. Therefore, almost one quarter of Spanish people with higher education were engaged in learning activities during the second quarter of 2007, while that percentage decreased to a 4.1% in the case of illiterate people and people without a primary education.
- The unemployed in Spain are more receptive to training than the rest of the population, since almost 17% engaged in training activities compared to 12.5% of occupied people and 10.7% of inactive population between 25 and 64.
- Concerning the different economic sectors and their relationship with adult education, people working in services received more training (16% with around 1.9 million people), followed by industry workers (10.3%), construction (6.3%) and primary sector, where only 4.8% of workers aged 25 to 64 received training.
- Finally, immigrants participated less in adult education than the rest of the population (only 8.3% of immigrants between 25 and 64 years old, 4 percentage points lower than the national mean), while the tendency taking into account educational attainment and labour status, is the same as the rest of the population.

So, participation in adult learning has clear patterns in Spain. Women follow the learning processes more than men; younger people engage much more actively in training than older adults; educational attainment is a very relevant variable to explain adult learning; immigrants and workers in agriculture and construction participate less in lifelong training than the rest of the population; and the unemployed are very involved in adult learning.

Unfortunately, it is not possible from a statistical point of view to determine the trends in the Spanish population for adult training during the last ten years, since there is a break in the series of official data on LLL. The change in the methodology consisted of an extension of the catalogue of training measures in order to improve the comparability with the rest of the EU, including more informal programmes and initiatives. According to official figures there was an increase of more than a 100% in the percentage of people participating in lifelong learning between 2004 and 2005, hence it is not possible to cast reliable assessments on the evolution of this variable, at least for such a long period.

The implications of this statistical change are not trivial. Most policy makers and social interlocutors prioritise the need to tackle LLL due to the apparent enormous gap observed between Spain and the average European figures. From 2000 to 2004, the proportion of adults (aged 25 to 65) engaged in training or education programmes amounted to 4.4% on average, with a slight positive trend during the period, whereas in the EU-27 it was close to 10% of adult population. After the break in the series, Spain suddenly caught up with the European level, contradicting all previous perceptions about the Spanish performance on LLL.

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

According to the data above, the groups least likely to access training in Spain are those less educated, those working in construction and the primary sector, people working in small and medium sized enterprises, immigrants and older people. The reasons for not participating in lifelong learning may vary among each group. Although information sources or survey do not exist for the perceived obstacles or disincentives by these groups to access further training, there are several general trends that have been commonly pointed out by trade unions and research.

In the case of the less educated (up to primary education) is that they do not fulfil the requirements needed to access most training programmes. They have to complete primary or secondary education to be able to register in those programmes and that implies more effort than most are willing to undertake. Besides, these previous educational requirements are not related to their fields of interest⁽⁴⁰⁾. The same reasoning applies to those working in the primary sector and older people, as they are groups with a prominently low educational background. Regarding the construction sector, there are two important factors to take into account in order to understand the lack of training. First, the construction sector has evolved as a highly profitable activity for less educated and young workers who do not have any incentives to enrol in further training measures. On the other hand, the construction sector is also an important source of employment for the immigrant population, who also have certain disincentives to take part in training programmes:

- Further education has a higher opportunity cost for the immigrant population, as the main reason for them to leave their countries is to find a job that allows them to obtain sufficient income to maintain their families in their home countries;
- The immigrant population are usually employed in activities that require less education than they actually obtained in their home countries, which discourages undertaking further training;
- Many training programmes require certain education prerequisites that for immigrants are difficult to prove, as there is no full recognition of degrees and certificates from foreign education institutions.

Finally, with regard to SMEs, trade unions have frequently argued a certain lack of information amongst employers about the financial possibilities of training programmes⁽⁴¹⁾ together with the evident obstacle stemming from the higher relative costs of training measures for such enterprises. Indeed, according to a survey by the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues in 2001, 85% of firms of size between 250 and 999 workers offered some kind of training (and almost 100% of firms with more than 1,000 workers), whereas only 30% of enterprises with 10-49 workers did so (20% in the case of companies with less than ten workers). There have been constant demands from trade unions about the necessity of further support from the public sector to overcome these differences regarding continuous training, pointing at possible measures of tax benefits or compensation for training during working hours.

3 Quality and impact of training

According to the latest OECD review on adult learning (2003), *potential participants' life experiences and competencies have not always been considered in the design of adult learning opportunities in Spain*. However now, in the basic education system for adults there have been noticeable arrangements to obtain compatible schedules and other administrative and organisational advantages. However, pedagogical methodologies seemed to replicate the mainstream education system. The implementation of web-based learning, which is one of the areas most developed in recent years in Spain, is highly recommendable, as it is easily accessible to SMEs and to self-employed individuals.

In relation to the effect of adult learning on employability, the OECD report indicates that, although accomplishments are clear, there are some issues, such as the low participation rates of certain population groups, the lack of coordination between different branches of the public sector, the limited supply of providers, and a need for more information, guidance and counselling, which can be targeted with greater coherence and sustainability. Especially worrying is the low effectiveness of occupational training measures, according to the latest Evaluation of the European Employment Strategy in the Autonomous Communities (INEM, 2005). Through the statistical comparison of two groups (one composed of people who have taken occupational training courses, and a control group), it does reveal a very low efficacy of such programmes, except for the long term unemployed who show greater differences (see table 1).

Table 1: Effectiveness of occupational training (2004)		
Non-employed job applicants (> 25 years old)		
	<12 months registered	>12 months registered
Target group		
Employment rate	52.2	37.5
Insertion rate	64.2	49.5
Exclusion rate	18.1	29.2
Control group		
Employment rate	52.6	31.4
Insertion rate	62.9	39.9
Exclusion rate	18.7	37.6

Source: INEM

Unfortunately, there is no research to identify the efficiency of continuous training for workers in terms of the impact on the development of salaries, which should be a key criterion for the assessment of these policies.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ See for instance Planas J. and Montoriol M. (2006)

⁽⁴¹⁾ See for instance Pineda Herrero P. (2007)

4 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

The lifelong cycle approach adopted by the Spanish administration regarding training and education is characterised by a clear division between general education for adults and employment oriented training, which includes continuous training (for the employed) and occupational training for the unemployed. Hence, there is not a formal and unique strategy that captures, in a single scheme, the initiatives for lifelong learning. However, even though there is a clear commitment to improving human capital and skills for adults, the assessment of objectives, resources and results must be done separately.

In relation to the basic education for adults, the government has explicitly committed itself through the inclusion of the principle of life cycle approach in the new Frame Law of Education approved on May 2006. It dedicates a whole chapter to the development of an education offer for adults under the same terms as the rest of the system. The legal text also stresses the necessity of enforcing the right of every citizen to permanently access education and training, regardless of whether in the education system or through other sources.

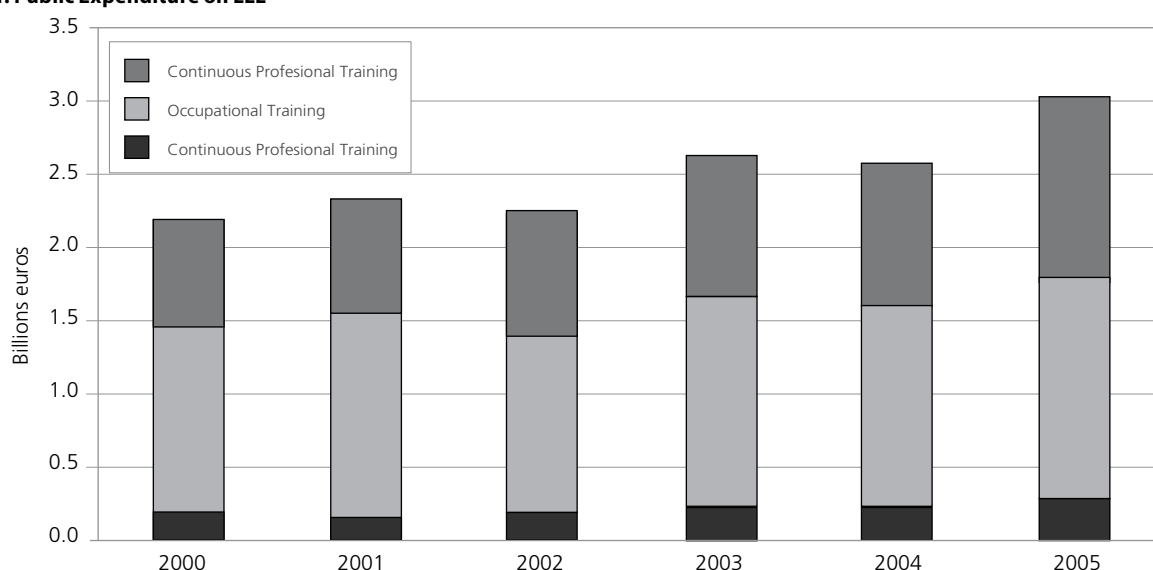
In relation to employment-oriented measures of LLL, the government has adopted specific objectives to fulfil the commitments of the National Reforms Programme (which is to increase the share of adults enrolled in training programmes up to 12.5 % in 2010). The continuing education and training of both those in work and the unemployed is being upgraded. A reform of the training model is proposed to encourage life-long apprenticeships, which involve regional administrations

and include training in collective sectoral bargaining. Among the most recent and important initiatives is the creation of a single "Professional Training Subsystem for Employment" which integrates Occupational Training and Continuing Education and Professional Training, and guarantees life-course training for those unemployed and people in work.

Another important factor, apart from the distinction of purely education and employment-oriented measures for adults, is the high degree of territorial decentralisation in the management of these policies. A large number of public policies have been decentralised over the last few years, including education and active labour market policies (both of great interest for lifelong learning). All Autonomous Communities have educational and labour responsibilities, but not all of them have fully developed their own policies. According to the latest OECD Review on adult training, the contribution of decentralisation to adult learning has been very positive, despite the different models of provision adopted by each region (some following the previous path and others introducing new models). Also, these divergences make it complicated to obtain comparable results on the implementation of lifelong learning activities.

Since the management of the overall LLL policies is shared between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, the assessment of financial resources dedicated to LLL in Spain is not easily identifiable. Public spending on LLL (Graph 1) has been increasing over recent last years. For most of the initiatives launched for continuous and occupational training, the respective financial resources seem to be sufficient to cover the demands, according to the results of several surveys and interviews with members of the education and labour administration. However, some weaknesses have been highlighted about the suitability of training supplied to specific needs, and the need to improve the efficiency of the expenditure in general. The data and results reported in the previous section seem to illustrate this.

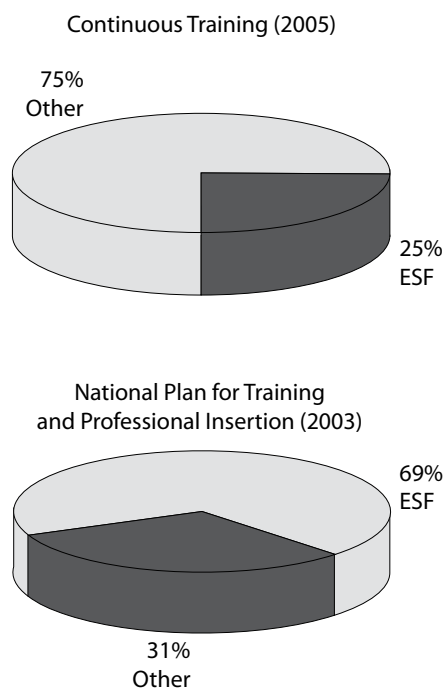
Graph 1: Public Expenditure on LLL



Source: Tripartite Foundation for Training at Work and Ministry of Education

With regard to the financial aspects, it is important to note the high level of dependence of total expenditure on LLL policies on the contributions of the ESF, at least regarding occupational and continuous training. This should be a cause of concern in light of the progressive loss of financial aid and funds received by Spain as a consequence of the recent enlargement of the EU.

Graph 2: Proportion of ESF resources over public expenditure on LLL policies



Source: INEM (Employment Public Service) and Tripartite Foundation for Training at Work

The financial approach to continuous training of workers has been explicitly co-financing, whereby the state shares part of the costs of training through several subsidy and credit programmes. There is public support for workforce training and development through a training levy scheme initiated in 1993. Under this scheme, employers pay 0.7% of payroll into a training fund administered by a State Tripartite Foundation for Training at Work, composed of employers, trade unions and government representatives. Effective partnerships should be highlighted as a strength in the Spanish system of LLL. There is a high degree of interaction between key social interlocutors, through a wide range of coordinating and consultative bodies, such as the General Vocational training Council, the Economic and Social Council, throughout collective bargaining or at the Tripartite Foundation for Training at Work.

Regarding recent and pending policy developments, the National Reform Programme launched in 2006 for the compliance of the Lisbon strategy seems to have put special emphasis on the enhancement of labour-related training programmes. The new programme of continuing training, which came into force in 2006, has prioritised the enhancement of training in SMEs, through several actions and policies:

- development of Company Training Plans to meet employees' training requirements, partially financed by a levy scheme;
- the development of systems for the accreditation of professional skills acquired in both training (formal and informal) and working experience, eliminating obstacles to the free movement of workers;
- a system of bonuses on the training quota for companies providing training to their employees (backup and assistance services to SMEs by the regional administrations and the social partners);
- individual training leave;
- public programmes to train employees of SMEs;
- training backup, and accompanying actions;
- programme contracts and agreements to make the training offered stable and permanent;
- national Reference Centres specialised in productive sectors, running experimental and innovative training activities in the field of professional training. It is also planned to create a network of Integrated Professional Training Centres to integrate the professional training offered so that people are able to access continuing education and training to enhance their employability.

Other effective experiences are the "Mentor Classrooms" network, which is an open and free training system based upon local centres, focused on the availability and use of computer-based, audio-visual and telecommunication resources for the training of adults, and the "Employment Workshops" for adults, which integrate training experience and information together with the development of specific skills aimed at search for employment and self-employment.

5 Bibliography

INEM (Public Employment Service), 2004. 'Evaluation of the European Employment Strategy' in the *Autonomous Communities*.

INEM, 2005. Financial aspects of professional training and investment in human resources in Spain. *INEM, Subdirección General de Servicios Técnicos, Área de Organización y Planificación de la Gestión, Servicio de Análisis, Documentación e Información*.

OECD, 2003. *Thematic Review on Adult Learning. Spain. Country Note*.

Pineda Herrero, P., 2007. 'Continuous training in Spain: situation and challenges'. *Revista Electrónica de Investigación y Evaluación Educativa, Volumen 13, No 1, p. 42-65*.

Pineda Herrero, P. and Sarramona J 2006. 'The new model of continuous training in Spain: situation after one year of changes'. *Revista de Educación, 341, septiembre-diciembre 2006 p. 705-736*.

Planas J. and Montoriol M., 2006. *Improving Teaching and Learning skills for Adults with Basic Skills*. Ministry of Education and Science.

Tripartite Foundation for Training at Work, 2006. *Continuous Training 2005 annual report*.

France

In 2005 EUR 25.9 billion was spent on continuing vocational training and apprenticeships. This expenditure has been rising steadily. 40% of this sum (EUR 10 billion) was spent by companies on training their employees and 15% was spent on the training of jobseekers.

The nation does make a substantial investment in training (1.5% of GNP) and the overall rate of access to continuing training has grown constantly since 1974.⁴² There has, however, also been a lot of criticism in recent years for the system being too complex, inegalitarian and inefficient. Thirty years after the Delors Act of 1971, on which the French training system is based, vocational training faces the challenge of globalisation, which requires developing the skills of the labour force and adapting it to new challenges. It is confronted also with a new demand to protect occupational paths. A reform was introduced in 2003 (the National Intersectoral Agreement, ANI, incorporated into the law of 4 May 2004 on lifelong learning) to address these challenges.

1 Adult participation in lifelong learning

In 2005, 4.5 million adults took part in lifelong training, of which 700,000 were jobseekers and around 3,800,000 employees.

1.1 Employees' participation in LLL: 'a system reserved for the most highly qualified employees, aged under 50 and working in big companies.'⁴³

The rate of access of employees to vocational training grew until 1998 (37.7%), then fell until 2003, when it stood at 35.2%, but has since undergone **a sustained growth, reaching 41.5% in 2005**. This rise has been accompanied by a downward trend in the length of training courses, which now is at around 30 hours per person trained.⁴⁴

However, this rise in the rate of access masks some variations and inequalities in accessing the training.

Firstly, by economic sector, there is a very high rate of access to training among the employees in highly capital-intensive sectors, e.g. in aerospace (88.9%), banking (73.1%) and the nuclear industries (61%), whereas the rate of access is lower in the traditional sectors such as woodworking (19.2%), and clothing and textiles (20.6%).

Secondly, by sex, the rate of access among men is still higher than for women (40.7% as opposed to 37%), even though the gap is narrowing. This figure masks some significant inequalities. Fewer women with young children or on low pay have access to vocational training.

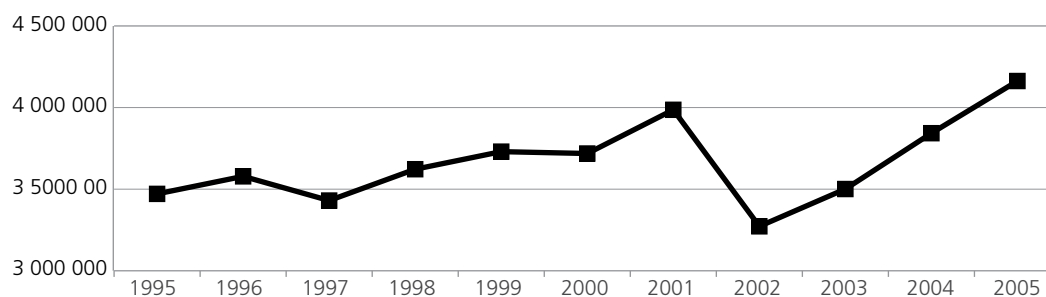
Lastly, by socio-professional category and company size, the rate of access of a manual worker in a company with fewer than 20 employees is 7.9%, as against 64% for a manager in a company of 2,000 employees and more.

Table 2: Rate of access to training by social category, depending on company size, in 2004 (%)

Size of company	Manual workers	Clerical workers	Technical and supervisory staff	Engineers and managers	TOTAL
10-19	7.9	11.5	24.1	20.1	12.5
20-49	14.5	12.0	30.8	29.8	19.7
50-249	26.1	29.4	46.6	47.3	33.9
250-499	31.8	35.7	54.5	57.6	42.1
500-1999	35.7	43.3	60.4	63.0	49.2
2000 +	41.7	39.8	65.7	64.1	50.4
TOTAL	29.0	29.3	55.0	53.2	39.0

Source: Tax declarations, no. 2483 – Statistics produced by Céreq

Table 1: Number of persons trained in companies with 10 or more employees



⁽⁴²⁾ DARES, Nov 2007 Premières informations, Premières Synthèses n°45-3, *La dépense nationale pour la formation professionnelle continue et l'apprentissage en 2005*.

⁽⁴³⁾ Report of the Senate Information Commission no. 365, *Formation Professionnelle, le droit de savoir [Vocational Training: The Right to Know]*, rapporteur Bernard Seillier, July 2007.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ All trainees, including unemployed and young people. More precisely, 30 hours for Training Plan activities and 50 hours when the costs of the training activities are shared. The balance sheets of the training providers show that 5.6 million people received training in 2005 (including young people) for an average duration of 75 hours per course, whereas in 1994 there were 2.8 million trainees, receiving an average duration of training of 115 hours (Source: DARES).

1.2 Jobseekers' participation in LLL: Increased use of training by the unemployment insurance system in the 2000s

The participation of jobseekers in vocational training has also been growing since the beginning of the 2000s, and stood at 8.1% at the end of 2005.⁴⁵ This corresponds to a structural development of employment policies, with a greater use of vocational training as a tool, firstly, within the Personalised Action Project – New Start (PAP-ND)⁴⁶ and, subsequently, the Employment Resumption Assistance Plan – Personalised Action Project (PARE-PAP).⁴⁷ In 2005, 637,000 jobseekers undertook training, 10% fewer than in 2003 and 2004. 52% of these were women, whose rate of access to training was 8.4%, compared to 7.7% of men. The fall in participation among jobseekers in 2005 is linked, above all, to the transference of responsibility to the Regional Councils, which led to the elimination of the Enterprise Access (SAE) and Integration and Employment Training (SIFE) courses financed by the state.

On the other hand, the rate of access to **training reduces with age**. For jobseekers aged over 45, it stands at only 3.1% (for both sexes) and just 11% of the unemployed in training are over 45 (whereas they represent 24% of jobseekers).⁴⁸

Lastly, the training undertaken by jobseekers is generally longer (an average of 4.3 months) than training undertaken by employees,⁴⁹ though not generally long enough to enable genuine retraining.⁵⁰

The inequalities in access to training are the same for employees and jobseekers. In 2004, 9% of unqualified unemployed undertook training, compared to 15% of unemployed with a baccalaureate and 23% with a higher education qualification.

2 Main obstacles to LLL

2.1 A complex context and the lack of transparency in the French system

'Complexity, compartmentalisation and corporatism' are the three main problems besetting vocational training, according to the Senate Report '*Vocational Training: the Right to Know*'.⁵¹

The French system is complex, having developed as political priorities have changed. The first source of complexity is the multiplicity of funders and the resulting fragmented governance of the system. The fragmentation of funding is largely an effect of dividing entrants into the target-group categories. The Senate Report takes the view that this system is 'intelligible only to the initiated' and speaks of a 'provision generally directed towards target groups distinguished by age, status and future prospects.'

Training for employees is divided into training undertaken at employer's initiative (as part of the Company Training Plan), at the initiative of the occupational or inter-occupational branch ('professional development contracts' or 'periods of professional development') and at the initiative of the employee (the CIF [*Congé individuel de formation*] or 'Individual Training Leave' and - since the reform of 2004 - the DIF [*Droit individuel à la formation*] or 'Individual Training Right'). Companies are not bound by an obligation to train, but by an obligation to fund training, in the form of a deduction from their payroll reimbursed directly or shared with the Approved Funds Collection Bodies (OPCAs).⁵²

The central government, the regions and the unemployment insurance system share responsibility for **vocational training for adult jobseekers**.⁵³ Though the decentralising process began twenty years ago and the Law of 13 August 2004 entrusted responsibility for defining and implementing the vocational training policy for adult jobseekers to the Regions, the Senate report takes the view that 'no one is now steering this ship'. The multiple spheres of responsibility, overlapping funding and the absence of a genuine lead weaken the governance of the system.

This fragmented governance is mirrored by a vocational training market that is itself complex. Over the last 30 years, private-sector bodies, the main providers of vocational training, co-exist alongside public ones. There are 45,000 declared training bodies, though only a few thousand of these are genuinely active.⁵⁴ There are also no fewer than 1,200 diplomas or titles delivered by seven certifying ministries, half of which by the Ministry of National Education. The number of actors authorised to award qualifications, together with the degree of dispersion and over-specialisation of these qualifications, reduces their transparency and transferability.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Rate of access is calculated as the number of jobseekers accessing vocational training divided by the overall number of jobseekers.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ *Projet d'Action Personnalisée pour un Nouveau Départ*. This was a programme introduced by the French National Employment Agency (ANPE) in 2001.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ *Plan d'aide au Retour à l'Emploi – Projet d'Action Personnalisée*.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Source: DARES and INSEE Employment Survey.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Source: PLF (French Finance Bill) 2007 'Budget Blue Book' on Lifelong Vocational Training.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ This is one of the main criticisms made by Pierre CAHUC and André ZYLBERBERG's report to the Paris Chamber of Commerce, *La formation professionnelle des adultes, un système à la dérive* [*The Vocational Training of Adults: A System on the Rocks*], July 2006.

⁽⁵¹⁾ Report of the Senate Information Commission no. 365, *Formation Professionnelle, le droit de savoir* [*Vocational Training: The Right to Know*], rapporteur: Bernard Seillier, July 2007.

⁽⁵²⁾ OPCA: Organisme paritaire collecteur agréé.

⁽⁵³⁾ General Councils [elected authorities at *département* level] are also funders of training activities for persons in receipt of income support.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Finance Bill, 2008: '94 % of training bodies are in the private sector. They account for 73% of the turnover and have trained 7.4 million trainees, i.e. 85% of the total number. The private training providers are composed of three almost equal groups: private profit-making organisations (32%); private non-profit-making organisations (31%) and individuals (31%).'

This complexity means that an employee, company or jobseeker has to take up a gauntlet of complexity to access to the system of vocational training, given its multiplicity of procedures and interlocutors, and has to battle to gain an intelligible and transferable qualification at the end of an uncertain training process.

2.2 An inequalitarian system

The access to vocational training is unequal, but, even more significantly, the system is far from giving a second chance to those people who left initial training without qualifications. Continuing training does, in fact, seem more accessible to those who already have a high level of initial qualifications.

Table 3: Rate of access to training by the level of qualifications					
Initial Qualification Level	No qualifications	CAP/BEP ⁵⁵	Brevet (GCSE equivalent)	Baccalaureate	Higher education
Rate of access to training (employees)	13.6%	23.4%	25.2%	33.7%	44.3%

Source: Senate Report 2007, based on the vocational training 2000 survey by CEREQ

On one hand, companies tend to favour employees in the highest level positions or those best integrated into the company. Moreover, these people tend to benefit from longer periods of training, enabling them to make significant career moves. By contrast, at the bottom of the scale, the employees already penalised by a lower rate of access to vocational training are more often placed on short courses designed around the needs of their present job.⁵⁶ Because these training programmes are too short in proportion to the trainees' level of initial training, and are geared to their current post, vocational training does not really enable the least qualified people to experience any social or career mobility.

On the other hand, only 16% of **unqualified jobseekers** express a desire for training when interviewed by their ANPE counsellor, as opposed to 24% of more highly qualified jobseekers. This is despite the fact that the absence of qualifications is one of the main causes of long-term unemployment. To remedy this, the ANPE offers more training to unqualified people (25% of unqualified jobseekers are offered training by their ANPE counsellor, compared to 16% of the more highly qualified).

Six months after they have been offered such training, only 7% of unqualified jobseekers have actually started the training. This may be explained by the difficulty of travelling when the training provider is not located locally, the problem of reorganising family life and by a smaller inclination to undertake training.

2.3 A limited impact of continuing training on careers⁵⁷

Existing studies show that continuing vocational training has a very limited impact on careers of employees and jobseekers. Fougère, Goux and Maurin (2001) analysed the **impact of**

training funded by companies, basing their work on data from the 'Formation Qualification Professionnelle' survey (carried out every five years). There is no significant difference in the way the remuneration of trained employees and the untrained employees changes over time, except when they move to another company, in which case the trained people experience less of a drop in earnings than the untrained.

Training funded by the public authorities or the social partners has been subjected to greater scrutiny. It emerges that courses of the alternating ('sandwich') type are distinctly effective in accelerating access to employment and making employment more stable. On the other hand, Ferracci (2005) has shown that the employment rate of unemployed people who had undergone training increased by only 1% after one year and that the effects of training were no longer perceptible after 36 months.

For both employees and jobseekers, **the outcomes of continuing training initiatives do not seem so prominent as the results of initial training**. Moreover, the results are affected by a bias in selection as companies send to training those workers where best return on their investment can be expected. Continuing training is of little appreciable help to the most 'at risk' categories, who may be said to have greatest need of it. Heckman (1999) concludes that, 'the net outcome of training is minimal, if not indeed negative, for the least qualified adults.' The qualification obtained through initial training remains, therefore, key to a career within a company, and to the speed of the return to employment. In this respect, vocational training provides no remedy to the segmentation of the labour market.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ CAP: Certificate of Vocational Skills; BEP: Certificate of Vocational Studies.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ The trend on the part of companies is generally towards training geared to the demands of a particular job, to the detriment of higher forms of training. This is because most training is delivered as part of companies' Training Plans.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ Few French studies show a significant impact of training on occupational situation. As Chaleix and Lollivier Report (2004) shows, there are few cohort studies of sufficiently long-term duration to enable career paths in France to be analysed.

3 Avenues of progress and innovative approaches for further development

In recent years, many tools have been created to improve security of employment within private companies. Alongside one of the most longstanding, the Individual Training Leave (or CIF),⁵⁸ the Law on Social Modernisation of 2002 established **the principle of the validation of work-based experience** (Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience or VAE), based on the idea of validating by certification the skills acquired during work and not solely from training. The 2004 Law introduced the **Individual Training Right** (or DIF)⁵⁹ and the **Professional Development Contract**.⁶⁰ The Law of 2004 also created a **period of professional development**, which is intended to help to keep workers in their employment, particularly those with 20 years of experience, aged at least 45 and in a certain seniority position in the companies employing them. This is achieved alternating training activities with theoretical and practical components.

The 2004 reform clearly puts emphasis on the **role of the individual** in the building of his/her skills through training (with a focus on the training project, which aims are co-developed with the company to take account of its needs) and the notion of **professional development**.⁶¹ After two years of the reform, its first assessment has been made,⁶² showing an effective take-up of the newly created tools (see table 4).

Table 4: Training tools	
TRAINING TOOLS	END 2005
Professional Development Contracts	120,000 contracts signed
Individual Training Right (DIF)	130,000 employees have activated their DIFs, 20,000 on activities that are regarded as priority by their branch (shared funding)
Professional Development Period	248,000 employees have benefited from this over an average period of 84 hours
Training Plan	40% of employees for an average of 30 hours of training activity when funded by companies and 50 hours when funded by an OPCA
Individual Training Leave (CIF)	34,000 CIFs for workers on permanent contracts (+10%) and 7,000 for workers on fixed-term contracts (+2%)

Source: PLF 2007

It emerges that the reform is 'incentivising rather than normative: it sets a general framework within which companies have many options for embracing' a logic of 'good practices that draw on a number of success factors, such as the involvement of middle management, the creation of schemes supporting individual initiative, the coherence of the approach at company level, and the establishment of career assessment interviews...'.⁶³ With the **central role given to the sectors**⁶⁴ in defining and implementing employee training policies, the sectors have fully embraced the scheme. By the end of 2005, 450 training agreements had been signed in 230 sectors.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ *Congé individuel de formation* [Individual Training Leave], funded by the company through Fongecif, is a provision that enables an individual to carry out occupational retraining.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ The 'DIF' (*Droit Individuel à la Formation*) makes available 20 hours of training, which can be rolled over for a period of up to 6 years for each employee. Based on a mutual agreement between the company and the employee, the training must be done outside working hours, except where there has been a decision on the part of the sector concerned to incorporate part of it into working time.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ This combines all the formerly existing 'alternating contracts' in a single contract.

⁽⁶¹⁾ In relation to professional development, 'the important thing is the outcome, that is to say the skills developed, not the training in itself'. Report of the DGEFP (General Directorate of Employment and Vocational Training), *Premiers éclairages sur la réforme de la formation professionnelle : enjeux, dynamiques et questionnements* [Initial Perspectives on the Reform of Vocational Training : Issues, Dynamics and Questions], October 2006.

⁽⁶²⁾ Ibid.

⁽⁶³⁾ Ibid.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ Through negotiation, a sector determines the guidelines for the development of training and the corresponding allocation of funds. The National Joint Commission on Employment and Vocational Training (CPNEFP), made up of the social partners, is responsible for the development of the 'Prospective and Analytical Observatory on Occupations and Qualifications'.

Moreover, alongside a contractual policy⁶⁵ aimed at supporting thesectoral organisations in the development of their employees' skills, the central government also has tools to better anticipate economic change, particularly through incentives for 'forward management of employment and skills'⁶⁶ (assistance with consultancy funding, a triennial obligation for companies with 300 employees or more to negotiate on 'forward management of employment and skills'). Over the period 2000-2006, the ESF has intervened, within the framework of Objective 3, to support this policy, but also to co-finance occupational training policies, developed by the sectoral organisations through their OPCAs and the Regional Councils, aimed at young people on schemes to integrate them into the labour market and adults undergoing retraining. Complementarity with the contractual policy of the government has made it possible to create a ratchet effect in terms of both quality and quantity.⁶⁷ Within the framework of the current Structural Funds, the 'Regional Competitiveness and Employment' objective takes up these broad principles, with an even more pronounced aim of anticipating economic change.

Yet, despite the funds devoted to training and the successive reforms, major criticisms are still made of the system. Recently published reports propose very distinct solutions, ranging from the abolition of the Individual Training Right (DIF) – a measure part of the 2004 reform but by no means proving its usefulness yet – to mere adaptations of the current system. Following the alarming findings of the Senate, a new reform is in the pipeline with the question of the protection of occupational paths at the heart of the debate – an argument advanced by the President during his electoral campaign – in the hope that this new reform will turn out to be the right one!

4 Bibliography

Senate Information Commission Report (N°365), *Formation Professionnelle, le droit de savoir*. Rapporteur: Bernard Seillier (Paris, July 2007).

Centre d'Analyse Stratégique *La Note de Veille*, 'A quoi sert la formation professionnelle continue?' *La Note de Veille* (Paris, June 2007). <http://www.strategie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/NoteVeille62V2/pdf>

CAHUC P., ZYLBERBERG A., *La formation professionnelle des adultes, un système à la dérive*, Report to the Paris Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Paris, July 2006).

Report of the Délégation Générale à l'Emploi et à la Formation Professionnelle [General Commission on Employment and Vocational Training], *Premiers éclairages sur la réforme de la formation professionnelle: enjeux, dynamiques et questionnements* (Paris, October 2006).

CHALEIX M., LOLLIVIER S., (2004) '*Outils de suivi des trajectoires des personnes en matière sociale et d'emploi*', rapport au CNIS, September 2004.

CHARDON O., ZAMORA P., 'Construction et valorisation des compétences: l'apport des analyses longitudinales', *Formation et carrières professionnelles*, Cereq. http://www.cereq.fr/pdf/08%20-%20Chardon_Zamora.pdf

FERRACCI, M., (2005) '*Using matching estimators to evaluate the effect of training for the unemployed: evidence from France, 1996-2004*', Paris, 31 May 2005. http://www.afse.fr/docs/congres_2005/docs2005/Ferracci.pdf

FOUGERE D., GOUX D., MAURIN E., 'Formation continue et carrières salariales: une évaluation sur les données individuelles', *Annales d'Economie et de Statistiques* (Paris, 2001).

HECKMAN, J. J., (2000) 'Policies to foster human capital', *Research in Economics*, Elsevier, vol. 54(1), pp. 3-56, March.

PEREZ C., THOMAS G., 'La formation continue dans les trajectoires d'emploi précaires', *Note Emploi-Formation* (Paris: Cereq, 2004).

DARES [French Research, Studies and Statistics Directorate], *Premières Informations, Premières Synthèses*

- April 2007, no. 15-2: L'offre de formation continue en 2004, une activité toujours en expansion.
- June 2007, no. 26-3: La formation professionnelle des demandeurs d'emploi en 2005: la Région, principal financeur.
- November 2007, no. 45-3: La dépense nationale pour la formation professionnelle continue et l'apprentissage.

FRENCH FINANCE BILLS 2007 and 2008, Appendices: '*Jaune Budgétaire*' sur la Formation Professionnelle ['Blue Book' on Vocational Training].

⁽⁶⁵⁾ The instruments used are varied in nature - Forward Studies Contracts, Employment and Skills Development Engagements (EDECs), Employment and Skills Development Actions (ADECs).

⁽⁶⁶⁾ *Gestion prévisionnelle des emplois et des compétences* or GPEC.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Other activities permitted within the framework of the ESF are support for the implementation and recognition of work-derived skills (VAE), the use of ICT (Open and Distance Learning, Personalised Learning Workshops and Resource Centres), the promotion of project-based awareness-raising or the elaboration of career projects.

Italy

In the year 2000 the EU Member States agreed to make Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world. Education and training soon emerged as key factors for the achievement of this ambitious goal. The major target has been to increase the educational attainment and the skill base of the adult segment of the population, insufficient for the challenges of globalisation and knowledge-based societies, requiring a continuous renewal and updating of skills to allow for structural adjustments, productivity growth and innovation. This target is especially important in those European countries, including Italy, experiencing a rapid process of population ageing⁶⁸.

1 Recent trends in adult participation in lifelong learning

Despite significant improvements in the educational attainment of the population, Italy still lags behind most of its European partners in relation to human capital accumulation. According to Eurostat, in 2006 the proportion of adults⁶⁹ having completed at least upper secondary education was around 51.3% (only 37.8% in 1996), as compared to 66.9% in France, 72.6% in the UK and 83.3% in Germany (Table 1).

The situation looks more promising for younger people. The proportion of young people (aged 20-24) with at least

an upper secondary diploma was 75.5% in 2006 (60.9% in 1996), in line with the EU-15 average (Table 1), but still ten points below the Lisbon target of 85% to be reached by 2010⁷⁰. The relatively good position of the Italian youth with upper secondary education is, however, accompanied by a significant extent of early school leaving. In 2006, the proportion of people aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training was 20.8%. It should converge, according to the Lisbon targets, to no more than 10% by 2010. Furthermore, recent evidence seems to suggest that Italian students attending upper secondary school perform poorly in comparison with their European EU peers when tested on their specific functional abilities. According to the latest PISA survey⁷¹, Italy (together with the Slovak Republic, Greece and Portugal) is among the lowest scorers amongst the OECD countries in reading, mathematics and science.

Italy thus has young people catching up rapidly in terms of schooling years, but the adult population lags behind most European partners in terms of formal educational attainment. This is reflected in a scarcely competitive labour force. In 2006, only 59.2% of the labour force participants had at least completed upper secondary education, while 7.9% had at most completed primary school. Lifelong learning could hence play a key role, as the slow rate of labour force renewal through the entry of younger and better qualified workers could be insufficient to cope with the higher skill requirements in production and international competition⁷².

Table 1: Main economic indicators of education and training in 2006: an EU comparison
(% of the corresponding age group in the population)

Indicators	Italy	France	Germany	Ireland	Spain	Finland	UK	EU-15
Upper secondary educational attainment of the population ^a	51.3	66.9	83.3	66.2	49.4	79.6	72.6	66.7
Upper secondary educational attainment of young people ^b	75.5	82.1	71.6	85.7	61.6	84.7	78.8	74.8
Early school-leavers ^c	20.8	13.1	13.8	12.3	29.9	8.3	13.0	17.0
Lifelong learning participation ^d	6.1	7.5	7.5	7.5	10.4	23.1	26.6	11.1
of which females	6.5	7.8	7.3	8.9	11.5	27.0	31.2	12.1

^a Population aged 25- 64 having completed at least upper secondary education.

^b Population aged 20-24 having completed at least upper secondary education.

^c Population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training.

^d Population aged 25-64 in education or training.

Source: Eurostat.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ According to OECD (2006), Italy will represent one of the oldest countries in the OECD area with over-65s forecasted to reach about one third of the entire population by 2050.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Those aged 25-64, according to the standard Eurostat definition.

⁽⁷⁰⁾ In the EU-15 this target has already been achieved by Austria, Ireland and Sweden.

⁽⁷¹⁾ The survey carried out periodically by the OECD on students aged 15 in order to assess comparative performance of scientific, reading and mathematical literacy.

⁽⁷²⁾ O'Mahony and van Ark (2003) show, for example, that Italian high-skilled workers contribute to only 30.8% of the value-added, as compared to 37.4% in France, 39.9 in the US, and over 40% in Ireland and Belgium.

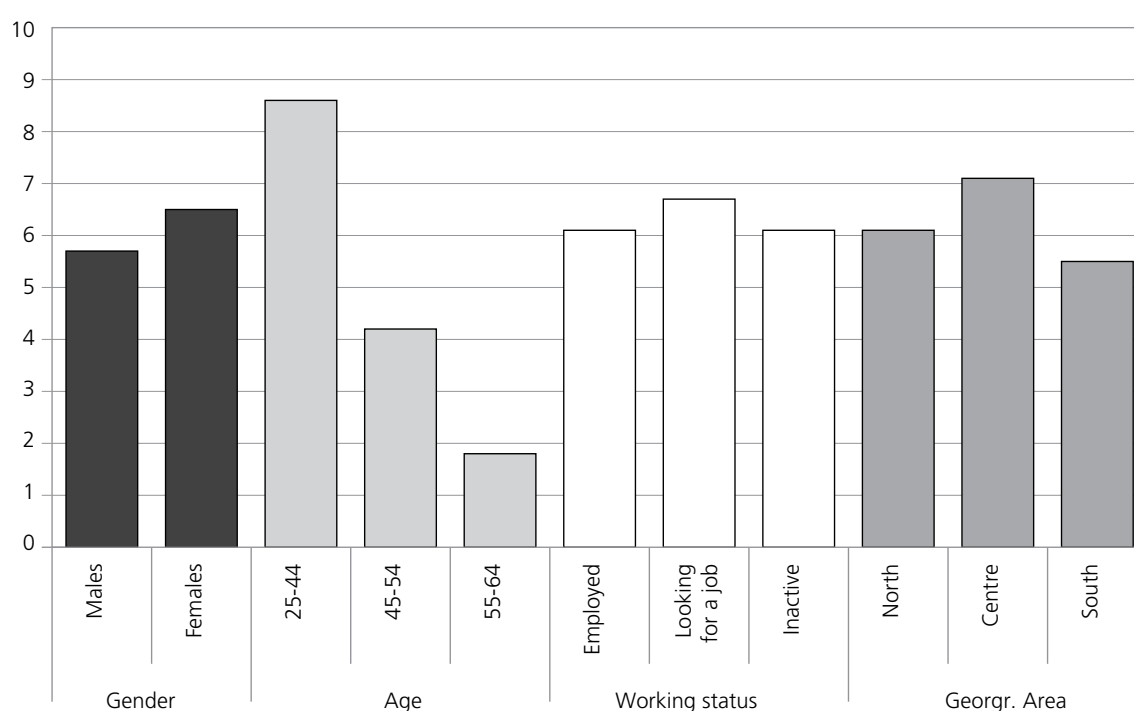
Yet, in 2006 only 6.1% of the Italian adult population participated in some kind of education, training or learning activities, as compared to a European average of 11.1% (Table 1). According to the Italian labour force survey (LFS)⁷³, adult participation in lifelong learning activities tends to be slightly higher for females (6.5%) than for males (5.7%), it is concentrated amongst younger workers (about 77.3% of the participants belong to the 25-44 age cohort) and is located in the Central and Northern regions of the country (Figure 1), i.e., the most developed areas. As far as the working status is concerned, persons looking for a job show a rate of participation in the same activities which

is about half a point higher than that of both employed and inactive persons⁷⁴.

More detailed data reveal that the persons looking for a job (together with the inactive people) are mainly involved in formal education activities (i.e., carried out in schools, universities and colleges), rather than non-formal training activities (i.e., all types of taught learning programmes not being part of formal education) which are mostly attended by already employed workers (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Participation in education and training activities of Italian adult people (age 25-64) by gender, age, working status and geographical area

(2006; % of corresponding group in the population)

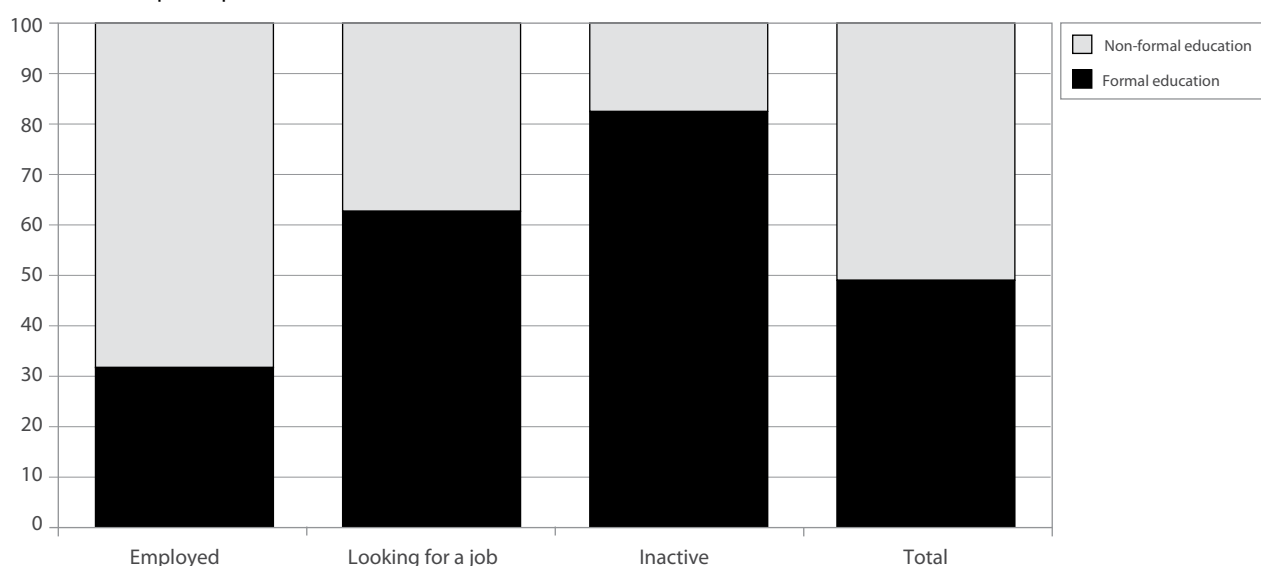


Source: Computations on LFS data.

⁽⁷³⁾ Unfortunately available data do not allow studying long-term trends as far as training participation is concerned, because of important changes introduced in the Italian LFS in the year 2004 which make comparisons with previous years not reliable.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ In particular, according to the evidence provided by the Italian regions, 55.6% of the unemployed adult people participating to vocational training programmes are women.

Figure 2: Adult population participating in lifelong learning activities by type of activity
(2006; % of total participants)



Source: Computations on LFS data.

Since training programmes are often designed to help unemployed persons to enter or re-enter the labour market, this suggests the existence of barriers to access lifelong learning activities. Furthermore, focusing on employed persons, it also underlines⁷⁵ a high degree of segmentation in training participation. Among private sector employees, 60.8% of training participants have completed tertiary education, while 54.7% are employed in high-skilled occupations (e.g. managers) and only 16.4% are blue-collar workers. Finally, participation is relatively higher for workers employed in the service sector (31.1%) compared to the manufacturing sector (22.4%).

2 Main obstacles to adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

Many factors influence adult participation in LLL activities in Italy. Low participation is strongly linked to the existing deficits in the educational attainment of the target population. Non-participation is much higher among low-skilled people.

This is a shared feature of most EU economies, but it looks particularly distinctive in Italy where, according to the *ad hoc* survey on lifelong learning in 2003⁷⁶, 66% of low-skilled individuals⁷⁷ did not participate in any kind of learning activities, as compared to the 22% of high-skilled ones⁷⁸. In particular, only 2% of low-skilled people participated in non-formal training activities, as compared to 11% in France and the UK, 24% in Finland and 31% in Denmark.

Hence, Italian training policies rarely succeed in reaching and involving the most vulnerable groups. This is due to several reasons:

- lack of information about training opportunities⁷⁹, which particularly affects people with lower educational attainment;
- financial constraints represent a significant barrier for disadvantaged individuals;
- for low-skilled persons, individual returns from training participation are generally lower than for high-skilled people in terms of expected wages.

Another important obstacle to adult participation in LLL in Italy originates in the supply side. According to the LFS, training

⁽⁷⁵⁾ Data refer to the latest survey on workers' attitudes and behaviours towards continuing training, carried out by the Italian Institute for Workers' Training (Isfol).

⁽⁷⁶⁾ See for details Eurostat (2005). This *ad hoc* survey asked about all lifelong learning activities occurred in the 12 months before the interview, while the LFS considers only the previous four weeks.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ Those with at most a lower secondary education.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ Those with tertiary education qualifications.

⁽⁷⁹⁾ According to a recent survey carried out by the Isfol, 60% of the interviewed people claimed not to have attended any training activity because of the lack of information.

activities mainly take place inside firms and in 2006 less than 20% of them⁸⁰ provided some type of training activities to their employees. For most firms, human capital development is not a priority to enhance competitiveness. A lot of variation emerges, however, when comparing firms of different size. More than 70% of large firms organise training programmes, as compared to the 16.6% of small firms (the vast majority of Italian firms have less than 10 employees). Training courses are more often organised by firms operating in the service sectors and located in the North. Thus, the availability of training opportunities rarely reaches the unemployed and inactive people located in the less developed areas of the country. This calls into question the role and relative magnitude of public training policies⁸¹.

3 Quality and impact of Italian training programmes

Cross-country empirical evidence suggests the existence of a positive link between participation in training of vulnerable population groups and their labour market performance. According to the OECD (2004), training opportunities are especially promising for women and workers aged 45-54, whose participation rates are more than 20 percentage points higher than those of people who do not attend any learning activity. The benefits from LLL look therefore potentially relevant in a situation of low employment and activity rates among women, older workers and low-skilled individuals.

In Italy, the impact evaluation of training policy is still in its infancy, though such an activity is planned for the outcomes of the Interprofessional funds⁸² (see the following section). Some investigations have, however, started to shed light on the effectiveness of training programmes. For instance, a recent survey on the employment performance of disadvantaged people participating in training activities in the Southern regions of the country (and co-financed by the ESF) reveals that, 12 months after completion of the training programme, only 20% of them found a job (Isfol, 2007a). Other scattered evidence can be obtained from specific territorial experiences in the provinces of Bolzano and Turin⁸³, indicating that policies aiming at financing the individual demand of training through the supply of *ad hoc* vouchers have been effective in promoting the training of women, precarious workers as well as people employed in small firms. The same cannot be stated for low-educated and older workers.

Some positive results also emerge from the evaluation of the employment outcomes of the training activities organised within the Higher Technical Education and Training initiatives (see the following section). According to Isfol (2007b), about 46.6% of training participants who did not hold a job before the programme were employed within one year from the end of the courses. The share of newly employed people is relatively higher (67.1%) for men than for women (52.3%), and the probability of finding a job equals to 62.1% for people holding tertiary degrees, as compared to the 44.4% of people with vocational school diplomas.

The Italian experience in the quality assessment of training programmes is also at its start, and the available information is scarce and fragmented. However, increasing attention has been paid to the quality issue in recent years through the spread of recognised certification practices, like ISO and EFQM. Furthermore, starting from 2001, Italian regions and provinces publish a list of training institutions which guarantee certain quality levels.

4 Policies for lifelong learning and good practices

Lifelong learning as a key ingredient of policy making has been introduced in Italy only in recent years. Until the early 1990s, the system of vocational training was almost exclusively targeted to young people leaving formal education, with the aim to fight early school leaving and social exclusion. Experiences in the field of continuing training were left to the initiative of firms, thereby leading to a supply of activities mainly targeted to employed (rather than unemployed and inactive) people with a relatively high educational attainment and working in large firms.

Yet, despite the absence of a systematic and well-developed approach to continuing vocational training, some relevant initiatives have been promoted since the 1990s⁸⁴. In 1993 the law 236 introduced training vouchers allowing individuals to choose their own training plan and reducing some obstacles to training participation (i.e. financial constraints). A decree of the Ministry of Labour of May 2007 distributed EUR 207 million to the Regions which can be spent to finance companies' training plans, company vouchers targeted to small firms (less than 15 employees) and individual vouchers targeted to workers in mobility or entitled for benefits (Cassa Integrazione Guadagni), older workers (45 years or more), low-educated and workers holding flexible contracts. In 2000, the possibility of leave schemes was introduced in order to guarantee workers the right to return to their jobs after a training period. In the last years, financial incentives have been granted to small firms to promote human capital investment.

⁽⁸⁰⁾ Data are derived from an annual survey carried out by the Italian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, see Isfol (2007b).

⁽⁸¹⁾ See Brunello (2007).

⁽⁸²⁾ The impact of training programmes will be measured on the basis of the employment rate of older workers, their average exit age from the labour market, the growth in labour productivity, as well as the total number of workers and enterprises involved in vocational training projects.

⁽⁸³⁾ See Isfol (2005).

⁽⁸⁴⁾ See Croce (2004) for a comprehensive review of policies.

The resources made available through the ESF played a significant role, as they helped to carry out – through co-financed schemes – most of the continuing training programmes organised in the last years. For example, the Ministry of Labour, using the ESF contribution within the National Operative Programme System Action Objective 3, signed a Protocol with the Tuscany Region to implement the Inter-Regional Project *Individual Learning Account – Carta Prepagata di Credito Formativo Individuale (Pre-paid card of Individual Training Credit)*. The other Regions participating in the Project are Piemonte and Umbria. The Ministry intervenes to accompany, support and spread the policy measures based on the demand for training and tailored to people who do not have an individual training project, and have limited information and weak motivation. The card provides a predetermined number of workers who are unemployed or hold an atypical labour contract with an amount (deposited with a bank or a post office) that can be spent (within two years) to participate in training activities selected with the help of a ‘tutor’ working for an employment centre.

Important reforms in the education and training systems are also in progress, aiming to improve and integrate learning in schools, universities and training institutions. An important example is the introduction and strengthening of Higher Technical Education and Training (*Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore - IFTS*) linking together schools, universities, vocational training and firms, with the aim of developing research and innovation in some areas of the country.

Another interesting experience was carried out in 2007 by the Municipality of Rome⁸⁵, which launched the project ‘*Local action plan to improve employability of older workers*’. A set of measures was implemented within Local Employment Agencies, including training initiatives targeted to older workers, LLL activities to encourage older citizens to remain active and training or wider LLL for older unemployed people. A targeted campaign informing potential users about the implemented service as well as discussion meetings with local stakeholders (employers’ organisations, trade unions and local community) were also organised.

In the last years, the major novelty has been the introduction of inter-professional funds for continuing training, which are expected to address the lack of training opportunities targeted at adult employees and, in particular, low-educated people and older workers. These funds are managed by the social partners⁸⁶ and are available in different sectors. Their aim is to finance training programmes through a compulsory levy paid by employers (0.30% of the payroll costs). Up to now, more than 450,000 Italian firms have joined an inter-professional fund, involving about 6 million workers, and the amount of resources made available for training programmes through this channel is significant (funds will receive EUR 192 million of public resources until 2008). A general agreement was signed in April 2007 by

the Ministry of Labour, the Regions and the social partners on the co-ordination between regional programmes and inter-professional funds, aiming at creating a nationally integrated system for continuing training. Some regions have already signed agreements with the funds in order to harmonise their training plans, but their effective implementation could be hindered by lack of regional level awareness on a life-cycle approach to work, inadequate planning capacity, different economic conditions across regions, involvement of active stakeholders, overlapping and inconsistencies with other training policies in terms of targets, financial resources and institutional mechanisms.

5 Bibliography

Brunello G. (2007), *The Effects of Training on Employment, Wages and Productivity: a European Perspective*, Thematic paper prepared for the thematic review seminar *Measuring, improving and promoting effects of lifelong learning*, held in Brussels in September 2007.

Croce G. (2004), *La formazione continua in Europa e in Italia: investimenti privati e politiche pubbliche*, mimeo.

European Commission (2007), ‘Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training’, *Commission Staff Working Document*.

Eurostat (2005), ‘*Lifelong learning in Europe*’, *Statistics in Focus*, Population and Social Conditions, 8/2005.

Isfol (2007a), *Rapporto 2007*, Rubbettino.

Isfol (2007b), ‘*Rapporto 2006 sulla formazione continua, Formazione orientamento professionale*, Anno 7, n.2/3.

Provincia di Torino - ISFOL (2005), *La formazione individuale dei lavoratori. Strumenti, pratiche, opportunità*, Levrotto & Bella Edizioni, Torino. <http://www.eformazionecontinua.it/sezioni/Approfondimenti/RapportoindividualeTorino.pdf>

O'Mahony M. and van Ark B., eds., (2003), ‘EU Productivity and Competitiveness: An Industry Perspective. Can Europe Resume the Catching-up Process?’, *Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg*.

OECD (2007), *Qualifications Systems: Bridges to Lifelong Learning*, Paris.

OECD (2006), *Live Longer, Work Longer*, Paris.

OECD (2004), *Employment Outlook*, Paris.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ Department XIV, ‘Local Development, Training and Labour Policies’-

⁽⁸⁶⁾ They must be authorised by the Ministry of Labour.

Cyprus

1 Introduction

The facilities for and extent of involvement in LLL in the Republic of Cyprus (Cyprus) are issues that have been identified in successive Lisbon strategy documents, beginning with the *National Lisbon Programme of the Republic of Cyprus* in October 2005. In it (section 4.3.4, p. 59), the intention to develop a strategy 'by the end of 2006' was stated. Subsequent reference was made in the *National Reform Programme of Cyprus: Progress Report* (NRP), October 2006 (p. 96) and a preliminary LLL report was circulated in September 2006. In its assessment of the 2006 NRP, the Commission recommended that Cyprus 'enhance LLL, and increase employment and training opportunities for young people by accelerating the reforms of the vocational, education, training and apprenticeship system'. It was not until the *National LLL Strategy in the Republic of Cyprus 2007-2013 (Ethniki Stratigiki Dia Viou Mathisis Stin Kipriaki Dimokratia 2007-2013)* that a thorough treatment of the subject could be found in a government document.

The strategy reviews the available programmes, both of initial training for individuals who have only obtained the minimum compulsory education (to the age of 15), and of further training. It also reviews the facilities and institutions involved in these efforts and mentions two new institutions (a new National Committee on LLL and the Foundation for the Advancement and Management of the European Programme for LLL) that have recently been set up. There is thus a clearly improved momentum and commitment to LLL.

This improved momentum arises in part from the external leadership provided by the Commission but also because of changes in certain economic fundamentals. The extensive reliance on sun-and-sea tourism, requiring mostly unskilled labour, seems to be coming to an end. Revenue from this type of tourism has been stagnant and the industry's contribution to GDP has been declining sharply. Because of the high cost of domestic labour, the industry has been relying almost completely on imported unskilled labour, considerably cheaper than that provided by Cypriot workers. This labour substitution has ameliorated but not resolved the fundamental issues.

In light of these difficulties, new strategies have emerged. They attempt to build up a high value-added service sector (educational, research, medical rehabilitation and business consulting services) as well as to diversify the tourism sector towards more complex products (e.g. conference, cultural, sport and agro tourism). In this context of a moribund tourist sector, rising domestic labour costs and restructuring, unemployment has been increasing (from 3.8% during 1995-2004, to 5.3% in 2005, 4.5% in 2006 and an expected 4.3% in 2007), particularly among women (in 2006, the unemployment rate of men was 3.9%, while for women it was 5.4%), the young people (in

2006, the unemployment rate of young men was 8.9% and of young women was 11.1%) and those previously employed in the hospitality industry (this sector is one where registered unemployment has not declined since 2005). Given this higher than average unemployment, skill adjustments and upgrading are more necessary than in the past.

2 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

It is firstly important to review the educational context within which the LLL infrastructure is placed.

Education in Cyprus begins with pre-primary and primary schooling (to the age of 12), followed by attendance at a Gymnasium (to the age of 15). An evening Gymnasium helps individuals later in life to complete the compulsory portion of education. Compulsory schooling ends at this point and one could argue that LLL programmes (initial and continuing) consist of anything that follows from this point on.

Most pupils attend general education at a Lyceum (to the age of 18) and receive the Apolitirion (the graduating certificate) with the aim of continuing studies to the tertiary stage. Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE) is available in Technical Schools as an alternative to general education, although, in principle, these schools also provide the possibility of gaining the same graduating certificate (the Apolitirion) as in general schooling. An Apprenticeship programme offers school 'dropouts' aged 15-17 (a term used by the Press and Information Office, Republic of Cyprus, 2005) the opportunity to receive on-the-job training in industry on a day release basis.⁸⁷

Further LLL opportunities consist of programmes that follow the main educational options listed above. Technical Schools and the Evening Technical School that operates in Nicosia offer a number of afternoon and evening sessions that lead to the Apolitirion. Technical Schools also offer various Vocational Education and Training programmes and also prepare students for a variety of examinations required by various bodies. Centres for Further Education (Epimorfotika Kentra) offer a variety of courses in computing, languages, various skills and general interests but also organise free courses for some disabled or disadvantaged groups. The Cyprus Institute of Education (Pedagogiko Institutouto Kiprou or PIK) provides further training to teachers. The Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA) runs a multitude of programmes in a variety of locations,

⁽⁸⁷⁾ The current Apprenticeship System has failed to attract the interest of young men and women. The 2007 NRP (p. 106) refers to plans to establish a 'New Modern Apprenticeship' that will upgrade and replace the existing, largely unsuccessful system.

including individual businesses. The HRDA also provides training programmes for new tertiary education graduates, women and the unemployed people with the view to facilitating their entry into the labour market. With the current expansion of the University of Cyprus (it will be increasing its student body from 5,000 to 7,000 students over the next few years), the operation of the new Technical University of Cyprus and the Open University, and the upgrading of private colleges to universities, the tertiary education landscape has changed dramatically and should offer more LLL opportunities at the top end of the educational ladder. These opportunities will cater not only to traditional students who carry on to tertiary education from high school but also to returning, more mature, students. In the context of the planned restructuring of the economy, these LLL opportunities should be very valuable.

Data available in the LLL national strategy provide a sense of the relative magnitude of the issues involved. Expenditure on education in 2005 and 2006 were in the region of 7% of GDP. During the 2004/5 school year, 57,575 pupils were enrolled in primary schooling, 51,353 pupils were enrolled in general education in Lyceums and 4,370 were enrolled in STVE. In addition, 809 students were enrolled in evening Gymnasiums, 1,349 students in the afternoon and evening programmes of Technical Schools and 473 pupils in the Apprenticeship programme.⁸⁸ In the 2004/5 academic year, 15,051 students were enrolled in programmes of tertiary education in Cyprus, while 19,011 were studying abroad. In 2005, 80.7% of the individuals aged 20-24 had completed at least secondary schooling (compared to the EU average of 77.3%). Of the individuals aged 30-64 in 2004, 26.4% had a tertiary education qualification (the EU average was 19.6%).⁸⁹ During the academic year 2004/5, 63% of graduates from secondary schooling went on to tertiary education. The percentage receiving their tertiary education in Cyprus increased by four percentage points (from 39.9%) since 2000/1 and is likely to increase further in the years ahead, given the expansion of the tertiary education sector.

In 2005, approximately 14% of teachers took part in training programmes offered by the PIK, while the HRDA programmes involved 53,326 individuals, or 15.2% of the labour force.

Of the individuals aged 25-64 in 2000, 3.7% took part in LLL programmes. This percentage increased to 5.6% in 2005. This increase may reflect the increased needs discussed earlier. The figure for 2005 is well below the EU average of 11%. An open issue is whether the higher participation rate in the EU reflects greater opportunities for LLL (a supply force) or greater need because of the generally higher unemployment prevailing in the EU (a demand force). Therefore it is important to explore the supply side and the adequacy of the LLL infrastructure.

3 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

It might be argued that, despite the lower than EU participation rates in LLL, the existing LLL infrastructure in Cyprus is adequate. After all, employment rates for subgroups of interest are near, or exceed, the Lisbon targets and unemployment rates for all groups are considerably lower than those prevailing in the EU. Such an argument would be strengthened by noting the preference, in Cyprus, for general training that leads to some sort of tertiary education qualification (preferably a university degree). Graduates of these programmes are more likely to secure, after some initial period of search, long-lasting job positions and less likely to rely on LLL.

However, the duration of employment spells in many countries has been shrinking and the proposed restructuring of the Cyprus economy referred to above may create hitherto unknown turbulence.

Until recently, an impediment to adjustment at the highest skill levels was the enormous cost of securing further tertiary training, since this would have to be undertaken abroad. However, enormous advances made recently in the tertiary education sector have substantially reduced the cost of retraining. In 1991, there were no universities in Cyprus. Now, there are three public and three private universities offering a variety of programmes. Thus, this particular obstacle to LLL has been ameliorated.

4 Quality and impact of training

It is well-known in the academic literature that a programme evaluation is a very challenging exercise. A careful review of a retraining programme, for example, would need to establish whether it increased an individual's probability of finding a job relative to what would have happened without exposure to the training programme. The effect of programme would normally be calculated for an average individual, with other measurable effects holding for individuals with different characteristics. In addition, the cost of participating in the programme would need to be established and a cost-benefit analysis conducted. It is likely that this sort of review has never been carried out for any programme offered in Cyprus.

⁽⁸⁸⁾ The Cyprus Statistical Service suggests that 9.8% of pupils did not complete the second level of secondary schooling.

⁽⁸⁹⁾ In Cyprus, the number of young people who go on to tertiary education is extremely high, reflecting the perception that economic and social mobility are facilitated through tertiary education.

Since the HRDA is one of the main players in the LLL area, it has felt the need to conduct an evaluation of its own programmes. This evaluation, conducted by outside experts, was completed in 2006. Because this was an internal effort, its findings have not been made public and its precise nature is not known. It is known, however, that 18 programmes, carried out between 1998 and 2004, have been evaluated, both initial and continuing. A number of adjustments are being made as a result of this review.

5 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

Two significant developments that should be mentioned are efforts by the HRDA to map out the qualifications required for certain professions and a major push towards developing the tertiary education/research landscape. These are briefly discussed in turn.

During the early part of 2006, a pilot study was carried out by HRDA mapping out the qualifications for five occupations (a waiter, cook, receptionist, sales person and construction worker). This was done extremely thoroughly. For instance, the manual for a construction worker is 128 pages long (available on the HRDA website, <http://www.hrdauth.org.cy/>). Plans are in place to extend this work, in a second phase, to twenty further occupations with co-financing by the ESF. The programme is aimed at employed Cypriot workers whose employers are willing to cooperate in the examination procedure. This project is important for several reasons. First, the work that has been done so far raises the standard of performance expected of the individuals who choose to follow these professions. Second, the mapping out of the required skills has the effect of increasing the profile of the particular occupation in society at large; the lack of social status is one of the reasons why young adults are disinclined to take up these professions. Third, this is the first step towards setting up EU-wide standards that would then have the effect of enhancing mobility and helping to complete the internal market.

As noted earlier, the tertiary education/research sector is undergoing major development. In addition to the University of Cyprus, which took in its first students in 1992/1993 and is planning further expansion in its range of programmes and student numbers, the Technical University of Cyprus and the Open University have just begun operating. Moreover, three pre-existing private colleges have just been given the status of university. A high-level research institute, the Cyprus Institute, has started operating with two new research centres focusing

on energy, water and the environment, and archaeology and technology. The Cyprus International Institute, focusing on epidemiological themes, has also been in operation for a few years. These efforts are helping to create a research culture, attracting outside funding and substituting the more expensive training previously obtained abroad with domestic university training. While mostly focussed on initial training, these institutions also provide LLL opportunities which will help the restructuring process mentioned above. Further development is needed in relation to the complementary Research Promotion Foundation (Idrima Proothisis Erevnas) to implement internationally prevailing protocols for assessing research proposals and institute a supervisory body, consisting of internationally acclaimed scientists, to guide the award of substantial research funds.

6 Bibliography

Commission of the European Communities, *Council Recommendations, Cyprus*, Brussels, 12.12.2006.

Ethniki Stratigiki Dia Viou Mathisis Stin Kipriaki Dimokratia 2007-2013 (National Strategy for Lifelong Learning in the Republic of Cyprus 2007-2013), circulated on 06 03 2007.

Statigikos Sxediasmos Gia Tin Pedia (Strategic Planning for Education), Ministry of Education and Culture, September 2007.

National Lisbon Programme of the Republic of Cyprus, Ministry of Finance, October 2005.

National Reform Programme of Cyprus: Progress Report, Ministry of Finance, October 2006.

National Reform Programme of Cyprus: Progress Report, Planning Bureau, October 2007.

Latvia

1 Trends in the participation of adults in lifelong learning

There are two sources of information on lifelong learning (LLL) in Latvia, namely, the non-governmental organisation the Latvian Adult Education Association (LAEA) (in Latvian – Latvijas Pieaugušo izglītības apvienība) which reports on adult involvement in training provided by the LAEA and its partner organisations (in total 75, in all regions in Latvia), and, the Eurostat.

According to LAEA, in 2005, more than 50,000 adults were involved in training at LAEA related institutions but statistics are not yet available for 2006⁹⁰. According to the LAEA the number of adults involved in training has grown substantially over recent years as “people themselves have understood that education is important issue in relation to their competitiveness in labour market”⁹¹.

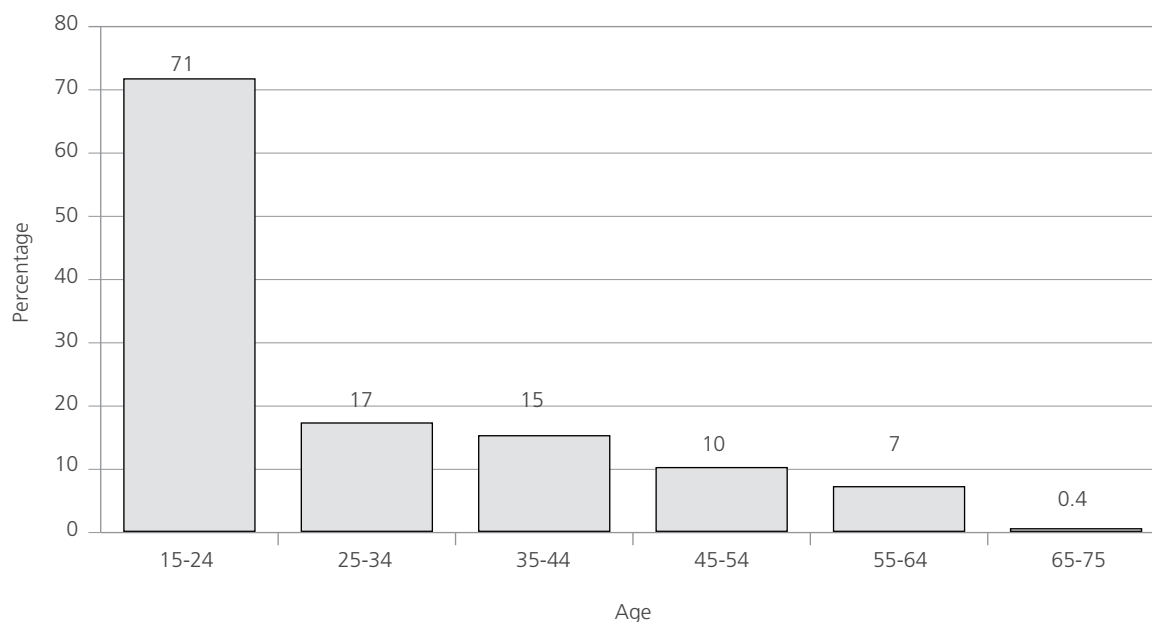
At the same time the Eurostat data shows no clear trend in adult involvement in education and training – if anything, and in fact the latest figures show a decline in the rates for both men and women (see Table 1). In terms of gender, the participation of Latvian women in LLL is rather close to the EU-27 average (10.4% in both 2005 and 2006) but the participation of Latvian men is significantly below the EU-27 average (between 8.6% and 8.9% over the last three years)

Year	Total	Females	Males
2002	7.3	9.2	5.1
2003	7.8	10.0	5.4
2004	8.4	10.8	5.7
2005	7.9	10.6	5.0
2006	6.9	9.3	4.1

Source: Eurostat

According to the Ministry of Education and Science (MES), the decline in participation in education and training can be explained by the high levels of migration for work abroad⁹³.

Figure 1: Involvement in training by age group (at the time of survey February/March 2006)
Are you involved in training? What is your age?



Total number of respondents, n=4012

Source: “Availability of Lifelong Learning and Education Opportunities in Latvia” (2007),

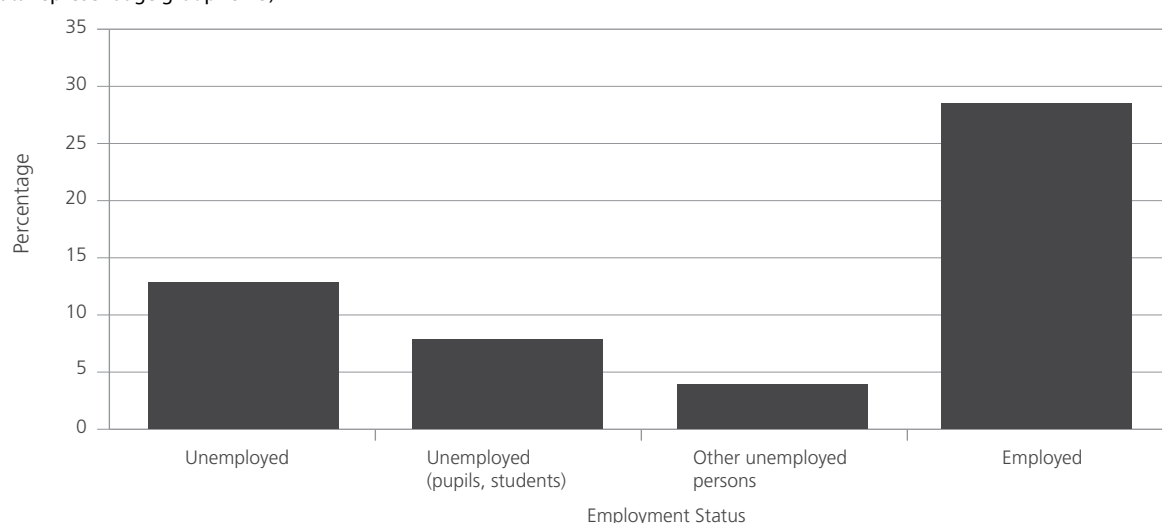
⁽⁹⁰⁾ Personal Communication, 16 November 2007.

⁽⁹¹⁾ Ibid.

⁽⁹²⁾ Defined as % of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training in the four weeks prior to the survey.

⁽⁹³⁾ Personal Communication, MES, 23 November 2007.

Figure 2: Involvement in training and employment status
(The data represent age group 15-75)



Total number of respondents, n=4012

Source: "Availability of Lifelong Learning and Education Opportunities in Latvia" (2007), p. 43

A major data source for LLL in Latvia is the first survey on *Availability of Lifelong Learning and Education Opportunities in Latvia* ("Mūžizglītības pieejamība un iespējas izglīties Latvijā"), published in 2007 by the LAEA. The following data represent some of its findings.

Table 2: Involvement in training and education level
(the data represent age group 15-75):
Are you involved in training?

Obtained level of education	Number of respondents, %	
	Is involved in education/training	Is not involved in education/training
Unfinished primary education	63	37
Primary education	40	60
Professional education without secondary education	11	89
Secondary special or professional education	9	91
General secondary education	18	82
Unfinished higher education	56	44
Highest education	16	84

Total number of respondents, n=4012

Source: "Availability of Lifelong Learning and Education Opportunities in Latvia" (2007), p. 36

Figure 1 shows that the rate of participation in training declines with age and Figure 2 demonstrates that the employed are proportionately more active in participation in training than the unemployed. Moreover, Table 2 suggests that people with some kind of unfinished education are more likely to be involved in training.

Regrettably, the survey "Availability of Lifelong Learning and Education Opportunities in Latvia" (2007) does not provide a gender perspective with regard to participation in training, thus it is not possible to compare female and male involvement in education and training activities. However, it is suggested in the Life Long Learning Strategy for 2007-2013 ("Mūžizglītības politikas pamatnostādnes 2007-2013 gadam") that in Latvia there is a danger in professional segregation according to gender. On page 11 it is stated "Data of MES reports on 2005 evidence that women more often want to acquire the arts and art professional education programmes (73% of students in these areas are women), social sciences, business sciences and the law (77% of students are women) as well as the health care and social welfare programmes (where 93% of students are women). On the other hand men choose to study engineering, productive industry and construction (87% of students are men), also technologies, natural sciences and mathematics (where 85% of students are men). Such segregation of education and later employment sectors according to gender can imply an inelastic labour force and impact negatively on the situation of women, as the sectors that women choose to study are lower paid."⁹⁴

However, Eurostat data for 2006 report a LLL rate of 9.3% for women and 4.1% for men. the fact that there are two times more women involved in education and training activities than men is also reflected in the training and education courses offered. According to LAEA statistics (provided by their partner organisations), the most popular training sectors for adults currently are education and culture, languages, and social care - all of which are sectors where mostly women are employed.

⁽⁹⁴⁾ Lifelong Learning Strategy for years 2007-2013, p.11.

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

The Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2007-2013 identifies the following groups in the population that are least likely to have access to training:

- Disabled persons. Due to the lack of physical infrastructure (e.g. high thresholds, uneven surface), it is often difficult to involve disabled persons in LLL in Latvia.⁹⁵
- Persons with a low level of formal education. People above age of 18 years face difficulties to acquire basic education. In Latvia there are only 35 schools with evening classes, and there are no alternatives for continuing education.⁹⁶
- Persons in prison. There is insufficient availability of training and education in prisons.⁹⁷
- People in remote regions. Low levels of mobility together with an underdeveloped transportation system creates obstacles for LLL in less developed regions, especially for those living in the countryside, working at home and economically inactive people.⁹⁸

Additionally, the LAEA pointed out that women returning after maternity leave face particular difficulties in participating in education and training because of a lack of childcare facilities⁹⁹. The MES emphasised difficulties related to the use of modern technologies (computer based training) in education and training, which excludes from training options those people who are not acquainted with them (usually, older people).¹⁰⁰

Still as the survey on *Availability of Lifelong Learning and Education Opportunities in Latvia* (2007) illustrates, most of the respondents regard education and training easy accessible. The most easily accessible was personal education and training (51%), while most inaccessible were the highest level of education (42%) and job related training (41%).¹⁰¹ There are differences

between employed and unemployed: unemployed see access to training as more difficult in comparison to the employed.¹⁰²

For respondents who have not been involved in education/training activities in the previous three years the main reason given (66%) was that it was not necessary. Lack of time, money and interest were the next most frequently cited reasons.

Is the training provided relevant for adults to progress in the labour market?

It is difficult to estimate whether the training provided has been relevant for adults to progress in the labour market, as there are no overall evaluation programmes/research on formal and informal training and education. Recently, a new study *Compliance of Professional and Higher Education Programmes with the Requirements of Labour Market* (2007) has been carried out by the University of Latvia, financed by the ESF. Results of the study indicate that professional and higher education programmes are frequently considered by employers as non-compliant with the requirements of labour market because they offer insufficient training in the practical skills in the profession. According to employees the level of skills required at work exceeds skills acquired during learning. Only computer skills acquired in vocational secondary education exceed what is required in practice. The study also reveals that the professions with high unemployment rates have remained the same over the last three years, as is also the case for professions with low unemployment rates. The same is true regarding vacancies – there are professions with persistent shortages, and professions where vacancies are quickly filled. “This means that training of specialists and (or) their involvement in labour market is too slow and inefficient”¹⁰³. The research is critical of the current highly bureaucratic system of higher and professional education, and calls for need to integrate the paradigm of LLL into the whole system of education in Latvia.

Also, the Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2007-2013 recognises that adult education offers few education programmes that match labour market demands, and thus do not provide a stepping stone in career education.¹⁰⁴

Are there particular disincentives?

Fees represent a serious disincentive to participate in LLL.¹⁰⁵ The MES has set as one of its priorities the provision of free LLL opportunities for the most vulnerable groups who cannot pay for education courses themselves.

⁽⁹⁵⁾ Lifelong Learning Strategy for years 2007-2013, p. 12.

⁽⁹⁶⁾ Ibid.

⁽⁹⁷⁾ Ibid, p. 12

⁽⁹⁸⁾ Ibid, p. 12

⁽⁹⁹⁾ Personal Communication, LAEA, 16 November 2007.

⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Personal Communication, MES, 23 November 2007.

⁽¹⁰¹⁾ *Availability of Lifelong Learning and Education Opportunities in Latvia* (2007), p. 57.

⁽¹⁰²⁾ Ibid, p. 57.

⁽¹⁰³⁾ *Compliance of Professional and Higher Education Programmes with the Requirements of Labour Market* (2007), p. 17

⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Lifelong Learning strategy for years 2007-2013, p.14.

⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Personal Communication, LAEA, 16 November 2007.

Additionally, enterprises are unwilling to invest in their workers education and training. This is explained as a consequence of the current labour market situation in Latvia, which is characterised by high rates of labour turnover, thereby creating a disincentive for employers to invest in the education and training of their workers¹⁰⁶.

3 Quality and impact of training

The LAEA has argued that it is difficult to provide sustainable quality in training with only project-based financing as provided by the ESF. Programme based financing from the state would ensure sustainability and would enhance long-term planning for the LAEA and other organisations working in LLL.

Further, the LAEA also argued that the ESF could indicate more precisely and in more detail the fields of education that should be supported. Otherwise, the term LLL is too broad and all-embracing, frequently leading to development of such training and education programmes that are not consistent with labour market needs¹⁰⁷.

According to the MES, a major flaw with regard to quality and impact of training is the lack of a coordination system. At present, in Latvia no less than nine ministries as well as local authorities and social partners are involved in LLL. It is planned to assign coordinators at regional levels whose task would be to determine labour market needs for training and education, and match those needs with LLL opportunity offers¹⁰⁸.

4 National strategy

The Lifelong Learning Strategy for 2007-2013 (*Muzizglitības politikas pamatnostādnes 2007-2013 gadam*) was finally approved by Cabinet of Ministers on 23 February 2007 after long development process. LLL as a concept and priority appears also in all the most important policy documents: the Latvian National Development Plan 2007 to 2013, Latvian National Lisbon Programme 2005 to 2008 as well as Education Development Strategy 2007 to 2013 and indirectly also already in National Innovation Programme 2003 to 2006. The LLL Strategy fills the gap summarising the aims and priorities, policy targets and indicators of achievement. The Strategy is new and a draft action plan for 2007 to 2010 was published in July 2007 which sets out timelines and financing. In terms of the legal framework, there is still work to do as current Latvian legislation does not accredit informal education, which is a substantial part of LLL.¹⁰⁹

There are nine Ministries and also non-governmental sector representatives involved in development of LLL strategies and action plans. As indicated in the Lifelong Learning Strategy for years 2007-2013, the cooperation between different ministries, NGOs and social partners is weak and there is lack of a normative basis and financing mechanisms.¹¹⁰ Until now, there were difficulties in conceptualising this new term as different Ministries and organisations all have a different understanding and definition of LLL¹¹¹. Currently, the system of LLL in Latvia has five regional plans (4 major regions and the city of Riga) and has a decentralised coordination approach for LLL in each of the regions. Together with establishing a new LLL system, it is planned also improve the mechanisms for collecting statistics on the participation of adults in training and education.

To date, the ESF has played major role in achieving training objectives for adults, providing LVL 825,000 (about EUR 1.2 million) of funding over the period 2004- 2006, which has been distributed to the five regions¹¹². For the next planning period it is expected to channel nearly EUR 87 million to LLL policy implementation. The major aims are:

- to ensure the availability of lifelong learning without discrimination;
- to provide high quality education for adults;
- to form an administration system for the coordination of laws and regulations and the efficient use of resources.

In the future, it is expected to change from the current situation where a major part of the ESF funding has been channelled to increase the level of qualifications of the unemployed, to improving the skills and qualification levels of low-skilled employed people.

5 Bibliography

Ministry of Education and Science *Life Long Learning strategy for 2007-2013*, Riga, 2007.

Latvian Adult Education Association *Availability of Lifelong Learning and Education Opportunities in Latvia*, 2007.

University of Latvia *Compliance of Professional and Higher Education Programmes with the Requirements of Labour Market*, 2007.

National Report *Education and Training 2010*, Riga, 2007.

Assessment of National Report *Education and Training 2010* (BICEPS), Riga, 2007.

⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Lifelong Learning strategy for years 2007-2013, p.13

⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Personal Communication, LAEA, 16 November 2007.

⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Personal Communication, MES, 23 November 2007.

⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Ibid.

⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Lifelong Learning strategy for years 2007-2013, p.15.

⁽¹¹¹⁾ Personal Communication, MES, 23 November 2007.

⁽¹¹²⁾ Ibid.

Lithuania

1 Trends in the participation of adults in lifelong learning

At the end of 2005, the Minister of Education and Science approved national indicators for monitoring the field of education, some of which related to lifelong learning (especially, the proportion of learners taking part in training over the last four weeks). In 2004–2006, the Ministry published four representative studies on learning trends and indicators. A study carried out in 2004 – *Developing adult continuous training opportunities in the context of implementation of the lifelong learning strategy*¹¹³ – presented important findings on lifelong learning, reflecting long-term trends. According to a representative survey of the Lithuanian population, during a year prior to the survey less than one fifth of the population aged 18-74 participated in various learning activities. Individuals aged 18-34 accounted for more than a half of all learners. Learning frequency amongst women was somewhat higher. Older respondents of working age (45-54) were more passive participants in learning. Learning was found to be dependant on the education level of respondents: the higher was their education level, the higher was the learning frequency. Participation in learning was higher amongst employed respondents, compared to unemployed. Learning frequency was higher in respondents from bigger cities and towns.¹¹⁴

A study carried out in 2004 – *Learning needs of rural and small settlement (30,000 population or less) residents*¹¹⁵ – showcased the non-formal learning needs amongst the population (see Table 1). In most cases, individuals above 45 lacked knowledge across all areas of the analysis.

Table 1: Respondents' answers to the question "What subjects would you like to study or improve knowledge in?" (Respondents could choose more than one answer)	
Subjects	Proportion of respondents
Foreign languages	34.9
Unwilling to learn at all	32.7
Computer literacy	30.0
Willing to acquire professions demanded on the labour market	15.3
Basics of law, its application in everyday life	14.9
Business organisation and management	14.8
Psychology	13.3
Accounting	7.0
Traditional crafts	5.1
Development of projects to apply for support	4.3
Literature, arts	2.7
N/R	0.5

Source: *Learning needs of rural and small settlements (30 000 population or less) residents, 2004*

Recent analysis of adult education shows that its needs are mainly determined by labour market demands, i.e., improvement of professional qualifications, re-skilling and need for adaptation. This is firstly evidenced by a bigger proportion of financial resources assigned to adult education (currently, mostly through the mechanisms of Structural Funds). Adult education is seen as one of the most important tools for better adaptation and active participation in the labour market.

The most recent findings from Lithuanian Statistics, based on a statistical survey carried out in 2006, show that 55% of individuals aged 25–64 were studying in educational establishments, attending courses and seminars organised by various training providers or studied autonomously in 2006, i.e., twice as many than three years ago (28% in 2003; EU average was 42% in 2003). There were more women learners than men learners (58% and 52%, respectively), and more urban learners than rural ones (61% and 42%, respectively). In addition, Lithuania has been lagging quite significantly behind the average in the EU in the proportion of learners participating in learning over the last four weeks (4.9% in Lithuania, compared to 9.6% in EU-27).

⁽¹¹³⁾ http://www.smm.lt/svietimo_bukle/docs/suaugusiuju_testinio_mokymo_ataskaita.doc

⁽¹¹⁴⁾ In the context of the study, the concept of adult learning encompassed learning to improve professional qualifications, attending various non-formal self-guided courses (e.g., artistic, foreign languages, computer literacy courses) and studying at adult comprehensive schools, vocational higher schools, colleges and universities after some break, for example, in order to obtain secondary education, new profession, or re-skilling at correspondence, evening schools.

⁽¹¹⁵⁾ http://www.smm.lt/svietimo_bukle/docs/050221_kaim_ataskaita.doc

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

Studies show that adults identify work overload, health problems, and the expense of training to be the main reasons and obstacles preventing them from participation in LLL. Many individuals, depending on their age, judge negatively their learning opportunities. For example, in 2005 more than a half of the population unwilling to participate in learning said that *it is too late for them to learn*.

Funding problems are foremost amongst the problems faced by providers of adult learning, as they lack funds for modern technical facilities, premises, and qualified experts. Other important problems are the lack of motivation and unequal readiness of participants, as well as insufficient experience in the implementation of projects with foreign partners. More than one third of the respondents mentioned that the non-recognition of non-formal education and some formal education certificates is also an issue.

Among other obstacles is the insufficient understanding of learning importance by government officials and private employers, as well as their unwillingness to help to improve employees' qualifications.

As funding for education and training has improved, insufficient ability to use financial resources is now causing more concerns. This is particularly relevant at the regional level. For example, a study carried out in 2006 *Situation of non-formal adult education organisation in municipalities*¹¹⁶ showed that most municipalities lack human resources, senior education managers, well-defined LLL strategies, and understanding and support from local politicians.

All studies demonstrate that the absence of a system for official recognition of non-formal learning constitutes a major shortcoming in the organisation of non-formal adult education in Lithuania. Professional qualifications of adults acquired during professional activities or independent learning are not formally valued or recognised. This reduces learning attractiveness and competitiveness in the labour market. In addition, achievements of learners are undervalued and inadequately recognised, thus reducing individuals' motivation to seek new competences in a non-formal way.

Key roles in the implementation of lifelong learning and adult education policy are played by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (MSSL). There are many institutions established at various ministries which have some influence in the development of adult education in the country, such as Lithuanian Adult Education and Information Centre, Centre of Vocational Training Methodology, Teacher Professional Development Centre, Teachers Competence Centre, Council for Non-formal Adult Education, Council for Vocational Training functioning at the Ministry of Education and Science and others. Central co-ordination of activities of such institutions is complicated by the lack of inter-departmental working in Lithuania.

In most cases, the education opportunities are available for socially disadvantaged groups. Lithuania has developed several targeted programmes, such as the Programme for Social Adaptation of Prisoners and Ex-convicts for 2004 – 2007, National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2004-2006, Programme for Control and Prevention of Human Trafficking and Prostitution, National Programme for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Drug Control for 2004-2007, National Programme for Social Integration of the Disabled for 2003-2012, National Programme for Child Day Centres for 2005-2007, Programme for Expansion of Social Service Infrastructure for 2004-2006 and others.

In Lithuania there are several Third Age Universities aimed at ensuring better social integration of older people, promoting their productive life, supporting workability, physical activities, and raising knowledge levels. However, learning of older students is affected by a comparatively lower demand for them on the labour market, often lower income, and lower learning motivation. In general, satisfaction of the learning needs of older people is still at the stage of diagnosis and planning.

Acquisition and improvement of qualifications by early drop-outs from the formal education system is problematic. Lithuanian labour market vocational training is intended for people with at least basic (10 years) or secondary (12 years) education. Individuals without basic education are excluded, as they must first obtain basic education and participate in vocational training. Currently, programme modules are being developed to enable individuals without basic education to acquire minimal qualifications.

⁽¹¹⁶⁾ www.lssic.lt

3 Quality and impact of training

Development of adult education has been recently facing new challenges. For example, the growing need for education quality is concurrently increasing the need to extend its supply (in formal and, first of all, in non-formal adult education). One of the most important positive financial factors is increasing funding for adult education from EU Structural Funds. This requires adequate education policy and management. Some studies showed that one of the most important and problematic factors in adult education development is the quality of adult education organisation at the municipal level.

In the environment of regularly increasing scope and importance of non-formal adult education, the absence of adequate information database constitutes one of the major problems. In 2006, the Ministry of Education and Science together with other institutions initiated the formation of an appropriate register (of non-formal qualification programmes). It is very important that this register is properly functioning and convenient to use.

Studies assessing various adult training initiatives are still absent in Lithuania, and it is difficult to speak objectively on the quality of training. In studies carried out in 2006, the absolute majority of adult residents (98%) positively saw the knowledge acquired and hoped to apply it in practice. Most respondents (nearly 80%) were of the opinion that continuous improvement of knowledge and skill were not vital in order to maintain a job, but did matter when seeking a successful personal career.

4 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

After restitution of the independence, adult education in Lithuania underwent a number of changes, such as drafting of numerous necessary regulatory acts, establishment of new and modern adult education institutions, introduction of innovative learning methods, activation of NGOs, and engagement in joint European projects. It remains important to better define achieved and pending outcomes, co-ordinate them at the inter-departmental level, and emphasise more widely strategic activity tasks in education community and among politicians. Special surveys are also necessary to better identify the needs of vulnerable groups. Ignoring such groups (e.g. rural residents, prisoners) can further threaten social cohesion, which may eventually become even more difficult to overcome in the context of knowledge society.

Presently, the strategy of LLL is being updated in Lithuania. This strategy is aimed at implementing provisions of the National Education Strategy for 2003–2012, Programme for the Implementation of the Provisions of the National Education Strategy for 2003–2012, Law on Non-formal Adult Education, Law on Vocational Education and Training, Law on Higher Education, Communication from the Commission - Adult learning: It is never too late to learn, 23 October 2006, Communication from the Commission - Action Plan on Adult learning - It is always a good time to learn, 27 September 2007, and other strategies.

At present, the legal basis of vocational training is also being updated in Lithuania. The Law Amending the Law on Vocational Education and Training of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted to initiate reforms in the vocational training and labour market training systems, optimise vocational training management system, and develop the national qualification system. In addition, the law introduced several new forms of organising vocational training (e.g. apprenticeship), possibilities to arrange vocational training in companies, and increased involvement of the social partners in vocational training processes.

Development of vocational guidance system is also in progress, and expected to provide assistance to individuals interested in training and employment opportunities. As these services are under-developed, just a small number of young people use them before choosing their profession. Labour market and youth out-of-school vocational information and counselling services are available at the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority and the Lithuania Labour Exchange. The implementation of the Plan for the Implementation of the Vocational Guidance Strategy (2003) is aimed at increasing accessibility of these services, enlarging the network of vocational information and counselling organisations and their units or information terminals, increasing variety and quality of services, training of more high-quality experts in vocational information and counselling, and advisors for continuous learning. Modern vocational information and counselling centres are operating only in a small number of counties. Information and counselling available at 46 territorial labour exchanges is more oriented towards job search and labour market training. Establishment of vocational guidance centres is envisaged in the centres of counties within currently functioning territorial labour market training and counselling authorities. In future, vocational guidance centres could be established in each municipality. Vocational guidance centres are also established at schools aimed at building and developing a network of all-embracing career counselling and vocational guidance services.

In addition, the national qualification system is in progress. This system is envisaged to encompass, inter alia, the validation of acquired competences, credit accumulation system to strengthen cohesion among qualifications acquired at different education levels and to eliminate some obstacles restricting or impairing lifelong learning. The Law Amending the Law on Vocational Education and Training provided the legal

base for the qualification system and the establishment of qualification service. Adoption of the Law on Qualifications is envisaged in 2008. This law will contribute to the management of the qualification system. It will define the role of different institutions in the management of qualifications and the institution of qualification administration in order to ensure conformity of qualifications to economic needs, transparency and comparability of qualifications, continuity of training, as well as professional and territorial mobility.

The legal basis was improved to create conditions for 'the second choice' for early drop-outs from education system. In 2005 the Minister of Education and Science passed an order whereby earlier acquired education was equated to basic education. In 2007, the description of procedures for modular, correspondent and autonomous learning was updated to create conditions for adult students to choose appropriate learning methods. Making earlier-acquired education equal to basic education and establishing procedures for flexible forms of learning created more favourable conditions to seek secondary education.

Structural Funds still remain to be one of the major funding sources of LLL services. One of the main priorities in the use of Structural Funds is improvement of the accessibility and quality of education services. Funds have been assigned to projects aimed at modernising the infrastructure of institutions for education, vocational training and science as well as for the development of lifelong learning. These funds enabled initiation of the national qualification system responsive to the labour market needs, development of vocational training standards, and promoting young people to remain in the education system and acquire professional qualifications as well as the organisation of various training for adults.

Tax-exempt income of permanent Lithuanian residents is subject to an increase. In accordance with the amendments to the Law on Income Tax of Individuals, with effect from January 2008, such income may be reduced with the costs for vocational training or studies (graduates from higher education and/or with certain qualifications; also, doctoral studies and postgraduate art studies), incurred by permanent Lithuanian residents over the tax period. Where payment for vocational training or studies is made from borrowed funds (by taking loans for this purpose from lending agencies), income may be reduced with a proportion of the loan repaid over a taxable period. When learning or studying permanent Lithuanian residents are not income tax payers or are unable to exercise the right to reduce income with expenses for vocational training or studies, such expenses may be deducted from income of their parents (adoptive parents) or guardians, brothers, sisters and/or spouses (co-habitees).

5 Bibliography

Provisions of the National Education Strategies for 2003–2012 *Official Gazette* No. 71-3216, 2003.

Programme for the Implementation of the Provisions of the National Education Strategy for 2003–2012 *Official Gazette* No. 12-391, 2005.

Law on Non-formal Adult Education *Official Gazette* No. 66-1909, 1998.

Law on Vocational Education and Training *Official Gazette* No. 98-2478, 1997; No. 43-1627, 2007.

Law on Higher Education *Official Gazette* No. 27-715, 2000, No. 47-2058, 2003.

Communication from the Commission - *Adult learning: It is never too late to learn*, 23 October 2006 (Brussels, 23.10.2006, COM (2006)614).

Communication from the Commission - *Action Plan on Adult learning - It is always a good time to learn*, 27 September 2007 (Brussels, COM (2007) 558).

Adult education and continuous training, Vilnius, 2005

Information from the Ministry of Education and Science www.smm.lt

Information from the Ministry of Social Security and Labour www.socmin.lt

Strategy for ensuring lifelong learning, Education Development Centre, Vilnius, 2004.

Study: *Developing adult continuous training opportunities in the context of implementation of the lifelong learning strategy*, http://www.smm.lt/svietimo_bukle/docs/suaugusiujutestinio_mokymo_ataskaita.doc

Study: *Learning needs of rural and small settlement 30 000 population or less residents*, http://www.smm.lt/svietimo_bukle/docs/050221_kaim_ataskaita.doc

Study: *Situation of non-formal adult education: attitude of residents and employers towards non-formal adult education*, http://www.smm.lt/svietimo_bukle/docs/neform_suaugsviet_bukl_ataskaita.doc

Study: *Situation of non-formal adult education organised in municipalities* www.lssic.lt

Study: *Adult learning in Lithuania: scope, needs and supply*, http://www.smm.lt/svietimo_bukle/docs/pr_analize/suaugusiujumokymasis.pdf

Luxembourg

1 Trends and participation of adults in lifelong learning

1.1 Introduction

This document draws on several sources of data:

- Eurostat, *EU Labour Force Survey* (LFS), referring to persons aged between 25 and 64 who replied that they had undergone training **in the four weeks preceding the survey**, including any form of training or education.¹¹⁷
- The *ad hoc* questionnaire of the 2003 Labour Force Survey. The survey refers to persons aged between 25 and 64 who have taken part in at least one educational, training or learning activity in the **twelve months preceding the survey**.
- STATEC bulletin no. 12-2007, on *Continuing Training in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*,¹¹⁸ which is based on the 'Continual Vocational Training Survey' (CVTS3, 2005) of companies with fewer than 10 employees. This is the successor study to the surveys of 1993 and 1999.¹¹⁹
- The National Institute of Continuing Vocational Training (INFPC¹²⁰), in relation to amended law of 22 June 1999¹²¹ for the support and development of continuing vocational training. This law provides a state contribution towards company investment in CVT, on the basis of individual applications.
- The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, with regard to the Second Path to Qualification (Adult Training Service).¹²²

1.2 Trends and statistics

1.2.1 LFS

The LFS enables to follow trends in adult training from 1995 to 2006.

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
EU-27	/	/	/	/	/	7.1(a)	7.1(a)	7.2	8.5(b)	9.3	9.7	9.6
EU-25	/	/	/	/	/	7.5(a)	7.5(a)	7.6	9.0(b)	9.9	10.2	10.1
Males	3.5	3.9	3.6	5.4(b)	6.2	5.7	5.9	8.9	6.8(b)	9.5	8.5	7.6
Females	2.3	1.9	2.1	4.8(b)	4.4	3.9	4.7	6.4	6.1(b)	10.1	8.5	8.7
Total	2.9	2.9	2.8	5.1(b)	5.3	4.8	5.3	7.7	6.5(b)	9.8	8.5	8.2

(a) Estimated value

(b) Break in the statistical series

Source: Eurostat, LFS

There is a distinct increase in the proportion of adults taking part in training. However, since there have been two breaks in the statistical series, a direct interpretation of the change in the participation rate can be made only with very great care. Where the last three years are concerned, the Competitiveness Observatory notes that the indicator on LLL has fallen, from 9.8% in 2004 to 8.2% in 2006.¹²³ There was also a steady fall in the participation rate among men, whereas among women a slight rise of 0.2% is recorded in 2006.

The rate of participation of Luxemburgers in training and education in the four weeks preceding the survey is below the European average.

The EU Labour Force Survey was complemented in 2003 by an *ad hoc* module¹²⁴ on LLL.

⁽¹¹⁷⁾ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1090_30070682_1090_33076576&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Service Central des Statistiques et des Études Économiques (STATEC), *La formation professionnelle continue au Luxembourg*, Bulletin du Statec N°12-2007, <http://www.statec.lu>

⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Excluding the sectors of education, health, social services, domestic care and public administration.

⁽¹²⁰⁾ <http://www.infpc.lu>

⁽¹²¹⁾ Law of 22 June 1999 for the support and development of continuing vocational training. 'Mémorial A – N°92 du 14 juillet 1999' <http://www.legilux.public.lu>

⁽¹²²⁾ We shall present only data relating to the adult training service, so as to illustrate developments in this field. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training also publishes data on the continuing vocational training delivered by the Centre for Continuing Vocational Training, but we take the view that vocational training is sufficiently covered by the data of the Eurostat and CVTS3 surveys.

⁽¹²³⁾ Competitiveness Observatory, *Bilan Compétitivité 2007*, Ministry of the Economy and External Trade, Luxembourg, 2007.

⁽¹²⁴⁾ Eurostat, *Life Long Learning in Europe*, Statistics in Brief, Population and Social Conditions, 8/2005.

In Luxembourg, the situation was as follows in 2003.

• All Training Activities Combined

Table 2: Rate of participation in all types of learning, by age and sex (%)															
Age Group	25-34			35-44			45-54			55-64			Total		
Sex	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T
EU-25	50	51	50	45	45	45	40	41	40	28	31	30	41	43	42
LU	87	86	86	83	85	84	78	80	79	76	75	75	81	82	82

Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey ad hoc module on lifelong learning.
Target population: 25-64 age group

Taking all forms of training together, the rate of participation in Luxembourg was far higher than the average for the EU25 in 2003. There was, generally, little difference between the sexes, but there was a decrease in participation with advancing age.

Where the rate of non-participation in training is concerned, there is a wide gap between persons with low levels of qualifications (secondary schooling only) and those with a higher level (higher education).

Table 3: Non-participation in training (of all types) by level of education (%)		
	Low level of education	High level of education
EU-25	76	34
LU	34	5

Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey ad hoc module on life-long learning.
Target population: 25-64 age group

• Non-formal Education¹²⁵

Table 4: Rate of participation in formal learning by level of studies and employment status (%)						
	Level of Studies			Employment Status		
	High	Medium	Low	Employed	Unemployed	Inactive
EU-25	31	16	7	21	14	6
LU	36	16	5	20	20	6

Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey ad hoc 2003 module on life-long learning.
Target population: 25-64 age group

It is clear that employees with a higher level of education take part more in non-formal training (see table below). On the other hand, there is no difference between economically active persons and the unemployed. One unemployed person in five undertook non-formal learning in Luxembourg in 2003.

Table 5: Percentage of persons with high and low levels of studies who do not participate in formal learning.		
	Low level of education	High level of education
EU-25	94	68
LU	96	64

Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey ad hoc 2003 module on life-long learning.
Target population: 25-64 age group

There is a wide gap between those with low and those with high levels of education where non-participation in non-formal learning is concerned.

Table 6 shows that the most highly qualified employees participate more in non-formal training.

Table 6: Rate of participation in non-formal learning, by occupational category (%)				
	Highly qualified clerical workers	Poorly qualified clerical workers	Highly qualified manual workers	Poorly qualified manual workers
EU-25	30	19	12	10
LU	30	19	9	6

Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey ad hoc 2003 module on life-long learning.
Target population: 25-64 age group

• Informal Learning¹²⁶

Table 7: Rate of participation in informal learning by age group and level of studies (%)								
	Age group					Level of studies		
	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Total	High	Medium	Low
EU-25	38	34	31	25	33	55	34	18
LU	85	83	78	75	81	94	86	67

Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey ad hoc 2003 module on life-long learning.
Target population: 25-64 age group

A rate of participation in informal education is higher in Luxembourg than the EU25 average. Besides this positive finding for Luxembourg, it emerges that participation levels decrease in Luxembourg as a function of age and level of studies. Nevertheless, Eurostat highlighted the fact that rates in Luxembourg are above 50%.

1.2.2 The CVTS Study

In general, the number of companies involved in vocational training rose from 60.3% in 1993 to 71.8% in 2005 (71.3% in 1999). Where clerical staff in Luxembourg are concerned, 60% undertook training in 2005 (36% in 1999), which pushes Luxembourg to the head of the European league table in this area.

⁽¹²⁵⁾ Non-formal education covers all the types of teaching not originating in a programme of formal education (formal education means within schools or universities).

⁽¹²⁶⁾ Eurostat defines informal learning as follows: self-teaching which is not part of formal or non-formal education and training, and which is effected by various methods, e.g. by computer, from educational TV programmes etc.

Comparing the different economic sectors, it is the financial sector where most vocational training is undertaken and the building sector does the least training.

Where company size is concerned, the survey enables us to assert that small companies (10-19 persons) do the least training. In those companies 22% of the staff had undertaken training, which represents a rise of 11% over 1999. The figure was 40% for medium-sized companies (50-249 persons) and 73% for large companies.

Despite these encouraging figures, the most surprising finding of the survey is that training-time per person fell from 39.5 hours in 1999 to 33 hours in 2005.

Where gender is concerned, the survey showed that 34% of employees are women, as are 35% of those receiving training. In general, STATEC notes that, taking size and sector into account, there is no significant gender discrimination in respect of training.¹²⁷

Taking age as a criterion of analysis, the results show that companies with many young employees provide less training for their staff, as do those which have many employees aged over 54.¹²⁸

1.2.3 The National Institute of Continuing Vocational Training (INFPC)

The INFPC is the reference body, entrusted by the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training, to support companies that wish to receive state co-funding within the framework of the amended law of 22 June 1999. The assessment of the applications submitted by companies allows an analysis of public co-funding of continuing vocational training within companies. EUR 18,021,600 were spent on the 272 companies selected by INFPC in 2004, as opposed to EUR 15,557,000 on 228 companies in 2003. It is the financial sector which absorbs more than a third of the budget invested (35% for 63 companies in 2004).

Where numbers of participants are concerned, INFPC notes that, since 2001, the number of times a person receives training has risen, on average, from 2.4 in 2001 to 2.9 in 2004.

1.2.4 The Second Path to Qualification

The Second Path to Qualification is organised by the Adult Training Service [*Service de Formation des Adultes*, SFA] and enables all those who have left initial education to gain a diploma or a certificate of secondary education or to acquire basic literacy skills.

Table 8: People wishing to gain education		
	1999	2006
Secondary Education	80	134
Technical Secondary Education	330	582
Literacy Skills	55	176

Source: Adult Training Service

There has been a distinct rise in the number of persons wishing to gain a secondary-education or technical-secondary-education diploma.

2 Obstacles and problems preventing future participation in lifelong learning

Use of such sources enabled to obtain a first insight into the various constraints that individuals and companies may encounter with regard to lifelong learning.

- The Adult Training Service of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training identified the following problems: dissemination of information, lack of time amongst learners, childcare issues, and irregular working hours.¹²⁹
- CVTS 2005 study brought to light a general trend within companies to limit training to 2% of working hours for each employee. According to company representatives, it is heavy workloads, cited by 61% of companies, that are the main obstacle to training.
- From a series of qualitative interviews carried out by INFPC in 2004,¹³⁰ it emerges that:
 - **For decision-makers**, the main obstacles are money and time. Problems of staff numbers are also mentioned, together with loss of earnings for employees. In some companies, training can be done only after working hours and requires individuals to make a contribution to training costs. Other problems are staff motivation and the fear that employees will leave after receiving training.
 - **For individuals**, the barriers cited are time and motivation. Family constraints and place of residence were also mentioned, together with the attitude of certain decision-makers to continuing vocational training.

⁽¹²⁷⁾ STATEC, *La formation professionnelle continue au Luxembourg* [Continuing Vocational Training in Luxembourg], STATEC Bulletin no. 12-2007, <http://www.statec.lu>, p. 29.

⁽¹²⁸⁾ Ibid., p. 52.

⁽¹²⁹⁾ The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, *Rapport d'activité 2006*, p. 48.

⁽¹³⁰⁾ <http://www.lifelonglearning.lu/pages/PrivateTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=c5136362-c858-4d94-bbf1-f437e73da247>

3 Quality and impact of training

To address the issue of missing impact analysis, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training has announced the creation of a data-collection and analysis tool, 'Formastat', through which it will be possible to monitor the career development of those who have received vocational training.

Some considerations on the impact of vocational training may, nonetheless, be advanced at this stage:

- The interviews carried out by INFPC show that, for decision-makers, the updating of knowledge and skills is a key element in CVT, which is seen as an excellent management tool 'enabling staff to be rewarded and their careers to be managed, but also, and most importantly, staff involvement to be increased.'¹³¹ For individuals, on the other hand, CVT is seen, above all, as an opportunity for personal and occupational development and as a way of staving off unemployment.
- Taken from the CVTS survey, the following graph shows that measurement of the impact on productivity is the procedure used least by companies.

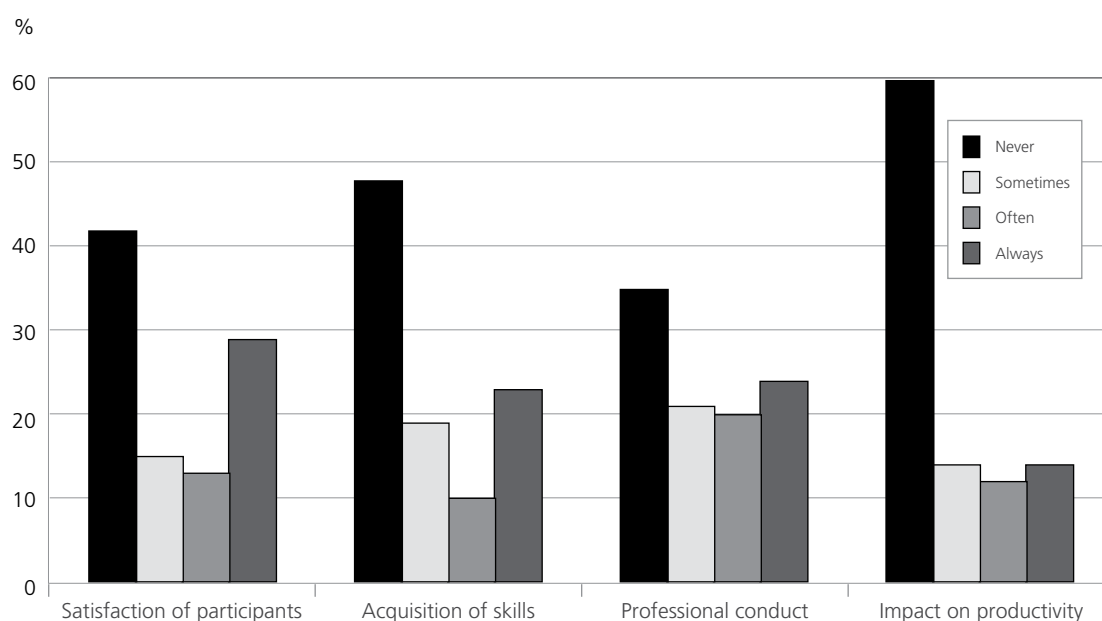
At a conference organised by INFPC in November 2006,¹³² the participants (employers, trainers, trade unions, ministries) proposed the idea of creating 'a training climate' in companies and increasing staff motivation, particularly by organising training during working hours.

Within the same framework, the role of the government communication *Mieux informer pour mieux impliquer* ['Inform Better to Involve Better'] should lead to increased awareness of current CVT issues amongst companies and individuals.

4 National strategies and measures highlighting promising practices

Luxembourg has had legislation promoting CVT since the late 1970s. But it was the European Commission's White Paper, '*Growth, Competitiveness and Employment: the Challenges and Ways Forward into the Twenty-First Century*' of December 1993 that triggered an increasing number of measures to promote CVT.¹³³

Graph 1: Proportion of Companies Assessing the Impact of CVT



Source: STATEC, CVTS3, STATEC Bulletin 12-2007

⁽¹³¹⁾ Ibid.

⁽¹³²⁾ <http://www.lifelonglearning.lu>

⁽¹³³⁾ Ibid.

4.1 National strategies and promising practices

The main elements of the current Luxembourg strategy are:

- Law of 12 February 1999 on the implementation of the National Action Plan for Employment.¹³⁴
- This framework law states that collective agreements have necessarily to contain provisions enshrining the outcome of collective bargaining on four subjects, including the training policy of the company, sector or branch.
- Law of 22 June 1999 for the support and development of continuing vocational training.¹³⁵ This concerns collective access to CVT through co-financing by the state of CVT activities within companies.
- Law of 12 August 2003 creating the University of Luxembourg.¹³⁶ Article 9 of this law provides for validation of on-the-job experience, which is part of a new configuration of lifelong learning, bringing complementarity between – and recognition of – the various types of training.
- Draft Law no. 5337 creating individual training leave and amending the amended law of 4 October 1973 on the establishment of educational leave.¹³⁷ This is a special form of leave designed to enable salaried workers, freelance workers and persons in the liberal professions to take part in courses and prepare for and sit examinations, to write dissertations or carry out any other work relating to an eligible form of training.
- The Grand-Ducal Regulation of March 30 2006 declaring generally obligatory an inter-professional social dialogue agreement on individual access to CVT made between the OGB-L¹³⁸ and LCGB¹³⁹ trade unions and the Union of Luxembourg Companies (UEL).¹⁴⁰ This concerns personal arrangements on working hours within the context of a regulation of flexible working hours and a legislative framework for unpaid leave.

- Draft Law no. 5622 reforming vocational training is conceived as part of a lifelong learning framework.¹⁴¹ Based on the acquisition of competencies, the reform sets in place a training system that structures the various types of training coherently and flexibly, while giving a new boost and an added dimension to alternating (or sandwich) training.

4.2 The actors in continuing vocational training

The following table provides a good illustration of the current situation in Luxembourg. It shows that the form and role of CVT and the new aims of CVT within the context of lifelong learning are defined within the framework of the social dialogue.

Table 9: The Actors in Continuing Vocational Training	
The Political Field of CVT – Where are decisions made?	
State/Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Partners • Employers' Professional Chambers • Employees' Professional Chambers
Institutional Ambit of CVT – Where is it implemented?	
Training Providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State, Communes • The training bodies of the Professional Chambers • Sectoral bodies • Mixed Providers • Private Providers 	Companies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Training • Application of the legislation on CVT
Beneficiaries of CVT – Who are the End-Clients?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Sector Employees • Public Service Employees • Non-salaried workers (freelance workers, professionals) • Jobseekers 	

Source: INFPC, <http://www.infpc.lu>

⁽¹³⁴⁾ Law of February 12 1999 on the implementation of the National Action Plan for Employment. Mémorial A – no. 12 of 23 February 1999.

<http://www.legilux.public.lu>

⁽¹³⁵⁾ The law of June 22 1999 for the support and development of continuing vocational training. Mémorial A – no. 92 of 14 July 1999.

<http://www.legilux.public.lu>

⁽¹³⁶⁾ Law of 12 August 2003 creating the University of Luxembourg. Mémorial A – no. 149 of 6 October 2003. <http://www.legilux.public.lu>

⁽¹³⁷⁾ Draft Law No. 5337 creating individual training leave and amending the amended law of 4 October 1973 on the establishment of educational leave. <http://www.chd.lu>

⁽¹³⁸⁾ Onofhänge Gewerkschaftsbond Lëtzebuerg.

⁽¹³⁹⁾ Lëtzebuerger Chrëschtlesche Gewerkschaftsbond.

⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Grand-Ducal Regulation of March 30 2006 declaring generally obligatory an inter-professional social dialogue agreement on individual access to CVT made between the OGB-L and LCGB trade unions and the Union of Luxembourg Companies (UEL). <http://www.legilux.public.lu>

⁽¹⁴¹⁾ Draft Law no. 5622 reforming vocational training. <http://www.chd.lu>

4.3 The European Social Fund

The European Social Fund (ESF) intervenes in several areas of CVT. In the Operational Programme of the ESF for the period 2007-13, priority 1 is the improvement of participation in the labour market.¹⁴² Within this framework, 38.4% of the budget is earmarked for, among other things, actions supporting training measures/courses aimed at older workers and the older unemployed, women, school drop-outs and persons excluded from the labour market.

Priority 3, receiving 19.2% of the budget, supports investment in human capital, particularly through a high-quality system of education and training and the promotion of a lifelong learning culture. As Luxembourg has identified structural problems in the available labour force, the ESF is supporting the development of projects aimed at enhancing and empowering human capital. This priority of the Luxembourg programme addresses continuing training projects in the fields of research and innovation, comprising also a strand of pro-active management of labour needs, including the definition of new training and retraining to meet the future needs of the Luxembourg economy.

5 Conclusions

- There is only a slight difference between men and women where access to training is concerned. On the other hand, the discrepancies between the different age groups and those with different educational levels in terms of access to vocational training are distinctly more marked.
- A certain number of obstacles has been identified, such as the lack of time, childcare issues, costs, and deficient communication and information.
- Of the different economic sectors, the financial sector performs the most training.
- Where legislation and administrative measures are concerned, the Government and the social partners have undeniably given new impulse to lifelong learning with a continuing restructuring of the education system and CVT currently taking place.

6 Bibliography

Eurostat, 'Life Long Learning in Europe', *Statistics in Brief*, Population and Social Conditions, 8/2005.

Eurostat, *European Union Labour Force Survey*. http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1073,46587259&dad=portal&schema=PORTAL&product_code=KS-BF-03-002

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, *Rapport d'activité* [Activity Report] 2006.

The Ministry of Equal Opportunities, *Rapport d'activité* 2006.

Ministry of Work and Employment, *Rapport d'activité* 2006.

Ministry of Work and Employment, *Programme opérationnel de l'intervention du Fonds Social Européen au grand-Duché de Luxembourg, au titre de l'objectif compétitivité régionale et emploi, période de programmation 2007-2013*, http://www.fse.public.lu/intro/nouv_appel_periode_programmation_2007_2013/index.html

The National Institute of Continuing Vocational Training (INFPC). <http://www.infpc.lu> and <http://www.lifelonglearning.lu>

Law of 12 February 1999 on the implementation of the National Action Plan for Employment. Mémorial A – No. 12 of 23 February 1999. <http://www.legilux.public.lu>

The law of 22 June 1999 for the support and development of continuing vocational training. Mémorial A – no. 92 of 14.07.99. <http://www.legilux.public.lu>

Law of 12 August 2003 creating the University of Luxembourg. Mémorial A – no. 149 of 6 October 2003. <http://www.legilux.public.lu>

Law of 31 July 2006 introducing a Labour Code. Mémorial A - no. 149 of 29 August 2006.

Draft Law no. 5622 reforming vocational training. <http://www.chd.lu>

Draft Law No. 5337 creating individual training leave and amending the amended law of 4 October 1973 on the establishment of educational leave. <http://www.chd.lu>

Grand-Ducal Regulation of 30 March 2006 declaring generally obligatory an inter-professional social dialogue agreement on individual access to CVT made between the OGB-L and LCGB trade unions and the Union of Luxembourg Companies (UEL). <http://www.legilux.public.lu>

STATEC, *Bilan Compétitivité 2007* [Competitiveness Assessment 2007], Competitiveness Observatory, Ministry of Economy and External Trade, www.odc.lu

STATEC, *La formation professionnelle continue au Luxembourg* [Continuing Vocational Training in Luxembourg], STATEC Bulletin no. 12-2007, <http://www.statec.lu>

STATEC, *Rapport travail et cohésion sociale* [Labour and Social Cohesion Report], Cahier économique no. 101, <http://www.statec.lu>

⁽¹⁴²⁾ Ministère du Travail et de l'Emploi, *Programme opérationnel de l'intervention du Fonds Social Européen au grand-Duché de Luxembourg, au titre de l'objectif compétitivité régionale et emploi, période de programmation 2007-2013*, http://www.fse.public.lu/intro/nouv_appel_periode_programmation_2007_2013/index.html

Hungary

1 Trends in the participation of adults in LLL

One definition of adult education sometimes used by the Hungarian Statistical Office, categorises people as taking part in adult education if they are older than 18 and take part in any part-time degree programme. This definition, therefore, does not include either non-degree studies, or informal learning in adult education, and it also excludes those who study, but do not receive a formal degree. It includes, on the other hand, those individuals who are younger than 25, study for their first degree, but are not full-time students (e.g. cannot afford full-time study). Bearing in mind these deficiencies in the definition, the number of people in adult education was only 111,000 in the academic year 1990/1991 (Hungarian Statistical Office, 2006). This number had increased by 1995/1996, and reached 292,600 in 2004/2005; in 2005/2006 it had decreased to 289,000. In proportional terms, approximately 2.7% of the population aged between 18-74 participates in some formal training leading to a degree.

It is not only participation in adult education that has changed, but also the composition in the level of education. In 1990/1991, most adults studied for a degree in primary or secondary education, while in 2005/2006 the majority of adult students were enrolled in higher education. This number is similar to the data provided by the Eurostat who estimate that the proportion of adults taking part in LLL is 3.8%. This also includes people taking part in any formal education, not only in those programmes that result in a degree (Eurostat website, population and social conditions section). The statistics reveal two discouraging facts. First, Hungary is among those countries that have the lowest participation rates of adults in LLL in the European Union (EU). The average participation across all EU countries was 9.6% in 2006, which is two and a half times greater than the Hungarian figure. There are only three countries that have lower participation rates in adult LLL: Bulgaria (1.3%), Greece (1.9%) and Romania (1.3%). Not only is the Hungarian rate of adult LLL very low, but it has also deteriorated during the last few years. In 2003, the participation rate was 4.5% but it has had a negative trend ever since, which has resulted in a slow, but continuous decline.

A more detailed picture can be given for adult education with the help of the LLL survey of the Hungarian Statistical Office, carried out in the second quarter of 2003, as an annex of the

LFS (Hungarian Statistical Office, 2004). This large sample survey has detailed information on the participation of the population aged between 15 and 74 who are in LLL, and includes their demographic characteristics and economic status, as well as the type of education they received as adults. The following part of this section presents several important results of the survey.

Panel A of Table 1 (see Annex) provides the participation rates in LLL by age group and gender (the figures refer to population aged between 25 and 74 years). Overall, 10.4% of the population received some type of learning in the period studied. This number varies little by gender, as women's participation rate is 10.8% and that of men is 10%. As expected, participation in adult education declines in age. While 19.5% of those between 25 and 34 years take part in LLL, in the next age group (35 to 44) this rate is 13%. The participation rate declines to 8.4% for those between 45 and 54, and reduces further to 4.5% for those aged between 55 and 64. It is only 2.2% among the oldest in the sample (individuals aged between 65 and 74). By gender, the participation rates in LLL are somewhat higher for females among prime-age individuals (between 25 and 54 years) and for males among the elderly.

Panel B of Table 1 (see Annex) shows the participation rates by economic activity of the person.¹⁴³ The employed have the highest participation in LLL (almost 16%), followed by the unemployed (13.6%). These numbers are quite different between genders. Among the active women (employed and unemployed), 18% take part in LLL, while this figure is 14% among employed men, and only 10% of the unemployed men. As expected, the participation rate of the retired is very low (1.6%). Among the economically inactive, for reasons other than retirement (and being a full-time student), very few people study and therefore their participation rate in LLL is very low, at only 4.5% (and this does not vary by gender). This figure would probably be even smaller among those older than 25, as it is probable that many of the studying inactive are young. Young people are likely to be economically inactive and at the same time take part in part-time education (for example, they can rely on their parents).

Besides the participation rates, the quality of education is also an important indicator of adult LLL. Table 2 (see Annex) disaggregates the participation rates into three types of education: learning for a degree, non-degree training and informal studies.¹⁴⁴ The table reveals that almost one quarter of the people who take part in LLL study for a degree, while the remaining part is almost equally distributed among those who

⁽¹⁴³⁾ These figures are unfortunately not available by age, therefore they describe the whole population between 15-74 years. Full-time students are excluded, as they are mostly aged under 25. The comparison of the total number of people between 25-74 years taking part in LLL and the total number of people in Panel B of the table shows that there are about 50,000 people who are present in Panel B and are younger than 25. As young people are more likely to take part in LLL, the figures in Panel B are probably upward-biased.

⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Informal studies include the following activities: reading journals, using the internet, using CD-ROM or audio tape, going to a library, and other activities.

study in a non-degree programme (40 %) and those who take part in informal learning (37.7%). Therefore, more than one third of the adults who study do not take part in any formal education. Instead, they rely on the weakest method of studies – learning by themselves, sometimes simply using the internet or a library. Unfortunately, the share of those who only undertake informal learning is greatest among the inactive. Out of those who are neither full-time students nor pensioners and take part in LLL, over half – 53% – only undertake informal learning, while the share of such people is 34.4% among the employed and 17.6% among the unemployed.¹⁴⁵

As expected, it is mostly the younger people who study for a degree – these may be those who did not have a diploma, or those who want a second one.¹⁴⁶ Non-degree studies are most popular among individuals aged between 35 and 54 years, but older people also take part in this activity. Informal learning has a large share of LLL in each age group and its share increases sharply by age. Gender differences are most pronounced in informal learning. Among the women who study, 34% only undertake informal learning, while among men this proportion is 42%. The difference between males and females is very small in the participation in degree studies, and 4% more women than men take part in non-degree studies.

2 National strategies promoting adult LLL

Adult learning is regulated by Law 101/2001, amended by Laws 106/2003 and 74/2005.¹⁴⁷ The legislation sets the institutional background which co-ordinates the activities related to adult education. The main body is the National Council of Adult Education, composed of 21 members, appointed for a two-year period. The Council's members are representatives of several ministries, NGOs, chambers of commerce, organisations dealing with adult education, and specialists. The Council's task is to assist the Minister of Labour in issues related to adult education, and to screen the quality of adult education by following up the people who took part in adult education and assess the usefulness of the education they received. The Council has a special interest in people who belong to socially disadvantaged groups.

The organisation in charge of the co-ordination of adult education is the National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education (NIVE).¹⁴⁸ NIVE has a duty to carry out research into adult education to promote it and make it more suitable to people's needs, to distribute the EU funds given to adult education, to keep track and harmonise the activity of the organisations that are engaged in adult education. It is also the accrediting body for these organisations.

Law 101/2001 is also the basis of subsidies for adult education. Several types of subsidies exist: per capita subsidy of the organisation dealing with adult education; subsidies for the education of individuals belonging to disadvantaged groups.¹⁴⁹ Employers are also eligible for subsidies if they arrange adult education for their employees. The law also specified that adults who study can benefit from a tax exemption, but this was partially abolished in 2007. In general, the costs of adult education cannot be subtracted from income tax (which was the practice before). Part of the tuition paid towards a degree education can be subtracted from income tax, but the maximum is Huf 100,000 (which also includes other types of tax exemptions).

A recent policy that subsidises adult education for a particular disadvantaged group targets public servants who were made redundant (the reform of the public administration resulted in thousands of layoffs). To assist the laid-off workers from the state administration, the Government launched a programme which provides these workers with funds for studying foreign languages, improving their computer skills and learning other important skills that are useful and increase the chances of finding employment in the private sector. Special attention to the laid-off from the public sector is important, as many of them had worked for a long time in the public sector, which was less competitive than the private sector. It is likely, therefore, that these people paid relatively little attention to upgrading their skills and they now need assistance to obtain the knowledge that increases their chances to find a job in the private sector.

3 Conclusions

Despite the fact that the most important asset for Hungary is the accumulated human capital of the people, adult LLL is very much under-developed. Not only is the country ranked fourth lowest in the EU for its participation rate in adult LLL, but this rate has been declining during the last few years. People from disadvantaged groups – especially those aged above 45 and the inactive – are very much under-represented in LLL (with the exception of women). This problem is even more pronounced in a post-socialist country, where the older people received their education under the socialist regime. A large part of the knowledge learnt might have become obsolete to a greater extent than in the case of those who studied in a market economy, so upgrading knowledge is therefore crucial. Secondly, the proportion of economically inactive is very high in Hungary. It is worrying that these people not only do not have a job, but do not study in order to increase their chances to get back into the labour market.

⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ These figures are not reported in the table.

⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ In Hungary it is quite typical to study for a second degree. See Varga (2006) for details.

⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ The law can be downloaded from http://www.nfi.gov.hu/jogi_hatter/1_tv/tv_2001_ci_0401.pdf (in Hungarian)

⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ The internet address of the NIVE is https://www.nive.hu/english_version/index.php

⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ The groups who can benefit from a subsidy are set by the government each year.

Making LLL available to adults to increase their skills – which may, in some cases, be improving very basic skills such as reading and writing – would be the way to improve the labour market situation for those from the lower parts of the skill ladder. Increasing the participation of such people in LLL should be a priority of the Hungarian government.

Annex

Table 1: Adult participation in lifelong learning, by age group and gender

	Total	Female	Male
Panel A: by age-group			
25-34	19.5	20.9	18.2
35-44	13.0	14.9	11.1
45-54	8.4	9.1	7.6
55-64	4.5	4.3	4.9
65-74	2.2	2.0	2.6
25-74	10.4	10.8	10.0
Panel B: by economic activity			
Employed	15.9	18.2	14.0
Unemployed	13.6	18.1	10.3
Pensioner	1.6	1.6	1.7
Other inactive	4.5	4.5	4.5
Total	10.5	10.7	10.2

Source: Hungarian Statistical Office, 2004

Note: the cells represent the percentage of individuals who take part in LLL, compared to the population in the given demographic group.

Table 2: The disaggregation of adult LLL by type of education

Age-group	Training for degree	Training without degree	Informal learning
Total			
25-34	40.8	36.7	25.1
35-44	17.9	48.6	34.6
45-54	6.6	44.3	49.6
55-64	1.1	29.1	69.1
65-74	0.0	7.7	92.4
25-74	24.2	39.7	37.7
Female			
25-34	41.4	38.6	22.9
35-44	20.1	50.9	29.6
45-54	9.5	46.3	45.0
55-64	2.1	32.7	65.6
65-74	0.0	6.8	93.2
25-74	25.4	41.8	34.4
Male			
25-34	40.0	34.8	27.6
35-44	14.2	45.1	41.8
45-54	2.8	41.8	55.6
55-64	0.0	27.1	72.9
65-74	0.0	8.5	91.5
25-74	22.6	37.0	41.8

Source: Hungarian Statistical Office, 2004

Note: the cells represent the percentage of individuals who take part in a given type of education, compared to all people taking part in LLL (in the given age category). One person can take part in multiple categories, except for the category of "informal learning", where only those people are included who did not take part in any other type of education.

4 Bibliography

Eurostat, population and social conditions section:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1996,45323734&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcomeref&open=/C/C3&language=en&product=Yearlies_new_population&root=Yearlies_new_population&scrollto=84

Hungarian Statistical Office (2006), *Data of Education*

<http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/oktat/okt0506.pdf>

Hungarian Statistical Office (2004), *Lifelong Learning*.

http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/pdf/lifelong_learning.pdf

Julia Varga (2006), *Why to get a 2nd diploma? Is it life-long learning or the outcome of state intervention in educational choices?*

Budapest Working Papers on the Labour Market No. 2006/4.

Malta

1 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

Despite the Maltese Government's declared aim of promoting lifelong learning (LLL), the country still lags behind the EU average with regards to LLL indicators.

Eurostat figures show that the participation of the Maltese adult population aged 25+ in education and training during 2006 was 5.5%, considerably less than the EU-27 average of 9.6% (European Commission, 2007). The participation rate increased by only 1% between 2000 and 2006. Malta's target of 7% of adults in LLL by 2010, as set in the NAP 2004, (which is less ambitious than the EU target of 12.5%) can hardly be achieved at this rate of progress. On the other hand, considerable progress has been noticeable in the participation of females, increasing from 3.5% in 2000 to 5.6% in 2006. This trend is probably related to government efforts to promote female participation in the workplace, which is still by the far the lowest among the EU-27 members. The male participation rate remained relatively stagnant for the period in question.

Age appears to be negatively correlated to participation in LLL. 9.1% of persons in the younger age group (25-34) tend to have the highest participation rate, when compared to those in the 35-44 age group (6.6%), and the 45-54 year olds who have the lowest level of participation (at about 3.9%).

Employed persons are much more likely to take part in LLL activities when compared to inactive persons (7.1% and 2.8% respectively). On the other hand, as will be explained in Section 2.1, the participation rate of the unemployed is not very encouraging.

The educational level of persons is positively correlated to participation in lifelong learning. Thus, 18% of persons with a high level of educational attainment participated in LLL in 2006, when compared to 8.1% of those with medium levels and 3.0% of low education achievers. While the male participation rate in the latter group showed a decrease between 2000 and 2006 (from 3.4% to 2.6%), the female rate increased from 1.4% to 3.2% (European Commission, 2007).

While no recent data is available, a study carried out with data of December 2002, revealed that distribution and access to training varies within the different sectors of the economy (NSO, 2003). Thus, out of all the employed persons engaged in LLL, 78.2% worked in the services industry, 21% worked in manufacturing, while 0.8% worked in agriculture and fisheries. This study also highlighted that employees in the public sector were twice as likely to participate in training as their counterparts in the private sector (9% and 4.5% respectively).

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

2.1 Available training and relevance to the labour market

A wide range of training opportunities exist in Malta, despite the country's size and limited human and economic resources. Adults who are willing to invest time and energy in learning have access to many education and training courses at little or no cost.

The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) offers a broad selection of job related courses free of charge to the registered unemployed together with free transportation to and from training venues. The ETC pays particular attention to the training needs of women and the unemployed. Between October 2005 and September 2006, over 11,200 persons received some form of training from ETC (ETC, 2006).

The Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) provide an array of part-time courses at a nominal fee which lead to both basic and advanced levels of certification. The University of Malta has increased its evening courses in recent years and organises lectures for senior citizens. While there are more females than males studying at the University, the number of females following vocational courses at MCAST is still low.

The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education (DFS/AE) offers many different part-time courses for adults, and collaborates with local councils to provide particular training in specific localities. The Foundation for Educational Services (FES) holds several courses for parents. In 2005, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment (MEYE) launched new LLL programmes on its TV station. Many courses are funded by the EU.

Apart from such public sector institutions, several social partners, employers, private training organisations and NGOs also provide training to adults. In the past years, work-related learning and training has become increasingly structured and systematic. Human resource development plans often feature in the collective agreements of larger organisations. Private industry has strong links with MCAST and has also recently improved its relations with the University, thanks to the latter's new Rector, who seems to be keen to forge greater links between tertiary education and the world of work.

2.2 Disincentives to training

Despite the efforts of different public and private organisations, adults are not sufficiently attracted to LLL. The pay differences between the higher and the lower qualified and skilled persons, especially in the public sector, are rather small. Many persons might find it more economically worthwhile to keep a low or medium paying job and earn extra money through part-time work, rather than furthering their qualifications to get promoted in their main job. Similarly, the narrow margin between unemployment benefits and the minimum wage makes training leading to employment unattractive for low skilled unemployed persons.

LLL has not yet become sufficiently integrated in the Maltese culture. Indeed, several courses organised by government entities in the past years have not been offered due to lack of participation. More marketing needs to be carried out in order to promote adult learning activities. It is interesting to note that when educational qualifications are seen as conducive to high-paying jobs, courses have a large following, as in the case of the government's scheme myPotential which promotes ICT courses.

2.3 Groups least likely to access training

Participation in LLL is strongly associated with socio-demographic characteristics. Among the social groups least involved in LLL, there are the unemployed, workers in SMEs or self-employed, low educated and low skilled workers, and older persons. The following subsections briefly examine each of these groups.

Unemployed

Despite the training opportunities offered by the ETC to the registered unemployed, the participation rate in these programmes is well below the intended targets (National Audit Office, 2006). Many registrants show a poor disposition towards training and only attend courses if failure to attend would result in being struck-off the employment register. ETC officials admit that the negative attitude of the unemployed is also often demonstrated through passive behaviour during training. Some participants do not value the significance of undergoing further training. The ETC also often finds resistance from registrants who believe that, unless there is a direct and immediate benefit to be acquired, it is not worthwhile undertaking training.

SMEs and self-employed

Many large enterprises have been practicing LLL for years, striving to adopt new skills and seeking to promote multiskilling and flexibility (Brincat, 2004). However, Malta is characterised by a large proportion of small enterprises and self-employed that tend to be non-unionised, and often show little disposition to invest in training. Employers of SMEs might not be keen on training their employees, due to logistical and financial difficulties of replacing employees in training, and the fear that training may encourage employees to find better employment.

While 7.3% of all employed persons participate in lifelong learning, the figure goes down to 2.8% for the self-employed without employees (NSO, 2006). Self-employed persons are particularly numerous in the wholesale and retail and the construction sectors and constitute around 14% of all workers in Malta. Self-employed persons may find it particularly difficult to participate in LLL as this would reduce their working hours, which tend to be longer than those of employees (NSO, 2006).

Lower educated and lower skilled persons

In line with the situation in other European countries, persons with lower education and skills levels are also less likely to participate in LLL, thus widening the education and skills gap between the higher and the lower educated. The value of LLL appears to increase among those with post-secondary or tertiary level qualifications. Besides, these persons also tend to be presented with more opportunities to further their studies than their lower educated peers.

Older persons

There are considerable disincentives for older persons to undertake LLL, stemming from both their employers and themselves. Employers would often rather train younger workers as the latter may be perceived as better investment in the long-term. Besides, older persons might find it harder to pursue further education as they would have stopped studying many years before.

3 Quality and impact of training

The efforts being carried out to promote LLL are not harmonised within the official policy. This leads to insufficient synergy among training providers, potentially lowering the quality and impact of training.

The courses developed on the specific request of the private industry provide a direct link between training and employability. However, in general, it is much harder to ascertain the impact of courses on the adults' employability and adaptability. Until recently, there was little evidence of vetting of the quality of adult education and training in Malta. While many courses lead to recognised certification from local or foreign accredited bodies, others lacked such quality assurance.

As part of a wide ranging educational reform process, the Government recently set up the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) and the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC), which should lead to improvement in the quality of LLL. The NCHE was set up in 2006 to monitor the quality of higher educational institutions. The NCHE aims to help in the revision of curricula "to ensure the highest level of academic content while responding to the changing needs of the labour market" (Department of Information, 2006, p. 24). The NCHE should play

an important role in the expansion of the adult educational sector (Government of Malta, 2006). The Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) was set up in 2005 with the aim of developing a national qualifications framework. It oversees the training and certification which is not already provided for by recognised educational institutions (MEYE, 2007). It aims to ensure that formal, informal and non formal qualifications are accredited and certified. Better recognition of qualifications should lead to a greater national and international mobility of learners and workers. The MQC should also increase the educational pathways between vocational and non-vocational streams, which until now were few in number. These national efforts are complemented by structures within higher educational institutions, which are also gearing up to improve the standards of their courses.

4 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

The Government appears to be committed to increasing investment in human capital and has put education as one of its main strategic priorities for the coming years.

Incentives are used widely to attract people into post-secondary and tertiary education. Indeed, students following one of a number of courses offered by higher learning institutions are entitled to a stipend. Mature students who decide to follow specific courses that are deemed important for the growth of the Maltese economy can also qualify for scholarships, soft loans or tax cuts. In the 2008 Budget speech, the Government stated that it has invested more than EUR 2.3 million in partnership projects and centres of private learning in IT, offering a variety of certificates. By October 2007, there were some 670 persons benefiting from this system. IT is being given considerable importance in the Government's bid to transform Malta into a knowledge-based society. However, to date, the amount of men pursuing IT courses is far higher than that of women. The Malta Government Scholarship Scheme will run for the third consecutive year in 2008, benefiting from an allocation of around EUR 465,000 for the provision of scholarships at postgraduate levels (Ministry of Finance, 2007). In 2006, 35 persons made use of these scholarships (Government of Malta, 2007).

Substantial funds are being invested in the infrastructure of MCAST and the University of Malta towards the building of a new campus and a new faculty respectively. The allocation of funds to the educational system has increased considerably over the past years. The Bologna Process has helped the University of Malta review its structures and improve its courses. However, lecturers at the University of Malta and MCAST complain of low wages and insufficient resources.

The government has in recent years encouraged the better utilisation of existing infrastructure to make training and education closer to the citizens. The setting up of community-based LLL Centres (LLLC) in seven localities is an innovative initiative in this direction.

The Government has also shown its commitment to improve the training of workers. The Business Promotion Act (BPA) provides financial assistance subsidising the training provided by employers to their employees. The BPA is currently being phased out and integrated in the amended Malta Enterprise Act, the law regulating the government agency in charge of attracting inward investment and supporting local industries.

The ESF is playing an increasingly prominent role in helping to achieve training objectives for adults. In the three years leading to August 2007, "ESF has funded training for more than 7,000 people, leading to the creation or retention of more than 1,000 jobs in Malta and Gozo" (DOI, 2007, p.101). LLL was prioritised in the Operational Programme 2007-2013. The European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA), in charge of implementing the programmes Comenius, Erasmus, Grundtvig, and Leonardo da Vinci, has been particularly useful in promoting adult learning through mobility. Overall, European initiatives have played a major role in structuring strategies for adult learning in Malta. However, such initiatives are still not sufficiently visible among the general population.

Several public-private agreements have also been made in an attempt to encourage LLL. For example, both the ETC and MCAST are contracting out courses to private educational institutions if a course on offer has been fully booked. The agreement between Lufthansa Technik Malta (LTM) and MCAST is a noteworthy example of the synergies being achieved between the public and private sector. LTM, which aims to generate hundreds of jobs in the sector of aircraft maintenance in the coming years, joined forces with MCAST to train a suitable number of persons for the predicted needs. The Government also signed some agreements with foreign IT organisations, such as IBM and Microsoft, which support adult education. Such public-private partnerships are very useful to make the best use of the limited human resources available in Malta.

This suggests that an increasing effort is being made by the Government and various other stakeholders to promote participation in LLL. This should bolster the number of LLL participants in the coming years. However, more work needs to be done to reduce the gender divisions in employment and training. Besides, the Government needs to invoke the help of social partners to improve LLL among the most excluded social groups. As often pointed out by employers' associations, stronger and more permanent synergies should be developed between social partners and educational institutions in order to keep improving the relevance of LLL to the world of work. In such a framework, the government also needs to strengthen the provision of career guidance to adults, an area which is still under-developed in Malta.

5 Bibliography

Brincat, J. (2004). *The contribution of private industry towards lifelong learning*. Malta Federation of Industry, Website: http://pos.cru2.net/foi_new/page.php?section=43&page=326

Department of Information (2006, 2007). *Diary of Events*. Website: <http://www.doi.gov.mt/>

Employment and Training Corporation (2006). *ETC Annual Report 2005-2006*. Website: www.etc.gov.mt

European Commission (2007). *Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines including indicators for additional employment analysis - 2007 Compendium*. Weblink: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/pdf/2007compendium_en.pdf.pdf

Government of Malta (2006). *National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF)*. Weblink: <http://www.doi.gov.mt>

Government of Malta (2007). *Malta's National Reform Programme – Annual Progress Report 2007*. Website: www.mcmp.gov.mt/pdfs/nrp_apr07.pdf

Ministry of Finance (2007). *Budget Speech 2008*. Website: <http://www.mfin.gov.mt/>

National Statistics Office (2003). *Contrasts in Workers' Participation in Training and Further Education*. Website: www.nso.gov.mt

National Statistics Office (2006). Website: www.nso.gov.mt

Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment (2007). *New thinking tools & communication technologies for better worker-participation and intercultural competence*.

Website: http://www.education.gov.mt/ministry/doc/pr_pdf7/PR00807.pdf

National Audit Office (2006). *ETC's job matching service: Meeting the requirements of employers and registered job seekers*. Website: <http://nao.gov.mt/>

The Netherlands

1 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

Adults currently participating in training

Unfortunately, overall figures regarding lifelong learning in the Netherlands are not yet available for 2007. However, for 2005, Statistics Netherlands (CBS) has published some of the main statistics concerning adult participation in life long learning. As a consequence of the use of varying indicators to measure lifelong learning, participation rates vary accordingly.¹⁵⁰ In 2005, 14% of the Dutch population who were no longer in regular secondary or higher education were undertaking some form of training.¹⁵¹ This number is based on the Dutch indicator for lifelong learning, by which all education and training followed by the population in the age of 25-64 years is measured. Following up on the discussion on EVC (competencies developed earlier and elsewhere) one may add a question mark with respect to the completeness of the figures presented in this article from Statistics Netherlands and by Eurostat. These figures – necessarily and by nature – only cover enrolment in regular and registered education or training, whereas, especially during later stages of the life course, gradually more knowledge, insights and competencies are being acquired through more informal channels.

The labour supply panel of the Institute of Labour Studies (OSA) specifically measures the participation in training and education meant for profession, or work, or finding

work. Training and education are defined as the recognised offer in secondary education, (higher vocational) education or university studies, including training on the job. The figures of the OSA show a participation rate of 44% in this kind of training in 2006, an increase compared with the 39% participation rate in 2004¹⁵².

Breakdown by age, gender, employment status, existing educational level and sector

Statistics Netherlands figures concerning lifelong learning do not show significant differences in the participation in lifelong learning, training and education between men and women. Significant differences occur when looking at educational level and age. The lowest participation rate is registered among lower educated and older people. The higher the educational level, the more likely someone is to attend some form of adult education. For instance, in 2005, only 7% of those with a primary educational level participated in lifelong learning, compared to 20% with higher vocational education or a university degree.

As shown in Figure 1, the participation in adult education shows a correlation with age as well. As age increases, there is a decline in the participation in training and education. In 2005, people under 45 showed a 19% participation rate in education, while those aged between 45 and 64 showed a participation rate of only 8%. With 4.5%, participation in adult education is the lowest in the age category 60 to 64¹⁵³. The limited share of older people participating in education or training can be explained by a number of factors. For instance, training older people would be less interesting for employers than training younger people because the time for return on investment is shorter for older people. Also in general, the educational level of older people is lower compared with that of younger people.¹⁵⁴

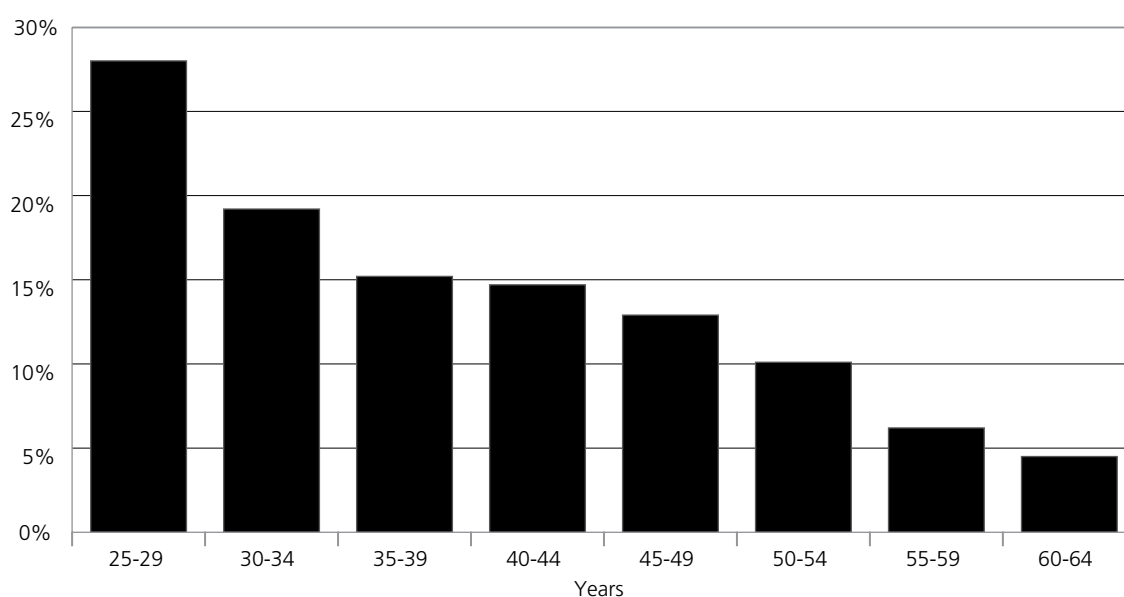
(¹⁵⁰) Figures regarding the number of adults participating in lifelong learning vary. Three most frequently used indicators are 1) the post initial education: the percentage of the population between 15 and 64, that does not follow initial education, and has not participated in education for five years before attending some form of education. 2) European indicator of lifelong learning: all education followed by the population between 25 and 64 years, as measured in the second quarter of the year and 3) Dutch indicator of lifelong learning: same as the European indicator only differs in the quarter in which the participation is being measured, because the second quarter appears to be continuously higher than the yearly average. General figures on lifelong learning, as used in this article, are based on the Dutch indicator for lifelong learning.

(¹⁵¹) CBS, Statline. November 2007.

(¹⁵²) Wilthagen, Tilburg University & OSA/Institute for Labour Studies, 2007 The OSA labour supply panel is a biennial panel survey among a representative sample of 2,500 household members, aged 16-65, not following initial education.

(¹⁵³) Van Herpen, Statistics' Netherlands, 2006.

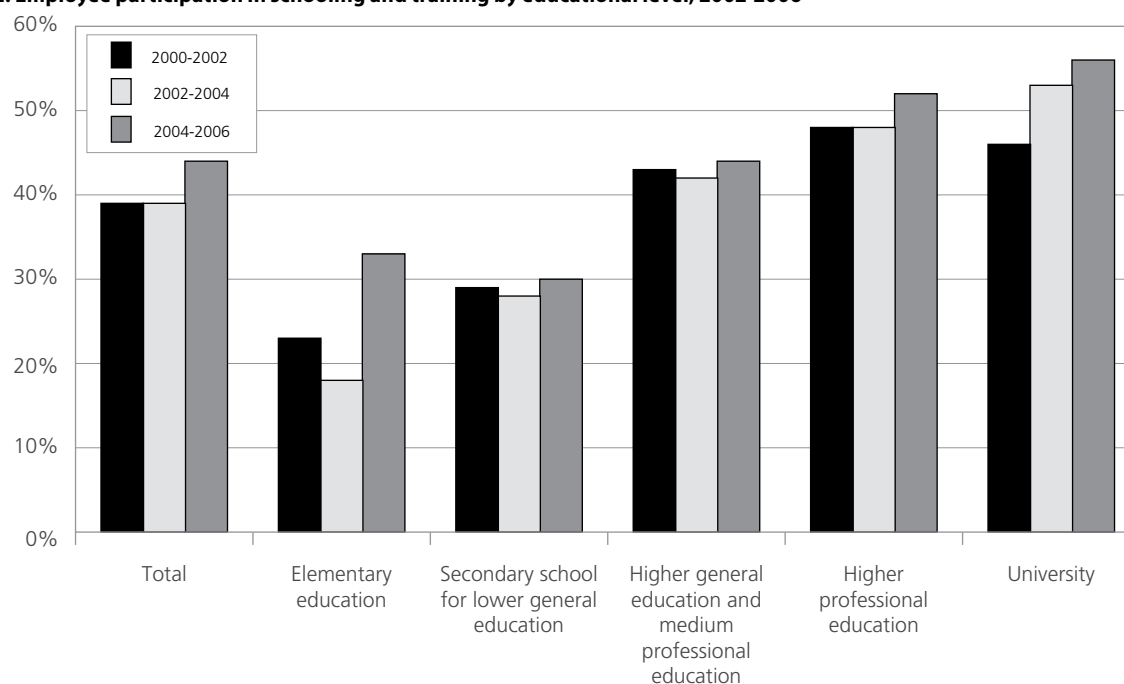
(¹⁵⁴) SER, 2002.

Figure 1: The participation in lifelong learning by age group, 2005

Source: Van Herpen, Statistics Netherlands 2006

Similar to the Statistics Netherlands figures, the labour supply panel OSA figures do not show significant differences between men and women in the participation in training and education meant for profession or work. But educational level and age again show a correlation with the participation rate. The higher

the educational level, the more likely one is to participate in training. This is shown in figure 2, although the participation rate of those with elementary education has increased substantially between 2004 and 2006.

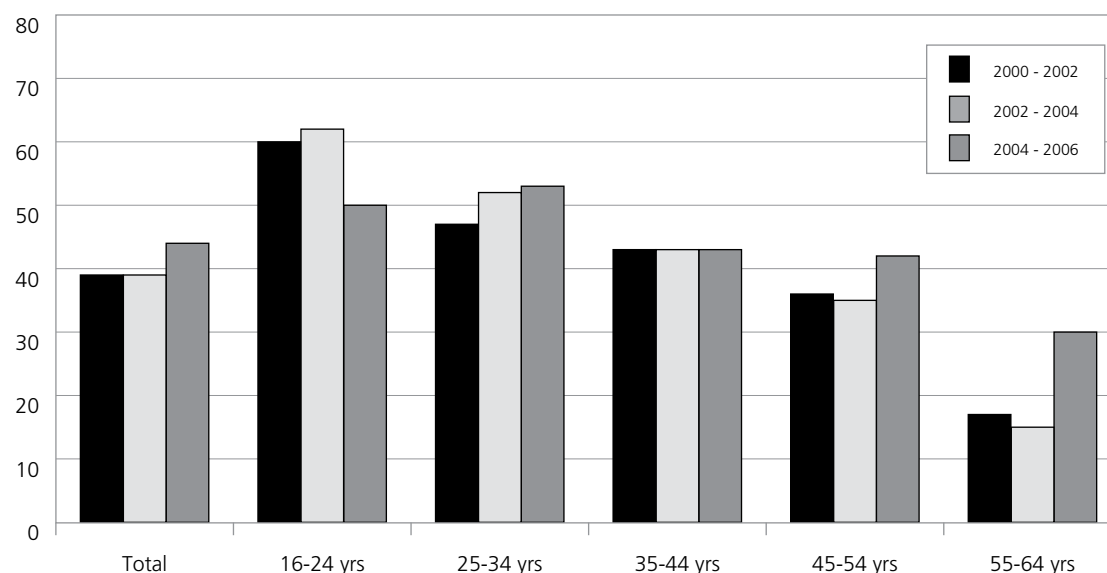
Figure 2: Employee participation in schooling and training by educational level, 2002-2006

Source: OSA labour supply panel, 2006

The participation rate in schooling and training of older employees is lower than the participation rate of younger age groups, as the OSA statistics in figure 3 show. Nevertheless the

participation rate of elderly shows an upward trend in 2006 compared with 2004.

Figure 3: Employee participation in schooling or training by age group, 2002-2006



Source: OSA labour supply panel, 2006

By sector, the highest participation in lifelong learning can be found among employees in financial and business services, government, education and the cultural sector. In other sectors, the participation rate is much lower. Regarding employment status, the unemployed working population equals the participation rate of the operative working population with 15.8%. However, a considerably lower proportion of 9.3% is to be found among the non-working population.¹⁵⁵

The participation in training and education meant for profession, or work, or finding work, as measured in the OSA labour supply panel is the highest among legal professions, teachers, medical personnel and professions dealing with behaviour and society. Education and government are the sectors that show the highest participation rate, followed by financial services and the health and welfare sector.

The main trends over the past ten years

The participation in adult education is stagnating. Fewer people after their initial education are taking part in training or education. In 2005, 14% of this group participated in a course or some form of training. In 2001, this was still 15%. In the past ten years the participation rate in lifelong learning has been rising from 12.1% in 1995 to 14.8% in 2003. After 2003 participation fell to 14% in 2005.

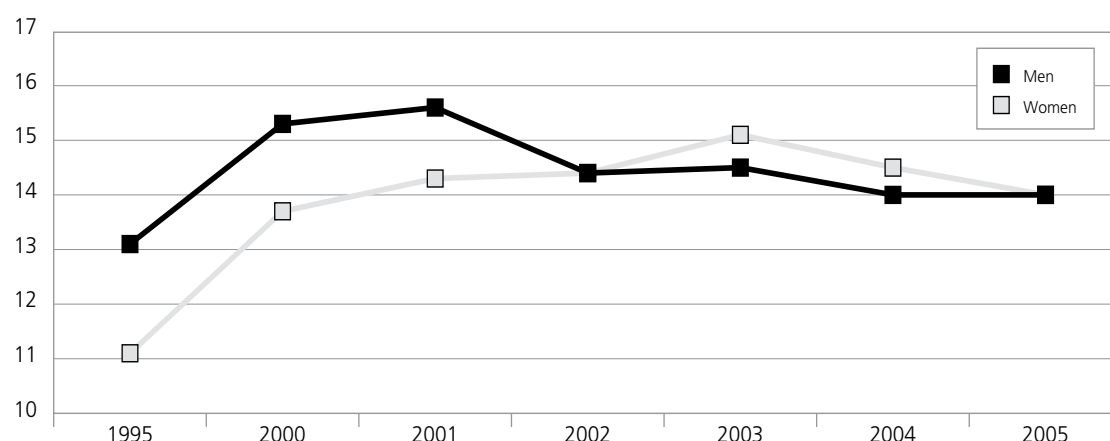
The breakdown of the participation in lifelong learning by gender shows a slightly higher participation rate of men until 2002. However, since 2002, women took a higher share in participation in lifelong learning, although in 2005 the participation rate of women was similar to the rate of men (see figure 4).

The effect age has on the decline in participation rate in lifelong learning is a continual phenomenon over the past ten years. However recent figures of OSA show an upward movement of older age groups in the participation in training and education meant for profession, work or finding work. Another common phenomenon is that higher educated persons show a higher participation rate than lower educated persons.

A noteworthy trend is the participation rate of members of ethnic minorities. Over the past ten years they show a higher participation rate in lifelong learning than native Dutch. This can be explained through their attendance of integration and language courses.¹⁵⁶

⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ Van Herpen, Statistics Netherlands 2006

⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ CBS, Press release, 5 September 2006.

Figure 4: The participation in lifelong learning by gender, 1995-2005

Source: Van Herpen, Statistics Netherlands 2006

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

Groups in the population least likely to access training

There are specific groups in the population that are least likely to attend training. Especially the low educated and elderly are groups with a low probability of attending some form of adult education. Other groups in the population with little prospects in participating in lifelong learning are members of ethnic minorities, illiterate people, jobseekers (other than those who have registered as unemployed and are entitled to some form of benefit) and people without initial qualifications. On the contrary, participation rates in different training programmes are quite high for people officially registered as unemployed and with entitlement to some form of social benefits. In 2006, more than a quarter (29%) of the Dutch working population did not have an initial qualification.¹⁵⁷ Members of ethnic minorities form a specific target group in lifelong learning. Although their participation rate in post-initial education is comparable to native Dutch people, their level of education

lags behind.¹⁵⁸ Someone who belongs to more than one specific group, such as a low educated older person, is least likely to attend adult education.

Key obstacles to accessing training

The lower educated, ethnic minority groups, jobseekers and people without initial qualifications experience different barriers in accessing adult training or education. Four specific kinds of barriers can be distinguished.

First of all, there are situational barriers like a lack of time or high cost that accompany taking part in training and education. Secondly, there are institutional barriers such as inconvenient education schedules or locations. Thirdly, the lower educated experience informational barriers, such as recognising the importance of education for life and career. And fourthly, psychological barriers in accessing training like feeling too old, not liking school, a low self-esteem are key difficulties in accessing training.¹⁵⁹

For older people, another obstacle in accessing training is the fact that employers seem to be less likely to invest in older employees because the returns of investments are perceived to be lower than in the case of younger people. Additionally there is a lack of motivation and initiative to participate in LLL amongst elderly themselves.¹⁶⁰ Finally, illiterate people and members of ethnic minorities experience difficulties in getting access to training as a result of a lack of Dutch knowledge, often combined with a lower self-esteem.

⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ CBS, Statline, 2007

⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ SER, 2002:37

⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ SER, 2002:36

⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ Actieplan Levenlang Leren, 2004.

To a large extent, post-initial training and education in the Netherlands is a matter of job-related investment. This means that many training and educational opportunities are limited to employees and not available to people outside the labour market or self-employed people. Moreover, job related training and education is often limited to those aged up to approximately 45 and so-called career makers, which usually do not include women as much as men.

Is the training provided relevant for adults to progress in the labour market?

Training of employees is considered to be an important means to improve the link between supplied and requested qualifications for the labour market. Especially when considering the economic situation knowledge ages rapidly and the demand for knowledge intensive labour grows.

However, there seems to be little insight in both the supply and the quality of the supply, as well as the effect of training provided, regarding either the link between supply and demand of qualifications or the progression of adults in the labour market. Lifelong training and education in the Netherlands is mostly provided by individual employers and private training institutions. An overview of the quality and the impact of education provided do not exist. Therefore, it is hard to comment on the correlation between lifelong learning and progress in the labour market.

According to Wilthagen¹⁶¹, (post-initial) training and education do have an influence on labour market participation, but so-called background or non-observed variables like motivation, intellect, perseverance, social competencies do play a significant role as well. Nelissen & Vos (OSA 2006) find limited effects of courses on labour market participation, although technical courses, taken no longer than 10 years ago, seem to have a positive effect on labour market participation.

Disincentives to participate in lifelong learning

In 2002 the Social and Economic Council observed that there are too few incentives encouraging individuals to take more responsibility for their own employability. Specific groups, such as people (partially) disabled to work, experience no advantage of being better educated. When education leads to a higher income, disability benefits will be reduced, resulting in zero financial improvement. Furthermore, the social welfare system seems to work as a hindrance for jobseekers with unemployment benefits.¹⁶² The financial incentives for attending education do not cover the loss of unemployment benefits, which are usually around 70% of the latest received income.

3 Quality and impact of training

As said before, there seem to be few insights into the supply and the quality of the supply, as well as into the impact of training in the Netherlands.

In general, studies regarding the impact of training show a positive correlation between participation in training and productivity of employees (Almeida and Carneiro, 2006, EEO Trust, 2003). Furthermore, it is found that participation in training reduces unemployment, enhances the self-esteem of employees, creates a higher job satisfaction and results in less absenteeism.¹⁶³ However, research in the Netherlands specifically shows that workers' participation in training in particular enhances internal career progression.¹⁶⁴ A study of low skilled workers by Sanders and Grip demonstrates that workers participation in training enhances a worker's chance to move to another job within the same firm. However, workers' participation in training does not increase their external employability expectations.

Several projects developed in the Netherlands as part of the ESF EQUAL programme successfully addressed the educational position of people without a job. A most remarkable project concerns the skills and training of women presently serving prison sentences. The project succeeded in developing training and job orientation programmes for female inmates. They could participate when in prison and the programme helped them to find a job and earn some money after they had completed their sentences. This is a great improvement, compared to the usual situation where ex-prisoners have to rely on social benefits, because the lack of skills prevents them from finding a job.

Another successful project helped women originating from outside the Netherlands (especially from Turkey and Morocco) to get acquainted with computers. This did not result directly in finding a job and entering the labour market, but it did result in helping them to get out of their homes, have their first contacts with Dutch society and qualify for a next step on the educational ladder. So, ESF can be particularly successful in all those cases where (additional or sometimes even basic) education and training is necessary, but no facilities and/or finance is available for those who need this type of human capital investment.

⁽¹⁶¹⁾ Wilthagen, Tilburg University & OSA/Institute for Labour Studies, 2007

⁽¹⁶²⁾ SER, 2002:38-39

⁽¹⁶³⁾ <http://www.bsad.uvm.edu/Research/inProgress/Resources/AgingEmp/ProdAndROI.htm>

⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ Sanders, J en A.Grip (2003).

4 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice¹⁶⁵

Strategies of the Netherlands to invest in human capital

With its ambition of being a competing knowledge based economy, the Dutch government set out a strategy to improve the link between education and the labour market. As a result, different measures have been mapped out or implemented in order to upgrade the quality of the Dutch labour force.

In 2002, the government acknowledged the joint responsibility of employers, employees and government in lifelong learning through the introduction of the so-called “levenslooplegeling”. Since then, first arrangements have been made in collective labour agreements. Though, fiscal arrangements within the “levenslooplegeling” have made pregnancy/parental leave and pre-pension more appealing to employers, no extra measures were taken to stimulate adult education as part of the life course saving scheme. A recent measure to lower the barriers for lifelong learning is the decision to no longer ask for higher fees for university education from people over 30 compared to students under 30. Furthermore, an overall strategy with respect to lifelong learning is still absent.

The individual has a central position in the Dutch approach to policy measures on lifelong learning. Workers and non-workers alike are expected to take responsibility for their own learning careers. Therefore, governmental measures focus on making the learning climate more attractive and on removing obstacles to learning. The Dutch government grants financial support in a number of ways. There are several tax advantages that stimulate post initial education (such as the former mentioned “levenslooplegeling”). Furthermore, some local public authorities offer funding for adult education.¹⁶⁶

In addition, ways of making the funding of education and training more demand driven are being researched and promoted. The trend towards more demand-driven education (individual learning pathways) will be stimulated by removing legislative obstacles. In the open education market, public training will have to develop expertise in competition with private training, which

means that public educational institutes will not be subsidised by the government. A demand driven model is expected to contribute to a better functioning educational system that stimulates people to be more inquisitive and motivated to learn. Moreover, possibilities of introducing “individual learning accounts” are being examined. These savings accounts (that can only be used for financing training) might help to encourage people with low qualifications to take up courses of training. Policies are developed to encourage specific target groups such as young people without initial qualifications, members of ethnic minorities, jobseekers and illiterate people.¹⁶⁷

Promising practices

Investments of the Dutch government in human capital are centred around two main projects: a Taskforce for Youth Unemployment (active between 2003 and June 2007) and a project called: “Learning and Working”. The latter focuses on the aims for lifelong learning in the Netherlands, in line with the Lisbon aims on vocational education and training. The inter-ministerial project “Learning and Working” was set up in 2005 to devise a joint strategy focusing on society’s needs. Its task is to ensure cooperation and coordination with all relevant stakeholders and to promote the achievement of goals set for lifelong learning and courses combining working and learning.¹⁶⁸

Within these projects the government has made investments to fight youth unemployment, the prevention of school drop-outs, and stimulating the combination of working and learning. While the first two types of investments have been part of the Taskforce for Youth Unemployment, the combination of working and learning is meant to improve adults’ education as well. Different kinds of initiatives are developed within the project “Learning and Working” such as learning and working programmes, and programmes based on the accreditation of prior learning (APL) ¹⁶⁹ and financial assistance, for example, to cover the costs of dual programmes of learning and working.¹⁷⁰

Financial resources

Initiatives around lifelong learning are part of a broader programme “Beroepsonderwijs in bedrijf” which has a total fund of EUR 229.5 million for 2007 and 2008. The investments around the stimulation of the connection between education and the labour market form part of this programme, with EUR 65 million.¹⁷¹

⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ See also our discussion of several policy measures as part of the post-assessment of the Dutch NRP progress report 2007.

⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ <http://www.minocw.nl/levenlangleren/473/ProjectLerenWerken.html>

⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2005.

⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ Actieplan Levenslang Leren, 2004.

⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ http://www.kenniscentrumevc.nl/evc_nl/56e810f09ac7e8195078f4e8cd07b6bb.php

⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ <http://www.minocw.nl/levenlangleren/473/ProjectLerenWerken.html>

⁽¹⁷¹⁾ Ministerie van SZW en OC&W. Leren, dat werkt! 2006

Stakeholders involved and cost sharing mechanism for enterprises, public authorities and individuals.

In the strategy of the Dutch Government to invest in human capital, regional stakeholders play a vital role. The most important stakeholders are considered to be companies, employers and employees, educational institutes and local and regional governments. Other relevant stakeholders are the Centre for Work and Income, reintegration institutes and the Employed Persons' Insurance Administration Agency (UWV).¹⁷²

The most important element of the Dutch strategy to invest in human capital throughout the life cycle is a combined responsibility of both employers and employees. In general, employers finance the training of their employees completely or partially. Although the government thinks employers and employees should have main responsibility in lifelong learning (as they are the ones who will benefit directly). It does take accountability for stimulating the participation of specific target groups.¹⁷³ Several (tailor made) initiatives have been developed for those without an initial qualification, ethnic minorities and illiterate people in order to increase their employability.

Weaknesses of the policy approach of lifelong learning

Although the Dutch government has made some efforts to stimulate and increase the participation in lifelong learning, by emphasising the responsibilities of both employers and employees, it still has not succeeded in creating a stimulating climate for lifelong learning.

First of all, the strategy of the Dutch government in lifelong learning is based on the premise that employers and employees are the main beneficiaries of adult participation in training and education. Therefore, most of the lifelong learning agenda is handed over to the social partners. So far, the government has refused to take the lead on this issue, even though successive cabinets have recognised the importance of lifelong learning from, for example, the perspective of good citizenship and democracy (SZW, 2002). But it is not just employers and employees that benefit from lifelong learning. An educated and qualified population brings along benefits for the entire society, as, for example, higher educated people live healthier and remain independent until an older age. Therefore lifelong learning should not be the concern of employer, employees and training institutes only. The Dutch government should take a greater share in promoting and undertaking activities for lifelong learning.

Secondly, current training and education for adults is largely provided by individual employers and private or public training institutions. As a result, only the active and inactive working population are accessing training and education. While the government focuses on specific target groups, the non-working population remains 'invisible' in the initiatives of lifelong learning. Thereby, a large group of the population is being excluded from lifelong learning.

A third weakness in the policy approach to lifelong learning in the Netherlands is the fact that the initiatives that are being promoted only for short term. Although projects initiated by the Dutch government like the "Learning and Working" project seem to be promising and successful in contributing to increasing a culture of lifelong learning, no structural measures are undertaken.

Finally, within initial education in the Netherlands, very limited attention is paid to lifelong learning. Therefore, a climate has been created that, after finishing initial education, 'the job is done'.

To conclude, the Dutch government stimulates the participation of adults in training and education in a number of ways. However, a stimulating climate for lifelong learning has not been achieved (yet).

5 Bibliography

Almeida and Carneiro (2006). *The return to firm investment in human capital*. WorldBank.

Equal employment opportunities trust (EEO) (2000). 'How to make the most of older workers'. *EEO trust Newsletter*, no.23.

Equality (2005). Factsheet Een leven lang leren. *Effecten van leren op verdere verloop van de arbeidscarrière*.

Herpen, M. van (2006). 'Deelname aan post initieel onderwijs 1995-2005'. *Sociaal Economische Trends*, kwartaal 4. CBS (Statistics Netherlands).

Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap (2004). *Actieplan een leven lang leren*. Den Haag.

Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap (2005). *'Implementing the educational and training 2010 work programme progress report'*, December.

Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap en het Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid. (2006). *Leren dat Wérkt! Naar een betere samenwerking tussen onderwijs, ondernemers en overheid*. Den Haag.

Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid (2002). *Verkenning levensloop*, Den Haag.

NTN Aanpassingsvermogen (2005), *Nieuwe wegen naar de arbeidsmarkt*, Den Haag: Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid.

NTN Inzetbaarheid (2005), *Inzet op vernieuwing*, Den Haag: Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid.

Sanders, J. en A. Grip (2003). *Training, Task Flexibility and Low-Skilled Workers Employability*. ROA-RM-2003/6E.

⁽¹⁷²⁾ <http://www.minocw.nl/levenlangleren/473/ProjectLerenWerken.html>

⁽¹⁷³⁾ Actieplan leven lang leren.

SER, (2002) *Het nieuwe leren, advies over een leven lang leren in de kenniseconomie*, n:o 10, 21 June.

Wilthagen, T. (2007), *Life-long learning in a comprehensive setting: some comments*, Tilburg University & OSA/Institute for Labour Studies, Presentation.

Websites:

www.minocw.nl

www.kenniscentrumevc.nl

<http://www.bsad.uvm.edu/Research/inProgress/Resources/AgingEmp/ProdAndROI.htm>

Austria

1 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

Over the past ten years, Austria saw an increase in the participation of the workforce in lifelong learning (LLL). According to EUROSTAT data, the share of the population aged 25-64 participating in formal or non-formal training (**structural indicator 'lifelong learning'**) rose continuously from 7.8% in 1997 to 8.6% in 2003. These numbers are not directly comparable to the most recent data due to the implementation of harmonised concepts and definitions in the more recent survey. However, data from 2003 onwards do, in fact, show an increase in the participation in lifelong learning.

Overall rate of participation in lifelong learning measures in 2006 was 13.2%. Participation of women (14.1%) is somewhat higher than of men (12.3%). Furthermore, Austrian citizens show a higher participation rate (13.4%) than people with other citizenship (11.7%). Regarding the labour market status, 14.1% of the entire working population participate in training, while self-employed persons show a lower rate of participation (11.3%) than dependent wage earners (14.6%). Due to the diverse training measures of the public employment service, the highest participation rate is among unemployed people (18.8%).

The most significant differences in the participation rate relate to age and level of education. The numbers show a clear decline in participation with an increase in age. In the age group of 25-29, a considerable 25.1% participate in education; with university education playing an important role. In the age group 30-39 the participation rate is 15.2% and the rate decreases to less than 10% in the age group 50-59. This means that the involvement of the older population – both female and male – is below average. The same is true for people with a low level of formal education. Just 4.6% with an ISCED level 0-2 participate in training, whereas among those with an ISCED level 3-4 the rate is 12.9%, and in the group with an ISCED level 5-6 it increases to 23.9%.

Table 1: Structural indicator 'lifelong learning' by age and qualification levels, 2006			
	Men (%)	Women (%)	Total (%)
Age			
25 – 29	24.6	25.5	25.1
30 – 39	14.5	15.8	15.2
40 – 49	11.1	14.1	12.6
50 – 59	7.8	9.6	8.7
60 +	4.9	6.2	5.6
ISCED level			
ISCED 0 – 2	4.3	4.8	4.6
ISCED 3 – 4	11.7	14.2	12.9
ISCED 5 – 6	19.4	30.0	23.9

Source: LFS 2006

A closer look at the purpose of training shows that the two groups with a relatively low participation rate focus more strongly on private purposes and less on occupational needs in training. On average, 54.4% of all people participating in formal or non-formal training do so predominantly for vocational purposes. However, the same holds true for only around one third of people with an ISCED level 1-2 and for 47.3% in the age group of 55-59. There are also significant gender differences: women's training is linked far more often to private purposes than men's (52.4% vs. 37.2%).

In general, it appears that a strong integration in the labour market and higher level of qualifications tend to result in higher participation in training programmes, especially in training for vocational purposes.

More detailed data, which are available for gainfully employed persons participating in **non-formal vocational training**, are in line with this general trend. According to these data, less qualified people in the labour market (non-skilled workers) have a very low participation rate (only 1.6%) in vocational training measures. In contrast, almost one out of five scientists is involved in training. The overall participation rate is 7.5%, and gender differences are marginal (women 7.7%, men 7.3%). Thus, in the case of women participating in the labour market, they do not encounter any significant disadvantages in this respect.

At the same time LFS data point towards significant differences in the various business sectors. The highest participation rate can be found in the 'education sector' (18.4%), followed by the 'credit and insurance sector' (14.4%) and the 'health, social and veterinary sector' (12.8%). Below average participation rates are in certain tertiary business sectors such as 'wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles; and personal and household goods' (5.5%) and 'hotels and restaurants' (2.5%). Data also indicate a relatively low integration of workers in training measures both in certain areas of the secondary sector ('manufacturing' - 5.5%; 'construction' - 4.1%) as well as of the primary sector ('agriculture, hunting and forestry' - 4.2%).

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

The differences above regarding the participation of adults in lifelong learning have to be seen as a structural and, for now, an ongoing problem. The below average participation rates of older, less educated and less qualified people as well as of people without Austrian citizenship are therefore an important challenge for an integrative lifelong learning policy. Differentiated measures should be taken to remove obstacles and to increase the participation rates of these groups.

One of the main problems is a general lack of information on lifelong learning offer and services. This is true irrespective of multiple sources of information available in Austria, e.g. information centres, websites. According to Schneeberger/Mayr (2004:94f), over 40% of low-qualified workers and over 35% of skilled workers do not feel well informed about training measures. At the same time, the people who have the greatest need to participate in training measures (such as individuals who left schooling without formal qualifications – which is often closely connected to negative learning experiences and a resulting low learning motivation – or migrants confronted with language problems) appear to have even more severe problems in accessing guidance or counselling. Customer-tailored and low-threshold services should be improved and expanded to meet the needs of these groups. Furthermore, it will be necessary to improve the interlinking and co-ordination of the wide range of already existing offers.

In this context, further important aspects to be taken into consideration are the costs of training, limited financial resources and a lack of information regarding existing subsidies. These are all considerable obstacles to an increased participation in further education and training. Moreover, the design of training measures must reflect the time resources of the individuals, since flexible working time arrangements and care responsibilities are factors that limit their possibilities to take part in training measures.

Furthermore, information services and specific offers should be targeted at small enterprises. Surveys show that the participation rate of employees declines with the size of an enterprise. Most recent data (available for Vienna, waff 2005) indicate that 80% of enterprises with a maximum of four employees did not invest in training. For enterprises with 100 or more employees, the rate was only 27%. The willingness of companies to encourage their staff to participate in training activities is an important access gate to skill development in the context of job related training. The ESF mid-term evaluation (WIFO/IHS/L&R 2005) demonstrated that especially small enterprises with less than

10 employees hardly nominated employees for adult training activities, although the unemployment risk in these companies is above average and continuous training would be of high importance. Participation in training activities still considerably depends on the initiative of employees.

Policies for lifelong learning have to take into account these obstacles. One specific problem is the low number of older people taking part in continuing education. This problem appears to be even more severe when the relatively low employment rate of people of 55+ years of age is taken into account. Therefore, it appears to be necessary to promote lifelong learning for all age groups and therefore to improve new approaches in training measures that are tailored to the needs of different target groups, especially older people.

3 Quality and impact of training

In the programming period 2000-2006, lifelong learning was a priority within the ESF. This included the improvement of IT structures in schools, the promotion of adult training and an increase in the inclusion of women in science and universities.

In the field of adult training, the following measures were subsidised:

- completion of basic school qualifications;
- preparation for the vocational matriculation examination (apprenticeship graduates can take this exam entitling them to enrol in a university);
- training offers to minorities;
- online counselling for adult training.

With these activities, ESF interventions focussed on those areas of LLL which had been neglected before. Another result was the improvement in the permeability of educational strands by giving people with an apprenticeship degree access to higher education.

Results of this ESF priority show that many problems that occur in the integration of disadvantaged groups into primary education are similar in adult training. Thus, future ESF interventions should develop and refine innovative approaches of targeting specific groups.

In the programming period 2000-2006, a further ESF strand concerning LLL was the training of employees. This was implemented as part of the priority 'flexibility on the labour market', which mainly focused on job-related training. The target groups were women in general, older men (45+), and low qualified men under 45 who were trained within a job rotation project or training network including several companies.

Moreover, companies with a staff of up to a total of 50 were entitled to two-day training guidance. This priority was intended to include staff that would not normally be nominated for participation in training courses.

Positive effects of adult training, even though only moderate, could be identified in relation to decision making power, rises in income and in-company position.

In a survey of 800 participants who had taken part in adult training, 83% said that the acquired knowledge and competences were useful for carrying out their job tasks (WIFO/IHS/L&R 2005). Only 6% of female and 4% of male participants declared that they moved to a higher position in the company hierarchy due to training activities. Furthermore, only 17% of women and 11% of men who participated in a training measure noted an increase in their income. However, only half of them saw a connection with the training course. Additionally, 17% of female and 11% of male participants admitted an increase in their decision making power. In total, 27% of women and 22% of men saw positive impacts on their vocational development due to the skill development.

Above-average positive effects were registered amongst participants in long-term training measures that incur higher costs. However, data show that the majority of participants (71%) attended training not more than 35 hours long. This is mainly because companies (especially small ones) state that they are unable to spare the trainees for a longer period while still being able to continue normal working.

Analysis of employment careers of training participants shows a slightly positive impact of the training measure when compared to the careers of non-participants. A one-year follow-up monitoring, showed the difference between the participant and the non-participant group to be, for the participant group, 10 days more in employment and three days less in unemployment. This has to be considered in the context of short training periods.

4 National strategies and measures that demonstrate promising practice

The ESF was important for the enhancement of adult training for employees. The effects were fairly positive (see section 3). However, the impact of ESF could be improved by putting a stronger emphasis on training activity plans for companies. These plans should be elaborated in greater detail and should focus on including the whole staff into training measures. Furthermore, the staff should also be involved in the development of training activity plans. In addition, companies should be supported in the development of their training and LLL strategy for the whole enterprise. Training activity counselling should be intensified to address the lack of information about training.

Groups who are less willing to participate in training must be approached separately and with special methods. Several projects to improve this are taking place at the regional and local level and discussions on improvements are underway. One successful example is an ongoing project in Vienna called "ARLE" (*Arbeiten-Lernen-Leben*, working-learning-living) which is aimed at employees with migration background. It shows promising results in activating employees to participate in learning activities by reaching them through their migrant community-based associations. In general, such innovative learning methods and training approaches to disadvantaged groups are still lacking. At the same time, it can be said that the implementation of the national lifelong learning strategy is still work in progress and a focus for the year 2008.

5 Bibliography

BMWA (2007): *Wirtschaftsbericht Österreich 2007*, Vienna.

bm:bwk (2004a): *OECD-Länderprüfung über Erwachsenenbildung II. Prüfbericht*, Vienna.

bm:bwk (2004b): *OECD-Länderprüfung über Erwachsenenbildung I. Hintergrundbericht Österreich, Langfassung*, Vienna.

Brüning, Gerhild (2002): *Benachteiligte in der Weiterbildung*, in: dies./Kuwan, Helmut (Hg.): *Benachteiligte und Bildungsferne – Empfehlungen für die Weiterbildung*, Bielefeld, S. 7–117.

Lassnigg, Lorenz (2000): *Lifelong Learning: Österreich im Kontext internationaler Strategien und Forschungen*, IHS, Reihe Soziologie 45, Vienna.

Lechner, Ferdinand/Leodolter, Katrin/Wetzel, Petra (fortlaufend): *Begleitende Evaluierung ‚PISA Innovativ‘ – Modellprojekte zur Verbesserung der beruflichen Entwicklung bildungsferner und bildungsbenachteiligter ArbeitnehmerInnen*, Vienna.

Obermayr, Bernhard (o.J.): *‚Bildungsferne Gruppen‘, Impulspapier des Zukunftszentrums Tirol*.

OECD (2004): *Thematic Review on Adult Learning*, Country Note Austria.

Pont, Beatriz (2004): *‚Improving Access to and Participation in Adult Learning in OECD Countries‘*, in: *European Journal of Education*, Vol.39/1/2004, S. 31-45.

Schneeberger, Arthur/Mayr, Thomas (2004): *Berufliche Weiterbildung in Österreich und im europäischen Vergleich*, Forschungsbericht an das Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit, Vienna.

Statistik Austria (2007): *Arbeitskräfteerhebung 2006*, Vienna.

waff (2005): *Wiener Beschäftigungs- und Qualifizierungsmonitor*, Juni 2005, Vienna.

WIFO / IHS / L&R Sozialforschung (2005): *Evaluierung ESF 2000-2006 Ziel 3 Österreich*. Aktualisierung der Halbzeitbewertung, Vienna.

Poland

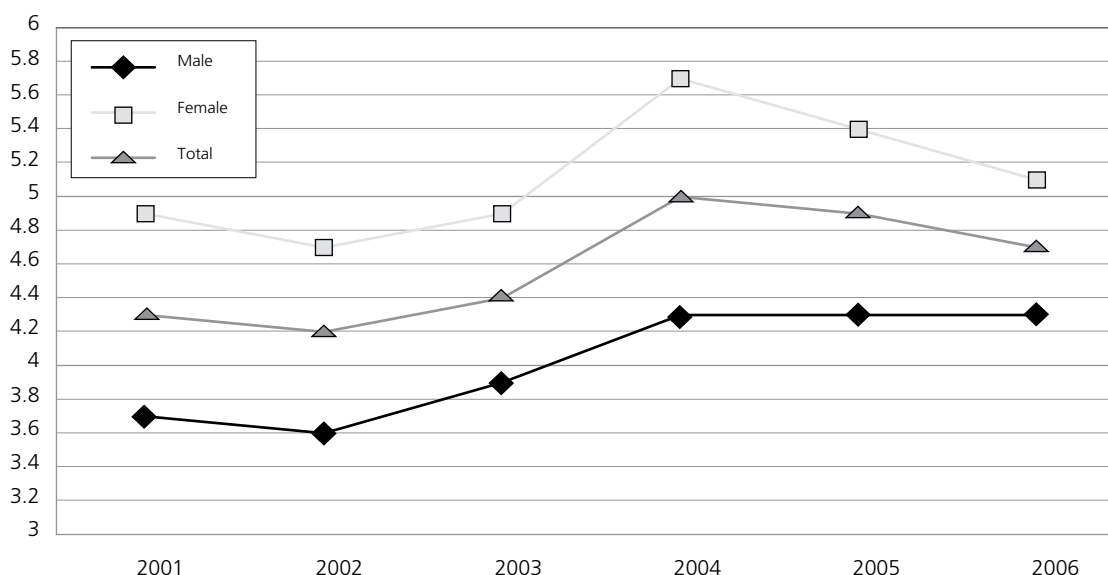
1 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

The participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning (LLL) in Poland is relatively low: in 2006 it amounted to 4.7% (Table 1 in the Annex). The participation of adults in lifelong learning in 2001-2004 slightly increased (3% to 5%) and decreased to 4.9% in 2005 and 4.7% in 2006.

- **Educational level:** the most frequent participants in lifelong learning are people with High Educational Attainment (13.1%). It is 3.3% for those with Medium Educational Attainment and only (0.6%) for people with Low Educational Attainment;
- **Working status:** employees are the most likely to participate in lifelong learning (5.9%), the unemployed less so (3.7%), and the economic inactive only 2.4%¹⁷⁴.

The level of education and age most differentiate participation in lifelong learning. The main participants in training are well-educated and young people.

Graph 1: Adult population participating in education and training in Poland 2001-2006



Source: Table 1 (see annex)

The participation of adults (25+) in LLL closely correlates to:

- **Age:** participation in LLL decreases with age: those least likely to learn are the oldest people (0.8% of people aged 55 to 64); the most frequent learners are young people (10.6% of people aged 25 to 34);
- **Gender:** women participate in learning more (5.1%) than men (4.4%);

The decrease in the participation in lifelong learning in 2004 to 2006 concerned women (from 5.7% to 5.1%); in the case of men it remained stable (4.3%). In Poland women are better educated than men¹⁷⁵, and their numbers in education indicates a method of adjustment to difficult conditions for participation in the labour market¹⁷⁶. The highest level of economic activity is visible in the case of young women. Temporary limitations connected with taking care of children cause the decrease of educational activity of young women¹⁷⁷. There is more time when children become independent but the vision of approaching retirement discourages participation in education.

⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ The data in brackets concern 2006.

⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ In the population aged 25 to 64 there are 15% more women with a higher education than men, and with education below secondary – there are 19% fewer women than men; Kotowska I. E., Sztanderska U., I. Wóycicka, *Między domem a pracą. Rekomendacje*, IBnGR, Warsaw 2007, p. 13.

⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ Sztanderska U., *Aktywność zawodowa kobiet w Polsce. Jakie szanse? Jakie rezultaty?* in: Wóycicka I [ed.] *Szanse na wzrost dzietności – jaka polityka rodzinna? Polskie Forum Strategii Lizbońskiej*, Niebieskie Księgi 2005 Gdańsk 2005.

⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ In the result of special research it was determined that the share of women in training is negatively connected with the number of children up to 15 years old in a household. Source: Kotowska I. E., Sztanderska U., Wóycicka I. (ed.) *Aktywność zawodowa i edukacyjna a obowiązki rodzinne w Polsce w świetle badań empirycznych* IBnGR, Warsaw 2007, p. 237.

Although, there is limited awareness in Poland for the need of lifelong learning, LLL has significantly increased recently. As research shows, the number of participants in training between 2000 and 2005 doubled, and about 45% of Poles are interested in education. The greatest interest to improve qualifications is amongst young people aged 25 to 29. Moreover, older people are also more interested in widening their knowledge¹⁷⁸.

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

Low qualified people, people living in rural areas and small towns and older people are the groups with limited access to training.

Basic obstacles to the participation of **low qualified people** in training are:

- Deficiencies within the framework of vocational qualifications and personal competencies (e.g. the ability to read with understanding, write, count, knowledge of foreign languages and computer skills);
- Low tendency to participate in training caused by the lack of motivation;
- A lack of accessible and State-supported programmes of lifelong learning. Low qualified people, usually the least productive, usually have a low income, which limits their possibility to finance (co-finance) education from their own resources;
- Inability to solve day-to-day problems concerning their living conditions and their situation in the labour market.

The basic causes of low participation of **people living in rural areas and small towns**¹⁷⁹ also include an unequal distribution of the networks providing educational services - often training institutions are situated in cities¹⁸⁰.

The basic causes of low participation of **older people** in lifelong learning are:

- Low assessment of the benefits of investing in education, because of a relatively short period of economic activity before retirement, and a tendency to think they are "too old" for education;
- A significant relationship between age and level of education: older people are, generally, more poorly educated than younger people;
- The mismatch of education available to the needs of older people, particularly a shortage of user-friendly learning on offer to older people e.g. distance learning, learning with the help of individual instructors or in small groups. There is also a lack of an individual approach in educational programmes, which would take the heterogeneity of knowledge and vocational skills of older people into account.

A key question is whether the training provided enables adults in Poland to progress in the labour market. The analysis of the Polish labour market indicates that with development of knowledge and vocational skills, people's participation in employment increases and the risk of unemployment and economic inactivity decreases. However, training does not always provide knowledge that is adequate to the needs of the labour market. The key reason is the lack of information on the current and future demand for education from employers. Moreover, there are no systematic forecasts of labour demand for educational level and vocation at a regional and local perspective. Also, educational institutions are often poorly equipped and offer outdated vocational education programmes¹⁸¹.

(¹⁷⁸) *Szkolenia w Polsce*, Raport IPSOS, 2006, Ipsos, *Spółeczeństwo i tendencje, Polacy chcą się szkolić*, http://www.ipsos.pl/new/3_4_023.html access 11.11.2007

(¹⁷⁹) Research indicates that the smaller locality, the smaller percentage of people participating in training (Kotowska I.E., Sztanderska U., Wóycicka I. (ed.) *Aktywność zawodowa i edukacyjna a obowiązki rodzinne w Polsce w świetle badań empirycznych*, IBnGR, Warsaw 2007, s. 227). The inhabitants of the countryside constitute only 9.6% of the participants of lifelong learning, and the inhabitants of small towns (up to 10,000 inhabitants) – 9%. The remaining 81.4% are the inhabitants of medium and big cities (the Ministry of Education and Science, *Edukacja ustawiczna. Raport o stanie edukacji ustawicznej w Polsce w roku 2005*, Warsaw 2005).

(¹⁸⁰) See: *Modernizacja kształcenia ustawicznego i kształcenia dorosłych w Polsce, jako integralnych części uczenia się przez całe życie*, a report developed for the Ministry of National Education and Sport, Stockholm University, Institute of International Education, http://www.men.gov.pl/ksztzaw/strategia/modern_spis.php access 5.11.2007.

(¹⁸¹) See: *Modernizacja kształcenia ustawicznego i kształcenia dorosłych w Polsce, jako integralnych części uczenia się przez całe życie*, report developed for the Ministry of National Education and Sport, Stockholm University, Institute of International Education, http://www.men.gov.pl/ksztzaw/strategia/modern_spis.php access 6.11.2007.

3 Quality and impact of training

Education in Poland is one of the basic factors shaping the chances of employment. It means that unemployment or early exit from the labour market can result from inadequate qualifications, and difficulty adjusting them to market requirements. This results from an ineffective system of education¹⁸².

Key factors determining the quality and impact of training for adults:

- The level of the adjustment of courses and training content to the demands of the labour market;
- Training methods, location and time of training;
- The accreditation system and certification, level of knowledge about accreditation systems, the analysis of the effectiveness of lifelong learning.

The quality of lifelong learning sometimes leaves much to be desired. As research shows lifelong learning institutions seldom make use of certification and do not ensure that teachers have appropriate qualifications.

The verification of vocational skills and qualifications acquired from external examination centres is limited. The shortage of adequate personnel in adult education with appropriate education or modern teaching methods is also a significant problem.¹⁸³

There is only a limited assessment of educational classes, and graduate destinations and demand for educational services reflect the weakness of the educational services market and a low competition culture. Educational market institutions usually compete with each other through price rather than quality of service provision.¹⁸⁴

With some shortages in training, a view is that lifelong learning is a guarantee to improve and maintain a position in the labour market, and training is a form of investment in human capital. In 2004, the Central Statistical Office carried out research into the processes and phenomena related to education, to establish the needs and educational aspirations of the population. Of those surveyed, good education - which facilitates the possibility of gaining work, achieving promotion, wage increase, and increase in social prestige – has a significant influence¹⁸⁵.

4 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

After the accession of Poland to the EU, interest in the problem of lifelong learning increased. Several strategic documents have been developed and gradually implemented:

- **Strategia rozwoju kształcenia ustawicznego do roku 2010**¹⁸⁶ (Lifelong Learning Development Strategy up to 2010). Its main objective is to define the direction of the development of lifelong learning and a knowledge-based society. The objective concurs with EU policy aimed at active participation in citizenship, personal fulfilment, adjustment to changes and facilitation of gaining employment. The realisation of strategic objectives is based on the following actions:
 - better access to lifelong learning;
 - improvement in the quality of lifelong learning;
 - cooperation and partnership;
 - increase in investment in human resources;
 - development of information resources and advisory services within the framework of lifelong learning;
 - awareness of the role and significance of lifelong learning.
- **Educational Development Strategy for 2007-2013 (Strategia rozwoju edukacji na lata 2007-2013)**¹⁸⁷. This document defines strategic intentions for educational development for forthcoming years. Pre-school education and an increase in the share of adults in lifelong learning are the most important challenges. Access to financial resources is a barrier to development programmes, hence significant emphasis is put on the possibility of co-financing education from EU resources. Within the framework of lifelong learning the forecasted changes concern the creation of adequate mechanisms to allow for effective financing of lifelong learning from the State budget, local government budgets and private resources (employers and the training participants).

⁽¹⁸²⁾ *Edukacja dla pracy. Raport o Rozwoju Społecznym Polska 2007*, UNDP, Warszawa 2007, <http://www.undp.org.pl/files/647/Edukacja%20dla%20pracy.pdf> access 9.11.2007.

⁽¹⁸³⁾ *Raport o Rozwoju Społecznym Polska 2004*, UNDP, Warsaw 2004, p. 61-64.

⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ The Ministry of Education and Science, *Edukacja ustawiczna 2005, Raport o stanie edukacji ustawicznej w Polsce w roku 2005*, Warsaw 2005, p. 81.

⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ Central Statistical Office, *Ścieżki edukacyjne Polaków*, Warsaw 2005.

⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ The Ministry of National Education and Sport, *Strategia rozwoju kształcenia ustawicznego w Polsce do roku 2010*, Warsaw 2003; http://www.men.gov.pl/ksztzaw/strategia/strat_ust.php access 13.11.2007.

⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ The Ministry of National Education and Sport, *Strategia rozwoju edukacji na lata 2007-2013*, August 2005, http://www.nauka.gov.pl/mein/gALLERY/16/18/16188/strategia_2007_2013.pdf access 13.12.2007.

- **The Development of Education in Rural Areas Strategy for 2007-2013 (*Strategia Rozwoju Edukacji na Obszarach Wiejskich na lata 2007-2013*)** aims to popularise pre-school education, improve the educational process and increase educational, social and cultural activity in rural environments¹⁸⁸.

This documents falls within the framework of the Lisbon Strategy and serves as a basis for the further creation of lifelong learning development programmes which are essential for the widening and diversification of the education offered. As OECD research shows, the problem is that the development of strategic documents substitute actions such as the monitoring and evaluation of applied solutions, which makes good and bad practice difficult to identify. It also hampers identification of inefficient solutions, where public resources could be more effectively utilised.¹⁸⁹

The National Reform Programme 2005-2008 enabled the government to develop the **Lifelong Learning Strategy (*Strategia uczenia się przez całe życie*)** in 2007, the equivalent of EU Lifelong Learning Strategy. Apart from lifelong learning, the strategy covers all areas of education and training. Lifelong learning is financed from many resources, including:

- The State budget and local government budgets;
- Earmarked funds: the Labour Fund, the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, the Programme of the Support of Economic Activity of the Disabled and earmarked subsidies for support programmes;
- European funds (Phare¹⁹⁰, EU Structural funds, ESF);
- enterprises;
- the learners' own funds.

Research is not available which would allow a calculation of the total amount of budgetary resources allocated to adult education. According to Research on the Educational Activity of Adults (2003) about 30% of training participants financed their own education¹⁹¹. Tax solutions in force until 2004 allowed

for Personal Income Tax (PIT) exemptions for education, but not any more.

It is impossible to measure employer engagement in organising training because of the lack of systematic data. According to research (2005), 90% of companies employing over nine employees, have training¹⁹², which indicates a significant engagement of enterprises in lifelong learning. However, it should be remembered that much of the training is obligatory, i.e. health and safety training. Generally, training in most of companies is for specific knowledge, updating practical or vocational skills, or developing skills essential to a company's market position (sales). Also, to a lesser extent, employee development and improving IT or language skills is required by companies. Thus, training is the answer to the needs of the firm.

Other research (2002) indicated that employee training was only available in 41.4% of Polish enterprises; Training was undertaken in large enterprises (250+ employees) twice as often as in small enterprises (fewer than 50 employees).¹⁹³

There has been no debate on the appropriate financial model for adult education in Poland; this is a key issue for the development of lifelong learning in terms of increasing adult educational activity, and improving access to training¹⁹⁴.

ESF resources enable increased participation in lifelong learning in the Polish labour force. These resources support the educational system, promote and improve vocational training and economic activation through training, and improve the qualifications of unemployed people and those at risk of unemployment.

During the first years of Poland's EU membership (2004-2006) EFS was allocated to the Human Resources Development Sector Operational Programme, one of the priorities of the Regional Development Integrated Operational Programme and participation in EQUAL Community Initiative. During that time, resources were allocated to adult education and education of the unemployed in particular.

During the period of the programme, 2007 to 2013, enterprises are able to facilitate the growth of employment and job

⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ The Ministry of National Education, *Strategia rozwoju edukacji na obszarach wiejskich na lata 2007-2013*, project, http://bip.men.gov.pl/akty_projekty/edukacja_na_obszarach_wiejskich_041206.pdf access 12.11.2007.

⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *Kształcenie ustawiczne w Polsce na tle innych krajów – na podstawie badania TRAL*, <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/index.php?gid=505> access 11.11.2007.

⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ The issues connected with vocational education can be found among *Phare – Socio-economic Cohesion* programmes. The programmes were aimed at changing the qualifications of unemployed people, reducing social exclusion, promoting entrepreneurship and development of personnel in SMEs.

⁽¹⁹¹⁾ The Ministry of Economy and Labour, *Uczenie się dorosłych. Przegląd tematyczny. Raport źródłowy*. Polska, OECD, Warsaw 2005, p. 50.

⁽¹⁹²⁾ *Szkolenia w Polsce. Badanie dotyczące potrzeb szkoleniowych*, Obserwatorium Zarządzania, IPSOS, Nowoczesna firma, Warsaw 2006.

⁽¹⁹³⁾ Matysiak A. *Kształcenie ustawiczne w Polsce. Korzyści i bariery rozwoju*, Niebieskie Księgi 2003 Nr 8, Polskie Forum Strategii Lizbońskiej, Gdańsk 2003, p. 12.

⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ *Edukacja dla pracy. Raport o Rozwoju Społecznym Polska 2007*, UNDP, Warsaw 2007, p. 61, <http://www.undp.org.pl/files/647/Edukacja%20dla%20pracy.pdf> access 9.11.2007.

creation thanks to EFS resources within the framework of the Human Capital Operational Programme. The main objective is the growth of employment and social cohesion, with the following aims:

- increase the level and quality of education and better links to the labour market;
- adjusting the labour force to the changing situation in the labour market;
- reducing social exclusion.

The Human Capital Operational Programme forecasts actions for the increase in accessibility and quality of lifelong learning and includes: improvement in skills of the education personnel; systematic update of educational content and better adjustment to individual needs, and decreasing the knowledge and skills deficit of adults.

ESF resources are allocated, mainly, for financing training for unemployed and employed people. The resources are only within the framework of the Human Capital Operational Programme, which will realise training directly for enterprises; EUR 2.3 billion is forecast until 2013¹⁹⁵.

ESF resources target people with greater skill deficiencies and people less favoured in the labour market and older people in particular. A combination of public and private resources allocated for adult education will be means tested since it is more difficult for people with low education and/or a lack of qualifications to access education and paid activity.

Estimates are that there is no horizontal or vertical integration of adult education nor any connections between those actions and regional development, infrastructure development or social policy and welfare. The institutional shape of lifelong learning indicates the need to:

- build a coherent adult education system;
- appoint an institution to solely engage in adult education, and act as coordinator within that system¹⁹⁶.

Social partners should play a significant role in the creation of an adult education system as they are not currently very active in that respect¹⁹⁷.

The level and accessibility of adult education in Poland has a long way to go in order to gain and maintain jobs and encourage active citizens. The basic problems of Polish lifelong learning are: how to increase the number of people in adult education, how to motivate people to take up education, and how to shape the adult education system.

5 Bibliography

Edukacja dla pracy. Raport o Rozwoju Społecznym Polska 2007, UNDP, Warsaw 2007.

Central Statistical Office, *Ścieżki edukacyjne Polaków*, Warsaw 2005.

Kotowska I.E., Sztanderska U., Wóycicka I. (red.) *Aktywność zawodowa i edukacyjna a obowiązki rodzinne w Polsce w świetle badań empirycznych*, IBnGR, Warsaw 2007.

Kotowska I.E., Sztanderska U., Wóycicka I., *Między domem a pracą. Rekomendacje*, IBnGR, Warsaw 2007.

Matysiak A. *Kształcenie ustawiczne w Polsce. Korzyści i bariery rozwoju*, Niebieskie Księgi 2003 Nr 8, Polskie Forum Strategii Lizbońskiej, Gdańsk 2003.

The Ministry of Education and Science, *Edukacja ustawiczna 2005, Raport o stanie edukacji ustawicznej w Polsce w roku 2005*, Warsaw 2005.

The Ministry of National Education and Sport, *Strategia rozwoju edukacji na lata 2007-2013*, Warsaw, August 2005.

The Ministry of National Education and Sport, *Strategia rozwoju kształcenia ustawicznego w Polsce do roku 2010*, Warsaw 2003.

The Ministry of National Education, *Strategia rozwoju edukacji na obszarach wiejskich na lata 2007-2013*, project Warsaw.

The Ministry of Economy and Labour, *Uczenie się dorosłych. Przegląd tematyczny. Raport źródłowy. Polska*, OECD, Warsaw 2005.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *Kształcenie ustawiczne w Polsce na tle innych krajów – na podstawie badania TRAL*, Warsaw 2003.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *Uczenie się dorosłych. przegląd tematyczny Polska - notatka na temat kraju*, Warsaw 2006.

Modernizacja kształcenia ustawicznego i kształcenia dorosłych w Polsce, jako integralnych części uczenia się przez całe życie, Report developed for the Ministry of National Education and Sport, Stockholm University, Institute of International Education *Raport o Rozwoju Społecznym Polska 2004*, UNDP, Warsaw 2004.

⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ *Edukacja dla pracy. Raport o Rozwoju Społecznym Polska 2007*, UNDP, Warszawa 2007, p. 61, <http://www.undp.org.pl/files/647/Edukacja%20dla%20pracy.pdf> access 9.11.2007.

⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ *Compare Raport o Rozwoju Społecznym Polska 2004*, UNDP, Warsaw 2004, pp. 61-64.

⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, *Uczenie się dorosłych. przegląd tematyczny Polska - notatka na temat kraju*, Warsaw, 2006.

Szkolenia w Polsce. Badanie dotyczące potrzeb szkoleniowych, Obserwatorium Zarządzania, IPSOS, Nowoczesna firma, Warsaw 2006.

Sztanderska U., *Aktywność zawodowa kobiet w Polsce. Jakie szanse? Jakie rezultaty?* (in:) Wóycicka I. [ed.] *Szanse na wzrost dzietności – jaka polityka rodzinna?* Polskie Forum Strategii Lizbońskiej, Niebieskie Księgi 2005, Gdańsk 2005.

Annex

Table 1: Life-long learning (participation of the adult population in education and training) in Poland						
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Aged 25-64 total	4.3	4.2	4.4	5.0	4.9	4.7
Aged 25-64 man	3.7	3.6	3.9	4.3	4.3	4.3
Aged 25-64 woman	4.9	4.7	4.9	5.7	5.4	5.1
Aged 25-34 total	9.4	9.7	10.4	11.0	11.2	10.6
Aged 25-34 man	8.8	9.1	9.3	9.5	10.2	10.1
Aged 25-34 woman	9.9	10.3	11.6	12.6	12.1	11.0
Aged 35-44 total	3.7	3.4	3.8	4.7	4.2	4.2
Aged 35-44 man	2.8	2.4	3.0	3.6	3.1	3.1
Aged 35-44 woman	4.7	4.4	4.7	5.8	5.4	5.4
Aged 45-54 total	1.8	1.3	1.7	2.2	2.0	2.0
Aged 45-54 man	1.5	1.2	1.6	1.8	1.4	1.6
Aged 45-54 woman	2.0	1.4	1.9	2.5	2.6	2.4
Aged 55-64 total	(0.5)	(0.4)	(0.4)	0.8	0.7	0.8
Aged 55-64 man	(0.5)	(0.4)	(0.5)	(0.9)	(0.9)	(0.9)
Aged 55-64 woman	.	.	(0.4)	(0.7)	(0.5)	(0.7)
Working status: employed total	5.5	5.2	5.8	6.6	6.2	5.9
Working status: employed man	4.5	4.2	4.7	5.2	4.9	4.8
Working status: employed woman	6.6	6.4	7.1	8.2	7.8	7.2
Working status: unemployed: total	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.6	3.6	3.7
Working status: unemployed: man	2.4	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8
Working status: unemployed: woman	3.7	3.2	3.8	4.4	4.5	4.7
Working status: inactive total	1.7	2.1	1.9	2.2	2.3	2.4
Working status: inactive man	1.6	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.8	3.1
Working status: inactive woman	1.8	2.0	1.7	2.1	2.0	2.0
High Educational Attainment total	14.4	13.7	13.6	14.7	13.7	13.1
High Educational Attainment man	12.2	12.0	12.1	12.6	11.9	11.7
High Educational Attainment woman	16.3	15.0	14.9	16.4	15.0	14.1
Medium Educational Attainment total	3.6	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.6	3.3
Medium Educational Attainment man	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.3
Medium Educational Attainment woman	3.9	3.7	3.9	4.3	3.9	3.4
Low Educational Attainment total	(0.4)	(0.3)	(0.4)	0.7	(0.6)	(0.6)
Low Educational Attainment man	(0.4)	.	(0.4)	(0.8)	(0.6)	(0.6)
Low Educational Attainment woman	(0.4)	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.6)	(0.6)	(0.5)

Source: Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines including indicators for additional employment analysis 2007 compendium, European Commission, Dg Employment, Social Affairs And Equal Opportunities, http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/pdf/2007compendium_en.pdf access 12.11.2007.

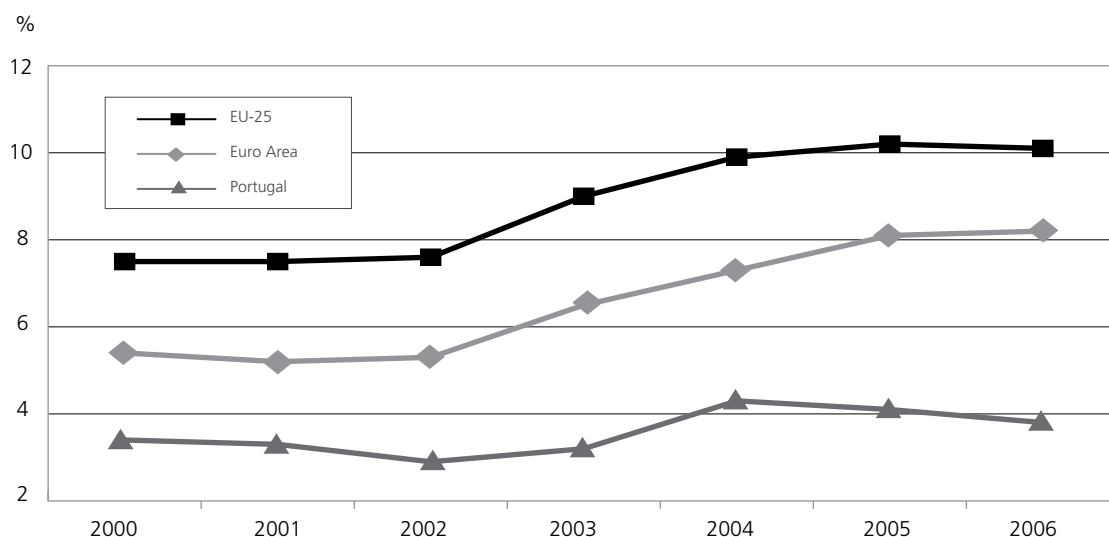
Portugal

1 Trends in the participation of adult 25+ in lifelong learning

In recent years, the percentage of Portuguese active adults participating in education and training has increased. Nevertheless, the gap between the EU-25 and Portugal has become wider (+4.1% in 2000; + 6.3% in 2006). Between 2000 and 2006, only 3.6% of Portuguese adults participated in job related education and training which is well below the average of 8.8% observed in the EU-25.

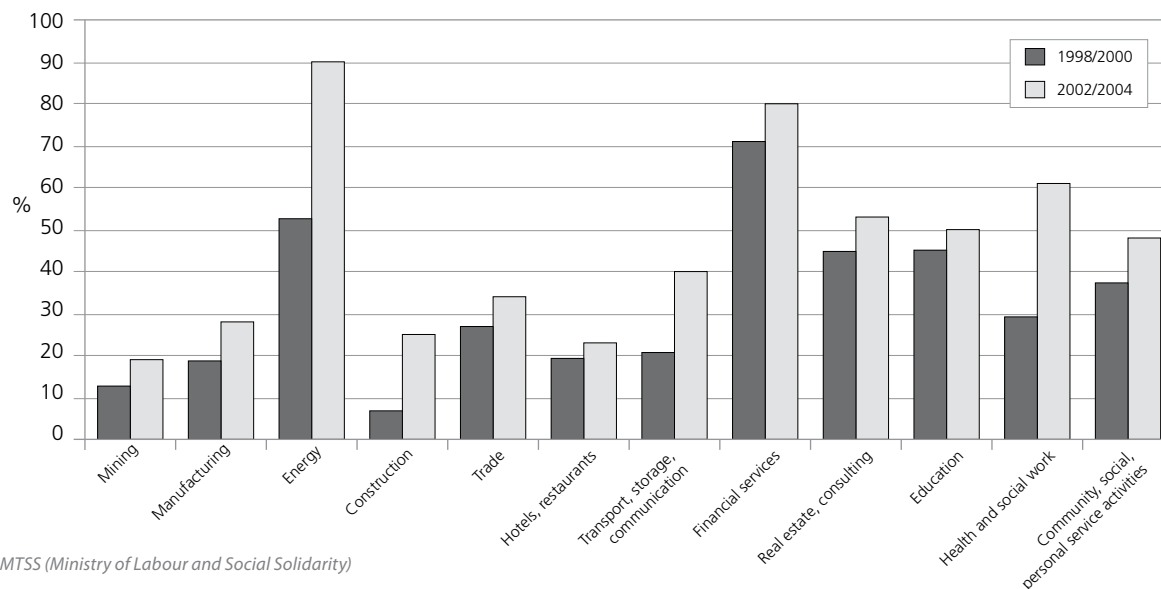
To obtain an overall perspective of the trends in the participation of adults in lifelong learning (LLL) it is necessary to combine different sources of information. The Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity (MTSS) launched two surveys on training carried out inside firms during the periods 1998-2000 and 2002-2004. The number of training activities increased in all sectors. In construction, health and social work, energy, and transport the likelihood of training increased considerably. Energy and financial services continued to be sectors in which firms offer training. In large firms, between 2002 and 2005, the number of hours dedicated to training rose from 0.7% to 1% of hours effectively worked. This trend was confirmed by training centres. According to their statistics, the number of trainers and trainees between 1999 and 2005 increased considerably (DEPP/MTSS, 2005).

Figure 1: Percentage of the adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training (2000-2006)



Source: Eurostat

Figure 2: Proportion of firms per economic activity with training activities during the periods 1998/2000 and 2002/2004



Source: MTSS (Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity)

Firms with more than 100 employees provide detailed information on vocational training by completing the 'Social Audit' (*Balanço Social*). During the period 1998-2005, the average cost and duration of each training activity decreased by more than 40% (EUR 355 in 1998; EUR 206 in 2005; 26.7 hours in 1998; 15.4 hours in 2005)¹⁹⁸. Firms paid 63.11% of the costs of these activities. This trend has occurred in the context of a growing demand for training and of a diversification and specialisation of products offered by training centres.

High and medium skilled workers receive more training than low skilled workers and managers. This asymmetric access to training remained constant during the period, but all groups receive more training now than in the previous period.

On the basis of the nationally representative Portuguese quarterly employment survey *Inquérito ao Emprego*, Budria and Pereira (2004) have concluded that the likelihood of participating in training decreases with age. The negative effect of age is larger among women than men in relation to training of a longer duration, while the opposite occurs in relation to training of a shorter duration¹⁹⁹.

Men are more likely to receive training within firms than women, who therefore seek more external training. Figures released by INE show that, between 2001 and 2006, the percentage of women enrolling in training and education activities was higher than average. Nevertheless, this gender gap is getting narrower (Figure 2).

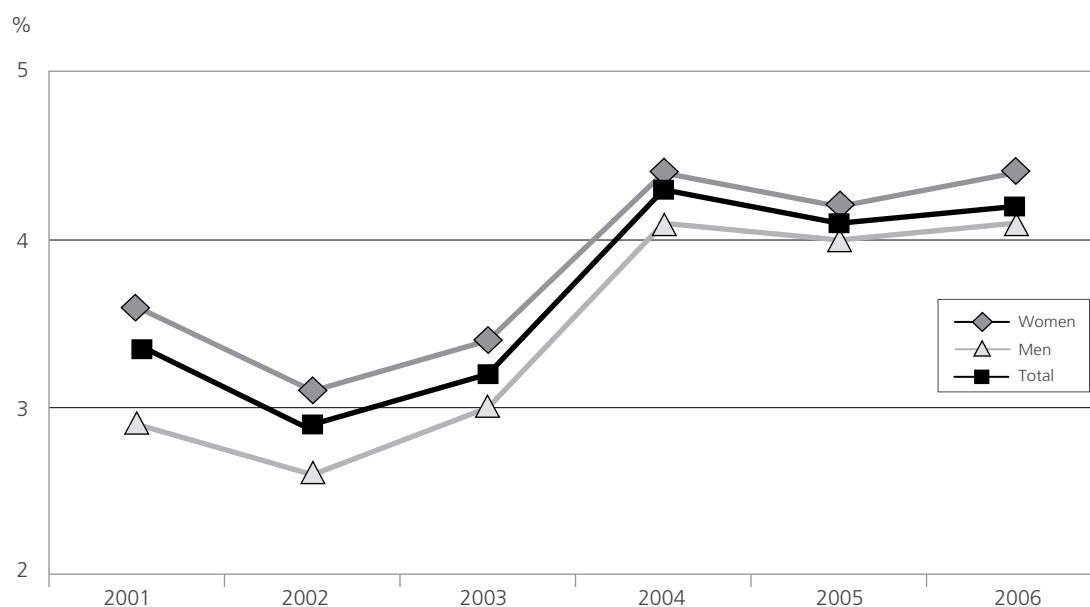
On average, training to improve current skills is shorter than other training activities. Training to move between jobs occurs within the firm and has a longer duration than training to improve current skills. Tenure and the size of the firm have positive effects on the probability of training.

40% of training was viewed as improving or updating skills. Training to start a first job represents an additional 13.5% among men and 20.7% among women; 14% of men and 8% of women trained to move jobs; and 20% is accounted for by training for personal interest or unspecified reasons.

2 Obstacles preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

Low skilled workers and older workers have low participation rates in LLL courses. Workers who have completed at least primary education are between three and four times more likely to participate in training than those who have not completed primary education. This likelihood is about one third below the average for workers aged between 30-44 years, and about one

Figure 3: Percentage of the adult population aged 25-64 participating in education and training (2001-2006)



Source: INE (National Institute of Statistics)

⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ Since firms with more than 100 workers represent only 1% of the total number of firms with activity in Portugal (although responsible for 35% of employment) it would be important to have evidence about LLL in small and medium size firms, but such data are not available.

⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ Budria and Pereira (2004) conducted their analysis with data referring to the period from 1998 to 2000. Although slightly out of date, their comprehensive study of training and education in the Portuguese labour market is a fundamental reference for this analysis, particularly because no similar study has been conducted since then.

half below the average among workers aged above 44 years (Budria and Pereira, 2004). Table 1 shows that older workers are also those more likely to have less formal school education (initial training). The combination of low initial and continuing education constitutes a considerable obstacle to socio-economic progress of low skilled workers. In terms of equity, this situation raises several concerns given the effects it is expected to have in future generations (Guichard and Larre 2006).

Table 1: Highest educational level completed by employed individuals (III 2007)

	None	1st cycle	2nd cycle	3rd cycle	Upper Secondary	Tertiary
15-24	1%	2%	19%	42%	32%	4%
25-34	2%	8%	23%	22%	23%	22%
35-44	3%	24%	29%	17%	14%	13%
>45	22%	48%	8%	9%	6%	7%

Source: INE

Firms offer training mainly to high/medium skilled employees. Adults with low qualifications are a minority in courses offered by training centres. The reasons are the lack of motivation, incompatibility of schedules, incapacity to meet training requirements, and difficulties to travel between work, training facilities, and home. Increased coordination between public authorities, schools, civil society and firms could promote better conciliation between training, work and family life. Adjustments in public transport schedules and in working time flexibility would create better conditions for low skilled individuals to enrol in training²⁰⁰. On the other hand, firms stress that the main problems in planning qualification activities are the workers' lacking resilience, low qualifications, and difficulties in balancing training and working periods (DEPP/MTSS, 2005)²⁰¹.

The Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) has a central role in the Portuguese training system. Its priorities to date have been to offer programmes to active adults (employed and unemployed) with particular attention to young adults, disabled people, immigrants and LTU. Those with higher qualifications receive less attention from IEFP and have fewer possibilities to update, recycle or acquire new skills in the public education sector. To do so, they have to enrol in courses offered by private institutions, bearing almost in full the costs of such training.

Courses for adults vary widely in their ability to increase employability. Courses that provide a technological specialisation, qualification to levels II and III, and professional conversion courses have the highest employability value. Education and vocational training courses for adults (EFA) with lowest and highest levels of qualifications and programmes for marginalised people have insufficient ability to increase employability.

There are several obstacles blocking further adult participation in LLL. First, firms invest in human capital because they expect that, in the future, the higher worker productivity will compensate for the cost of training. The high proportion of workers with fixed term contracts limits the incentives for both firms and employees to develop skills (between 2000 and 2006 the proportion of workers with temporary work contracts rose from 13.72% to 15.9%). Second, the value of training depends on the ability of firms to adapt their organisational structure. In Portugal, many micro and small firms lack qualified managers to implement adequate changes. Third, if jobs for low skilled workers were scarce, they would be forced to get additional training. Since there is a demand for such workers, they are not pressured to develop their current skills (over the past decade, almost 76% of all employed workers had only primary education or less and 7.7% had no formal education). Fourth, the Labour Code establishes that workers have the right to 35 hours of training per year, but there is insufficient monitoring of how firms meet this obligation. Closer surveillance from Inspeção Geral do Trabalho and a more demanding attitude of employees would force firms to offer more training. Investment in human capital could also gain from a system of fiscal benefits to firms who invest more in their workers.

3 Quality and impact of training

The education and vocational training system has been the object of several reforms over the past decade. Measures with positive influence on the quality of training include the certification of the training centres and the establishment of minimum requirements to be a trainer; a wider range of courses for trainers; the elaboration of studies to analyse the skills demanded in the market and the employability outcome of different courses.

A survey of trainees conducted in 2005 showed that 26.7% considered that their course contributed to job security; 26.3% recognised an improvement in their professional ability; 23.8% felt more able to cope with technological and organisational change; and 47.4% believed that their productivity increased.

Budria and Pereira (2004) found that training had an extraordinarily positive effect on wages of Portuguese workers, in fact one of the highest among the OECD countries (OECD, 2005). On average, those who have undertaken training are paid 15-17% more than those who did not. Workers with more experience, low skilled workers and women earn larger returns for their training efforts. Women are nevertheless subject to greater variation across education and experience groups. Training to expand current skills and training within the firm produce larger wage gains. Short courses raise wages more than training with a longer duration.

⁽²⁰⁰⁾ The ongoing expansion of the network of recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC) centres is expected to have positive effects on the participation of adults in training.

⁽²⁰¹⁾ These conclusions are drawn from the results of the surveys to trainers, trainees and firms presented in the evaluation study of LLL policies from the Ministry of Labour.

The ESF has been assuming a fundamental role in supporting training activities (CEDEFOP, 2007). Between 1994 and 1999, the budget of the ESF allocated to programmes of human resources and employment was EUR 1,972 million. For the 2000-2006 period, the committed budget was EUR 4,900 million.

European funds have been supporting the majority of public programmes related to education and training, from pre-school to learning activities for adults. Although several studies raise concerns regarding the efficiency with which these funds have been used (Afonso and St. Aubyn, 2005; Guichard and Larre, 2006), the current progress would not have been possible without European funds. The role of ESF in the future will depend on the ability to develop and implement schemes to improve its efficiency (e.g. the development of a stricter monitoring system; higher participation of firms and employees in covering costs). The available data suggest that ESF covers about 75% of the education and training expenses of the programmes. The state budget and social security contributions cover part of the remaining cost, and the private individuals and enterprises bear the remaining costs (CEDEFOP, 2007).

4 National strategies and measures demonstrating promising practice

During the last decade, a commitment to invest in human capital was kept even in the context of economic recession. The amount of financial resources allocated from the state budget and from the ESF to training and education reflects this commitment. The education and vocational training system had long suffered from severe problems (e.g. inefficiencies in public spending, insufficient courses with a vocational training component, lack of articulation with the labour market) that have been highlighted by national and international reports (Guichard and Larre, 2006). In recent years, a comprehensive set of reforms was launched to overcome these deficiencies.

The National Employment Plans reflect the government's concern with the low qualification of the Portuguese labour force. The Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education developed several types of adult training activities (adult education and training courses; qualifying and retraining courses; specialised and vocational courses; refresher, updating and further training courses; courses to improve organisational and management skills), but as Figure 1 and 2 highlight the achieved results are far from the desired level.

The year of 2005 was a turning point for the LLL policy. Some of the factors behind this policy shift were the streamlining of the Lisbon Agenda and the renewed European Employment Strategy (EES), the political change that took place when the governing coalition of the liberal-conservative PSD and the conservative CDS-PP lost general elections to the Socialist Party, and the fact that the new government had to present a National Reform Programme (NRP) with integrated measures to meet the targets set in the Lisbon Agenda for 2010. To overcome the low level of education of the labour force, the government decided in 2005 to concentrate efforts.

The policies outlined in 2005 are now in force and are showing significant ability to encourage low skilled adults to seek training. The "New Opportunities" Initiative is the main programme through which the government has been mobilising active adults to take up training. Several factors have contributed to the results achieved so far: the increase in the number of Centres for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC), the expansion of training options for active adults to complete primary and secondary education, a large communication campaign, and the governance model (e.g. agreements with firms to allow their employees to enrol in training).

The changes introduced in 2005 also include more support to advanced training through an increase in the number of scholarships to PhD students and post-doctoral researchers, more funding for research centres and additional incentives to enforce the links between universities, polytechnics, research centres and firms. The development of advanced training programmes for workers from a specific sector, and incentives to the creation of highly qualified jobs in firms and in research centres are some of the results of these entrenched links.

Despite the efforts to increase the qualifications of active adults that have been stressed above, there are gaps in the Portuguese training and education strategy, namely the lack of sufficient incentives for adults with secondary education to renew their qualifications or to acquire new skills. A reason for this may be that the government wants to resolve the problem of low qualifications firstly, planning to invest later in continuous training.

The ESF has been playing an important role supporting external and internal training activities (DEPP/MTSS, 2005). The 2000-2006 Operational Programmes (OP) - PRODEP III; POEFDS; POCTI; POSI; Regional OP; and Sectoral OP - were the drivers behind measures to foster RVCC and the development of the network of RVCC centres; GERIR and REDE Programmes (programmes of training within the firm); the investment in the qualification of trainers; the modernisation of the public administration, public employment services, and training centres; programmes for marginalised groups; and incentives to investment in human capital.

The resources from the 2007-2013 programming period will be used to continue to expand the number of courses with a vocational training component (the target is to attract 650.000 students to these courses); to try to qualify 1,000,000 active adults through RVCC and EFA courses; and to enlarge the network of "New Opportunities" Centres. In the National Strategic Reference Framework (QREN 2007/2013) the qualification of the population appears as a priority and therefore the "New Opportunities" Initiative will receive 70% of the funds of the thematic OP "Human Potential".

The appropriate incentives and cost sharing mechanisms for enterprises, public authorities and individuals will depend on the value each part gives to training. But in order to determine the value of training it is necessary that firms and employees adopt a medium term perspective and perceive how the organisational processes can be adapted to take advantages of such training. The high proportion of low skilled workers and managers works against a future agreement on the proportions of the costs to be borne by each part.

Over the past decade, macro-level negotiations between the government and the social partners resulted in a series of important agreements, two of them focussing on VET-issues, the Agreement on Employment Policy, Labour Market, Education and Training (2001) and the Agreement on the Reform of Vocational Training (2007), the latter preceded by a bilateral agreement between social partners (2006). At the moment, the National Strategy for Active Ageing is another important document under discussion. In Portugal, employment and vocational training policies are systematically discussed at the Permanent Commission for Social Concertation where government and social partners try to come to a common understanding of the problems and to agree upon the principles and fundamental measures in this area. Social partners, however, frequently adopt positions marked by great divergences and a low commitment to common goals (DEPP/MTSS, 2003). They tend to agree on demands directed to the government, but they rarely commit themselves to take concrete action by themselves.

Developments in European initiatives have been playing a crucial role in national strategies for adult training. The former National Action Plans (NAPs) and the NRP reflect this influence. The attention given recently to young adults in the labour market shows a commitment to adhere to European policy guidelines and that national policy is being quickly adjusted to its shifts.

5 Bibliography

Afonso, M. and F. Ferreira (2007), Vocational Education and Training in Portugal, *CEDEFOP Panorama series 144*.

Afonso, A. and M. St. Aubyn (2005), *Cross-country Efficiency of Secondary Education Provision - A Semi-parametric Analysis with Non-discretionary Inputs*, European Central Bank WP 494.

Almeida, R. and P. Carneiro (2006), 'The Return to Firm Investment in Human Capital', *World Bank Policy Research WP 3851*.

Budría, S. and P. Pereira (2004), 'On the Returns to Training in Portugal', *IZA DP N° 1429*.

Carneiro, A. and P. Portugal (2006), Earnings Losses of Displaced Workers: Evidence from a Matched Employer-Employee Data Set, *IZA DP 2289*.

CEDEFOP (2007), *O sistema de Formação Profissional em Portugal*.

DEPP/MTSS (2003), 'Avaliação do Impacto da Estratégia Europeia para o Emprego em Portugal', *Políticas Activas para a Empregabilidade, Coleção Cogitum n°2*.

DEPP/MTSS (2005), Estudo de avaliação das políticas de aprendizagem ao longo da vida, *Coleção Cogitum n°17*.

Guichard, S. and B. Larre (2006), 'Enhancing Portugal's Human Capital', *OECD Economics Department Working Papers*, No. 505, OECD Publishing.

OECD (2005), *Promoting Adult Learning*.

Pereira, P. and P. Martins (2002), *Education and Earnings in Portugal*, Banco de Portugal Conference Proceedings 2002.

Romania

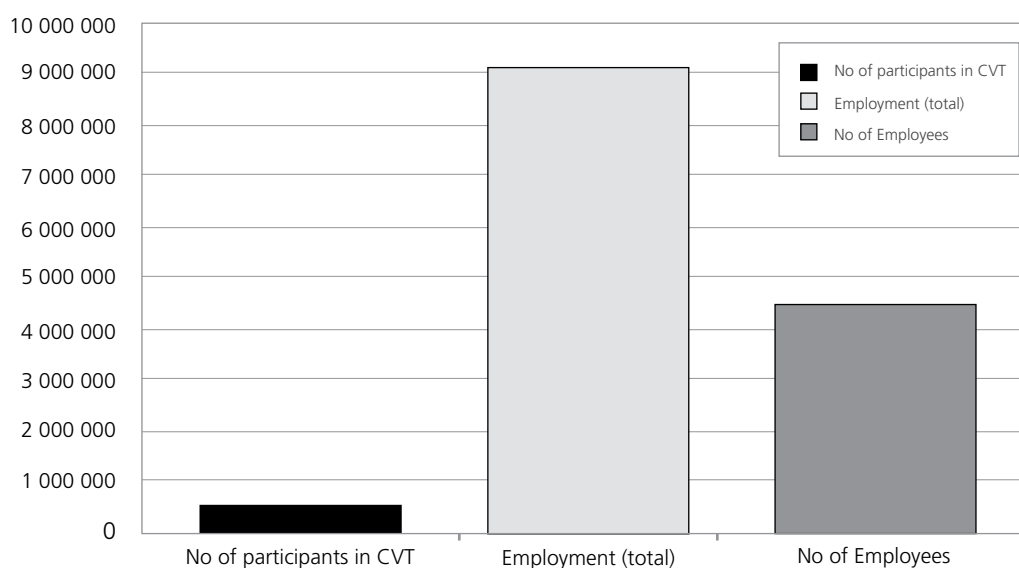
1 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

Data on enterprises show clear progress in involving key players in human resource development by providing specialised, directed training. There has been an increase of a staggering 30 percentage points compared to the values of 1999, when only 11% of Romanian enterprises were able to offer some form of training or involve their employees in lifelong learning (LLL). There has therefore been some progression when taking into account the overall participation of the population, of the active population and of employees in lifelong learning.

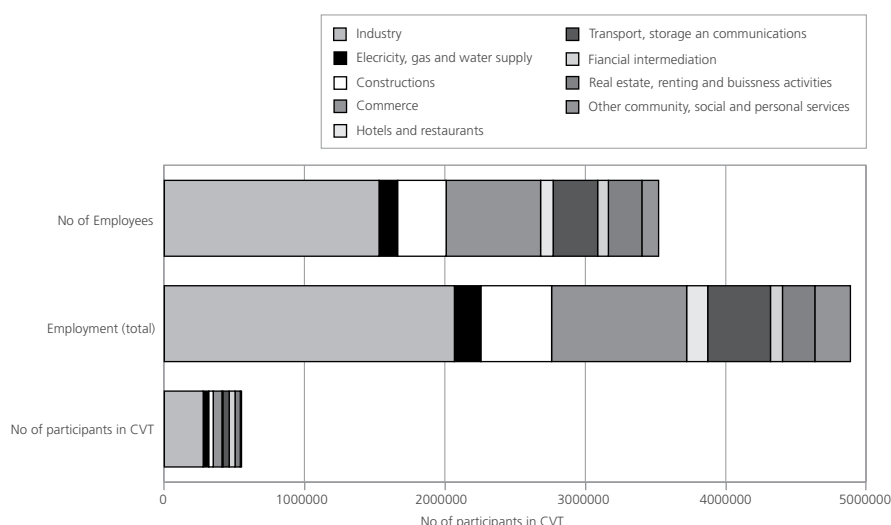
Some figures that are still circulated, depict a situation from the beginning of the decade when only 1.5%-1.6% of the total

population aged 25+ was taking part in lifelong learning. However, newly released figures from the above-mentioned investigation show that currently 3.28% of this age group in total population are involved in lifelong learning. Figures are still to be compiled to assess the participation of workers aged 25+ in lifelong learning which may show significant participation – at 2005 the figure was 6.12%. Therefore, it seems that a vibrant economy has swept off its feet a training sector that was, until a few years ago, been only marginal in the economy. Furthermore if we are to look at the participation in various forms of Continuous vocational training (CVT) and LLL of salaried employees, one notices that their share is climbing strongly to around 9.3% of their total which is estimated by the Romanian LFS (AMIGO) at around 5 million out of a total employment (occupied population) of 9.14 million. If one takes this last mentioned aggregate to see the share of participants in LLL and CVT as a percentage of the total numbers, it can be seen that the figure is as high as 6.04%. As such, when counting the total of Romania's population and all of its age groups, participation in LLL and CVT stands at a low figure of 2.55%. However, this final measure has little significance for any analysis, assessment or forecasting.

Chart No.1²⁰²: Positioning CVT - LLL on the labour market (2005 = million persons)

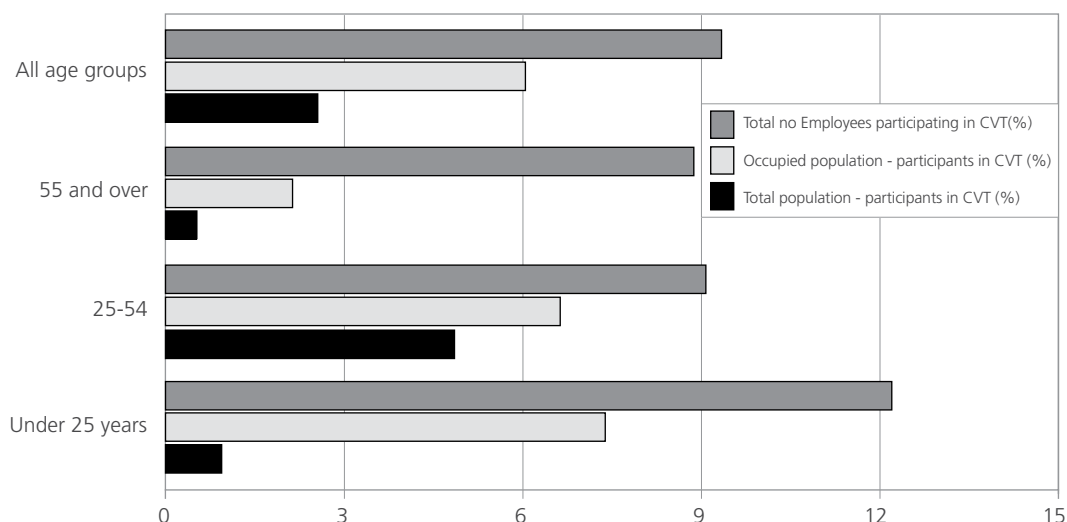


⁽²⁰²⁾ All charts and graphic representations in this paper are based on National Institute of Statistics (NIS) of Romania data, processed by Dr. Catalin Ghinararu.

Chart No.2: Positioning CVT - LLL on the labour market by sector of economic activity (2005; no of persons)

It would seem possible for the Romanian Government to reach the objective of a participation rate of 7% in LLL by 2010 for the population aged between 25 and 64. In one looks at the results from the same study, it can be seen that the participation rate of LLL and CVT is still hard to distinguish in Romania. CVT remains the main component of LLL. Therefore, there is a participation rate of 4.8% for the 25-54 age group when calculated for the country's total population. This increases to 6.63% when applying absolute numbers for the figures for total employment and climbs to 9.085% when counting their participation in CVT-LLL for salaried employees for this age group.

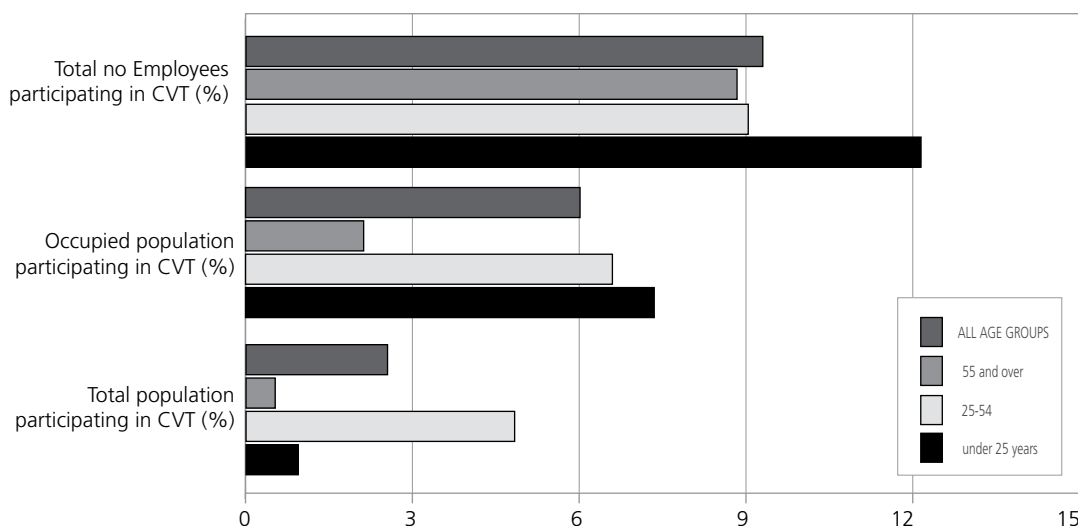
The age structure of LLL-CVT participation reveals its clear tilt towards younger generations, especially towards those below the age of 25 in the workforce; these have an insignificant rate of participation (0.9%) in forms such as learning and training when applying their absolute figures of participation to the total of population in this age group, as most of them are not yet active in the labour market and instead are enrolled in the education process. The figure jumps to 7.4% when applying the same numbers to figures for total employment in the same age group and 12.2% when counting them as share of the total number of salaried employees in their age group.

Chart No.3 : Participating in CVT by age groups as share of the total population, occupied population and total no of employees
(participants in CVT as % share of total population in each age group and as % share of total population - all age groups, 2005)

Lowest participation is ubiquitously recorded by older workers who only score a 0.5% share of participants in LLL and CVT when applying the absolute numbers to the total of population in this age group, climbing slightly to 2.1% when counting their share of total employment in their age group. The figure jumps to 8.87% when performing the ratio with the total number of salaried employees in the group. Therefore, one could say that

age is not an obstacle in LLL and CVT participation especially if one is a salaried employee. However, it seems that if not, things change dramatically for the worse with a seven percentage point difference between the share of participants in LLL-CVT calculated as a ratio to total employment and the share of participants in LLL-CVT calculated as a ratio of the number of employees clearly shows.

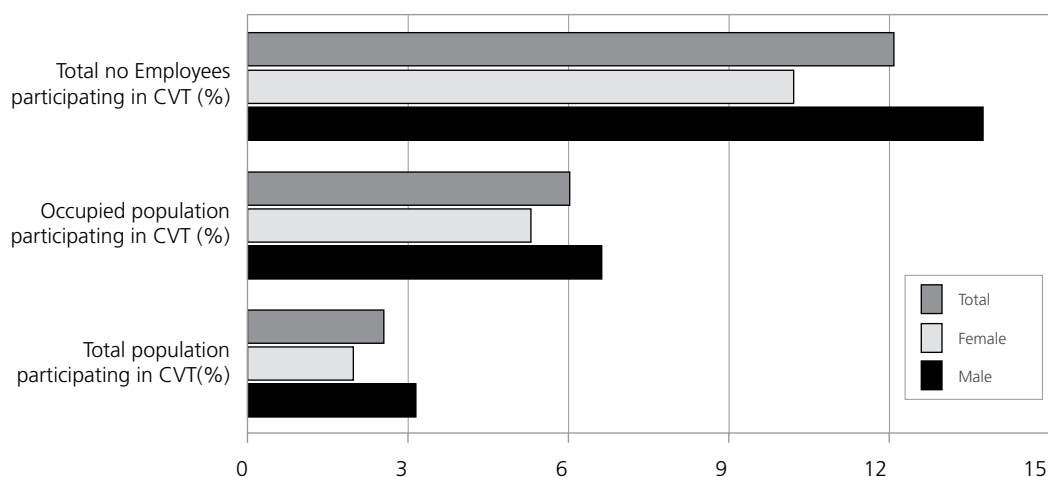
Chart No.4 : Total population, occupied population and employees participation in CVT by age groups
(participants in CVT in the age group as % share of total age group population, 2005)



When looking at gender one can see that while there are 0.5 million more women than men in the total population of Romania, their participation in CVT-LLL activities is far lower than that of their male counterparts. As a ratio of the total population, male participants in CVT-LLL constitute 3.16%, while women constitute only 1.95%. However, when calculating the same ratio for the total of the employed population, the two ratios move closer

together with the share of employed men involved in CVT-LLL being slightly above 6% while for women it is slightly lower at 5.3%. The difference widens again when calculating the ratio for the total number of waged employees, reaching approximately three percentage points; the share of male participants in CVT-LLL of the total for this population stands at 13.8% while the same percentage for women is around 10%.

Chart No.5 : Participation of the total population, occupied population and total no of employees in CVT by gender
(participants in CVT as % share of each gender's total population, 2005)



2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

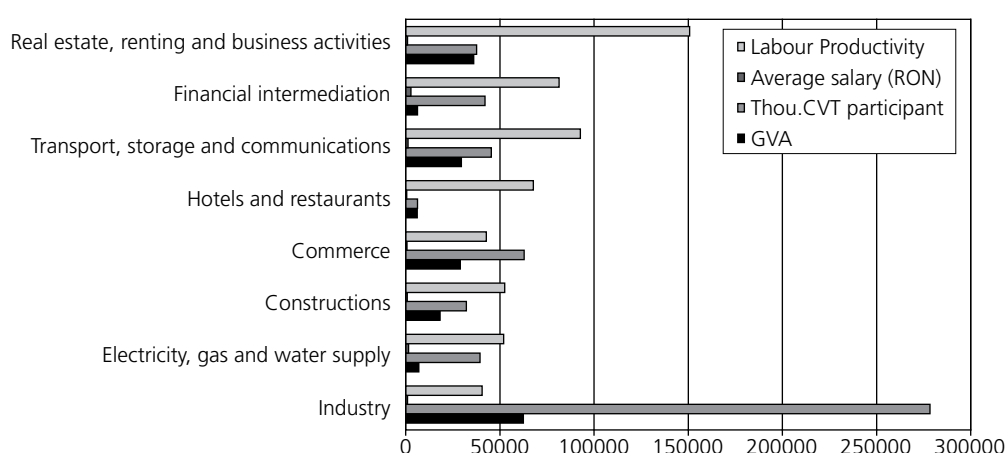
At the beginning of the decade, studies into CVT and LLL in Romanian enterprises would have highlighted the cost of training as the main obstacle in offering training to employees. Nowadays, this is not a predominant factor, although of the 26,100 enterprises that did not offer any type of CVT-LLL to their employees (59.7% of the total number of enterprise studied), around half, still indicate the high cost of training as the main hurdle. A significant share of these companies are companies in the textile and footwear industries which tend to employ a larger than average number of women; of the two industries, 61.6% of the leather industry and 56.6% of the textile industry have not been able to offer any form of LLL due to the impossibility of meeting the associated cost. The fact that such companies still contribute a significant part of the national economy and, by the nature of their activity, have low profit margins which do not allow them to invest in training and LLL for their participants, not only points to a significant obstacle in accessing LLL for many workers but also indicates one of the causes of the labour shortages facing this industry at an alarming rate. With an average salary below the national average and with no prospects of advancement through training and LLL, it is little wonder that workers shun these sectors and prefer to emigrate (even though the latter may lead to undeclared work and thus expulsion in destination countries).

However, of the enterprises that have provided some form of CVT-LLL to their employees, one third has offered the classical-type course and 94.9% have offered some form of special courses to low qualified or unqualified workers. It is therefore the vulnerable group that has received the most attention possibly courtesy of the booming activity in construction and infrastructure - both labour hungry sectors - who also feel the loss of labour inflicted by emigration.

Other vulnerable categories, like ethnic minorities or people with disabilities are not evident as beneficiaries of training or LLL, either in training for entrepreneurs or traditional and more expensive forms of training courses; of the 12,100 enterprises that have offered training courses to their employees, only 1.1% have offered any form of special training or LLL for minorities, (notably the Roma population), or for individuals with disabilities. Therefore, these two groups remain the most disadvantaged in the labour market for accessing CVT and LLL.

Out of the 26,100 enterprises which have not offered any form of CVT to their employees, more than 84% have declared the "current level of knowledge and skills of their employees" as the main reason for doing so. Skill gaps and skill shortages are the main complaint of Romanian businesses, but it also highlights the extent to which schools/university [in]sufficiently prepare people for the labour market and the long period of time after the completion of studies where no further training or formalised learning is felt to be needed. This also explains why Initial Vocational Training which can qualify more as Life Long Learning than CVT itself has been offered only by 1.8% of the total number of enterprises investigated of those offering CVT. This points to the fact that new-entrants in the labour market, to whom initial vocational training is usually addressed, are another group facing additional difficulties accessing LLL.

Chart no 6 : The economic dynamics of CVT participation (thousand participants in CVT, labour productivity, average salary and gross value added by economic activity (2005))



3 Quality and impact of training

Taking a closer look at data provided by the investigation carried out by the NIS and processing them alongside National Accounts data, on the contribution to Gross Value Added (GVA) formation by major economic activity, reveals a huge distortion. This can be explained by the emergent status of the economy, but it nevertheless mirrors its deficiencies. These deficiencies not only impact upon the quality of training provided but also affect the impact of potential training variables such as labour productivity, salaries and Gross Value Added.

While it is clear that more emphasis on CVT and a stronger participation in such activities ultimately leads to higher salaries, it is nonetheless the only correlation from a chain of four that does this. As such, if one took all things as they should be then, the four correlations would have to confirm the highly beneficial effect of CVT and LLL to both enterprises and the wider economy and, of course, to the individuals, as follows:

- a higher participation in CVT should lead to higher labour productivity;
- higher productivity should lead to higher salaries;
- higher participation in CVT should lead to higher salaries;
- higher productivity would yield both a higher Gross Value Added and an increased contribution to Overall GVA and GDP formation.

However, of these four obvious relationships only one, which we have already mentioned and which shows that economic activities exhibit a higher than the national average participation in CVT expressed as a percentage of the total number of employees, also exhibit a higher than the national average salary. The determination coefficient is so high that one would be tempted to say that indeed higher investment in HRD as expressed by participation in CVT almost fully explains a higher-than-average salary and therefore access to a better living standard and better development opportunities for both the individual and firms committing to such a policy.

However, as usual in the economy, things are not as simple as they might look at first glance. While this correlation holds and holds strongly the other more important correlation between CVT participation and training does not.

Chart No.7: Average salary by economic activity expressed as % of national average (=100) versus participation in CVT as % of total no of employees by economic activity, as against the national average (=100) (2005)

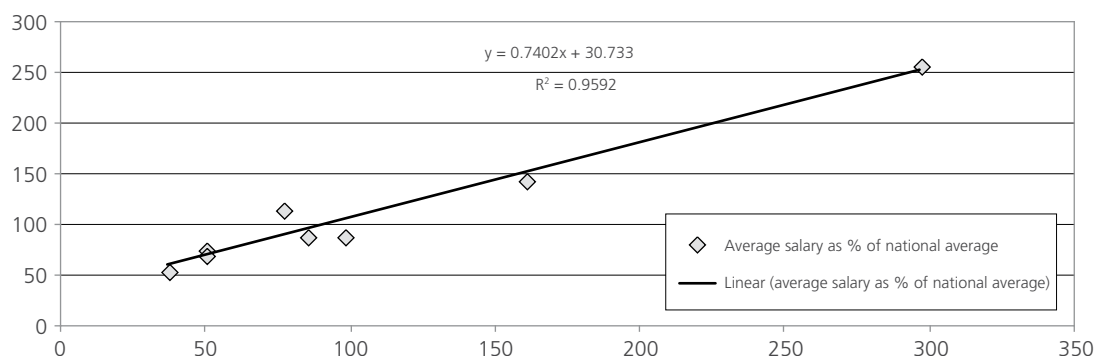
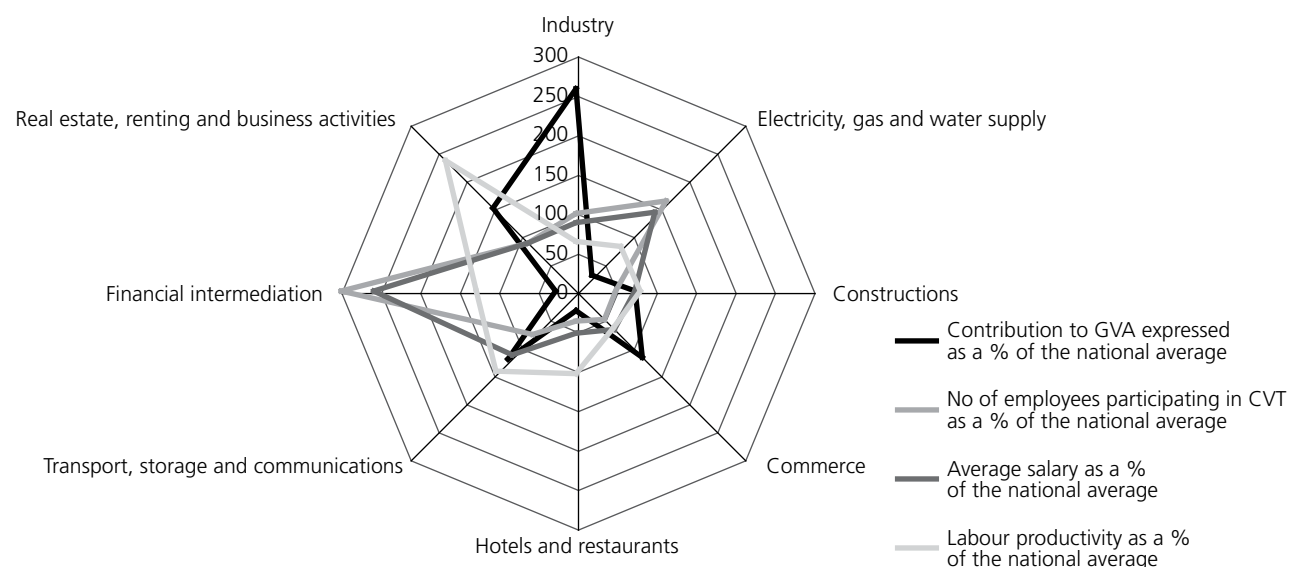


Chart No 8: The economic dynamics of CVT participation (thousand CVT participants, labour productivity, average salary and gross value added by economic activity)



Attempting a simple but useful RADAR-type representation for the variables mentioned above by major economic activity would reveal some major imbalances. As such, while industry scores unimpressively on all counts, it holds a disproportionate share in overall GVA formation that puts it far above the average contribution and therefore distorts the set of correlations mentioned above. This also applies to the renting and business services sector when it comes to labour productivity, as it far

exceeds the average, having benefited from the huge boom in construction and real estate. Therefore, while attempting correlations that use labour productivity as an explanatory variable, one will have to remove it. Finally, financial services - another highly volatile sector which has benefited from a buoyant climate in the financial markets, should be removed from any correlation in which salaries are a part.

Chart No 9: Participation in CVT (% of total employment by economic activity) and contribution to Growth and Employment (I)

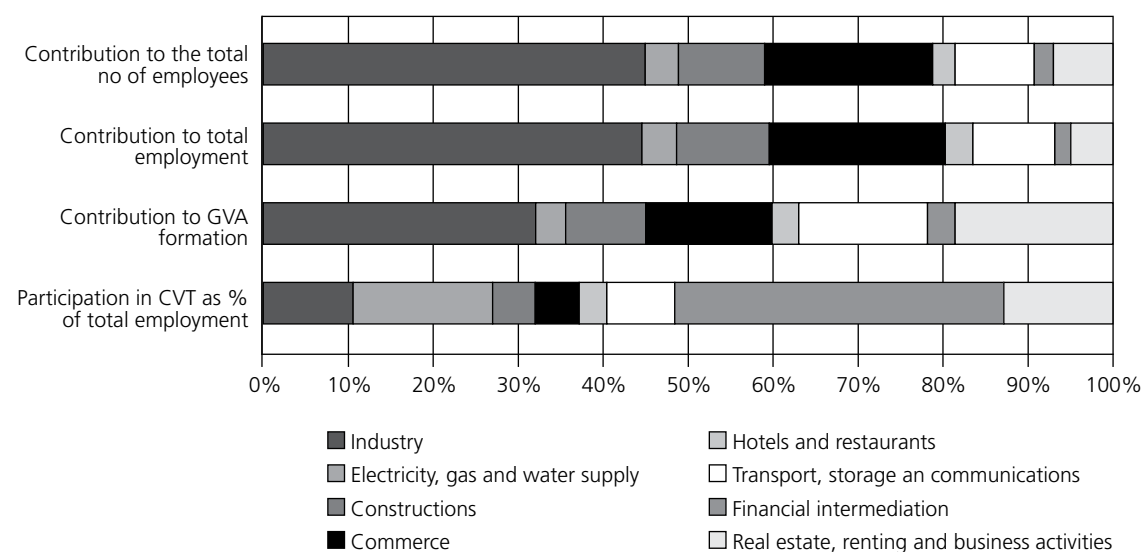
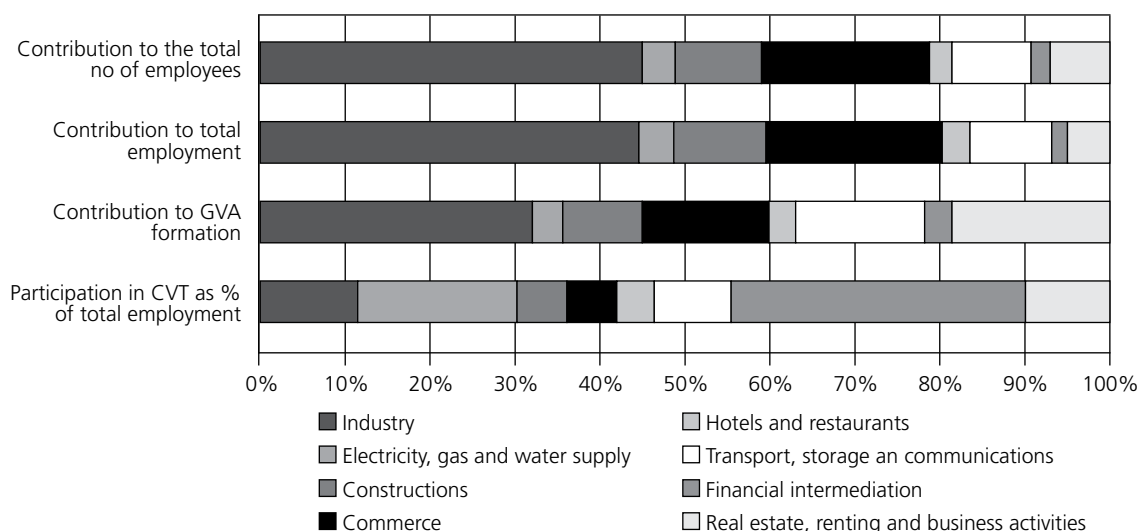


Chart No. 10: Participation in CVT (as % of the total number of employees by economic activity) and contribution to Growth and Employment (II)



In a nutshell as all the ubiquitous correlations except one would only verify themselves after removing one sector or another, one cannot so easily do away with industry and financial services. However, the fact is that Financial Services is THE sector boasting the highest propensity for CVT, with an overall participation, (when expressed as a percentage of its total number of employees), scoring far above the national average. In the meantime, sectors complaining of severe labour and skills shortages, such as construction, still fall below the average when applying the same measure.

All these factors show that while there is enough evidence, even in an embryonic stage, of the advantages of participation in training, sectors that would need it the most are somewhat reluctant to embrace it. This is connected to the profitability of those particular sectors as well as with the fact that most of them are weary of long economic forecasts and prefer to see their profits swell before committing themselves to what they may still consider as "extravagant expenditures." On the other hand it is more than clear that sectors that do have the tendency to "ride the wave" of the economic cycle, such as financial services and real estate, do have the tendency to overspend, even in training, but which may not be sustainable. Nonetheless, it is commendable that various branches of the industry have increased their investment in CVT and that although by the share of participants in the total number of employees it is at a notch (98%) below the national average (=100), as major economic activity it provides, in absolute numbers, the largest number of participants in CVT.

Although Romania has only just started to access the ESF and the Sector Operational Programme has only just been approved by the EU Commission, its intervention - which dedicates an entire Priority Axis (PA) to LLL and improving links between LLL and the labour market - should play an important role in the sustainability of investment in CVT and LLL and should shift the emphasis from sectors that are market-sensitive towards sectors that are rather less sensitive to the vagaries of the market.

4 National Strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

As outlined by the National Reform Programme 2007-2013 submitted this summer to the European Commission, the Government of Romania is fully committed to the aims and objectives of the Revised Lisbon Strategy for Growth, Jobs and Better Regulation and has assumed the strategic goal of a 7% rate of participation in life-long learning for the population aged 25 to 64 to be attained by 2010, at the latest. This goal has been enshrined into the National Short and Medium Term Strategy for Continuous Vocational Training. As a result of this strategic commitment, the entire institutional framework that relates to LLL and CVT will undergo a thorough overhaul between 2007 and 2009 with the National Adult Training Board (NATB) in its capacity as National Authority for Qualifications, with enhanced roles and functions.

Special attention will be given to examples of best practice already playing a pivotal role in fostering vocational training and LLL in enterprises. Via the Sector Committees that involve members from both employer's organisations and trade unions, and which operate under the umbrella of the NATB, the social partners are directly involved not only in the continuous development of the national system of qualifications but also in the day to day accreditation and evaluation process of vocational training providers. A high share of enterprises have entrusted their CVT programmes to private vocational training providers - according to NIS investigations this amounted to 57.7% in 2005, of the total number of enterprises that provided some form of training. This is proof of the success of the system and of its potential for future development, via what is practically a form of self-regulation only loosely involving the State.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Education aims to further reduce the number of early school leavers which acts in itself as a further hindrance to CVT and LLL participation. Accordingly, a 15% reduction in the early school-leaver rate for compulsory education has been assumed for 2010, together with the aim of increasing by 10%, the rate of access to upper-secondary education for children and youngsters from disadvantaged groups. There is also a target to raise by 15% the integration rate of children with special needs into the regular education/school system.

More attention has to be given to ALMPs which, in their current form are obsolete and unable to meet the demands of a continuously and fast changing labour market. It is telling that the many subsidies available, including those dedicated to enterprise-based training, have only been accessed by 7.9% of the total number of enterprises that have engaged in CVT activities - 92.1% have not.

In the meantime, great hopes are attached to the intervention of the ESF, which as mentioned earlier should make an important contribution to the development of LLL and CVT, especially at enterprise level. One full PA (Priority Axis) of the SOP-HRD (The Sector Operational Programme – Human Resources Development) is aimed at the development of Life Long Learning and improving the links between the process and the needs of the labour market. Amongst the targets set to be attained by 2015 are:

- 15,000 students assisted in their transition from university to economic activity;
- 2,500 new qualifications developed in the frame of the partnership arrangements that have been described above;
- A share of 20% of the total number of enterprises providing CVT (N.B. as seen from our paper this objective has already been achieved);
- A 10% participation rate of the adult population aged 25 to 64 in CVT with an intermediate target of 7% in 2010, likely to be achieved sooner;
- A share of 85% of adults at or above the age of 22 having achieved at least upper secondary education.

To cater for these ample tasks ahead PA-2 - under which most of these actions fall within the SOP HRD - have a total allocation of EUR 991,397,184 million, from both the EU allocation as well as from national contributions. Its allocation amounts to a 24.2% share of the total amount allocated to the SOP HRD, which is slightly over EUR 4 billion in total allocation and makes up approximately 23% of the total amount foreseen to be allocated under the umbrella of the Structural and Cohesion Funds. If well used, these funds could make a considerable contribution to the overall development of human resources with special regard to improving sustainability of the whole process.

Therefore if one expresses the amounts allocated for PA-2 in terms of GDP equivalent at the current nominal value of this macro-aggregate (which is approximately EUR 100 billion), then we would come up with the equivalent of 0.99% of the current GDP. This would add an estimated 0.04 percentage points to the annual pace of GDP percentage, presuming a constant rate of growth of around 5% annually, something that would be hard to ignore for much needed HR Development in a climate hinting at a worldwide economic downturn.

5 Bibliography

National Institute of Statistics of Romania – ‘*Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2006*’, NIS-Bucharest, 2006.

National Institute of Statistics of Romania – ‘*Characteristics of Continuing Vocational Training in the Romanian Enterprises – 2005*’, NIS-Bucharest 2007.

National Institute of Statistics of Romania – *Romania in Figures – 2007*, NIS-Bucharest, 2007.

National Institute of Statistics of Romania - *The World Economy in Figures*, NIS-Bucharest, 2007.

National Institute of Statistics of Romania – *Social Trends* (2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006), NIS-Bucharest, 2003, 04, 05, 06.

The European Commission – ‘*Europe’s Demographic Future: Facts and figures on challenges and opportunities*’, EU-Commission, DG- Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2007.

Dr. Catalin Ghinararu and team – ‘*Making EU Accession Work for ALL*’, UNDP-National Human Development Report, Romania 2007, UNDP, Bucharest, 2007.

The Economist – ‘*The World in 2007*’.

The Government of Romania - ‘*National Reform Programme*’, Bucharest, 2007.

The Government of Romania - *The National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-13*, Bucharest, 2007.

The Government of Romania – *National Reform Program – Progress Report*, Sept.2007, Bucharest.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions – ‘*Fourth European Working Conditions Survey*’, Dublin 2007.

‘*The Economist*’ – weekly magazine, author’s collection, selected issues (2001-07).

Selected outputs of the ‘MITGEM – Mid Term Growth and Employment Model’ developed by the author, Dr, Catalin Ghinararu at the National Labour Research Institute of Romania.

Slovenia

1 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

Adult education in Slovenia is characterised by a growing number and an increasingly diverse range of programmes (6,242 programmes in 2006). Schools and higher education institutions - institutions providing youth education - also offer formal education courses for adults, thereby adapting the programmes and their organisations to the needs of the adult population. Non-formal education programmes are designed for various target groups, for example, employed people seeking to improve their employment opportunities or gain promotion, individuals wishing to enhance the quality of their lives, individuals pursuing a hobby, the unemployed, marginalised groups, ethnic minorities and foreigners. Access to most non-formal education courses is unrestricted and voluntary.

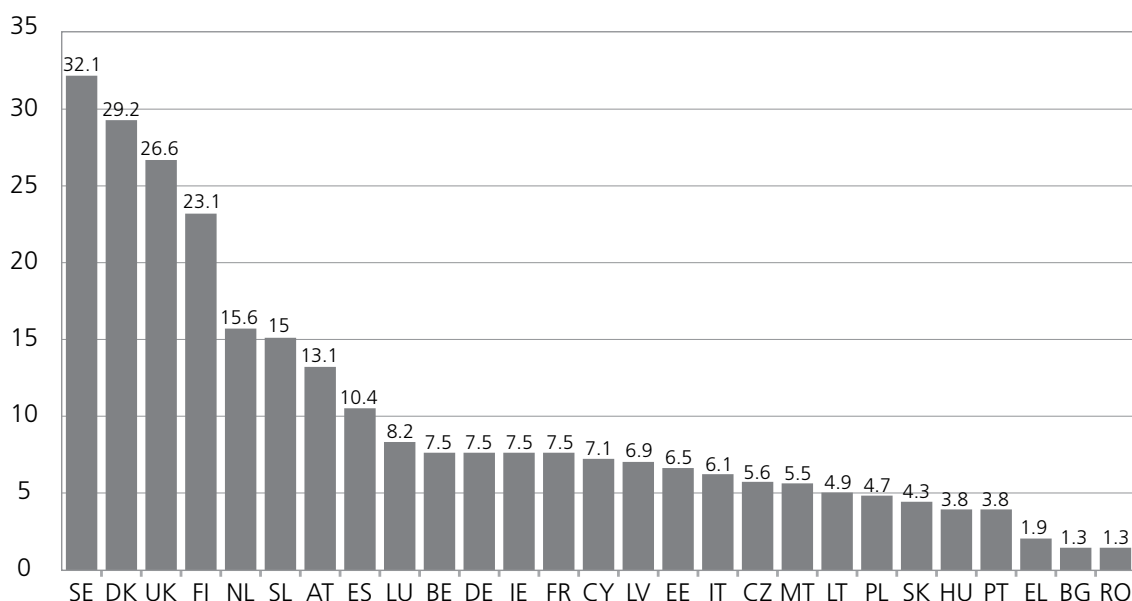
According to the LFS data, Slovenia performs relatively well regarding the share of adult population participating in lifelong learning. In the second quarter of 2005, this share was 17.8% placing Slovenia on the fifth place in the EU-25. In 2006, the percentage slightly declined (15.0%) and Slovenia dropped to sixth place among EU-27 countries.

More Slovenian women (16.3%) participated in education and training in 2006 than men (13.8%). On the other hand, an interest for lifelong learning drops rapidly with age – while around 65% (64.6% in the second quarter of 2007) of all participants in education and training were younger than 30 years in 2005, the share of participants between 50 and 64 years was below 10% (6.9% in 2007).

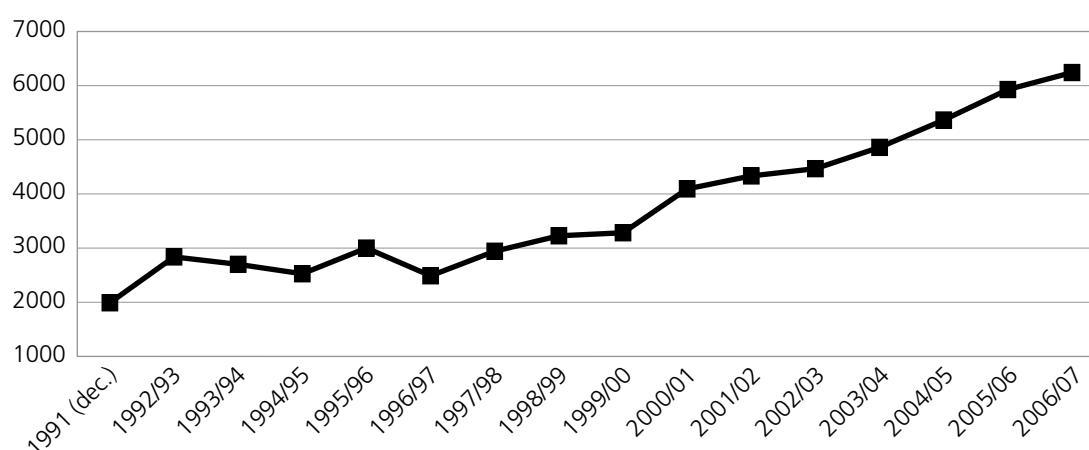
Similar data can be broken down by educational attainment and employment status. According to the data from the Ad Hoc Module on Lifelong Learning in 2003, the highly educated people in Slovenia participated more in non-formal education (44% against the 31% average in the EU-25) than people with medium (22% against 16%) and lower education level (7% each). The same trend can be observed for employment status: 31% of employed Slovenians participated in non-formal education against the 21% average in the EU-25; 13% of unemployed Slovenians against the 14% average in the EU-25; and 5% of inactive Slovenians against the 6% average in the EU-25 (Eurostat, 2005). Among the employed there are great differences between full-time employees and those employed in flexible forms of employment, who have more limited options to participate in education and training.

According to the data gathered for 2004, the greatest share of individuals participating only once in non-formal education were employed in agriculture (58.3%), construction (52.9%) and industry (48.9%), while employees in public services, electricity sector and financial sector had the largest shares of those who participated twice or more in a given year (Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, 2007a).

Chart 1: Percentage of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training in the four weeks prior to the survey



Source: Commission of the European Communities, 2007

Chart 2: Number of programmes in adult education

Source: Brenk, 2006:18

One of the main characteristics from the past ten years is the increasing number of providers and programmes. The training providers can be classified into public adult education institutions (ljudske univerze), schools at different levels (education institutions providing youth education but having units for adult education) and private providers. In addition, an important role in adult education is played by various organisations offering education parallel with their main activity.

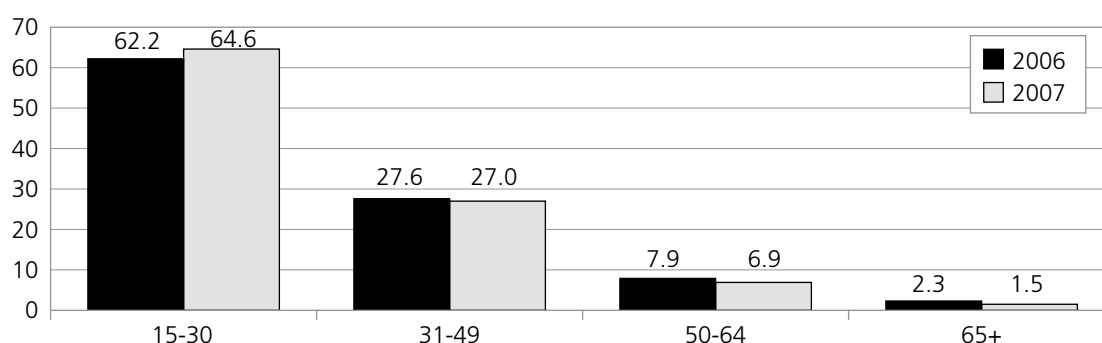
Another important characteristic is the growing number of participants in education or training as a whole and in particular still rapidly increasing participation of young people in tertiary education. The share of population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education increased from 14.2% in 1995 to 20.0% in 2005.

Furthermore, as one of the consequences of the increased and prolonged participation in formal education, the average number of years in education for the active population has increased. During the period from 1995 to 2005, the average number of years increased from 11.0 to 11.8. The increase was higher for women (from 11.04 to 11.95 years) than for men (from 10.94 to 11.31 years), and higher in the public sector (from 12.4 to 13.2 years) than in the private sector (from 10.6 to 11.1 years) (Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, 2007a).

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

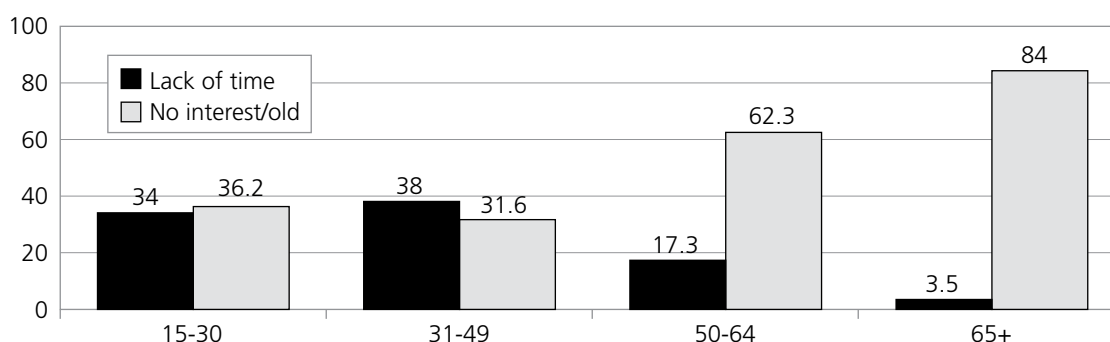
In spite of growing importance of lifelong learning in Slovenian society, not all groups are equally involved in the lifelong learning process. As already presented in the previous chapter, the most active are those that already have a higher level of formal education or employment status. The least active are those that are already in an under-privileged position in the society, e.g. people with lower education level, adults over 50 years of age, adults with low employment status and other status groups (retired, unemployed and housewives). Despite the increase in educational attainment of the population as a whole, this problem is still relevant since the differences in educational attainment are not shrinking. Instead, they reveal deeper patterns of social inequality (Mirčeva et al., 2007).

A particularly important matter - related to the ageing of the Slovenian population and the problems around low labour market participation rates among older age groups - is the low participation of older age groups in education. As can be seen in Chart 3, the share of participants in education who are 50 years or more (8.4% in 2007) is very low. Therefore, in recent years specific measures have been taken to change the attitude of older workers, who need to upgrade their competencies to remain in the workforce or senior citizens preparing for retirement.

Chart 3: Age structure of participants in (formal and non-formal) education in 2006 and 2007

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS), LFS 2006 and 2007, 2. quarter

The attitude towards participation in education is one of most important obstacles for greater participation of older generations as they have had and still have a relatively secure position in the labour market. Chart 4 shows that the majority of over 50 year-olds who do not participate in non-formal education are not interested in participating or think that they are too old to participate in education (62.3% of those in the age group 50 to 64 and 84% in the age group 65 and older).

Chart 4: Most important reasons for not participating in non-formal education, 2007

Source: SORS, LFS 2007, 2. quarter

Despite of progress in implementing the lifelong learning system in Slovenia, there are still several obstacles preventing quicker development and higher participation rates. According to several recent documents, the predominant obstacles are:

- There is an imbalance between investment in general education and vocational education. More attention is given to education that fulfils labour market needs in comparison to education for accomplishing active citizenship and individual development. Social, cultural and psychological elements of knowledge and skills have so far been neglected.
- Access to available educational opportunities is highly fragmented. Educational activity is the lowest among those groups that are already in an under-privileged position.
- There is a significant concentration of educational providers in large cities and to a large extent a shortage of such providers in rural areas.
- Under-developed partnership relations between different actors have been identified.
- No substantial progress has been made in the co-ordination of post-secondary vocational education and higher education
- Financial incentives for participation in education are rather marginal.
- A poor image of vocational education and training as well as a lack of information on the prospects of transferring from one form or level of education to another and transferring from VET to employment.

- Insufficient links between the higher education arena, the economy and employers.
- Too much emphasis is put on the quantity rather than effectiveness of knowledge and skills.

3 Quality and impact of training

Related to the last obstacle presented above, the Slovenian system(s) would need a greater utilisation of quality assessments on implemented programmes. Effectiveness of the knowledge and skills is not assessed systematically in many institutions and organisations. On the other hand, it is necessary to provide appropriate knowledge and counselling for all educational providers in order to enable them to evaluate their own quality and to determine options for future development.

It should also be stressed that organised and systematic human resource development is performed mainly in large organisations, and to a lesser extent in smaller ones. Related to that, there is a general belief that Slovenian workers are less skilled than the economy and labour market are demanding. But, on the other hand, it is stressed by some experts that workers possess enough skills and a significant amount of working experience, which can often be used in practice. According to experts, the problem is somewhat different – Slovenian workers especially older workers have skills and competencies which are too specific; they have company specific skills and competencies (acquired through education and training organised by the company and practical work experience), which are not transferable to other working environments in the event that they lose their jobs.

4 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

The main public actors in the field of education and promotion of lifelong learning are the Ministry of Education and Sport (MES) and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MLFSA), with important help from other ministries including the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of the Economy, Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy, etc. Additionally, several public institutions are especially important for professional development and support to the implementation of specific activities in Slovenia: Employment Service of Slovenia, National Educational Institute, Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, National Institute for Vocational Education and Training, CMEPIUS (Centre for Mobility and European Education and Training Programmes) and other state institutions, like the universities, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, Chamber of Craft of Slovenia, etc.

As a basis for the preparation of many documents and promotion of lifelong learning in Slovenia, the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning and several other EU documents have been utilised. These documents emphasise not only the role of education and training in accomplishing the economic objectives but also their part in achieving personal development, active citizenship and social cohesion.

Among the documents that have been adopted recently, the most important is the Adult Education Master Plan, which defines four global aims: 1) to improve the level of general adult education; 2) to raise the level of educational attainment; 3) to increase employment possibilities; and 4) to increase learning possibilities and participation. In 2007, the authorities adopted another two important documents: the Operative Programme for Human Resources Development for the Period 2007-2013 and the Lifelong Learning Strategy.

Slovenia already allocates quite a large percentage of GDP to the field of education: 6.02% in 2003 and 6.82% in 2004 (Commission of the European Communities, 2007). Funding of adult education institutions is carried out according to the system of state approved programmes, in which ESF (European Social Fund) funding plays an important role. The ESF resources represented about 75% of all funds in programmes such as Active Labour Market Policies Development (increasing employability, ensuring social inclusion, creation of new jobs and increasing the adaptability of enterprises), Increasing of Social Inclusion and Lifelong Learning (MOLFSA, 2004).

Some good practices in promoting lifelong learning

As one of the important activities of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, the Lifelong Learning Week in Slovenia was launched in 1996 and it is considered as an advocacy tool for raising the visibility of adult and lifelong learning and for attracting and motivating people to take part in learning activities.

Another important activity is the certification system, established in 2000. The system gives an opportunity for adults to acquire vocational qualifications through a specific procedure of an assessment and accreditation of knowledge, skills and experiences that are acquired outside the formal education system. The national vocational qualifications, acquired within the certification system, are intended for the recognition of skills in the labour market and do not provide any higher educational level as such.

The development of career guidance in Slovenia is also very important for the promotion of lifelong learning. It is offered by an increasing number of public and private organisations in Slovenia and it is basically divided into two streams. The first one is intended for young people and the unemployed, and it is performed mainly by Vocational Information and Guidance Centres in order to increase employability of unemployed people, pupils and students. The second is the network of Guidance Centres for Adult Education (14). The centres are financed by the funds of the ministry and the European Social Fund. Information and counselling in the Guidance Centres for Adult Education is intended for and is equally accessible to all

adults in the local area where it operates, with special attention given to all disadvantaged groups of adults in the local area; those who normally have difficulties in accessing education, are low skilled and less active in the field of education.

5 Bibliography

Bezič T. et al., 2006. *Information and Guidance for Lifelong Learning and Career Development in Slovenia*. Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. Ljubljana.

Brenk E., 2006. *Pregled ponudbe izobraževanja in učenja odraslih v Sloveniji v šolskem letu 2006/2007*. ACS in MDDSZ, Ljubljana.

Commission of the European Communities, 2007. *Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation*. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European economic and social Committee and the Committee of the regions. COM(2007) 703.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007. 'Employment and labour market policies for an ageing workforce and initiatives at the workplace'. *National Overview Report: Slovenia*.

Eurostat, 2005. 'Lifelong learning in Europe'. *Statistics in focus*. 8/2005.

Eurostat, 2007a. 'The transition of women and men from work to retirement'. *Statistics in focus* 97/2007.

Eurostat, 2007b. 'The narrowing education gap between women and men'. *Statistics in focus* 130/2007.

Ivančič A. in Radovan M., 2006. *Značilnosti zaposlitve in udeležba v formalnem in neformalnem izobraževanju odraslih*. Mohorčič Špolar V., Ivančič A., Mirčeva J., Radovan M., 2006. Družbeno skupinski vplivi udeležbe odraslih v izobraževanju kot podlaga za razvoj modela poklicne kariere. ACS, Ljubljana.

Ministry of Education and Sport, 2007. *Slovenian Lifelong Learning Strategy*.

Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, 2004. *Evropski socialni sklad v Sloveniji*. Novinarska konferenca 13.4.2004.

Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, 2007a. *Program ukrepov aktivne politike zaposlovanja za obdobje 2007-2013*.

Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, 2007b. *Operativni program razvoja človeških virov za obdobje 2007-2013*.

Mirčeva J. et al., 2007. 'Lifelong Learning Policies in Slovenia'. *LLL2010 SP1 Country Report*. Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. Ljubljana.

Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS), 2006. *Rapid reports No. 150/2006*.

Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS), 2007. *Labour Force Survey Data 2002-2007*.

University of Surrey & University of Nottingham, University of Edinburgh, Slovenian Institute of Adult Education, Ljubljana, 2007. *Lifelong learning: Patterns of Policy in Thirteen European Countries*. Report of Sub-project 1.

Vošner M., 2007. *Staranje delovne sile – nov izziv za strokovne delavce*.

Slovakia

1 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

Adult learning in Slovakia takes place within the systems of *formal education* (inside an established school system of primary, secondary and tertiary schools), *non-formal education* (training provided outside the formal education system by companies, private training facilities, schools, labour offices and others) and *informal learning* (non-organised acquisition by the learner of attitudes, skills and knowledge in the workplace, at home, leisure time, etc.). As for the focus of this article, the following assessment refers to the participation of adults in lifelong learning (LLL) mainly in the formal and non-formal sub-systems, including continuing vocational education and training (CVET).

The educational attainment of the adult population (aged 25+) is gradually improving, as suggested by the statistical data. Table 1 shows a moderate shift in the past years towards higher ISCED levels. The distribution of attained education among adults points to a relatively low share of poorly educated persons (backed up by one of the lowest levels of early school leaving in the EU²⁰³), one of the highest attainments of upper secondary education in Europe and an unfavourable, low share of people with tertiary education. In spite of a rapid growth in university enrolments over the past decade²⁰⁴, the proportion of highly educated people is still below the EU average (see Table 1). Recent economic trends emphasise more than ever the importance of continual skills development for a better adaptability to the changing labour market demands. This request comes particularly into the foreground in an environment, which declares support to building a knowledge-based economy and which does not rely merely on investments into less skill-demanding sectors. Given the educational structure of the population – a relatively skilled but not overly flexible labour force – there will almost certainly be a growing need for participation in lifelong learning.

Table 1: Educational attainment of the adult population (distribution of the 25-64-year-old population, by highest level of education attained, %)

	Attained lower secondary level of education or below (ISCED 0-2)	Attained upper secondary level of education (ISCED 3-4)	Attained tertiary level of education (ISCED 5-6)	All levels of education
Slovakia (2001)	15	74	11	100
Slovakia (2005)	14	72	14	100
EU-19* average (2005)	29	44	24	

Note: (*) OECD's 19 EU Member States.

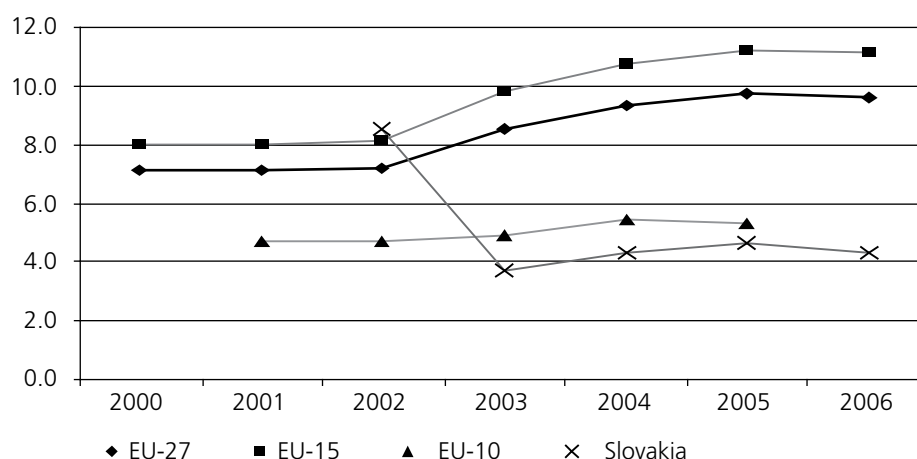
Source: *Education at a glance. Editions 2002, 2007, OECD*

There is not much reliable statistical evidence about the participation of adults in the different forms of LLL. In contrast to solid statistics on initial education, national data on further/continuous learning are largely inconsistent, fragmented or not surveyed at all. This concerns mainly information about adult non-formal education and company-related training. Existing analyses of LLL, thus, rest mostly on the EU Labour Force Survey (including the 2003 ad hoc module on Lifelong Learning) and the UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat (UOE) data collection. According to the 2006 data, the participation rate of the Slovak adult population in lifelong learning (4.3%) is considerably below the EU-27 average (9.6%). Conclusions about trends are uncertain due to the lack of comparable data for a longer period of time. Yet available statistics (see chart 1) indicate stagnation and/or at best an insignificant growth in the past five years (as in other new Member States) compared with a more distinct increase of LLL at EU level (mainly in the old EU-15 Member States). Slovakia is far behind in meeting the 2010 EU benchmark of a 12.5% share of adults participating in LLL.

⁽²⁰³⁾ Only 6.4% of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education (ISCED level 2) was not in further education or training in 2006. The corresponding figure for the EU-27 was 15.3%. Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey.

⁽²⁰⁴⁾ During 1996-2006, the number of students enrolled in university studies increased by 57 %. The number of part-time students in higher education recorded a remarkable, five-fold (!) increase in the same period, accounting now for 59% of the total number of university students (17% in 1996). Source: Institute of Information and Prognosis in Education, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Chart 1 : Adults in lifelong learning (percentage of the population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey)



Note: 2000-2001 data are estimates. Break in series in 2003 (2004 for EU-10).

Source: Eurostat

A breakdown of the European LFS data by gender suggests that there are slightly more adult learners among women than among men in Slovakia.²⁰⁵ The Ad Hoc module on Lifelong Learning from 2003, on the contrary, shows men with somewhat higher participation rates than women, particularly in non-formal education. The gender gap becomes more distinct in the older age category (55+), but in general does not play a decisive role in access to educational activities.

Age and educational attainment of the learner are important socio-demographic factors influencing participation in any kind of adult learning in Slovakia. Statistical surveys show that involvement in learning decreases with age (Table 2). The participation rate in the formal system of education is generally very low (1% of the 25-64 age group, 4.5% in the EU-25), and the age-related decrease is quite understandable given that initial formal education is acquired predominantly at younger age. The share of adults engaged in non-formal education appears to be relatively high throughout the productive age of 25 to 54, but falls rather sharply after the age of 55. The participation rate towards the end of the productive age is as much as three times lower than at the age of 25 to 54 (five times lower among women). The main reason behind the abrupt drop is seemingly the official retirement age, which was until 2003 set at 60 years for men and 53 to 57 years for women (depending on the number of children raised). The 2004-2005 pension reform stipulated equal retirement age for both genders at 62 years. The gradual increase in the retirement age enhanced employment and slightly also participation of older workers in learning activities. Another obvious reason for the declining participation in LLL in older age is the shortening of active time over which acquired skills and also invested expenses may be utilised.

Table 2: Participation rate of adults in lifelong learning by age (2003)

	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Total 25-64
Any kind of learning*					
Slovakia	62	62	61	49	60
EU-25	50	45	40	30	42
Formal education					
Slovakia	2.6	0.7	0.1	0.1	1.0
EU-25	10.7	3.6	2.1	0.9	4.5
Non-formal education					
Slovakia	23.4	23.3	22.5	7.5	20.5
EU-25	19.8	19.2	16.5	8.5	16.5

Note: (*) Includes informal learning.

Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad Hoc module on Lifelong Learning 2003, target population: 25-64 years old, reference period 12 months.

Two out of five persons with an attained high educational level (ISCED 5, 6) take part in non-formal educational activities, while the participation rate of persons with a low educational attainment (ISCED 0, 1, 2) is six times lower (Table 3). It appears that highly educated people (i) are more driven to participate in skills development because of more challenging jobs, (ii) tend to have a more responsible approach to their further education and (iii) presumably enjoy a better access to learning activities due to higher income and/or more sensible allocation of expenses. The effect of initial education on obtaining further education or leading to participation in some form of lifelong learning is generally acknowledged.²⁰⁶ As for the employment status, employed adults follow non-formal learning significantly more than unemployed and inactive persons, who are characterised by poor participation rates (see also table 4).²⁰⁷ The rates for the

⁽²⁰⁵⁾ See, for example: *Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines including indicators for additional employment analysis: 2007 compendium*. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/pdf/2007compendium_en.pdf

⁽²⁰⁶⁾ Source: Psacharopoulos, G.: *The effects of education on employment, wages and productivity: a European perspective*. Thematic paper for the Thematic Review Seminar of the EES *Measuring, improving and promoting effects of lifelong learning*, Brussels, 20 September 2007.

⁽²⁰⁷⁾ The 2003 Ad Hoc module on LLL implies that the relative volume of training attended by the unemployed (mean volume of 90 hours of non-formal training) and also inactive (63 hours) is considerably higher than that attended by those in employment (35 hours).

two latter groups are markedly lower than the EU averages, which may be partly explained by a higher proportion of long-term and otherwise disadvantaged unemployed people and not least a deficient active labour market policy in Slovakia at the time when the survey was undertaken. It is believed that the 2004 reform of employment services and other pro-active incentives accelerated the participation of registered unemployed persons in training and re-training programmes.

Table 3: Participation rate in non-formal learning by educational level and employment status, % (2003)

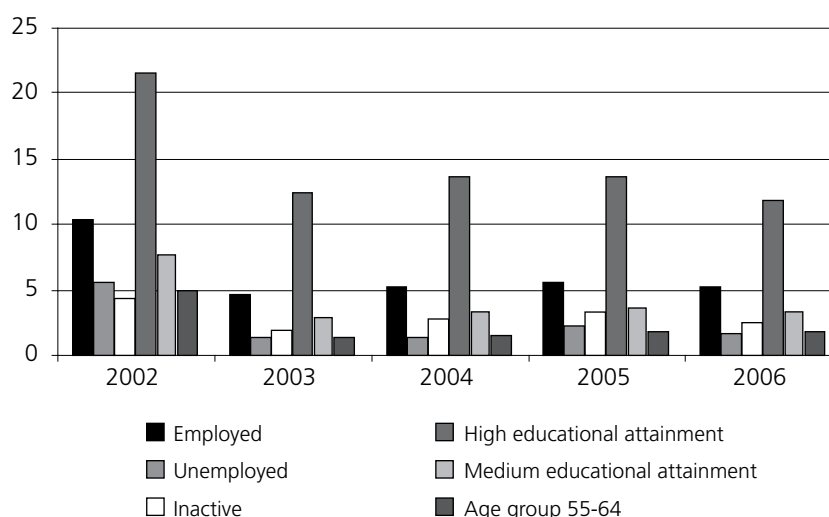
	Educational level			Employment status		
	High	Medium	Low	Employed	Unemployed	Inactive
Slovakia	41.2	19.7	6.7	28.5	6.5	2.2
EU-25	30.9	16.4	6.5	20.6	13.5	5.6

Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad Hoc module on Lifelong Learning 2003, target population: 25-64 years old, reference period 12 months

As for the trends, not many clear-cut conclusions can be drawn. The EU LFS data from 2003-2006²⁰⁸ (see chart 2) confirm the impression of a minimal progress in participation rates. In relative terms the highest increase can be observed in the age group 55-64 (+38%) and least progress among highly educated population (-4%).

Information on workplace training is usually not publicly available. The mass inflow of foreign investment and the import of corporate VET schemes imply that job-related training at company level is progressing, particularly in large and medium-sized enterprises. Data from the 2003 Ad Hoc module indicate that 93% of those who undertook a CVET activity participated in it mainly because of job-related reasons. Only 7% of respondents followed training mainly for personal or social reasons.²⁰⁹

Chart 2: Trends in participation of adults in lifelong learning (percentage of the population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey)



Source: Eurostat, EU LFS

⁽²⁰⁸⁾ The 2002 data are clearly standing out from the time series and should be treated with caution.

⁽²⁰⁹⁾ Source: Kocanova (2007).

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

The previous section suggested that participation in LLL is generally low in Slovakia and particularly low for adults who failed in former education and hold a difficult position in the labour market – low educated, inactive, unemployed and older people. Low participation, however, does not necessarily imply low access to training. The following is an attempt to summarise key obstacles to accessing LLL on the supply (policy framework, providers) and demand sides (adult population).

As seen in Table 4, the main barriers do not refer to insufficient opportunities for adult learning (on contrary, there is a decent number of providers), but rather to an absence of policy instruments (regulatory framework, legislation, quality control, financial support, information system) and to a lack of private incentives to undertake training. The *Strategy on lifelong learning and lifelong counselling*, adopted by the government in April 2007, acknowledges most of the above mentioned shortcomings and stipulates a list of priorities for the development of an open system of lifelong learning and counselling (see also chapter 4).

Table 4: Main obstacles to assessing lifelong learning in Slovakia

Supply of LLL	Demand for LLL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • absence of a functional system of lifelong learning, which would integrate the individual sub-systems of education • absent system of recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning, ensuring transferability of acquired skills • insufficient programme assessment and quality assurance in non-formal education • missing mechanism of early identification of qualification needs, which should be one of the non-formal system's main assets • fragmented network of training providers in terms of networking and information exchange • no integrated information system on providers and poor statistics on adult learning • no lucid financing schemes for continuing education and training, lacking fiscal incentives for individuals and the private sector to invest in training • unreformed initial formal education (primary and secondary) with respect to labour market needs • insufficient promotion of importance of lifelong learning in the society, inadequate investment in human capital when it comes to allocation of public spending 	<p>Insufficient incentives to train on the part of the adult population, influenced by a variety of factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • socio-demographic factors (parental education, own educational attainment, values²¹⁰, age, working status, occupation, income, etc.) • reliance on initial formal education, which continues to be perceived as delivering high-quality education, and under-estimation of continuing education • cost of training – pointing to a lack of established schemes of financial support and other fiscal incentives • time management – challenge of reconciliation of work and private life (referring to a lack of recognised, flexible forms of training – distance learning, e-learning, part-time, etc.) • lacking knowledge of programmes and their outcomes

⁽²¹⁰⁾ Despite being valued as one of the key assets in life, households spend less than 1% of their total expenditure per person per month on education. Source: Household Budget Survey, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

3 Quality and impact of training

With respect to quality assessment, the situation differs quite significantly between the formal and non-formal education systems. The conventional system of initial education is regulated and supervised by the state authorities (Ministry of Education, State School Inspection, Accreditation Commission) and is subject to established evaluation and monitoring procedures. In contrast, training content and quality in non-formal education remain "largely unmonitored, unregulated and left up to the market forces".²¹¹ Many educational programmes are neither accredited nor regulated by other means.²¹² There are certain cases, where accreditation is required by law (education and training financed by public funds – e.g. education and training of unemployed people, and training aimed at public servants and specific professions). However, a lot of the CVET providers apply for accreditation of their activities as it increases the credibility of the educational institution.²¹³ All in all, the majority of adult training activities are not subject to quality assurance and programme assessment. A lack of knowledge of training opportunities and their quality negatively affect participation rates, and vice versa, providers may not receive adequate feedback on the quality of provided services.

The main factors related to the quality and impact of adult training in Slovakia include:

- type of provider of educational activities, and existence and type of accreditation;
- quality of trainers/lecturers;
- design and delivery of training;
- responsiveness to labour market needs;
- standardised quality assurance and evaluation;
- recognition of learning outcomes, certification and transferability of attained qualification;
- learner satisfaction;

- direct/indirect effects of training – new job, wage rise, career progression, improved adaptability, etc;
- dissemination of vital information on quality and outcomes of training to the public.

The availability of information on the quality aspects of adult learning is clearly insufficient. Some assessment of adult participation in formal education is carried out; these are mostly related to part-time studies at higher education institutions and completion of second-chance education at secondary or primary level.²¹⁴ This is not the case for most non-formal educational activities as they are not currently supported by a systematic monitoring procedure and quality assessment. Although there are partial data on the number of providers²¹⁵ and accredited institutions²¹⁶ as well as lecturers' qualifications²¹⁷, an overall assessment of the quality and impact of non-formal learning is not feasible. Exceptions include educational activities financed by the State Budget and the ESF, such as education and preparation of job-seekers, which is administered and monitored by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and a Monitoring Committee. Even though an independent cost-benefit analysis of the policies is lacking, the assessment provides information on the placement of trained, unemployed persons in the labour market.²¹⁸ There is also some evidence from businesses, which received state aid to train employees for their new jobs²¹⁹. It may be assumed that the quality and outcomes of job-related employee training are evaluated by employers but usually such information is not made public.

4 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

Slovakia is a 'latecomer' in adopting special lifelong learning policy. Although LLL has been referred to in policy documents and national legislation since 2000, the first *Concept of Lifelong Learning* was approved in 2004. The development of a comprehensive strategy was repeatedly postponed until 2007

⁽²¹¹⁾ Source: Vantuch - Jelinkova (2006).

⁽²¹²⁾ Ditto.

⁽²¹³⁾ See Kocanova (2007).

⁽²¹⁴⁾ Information is available on students and graduates, drop-out rates, content and outcomes of learning, awarded certificates, placement in the labour market, etc.

⁽²¹⁵⁾ There were estimated 2,500 providers of adult non-formal education and training in 2004. Source: Kocanova (2007).

⁽²¹⁶⁾ 950 out of 2,711 educational programmes were accredited by the Ministry of Education in 2004. Source: Vantuch - Jelinkova (2006).

⁽²¹⁷⁾ More than 80% of the CVET lecturers had tertiary education and 60% possessed a pedagogical qualification. Source: Vantuch - Jelinkova (2006).

⁽²¹⁸⁾ In 2005, 31,535 job-seekers attended education and preparation programmes, of which 9.7% were placed in the labour market within one month after finalising their training activity and 21.8% of the participants within three months. Source: *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources for 2005*. MOLSAF, June 2006.

⁽²¹⁹⁾ For example PSA Peugeot Citroen, KIA Motors, Samsung Electronics. See Kocanova (2007) for more details.

when the *Strategy on Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Counselling* was finally adopted.²²⁰ The document identifies notorious barriers and proposes an open system of lifelong learning, responsive to labour market needs.²²¹ To that end, the individual sub-systems of education shall become more integrated and the regulatory framework for non-formal education shall be improved. The strategy stipulates a set of reasonable measures to be implemented between 2007 and 2011. The main shortcoming of the strategy is the vague discussion on the financing of LLL. No concrete financing schemes and/or incentives are proposed, apart from an obligatory statement about multi-source financing and reliance on ESF resources.

The Slovak governments have repeatedly declared education as a policy priority and made commitments to increase spending on human resource development. Against all commitments, expenditure on education and R&D in GDP terms has been decreasing since 2006. A reallocation of funds in favour of areas promoting a knowledge-based society is inevitable with respect to the future competitiveness of the labour force and the economy.

A simplified assessment suggests that most adult learning provided by private institutions is financed by the participants and/or their employers, while the cost of training and education provided by public agencies is usually covered or co-financed by public resources (this also applies to formal education). Since training yields benefits mainly to the learner, a crucial part of it should be financed privately. However, there is conclusive evidence that investments in education generate returns for the entire society and thus, well-designed co-financing and economic incentives for adult learners are justifiable. Surveys imply that financial support is the main stimulus for participation in training (see Table 5). Co-financing schemes should, however, mainly target vulnerable groups and preferably have the form of cost-sharing rather than non-returnable subsidy. Cost-sharing raises responsibility of the beneficiary and increases public acceptance of such spending in a tight fiscal environment.

Regardless of the fact that the public favours direct financial support, the possibility to introduce tax incentives for learners should be further explored. Slovakia could benefit from the transfer of know-how related to the application of established training support schemes (learning accounts, loan schemes, vouchers, etc.) from more advanced countries. Finally, there are also relatively inexpensive and equitable instruments, which could encourage individuals to participate – measures addressing the absence of validation of skills in non-formal and informal learning, and the improvement of the framework for flexible forms of learning (modular-based programmes, distance learning, e-learning, etc.). Tax relief could play a role in increasing involvement of the private sector in job-related training, particularly in small enterprises. Policies should draw from existing experience of such schemes in foreign countries to avoid potential negative effects related to fraud, deadweight effects, etc.²²²

The ESF resources have played a vital role in promoting adult training in Slovakia. Apart from providing funding for national programmes and demand-oriented projects, ESF has enhanced the quality of training by way of stipulating standardised tender procedures, setting eligibility criteria, and undertaking regular monitoring and evaluation. Another important asset of ESF with respect to training programmes was the activation of partnerships at local and regional levels. The ESF supported project *Design, Development and Implementation of an Open System of Lifelong Learning in the Slovak Republic for the Labour Market* is directly involved in the creation of LLL policy and legislation. ESF could be further supportive in elimination of barriers to adult learning, most importantly in developing mechanisms of early identification of skill needs, introducing quality management, recognition of outcomes, information systems, transfer of know-how and mutual learning.

Table 5: Factors encouraging adults to undertake more training (max. 2 responses)

	Financial support	Time made available during working hours by employer	Recognition of certified skills and qualifications	Career guidance	Tax relief schemes	Availability of child care	Other
EU-25	39 %	30 %	24 %	15 %	12 %	8 %	6 %
Slovakia	52 %	31 %	32 %	15 %	7 %	4 %	1 %

Note: Target group 18-64 years

Source: Special Eurobarometer 216 "Vocational Training", 2005

⁽²²⁰⁾ The progress in implementing LLL policy was decisively triggered by European initiatives (Memorandum of Lifelong Learning, Making the European Area of LLL a Reality, Copenhagen Declaration, Leonardo da Vinci programme, relaunched Lisbon Strategy, ESF, etc.).

⁽²²¹⁾ The model is the result of an ESF supported project called *Design, Development and Implementation of an Open System of Lifelong Learning in the Slovak Republic for the Labour Market*, coordinated by Academia Istropolitana, which shall also lead to a proposal of a new *Act on Lifelong Learning*.

⁽²²²⁾ See, e.g. Brunello, G.: *The effects of training on employment, wages and productivity: a European perspective*. Thematic paper for the Thematic Review Seminar of the EES *Measuring, improving and promoting effects of lifelong learning*, Brussels, 20 September 2007. The most transparent way would be to reduce the tax burden and let the citizens and the private sector decide how to invest funds.

Examples of good practice in LLL/CVET include:

1. A Leonardo da Vinci project Instructor for driving, coordinated by the Association of Driving Schools in the Slovak Republic, focused on the harmonisation of training of driving instructors in nine EU countries. Based on an analysis of existing regulation, the project team developed a common curricula, training material, and proposals for monitoring instructors' work and revision of their skills. The project was awarded a Quality Award under the Successful Innovation projects of the Leonardo da Vinci programme by the European Commission. http://www.siov.sk/refernet/public/cedefopinfo/cedefop_info_1_2007_ldv.pdf
2. The internet portal www.education.sk, operated by a private company (Education, s.r.o.), runs the biggest online database of educational activities for adults in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. This activity is in particular demand since there is no official information system on continuing education and training.
3. In an environment where the quality control on non-formal education is absent, the Association of Adult Education Institutions developed an unofficial system for the certification of lecturers. The Association also offers certified training for lecturers and publishes a list of certified trainers on their website. www.aivd.sk

5 Bibliography

Documents

Annual Report on the Implementation of the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources for 2005. Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR. http://www.strukturalnefondy.sk/Documents/SBS/spravy_MV/Vyrocné_spravy2005/Angl%20Vyrocná%20správa%20o%20implementácii%20SOP%20LZ%20za%20rok%202005%20final.zip

Education At a Glance. OECD, editions 2002-2007. http://www.oecd.org/document/30/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_39251550_1_1_1_1,00.html

European Employment Observatory, Review: Autumn 2006. <http://www.eu-employment-observatory.net/resources/reviews/EEOAutumnReview2006-EN.pdf>

Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines including indicators for additional employment analysis. 2007 compendium. European Commission. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/pdf/2007compendium_en.pdf

Kocanova, D.: *Continuing vocational education and training – Slovakia.* Study prepared for the eKnowVet database of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop). Bratislava 2007. http://www.siov.sk/refernet/en/public/studie/theme_5.pdf

Lifelong Learning in Europe. Statistics in focus, Population and social conditions. 8/2005. http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-NK-05-008/EN/KS-NK-05-008-EN.PDF

Measuring, improving and promoting effects of lifelong learning. Thematic Review seminar, organised by ÖSB/IES/BICEPS on behalf of the European Commission, Brussels, 20 September 2007. [http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/stories/storyReader\\$225](http://www.mutual-learning-employment.net/stories/storyReader$225)

National Strategic Reference Framework, Operational Programme Education. <http://www.nsrr.sk/operacne-programy/vzdelavanie/>

Concept of Lifelong Learning in the Slovak Republic. Ministry of Education of the SR. <http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/F27594E2C767166BC1256E3C00341334?OpenDocument>

Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources. Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family of the SR.

Special Eurobarometer 216 *Vocational Training* (2005). http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/upload/etvnews/news/1659-att1-2-special_eurobarometer_216_-_vocational_training_-_report_august_2005.pdf

Strategy on Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Counselling. Ministry of Education of the SR. <http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/72D2F96631133B00C12572BA002D7D25?OpenDocument>

Thematic Review on Adult Learning. OECD 2005.

Vantuch, J. – Jelinkova, D.: *Vocational Education and Training in Slovakia.* Thematic Overview 2006. Bratislava 2006. http://www.siov.sk/refernet/public/studie/thematic_overview2006.pdf

Legislation

Act No. 386/1997 Coll. On Further Education and its Amendment No. 567/2001. <http://www.minedu.sk/index.php?lang=sk&rootId=640>

Websites

Association of Adult Education Institutions. <http://www.aivd.sk>

Eurostat http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1090,30070682,1090_33076576&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Ministry of Education of the SR. <http://www.minedu.sk/>

State Vocational Education Institute. <http://www.siov.sk/>

Statistical Office of the SR. <http://www.statistics.sk>

SLOVSTAT on-line database of the Statistical Office of the SR. <http://www.statistics.sk/pls/elisw/vbd>

Finland

1 Lifelong learning in Finland

The Finnish education system, which provides equal education opportunities for all generations, is under a powerful pressure to change both in terms of quality and quantity. The educational policy, followed in a closed economy and driven by the supply in the public sector, no longer works under the conditions of a knowledge-based economy²²³. Even more demand-driven youth and adult education taking into account local and business-specific conditions is needed.

Also, the ageing population and the consequent acceleration of the pace in the labour market exits emphasises the importance of upgrading the quantity as well as the quality of educational supply (course contents, teachers' knowledge of working-life), thereby improving employment opportunities for people receiving education and fostering a rise in labour productivity. Moreover, an increase in population with a foreign background having a lower educational level than on average (work-based immigration) requires a greater investment (in comparison to the native population) to improve their labour market suitability.

In terms of the growth of human capital (an individual output of education) and growing labour productivity, the point of departure appears rather good if we only examine the educational level of the present, young age groups. The current, large educational gap between the younger and older age groups will level out in the next 15 years. This means an automatic rise in the level of education, which is faster than in other EU countries (Table 1).

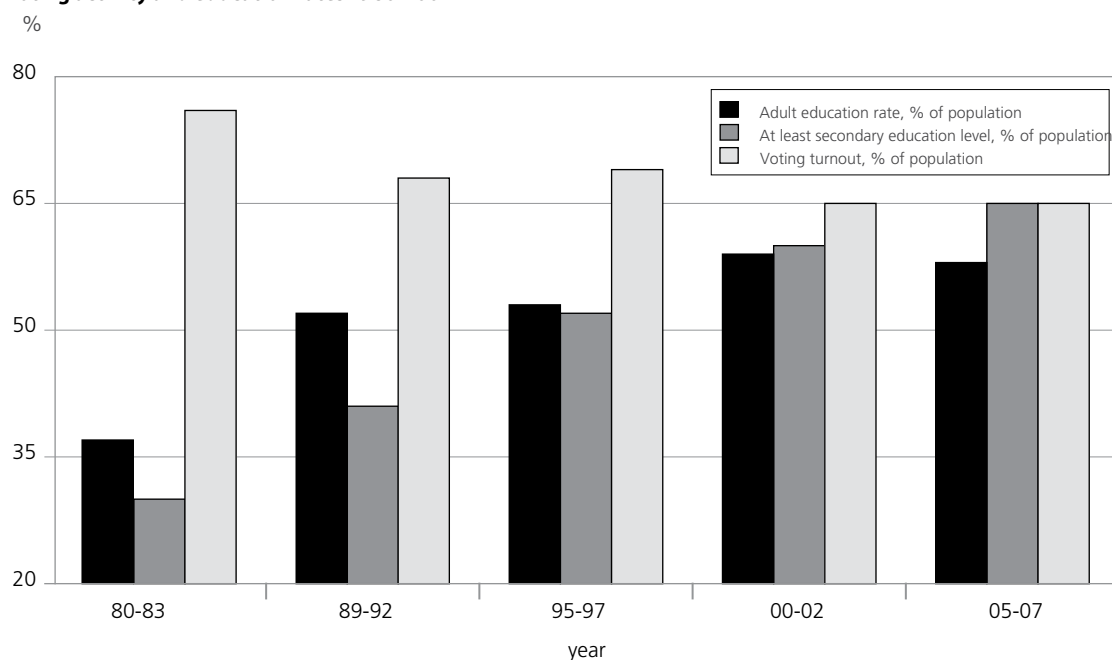
The long-term potential productivity benefits are threatened by the growth of lower level productivity brought on by the ageing population, which is resulting in a growing demand for services. A distinct rise in labour productivity is needed especially in female-dominated, public service sector jobs demanding a long education, for example social services, healthcare and education. This can be influenced in many ways. The most important thing is to increase external incentives for working-life (wage formation) along with quantitative educational efforts and promotion of private service production based on partnerships and competition with public production.

In terms of the return on social capital, the situation is more problematic. Despite increasing educational efforts and the general rise in the education level, many macro-indicators of social capital are pointing to a troublesome direction. The last couple of decades have witnessed a trend-like descent with respect to active citizenship (in terms of voting activity and participation in political parties and organisations). The development reflects the loosening of the national society based on Finns' respective trust. The individualisation of citizens' values and attitudes has clearly grown (Figure 1).

Table 1: The share of population that has attained tertiary education by age group in Finland and EU countries (per cent)				
	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years
Finland	38	41	34	27
EU-13	33	28	24	20

Source: *Education at a Glance 2007*, OECD.

⁽²²³⁾ In the 1970s and 1980s the educational needs were defined in a centralised fashion by public sector authorities.

Figure 1: Voting activity and education rates 1980-2007

Source: Statistics of Finland.

The education supply maintained by the society, which is within the reach of all age-groups (equal opportunity), together with other service provision and social security schemes funded by public tax funds have fostered equality between genders. Nowadays women participate more than men in all spheres of education, do better in school and their education level has risen higher than men's.

Despite genders becoming more equal, worrying developments have occurred in the micro-indicators of social capital. The number of young boys dropping out of school and their need for special education has increased sharply, and divorces and children being taken into custody have rapidly become more common. The Finns are at the top of the worldwide statistics in male suicides and diseases of over 50-year-olds and within all adult age-groups alcohol and obesity problems are increasing. The use of medication has increased in the present decade at an annual average rate of 7% and the most common reason for over 40-year-old Finns to be outside of the labour market due to disability is mental health problems (40%).

The specific problem of the adult education system concerns measuring its inputs, outputs and quality. Internationally good scores in quality and quantity achieved in the primary level (Programme for International Student Assessment - PISA) do not, for example, according to the OECD and EU indicators, recur in upper level youth education. For example, no Finnish university ranks even among the world's top 200 universities. There are also significant problems in measuring the quality of adult education as the evaluations are mainly based on evaluations undertaken by the adult education providers themselves; there are no comprehensive and systematic evaluations done by independent bodies.

2 Participation in adult education

Finland has traditionally ranked high in terms of participation in adult education. In 2005, a very ambitious objective was set (within the national reform programme approved by the former government) to raise the amount of people participating in adult education to 60% of the working aged population by 2008. This objective meant an addition of 250,000 people in adult education when compared to the number of participants in adult education in 2000.

This spring Statistics Finland published the adult education study for 2006. According to the study, the number of people participating in adult education decreased from the year 2000 by about 50,000 people to 1,705,000 people while the adult education rate dropped from 54% to 51%.

The most significant single reason for the participation level decreasing was the vast economic boom starting in 2004 and the improvement of the employment situation. The strong growth of employment has decreased the number of participants in adult education. The presumption is also supported by the fact that there is a negative statistical dependence between the education activity of full-time students and the employment rate (Figure 2).

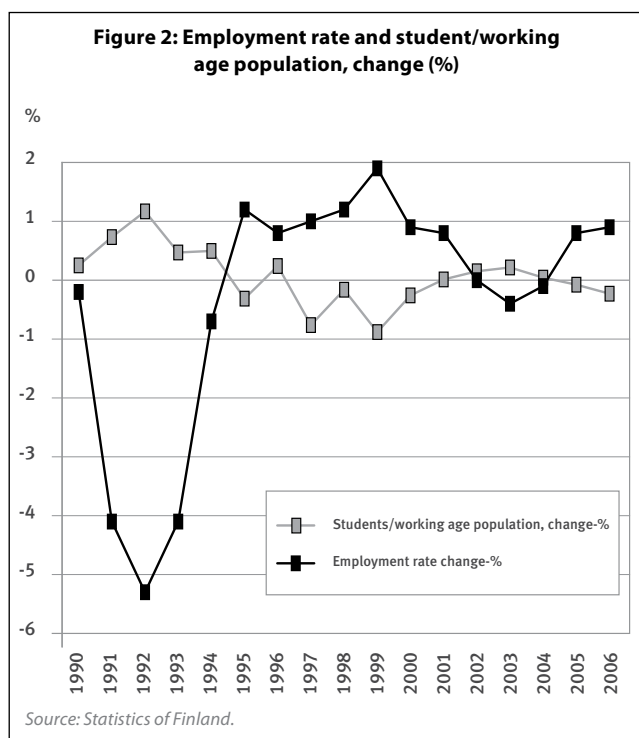


Table 2: The participation of 18-64 year-olds in adult education in Finland (1995-2006)

	1995	2000	2006	Change-% 95-06
18-24 years	42	49	43	+1
25-34 years	53	62	58	+5
35-44 years	54	62	61	+6
45-54 years	54	56	56	+1
55-64 years	32	33	37	+5
Total	48	54	52	+4
Men	43	49	45	+2
Women	53	59	58	+5
Employed	60	63	60	+0
Unemployed	27	37	29	+2
Primary level	32	37	35	+3
Secondary level	50	51	48	-2
Tertiary level	74	76	71	-3

Source: Finland's AKU survey

According to the Finnish National Board of Education, the decline in the participation rate could also be caused by the decline in short-term educational courses lasting a minimum of six hours, for example, as a result of the decreasing need for IT studies and the new study methods provided by new technology (e.g. self-study in the workplace).

When examined by gender, men's participation level decreased in adult education by three percentage points to 45% in the first half of the current decade and women's by one percentage point to 57%. The share of the employed in adult education has stayed at about 60% and the share of unemployed at about 30% (Table 2). When examined by age groups, participation in adult education continued to grow strongest among older age groups. In the age group 45-64, the participation level rose by an average of five percentage points.

However, staff training - considered as a feature of adult education - arranged by businesses and organisations, had almost 100,000 more participants, totalling about 1.1 million people in 2006. The participation rate increased by a percentage point to 57% between 2000 and 2006. The participation rate in other forms of adult education besides work-related (self-financed hobby activities and general education) stayed the same level at about 18%.

The participation rate of women in staff training organised by employers (public and private sector employers) has risen clearly more than that of men. The share of women's participation out of all participants grew by 3 percentage points in the first half of this year to 61%, while men's share decreased by 1 percentage point to 53%. The participation rate of over 45 year-olds rose by an average of 10 percentage points. The labour market situation and the socio-economic status of those participating in adult education is very skewed, concentrating on white-collar workers with a strong basic education to begin with.

The most significant reason for the rise in the women's participation rate is an increase in staff training in the female-dominated public sector. The adult education rate of the public sector labour force (including voluntary organisations) rose by 3 percentage points to 69%. The participation rate of employees in the private sector stayed unchanged at 49%. The difference is exceptional and could be explained by the fact that in the public sector service production, the significance of personal service is emphasised more than in male-dominated private sector lines of business (e.g. industry and construction). In addition, healthcare personnel are legally obliged to participate in supplementary training.

3 Most significant barriers to the development of adult education

The Finnish labour market is undergoing a significant change. An acceleration of the rate of persons reaching retirement age and an increased demand for professional skills have increased competition for labour, especially in larger cities. Regional centres appear to be strengthening as a result of better employment and income opportunities.

The concentration of business activities to the fastest growing regional centres requires increased flexibility in the organisation of youth and adult education. Owing to its current supply-driven nature, the education system allocates labour inefficiently and does not necessarily spawn the best knowledge. An increasing orientation towards client demands and working life is a must for both teacher education and the entire school system.

One of the problems affecting adult education is its concentration on women and persons with a strong basic education and good labour market situation. Equality of opportunity in education decreases after compulsory education as educational opportunities in adult education tend to be concentrated on persons who are already in a good position in the labour market. According to a survey of members of the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) undertaken in 2005, some 70% had not participated in adult education during the previous year. Participation in adult education in manufacturing-oriented sectors was, thus, as low as the participation of unemployed persons in adult education, as found by the adult education survey compiled by Statistics Finland.

The low propensity of low income workers and unemployed persons to participate in retraining and education programmes is attributable to poor incentives. Further training of persons with a poor basic education rarely leads to a better career progression and higher earnings. The low compensation for self-initiated education (income-related disincentives) reduces the desire for participation in educational programmes.

Labour market training schemes intended for unemployed persons may even prolong unemployment because the level of compensation for self-initiated adult education is often lower than the unemployment benefit. Unemployment may also be prolonged for the reason that participation in labour market training schemes must be ordered by the employment office instead of the unemployed persons themselves taking the initiative to apply to an adult education programme.

Employed persons also lack incentives to participate in adult education. The incentives for women to participate in educational programmes are related to internal factors, such as raising the level of vocational skills and enhancing self-confidence and reputation stemming from new learning.

External factors, such as a rise in earnings and the effect of promoting career development, remain relatively modest due to the evenness of the wage distribution and a higher tax burden. It is comparatively difficult in Finland, by international standards, to raise the wage level by climbing up the career ladder, especially for those in the lower end of the wage scale (Table 3). Greater wage incentives would encourage people to seek adult education on their own.

Table 3: Relative earnings by level of education attainment (secondary level=100)

	Primary level	Secondary level	Tertiary level	Difference between primary and tertiary level %
Finland	94	100	148	+57
EU-12	83	100	143	+71
USA	65	100	143	+119

Source: OECD, *Education at a Glance 2006*.

Competition between adult education organisers on funding and the number of students that can be enrolled is still intense. The procurement of educational services is nowadays carried out by the Finnish National Board of Education and the employment offices via competitive bidding procedure between educational institutions.

The suppliers of education have a clear tendency to overestimate the number of students needed so that the number of teaching hours at the educational institution can be maximised. For example, the normal study duration for a basic degree at a vocational school has stretched to four years even though the degree can actually be completed a year faster.

Many persons who already have a vocational degree are selected for long-term educational programmes even though they would really only need to update their professional skills with supplementary training of a shorter duration. Thus, the competition for funds leads to 'redundant studies', longer training periods and a slow return to the labour market.

An evaluation of the adult education system is hindered by its weak transparency. It is difficult, for example, to separate adult education from youth education. Due to the dispersed network of educational institutions and multi-channelled financing, it is difficult to get uniform figures on the cost of public education. To a large extent, the quality assessments on adult education are based on individual studies and self-evaluations by educational institutions. No comprehensive evaluations on the quality of adult education are carried out by independent parties.

All in all, it would be important for Finland to improve its adult education statistics in accordance with the EU's operative policies aimed at promoting lifelong learning. This would enable the verification of quality in a more comprehensive fashion and facilitate a more credible measurement of performance.

4 Best practices

The prime example of best practice in adult education is the co-operation between the government and the labour market organisations in the ageing workers reform programme started in 1997, followed by the Noste programme started in 2003. The ageing workers programme has received international recognition (Bertelsmann Prize in 2006).

The aim of the Noste programme is to promote the career development of 30 to 59 year-olds with a primary level of education by keeping them in working life, to ease the shortage of labour caused by the shifting of large age groups into retirement and to affect the employment rate. The Noste programme is due to continue until the end of 2009.

According to an evaluation of the Noste programme made by public authorities, it has made progress in line with the set goals, but the goals regarding the number of students has been achieved more slowly than expected. By the end of 2006, the number of students who had begun their studies with funding from the Noste programme reached 17,000, which nevertheless corresponded only to about half of the total annual goal. The duration of participants' education has, however, increased annually.

The goals regarding the gender breakdown of the Noste programme participants have been reached. The men's share of the total number of new students rose last year from 33% to 43%. A substantial change also occurred with respect to the number of unemployed persons. Their share of all new students rose from the previous year's 7% to 10%. Considering the goals set for the Noste programme, the share of unemployed persons in the target group is still relatively small. The main reason for the modest participation of unemployed persons is the better income provided by the labour market policy programmes.

With regards to the effectiveness of ESF-financed (European Social Fund) adult education programmes, the observations from the previous programme period indicate that the results are inconsistent and the scattered nature of programmes has been the main shortcoming. According to the feedback from the participants, Finland's ESF programmes have worked well with respect to three main lines of activities. The programme has reached its goals regarding the number of participants and it has likewise been successful in raising the share of women and older people in the social and health sector employment. The programme has, nevertheless, not had an appreciable impact on broader employment targets, such as increasing the average retirement age, raising the educational proficiency of persons with lower levels of education and promotion of vocational mobility.

5 National strategy and measures

In Finland's lifelong learning strategy the challenges related to the knowledge-intensive economy, the ageing population, regional development and the flexibility of labour markets are widely acknowledged. The reform of the adult education system has been included in the Finnish national reform programme in accordance with the Lisbon strategy and it has been integrated into the new government's programme published this spring.

The most significant education policy measures specified in the Finnish national reform programme are related to the municipal and public service structure reforms by the year 2012. The purpose of these reforms is to strengthen the municipal and service structure by gearing services toward a wider cross-municipal population base and increasing joint municipal services. The goal is to ensure the availability of high-quality services for Finns all across the country with respect to education as well as social welfare and health care. A precondition for arranging basic vocational education is that there are at least 50,000 residents in the region. Stringent administrative municipal and provincial borders should not be barriers to participation in adult education.

Another project promoting lifelong learning is a tripartite working group charged with the task of designing a Finnish model of flexicurity. Adult education reform is of pivotal importance to the flexicurity model. A comprehensive reform of adult education will be initiated and steps will be taken to increase the effectiveness of active labour market policies. The reforms will seek to streamline administration and financing of adult education, benefits and educational programmes.

The Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education have initiated a programme to be carried out between 2006 and 2010 aimed at developing comprehensive information and counselling service for the adult population. A new, internet-based counselling and guidance system will be created with assistance from ESF. Furthermore, a new method of evaluating and monitoring counselling and guidance work will be developed. The ESF funding will be used to support national goals via special projects aimed at creating more vibrant clusters of regions and innovation.

One of the main instruments of the reformed labour administration (Ministry of Employment and Economy) with respect to fostering know-how is adult education in connection with active labour market policy measures. According to the labour administration strategy, labour market training will be directed increasingly towards those participating in apprenticeship schemes with the best probability of becoming employed in regions with the greatest shortage of labour. The familiarity with business life for persons participating in educational and training programmes will be improved, e.g. by increasing the scope of co-operation with SMEs.

6 Bibliography

'Adult education survey 2006', Statistics Finland preliminary report 17.4.2006.

Noste-programme 2006, Ministry of Education 2007:30.

Osaava henkilöstö–menestyvät yritykset, EK:n koulutus- ja työvoimapolitiittiset linjaukset 2006–2010.

'The Finnish National Reform Programme 2005-2008', *Economic Policy Surveys*, 3b/2007.

The Finnish Government's Budget Proposal 2008, Ministry of Finance.

Yearbook of Adult Education, Ministry of Education 2007:26.

Interviews:

Secretary General Matti Ropponen, Adult education Council/
Ministry of Education

Head of training division Markku Liljeström, Central Organisation
of Finnish trade Unions (SAK)

Sweden

1 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

Lifelong learning (LLL) makes up an integrated part of the Swedish educational and employment system. One feature of the Swedish LLL system is the extensive opportunity to complete or enhance educational attainment after leaving initial education, either through the adult education system or through various training courses within the framework of labour market policy. At the workplace level, access to on-the-job training or the opportunity for an employee to further develop their skills also constitutes an important component of the Swedish LLL system. The basic policy orientation regarding public adult education initiatives is that resources should be directed to those who have the greatest need for education, e.g. those who have not had the opportunity to obtain basic eligibility to higher education or who need education in order to strengthen their position in the labour market.

Adult education (AE) takes different educational forms and is organised by different actors ranging from national and municipal AE to labour market training for unemployed persons as well as in-service training and skills enhancement in the workplace. The main public educational forms cover municipal and state AE (*Komvux*), AE for those with learning disabilities (*särvux*), Swedish language training for immigrants (SFI, Svenska för invandrare), advanced vocational education (*myndighet för kvalificerad yrkesutbildning*), labour market training within the framework of active labour market policy (*arbetsmarknadsutbildning*) and popular adult education (*Folkhögskolor*).

- *Municipal adult education (Komvux)* encompasses basic and upper secondary education as well as continuing educational programmes. Komvux was established in 1968 to offer education to adults who lacked the equivalent of compulsory or upper secondary education. Municipalities have an obligation to provide basic education for adults lacking compulsory education (or equivalent). Various programmes are supported by the same public loan facilities and grants that are available for university students. The municipal adult upper secondary education shares the same syllabi and curriculum than regular upper secondary education. During the 1990s, the number of mature students nearly doubled while the volume of course participants more than tripled. Since the turn of the century the volume of participants has declined but is still significantly above the level of the early 1990s. In the school year 2005/2006 around 228,000 persons took part in municipal adult education (143,000 persons were FTEs/full-

time equivalents). In 2005, the expenditure on municipal adult education amounted to around SEK 4.5 billion (EUR 0.5 billion) and the average expenditure per full-time student was SEK 32,000 (around EUR 3,400). During the same period, 65% of the participants were women and one third were born abroad (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2007).

- *Education for adults with learning disabilities (Särvux)* follows the same curriculum as municipal adult education but uses specially-adapted syllabi and timetable. The programmes range from the acquisition of skills in individual topics to programmes equivalent to compulsory education and vocational education at upper secondary level. Since the mid-1990s the number of participants in Särvux has increased markedly in secondary education, (a four-fold increase since the school year 1994/1995). In the school year 2005/2006 around 5,000 pupils with learning disabilities were enrolled in Särvux programmes and the number of participants was evenly distributed in terms of gender. In 2005, the total expenditure for Särvux was SEK 158 million (around EUR 16.8 million) (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2007).
- The *Advanced Vocational Training (AVT)* programme was introduced in 2002 and it has since become a regular post-secondary form of education in the Swedish education system. Under the responsibility of the Agency for Advanced Vocational Training, the AVT is designed to lead to employment and it is carried out in co-operation with workplaces. The programme is an alternative to other forms of post-secondary education. A third of the training period, which can vary from 1 to 3 years, is carried out in the workplace. Since 1 August 2006 it has been possible for companies to purchase advanced vocational education from different training providers to complement and/or improve their internal training provision. Advanced vocational programmes are run by municipalities, training companies and post-secondary institutions in co-operation with workplaces. In 2006, around 32,600 adults participated in AVT (18,200 FTEs) of which 53% were women and 13% non-natives. The average study time ranges from 2 to 2.5 years and in 2006 the average age for participants was 30 years for women and 27 years for men. In 2006, the total expenditure on AVT stood at SEK 1 billion (around EUR 0.1 billion) (state grant).
- *Swedish for immigrants (SFI)* aims at providing adult immigrants with basic knowledge of Swedish language and the Swedish society. All municipalities have an obligation to ensure that SFI is offered to those who do not have the basic knowledge of Swedish. The target for the amount of tuition is 525 hours. In the school year 2005/2006, a total of 48,000 students took part in SFI. Since the beginning of the decade, the number of participants in SFI has increased by almost 30%. Around 61% of all students were women.

The municipal expenditure on SFI amounted to SEK 897 million (around EUR 96 million) and an average expenditure per full-time student was SEK 32,800 (around EUR 3,500) (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2007).

- The courses offered by 148 *adult colleges (folkhögskolor)* and eight study circles and cultural activities of educational associations (*Studieförbund*) are open to all residents and cover a wide range of topics (from vocational training, secondary education and foreign language courses to artistic activities). The responsibility for the allocation of state grants belongs to the National Council of Adult Education (*Folkbildningsrådet*). In 2006, the state grant for adult colleges and study circles amounted to around SEK 2.6 billion (around EUR 0.2 billion). At the same time around 15,000 adults (25 years and older) were enrolled in folk high schools, with 65% of participants being women. Around 1.6 million persons took part in study circles. Some 57% of those participants were women, 85% were over 25 years and fewer than 10% had a foreign background.
- *Labour Market Training* targeted to unemployed job-seekers has a long tradition in Sweden and it became the main labour market policy instrument in the mid-1990s. The purpose of labour market training is to provide unemployed persons with a basic or supplementary vocational training. In 2006, around 47,000 unemployed persons aged 25 years and older were enrolled in various forms of labour market training. Women constituted 49% of the participants.

In 2005/2006, Statistics Sweden conducted a comprehensive household survey on the participation of adults in education and learning (SCB, 2007). The SCB survey follows the Eurostat guidelines for the European Adult Education Survey (AES) as well as the classification of learning activities (AES, see European Communities, 2005). The following data on adult education and lifelong learning covers, therefore, all parts of the AE system and all forms of learning (including formal and non-formal learning²²⁴). As shown by the Table 1, 73% of the Swedish population aged 25 to 64 years participated in formal or non-formal adult education during a twelve-month period in 2005/2006. If formal education is excluded, the participation rate amounts to almost 70%.

Table 1: Participation of adults (25-64) in various forms of lifelong learning by age, gender, educational attainment and labour market status (%), 2005/2006

	All participation in learning/ training	Of which non formal learning/ training	Of which in-service training
Gender			
Men	71	68	50
Women	76	71	49
Age			
25-34	81	72	47
35-49	77	73	55
50-64	65	64	46
Educational attainment			
Compulsory education or lower	51	48	27
Secondary education	70	67	47
Higher education	90	84	66
Labour market status			
Employed	79	78	62
Unemployed	59	47	8
Total	73	69	50

Source: SCB (2007)

Many Swedish workplaces provide comprehensive in-service training for personnel at all levels. This type of training can involve everything from practical vocational skills to extensive theoretical studies. Training can be carried out in co-operation with universities and institutions of higher education, municipal adult education providers or training companies. On-the-job training (OJT) accounts to 50% of the training received by adults aged 25-64.

As far as the gender distribution is concerned, more women than men participated in adult education in 2005/2006 due to a higher incidence of women in formal education (see Table 1). The gender differences were minor among participants in non-formal education, particularly regarding OJT. Around 85% of men in non-formal adult education participated in training activities that were closely related to their occupation and professional competences. For around 80% of the men questioned, these training activities were compensated for or they were undertaken during their normal working hours. The corresponding figures for women were 80% and 70% respectively.

⁽²²⁴⁾ Following the recommendations of the AES survey, the SCB survey defines *Formal Education* as "...education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions that normally create a continuous 'ladder'". This category includes municipal adult education (*Konvux*), adult education for those with learning disabilities (*särvux*), Swedish language instruction for immigrants (*Svenska för invandrare*), advanced vocational education (*Agency for Advanced Vocational Education*), labour market training within the framework of active labour market policy (*arbetsmarknadsutbildning*) and popular adult education (*Folk högskola*). *Non-formal Education* is defined as "all organised and sustained educational activities that do not exactly match the above mentioned definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside of educational institutions, and cater for adult persons of all ages". The following are included in this category: in-service training, participation in study circles, instructions from supervisors and colleagues, and participation in seminars and conferences.

Regarding formal education, on average participants received 300 hours training during the last 12 months. Around 20% of adults participating in formal training received more than 1,000 hours of training. According to Statistics Sweden (SCB, 2007), an annual average volume of training hours amounted to 250 hours for men and 320 hours for women during the same period. The average duration of non-formal education is shorter than the average duration of formal training. Around 60% of individuals participating in non-formal AE spent less than 51 hours in training. An annual average duration was 33 hours for men and 36 hours for women.

The survey conducted by Statistics Sweden also shows that around 40% of participants were interested in further participation in AE. The main reasons for not doing so were time constraints resulting from work/family commitments and financial reasons.

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

Regardless of the learning forms, highly educated people have a higher propensity to participate in AE than the low-skilled (see Table 1). Around 90% of individuals with post-secondary education took part in training activities in 2005/2006 compared with only 50% of those with compulsory education or a lower level qualification. Participation in adult education also varies according to the labour market status, with employed persons constituting a larger share of the participants than the unemployed (see Table 1). Participation in non-formal learning activities is also lower among self-employed persons. Around 65% of the self-employed participants took part in non-formal learning activities compared with 80% of dependent employees.

According to the SCB survey (SCB, 2007), 11% of the sample did not participate in any form of AE. While no differences could be found between sexes, the incidence of non-participation is significantly higher among people with low educational attainment, unemployed persons and older workers (aged 50 to 64 years).

Table 2: The share of non-participants in lifelong learning activities (%), 2006	
	Share of non-participants
Gender	
Men	11
Women	11
Age	
25-34	7
35-49	9
50-64	16
Educational attainment	
Compulsory education or lower	25
Secondary education	12
Higher education	3
Labour market status	
Employed	8
Unemployed	20
All	11

Source: SCB (2007)

Based on the 2001 Swedish Labour Force Survey (LFS) and using traditional estimation techniques, Ericson (2004) has analysed the influence of socio-economic background on the likelihood to participate in on-the-job training (OJT). Confirming previous studies, the research concluded that the probability of participation in OJT increases with age but at a declining rate. Women as well as employees in the public sector also have a higher probability to participate. Workers born outside the Nordic countries and employees on short-term contracts or/and employed part-time have a significantly lower probability of taking part in OJT. The incidence of training is also positively linked to educational attainment and company size. Managers and professionals have a 30% higher probability to participate in OJT than employees in elementary occupations.

3 Quality and impact of training

The results from the International Adult Literacy Study show that Swedish adults perform well in terms of literacy and numeracy. From an international perspective, not only Swedes perform well on average but particularly amongst adults with lower educational attainment and earnings. As stressed by Björklund et al. (2004), the fact that the mean level is comparatively high in Sweden combined with the fact that the dispersion of achievement in terms of test scores for adults is low suggests that the Swedish educational policy has been successful at raising the level of achievement for low-skilled workers.

However, recent studies evaluating AE suggest that the average return of secondary adult education is relatively low. Ekström (2003) has estimated the earnings premium for various sub-groups of participants around 10 years after they started AE. His studies have found that there is no positive return for Swedish born participants. A somewhat more positive picture emerges for immigrants; the positive effects are fairly significant for female migrants.

During the last decades several empirical studies have also been conducted to evaluate the efficiency of labour market training programmes (LMTP). Globally, the study performed during the 1980s and early 1990s indicates that LMTP have had a positive employment and earnings effect, while studies of the late 1990s usually find insignificant or even negative effects (see Calmfors et al., 2002).

During the period 1997-2002, the Swedish government implemented a new major adult education programme called "Adult Education Initiative" or "Knowledge Lift" (KL), which had the explicit objective of raising the skill level of low-skilled workers to a level of the three-year upper secondary education. Participants were eligible to the same grants and loans as those taking part in traditional forms of adult education (*Komvux*) and special educational support was given to participants eligible to unemployment benefits. The size of the programme was unprecedented; between the period 1997 and 2002 more than 10% of the labour force was enrolled in KL²²⁵. An evaluation of the outcome by Albrecht et al. (2005) shows that the impact of KL on the probability to obtain employment was positive only for men, but no significant effect was found on the subsequent income of participants.

As far as on-the-job training is concerned, Regnér (2002) found that participation in training does increase employees' level of pay, irrespective of the level of seniority (tenure) of the participants. According to Regnér, one possible explanation is that personal training reflects the impact of promotion on wages rather than participation in training per se. Furthermore as stressed by Ericson (2004), personal training in Sweden may be used by employers as tax-free fringe benefits due to the relatively high marginal tax in Sweden.

4 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

As illustrated by the developments, AE and adult training in Sweden form an integrated part of the Swedish educational system. Lifelong learning has a long tradition in Sweden and it has expanded markedly since the end of the 1960s. Already since 1974 employees have been able to take career breaks to pursue training/study. The legislation on training leave is particularly flexible providing individuals with considerable leeway in their choice of studies. Access to training leave is also promoted by a system of public loans and grants with subsidised interest rates and other re-payment terms²²⁶. The Individual Training Leave Act had two aims; to encourage social and occupation mobility and to facilitate access to education for employees with the lowest levels of compulsory education. The right to training leave is backed by a full employment guarantee.

One of the basic fundamentals of the Swedish social model is a strong contractual tradition based on the existence of powerful social partners and a well developed social dialogue. Regular consultations are held with social partners and they are considered as a key element in the government's action on issues relating to education, employment and labour market regulations. These consultations, which involve politicians and civil servants, create opportunities to discuss important issues in relation to national policies. According to the Swedish government, better co-ordination of different sectors and policy areas is crucial for effective support for LLL. On-going discussions take place on the development of LLL and measures that may need to be implemented through the preparatory and reference groups, in which the representatives of the labour market partners are represented. As previously mentioned, an access to in-service training and/or opportunities for an employee to further develop their skills are important components of the Swedish LLL and is also largely a matter of discussion and agreement between the social partners. Recently, the government has declared that it is considering researching new means of stimulating employees and employers to put additional resources into LLL at the company level.

⁽²²⁵⁾ To illustrate this, in 1999 up to 228,000 persons were enrolled in the KL programme, while at the same time the number of pupils in the regular upper secondary education stood at 300,000.

⁽²²⁶⁾ Sweden has a good student aid system, which makes it possible for broad groups of individuals in Sweden to study. During 2006 several improvements have been made on the student aid system; an additional child allowance has been introduced for students caring for children, the opportunity for older persons to apply for student aid has been improved and the overall amount of student aid was raised.

In the case of collective redundancy due to restructuring or an individual loss of employment due to shortage of work, the Swedish social partners have negotiated "security/adjustment agreement" in order to help workers, who have been given notice, to quickly find new employment with the help of adjustment measures and financial support. By supplementing the role of public employment agencies, these agreements, covering about half of the labour force, contribute to improving security for employees and enhancing geographical and occupational mobility. The displaced workers may, in addition to individual guidance, participate in further education while they receive compensation for their wage.

Last year the government launched several initiatives regarding LLL. The National Agency for Education has been commissioned to determine, in collaboration with the two sides of the industry, the syllabuses for overall vocationally oriented education as well as advanced programmes (see Ministry of Education and Research, 2007).

According to the government, it is important to reach those who feel they do not have the motivation or opportunity to study. The municipalities have been encouraged to take measures to promote outreach recruitment and to make vocational education accessible to all their inhabitants. The state grant to popular adult education has been increased during 2007 by approximately SEK 500 million (around EUR 53 million). The government has also commissioned the Swedish National Council of Adult Education to implement special initiatives during 2007 and 2008 to improve the abilities and competencies of older persons and other groups in the use of modern technology. In its budget bill for 2007, the government also announced a number of initiatives, including that academics with a foreign background should be offered enhanced opportunities for supplementary education in order to facilitate their entry into the Swedish labour market. Special initiatives have also been taken to provide supplementary training for lawyers and teachers and to increase the proportion of academics with a foreign background in the state sector.

In 2007, a new commission was set up with a task of carrying out an analysis and submitting proposals on how all post upper secondary vocational education that is outside the higher education sphere could be integrated under a common framework labelled as Vocational University College. The commissioner's proposals should simplify and clarify the system proposed for post upper secondary vocational education and facilitate allocation of priorities and distribution of resources at the national level. The commission is expected to present its report by 29 September 2008 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2007).

5 Bibliography

Agency for Advanced Vocational Training (2007): Årsredovisning 2006, <http://www.ky.se/rapporter.html>

Albrecht J, Van den Berg G and Vrooman S. (2005): 'The Knowledge Lift: The Swedish adult education program that aimed to eliminate low worker skill levels' *IZA discussion paper*, no 1503, Bonn.

Björklund A., Edin P-A, Fredriksson P. and Krueger A., (2004): 'Education, Equality and Efficiency- An analysis of the Swedish School reform during the 1990s', *Institute for Labour Market Policy Evaluation (IFAU) report 2004:1*, Stockholm.

Calmfors L., Forslund A., and Hemström M., (2002): *Does active labour market policy work? Lessons from the Swedish experiences* Seminar Papers Institute for International Economic Studies Stockholm. Download from <http://www.iies.su.se>

Ekström E., (2003): 'Earnings effect of Adult Secondary Education in Sweden', *IFAU working paper 2003:16*, <http://www.ifau.se/templates/ListingPublication.aspx?id=1112>

Ericson, T., (2005): *Trends in the patterns of lifelong learning in Sweden: Towards a decentralized economy*, Working paper, Department of Economics, Gothenburg School of Business Economics and Law, Gothenburg University.

Ericson, T., (2004): 'The effects of wage compression on training: Swedish empirical evidence', *working IFAU paper 2004:15*, <http://www.ifau.se/templates/ListingPublication.aspx?id=1112>

European Communities (2005): 'Task force report on Adult Education Survey', *Working papers and Studies*, Office for Official Publication of The European Communities, Luxembourg.

Ministry of Education and Research (2007): *Sweden's national report 2007*, material for the 2008 joint interim report on the implementation of the Education and training 2020 work programme, Regeringskansliet, Stockholm.

Regnér H., (2002): 'The effect of on the job training on wages in Sweden', *International Journal of Manpower*, vol 23:4.

Swedish National Agency for Education (2007): *Descriptive data on pre-school activities, school age childcare, school and adult education in Sweden 2006*, Skolverket, Stockholm 2007, www.skolverket.se

SCB (2007): 'Tema utbildning: Vuxna deltagande i utbildning', *Avdelning för Befolkning & Välfärd*, nr. 2, Stockholm

United Kingdom

1 Introduction

Recognising the importance of human capital to a globally competitive workforce, the UK government has expressed a desire to radically improve the nation's skills base. Benchmarked against the top quartile of OECD countries, the government aims to be a world-leader in skills by 2020.

However, the UK is starting from a comparatively low base. In December 2006, the Leitch Review of Skills reported that: 'more than one third of adults do not hold the equivalent of a basic school-leaving qualification. Almost half of adults are not functionally numerate and one sixth are not functionally literate.'²²⁷ Indeed, the central importance of lifelong learning in addressing this deficit is clearly emphasised – 'improving our schools will not solve these problems. Today over 70% of our 2020 workforce has already completed their compulsory education.'

The government has taken steps to create a policy environment that matches such high ambitions. However, without a step-change in engaging adults and employers in training it is unlikely that the target will be met.

2 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

Measures of training and lifelong learning in the UK derive principally from two sources of information: the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the National Skills Surveys²²⁸. The most common measures are the proportion of employees that have received training in the past year asked of employers (covered in National Skills Surveys) or the past 13 weeks asked of individuals (LFS). However, this has some limitations as these measures do not take account of educational courses that individuals pursue privately and some of the data presented below is for the working age population (i.e. 16-59/64) and cannot be disaggregated specifically for those aged 25 and over. Due to limited space, the figures below are based principally on these measures, supplemented by an LFS measure of those enrolled in educational courses.

2.1 Training

The 2005 National Employers Skills Survey in England (NESS)²²⁹ (which accounts for approximately five in six of the UK population) shows that 61% of all people in employment or 13.1 million had received training in the past 12 months. Of those that had, only a small proportion (19%) received training towards a nationally recognised qualification – almost half of which (48%) were NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications), the vast majority of which were undertaken at levels 2 and 3 (Figure 1).

⁽²²⁷⁾ HM Treasury (2006) *Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for All in the Global Economy – World Class Skills*

⁽²²⁸⁾ National Employers Skills Survey in England, Future Skills survey in Wales, Future Skills Scotland and Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey

⁽²²⁹⁾ The most recent year for which the full results are available. Figures are for all employees (i.e. from age 16 upwards)

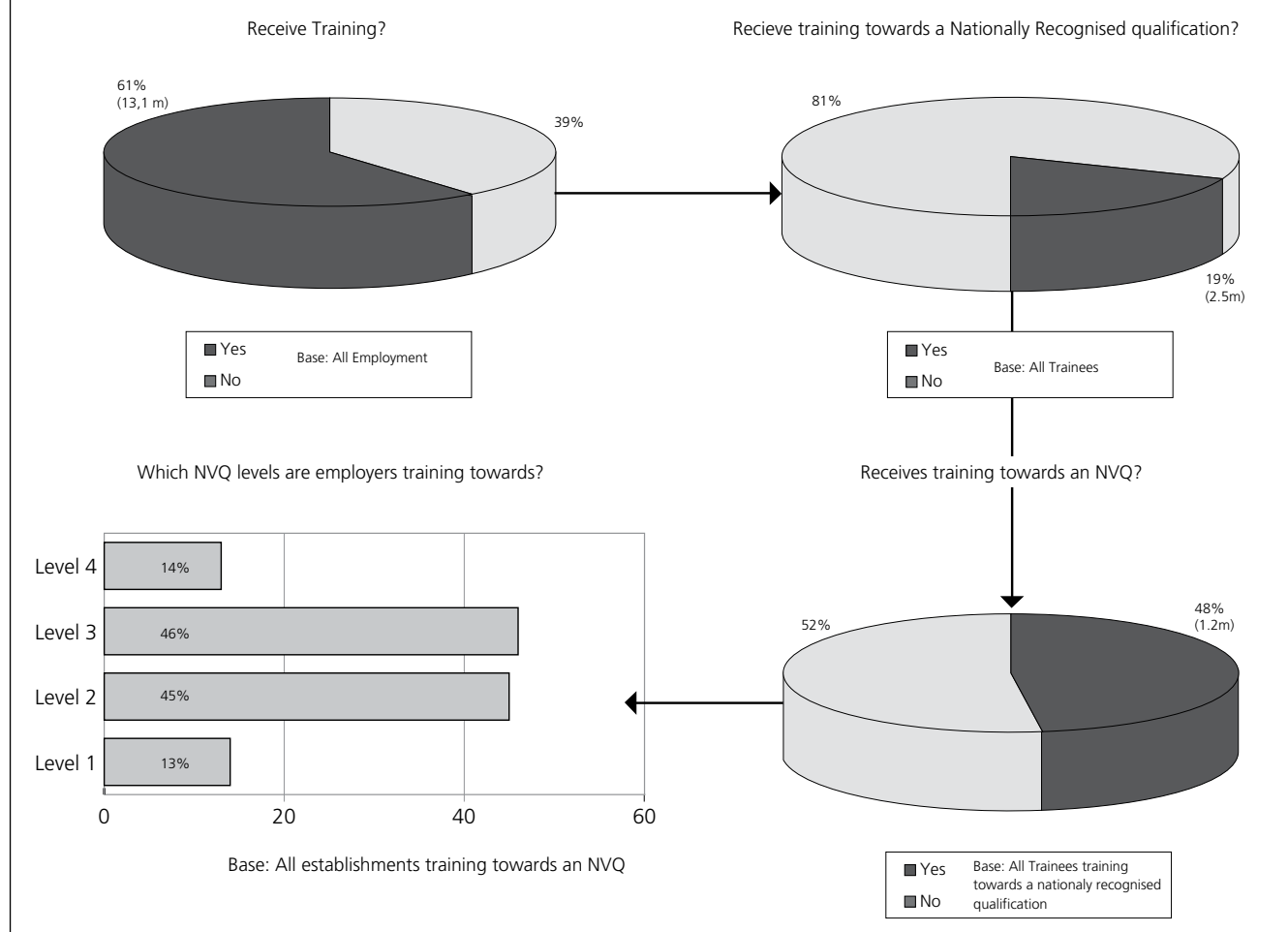
Figure 1: Proportion of employees trained, trained towards a nationally recognised qualification and towards a national vocational qualification²³⁰

Table 1 shows the most recently available data (July to September 2007) from the LFS on the proportion of the UK population that received training in the previous 13 weeks. It shows that younger workers were more likely to have had training – though the figures for those aged 55 and over should be interpreted with caution due to the very high proportion of respondents that did not answer. Females appear to be slightly more likely than males to have undertaken training though, again, the

higher proportion that did not answer makes this difficult to compare directly. Those from a White ethnic background were less likely than mixed, Black/Black British and other ethnic groups, but more likely than Asian/Asian British and Chinese to have had training. This suggests that, while this varies in relation to different ethnic groups, the White population does not have preferential access to training compared to ethnic minorities.

⁽²³⁰⁾ Figure 1 is reproduced from: LSC (2005) *National Employers Skills Survey 2005: Main Report*. The base for these figures is all people in employment of working age (i.e. 16-59/64) in England

Table 1: Proportion of population aged 25+ trained in the past 13 weeks, 3rd Quarter 2007

	Training in past 13 weeks (%)	No training in past 13 weeks (%)	Did not answer (%)
Total (aged 25+)	14.4	45.4	39.9
Age			
25-34	22.7	57.2	19.8
35-44	20.9	60.8	18.0
45-54	19.8	61.2	18.8
55-64	10.5	46.7	42.7
65+	0.7	6.3	93.0
Gender			
Male	14.4	53.3	32.1
Female	14.8	38.1	47.0
Ethnicity			
White	14.4	45.5	40.0
Mixed	21.3	46.6	32.1
Asian or British Asian	13.2	45.1	41.5
Black or Black British	22.1	41.4	36.1
Chinese	12.2	51.9	35.5
Other ethnic group	15.4	44.0	39.7

Source: Labour Force Survey, all aged 25+ in the UK

The same measure for employees (Table 2) also shows that the proportion of working age employees trained varied substantially in different sectors. Public sector dominated sectors such as health and social work, education and public administration and defence were most likely to train employees, while in sectors such as textiles and textile products under a fifth as many employees were trained.

Table 2: Proportion of employees trained in selected sectors in the last 13 weeks²³¹

Top 3 sectors	
Health and social work	46.4%
Education	41.6%
Public administration and defence	41.0%
Bottom 3 sectors	
Textiles and textile products	8.1%
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	10.5%
Furniture, jewellery, musical instruments, sports goods, games and toys; recycling	13.3%

Looking at trends over the past ten years, Table 3 shows the same measure for certain groups within the working age population (16-59/64) in England in 1996, 2001 and 2006. Again, females were more likely to undertake training than males and the gap had increased from 1996 to 2006. In contrast, however, while younger employees were more likely than older ones to receive training, the gap closed substantially between 1996 and 2006. Overall, the total proportion that had received training increased from 1996 to 2001, but declined from 2001 to 2006. Importantly, this general trend applied to those aged 25-49 but not to those aged 50-64. The reasons for this are not clear. The table also shows that in 1996 white people were slightly more likely to have training than non-white people, but that this was reversed in 2001 and 2006.

Table 3: Proportion who had received training in the previous 13 weeks 1996-2006²³²

	1996 (%)	2001 (%)	2006 (%)
All	25.3	29.0	28.2
Age			
16-24	34.4	38.8	36.7
25-49	27.0	30.6	29.4
50-59	17.2	22.6	24.6
60-64	9.8	12.6	15.6
Gender			
Male	23.4	26.0	24.8
Female	27.6	32.6	32.2
Ethnicity			
White	25.3	28.8	28.1
Non-white	24.8	29.6	29.5

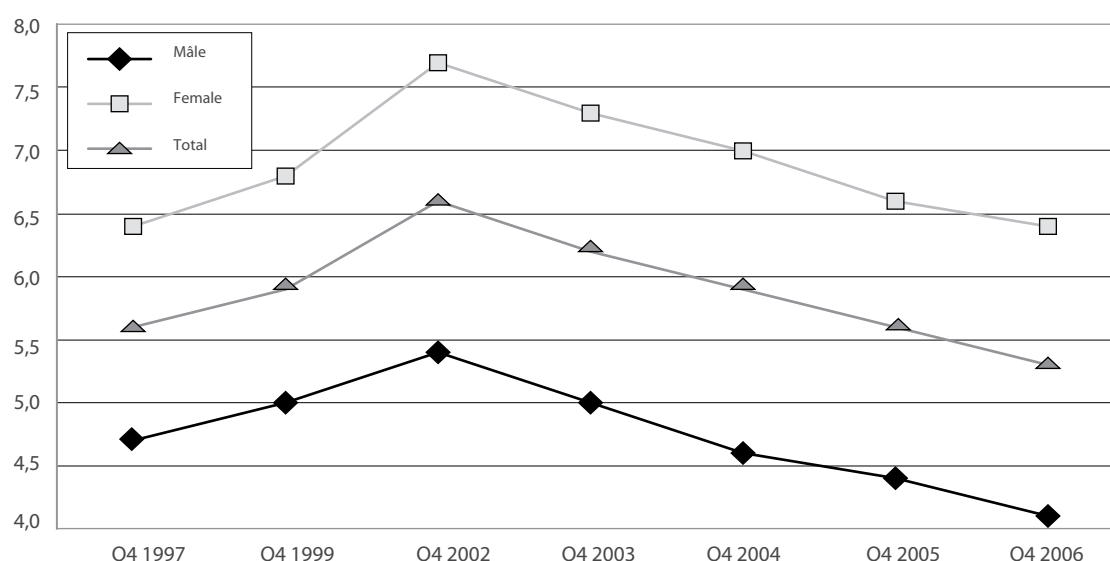
2.2 Educational courses

Figure 2 shows the percentage of the UK population aged 25 and over enrolled in a full- or part-time educational course. The figures are taken from the fourth quarter of selected years from 1997 to 2006. These show that, across this period, females were more likely than males to undertake an educational course by approximately two percentage points. Reflecting the trend noted above for training, there was an overall increase in the proportion undertaking an educational course in the five years from 1997 to 2002 which was reversed from 2002 to 2006. Again, the reasons for this are not clear, although part of the trend may be attributable to the short lived Individual Learner Account policy which saw 1.5 million learners' funded through this mechanism between 2000 and 2001.

⁽²³¹⁾ Table adapted from Skills for Business (2007) *The Sector Skills Almanac*. Figures are derived from the Labour Force Survey for 2005, using a base of all employees of working age (i.e. 16-59/64) in the UK

⁽²³²⁾ This table is reproduced from LSC (2007) *Skills In England 2007 Volume 2: Research Report* and is based on figures from the Labour Force Survey, using a base of all people of working age (i.e. 16-59/64) in England

Figure 2: Percentage of population aged 25+ enrolled on full-time or part-time educational course (excluding leisure), October to December selected years 1997-2006



Source: Labour Force Survey, all aged 25+ in the UK

3 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

As the data above suggests, individuals that are young and/or female are more likely to receive training or undertake educational courses. In addition, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) has identified a major gap in access to training between those who have prior qualifications and those who do not. According to the TUC 41% of graduate employees participated in job-related training in the past three months compared with only 12% of employees without any qualifications in 2006. This finding is supported by the 2005 NESS, which shows that "the percentage receiving training amongst the most highly qualified has remained constant but the percentage of people with no qualifications receiving training is stable and may even be in decline."²³³

Barriers to training and lifelong learning can be split into those that principally affect individuals and those that affect employers. The Leitch review of skills has found that the main barriers for individuals are as follows:

- low aspirations and a low awareness of the benefits of skills;
- lack of effective information and advice;

- lack of clarity over financial support available; and
- variability in the quality of provision.

The main finding from the Leitch review in relation to employers accessing training through publicly funded bodies is that provision is not sufficiently demand-led and is therefore not appropriate to employers' needs – a concern which the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) has also voiced. The Leitch review also identified several other barriers including: lack of awareness of the importance and value of training, the time and monetary cost of sending staff on training and the quality of leadership and management. These factors particularly affect employers in training low skilled workers. For example, businesses may find it difficult to value the indirect benefits of training at lower levels, such as reductions in staff turnover and improvements in morale and motivation, all of which also contribute to efficiency.

In a survey undertaken by the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) about the barriers that employers face when accessing training, there were important differences based on the size of the employer. Small (especially micro) establishments were more likely than large employers to cite a greater range of barriers, including financial cost, concerns about staff being poached, and concerns that the acquisition of new skills may lead to higher wage demands. By contrast, and perhaps surprisingly, disruption to work patterns was most commonly mentioned by the largest establishments.

⁽²³³⁾ LSC (2005) *National Employers Skills Survey 2005: Main Report*, p.171

4 Quality and impact of training

It is difficult to provide objective evidence of the quality of training for adults. However, the LSC's Learner Satisfaction Survey²³⁴ provides some evidence towards learners' views on quality. The proportion of learners who were fairly, very or extremely satisfied with their learning experience was very high across all types of provision (90% plus). Similarly, the NESS shows that just 8% of employers were dissatisfied with the training they received from further education colleges. However, this compares with 2% where there was dissatisfaction with provision from other external providers.

However, along with the concerns noted above in relation to employers accessing training, concerns have also been raised in the past by employer organisations over quality of training provided by colleges. Measures have also been taken at the policy level to ensure that the quality framework is robust. In England, the LSC has developed and is piloting a Framework for Excellence in further education, which aims to provide a single, unified framework for assessing and reporting achievement in all key areas of performance. It is hoped that the use of the Framework will lead to better and more relevant outcomes for learners and employers, and a better reputation for the FE system. Similarly, in Northern Ireland, DELNI (Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland) has published its Quality Improvement Strategy for the FE sector. The strategy lays out action points and priority areas for each partner, providing a clear basis for quality provision.

In terms of the impact of training, the UK demonstrates strong returns on investment in training. In the UK, the private returns to education are thought to be 16.8% whereas social returns are 13.7% (Psacharopoulos, 2007). The OECD (2005) estimates that the fiscal rates of return of public spending on higher education are around 10% in the UK.

On returns to training, the NESS 2005 report cites research which shows that: returns to adults participating in formal learning, in terms of the distribution of hourly pay, are significant and progressive beyond level 2, however, returns below level 2 are often zero or negative, though for individuals, Level 2 training is a necessary stepping stone to sustainable employment and pathways to achieve higher level qualifications which do have higher wage returns attached. The ESF has an important role to play in compensating for clear market failures. The latest programme priorities emphasise sustainable employment, which go beyond simply job entry to progression and vocational pathways in work. ESF provision will be targeted at those who do not possess qualifications relevant to their current occupation, low paid and low skill women workers to improve their progression and firms that have skill shortages. Training can be offered up to Level 3 where there are definite returns to the individual, the firm and society.

Evidence of the positive effects of training is supported by the Leitch review that anticipates huge benefits for the UK from achieving the goal of becoming a world leader in skills by 2020. The review asserts that the impact of meeting the proposed targets on skills will deliver a possible net benefit of at least GBP 80 billion over 30 years at an annual average of GBP 2.5 billion. This would be driven by increased productivity and improved employment. The rate of productivity growth would increase by at least 10%, helping to close the UK's productivity gap and leaving the average worker producing GBP 1,800 more output each year by 2020 than would otherwise be the case. The employment rate would grow 10% more quickly than otherwise projected, with at least an additional 200,000 people into work by 2020, helping to move towards the ambition of an 80% employment rate.

5 National Strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

The UK has set out far-reaching proposals relating to lifelong learning. However, since devolution, responsibility for education and training has been delegated to each of the home nations. Whilst the Northern Ireland and Welsh assemblies have, in practice, tended to follow the English policy agenda quite closely, the Scottish Executive has acted much more independently. This is reflected in the text below.

In England, the newly formed DIUS, (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills) has recently published *World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England*. The overall aim of the Leitch review is to instigate cultural change around skills development throughout individuals' careers with responsibility shared between individuals, employers and government. It contains proposals for the government to increase substantially investment in adult and lifelong learning and to ensure that provision is demand-led, predominantly through the extension of the Train to Gain brokerage scheme. Specific objectives include increasing participation in post-16 full time education, increasing rates of literacy and numeracy, and specific percentage rate increases in those gaining level 2, 3 and 4 qualifications.

The Devolved Administrations are considering the implications of the Leitch Review for their own skills strategies. The Scottish Executive has recently published *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* (September 2007), which addresses many of the issues highlighted in the Leitch review as well as developing a 'cradle to grave' approach to skills development. Success through Skills is the Northern Ireland Executive's overarching vehicle for delivering improvements in skills levels within the region, and is underpinned by the key themes of understanding the demand

⁽²³⁴⁾ LSC (2006) *Learner Satisfaction Survey*

for skills; improving the quality and relevance of education and training; enhancing the skill levels of the workforce; and tackling skills barriers to employment. In Wales, a new Skills and Employment Strategy (incorporating a response to Leitch) is planned, while the innovative Basic Skills Employer Pledge scheme has secured commitments from over 260 employers to improve the basic skills of the workforce.

5.1 Promising practice: learner accounts

One government strategy that demonstrates encouraging practice is that of individual learner accounts (ILAs). These were designed to put purchasing power in the hands of individuals and widen participation by overcoming financial barriers. Initially, the take up of ILAs was much greater than had been expected but the scheme was withdrawn in 2001.

However, the piloting of new learner accounts began in September 2007 with two small scale trials, in two regions, aimed at people over the age of 19 who wish to gain an intermediate level qualification. Learners will receive independent advice on training options up-front. Once they have signed up for a course they will receive a written statement confirming the cost of the course and the amount that the state and individual or employer will be expected to pay for it. As they progress, students will receive regular updated statements. All learners with accounts will be able to call on independent advice and guidance to help them choose the right course and training provider to meet their needs. There will be increased choice as to where they can get the learning they want. As they approach the end of their learning programme they will be provided with details of further development opportunities to progress their learning.

The learner accounts policy was developed prior to the publication of the Leitch review of skills and while the initiative is in line with the recommendations, the review actually goes further, recommending increasing choice and giving individuals' real purchasing power by channelling all adult vocational further education funding for individuals through Skills Accounts by 2010.

6 Bibliography

DELNI (2007) *Success Through Skills*.

DIUS (2007) *World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England*.

European Commission DG-Employment and Social Affairs (2007) *Measuring, Improving and Promoting Effects of Lifelong Learning*.

HM Treasury (2006) *Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for All in the Global Economy – World Class Skills*.

House of Commons, Education and Skills Committee (2007) *Post-16 Skills, Ninth Report of Session 2006-07*.

LSC (2007) *Skills In England 2007 Volume 2: Research Report*.

LSC (2006) *Learner Satisfaction Survey*.

LSC (2005) *National Employers Skills Survey 2005: Main Report*.

Psacharopoulos, G., *Measuring, improving and promoting effects of lifelong learning. Thematic Review Paper, 2007*.

Scottish Government (2007) *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy*.

Skills for Business (2007) *The Sector Skills Almanac*.

SSDA (2006) *Skills for Business Network 2005: Survey of Employers*.

TUC (2007) *Raising Expectations: Staying on in Education and Training Post 16 – TUC Submission to DfES*.

Candidate countries

Croatia

1 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

In Croatia, as in many other transition economies, particular attention should be paid to skills and qualifications, because the labour force is inappropriately skilled for the activities of a modern industrial economy. The investment upon which economic reconstruction and development depends should be understood to include investment in human as well as physical capital. Demand for a highly qualified and well skilled labour force will probably increase. At the same time, it is possible that a large part of under-qualified labour force will be negatively affected by EU accession. It is of key importance to increase both the mobility and the average skill and educational levels of the Croatian labour force. This requires cost effective and relevant adult learning and lifelong learning programmes as well as development opportunities that can be accessed by employers, employees, unemployed people and other individuals. The education and training system in Croatia is not yet able to contribute sufficiently to the needs of the changing economy, particularly in relation to lifelong learning and the needs of adults (Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, MELE, 2004).

Croatia signed the Bologna Declaration in 2001 and so took on the obligation to harmonise the system of higher education with the Declaration's requirements by 2010. Croatia is also active in the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy and other documents where adequate attention is given to the development of adult learning and lifelong learning (LLL).

Unfortunately, unlike regular education where the level of participation is high, the participation in LLL in Croatia is very modest. According to the Labour Force Survey 2005, in EU-25 the average of 10.2% of the population aged 25-64 participated in LLL. The equivalent participation rate in Croatia has, for a long period, been only around 2%. Thus, Croatia is only marginally better than Bulgaria and Romania, but far behind the participation rate of 25-30% in leading countries like Denmark, Finland or Great Britain (Eurostat, 2007).

In the survey by UNDP (2007) only 10% of those interviewed in Croatia gave an affirmative answer to the question: "Did you in the last year attend some course or programme of training?". This is less than a half in comparison with EU-15 (21%) or in the new EU Member States (10-19%). In Croatia participants in LLL most frequently attend courses or programmes linked to their current job or interest (38%), followed by courses in computers and foreign languages (16%). Only 14% of participants attend regular programmes of general education with the intention to acquire an official diploma. Also, there are significant regional differences. The inhabitants in the capital Zagreb participate in LLL more often, probably because of a relatively rich supply of various programmes. Also, the above average participation in LLL is in the South Adriatic counties.

Table 1: Participation of population in some form of LLL in previous four weeks, by age			
	15-24	25-34	35-59
Croatia 2001	53.7	4.8	0.2
Croatia 2004	56.8	5.5	0.3
EU average 2001	64.3	14.5	6.9

Source : Croatian Statistical Bureau: Labour Force Survey (Eurostat, 2007)

One noticeable and disturbing trend is the different participation rates in LLL programmes between various groups in the labour market. Short-term unemployed persons and individuals employed on a fixed-term contract participate in LLL at a rate roughly equal to people in permanent employment. Long-term unemployed people participate much less in LLL. Only 3.3% of adult education is implemented through active labour market policy and training programmes provided by the Croatian Employment Service (CES). Furthermore, younger people, individuals with tertiary education and higher household income as well as those living in urban centres participate more significantly in LLL. Therefore, those with a better starting position on the labour market obtained additional skills and knowledge more than those who are old, less educated, less well-off and/or live in rural areas. These factors create the possibilities to increase the difference in employability and accentuate existing social inequalities (Matković, 2007).

The Labour Force Survey in Croatia does not include data on participation in LLL broken down by gender. The only available source, UNDP survey in 2007, is not fully consistent with the methodology of the Labour Force Survey. The UNDP survey indicated that the total participation in various educational programmes in the year preceding the survey was 9.8% (10.4% for males and 9.2% for females). This would indicate that men participated more in learning, compared to women.

2 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

Low participation in adult learning and training programmes in Croatia is caused by various factors. First, it is underdeveloped in terms of the number of specialised institutions and specialised staff. The required infrastructure is undersized and some elements of the infrastructure simply do not exist, and are yet to be developed. There is no system implemented to monitor the number and success of participants, programmes and institutions; no model of public co-financing and no modern legislative framework. Until recently, there has been also a lack of regulation in the area. Besides, no serious campaign has yet been

launched to motivate and explain the concept and the need for lifelong learning among the population. This is due to a relatively weak information and developmental infrastructure. Issues such as informal education, continuing education, post-secondary education outside formal higher education and lifelong learning have been addressed only recently or not been seriously tackled at all. Until recently, there were no bodies tasked with providing information and counselling on LLL. Furthermore, Croatia did not have a framework of national qualifications until recently and this is an area for further development. It was necessary to create a classification system which is flexible and which reflects the fact that individuals will change industries and skills far more than in the past (The Commission for Adult Education, 2004). Further improvements should be oriented towards reinforcing all formal and informal methods of acquiring knowledge and skills and creating the measures that will enhance lifelong learning.

3 Quality and impact of training

The Croatian system of lifelong learning lags considerably behind the systems of highly developed countries. Today's modest investments in Croatian education and ineffectiveness of its educational system present a significant obstacle to the future strengthening of the competitiveness of Croatian firms as well as the competitiveness of the entire Croatian economy (Plantić, 2005).

There is still no-recognition of non-formal and informal training activities. Thus, there is a need for facilitating the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The situation will change as the National Action Employment Plan emphasises the importance of all kinds of knowledge acquisition and the need for the collection of positive examples from abroad. Apart from the Labour Force Survey, there is a lack of any statistical database for LLL. Robust training institutions and high quality monitoring systems of services provided are also missing. Examples of knowledge and positive experiences could be gained through Croatia engaging in a co-operation process with various EU bodies and institutions responsible for LLL.

4 National strategies and measures which demonstrate promising practice

National Action Employment Plan for Republic of Croatia (NAEP) for the period 2006-2008 reminds readers that LLL comprises all formats of formal and informal learning. Underdevelopment of LLL is not easy to solve quickly. NAEP contains the following key objectives:

- To include adult education as a key part of educational policy;

- To reform the vocational training and education system so that it has agreed occupational standards and curricula, modularisation, assessment, certification and recognition and meets the needs of people both inside and outside of the formal education system;
- To create a coherent legal and institutional structure for reform and allocating finance, which should include tripartite arrangements (council) for agreeing vocational qualifications, skills needs assessment, training provision and quality and for implementing modernisation measures;
- To devise arrangements for tripartite participation in the financing of education by individuals, employers and government.

Highly desirable objectives of the NAEP are:

- To modernise education institutions to better meet the educational needs of adults;
- To finance, within active labour market policy, programmes of education and training for long-term unemployed persons with a goal to increase their employability.

Desirable objective is:

- To organise and finance media campaign with the aim to increase general awareness and knowledge about the importance of lifelong learning and education.

The Government of Croatia adopted in 2005 *The Education Sector Development Plan 2005 – 2010 (ESDP)* as a strategic document for the development of education on all levels, including adult education. Special attention is given to the principle of lifelong learning and the participation of adults and the unemployed in flexible educational and training programmes. The Development Plan integrates the principles of lifelong learning at all levels of education by focusing on developing learning-to-learn attitudes and skills. The ESDP goal regarding LLL is to increase the percentage of adults participating in lifelong learning by:

- promoting and developing a LLL system in which credit points could be accumulated during the entire life;
- developing a system of professional information and counselling services in order to provide education and training for those who do not complete primary and secondary education;
- training adults who have less schooling in literacy, mathematics and vocational skills, in order to contribute to their employability.

The Commission for Adult Education was established. It drafted the Strategy for Adult Education in 2004. The overall objectives are to expand and develop lifelong learning where a system of adult education offering equal opportunities and quality learning is essential. The Strategy for Adult Learning and the

Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy, adopted in 2005, have a main goal to increase the availability and flexibility of adult learning. The implementation of this strategy is expected to promote lifelong learning, increase social inclusion and reduce long-term unemployment. The implementation of the Strategy for Adult Education includes the following:

- Promoting lifelong learning as a right and an obligation of all citizens.
- Developing a system of adult education that will offer equal opportunities for quality learning throughout life to all people, and in which education is based on and results from the demands and needs for learning.
- Measures for joint and coordinated action of the relevant ministries, social partners and educational institutions.
- Creating legal and professional prerequisites for establishing comprehensive adult education as an integral part of the Croatian education system.
- Adjusting educational planning and programming, the strategies and ways of teaching and learning, so that individual knowledge and skills match their abilities and needs, as well as demands of jobs and occupations, work and society.
- Encouraging and enabling individuals to participate in all spheres of modern life, especially in social and political life at all levels, including European level.
- Encouraging the use of new information and communication technology in lifelong learning and adult education, thus enabling an individual approach to learning.
- Speeding up the integration of labour market and learning, in line with the OECD economies, and thus creating a continuous link between education and labour market, instead of the traditional separation between formal education and LLL.

In addition, yearly action plans have been adopted, and the Council for Adult Education and the Agency for Adult Education (AAE) were established in 2006. The Agency has the function of monitoring, regulating and developing adult education activities. The Agency has an important role in continuous professional training of teachers who participate in education and training programmes for adults. It will be in charge of managing the Community Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action Programmes. However, the legal and administrative frameworks need to be completed and the capacity of the Agency built up, staff trained and preparatory measures implemented with a view to future participation in these programmes.

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) Component IV is intended to support operations under measures that increase adaptability of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs. The aim was to improve the anticipation and positive management of economic change, in particular by promoting LLL and increased

investment in human resources. Within the IPA Component IV, Operational Programme (OP) Human Resource Development, AAE submitted a project aimed at enabling adults easier access and higher competitiveness on the labour market.

The Council for Pedagogical Standards of Pre-school, Elementary and Secondary System of Education in Croatia consists of four Commissions. One of them is the Commission for determination of standards for adult education. The Commission has eight members, three of which are from AAE. Their task is to provide quality education for adults by determining the minimum standards for adult education. The Commission members work on standards for education programmes and their respective performance, as well as educational groups, forms of teaching, human resources and other conditions related to employees that work in adult education. The main goal of the Commission's work is to increase the quality of the Croatian education system, particularly LLL.

The project for adult literacy entitled *The Way to a Desirable Future – the Decade of Literacy in Croatia 2003-2012* is being decentralised, and an increasingly important role is played by local authorities (counties) that have been given a role of project facilitators. The facilitators also explicitly include institutions accredited to provide primary school education of adults.

The Law on Adult Education was accepted in February 2007, stipulating that adult education is an integral part of the education system. According to the Act, adult education can be conducted as formal, non-formal, informal and/or self-guided learning. This is viewed as a possibility for adults to choose their own learning path that will eventually be recognised within the educational system. The Act stipulates that adults will have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities, regardless of means by which these were acquired, by taking an examination. Such exams shall be organised and conducted by adult education institutions offering programmes for the acquisition of such types of knowledge, skills and abilities, except for the graduation examination [state matura], which is conducted by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education.

During 2007 the Croatian Statistics Bureau finished preparation of the *Adult education survey* (AES), funded by the EU and following the Eurostat methodological guidelines. The results will be available in 2008.

Ongoing reforms in all levels of education are preconditions to enable every person to acquire and update their abilities, interests, knowledge and qualifications, thus enabling them to choose and create their own learning pathways. Opening learning pathways to individual needs and demands has been recognised as a priority of the ongoing education reform. The reform of the adult education is especially important in opening pathways to further and higher education. Secondary education curricula are adopted at the national level and apply to regular education and adult education. Therefore, after finishing at vocational school, it is possible to enrol in an adult education programme and acquire a formal certificate in general secondary education. Afterwards, it is possible to continue

higher education without any restraints. Adult education programmes are becoming flexible and open to all generations (from the age of 15) and therefore play an important role in creating educational opportunities.

5 Conclusion

As a conclusion, Croatia embarked on an ambitious reform of its LLL system in line with common European standards. Complete data on LLL activities are missing, but estimated overall participation of adults seems to be relatively low (around 2% of population of adult age). A new institutional and legal framework for the expansion of adult education was set up. However, further strengthening of the recently established institutions is necessary to enable them to function effectively and to develop models of adult education and its financing which will satisfy both the needs of an individual and the labour market. The Adult Education Act provides a legal basis for a more coherent and transparent development of all aspects of adult education. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sport is currently preparing regulations on the educational standards in adult learning, the monitoring and statistical evaluation of adult learning system, and the certification process in adult learning.

Adult education in Croatia has been the most neglected and under-developed part of the educational system. The main challenges for the educational system are to bring it closer to the needs of the labour market and to stimulate LLL. As Croatian society is moving towards a more accountable and effective system of education, it is beginning to need agents of change, which are both familiar with current trends of education reform world-wide and skilled in implementing the necessary changes. Large-scale awareness-raising and guided learning processes (mentoring) of local actors will be necessary to develop sustainable national solutions and increase the effectiveness of their implementation.

6 Bibliography

Eurostat, 2007. *Life-long learning (adult participation in education and training)* – total: *Percentage of the adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training*, Eurostat, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1996,39140985&dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&product=STRIND&root=theme0/strind/emploi/em051&zone=detail

Matković, T. 2007. *Obrazovanje i vještine* (Education and Skills), in United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Croatia, 2007, *Kvaliteta života u Hrvatskoj: regionalne nejednakosti* (Quality of Life in Croatia and Regional Differences). Zagreb: United Nations Development Programme.

Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship (MELE), 2004. *National Employment Action Plan for Republic of Croatia, Volume 2, Background Papers for Employment Action Plan*, Zagreb: The Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship.

Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, 2004. *Development of a Model of Teacher Lifelong Education and Learning*, Zagreb: The Ministry of Science, Education and Sport.

Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, 2005. *The Strategic Development Framework 2006-2013*, Zagreb: The Ministry of Science, Education and Sport.

Plantić, D., 2005. *Koncepcijom cjeloživotnog obrazovanja do veće konkurentnosti Hrvatske (From Lifelong Learning Concept to Higher Competitiveness)*, *Ekonomski pregled*, 56 (1-2) 93-101.

The Commission for Adult Education, 2004. *An Approach to an Adult Learning Strategy for Croatia*, Zagreb: The Commission for Adult Education.

UNDP 2007. *Quality of Life in Croatia: Regional disparities*, Zagreb: United Nations Development Programme.

Turkey

1 Introduction

In the EU region, the Joint Employment Report 2006/2007 suggests that the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs is providing results. Similarly, in Turkey, there has been some net employment growth since 2005, which, however, was nowhere near the impressive economic growth rate of the last five years. The unemployment rate remained stable at around 10%.²³⁵ The non-agricultural unemployment rate is higher at 12.6% (2006). Since the working age population increased more than the net employment creation in the past two years, a stable unemployment rate implies falling labour force participation rates (LFPR) across the board. Indeed, across age, gender, and education groups, Turkish LFPR's continue to fall at varying rates.

The number of non-participants increased by 2.4% per year between 2000 and 2006. In the same period, overall male LFPR fell from 73.7% to 71.5%, and female LFPR fell from 28% to 25%.²³⁶ This keeps the unemployment rate in check. However, the current situation is a waste of available human resources. This is especially true for women whose labour participation rates are the lowest participation rates among OECD countries. On the other hand, the Turkish urban economy creates jobs; non-agricultural employment increased by an average of 3.9 % per year between 2002 and 2006. If it were not for the haemorrhaging of agricultural employment, Turkey would have almost provided enough jobs to have matched the rise in its working age population.

Still in the early stages of its accession negotiations, Turkey is faced with two related and significant challenges; in addition to the falling LFPR's, Turkey's rural population continues to move to its cities - 30% of the total population were living in villages in the 2000 census. This ongoing movement explains some part of the falling LFPR's. Uneducated and unskilled, especially female, migrants drop out of the labour force. There is a widespread perception about the inadequacy of employment opportunities. This low-skilled component of the Turkish workforce (especially school dropouts and most women) have more basic needs such as literacy and numerical skills than the current understanding of lifelong learning in the EU. As things stand today, they are not likely to hold permanent jobs.

So where does this brief picture put Turkey in the EU or OECD discourse on lifelong learning and the knowledge economy/society? The Lisbon Council has consolidated economic growth

and social cohesion concepts with lifelong learning (LLL) as the cement of the so-called knowledge economy/society.²³⁷ Unemployment and social exclusion go hand in hand. Note that, in the pre-Lisbon discourse of the EU (in CEC documents), LLL meant post-compulsory vocational education and training (Brine, 2006, p. 651) as an answer to the 'employment challenge'. Unemployed people must increase their 'employability'. This is where the Turkish discourse stands now. The implicit understanding is that a high-skilled (high-education) component of the workforce could look after itself and one must focus on the low-skilled 'disadvantaged' groups²³⁸ who stand to fall into the cracks of the 'information society'. Many a bureaucratic mind in the EU and in Turkey would agree with this portrayal of the issue. Policy-makers' understanding of the picture necessarily dictates their policy proposals.

Although Turkish discourse is a few years behind the European discourse, the country's traditional vocational education system is outdated and it needs to be refurbished and revamped. Since adult post-compulsory (compulsory is eight years in Turkey) vocational training will build upon this base, it is appropriate that LLL now means vocational skills to the Turkish.

The second stage of EU discourse on LLL emphasised the accreditation of competences, however and whenever gained. This understanding is also in the current Turkish discourse and the Occupational Competencies Certification Board has been established. In addition, Turkey has recently been active in Leonardo projects and current projects reflect a good mix of voluntary organisations with activities in marketable hobbies, and workplace organisations (like unions) with activities in workplace-related competencies.

If "the implementation of policies to increase investment in human capital through better education and skills is progressing although adult participation in lifelong learning is a particular cause for concern" in the EU, there is much to be concerned about in Turkey. EUROSTAT (2007) reports adult participation in LLL in Turkey as 2%, as in Greece.²³⁹ The EU average is 9.6%.

The aims of the article are to examine national data on participation in lifelong learning and skills development, and to comment on barriers that may prevent further participation. Note that, except in the case of Koran reading courses, the age breakdown of LLL participants is not reported in Turkish statistics (neither is the participants' education level). Gender

⁽²³⁵⁾ All statistics are from TURKSTAT. Author calculated the growth rates.

⁽²³⁶⁾ Between 1988 and 2006, most populous education group's (less than high school) overall participation rates fell from 83% to 71% for males, and 32.4% to 22% for females.

⁽²³⁷⁾ The Lisbon Strategy did not define the knowledge economy. Later Commission documents did not define lifelong learning, either. This author thinks that (Ericsson) Sweden and (Nokia) Finland are the closest countries to the ideal of the knowledge society.

⁽²³⁸⁾ In fact, Keese (2007) reports large differences across individuals in average hours of education and training. Immigrants, women, low-educated, and older workers receive 4%, 10%, 55%, and 60% less training, respectively, compared to the overall average across a group of OECD countries.

⁽²³⁹⁾ The author could not find the source of this statistic.

data are provided. As such, one may not test the hypothesis that those with poor initial educational qualifications, older workers, migrants and women (particularly those who are working part-time) have less access to lifelong learning opportunities.

2 Participation in lifelong learning by gender in 2005

TURKSTAT reports one set of statistics on 'non-formal education'. 'Formal education' means the regular school system. There are three tables for one year only. There is enrolment data for non-formal education institutions, their breakdown by provinces, and Koran courses by provinces. There is no time-series data. 'Successful finishers' are reported in the province tables, but this data are aggregated more than the general table.²⁴⁰ This data constitutes the official statistics on LLL in Turkey; there are no unofficial quantitative data sources. Table 1 synthesises the available data.

Note that these statistics do not include on-the-job-training within firms. Recently, employer organisation training-foundations have increasingly started to provide white collar and blue collar training programmes. It is not clear whether their data are included in the private total in Table 1. Similarly, Turkish Employment Agency's active labour market policy courses may be missing in the vocational courses line of Table 1. If one takes out about half of total non-formal education in Turkey (drivers' licenses courses and university-entrance examination courses, all private), of the remaining two million people, 11% are educated in private non-formal education institutions. Most of these courses are computer related or English language courses. Crafts or vocational training is traditionally conducted at public institutions in Turkey.

Table 1: Non-formal education statistics of Turkey (2005)
Non-formal Education Institutions (at the end of the 2004/05 academic year)

Institution /Centre Type	Number	Students			Teachers			Successful Finishers			Successful Finishers (%)		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
NON-FORMAL EDUCATION Total	3 711	1 980 672	996 838	983 834	14 183	7 915	6 268						
PUBLIC NON-FORMAL EDUCATION Total^a	1 663	1 760 036	883 608	876 428	9 733	6 098	3 635						
Public education centres^b	924	1 312 618	574 937	737 681	4 724	2 213	2 511	1 060 904	483 632	577 272	80.8%	84.1%	78.3%
Vocational Education Centre	351	309 962	262 605	47 357	4 532	3 840	692						
Technical Education for Girls	366	74 428	4 751	69 677	477	45	432	53 276	1 803	51 473	71.6%	37.9%	73.9%
Practical Art School For Girls	354	72 913	4 751	68 162	188	7	181	52 733	1 803	50 930	72.3%	37.9%	74.7%
Maturation Institute	12	1 515		1 515	289	38	251	543		543	35.8%		35.8%
Technical Education for Boys^c	22	1 186	325	861				392	287	105			
Practical Art School For Boys	10	743		743									
Technical Education Centre For Adults	12	443	325	118				392	287	105			
Vocational Courses^d		61 842	40 990	20 852				55 892	35 708	20 184			
PRIVATE NON-FORMAL EDUCATION^e	2 048	220 636	113 230	107 406	4 450	1 817	2 633	177 005	91 468	85 537			

Source: TURKSTAT education statistics

Notes: TURKSTAT tables include driver's license courses (970,000) and university entrance examination private preparation courses (925,000) enrolments in their totals. As these items are not related to LLL concept, the author has taken them out.

a Non-formal education provided in public institutions.

b Formerly called "people's houses" (halkevleri). An early republic tradition that still goes on strong today. Evening and weekend courses are organised for the public.

c Instructors are vocational school teachers.

d Courses are opened by formal vocational schools. Instructors are vocational school teachers.

e Various courses. For the most part, computer usage and English language courses.

⁽²⁴⁰⁾ The author retains TURKSTAT terminology. Statistics in English are available at www.turkstat.gov.tr

In the early years of the republic, adult literacy courses and general and specific vocational skill courses were organised. During the 1930's, so-called 'village institutes' were the most important attempt at providing both public education and training in rural areas. Their emphasis was on practical skills and they were founded in 1935, when there was single-party rule in Turkey. In later years, these institutes were deemed hotbeds for 'Communism', and so they were closed and regional boarding schools took their place.

Another important adult education initiative also came into existence in the 1930's. These were 'people's houses' – halkevleri. The first one was opened in 1932 in Ankara. The centres provided courses on Turkish usage, literature, fine arts, and athletic disciplines. In 1952, two years after the multi-party elections that brought the Centre-Right into power in Turkey, these institutions were closed. In 1960, after the military coup that ended the Centre-Right government's reign, they made a comeback as 'Public Education Centres' and they are still important today. Their enrolment constitutes two thirds of non-formal education in Table 1. They do not offer much vocational training, however (see Section Three). The bulk of their activities are crafts, hobbies, and social skills.

3 Issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

The truly technical vocational training for adults comprises 19% of non-formal education enrolment in Table 1. There were 370,000 trainees. The Turkish labour force number is approximately 25 million. This 1.5% technical training rate is not satisfactory. Moreover, only 18% of these vocational trainees were women, 68,000. On average women are less educated than men. These numbers and the stylised facts of the Turkish labour market suggests that the obstacle preventing further access to training is one related to the lack of 'basic' skills in literacy and numeracy of the adult population, especially of women. One would expect that, with the increasing share of private quality training providers like employer organisation foundations and local universities, such training will become more and more relevant for the job market. One would similarly think of Turkish Employment Agency's ALMP training programmes. As the brief history of adult education and current enrolment figures in Turkey implies, governmental and societal attitudes towards LLL are positive. There are no particular disincentives, only a lack of finances. Certified education and training is traditionally held in high esteem in Turkish culture.

The report by Ültanir and Ültanir (2005) include part of an interview with a director of a Public Education Centre. It is stated that the Director stated that their certificates are not valid for establishing a business, and occupational competency is not recognised. The training period is deducted from the minimum working time requirement for an apprentice or master certificate, however. Their general skill training certificates (like English) are not accepted anywhere. There is a central English (and other languages) competency examination for public employees in Turkey. The centre's computer operator certificate, obtained after 180 hours of training, is valid for public employment but is very ad-hoc.

4 Quality and impact of training

The key factors influencing the quality and impact of training for adults is an issue for which there is complete lack of data. There has been no follow up surveys in the country's history for recipients of vocational training (or for vocational school graduates). This author is currently trying to convince the Turkish Employment Agency to undertake a post-training survey to establish how training contributes to the recipient's career progression and employability.

5 National strategy does not yet exist

It is the tradition of the Turkish education system to markedly distinguish between formal education and non-formal education. The latter is considered either basic (literacy courses) or remedial (evening vocational training in vocational schools). The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) still defines its adult education guiding principles with adult literacy and adult remedial education at number one in a bulleted list that ends with 'productive spare time activities' in its annual publication on national education.

The technical leg of the non-formal education system is not strong in numbers. On the other hand, Turkey has a long history of providing some form of non-formal education to its adult population. The system is not yet geared to the modern EU concept of LLL in the context of the 'knowledge society'. It may be aligned with financial support coming from the EU through participation in LLL umbrella programmes. Table 1 data thus miss the very recently rising component of LLL. Inspired and spurred by EU projects for programmes like Leonardo da Vinci, many NGO's and some local universities are becoming centres for LLL initiatives and also design and offer many courses for adults.

According to the 2006 Turkey Progress Report, good progress has been made in the area of education, training, and youth. Turkey has been participating successfully in the Community Programmes Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, and Youth. Nation-wide coverage of the programmes is encouraged as attested by the geographical distribution of accepted projects.

The progress report commends the Turkish progress in Chapter 26 (Education and Culture) and states that alignment is nearly complete. There is one warning: "Efforts in line with the Lisbon strategy need to continue, in particular on lifelong learning."

6 Bibliography

Brine, Jacky (2006). 'Lifelong learning and the knowledge economy: Those that know and those that do not – the discourse of the European Union', *British Educational Research Journal*, 32:5, pp.649-665.

EU (2006). *Turkey Progress Report*. Brussels.

EUROSTAT (*Key Figures on Europe* – 2007/08 edition, Table 2.15, p. 69)

Keese, Mark (2007). *The benefits of lifelong learning: What we know and don't know*. Contribution of OECD. Thematic Review Seminar of the European Employment Strategy: Measuring, improving and promoting effects of lifelong learning. Brussels (September).

Ültanir, Emel and Gürcan Ültanir (2005). 'Estonya, İngiltere ve Türkiye'de Yetişkinler Eğitiminde Profesyonel Standartlar', *Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1:1, pp.1-23. (Professional standards in adult education in Estonia, United Kingdom, and Turkey.)

EEA country

Norway

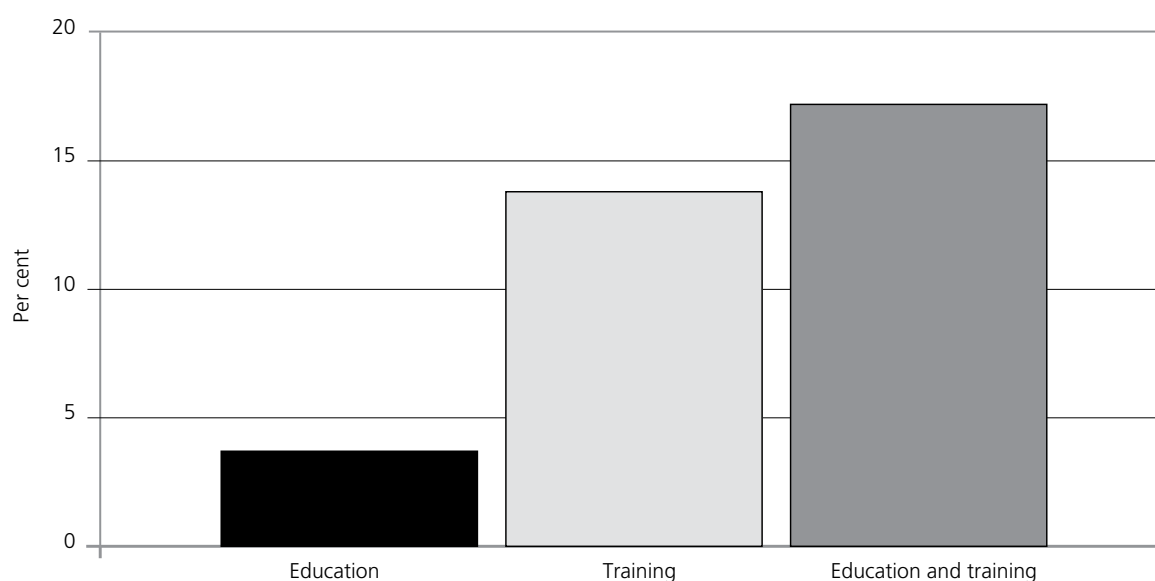
1 Trends in the participation of adults (25+) in lifelong learning

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), as illustrated by Chart 1, only 3.7% of the Norwegian working age population (age group 25-64) considered themselves primarily as students attending a school, college or university in the second quarter of 2005. We refer to this kind of learning activities in this report as education. Most young people have completed education at the age of 25, but 10.1% of people in the age group 25-34 were still in education. In the age group 35-44, 3.1% did so.

Excluding those who are primarily students and do not have a part-time job, the LFS also surveys individuals' participation in courses, seminars and conferences during the latest four week period. We refer to this kind of learning activities in this report as training. The participation rate in training in the second quarter of 2005 for the age group 25 to 64 years was 13.8%. Public training measures for the unemployed are not included in this figure but both learning activities with a job-related purpose and a personal/social purpose are included. About 7% of training activities have a personal/social purpose. The rest is job-related.

In total 17.2% of the working age population (25-64) were attending education or training in the second quarter of 2005. The overlap between education and training is mainly due to individuals, who are registered primarily as students, but in addition have a part-time job where they receive training.

Chart 1: Percentage of working age population (age group 25-64) participating in education and training, second quarter of 2005



Source: Statistics Norway, LFS

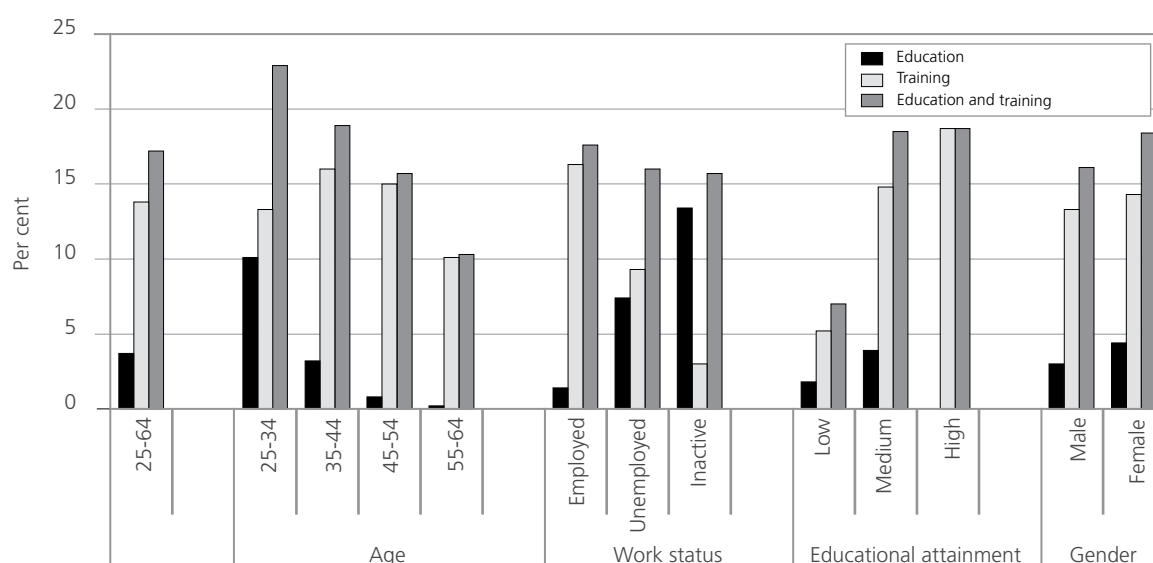
Chart 2 shows that the participation of adults in education decreases with age, while the participation in training increases with age up to the age group 35-44. After that the participation in training decreases with age, but remains at a high level.

Few employed adults are primarily students but 16% have attended training. The inactive in the labour market includes most of the adults in education; 13.4% of the inactive adults are in education. Few of the inactive attend training.

The unemployed attend education and training to an equal degree. If public qualifying measures had been included, the training rates would have been much higher.

Only 6.0% of adults (25-64 years) with less than upper secondary education participated in education or training in the second quarter of 1999, compared to 18.6% of those with completed upper secondary education (but without upper tertiary education). Participation in training increases with educational level. Adult women have a somewhat larger rate of participation in education than men. The difference is smaller when training is included.

Chart 2: Percentage of working age population (age group 25-64) participating in education and training, by age, working status, educational attainment and gender, second quarter of 2005

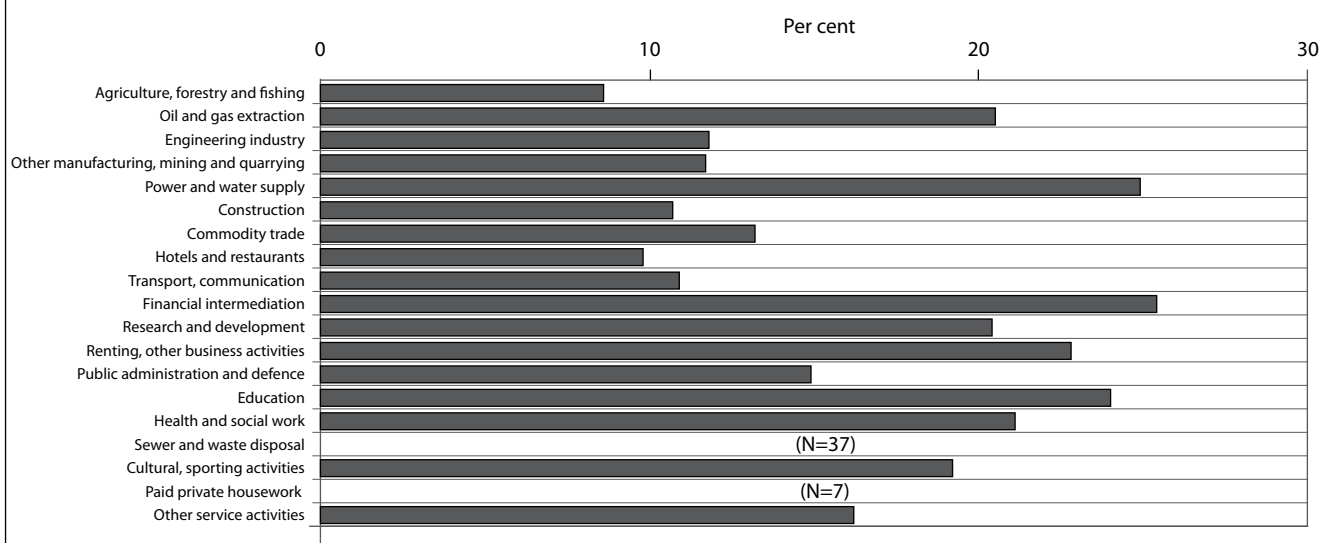


Source: Statistics Norway, LFS

Education level achieved: High = upper tertiary education completed; Medium = upper secondary education completed;

Low = less than upper secondary education

Chart 3: Percentage of employed adults (age group 25-64) participating in training, by industry, the second quarter of 2005



Source: Statistics Norway, LFS

Chart 3 shows participation in training among *employed adults* in different industries in 2005. Those employed in primary industries have the lowest participation rate. Finance and the power and water supply sectors have the highest rate. The petroleum industry also has a high rate, above 20% of the employed. The engineering and other manufacturing industries and the construction sector have participation rates just above 10%. The service sector has higher than average participation rates, but commodity trade, hotels and restaurants and transport are in line with manufacturing. Other service industries have higher rates, several above 20%. Financial intermediation has the highest rate (25%).

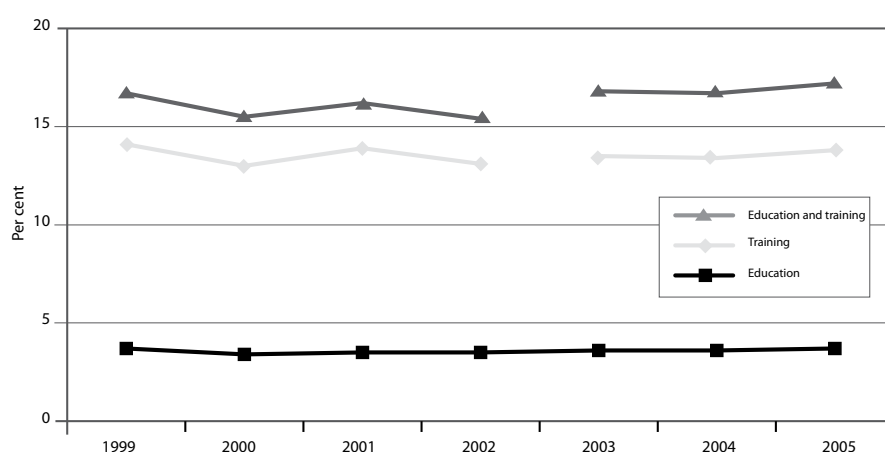
In 2005, 86% of Norwegian *firms* with 10 employees or more provided continuing vocational training (CVT) to their employees. This is based on the Continuing Vocational Training Survey conducted by the European Union. Although not a member of EU, Norway participated in this survey. Firms in public administration, primary industries, education, and health and social work are not included. Financial intermediation, real

estate and business activities have the highest rates. Almost every firm within these categories of economic activity had employees taking part in CVT in 2005.

Pål Schøne at the Institute for Social Research in Oslo has published an article on '*Does increased international competition increase need for training?*' (Schøne, 2007). Based on company level data, he finds that *firms* operating in an internationally competitive arena invest more in training than other firms. He suggests that more training at work is a response to fierce international competition.

The main trends for *adults* from 1999 to 2005, based on the LFS-data, are shown in Chart 4. The series have a break between 2002 and 2003. The figure for training in 2000 was low because of strikes. Without this, the figures for education and training would probably have shown a decline from 1999 to 2002. A small increase can be seen from 2004 to 2005. However, the main impression is that the level of participation in education and training between 1999 and 2005 has remained rather stable.

Chart 4: Percentage of working age population (age group 25-64) participating in education or training, the second quarter of 1999-2005



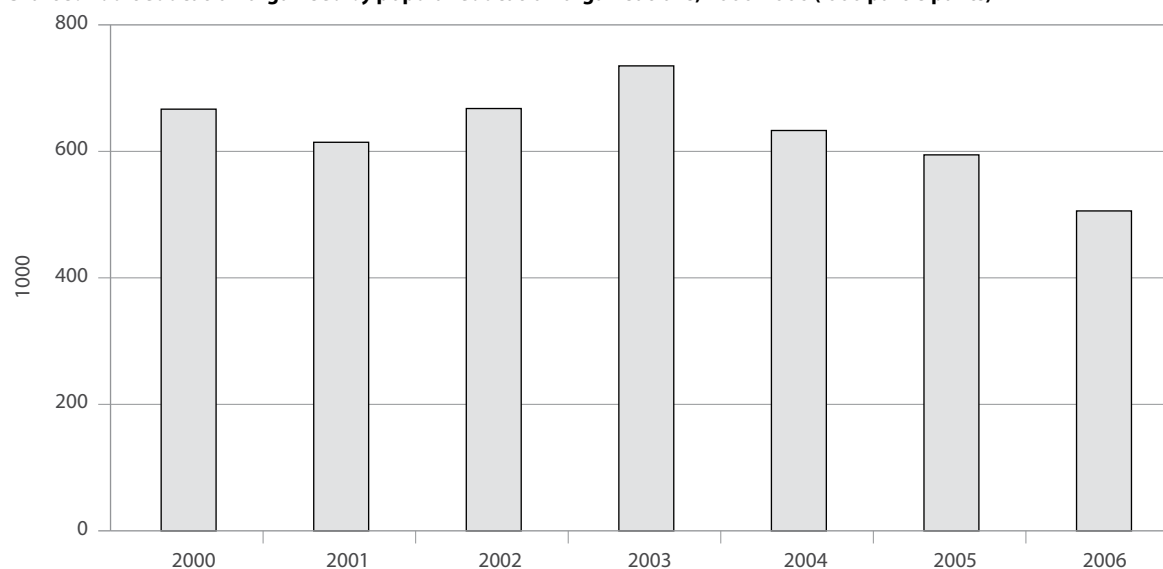
Source: Statistics Norway, LFS

Note: Refers to job-related training before 2003. From 2003, training includes both learning activities with a job-related and personal/social purpose.

The European CVT Survey has included Norway both in 1999 and 2005. In these surveys there are clear indications of decline in *employees'* participation in CVT training courses. In 1999, 48% of all employees in the surveyed firms (10 or more employees and mainly in the private sector, excluding primary industries) took part in one or more CVT course during the year. In 2005, the participation rate was down to 29%. However, these figures are not limited to employees 25 years or more. The European CVT Survey from 1999 also shows that at that time the Nordic countries had the highest level of continuing vocational training in Europe.

Some *institutions* providing adult education and training have experienced a significant decline in attendance.

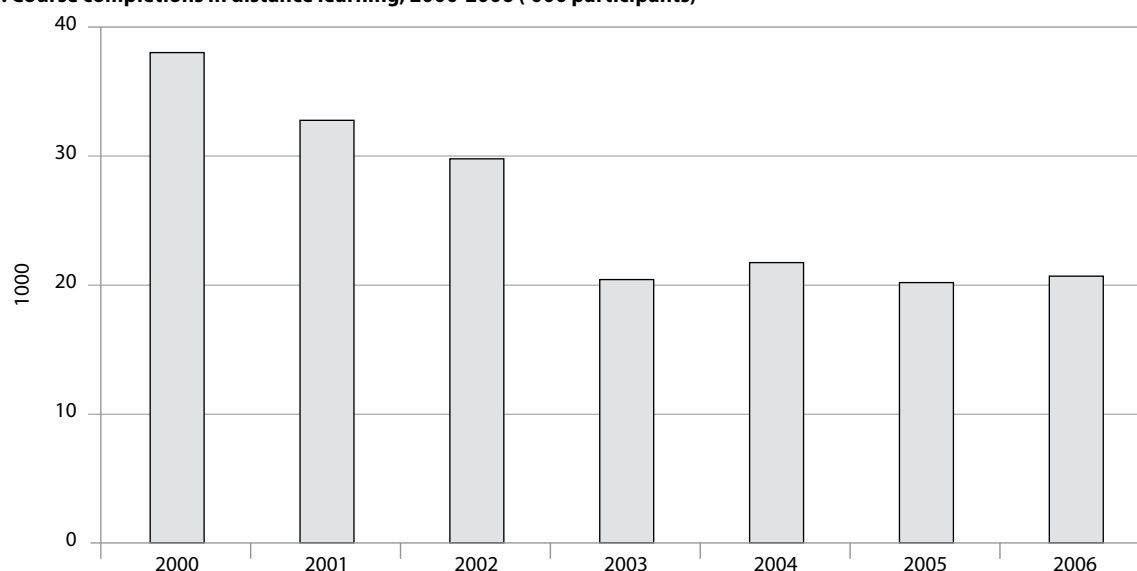
Adult education associations are run by voluntary organisations. Courses are offered in a wide variety of subjects, ranging from recreational courses to vocational courses and courses at a university and college level. Chart 5 shows that the number of participants increased from 2000 to 2003. Later there has been a falling trend in the number of participants.

Chart 5: Adult education organised by popular education organisations, 2000-2006 ('000 participants)

Source: Statistics Norway

Distance learning is widespread in Norway. Traditionally this has consisted of correspondence courses, but a number of multimedia programmes are now offered. Courses are offered by 14 authorised distance learning providers. In the coming years, distance learning will play an important part in providing alternative and more flexible facilities to meet the need for

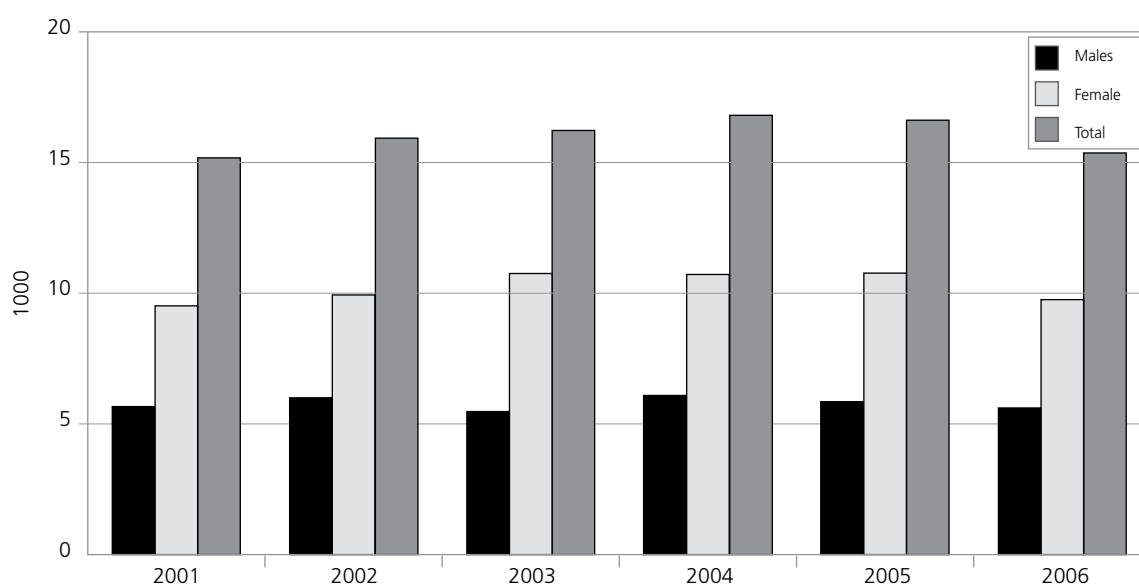
continuing education and training. Chart 6 shows the number of course completions from 2000 to 2006. The number has fallen strongly from 2000 to 2003, and then has levelled out. This figure covers all age groups. In 2006, about 70% of the participants were 30 years old or more.

Chart 6: Course completions in distance learning, 2000-2006 ('000 participants)

Source: Statistics Norway (State subsidised courses by independent distance teaching institution)

Folk high schools provide general courses for young people and adults without any formal examinations. There are about 80 schools located around Norway. Most of them are boarding schools that are owned and operated by several different types of bodies ranging from Christian organisations to local councils

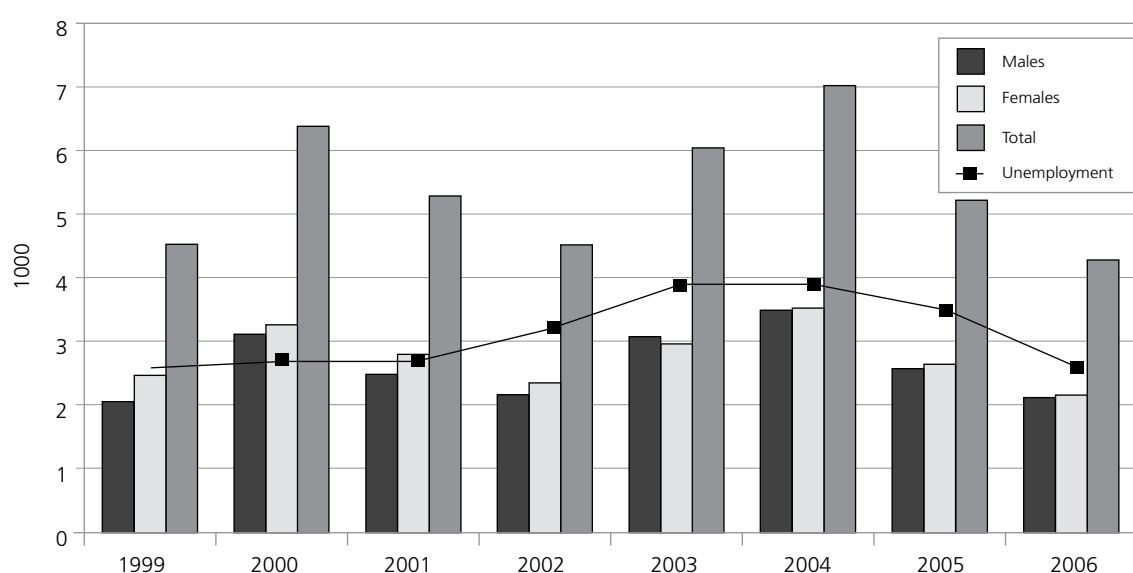
and independent foundations. Courses for adults are mainly so-called short-courses and the statistics for participation are shown in Chart 7. Women participate more often than men in these courses. The participation increased up to 2004 and since then has slightly reduced.

Chart 7: Participation in short-courses at Norwegian folk high schools by gender, 2001-2006 ('000). Age group 30+

Source: Statistics Norway

Participation in *training courses for unemployed jobseekers* varies with the level of unemployment (see Chart 8). In 2004, the number of participants reached 7,000 (includes all age groups). In 2006, about 70% of the participants from public unemployment measures were 25 years or above. This labour market training consists of a co-operation between the

authorities responsible for the labour market and the education authorities. Courses lead to vocational qualifications and they are provided by a number of different agencies, including upper secondary schools, autonomous resource centres attached to schools, study associations and private companies.

Chart 8: Participation of jobseekers in public training courses, 1999-2006

Source: Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation (NAV)

3 Obstacles and issues preventing further adult participation in lifelong learning and skills development

Participation of adults in education and training has remained rather stable in Norway since 1999, or at least it has not increased. Some learning institutions for adults have seen a decline in attendance. What is the reason for this development?

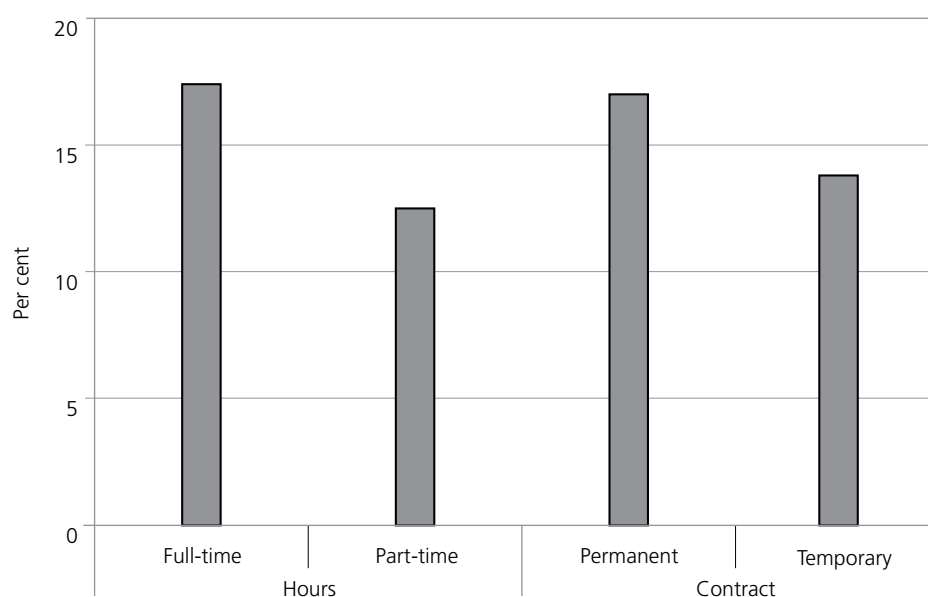
The reason is probably a combination of several different factors on the demand and supply sides. Factors on the demand side can be a lack of motivation for further education and training. School leavers are not eager to return to school. People and employers may lack information on the possibilities for competence development or they do not see the use of more

education or training. Self-financing of further education or training may be too costly or take too much time. Factors on the supply side are that the service supply may be too low and not well-suited to the needs of different target groups.

The European CVT Survey of 2005 found that the most common reason for not providing CVT in Norwegian firms, among firms not providing CVT, is that existing skills and competencies of employees correspond with the current needs of the firm; they do not need to train or educate their employees. Two thirds of the non-providing firms state this and 42% state that the firm focuses more on initial vocational training. Some 36% say the firm preferred to recruit individuals with required competencies.

Chart 9 shows how the participation of adults in training, which mainly involves employed persons, varies with working hours and work contracts. Adults working part-time participate less in training than adults working full-time. Those in full-time employment have about 40% higher participation rate. Adults on permanent contracts have almost 25% higher participation rate than those on temporary work contracts.

Chart 9: Percentage of employed adults (age group 25-64) participating in training, by full-time / part-time employment and type of work contract, the second quarter of 2005

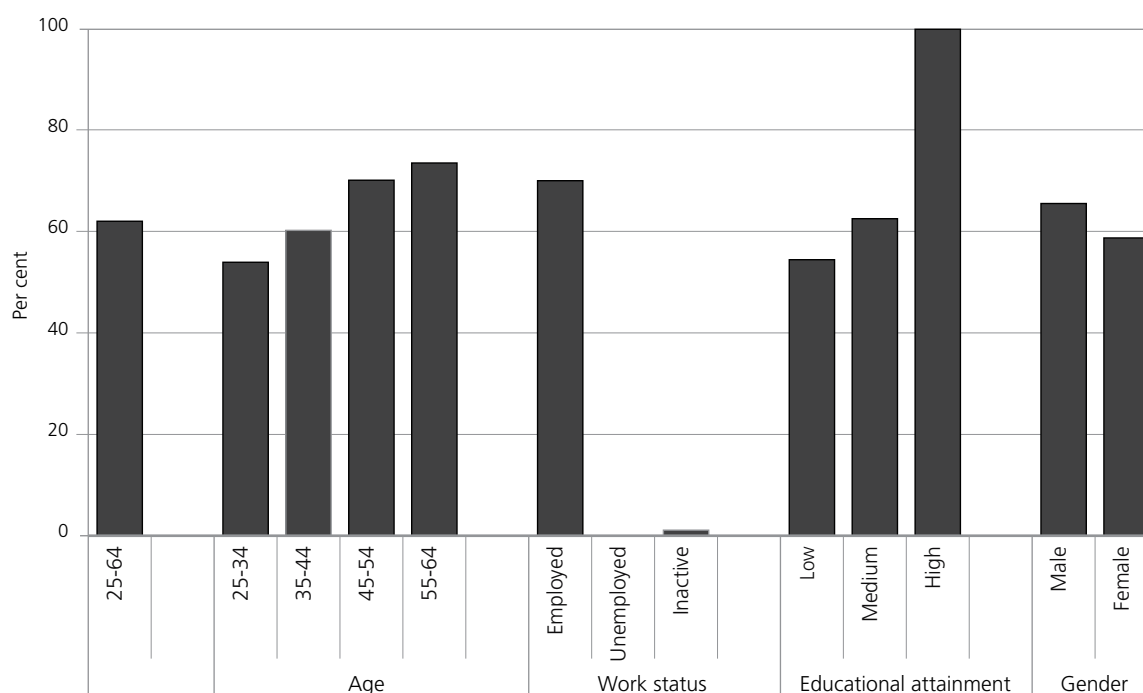


Source: Statistics Norway, LFS

Chart 10 shows that in 2002, 62% of the adult participants received a wage during their training. The incidence of pay increases by age and educational level. Men more often than women get paid when attending training. People attending training and having a full-time job have a 42% higher tendency

to receive a wage during their training than persons with a part-time job. Those with a permanent contract have a 64% higher tendency to receive a wage during training than persons on a temporary contract. One obvious reason is the low expected return on an employee on a temporary contract.

Chart 10: Percentage of participants in training (age group 25-64) who received a wage during their training, by age, working status, educational attainment and gender, the second quarter of 2002

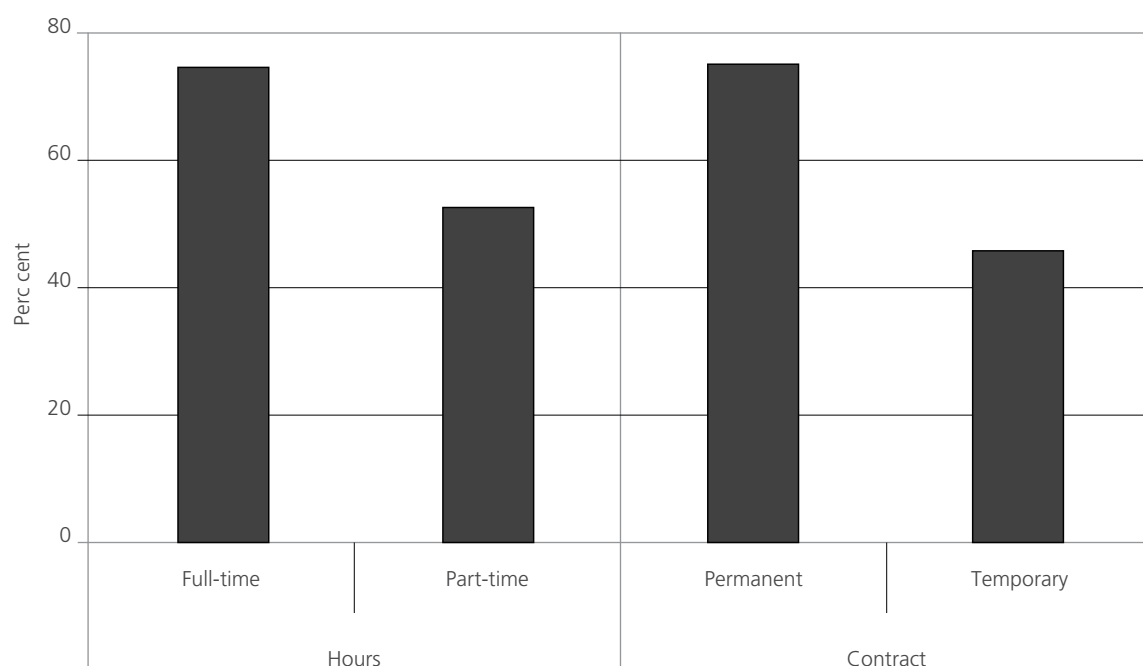


Source: Statistics Norway, LFS

Education level achieved: High = upper tertiary education completed; Medium = upper secondary education completed;

Low = less than upper secondary education

Chart 11: Percentage of participants in education and training (age group 25-64) who received a wage during their training, by full-time / part-time employment and type of work contract, the second quarter of 2002



4 Impact of training

The thesis *'Essays on skill formation through training at work'* (Schøne, 2001) shows that most of the training financed by companies in Norway is general and transferable to other parts of the labour market, and that training has a positive effect on wage level and development.

In his later article Schøne states that nine out of ten firms in Norway provide employees with formal training during a year (Schøne, 2005). In one out of three firms all employees get training during a year. Much of this training leads to competences useful outside the firm. Half of the company managers say that most of the training can be useful in other firms. This is contrary to the claim that employers only finance company-specific training.

Schøne also finds that training is technology driven. The most extensive training is provided by firms having new ICT-equipment and where workers use PCs on a daily basis. This result indicates that training is a condition for effective utilisation of new technology.

Several studies on the effects of public training measures for unemployed jobseekers have been carried out in recent years. Oddbjørn Raaum and Hege Torp (Raaum and Torp, 2002) found that participation in public training courses had a positive effect on annual earnings of unemployed jobseekers. In comparison with data from Norway from 1989 to 1994, there has been a 15-20% increase in earnings.

Torp, Raaum and Zhang (2003) have studied the long-term effects of training courses for unemployed jobseekers. Participation for persons with some work experience leads to a positive effect on earnings and the effect on earnings increases over time. For women the accumulated gain after five years is larger than the cost of training. For men the benefits are on the same level as the costs.

Dale-Olsen, Røed and Schøne (2006) have analysed the scale of labour market measures. They did not find any strong evidence to illustrate that training programmes have any reducing effect on total unemployment (ordinary unemployment plus participants on programmes). However, the training programmes have the effect of increasing recruitment of unemployed persons. Therefore, the duration of the period of unemployment is reduced and the turnover of individuals increases. This may have favourable effects on the long term unemployment.

Hardoy, Røed and Zhang (2006) evaluated the public training courses for unemployed jobseekers during the period 1993-2003. They found that these training measures did increase the probability of getting a job.

5 National strategies and measures

Lifelong learning and opportunities for education for adults are important principles of the Norwegian education policy. The aim is to make it possible for adults to strengthen their competences throughout their career pathways. The main strategy is to establish legal rights to free primary and secondary education regardless of age, open up higher education and establish rights to unpaid leave for an educational purpose. In addition, financial support is directed both towards the supply and the demand side of the market and innovative practices for adult education and training.

The Competence Reform of 1999 established a basis for an over-arching policy for training, education and competence development of adults in Norway. The main strategies and measures have been summarised in the following:

- Statutory *right* for adults to primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education are established. The right to upper secondary education and training was enforced in autumn 2000 for adults born before 1978, while the right to primary and lower secondary education was implemented in August 2002. From 2001, adults (25+) were also given the right to be admitted to universities and university colleges on the basis of their formal, non-formal and informal qualifications. Municipalities are responsible for primary and lower secondary education for adults, and training in Norwegian language and civic life for adult immigrants. County authorities are responsible for upper secondary education for adults. The state finances most of the higher education in Norway.
- A system for *validation* and recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes has been established. Several thousand adults have had their non-formal learning assessed with a view of taking up upper secondary education.
- The right of employees to unpaid *leave for educational purpose* for up to three years if they have been with the same employer the last two years was established on 1 January 2001. Education has to be formally organised and it has to be relevant to the working life. Primary and secondary education is always considered as vocationally relevant. Employers do not have to pay a wage during the leave. Employees can apply for loans and grants from the State Educational Loan Fund.
- Education financed by employer is generally speaking exempt from tax.

- Public support to adult education associations and distance learning providers.
- *Training courses for unemployed jobseekers* are a part of both the active labour market policy and life-long learning systems. They are fully financed by the state.
- Public contributions have in recent years been granted to projects aiming at *developing the market* for work-related education and training, internal competence development in firms and experiments with paid leave of absence for educational purposes.
 - *Competence development programme 2000-2005*. This programme contributed to projects aimed at innovations and improvements in the market for supplementary and further education & training. The programme also contributed to projects aimed at improving the ability of private and public enterprises to identify and cover their skill needs, and to establish co-operation between actors in working life and in education in order to develop courses adjusted to the needs of working life. The programme has also experimented arrangements with paid leave of absence for educational purposes.
 - *Programme for basic skills*. This programme started in 2006 and it aims help enterprises to provide basic training in arithmetic, reading and use of ICT.
 - the competence development programme and the programme for basic skills are publicly *financed*, but the projects within the programmes are financed by the programmes and other project participants.

The government presented in December 2006 a report to the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament) called *...and nobody was left behind. Early Effort in Lifelong Learning*. The report includes proposals to improve access to training and education for prisoners and convicts and a proposal to strengthen and expand the programme for basic skills. The expansion means development of similar training (in arithmetic, reading and the use of ICT) for groups outside the labour market, like stay-at-home parents. The ministry also proposed to establish a right to upper secondary education for all adults (25+). As mentioned above, today the right to upper secondary education for adults is reserved to those who are born before 1978. The main part of the report concerns the quality of the education system and measures to improve the quality.

6 Bibliography

Dale-Olsen, Harald; Marianne Røed and Pål Schøne (2006): *Omfang av arbeidsmarkedstiltak: Betyr det noe?* Report 2006:12, Institute for social research, Oslo

Hardoy, Inés, Knut Røed and Tao Zhang (2006): *Aetats kvalifiserings- og opplæringstiltak. En empirisk analyse av seleksjon og virkninger*. Report 4/2006, Ragnar Frisch Centre for Economic Research, 2006

Raaum, Oddbjørn and Hege Torp (2002): 'Labour market training in Norway – effect on earnings'. *Labour Economics*; 207-247, 2002

Schøne, Pål (2001): *Essays on skill formation through training at work*. AR 2001:100. Institute for social research, Oslo

Schøne, Pål (2005): 'Opplæring i arbeidslivet' In: Hege Torp (ed.): *Nytt arbeidsliv, Medvirkning, inkludering og belønning*. Gyldendal Akademisk: 74-95, 2005

Schøne, Pål (2007): 'Does increased international competition increase the need for training?' *Applied Economic Letters* 14 (2):151-155, 2007

Report 16 to the Storting (2006-2007) *...and nobody was left behind. Early Effort in Lifelong Learning*

Torp, Hege; Oddbjørn Raaum and Tao Zhang (2003): 'Effekter av AMO på arbeidsinntekt. Er gevinsten større enn kostnadene?' In: *Søkelys på arbeidsmarkedet*. 20(1):27-35, 2003

Note: Despite being valued as one of the key assets in life, households spend less than 1% of their total expenditure per person per month on education. Source: Household Budget Survey, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

European Commission

European Employment Observatory – Review: Autumn 2007

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2008 – 189 pp. – 21 × 29.7 cm

ISSN 1725-5376

How to obtain EU publications

Our priced publications are available from EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>), where you can place an order with the sales agent of your choice.

The Publications Office has a worldwide network of sales agents. You can obtain their contact details by sending a fax to (352) 29 29-42758.

Are you interested in the **publications** of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities?

If so, you can download them at

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/publications/index_en.cfm

or take out a free online subscription at

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/sagapLink/dspSubscribe.do?lang=en

ESmail is the electronic newsletter from the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

You can subscribe to it online at

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/news/esmail_en.cfm

<http://ec.europa.eu/social>