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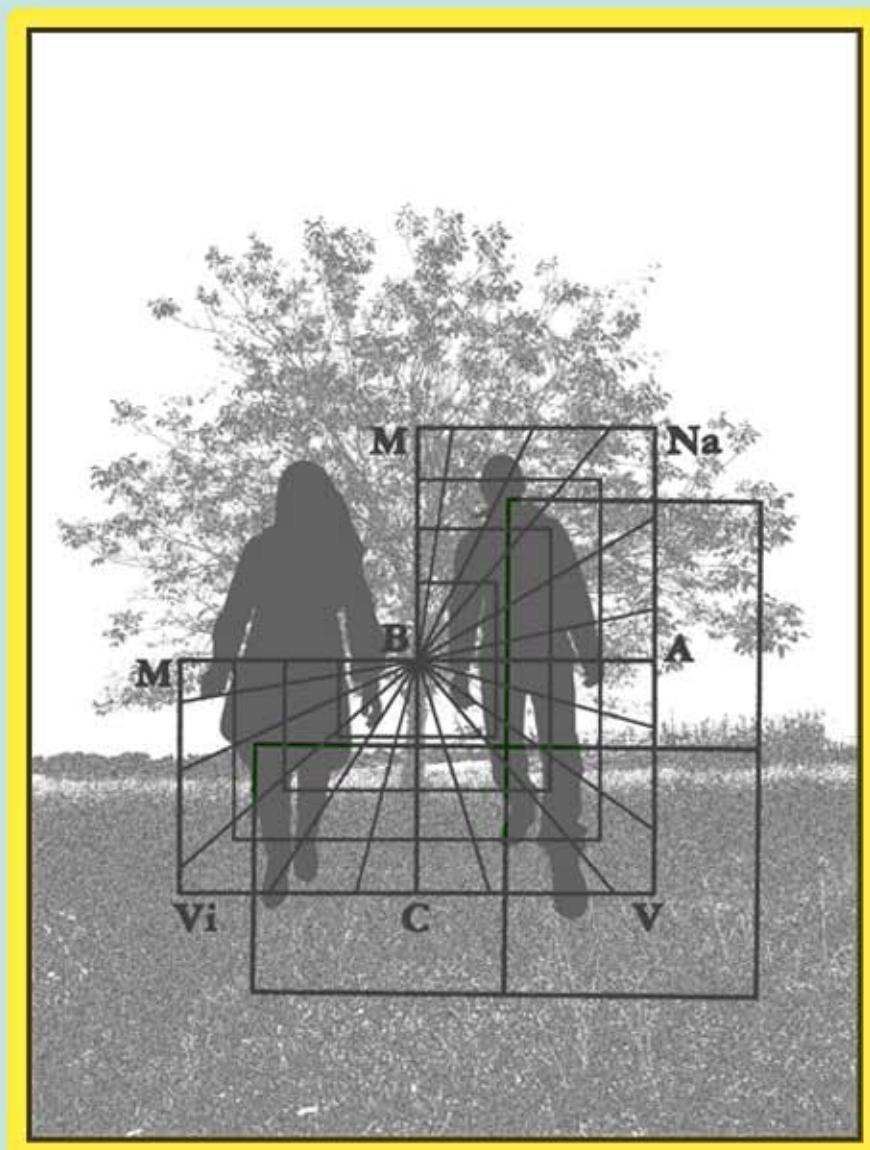
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Teaching and Learning in University Lifelong Learning for People in Mid-Life

Discussion paper 2013/6.1.

Muir Houston - Mike Osborne





**Teaching & Learning for in
University Adult Education for People in Mid-Life
Transnational Report Work Package 6**

Discussion Paper 2013/6.1

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University of Glasgow / Pascal Observatory

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1. Introduction to the project

Learning has always been recognised as a means to improve quality of life (Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, 2008; OECD, 2012). Labour market position, one means to achieve well-being, tends to be correlated with learning. In a global knowledge society, work environments are changing quickly, requiring from citizens and enterprises proactive and reactive measures to adapt their knowledge, capacities and competences. Lifelong Learning (LLL), it has been argued, may be one of the most effective tools to fight social exclusion and an essential precondition to progress in the labour market. In this respect, European Union (EU) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are expected to play an important role in providing Tertiary LLL (TLLL) opportunities (see for example, Knapper and Cropley, 1985; Knust & Hanft, 2009; Schuetze & Slowey 2000 and 2012).

The THEMP Project targets the TLLL provided by three universities in each of seven EU member states (Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and UK), focussing on relevant labour market programmes and on a specific cohort of learners aged 45 and above. It does not limit its remit only to employability issues, but also considers the wider impact of learning provided by HE on the overall quality of life of this group of people. Aligning itself with the European Commission's *Adult learning: It is never too late to learn* which *inter alia* argues that member states should:

ensure sufficient investment in the education and training of older people and migrants, but above all ensure efficiency by designing education and training which matches the needs of the learner. (EC, 2006a: p9)

The main research question of the project asks how TLL contributes in the prevention and mitigation the risk for people over 45 in danger of social exclusion and focuses on labour market transitions. According to our original work plan, this core question is further articulated in two more specific questions:

in which way are TLL programmes effectively contributing to the social inclusion of mid-life learners? (WP5 - Social inclusion analysis);

how do TLL programmes didactics differs from the 'ordinary' University courses didactics to match mid-life learners' needs? (WP6 - Didactics analysis).

The research approach adopted by THE-MP project is the Case Study method and has been described in detail for this project by Mariani (2012). This method chosen is deemed to be particularly well suited to study contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts, where the relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated (Yin, 1994). More specifically, the project adopts a Multiple-Case Study research strategy to compare different HE programmes oriented to TLL for learners over 45, across our chosen cluster of EU Universities. The study has been exploratory (rather than purely descriptive or fully interpretative) in nature, in answering its research questions.

In this report we focus specifically on the questions related to teaching and learning (Didactics) of WP6. Data has been gathered in THE-MP case studies principally via the systematic interviewing of key stakeholders (decision makers, lecturers and students), and a survey used only with students.

Our interviews were semi-structured (Merton *et al.*, 1990) with a majority of open-ended questions, in which respondents were interviewed for a period of time in between 45 and 90 minutes with the interviewer following a protocol, whilst aiming to maintain a conversational attitude. The interview protocol in this instance refers to the instructions and to the list of specific open-ended questions that are asked each target group of respondents. The research approach distinguished between two main types of target group: TLL providers and TLL users (students). TLL providers were further divided in three sub-groups: stakeholders; decision makers; lecturers. Thus, four different versions of the unique interview protocol were designed. Interview schedules were designed to address the requirements of both WP5 and WP6. Those parts of interview schedules that pertain to didactics (WP6) are found in Annex 1 below.

The goals and the content of the survey were defined subsequent to the completion of interviews and were a function of the preliminary findings. The section of the survey that relates to teaching and learning is found in Annex 2 below. Two scales (Educational Trajectory II.3 and II.4) were used to investigate how much the programme undertaken had enabled the individual to develop different skill and abilities; and what they felt they had learned as a result of their studies. Section II.3 utilised an adapted form of the Personal and Educational Development Inventory (PEDI) designed by Lawless and Richardson, (2004) to measure: self-organisation, mathematical, social and cognitive skills development as a result of participation in a programme of study (Edmunds and Richardson, 2009). Section II.4 drew on elements of the ILS (Inventory of Learning Styles) developed by Vermunt and van Riswijk (1988). The section used in the present study was adapted from the work of Brennan et al (2010) and was previously used in a large-scale project looking at social and organisational mediation of the UK university experience.

In relation to the didactical issues, it was useful to create a model within which to attempt to classify or categorise what is observed in terms of teaching and learning approaches within the cases selected for analysis. Didactics, although meaning teaching methods in general, in English is often associated with a heavily teacher-centred approach without significant learner involvement. Thus it is better to speak about teaching and learning approaches, which may vary from procedures which have very extensive teacher involvement to those which are largely self-directed by the student.

Greeno, Collins & Resnick (1996) identify three clusters or broad perspectives that make different assumptions about what we need to know to understand learning. These are termed:

- the *associationist/empiricist* perspective (learning as activity)
- the *cognitive* perspective (learning as achieving understanding)
- the *situative* perspective (learning as social practice)

These perspectives contribute in distinctly different ways to the way in which we specify learning outcomes, design learning environments and teaching methods, and create associated assessment. In a later section, we will attempt to apply these different perspectives to our case studies although in practice the distinctions are not always so clear cut and mutually exclusive.

In the **Associationist/Empiricist approach**, knowledge is an organised accumulation of associations and skill components. Learning is the process of connecting the elementary mental or behavioural units, through sequences of activity. This view encompasses the research traditions of associationism, behaviourism and connectionism (neural networks). At one extreme teaching in this tradition is viewed as heavily didactic and teacher-directed, but is also encompasses learning by doing, individualization of instruction and individual feedback.

Characteristics of teaching and learning approaches in this domain include:

- Teacher-led instruction – lectures, seminars, symposia, tutorials
- Individualised instruction with questioning and feedback – programmed and computer-based instruction
- Breaking learning down into small logically-connected and sequenced units
- Highly focused objectives - competencies
- Alignment of learning objectives, instructional strategies and methods used to assess learning outcomes

Cognitive approaches to learning emphasise the assumptions of constructivism that understanding is gained through an active process of creating hypotheses and building new forms of understanding through activity. In short we individually construct knowledge and mental representations through experience and acting on our environment. We construct our own realities through meaning-making, and this is dependent on social and cultural contexts.

Teaching and learning approaches within this domain include:

- Active learning – discussion groups, debates, games, brainstorming, simulations, role plays
- Guided Learning through discovery and experimentation
- Experiential learning and its accreditation (Kolb 1984)
- Teachers facilitating connections between new knowledge and previous experience
- Meta-cognition – learning to learn¹
- Self-directed learning
- Developing autonomous learners
- Coaching and modelling of thinking skills
- Scaffolding²
- Creating opportunities for reflection on practice (Schön 1983; Mezirow 1990)

In **situated** approaches, knowledge is seen as situated in the practices of communities – the outcomes of learning involve the abilities of individuals to participate in those practices successfully. The socio-psychological view of situativity emphasises the importance of context-dependent learning in informal settings. In this context ‘practice fields’ represent constructivist tasks in which the learning activity is made authentic to the social context in which the skills or knowledge are normally embedded.

Examples of practice fields include:

- Problem-based learning
- Project-based learning

¹ In Higher Education linked to the work on approaches to learning developed initially by Marton and Säljö (1976)

² This refers to a teacher giving support to a learner during a learning process in various forms (resources, models, guides, advice on skills development, etc), gradually removing the supports over time as the student develops knowledge and skills. It is most closely associated with the work of Vygotsky (1978)

- Anchored instruction³
- Cognitive apprenticeship⁴ (Collins, Brown and Newman 1987)

A second important element of the situated approach is the relationship of an individual to the group where beginners are initially peripheral in communities and gradually become more central. Learning approaches therefore encourage:

- Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) in communities of practice (a concept related to how newcomers become part of a group and introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991))
- Developing learning relationships with others
- Learning through collaboration
- Learning through the authentic practice of formulating and solving real problems
- Collaborative projects and assessment tasks
- Co-creation of knowledge (Hall *et al* 2013)
- Conversational learning (Laurillard 2002)

All of the above approaches can be mapped onto spatial and temporal contexts. In short these apply to classroom face-to-face, open learning, flexible, virtual and e-learning environments, and to synchronous and asynchronous learning designs.

In a more detailed analysis of teaching approaches in each case we have looked for evidence of the characteristics associated with each of these approaches. This will be explored in more detail below, when we attempt to compare cases against a list of criteria drawn from the characteristics listed below. In summary we have looked to analyse the following:

- Modes of instruction/facilitation: blended, face to face, distance
- Degrees of learner autonomy: choice of options, student input into choice and trajectory of study
- Support systems in place for learning: provision of pre-entry, ongoing and post study support, guidance and information
- Capitalising on learner experience: co-construction of knowledge, links to practice

³ This refers to using a realistic and authentic case or problem as a fixed and situated point from which to develop further learning. It is associated with the work of Bransford (1990)

⁴ This refers to a skills exchange between masters and apprentices that takes into account tacit knowledge, bringing this into the open in the teaching and learning process, and is linked to Bandura's (1977) notion of modelling

Additionally we have to link these approaches within teaching and learning to:

- Degree of openness of programmes: Highly selective v completely open to anyone
- Degree of flexibility of learning: Timing (daytime, evening, weekend, summer, etc) place (e.g. classroom, workplace, etc) and space (face-to-face, virtual, blended)
- Orientation: Vocational v Theoretical

In relation to the qualities of teachers delivering higher education within the context of a student complement of lifelong learning we are informed by work by Buiskool *et al.* (2010) for the EC. They classified the competences for being an adult educator into three categories – generic competences, specific competences related to the learning process and specific competences supportive of the learning process. In their work the description of each competence contains the following information:

- **Title:** this is the header of the competence, which contains information summarizing the competence
- **Description of the competence:** this items gives a full description of the competence
- **Knowledge:** every competence consists of knowledge, skills and attitudes. In this item the knowledge is described that is considered to be relevant for this competence.
- **Skills:** In this item the abilities and skills are described, that are considered to be relevant for this competence.
- **Attitudes:** In this item the attitudes are described that are considered to be relevant for this competence.
- **Empirical underpinning:** the competence described can be traced back to empirical reality. Under this heading some examples of job descriptions in Europe that mention this competence are presented.
- **Activities related to/supported by this competence:** under this heading the activities are mentioned which are supported by this competence. With other words, someone who has the competence as described is able to carry out specific activities in a certain context (possibly helped by other competences)

They divide competences into those that are Generic, those that are Specific and directly involved in the learning process and those that are Specific and supportive of the learning process in the following way:

Generic competences

- 1/ Being a fully autonomous lifelong learner
- 2/ Being a communicator, team player and networker
- 3/ Being responsible for the further development of adult learning
- 4/ *Being an expert in a field of study/practice*
- 5/ *Being able to deploy different learning methods, styles and techniques*
- 6/ *Being a motivator*
- 7/ *Dealing with heterogeneity and diversity in groups*

Specific competences: directly involved in the learning process

- 1/ *Being capable of assessment of adult learners' learning needs*
- 2/ *Being capable of designing the learning process*
- 3/ *Being a facilitator of the learning process*
- 4/ *Being an evaluator of the learning process*
- 5/ *Being an advisor / counsellor*
- 6/ *Being a programme developer*

Specific Competences: supportive for the learning process

- 1/ Being financially responsible
- 2/ Being a people manager
- 3/ Being a general manager
- 4/ Dealing with PR and marketing
- 5/ Being supportive in administrative issues
- 6/ Being an ICT facilitator

Only some of the competences of course are related to delivery and facilitation of learning. We therefore informed our analysis of teaching by choosing just 10 items for analysis. These were items 4-7 under generic competences, and all of the specific competences that are *directly* related to the learning process. As noted earlier, our attempts to investigate the competences above through interview schedules are contained in Annex 1.

2. The theoretical literature

The theoretical underpinning literature for the project has been presented in some depth by Krüger and Duch (2012) and Krüger *et al* (2013), and is summarised here.

In recent years, societal transformations in the EU have produced substantial changes in the conception of education and training and its interrelation with other socio-economic policies. The continuous participation of the citizen in education and training is seen as key to assure quality of life and work, and has become part of active labour market policies aiming to transform the European social model to an activating model preventing cases of social need by proactive social investments (Palier 2004 and 2006; Pfau-Effinger 2006). This strategy advocates “a market-oriented approach to social welfare” (Gilbert 1999: 21), reinforcing the link between social rights and social obligations, and fostering social inclusion through active participation in the labour market. More recently, the Transitional Labour Market approach (TLM) emerged as an alternative to activation policies (Schmid, 1995; Schmid & Auer, 1997). This approach links social risk management in transitional work periods with concepts of social equity dating back to Rawls (1971) and has been further developed by Sen (1999 and 2010) and Nussbaum (2007 and 2007a). TLM stresses the role of public institutions in managing situations of social risk, promotion of proactive flexible public actions to avoid individual social risk, and reinforcement of the qualitative dimension of labour market policies as compared to the orientation to mere quantitative results. The TLM thus provides a framework to identify specific social risk situations (transitions) and ways to provide appropriate measures aimed to mitigate the negative impacts of life changes.

This suggests that in involuntary transitional periods, citizens should be able to count on institutional support devised in different forms, for instance through direct financial support or the funding and organising of LLL activities. However, in this account, only institutional supported formal LLL activities with a clear labour market orientation are considered part of transitional labour markets. In such a sense, university programmes for adult learners have a considerable potential as institutional support to manage life and labour market transitions. The TLM approach, thus, can be seen as an effective ‘social bridge’ that avoids individuals being trapped in exclusionary transitions and a means to increase the probability that, for example, non-standard jobs become ‘stepping stones’ to sustainable job careers (Räisänen & Schmid, 2008).

In the THEMP Project, we distinguish between social danger, social risks and individual risks. The difference between risk and danger is the degree of knowledge that individuals have about

the possibility that certain events may occur⁵. Social vulnerability, on the other hand, is a measure of an individual responsiveness – in short whether it is limited to acting preventively in responsive mode or whether there is capacity to react in advance of the risk situation. In other words, citizens' vulnerability is assumed to grow in relation to the limits of their action capacity. Without denying the self-responsibility of citizens, bounded knowledge of social-economic developments limits citizens' capacity to prevent future labour market situations. Further limited action capacity restricts their possibility to avoid (or stimulate) undesired (or desired) labour situations or to act proactively or to react in advance of potential negative events.

As point of reference to measure the efficiency of TLLL programmes beyond the labour market, and in life-wide perspective, TLM suggests a link to theories of social justice. Such theories have been recently expanded and developed under the heading of the *capability approach*. This perspective, especially in Sen's articulation, allows the measurement of the quality of social insurance programmes beyond the rates of active participation or employment focusing on the quality of work and life. It starts from the idea that each individual has a set of capabilities (individual agency) and objectives regarding their quality of life (functionings), which should be considered in the design of concrete measures. Resources are not aims *per se*, but a means to achieve a (subjectively defined) better quality of life.⁶

One main area to obtain resources is the labour market, but position in the labour market depends on the outcomes obtained during the course of diverse formal, informal and non-formal learning processes. TLLL aims to improve the qualifications of learners, providing them with new knowledge, to support intellectual development and facilitating new social relations. However, seen through a labour market lens, achieved learning outcomes must be converted in resources. This requires its recognition as having value in appropriate labour market segments: learning outcomes must be converted to human, cultural and social capital.⁷ This is a complex

⁵ An example is the situation of an enterprise, which steps into a critical situation because of risky management decisions, which aren't communicated to the employees. The managers have knowledge about the possibility that these decisions could have negative impact on the economic situation of the enterprise: for them it is a risk situation. However, the workers knowing only about the high productivity of the enterprise haven't complete knowledge about the situation: they are exposed to a situation of social danger.

⁶ Sen criticised that the resource-based approach confounds resources with the aims of social and employment policies. But the resources are only utilisable to achieve other goals or in the terminology of this approach: functionings.

⁷ Besides physical and financial capital, we refer to three capital types that occupy prominent places in the social science debates: i) Human capital (Becker, 1964); ii) Cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1983 and 2005). It seems difficult to make a clear distinction between human and cultural capital. Both approaches are quite different in theoretical orientation, but both refer to the acquisition and use of knowledge, skills, competence and aptitudes during the whole

process of social bargaining in the specific labour market fields. Such a TLLL-acquired capital (or *capabilities* in Sen's terms) opens or restricts the opportunities for professional development, for facing critical life transitions in an age of TLMs and for achieving new levels of well-being (or *functionings* in Sen's terms).

We will thus use the well-known notion of 'capital' to measure the social efficiency of TLLL for learners in mid-life, under the overall analytical framework provided by the TLM theory. Each labour market segment is conceived as a social field determining which learning results are convertible to capital and what is the value of the capital stock of each individual, defining so their positions in the labour market and their occupational opportunities. The labour market position of the citizens and their occupational opportunities depend on their capital stock and its valuation in the labour market segments. There is a complex interrelation between capital accumulation, capability development, learning outcome and quality of life in a given socio-economic context.

It seems clear that, to get a measure of their social efficiency, or of their positive contribution to social risk management, HEIs committed to LLL must be evaluated in terms of (i) the design of adequate lifelong learning programmes, (ii) the institutional and financial support provided to socially vulnerable persons in life and work transitions and (iii) the capacity to adapt their internal structures and procedures to new requirements coming from the adult population and to changed labour market conditions.

life course putting specific interest in the early accumulation stage. Hereinafter we will use the notion of human capital for the type of cultural-human capital that has obvious labour market relevance in the economic system. The third type is iii) Social capital is defined by Bourdieu as individual investment in social relation or networks. This is also part of the definitions of Putnam and Coleman, who include also other elements such as trust and norms. We considered these elements forming part of the social fields (Bourdieu 1979 and 1988) in which human action is embedded (Granovetter 1985).

3. The context for the project and the report

It has long been recognised that Europe is facing a number of socio-economic and demographic challenges. Increasing globalisation, rapid technological change, an ageing population and the demands of a more knowledge- and skills-intensive European labour market, have resulted in the need to provide adults with opportunities to increase their skill levels in order to meet these challenges (European Commission (EC) 2010).

A comprehensive study carried out by CEDEFOP (2008) demonstrates the structural changes that are occurring in labour markets at both the European level and also at the level of individual member states. These are characterised by an increasing shift away from agricultural, extractive and manufacturing industries towards a more service orientated knowledge-driven economy; there is a recognition that these trends will continue over the coming decades. Subsequent CEDEFOP briefings (CEDEFOP 2010a, 2010b and 2010c) have suggested that jobs for those with higher-level qualifications are expected to increase from 29 per cent to 35 per cent, whilst those requiring low levels of qualifications are expected to fall from 20 per cent to less than 15 per cent.

In recent decades, calls to increase participation in by adults in higher education were given particular impetus by the Lisbon Strategy (Council of European Union 2000, para. 5) which famously aimed to make Europe ‘become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world’ and were reflected in the European Commission’s Communication, *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality* (EC 2001). In this Communication by 2010, Member States agreed to aim to: improve the quality and effectiveness of EU education and training systems; ensure they are accessible to all; and, open up education and training to the wider world. In addition, the Lisbon Strategy implied that in order to achieve these objectives, it would be necessary to: enhance quality in HE across Europe; remove barriers to teacher and student mobility; promote lifelong learning and guidance; and, encourage language learning. Moreover, Member States agreed to raise participation of adults in education in general to 12.5 per cent in 2010 and 15 per cent in 2020. Finally, and directly relevant to lifelong learning was the aim that by 2020, 40 per cent of the cohort aged 30-39 should possess a tertiary level qualification.

Moreover, in 2006, the European Commission issued a further Communication entitled, *Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation* that identified nine areas where Europe’s universities could contribute to the implementation of the Lisbon strategy as follows:

1. Break down the barriers between universities in Europe;

2. Ensure real autonomy and accountability for universities;
3. Provide incentives for structured partnerships with the business community;
4. Provide the right mix of skills and competencies for the labour market;
5. Reduce the funding gap and make funding work more effectively in education and research;
6. Enhance inter-disciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity;
7. Activate knowledge through interaction with society;
8. Reward excellence at the highest level; and,
9. Make the European higher education area and the European research area more visible and attractive to the world. (EC 2006b, pp. 5-9)

In 2006, the importance of adult learning to the lifelong learning agenda was underlined in the Commission Communication, *Adult Learning: It is never too late to learn* (EC 2006b) and its associated Action Plan (EC 2007) which encouraged Member States to increase and consolidate learning opportunities for adults and to make learning accessible to all. It reiterated the three main challenges as:

- (a) *economic competitiveness, suggesting that by 2010 half of all new jobs will be for workers with higher skills levels, whereas today a third of the labour force in Europe remains low skilled and many still lack the ability to employ printed information in daily activities;*
- (b) *demographic change, improving the skill levels of ageing workforce, in particular those over 40 and harnessing the potential of migrants were key to responding to an ageing population; and*
- (c) *poverty and social inclusion, noting the role adult learning could have in overcoming initial low levels of education, unemployment, rural isolation and reduced opportunities.*

It identified five types of action to enable Member States to address these challenges and the form that these actions might take, suggesting that they should:

- set up more equitable adult learning programmes;
- ensure the quality of adult learning programmes;
- develop systems for the recognition and validation of learning outcomes;

- invest in education and training for older people and migrants; and,
- promote research and analysis in relation to adult learning activities.

The 2007 Action Plan emerged from wide ranging consultation stimulated by the 2006 Communication and which resulted in the sharing of examples of good practice. It reiterated the five action points in the Communication and set out a timetable for a number of outcomes in relation to each of the actions.

In 2011, the Commission staff produced a working paper, *Action Plan on Adult Learning: Achievements and results 2008-2010* (EC 2011a), outlining progress on each of the action points and noting the range of activities which had taken place to support developments. It then indicated initiatives that were on-going and those still requiring attention. For each of the action points, specific examples were reported. It noted that, in relation to reforms to systems, one of the main obstacles was funding, despite this being designated as high priority by the Commission, and that progress in respect of participation in higher education (the first Action Point) as outlined in the Bologna process was slow.

The Action Plan outlines specific challenges for HE. Rates of new entrants to ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) 5A courses aged 30 and above and not holding a HE qualification range from 20 per cent in some countries to less than 5 per cent in others. A final conference in Budapest related to the Action Plan (EC2011b) noted that removing barriers to access by working on enhancing information advice and guidance, enhancing validation of non-formal and informal learning in HE and developing demand-driven financial mechanisms (individual learning accounts, tax measures and publicly awarded or publicly guaranteed loans) were all important in the overall context of support and the likelihood of persistence and progression for these learners (see also Houston, 2006). The conference further recognised the role that the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs) can play in adult participation to and within HE:

Policies have tended to cluster around three main themes, namely: admission into HE including greater usage of validation of non-formal and informal learning and the establishment of quotas; measures to provide additional supports; and alternative delivery modes. (EC 2011c, p. 30)

Of particular relevance to the researchers in the field, the Budapest conference found that the '**coordination and identification of good practice**, without ignoring the importance of contextual aspects is a major challenge' (*ibid.* p. 30; original emphasis). Of particular relevance

to the consideration of the role of the HE sector is that they note the importance of CPD provision in widening participation to HE for adults.

The conference's workshop on Opening Higher Education to Adults, reiterated the challenges in the form of globalisation and technological change and their concomitant impact on HEIs (CEDEFOP 2008). Delegates reiterated the dearth of robust data in the area Bologna Process Stocktaking Report (BFUG Working Group 2009) but noted that much of this is due to definitional issues (Souto-Otero 2010). It reports the main issues in the form of a SWOT analysis. There are strengths and a sound basis on which to work to advance adult participation in HE:

Adults are already a sizeable proportion of new entrants into HE in some countries, and those can serve as examples of good practice. There seem to be a range of reasons to further stimulate adults to achieve 'one step up', for instance, adults gain much from their participation in HE – from self-confidence to employability improvements. (EC 2011c, p. 40)

Financial benefits may be an incentive, with between 7 per cent and 10 per cent higher earnings being associated with participation by older learners, although this may be dependent upon national context (see Blundell *et al.* (2000); De la Fuente and Ciccone (2002); and Egerton (2000)). In addition, learning is likely to lead to more learning (see Albert, Garcia-Serrano and Hernanz (2010) and Arulampalam, Booth and Bryan (2004)).

There are weaknesses. It is unclear whether present levels and future projections are at a satisfactory level. At an institutional level, adults are often seen as 'second-best' especially in relation to elite or prestigious institutions and programmes. However, many issues are more systemic:

Ten years of rhetoric about lifelong learning strategies have not produced a strong impact on adult education and adult participation in HE ... This mismatch between rhetoric and practice may cause stakeholder fatigue regarding this topic. (EC 2011c, p. 41)

Opportunities have been identified. The OECD (2011) reports that the demographic picture is complex yet age imbalance is often cited as an impetus for increased participation in HE. Further:

... there are opportunities for HEIs to make the HE offer more flexible, increase use of modular offers, validation of non-formal and informal learning for admissions and granting exemptions, further work on guidance and counselling, deeper cooperation with industry, and a change in the view HEIs have of their role, to more fully incorporate adults as "core clients". (EC 2011c, p. 42)

Moreover, the increasing use of technology in teaching and learning in innovative ways is one of the ways in which the EU seeks to address some of the barriers identified above (EC, 2011). The rise of distance and blended modes of teaching and learning including the rise of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) offer the possibilities of increased flexibility across the sector in relation to the accreditation of prior learning, transferability of credit, increased student mobility and meeting the demands of Europe 2020 (EC, 2013).

There are threats however. Firstly, the recognition that a 'one size' approach will not be suitable given the specific contexts of national states. Secondly, the Budapest Conference suggests that projections of current trends need to be monitored to ensure that increased participation is the best solution. Thirdly, given the current economic crisis, governments may wish to direct resources to school leavers on the basis that investment at an early age is a more efficient use of diminishing funding. Finally, questions are raised about the primacy in some quarters of the economic dimensions of increased participation in higher education, with perhaps less emphasis on the wider social benefits to be gained. Given recent research on returns cited earlier, as nations such as China and India increase graduate numbers (Arulampalam, Booth & Bryan 2004), social benefits may take on increased importance as economic benefits decline. On the other hand, the impact of turbulence in markets, the adjustments required of some European nations and burgeoning unemployment, particularly among workers younger than 40, suggests the need for re-skilling, up-skilling and maintenance of skills that are important to sustaining levels of employment, technological innovation, highly skilled knowledge workers, and high standards of living, while at the same time providing access to these wider social benefits that flow from HE.

And it is not just for workers less than 40 years in age for whom lifelong learning is vital. It has been estimated that by 2035 that a third of the EU population would be over 60 (OECD 2005).

4. Tertiary Lifelong Learning (TLL) and Mid-Life-Learners in Partner-Countries

In this section, we attempt to provide some comparative analysis of the national higher education contexts operating in the case study countries. We are also interested in national conditions and policy drivers for adult tertiary level education. For example in the UK, the Leitch Review called for the development of skills in order to be able to respond to the demands of the knowledge economy.⁸ We will also examine various indicators of education attainment across the cases relative to EU averages with a focus on adults and lifelong learning.

Firstly we will examine the structure of higher education and note both similarities and differences across the THEMP member states (Annex 3). One issue to be examined is how diverse or how coherent the higher education sector is. For example, as will be seen, in a number of countries universities are only one form of higher education with other specialised institutions catering for example for drama, music, and the arts or applied sciences or engineering. We will proceed with a summary of higher education in each of THEMP partner countries before providing some examples of similarity and difference.

Czech Republic⁹

In the Czech Republic, the tertiary education sector is divided into higher education (ISCED 5A and 6) and tertiary professional education (ISCED 5B). *Higher education institutions* may be public, state or private. Under the Higher Education Act a distinction was made between those classified as university type (24 public, 2 state and 3 private) which offer study programmes at all three levels (Bachelor's; Master's; and Doctoral) of higher education and non-university type (2 public and 43 private) which offer mainly Bachelor's programmes but may also provide some Master's programmes.

The general goal of higher education is to provide students with adequate professional qualifications, prepare them for engagement in research and participating in life-long learning, make them contribute to the development of civic society and international, particularly European cooperation. They attain this goal by linking instruction with scholarly, research, developmental, artistic and other creative activities.¹⁰

⁸ http://www.delni.gov.uk/leitch_finalreport051206%5B1%5D-2.pdf

⁹ The following section draws heavily on Navrème Bohème (2013) Mapping the Czech Landscape of Tertiary Lifelong Learning, Discussion paper - WP4 – no.2 www.themp.eu

¹⁰ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Czech-Republic:Higher_Education

Tertiary professional education (ISCED 5B) is provided mainly at tertiary professional schools although this level of education can also be attained at a conservatoire (for example music). Tertiary professional schools may be under public, state, private or denominational control and the vocational and professional nature the courses usually include both a theoretical and a practical part. Tertiary professional schools also tend to be more flexible in modes of delivery.

Tertiary Lifelong Learning (TLL) has been recognized as a distinctive form of tertiary education since the Education Act (No. 561/2004). TLL is also regulated by the Tertiary Education Act (No. 111/1998). Another legal document with important impact on adult learning was the Act on Verification and Recognition of Further Education Outcomes (No. 179/2006), which enabled adult learners to obtain full certificates of qualification acquired through training and/or practise without having to go to school.¹¹ In addition, and more recently, a [Lifelong Learning Strategy in the Czech Republic](#) was adopted in 2007.¹²

The Velvet Revolution in 1989 resulted in profound changes to the Czech political and economic landscape. This also influenced education. Private colleges began to appear and make competition to the traditional public colleges and universities. Several new public colleges and universities were founded as well. However, in terms of scale, public universities educate about 85 % of tertiary students.¹³ There is also flexibility in the system and students can choose to participate either traditionally face to face, by distance or through blended learning by combining traditional and distance modes. However, not all programmes offer that level of flexibility. In relation to funding, by law, general higher education at public and state schools is free of charge for citizens of all nationalities, although there are exceptions.¹⁴

Colleges and universities also offer programmes of Lifelong Learning (LLL) outside the framework of regular (degree) study programmes and they can charge for these LLL programmes. The programmes can be job-oriented (e.g. further education of pedagogical staff) or interest-oriented (e.g. the University of Third Age). In line with project criteria, the Czech case studies focused on job-oriented programmes. Participants of LLL are not students as defined by the Tertiary Education Act, however, credits gained within LLL programmes can be transferred to regular study programmes with some restrictions.

¹¹ Structures of Education and Professional Training Systems in Europe, Czech Republic, 2009/2010. Available online: <http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/system-vzdelavani-v-cr> (7. 2. 2013, in Czech).

¹² See The Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the CR, available online: http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/Zalezitosti_EU/strategie_2007_EN_web_jednostrany.pdf (11. 2. 2013).

¹³ Source: Structures of Education and Professional Training Systems in Europe, Czech Republic, 2009/2010, p. 8.

¹⁴ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Czech-Republic:Higher_Education_Funding

Since the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union in 2004, there have been new opportunities for adult education as many projects supported by the EU focus on this area. This is important to better assess the context of TLL in the Czech Republic. Specifically, there was Operational Programme for Human Resources Development (2004-2006) and there is Operational Programme Education for Competitiveness (2007-2013). These programs are provided by the MYES. Furthermore, the Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment (2007-2013) provided by Ministry of Labour and Public Affairs also contains education programmes for adults. Some of the projects within the Operational Programmes mentioned in this paragraph are realised by universities or with universities as partners.

Germany¹⁵

The tertiary sector includes a number of types of institution of higher education and, to a limited extent, establishments outside the higher education system. In addition to the traditional universities, the *Technische Hochschulen* or *Technische Universitäten*, that specialise in natural and engineering sciences also enjoy university status. Also equivalent to universities are establishments that only offer a limited range of courses of study, such as theological colleges and *Pädagogische Hochschulen*. The latter, which still exist only in Baden-Württemberg, have been incorporated into universities in the other Länder or expanded into institutions offering a wider range of courses.¹⁶

In the German education system, the states (16 Länder) have the main responsibility, while the Federal Government plays only a minor role. The Federal Government is mainly responsible for legislation on the general principles of higher education, promotion of research, financial assistance for the students, vocational counselling and vocational on-the-job training in the dual system. However, several major issues are still addressed at the national level, which in practice leads to conflict among states and to more or less different regulations and procedures in the states.

The legal basis of higher education in Germany is provided by the [legislation on higher education of the Länder](#) (Hochschulgesetze), as well as the [legislation regarding colleges of art and music](#) and the [legislation regarding Fachhochschulen](#) of

¹⁵ This section draws heavily on: Institut für Arbeit und Technik (2013) Mapping the German Landscape of Tertiary Lifelong Learning Discussion paper - WP4 – no.3 www.themp.eu

¹⁶ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Types_of_Higher_Education_Institutions

the Länder as far as these types of institution are not included in the general Higher Education Acts.¹⁷

The universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen) are a special feature of the German university system. Distinctive features of those universities are their emphasis on practical relevance, their small group size and exams which are integrated into the studies, as well as study programs which are highly structured, planned, job-related, which therefore result in much shorter study times than is usual when compared with other German universities. The universities of applied sciences offer application-oriented study courses mainly in Engineering, Economics, Social Work, Public and Legal Administration and Health and Therapy. In addition, there are also specialised institutions dealing with professional studies in arts and music.

Since the 1980s there have been some initiatives to establish continuing education, alongside teaching and research, as the third pillar of higher education. The terms continuing vocational training and continuing education are both used. *Continuing vocational education* is targeted at a wide range of groups and at a variety of levels. However, not all courses are recognised by law or by industry organisations. *Continuing education* in comparison is generally targeted at those with either a degree, or considerable experience gained through employment or other means in a specified area. Provision is certificated and also includes Master's level courses.¹⁸ In addition, there are what is termed *second chance* education delivered at evening classes which allows attainment of a higher education entrance qualification (*Abendgymnasien*) although there are a number of requirements or prerequisites which must be met.¹⁹

Meanwhile, several HE-Institutions have established further training centres and offer courses and seminars of various length and content. Furthermore, new organizational forms have been established in order to ensure flexibility in the training market as well as to develop target group specific offers. Corporate universities and the increasing engagement of international universities are also new developments in recent years.

In 2004 the Federation and the Lander adopted a joint strategy for Lifelong Learning in the Federal Republic of Germany (*Strategie für Lebenslanges Lernen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) with the aim of promoting LLL activities among different age groups in Germany with a special attention to those who have low qualifications. The strategy is focused around life

¹⁷ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Higher_Education

¹⁸ For further details see:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Continuing_Education_in_the_Academic_and_Creative_Field

¹⁹ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Second-Chance_Education

phases, from early childhood to old age. In order to achieve these goals a number of reforms were agreed including: developing continuing education opportunities; further developments in quality assurance; modularisation; promotion and marketing of continuing education opportunities; and, changes in the funding structure.²⁰

As outlined above, several attempts have been made in order to open universities for people with vocational training and experience. Recognising prior learning experiences is the competency of the federal states, since there is no unified education system in Germany. In order to ensure mature students' participation in tertiary lifelong learning activities, a central question is recognition of their prior learning experiences. Moves have been made though to include non-formal and informal learning within the development of a German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (*Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen für lebenslanges Lernen – DQR*) with the aim of linking it with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

*In June 2011 two working groups were set up to develop criteria for connecting non-formal and informal learning with the DQR. With the involvement in particular of the main stake-holders in further and continuing education and the social partners possible processes and strategies to include non-formal and informal learning are to be developed and their applicability tested. Two expert reports had already been produced on this subject. The recommendations of the working groups are currently being discussed in the DQR committees.*²¹

Hungary²²

Higher education institutions in Hungary can be categorised in the following two ways. Firstly there is a distinction between state and non-state institutions. Non-state institutions can be founded by local governments, national minority governments, churches, business organizations or foundations. Institutions meeting the criteria are granted state recognition by the Parliament. In addition, according to the Higher Education Act, there are colleges (non-university higher education institutions) and universities.

The main differences are in relation to capacity and provision: universities are institutions authorised to provide Master courses in at least two fields of study and offer doctoral programmes and award doctoral degrees in at least one field of study, provided that at least two

²⁰ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Lifelong_Learning_Strategy

²¹ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:National_Qualifications_Framework

²² This section draw heavily on: Makó, C., Csizmadia, P. and Illéssy, M. (2013) Mapping the Hungarian Landscape of Tertiary Lifelong Learning, Discussion paper - WP4 – no.4, www.themp.eu

thirds of its professors have a doctoral degree. Colleges may also offer programmes in all three cycles but traditionally they tend to offer more practical and vocational programmes, mainly Bachelor and short-cycle programmes. They are generally more active in applied research, while universities generally are perceived as offering more theoretically oriented degree courses, and are especially active in basic research.

In terms of scale, state universities are large organisations with several faculties, while collages also include smaller institutions. Non-state institutions are generally smaller (in terms of the number of faculties and students) and the majority of them are colleges.²³

There are a number of legislative sources that regulate directly or indirectly adult education. The two most relevant are the *Higher Education Act*; and the *Adult Education Act*. The former regulates the special training programmes that are offered by HE institutions for those who have already graduated (at ISCED level 5A). The law defines both the minimal human and technical standards necessary to run such courses and both the input and output requirements. The state also regulates the number of state funded places each year for new entrants to Bachelor level and advanced vocational programmes. Funding for Masters level courses is capped at 35% of those entering Bachelors level three years previously.²⁴

According to the Adult Education Act, courses should be accredited by the Board for Adult Education and Training Accreditation (*Felnőttképzési Akkreditáló Testület: FAT*) if the training provider wants to have his programme to be recognised by the state. Higher education institutions, however, are not obliged to have their programmes accredited.

As part of the vocational education and training system, however, HE institutions also provide two-year advanced vocational programmes (ISCED 5B, 120 ECTS credits) as well. These programmes can also be offered by upper secondary schools. There are, however, special training programmes (at ISCED level 5A) for those who have already graduated. This type of training programme (*szakirányú továbbképzés*) offers graduates the possibility to either gain a new qualification or to specialise in a given area related to their basic qualification. In some cases, e.g. legal, medical and technical professions, participating in such courses is a legal prerequisite of obtaining and preserving their licences. The ratio of participants in these programmes was 5.5% within the whole student population and was 6.5% in 2010. On the basis of these figures, these programmes do not seem to be very popular or widely accepted by employers.

²³ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Hungary:Types_of_Higher_Education_Institutions

²⁴ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Hungary:Higher_Education_Funding

In relation to Lifelong Learning, Hungary introduced a *Lifelong Learning Strategy*²⁵ in 2005 which aimed to define actions and developments in the period 2007-13. The strategy had a number of objectives including improved economic competitiveness, the development of education and training to mitigate regional differences; a focus on disadvantaged groups; and, to improve both physical and virtual access to opportunities.²⁶

Finally, as in other member states, Hungary has made moves towards convergence with Bologna on a national qualifications framework. A government resolution on a national qualification framework and convergence with the EQF was adopted in 2008, which led to working groups developing a draft resolution in 2011.

Italy²⁷

The Italian higher education system is organised as follows:

- tertiary education offered by universities
- tertiary education offered by the High level Arts and Music Education system (*Alta formazione artistica e musicale - Afam*)
- higher technical education and training offered by the Higher technical institutes
- education offered by higher institutions

Only universities and *Afam* institutions offer programmes leading to first, second and third-cycle qualifications (ISCED levels 5 and 6). Higher technical education, although belonging to the higher level of education, leads to post-secondary non tertiary qualifications (ISCED level 4), while qualifications offered by higher institutes are not recognised as first, second or third cycle qualifications. Italy began working on the development of a national qualifications framework to comply with Bologna criteria in 2005. This process resulted in the approval of the Italian Qualifications Framework²⁸ (Quadro dei Titoli Italiani - QTI), which groups information on qualifications released by Italian higher education institutions, both universities and *Afam* institutions. The QTI also includes reference legislation for the higher education sector and specific descriptions on regulated professions. As noted below, the Framework is organised according to the three main higher education levels as defined through the Bologna Process, and

²⁵ <http://www.nefmi.gov.hu/europai-unio-oktatas/egesz-elelen-at-tarto/angol-strategia>

²⁶ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Hungary:Lifelong_Learning_Strategy

²⁷ This section draw heavily on: Mariani, M. (2013) Mapping the Italian Landscape of Tertiary Lifelong Learning, Discussion paper - WP4 – no.5, www.themp.eu

²⁸ <http://www.quadrodeittitoli.it/>

it shows the qualifications released for each cycle as well as the relative ECTS credits and learning outcomes.²⁹

Universities adopt autonomous statutes establishing their governing bodies (e.g. rector, Senato Accademico, board of management) as well as their teaching and research structures. They offer the following qualifications: *Laurea*, corresponding to a Bologna first-cycle qualification; *Laurea specialistica/magistrale*, corresponding to a Bologna second-cycle; and *Dottorato di ricerca*, corresponding to a Bologna third-cycle degree.

The *Afam* institutions include: Academies of Fine Arts, the National Academy of Drama, Higher institutes for Artistic Industries (ISIA), Conservatoires, the National Dance Academy and officially recognised music institutes. They have similar legal status to universities and statutory, teaching, scientific, administrative, financial and accounting autonomy. Afam institutions issue the following qualifications: *Diploma accademico di primo livello* (First-level academic diploma), corresponding to a Bologna first-cycle qualification; *Diploma accademico di secondo livello* (Second-level academic diploma), corresponding to a Bologna second-cycle qualification; and, *Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca* (Research academic diploma), corresponding to a Bologna third-cycle degree.³⁰ Both universities and *Afam* institutions also offer specialised diplomas linked to Bologna cycles.

The Reform law 53/2003 introduced the term 'lifelong learning' among the principles and directive criteria of the education and training system. For its implementation, the reform law provided a programmatic plan to fund *interventions for the development of higher level technical education and training and adult education*. However, the above reform has resulted in a slow integration of the available training instruments, and the achievement of a unique lifelong learning strategy directed to adults seems still far to be reached, with LLL continuing to lay behind the desired targets.

At the level of higher education, measures have been taken to create flexibility to encourage the participation of non-representative groups of students and to recognize prior learning. The accreditation of 11 online universities³¹ is meant to facilitate access to university studies for disadvantaged groups of students, such as working students, disabled students and adults. Moreover, traditional universities are allowed to offer more flexible courses through blended or totally online programmes of study. Universities are also developing continuing professional development (CPD) courses, focusing on in-depth studies in specific areas. Beginning in 2004, higher education institutions were able to establish their own criteria for the recognition of prior

²⁹ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Italy:National_Qualifications_Framework

³⁰ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Italy:Higher_Education

³¹ <http://unitelematiche.it/>

learning within the limits specified for each course of study. A national working group defined the *National guidelines for the recognition of prior learning* adopted by universities.³²

In the Italian Higher Education debate, the importance of lifelong learning issues has been underlined recently on several occasions, focusing on the need for a law for HE lifelong education. For instance, the 2007 guidelines on new curricular design³³ issued by the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) called on universities for a ‘serious commitment’ to lifelong education recognizing the fact that adult TLL has to become the new ‘mission’ of Italian universities. It was suggested that this may also help, to mitigate the negative effects of Italian demographic trends. However, at the moment, at a practical level, Italian universities seem to be diversely aware about their ‘new mission’ and the concept of continuing education is intended and interpreted in extremely different ways, reflecting universities’ different experiences and purposes. Italian universities actually open themselves only to a very low share of the market for continuing education, and an overarching legal formalization of the existing voluntary single initiatives would be needed. In summary, the movement towards the development of Italian tertiary lifelong learning initiatives seems at this time to be led more by single academic initiatives than by Government Policies.

Netherlands³⁴

Higher education in the Netherlands is provided by three types of institution. Firstly, university education provided by the traditional universities and the Open University and secondly, higher professional education provided by *hogescholen* (universities of applied science). These legally based institutions receive funding from the state and charge students government-approved fees. Thirdly, there are about 60 institutions providing higher education that are not funded and regulated by the state by the state and are free to set their own fees and admissions policy. These private institutions acquire legitimacy through their courses being accredited in the same way as the government-funded institutions. Students at these institutions are then also eligible for student grants and they may obtain bachelor’s and/or master’s degrees for the accredited courses. However, many of the provisions of the Higher Education and Research Act do not apply to the private institutions providing higher education. Private-sector institutions including foreign universities and business schools are not covered by Dutch government regulations.

³² https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Italy:Lifelong_Learning_Strategy

³³ MIUR, “Linee guida per la progettazione dei nuovi ordinamenti didattici dei corsi di laurea”, Roma, July 26th, 2007.

³⁴ This section draws on: Plato (2013) Mapping the Dutch Landscape of Tertiary Lifelong Learning, Discussion paper - WP4 – no.6, www.themp.eu

Both universities and *hogescholen* (universities of applied science) offer a large number of courses in several different fields. The universities are large institutions and the average size of the *hogescholen* is constantly increasing as a result not only of mergers but also of rising student numbers. The private institutions that provide higher professional education are usually more specialised and the courses count a smaller number of students.

Universities in the Netherlands generally consider their primary task to conduct fundamental disciplinary research and a secondary consideration is to provide initial education to young people according to the requirements of the disciplines concerned. Only the Open University is an exception in this respect. And in higher professional education, there are also a small number of advanced courses (art courses, courses in architecture, and teacher training courses in special education or leading to a grade 1 qualification in general subjects). These are open to students who have already completed a higher education programme.³⁵

Policy measures by the government demonstrate that TLLL has a low priority in practice. Students may only receive student grants until the age of 30. Part-time courses are practically excluded from funding. Consequently TLLL is mainly left to the market and to private institutions. This is not to say that a number of developments relevant to lifelong learning have not taken place.

Reports on lifelong learning were published by the Social and Economic Council in 2002 and the Education Council of the Netherlands in 2003 which culminated in 2004 with the Lifelong Learning Action Plan. Objectives included broadening access to prior learning recognition schemes (EVC), setting up programmes combining work and study, establishing training and employment help-desks and experimenting with learning and development budgets. In 2009 the Education Council issued recommendations on secondary and higher education for adults. They included the creation of a separate institution with responsibility for ranking training programmes in a national qualifications framework for non-formal learning, awarding grants to part-time institutions and strengthening demand for learning through the provision of open-source study materials. It is recognised that the recognition of prior experience or learning is an important element of lifelong learning and the government has made grants available for its assessment and recognition and the system is subject to on-going development to improve the current system and to this end legislation was prepared to produce a comprehensive quality assurance system for prior learning assessment and recognition.³⁶

³⁵

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Netherlands:Types_of_Higher_Education_Institutions

³⁶ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Netherlands:Lifelong_Learning_Strategy

Specific sectors and organisations also have academies of their own that provide education at university level or are linked to university education. This applies to the police and the army. These institutions are classical examples of organisations that afford employees the possibility to develop and progress in their career during their working life. In addition, in some sectors scientific expertise centres are established, evolving from (individual or groups of) universities. Examples are vocational education, youth welfare, public administration and organisational development. Such expertise centres conduct research and support the professional development of practitioners and the innovation of their sectors. They often not only provide training but use a variety of means to communicate knowledge: conferences, newsletters, handbooks, consultancy etc. Moreover, a number of other professions (medicine, law and accountancy for example) require their members to participate in Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The professionals concerned are obliged to follow courses to preserve the qualification to practise their profession. The universities concerned provide numerous programmes in this area.

As with other member states, the development of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) by the European Commission and the adoption of the Recommendation on the EQF by the European Parliament and the Council in April 2008, led the Netherlands to develop a Dutch national qualifications framework, the NLQF.³⁷ The NLQF will allow both government regulated qualifications and non-regulated qualifications (often important in terms of employability) to be incorporated and it is hoped that this will boost the value of non-regulated qualifications and also make it easier to understand how the different levels of qualification relate to each other. Overall the main objectives of the NLQF are to create transparency, enable comparisons of Dutch education and training qualifications, support progression within the Dutch qualifications system and provide a basis for referencing the Dutch system to the EQF.³⁸

Spain³⁹

In Spain, higher education institutions are classified depending on whether they organise university or non-university provision. Non-university provision includes centres which offer Advanced Vocational Training, and specialised education⁴⁰ institutions. Universities may be either public or private organisations.

³⁷ <http://www.nlqf.nl/information-in-english>

³⁸ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Netherlands:National_Qualifications_Framework

³⁹ This section draws on: Montse Álvarez, M., Duch, N., Krüger, K., Jiménez, L., and Molas, A. (2013) Mapping the Spanish Landscape of Tertiary Lifelong Learning, Discussion paper - WP4 – no.7, www.themp.eu

⁴⁰ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Spain:Glossary#Specialised_Education_.28Ense.C3.B1anzas_de_r.C3.A9gimen_especial.29

Public universities and private universities are founded pursuant to a specific act passed by the Legislative Assembly of the region where the institution will be located, or an act approved by the Spanish Parliament, at the proposal of the central government and in accordance with the relevant Autonomous Community Council. A report from the General Conference for University Policy is also mandatory.⁴¹

The Spanish legislation – article 27 of the Constitution – established the principle of university autonomy. Under this principle, universities should accomplish three missions: research, education and service to society in the broadest sense. More specifically, the functions of a university are to include the spread, appreciation and transfer of knowledge at the service of culture, life quality and economic development; the diffusion of knowledge and culture by means of the extension of university education; and, Lifelong Learning.⁴²

The Spanish higher education system and the education system in general, are characterized by its high degree of decentralization. The central state and the Autonomous Communities share competences.

The State Education Authority executes the general guidelines of the Government on education policy and regulates the basic elements or aspects of the system. The Autonomous Education Authorities develop the State regulations and have executive and administrative competences for managing the Education System in their own territory.⁴³

The Spanish education system separates organisationally tertiary vocational education clearly from the universities. Vocational tertiary education forms part of the vocational track. Vocational training has three stages: the initial vocational training in the form of modules; the middle technician degree and Higher Technician degree. Only the latter is considered as part of higher education. However, there are barriers to access from the middle technician degree to the higher vocational track. This access is only possible through an access test and once accomplished 18 years. People with a higher vocational degree, but not people with a middle technician degree can access directly to the university without an access test.

⁴¹ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Spain:Types_of_Higher_Education_Institutions

⁴² https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Spain:Higher_Education

⁴³ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Spain:Overview>

Specific access for people older than 25 is also possible via a test⁴⁴; and there is a specific regulation for people older than 40 that have work and professional experience related to a specific program, but don't have a degree that enables them to enter university through standard procedures. It is based on the accreditation of work or professional experience regarding the specific university degree for which the access is requested.⁴⁵ There is also a route for those over 45 without work and/or professional experience. Finally, people with a higher vocational degree can access university without an access test.

Estrategia Universidad 2015 (Strategy University 2015), published in 2010, gave a new impetus to Lifelong Learning at universities. It was developed by the former socialist government. After the change of government it is currently in a kind of stand-by or hiatus. It defined higher education as lifelong learning at both undergraduate and postgraduate cycles. The document integrated adult education programmes, offered by individual universities, as an essential part of university lifelong learning. In accordance with EU strategy, this document emphasised the importance of lifelong learning “*not only within the macroeconomic and structural context but also as a way of personal self-realization*” (Strategy University 2015, Page 20).

It also recognised the efforts of universities offering adult education providing complementary training to the official degree courses. However, it also states the need for provision to be boosted with more flexible continuing education adapted to social needs and demands, with modular courses, completing the open learning available with corporate and occupational training. Following this document, adult education forms part of the 1st mission of the university. In this context, the University Council approved in 2010 an agreement about lifelong learning in universities (*Las Universidades y la Formación Permanente en España*), which claims, overall, for the official recognition of university degrees.

In relation to flexibility, a Royal Decree 1393/2007 established that 15% of the credits of official programmes can be obtained by prior learning, that means the recognition of work and professional experience or by credits in adult learning programmes of the universities (see *Comisión de Formación Continua* (2010: 51/52) *La formación permanente y las universidades españolas*) allows that a certain contingent of credits can be recognised for the official programmes. But this possibility does not seem to be used frequently.

In 2002, the Legal Act 5/2002 established the Spanish Qualification Framework (SQF),⁴⁶ which is currently under revision for its adaptation to the European Qualification Framework (EQF).⁴⁷

⁴⁴ <http://estudiantes.us.es/faqs-prueba-acceso-mayores>

⁴⁵ <http://estudiantes.us.es/proced-eval#procedimiento>

⁴⁶ <http://www.mecd.gob.es/mecu/en/que-es/que-es.html>

It established 5 levels of professional qualifications. In so far, it doesn't include all educational levels and starts from the Compulsory Secondary level. Tertiary qualifications are classified at level 3, 4 and 5. This has its correspondence to the levels 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and of the new ISCED-scheme 2011. The SQF makes reference only to the official certifications. In so far, it is not so clear, where the certificates of Tertiary Adult Education fit in this scheme. The aforementioned document of the University Council advocates converting them in official certificates included in the State Register of University Titles. But actually these certificates have no official educational value, and must prove their value directly in the labour market.

UK: Scotland⁴⁸

In general, UK higher education operates in similar ways across the constituent parts (England⁴⁹, Ireland⁵⁰, Scotland⁵¹ and Wales⁵²)). However, there are separate policy developments in each of the four countries of the UK, reflective to a large extent on the different politics of ruling parties in each country (England (the UK Conservative/Liberal coalition), Scotland (the minority Scottish Nationalist government), Wales (the Labour/Welsh Nationalist coalition) and Northern Ireland (the cross party power sharing arrangement). In addition, there are also some fundamental differences between the system in operation in Scotland and the rest of the UK. The most important point perhaps to make is that there are different fee regimes in the four countries. Universities in England for example are able to charge the individual up to £9000 per year for a Higher Education course, whilst there are no fees in Scotland for its own residents, and other residents of the EU. However, students from England, Wales and North Ireland who do wish to study in Scotland pay fees.⁵³ This difference, it may be assumed and some research exists to support the contention that this is likely to affect decision-making by students, including adults, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds,

⁴⁷ The Spanish application of the Bologna scheme is different from the majority of the other European countries. The bachelor is established with 240 credits corresponding to 4 years.

⁴⁸ This section draws on: Osborne, M. (2012) Mapping the UK Landscape of Tertiary Lifelong Learning, Discussion paper - WP4 – no.8, www.themp.eu

⁴⁹ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/United-Kingdom-England:Overview>

⁵⁰ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/United-Kingdom-Northern-Ireland:Overview>

⁵¹ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/United-Kingdom-Scotland:Overview>

⁵² <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/United-Kingdom-Wales:Overview>

⁵³ For details of the different tuition fees and students support see: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

differentially in the four countries; and given that the three cases are based in Scotland, it is worthwhile concentrating on the Scottish context.⁵⁴

There are 20 higher education institutions (HEIs), comprising 16 universities (including the Open University) and 4 other institutions. HEIs are funded by the [Scottish Funding Council](#) (SFC). Courses at higher education level (mainly Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND) or both, but also including a limited amount of degree provision) are also offered by all the colleges that provide further education courses and there are close links between the FE and HE sectors.⁵⁵ Former higher education institutions which were specialist colleges providing pre-service and in-service courses for the education of teachers and, in some cases, a range of courses in social work, community education and leisure have now merged with universities. Two HEIs, Edinburgh College of Art and Glasgow School of Art, specialise in fine art, art and design, and architecture. Higher education institutions provide sub-degree courses, first degree courses, courses for the education and training of teachers, courses of post-graduate studies at Masters and Doctorate levels and courses at a higher level in preparation for a qualification from a professional body. The higher education institutions are also expected to carry out research.

The relevant legislation and broad policy action of the Scottish Government relate to both higher and further education. The [Further and Higher Education \(Scotland\) Act 1992](#) made fundamental changes in the organisation of post-school education in Scotland. The 1992 Act also created a separate Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC). From 1 July 1999, under powers provided in the 1992 Act, a Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) came into operation, replacing the former FE Funding Unit of the then Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (later the Scottish Government Lifelong Learning Directorate (SGLLD). The [Further and Higher Education \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#) dissolved SFEFC and SHEFC and created a new [Scottish Funding Council](#) (SFC). The 2005 Act repealed the sections of the 1992 one which referred to the old Councils. Merging the two Funding Councils allowed a more strategic overview of both the FE and HE sectors, increasing transparency and allowing more coherent decision-making. SFC is responsible for funding Scotland's Colleges and Universities. The Act also extended the powers of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to the actions of FE and HE Institutions.

In Scotland, immediately after devolution in 2000, *lifelong learning* was linked with *enterprise* in a new department of the Scottish Executive, although in 2007, within a reorganised Executive, all departments were abolished and all sectors of education are now included in a

⁵⁴ For a more detailed view of the UK context see Osborne and Houston (2012)

⁵⁵ For a detailed analysis of HE in FE see Gallacher (2006; 2009)

new education and lifelong learning directorate within the Scottish Government. The main policy paper in relation to LLL was *Life Through Learning: Learning Through Life* published in 2003 which stated that LLL policy in Scotland was *about personal fulfilment and enterprise; employability and adaptability; active citizenship and social inclusion*. This was consolidated with an eye for the future in 2005, when the Scottish Funding Council published *Learning for All*, the results of a SHEFC/SFEFC working party's review of widening access policy and strategy. This document articulated the priorities for widening access in both FE and HE for the following five years and beyond. Further it noted that whilst some progress had been made in the accessing FE and HE, it has been slow for individuals from the most deprived areas.⁵⁶ Lifelong learning policy was formally set out in *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy*⁵⁷ (2007), which aimed to develop a cohesive lifelong learning system centred on the individual but responsive to employer needs and which concentrated on three main areas: individual development; responding to economic and employer need; and creating cohesive structures. A revised strategy, *Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth*⁵⁸ (2010), was produced and while it recognised progress and achievements since 2007 a renewed focus on the skills was required to accelerate economic recovery; and on providing the opportunities for skills to be developed and for these skills to be used effectively.⁵⁹

The case of flexibility as it pertains to the university sector (Osborne and Young 2006) exemplifies the range of actions that take place to improve access and increase opportunity. However, it is important to note that credit transfer between sectors is discretionary rather than mandated, AP(E)L is espoused strongly but remains marginal and part-time study does not receive too much priority in many institutions. Distance education for adults is of course manifest in the role of the Open University and a few other higher education institutions that offer some distance and mixed mode courses. Further details including a number of case studies of flexibility in relation to access to higher education is found in Houston, McCune and Osborne (2011). These authors report that the use of alternative forms of delivery; the creation of flexible pathways through higher education; the development of alternative programmes of study, and the opportunities made available through innovations in information and communications technology have, through the flexibility they offer, opened up new possibilities for widening access to, and facilitating successful participation in, HE.

⁵⁶ <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/FundingOutcomes/Access/learningforall/LearningforAll.aspx>

⁵⁷ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/09/06091114/0>

⁵⁸ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/04125111/0>

⁵⁹ Ongoing progress in access to FE and HE is provided annually in Learning for All reports:
<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/FundingOutcomes/Access/learningforall/LearningforAll.aspx>

Finally, in relation to Bologna and the EQF, in all parts of the UK Credit Frameworks are utilised as ladders of progression for adults. So for example, the *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework* (SCQF)⁶⁰ aims to use two measures: the *level*⁶¹ of a qualification and the number of *Credit Points*⁶² awarded to allow learners to understand and compare various qualifications from access level to doctoral level including school and vocational qualifications. However, how these are adopted or accepted in practice in the UK varies widely both across and within institutions. There are equivalences between ECTS and SCQF credits although in practice credit transfer is not used as much as perhaps was expected. This is in part due to autonomy at college and university level in the UK about what credit each institution will accept for any given programme (Souto-Otero, 2013).

One positive note in relation to part-time students, many of whom are classified as adults, in Scotland, is the decision by the Scottish Government to make significant changes to the funding of part-time higher education. In line with its commitment to have no tuition fees for full-time undergraduate students from Scotland and the EU, in contrast to the rest of the UK where fees of around €11000 per annum are in operation, it has now extended tuition fee support to part-time students earning less than around €30000 which will come into effect in session 2013-14.⁶³

Summary

The sections presented above have provided a general overview of the higher education systems in operation in the member states represented by the selected case studies. As noted, there are similarities and differences. These will be drawn out and linked to our theoretical and analytical framework outlined earlier. However, at this point it is useful to note where in general we can see similarities and differences in respect of the provision selected for the case studies.

One difference is the degree to which, and the scale of, alternatives to what might be seen as traditional universities in the form of advanced professional, technical or artistic institutions. A number of countries including Netherlands and Germany have adopted or developed a clearer separation between some professions and general higher education than for example in the UK context where there are only a few specialised institutions in the areas of art, music and drama.

⁶⁰ <http://www.scqf.org.uk/>

⁶¹ The SCQF Level Descriptors describe in broad terms what learners should be able to do or demonstrate at a particular level.

⁶² In common with other credit systems, the SCQF works on the basis that one credit point represents the amount of learning achieved through a notional 10 hours of learning time which includes everything a learner has to do to achieve the outcomes in a qualification including the assessment procedures

⁶³ http://www.saas.gov.uk/part_time/ug/eligibility.htm

Related to this is the degree to which the tertiary landscape is complex and how this complexity may hinder access or transfer from one sector to another in the pursuit of tertiary or degree level study. In addition, we have also seen the increasing entry of private institutions in what was traditionally a quasi-public sector albeit at arm's length and with a strong element of autonomy. Once again, the degree to which private enterprise has intruded into learning differs across our cases.

The financing of institutions also introduces the question of student funding and support systems. As we have seen, most of the selected member states offer some level of funding for undergraduate students; while most will also levy some form of fee or charge in relation to post-graduate or CPD provision. As noted in the UK due to political devolution fees depend upon domicile which results in Scottish and EU students at undergraduate level at Scottish institutions paying no fees, while students from the Rest of the UK at Scottish institutions pay annual fees of around €7500. This has resulted in changing trends in student mobility with year on year increases in the number of EU students applying to study at Scottish institutions⁶⁴; and also increasing numbers of Rest of UK students looking to study in the EU to avoid high fees.^{65, 66} This is aided by an increasing number of EU universities providing tuition at both under- and post-graduate levels in English.⁶⁷

Other member states represented in the project also offer free tuition⁶⁸ to all nationalities subject to some limitations and these include: the Czech Republic⁶⁹; Germany (although a semester contribution is required⁷⁰); and Hungary (although there are provisions for fees dependent upon academic performance⁷¹). Tuition fees are applicable in Spain⁷² and Italy⁷³, where they average around the €900 mark and in the Netherlands where they average around €1700 per annum.⁷⁴

Finally, before moving on to a more detailed analysis of the case studies, it is perhaps useful to provide some indicators for the selected member states compared to the average for EU27 on

⁶⁴ <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/education/eu-student-applications-at-record-high.20055596>

⁶⁵ <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/jan/10/universities-tuition-fees-students-exodus>

⁶⁶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/9790250/Why-British-students-are-heading-to-Germany.html>

⁶⁷ <http://www.study-info.eu/>

⁶⁸ The following section refers only to undergraduate Bachelors level courses

⁶⁹ <http://www.studyin.cz/higher-education-system/>

⁷⁰ This ranges from €50 to €250 but includes a public transport ticket <https://www.daad.de/deutschland/nach-deutschland/voraussetzungen/en/9198-expenses-finance/>

⁷¹ https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Hungary:Higher_Education_Funding

⁷² <http://universidad.es/en/spain/spains-universities/spanish-university-system/cost-studying-spain>

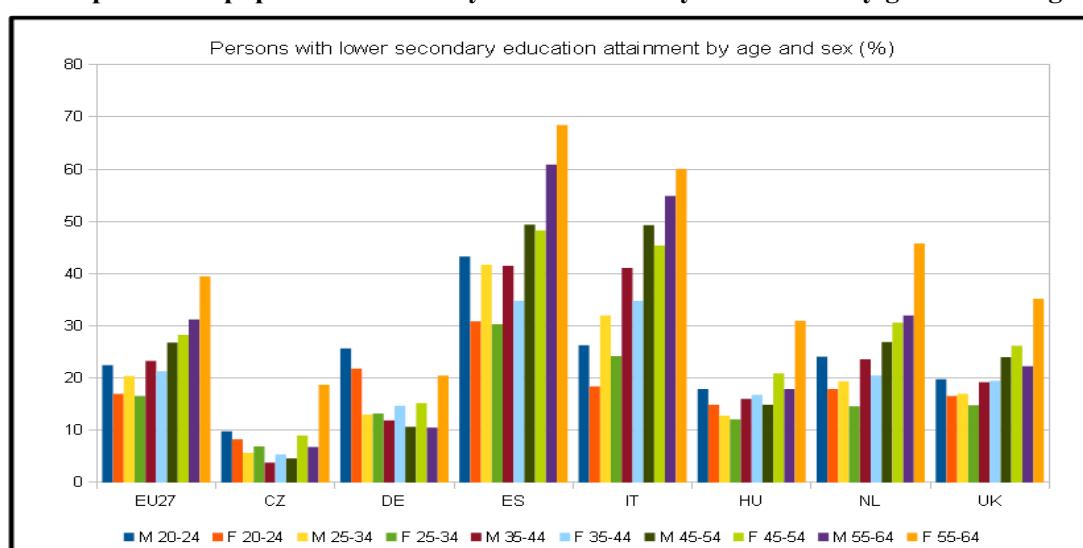
⁷³ <http://www.study-in-italy.it/studying/fees-costs.html>

⁷⁴ <http://www.studyinholland.nl/scholarships/financing-your-studies>

various measures. In the following figures, details are provided by age and gender on the proportion: with only lower secondary level qualifications; with a tertiary level qualification; and those who had undertaken education or training in the last four weeks which is used as an indicator of lifelong learning.

The first figure⁷⁵ indicates the proportion with only lower secondary level qualifications and is important in the context of Europe 2020 and national responses to the changing demands of the labour market.

Figure 1:
Proportion of population with only lower secondary attainment by gender and age



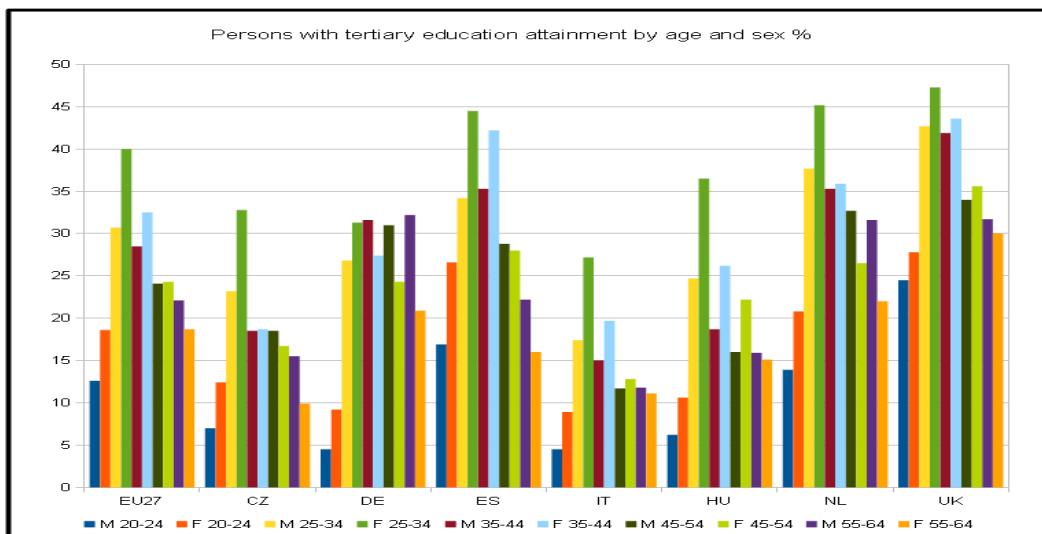
As can be seen, in general and for all selected states with the exception of Germany, older workers are more likely to have lower qualifications than younger workers and this is even more so for females. In the case of Germany, levels in general are below those for the EU27, but only in Germany are there more young people with low levels of attainment than older people. Also of interest are the low levels for all age groups in the Czech Republic although even here we can see relatively high levels of younger workers with low educational attainment.

Figure 2 indicates the proportion of the population by age and gender with tertiary level qualifications. As can be seen, in general, and for most of the selected member states and also for the EU27, up to the age of 45, females are more likely to have a tertiary level qualification than their male counterparts.

⁷⁵All figures are produced from EUROSTAT data:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/education/data/main_tables

Figure 2
Proportion of population with tertiary level qualifications by gender and age

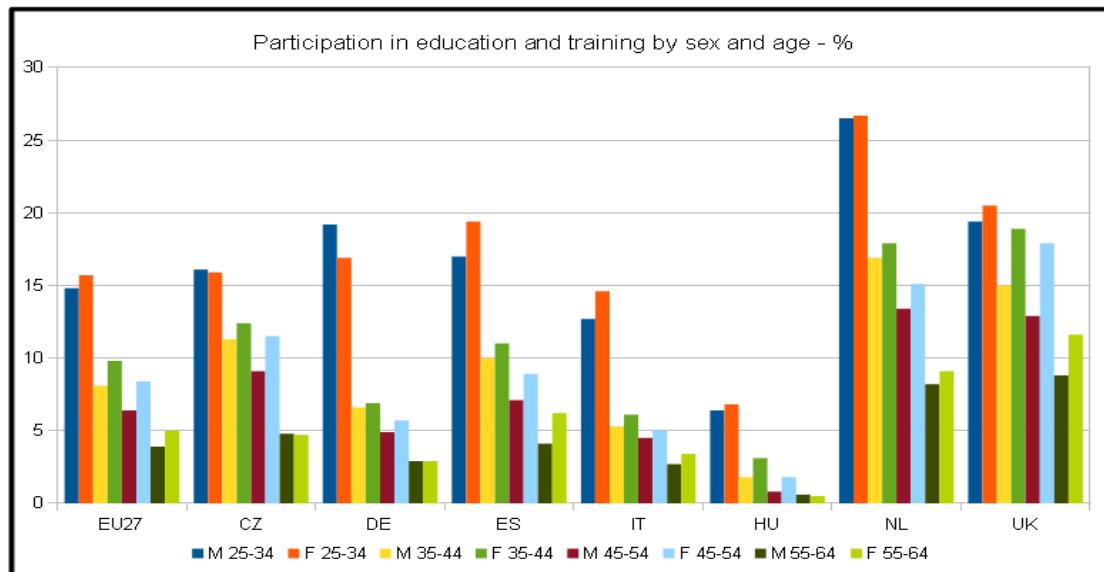


Member states that in general perform worse than the EU average are the Czech Republic, Italy, Hungary; while Spain, the Netherlands and the UK generally perform at all age groups above the EU average. Germany is a more mixed picture and may perhaps be explained by the role of vocational and technical education outside the tertiary system.

The final figure reports on the proportion of those, by age and gender that had, in the last four weeks prior to the survey, undertaken any education or training and is classified by EUROSTAT as an indicator of Lifelong Learning.

As the figure illustrates, a number of the member states perform above the EU27 average and while for the Czech Republic, Germany and Spain this difference is more pronounced for the younger age groups, both the Netherlands and the UK are consistently above the EU27 averages for all age groups. In addition, and in some ways mirroring tertiary level attainment the higher likelihood of females in comparison with their male counterparts having participated in education or training is apparent. Finally, it is perhaps interesting to note the data for Hungary in relation to both tertiary qualifications and lifelong learning. It has been suggested that those with higher education qualifications are more likely than those who do not to participate in lifelong learning. For Hungary, and to a lesser extent Germany, this does not appear to be the case.

Figure 3
Proportion of population undertaking training or education in last four weeks by age and gender



5. Analysis of case studies: Institutional and programme similarities and differences

The purpose of this section is to report the analysis of the case studies in relation to various characteristics outlined in Section 1. The first step is to introduce the cases. Table 1⁷⁶ below, provides general details about the case studies.⁷⁷ It also provides brief information on: the location of the case and sector (public/private/cooperation); on the programme(s) covered by the case study and institutional setting.

Table 1:
Summary information for case studies

	Name of the Institution	Programme	Institutional Setting
CZECH REPUBLIK			
1	Charles University in Prague (public institution)	Programme for School Consultants	Department of Psychology of the Faculty of Arts
2	Masaryk University in Brno (public institution)	PREFEKТ	Supervised by a specially established board from the cooperating universities
3	College of Applied Psychology (private institution)	Traffic Psychology	Outsourced rooms, programme directors and lecturers
GERMANY			
1	University Bochum	Change Management	organized by the Ruhr-University Academy (RUB).
2	University Duisburg-Essen	VAWi Business Computer Science	organized by the Ruhr Campus Academy
3	University Hagen	Infernum: The interdisciplinary Distance Learning Program for Environmental Sciences	Own Faculty and institutional cooperation
SPAIN			
1	Fundaction URV - Centre of Continuous Training Universidad Rovira i Virgili	Human Resource Management	outsourced university owned organisation
2	Institute of Continuous Training IL3 University Barcelona	Social Economy and Management of Non-profit organisation	Special university administrative unit + Outsourced university owned organisation

⁷⁶ Source: Oz and Hamburg (2013)

⁷⁷ Full details of each case study are contained in the relevant national reports available at www.themp.eu

Table 1: Summary information for case studies			
3	Politechnic University Valencia - Centre of Continuous Training	Photovoltaic Energy, Car design European Financial Advisor	Special university administrative unit
HUNGARY			
1	Szent Istvan University Faculty of Mechanical Engineering	KITE Farmers' training programme	Joint programme based on the cooperation of the Faculty and the KITE Co.
2	Debrecen University Faculty of Engineering	Quality Management Engineering Studies	Faculty-based postgraduate training course
3	Budapest Business School	Business Coach Postgraduate Programme	Joint programme cooperation School and Flow Group
ITALY			
1	University of Bologna – FormArea	FormArea Educational Campus	External independent organisation (FormArea)
2	University of Genoa – PerForm	‘International Business Leadership’	Outsourced university owned organisation (PerForm)
3	University of Bolzano	“CasaClima” Environmental Design	Own Faculty (Science and Technology Faculty)
THE NETHERLANDS			
1	Campus The Hague, Leiden University	Course Public Affairs	Separate faculty of the university for (a.o.) professional learning
2	Expertise Centre for Vocational Education	Learning Network Management of Innovation	Intermediary organisation between universities and the field of vocational education
3	The Dutch Police Academy	Master of Criminal Investigation	Recognised college for higher education, cooperating with universities
UNITED KINGDOM			
1	University Glasgow	BA Community Development	School of Education, College of Social Sciences
2	University of the West of Scotland	BA Health and Social Care, Business and IT	Lifelong Learning Academy – university department with responsibility for all part-time enrolment
3	Open University in Scotland	BA Health and Social Care, Community Education	National Centre with degree of autonomy

As can be seen the majority of the cases would appear to be organised in universities although in a number of cases, this is either in partnership with external organisations (public or private

sector), or as in the case of Spain, and to a lesser extent Italy, owned by the university but operated as separate units or organisations. The only private organisation is noted in CZ3⁷⁸; while we see the operation of professional studies in the form of NL3 and DE3, or partnership with a sector wide organisation in the case of NL2. The UK cases could be seen as more traditional first cycle courses and programmes.

Having provided a general overview, we will now attempt to apply a typology of the Case studies in relation to issues of pedagogy and will draw upon notions of how far the cases can be classified as Associational/Empiricist; Cognitive or Situated which are defined in more detail in Section 1. However, as we will report, these classifications are not always mutually exclusive, and that some while some cases can in general be located in one of the three approaches, for some cases elements of more than one can be identified.

Table 2: Pedagogical approaches				
ID	Outcome/award	Associationist/ Empiricist	Cognitive	Situated
CZ 1	Legal accreditation and certificate	Knowledge/theory transmission	Some use of games	Elements of problem based learning
CZ 2	CPD ECTS rated	Knowledge/theory transmission		
CZ 3	Legal accreditation and certificate			Dominant method
DE 1	Masters level	Knowledge/theory transmission		Project and problem elements
DE 2	Masters		Interactive and supportive learning dominant	
DE 3	Masters		Interactive and supportive learning dominant	Elements of PBL
HU 1	Certificate of Competence (Accredited)		Simulation based	Practice oriented
HU 2	PG Certificate	Competence and focused		Program and practice

⁷⁸ IT3 operates as a non-state funded university

Table 2: Pedagogical approaches				
ID	Outcome/award	Associationist/ Empiricist	Cognitive	Situated
		objective elements		elements
HU 3	PG Diploma	Knowledge/theory transmission		Practice and problem elements
IT 1	Certificates?		Learning to learn	Collaborative and problem elements
IT 2	Masters	Knowledge/theory transmission		Problem-based and collaborative
IT 3	Masters	Knowledge/ theory transmission		Practice, problems and placements
NL 1	CPD Non-formal certificate	Knowledge/ theory transmission dominant	Discussions	Collaboration through exchange of expertise
NL 2	CPD No certificate	Dissemination of scientific knowledge	Active and experiential learning	Community of practice dominant
NL 3	Professional Masters ECTS rated	Knowledge/ theory transmission	Active learning and reflection dominant	Practice-based learning
ES 1	Own Master Certificate (2 years)	Some elements	Interactive and supportive learning dominant	Project & problem based; collaborative, placements
ES 2a*	Own Specialist Certificate	Knowledge/ transmission theory	Interactive and supportive learning dominant	Learning through practical examples; possibility to create learning communities;
ES 2b*	Own Masters Certificate		Interactive and supportive learning	Project based, Learning through practice;
ES 2c*	Own Specialist certificate	Knowledge/ transmission theory	Interactive and supportive learning dominant	Learning through practical examples; problem based; possibility to create learning communities; possibility for self directed learning
ES 3	Own Masters Certificate		Interactive and supportive learning	Collaborative and practice/problem elements/ Cognitive apprenticeship

Table 2: Pedagogical approaches				
ID	Outcome/award	Associationist/ Empiricist	Cognitive	Situated
UK 1	Bachelors level + Professional Accreditation		Learning to learn and scaffolding	Collaborative and practice/problem based placements
UK 2#	Bachelors level (Professional Accreditation if relevant)	Knowledge/transmission theory		Collaborative and practice/problem elements
UK 3#	Bachelors level (Professional Accreditation if relevant)		Interactive and supportive learning dominant	

* ES 2 examines three programmes each with a different dominant approach:
ES2a Photovoltaic Energy; ES2b Car design; ES2c European Financial Advisor
Programmes examined included some with professional recognition
CPD = Continuous Professional Development
PG = Post-Graduate (Generally Second Cycle)

As can be seen, few of the case studies rely on the Empiricist approach with most utilising a combination of approaches often for specific purposes. Those who tended to have a dominant Cognitive approach were often distance learning where the development of interactive materials, the use of discussion and of learning to learn was dominant although this was not exclusive to distance learning. On the other hand, those with a more professional or practical orientation tended to be dominated by a Situated approach. There were also cases (IT3; HU3) where the first half of the course could best be described as Empiricist; while the second half of the course was dominated by a situated approach to apply theory and knowledge to solve problems or to improve practice.

Overall however in the case studies, there was little evidence of teaching and learning specifically developed or designed to accommodate older adults who may or may not have had recent academic or educational experiences. The closest thing might be IT2, where the emphasis is on learning to learn, and providing soft transferable skills to empower learners to make informed choices about future career or labour market activity although it could also be argued that the *raison d'être* of UK3 when it was created was to provide opportunities for working adults to gain higher education qualifications. For some of the cases (DE2 and DE3) online delivery required material to be adapted and teaching approaches to be more supportive, interactive and collaborative in general. The three UK cases while not directly changing teaching style to accommodate older learners; all have in place systems to support learners to

adapt to the requirements of academic study. Both UK2 and UK3 and also NL3 allocate a personal adviser or tutor to all students who offer pastoral and academic support to provide them with the required skills and competences to succeed in higher education. Moreover, these cases also offer guidance, support and information at all stages of the learner journey (pre-entry, on-going and post study).

A further consideration in relation to teaching is the recruitment and selection of lecturing staff. Having already noted some of the similarities and differences across THEMP case countries in relation to the extent and degree of collaboration with external partners or stakeholders; and how this is often reflected in the mix of academic and professional or practical elements. It is not surprising that in a number of cases teaching is shared between those with an academic background and employed directly by the institution on academic contracts; and those with a professional or practice background or specific relevant expertise.

In some cases, this may take the form of guest lectures, seminars or workshops (for example: CZ2; DE1; HU2). In other cases, external or professional staff play a considerable role (for example: CZ1; CZ3; ES2; ES3) in the delivery of the programme. Moreover, in at least a couple of cases, external staff were responsible for at least 50% if not more of teaching input. In the case of HU2, there was a 50/50 split between academics and HR professional employed by the private sector partner, while in the case of IT3, external staff made up the majority and often these were international academics or professionals recruited through a competitive process.⁷⁹

In the case of NL1, the increased input of professional (60-70%) versus academic (30-40%) staff was the result of a conscious decision to deliver a more professionally oriented programme. In ES1, where a similar academic/professional balance operates, the course organisers believe this professional focus is seen as a key to its success in attracting participants. In addition, lecturers are usually selected by the director and the coordinator based on their CV and a personal interview. Selection of academic and practical staff by the course director also operates in ES2.

In some cases outsourcing was a major element due to the requirements of the course in relation the amount of specialised or expert input the course utilised. In IT1 for example both University Professors and professionals from the private sector are used depending on the content of the learning modules. For example, Occupational Psychologists are responsible for content related to change management, motivation and skills balance; Communication specialists teach subjects related to information seeking and new media; and Sociologists and Jurists deal with matters related to labour market and workers' rights. Many teachers have previous experience in the

⁷⁹ A competitive recruitment process also operated in relation to IT1.

University, where they have worked as lecturers or collaborators in research projects. The selection of staff and the balance of professional and academic staff dependent upon course requirements can also be seen in ES3 although the majority of the delivery is by academic staff (75%).

There are cases which are more specific in relation to inputs and are to some extent directly related to the programme focus. The first concerns HU1 where the outcome is the attainment of specific competences in relation to technologically sophisticated and advanced agricultural equipment. In this case, while academics deliver much of the programme, it is designed and developed by representatives of the manufacture and their agents who also supply the required simulation software. A second is that of NL3 where the specific requirements advanced training of police officers requires a mix of those with academic backgrounds and those with backgrounds in police practice. In addition, experts in specific areas related to law enforcement will also be involved in the delivery of specific lectures or workshops. In relation to UK1, while academics deliver much of the programme, external professionals are involved in the supervision and assessment of the required placements which students must undertake in relevant organisations. This practical element is an important factor in the accreditation of the programme by the relevant professional regulatory body.

What might be termed a more distributed model of teaching supply can be observed in ES2. The Financial Advisors programme involves 7 academics and 3 external professionals. The academic lecturers have the responsibility to develop the programme contents, prepare the tests and introduce improvements based on the evaluation of the students. However, they have no direct relation with the students, who are managed by the 3 externals and one academic staff, an associated professor. Finally, there are a number of cases (DE2; DE3; UK2; UK3) where the programmes are embedded in university provision and the responsibility of traditional academic staff based in the department or academic unit responsible for the programme.

Perhaps disappointingly, only a small number of the cases noted specific training in teaching and learning for university lecturers⁸⁰ and in very few cases (e.g. DE1; UK3) did this have an emphasis on adult education. In others, (e.g. UK2) lecturers either self-selected to teach on the part-time degree programmes or in the case of DE1 were specifically selected on the basis of their experience in teaching adults; while in the case of UK3, frontline academic contacts were subject to intensive training for their role as Associate Tutors. Teaching staff in ES2, ES3 also act as mentors, tutors or provide other forms of support. In NL3 the tasks of providing scientific

⁸⁰ In the UK, in general all new academic staff are required to undertake a Teaching in HE post-graduate qualification unless already in possession of such.

input, teaching subjects, mentoring students and supervision of students in professional practice are to a large degree divided among different staff members. In other cases (e.g. DE3, IT1), while there may not have been any formal training to teach adult, academic staff often had considerable teaching experience.

When we look at outcomes, the majority were at post-graduate level and as will be shown, many required at least a 1st cycle and in some cases a 2nd cycle qualification for entry. As might be expected, those with a focus on practice usually conferred some form of CPD or in the case of CZ1; CZ3; HU1; UK1 (and to some extent UK2 & UK3) professional accreditation to practice. The UK cases were the only ones to offer adults programmes resulting in a 1st cycle Bachelor degree; said to be crucial in creating the pool of quality workers that Europe 2020 suggest is required in the knowledge economy.

We now turn to issues of organisation. As noted above, it has been suggested that increased flexibility is an important factor in allowing adult learners to access learning opportunities; a number of examples were provided in Section 3 of what that flexibility might look like in practice. With this in mind we were concerned with questions of mode, delivery, duration and time commitment. For example is the course delivered face-to-face, by distance or is it a mix of the two in a blended mode; and, is it full- or part-time. We also look at entry requirements in terms of level and whether there are restrictions based on having relevant experience or specific employment/professional roles. As Table 3 reports we are also interested in duration, in terms of hours, days or months; and modes of participation in terms of day, evening, weekend. Obviously, in the case of online programmes the inherent flexibility tends to allow students a choice of when to study. Table 3 also reports on the focus or target of the programme and whether this is generic or specific in terms of profession or career outcomes; and, who was responsible for the development of the programme. Finally, Table 3 reports on funding in terms of costs to the students and if there is employer or other support.

Table 3:
Organisational elements of case studies

ID	Mode§	Duration	Entry requirements/ openness	Flexibility	Specific/ generic orientation	Rationale - development	Cost to student
CZ 1	F2F; PT	250 hours	1 st cycle Restricted	2 days per month	Specific	Legislative change	€520 (employer support)
CZ 2	F2F; PT	92 hours	2 nd cycle and restricted access	day	Specific	Collaboration	free

Table 3:
Organisational elements of case studies

ID	Mode§	Duration	Entry requirements/ openness	Flexibility	Specific/ generic orientation	Rationale - development	Cost to student
CZ 3	F2F; PT	160 hours	1 st cycle and relevant experience	weekend	Specific	Legislative change	€380
DE 1	F2F; PT	12 month	Professional or vocational education plus relevant experience	day	Specific	Collaboration	free
DE 2	D; PT	Bounded flexibility	1 st cycle and selective	flexible	Specific	Collaboration	€???
DE 3	B; PT	Flexible credit related	1 st cycle minimum	Flexible/day	Specific	Collaboration	€???
HU 1	F2F; PT	5 days	Restricted relevant employment	day	Specific	Collaboration but demand led	None (employer)
HU 2	F2F; FT?	12 month	1 st cycle	day	Specific	University led?	€570
HU 3	F2F; PT?	12 month	1 st cycle	day	Specific	University/ private partnership	€1200
IT 1	F2F; PT?	48 hours	open	day?	Generic	Collaborative	free
IT 2	F2F; PT?	24 months	2 nd cycle required	flexible	Specific	Collaborative	free
IT 3	F2F; FT?	24 months	2 nd cycle required	6 day blocks	Specific	Collaborative	€7500
NL 1	F2F; PT	10 days over one semester	2 nd cycle relevant experience	2 day blocks	Specific	Profession led	€4550 (employer support)
NL 2	B; PT	Continuous programme	Professional experience	day	Specific	Sector led	€400 (employer support)
NL 3	F2F; PT	24 month	1 st cycle and Restricted	Day	Specific	Profession led	Free (employer pays costs and salary)
ES 1	F2F; PT	24 month	1 st cycle	2 day blocks	Specific	Academic led Cooperation with companies	€6000, some employer support

Table 3: Organisational elements of case studies							
ID	Mode§	Duration	Entry requirements/ openness	Flexibility	Specific/ generic orientation	Rationale - development	Cost to student
ES 2a*	Online option session + F2F	6-12 month	Professional Experience or HE-certificate	flexible	Specific options	Academic led Cooperation with companies	€1400
ES 2b*	F2F	12 month	HE-certificate	Evening days/week	Specific	Academic led Cooperation with companies	€7.800
ES 2c*	blended	12 month	Professional Experience	Flexible + 1 day per week	Specific	Academic led Cooperation with companies	€2.700
ES 3	Blended	12 month?	Professional Experience or HE-certificate + interview	Flexible/ day	Specific	Academic led Cooperation with companies	€4000 some aid available
UK 1	F2F; FT	36 months	None but relevant practice required	Day	Specific	Collaboration between School and regulatory body	free□
UK 2#	F2F/B/D; FT/PT	36/48 months	Access generally unrestricted	- Day, Evening, Weekend	Specific although more generic options available	University led but accredited degrees in collaboration with stakeholders	free□
UK 3#	D: PT/FT	Flexible but not less than 36 months	None/ unrestricted	Total flexibility	Specific although more generic options available	University led but accredited degrees in collaboration with stakeholders	free□

* ES 2 examines three programmes each with a different dominant approach
Programmes examined included some with professional recognition
§ F2F = face-to-face; B = blended; D = distance; FT = full-time; PT = part-time
□ Scottish and EU students pay no fees but see Section 4 for complexity of UK student funding.

What is apparent is the diversity in provision represented by the case studies. We can see a mix of delivery modes with F2F in the majority. Distance courses are relatively rare among the selected programmes, although a number feature a blended learning approach with the balance or proportion between F2F and online varying case by case. In terms of commitment and often reflecting that participants are in employment, a number of courses are classified as part-time with attendance either on a one of two day basis spread over a set period of time. The majority

however demand more intensive participation with some requiring a commitment over a considerable period of time (1 – 3 years) in relation to for example: all the German cases; HU2 and HU3; IT2 and IT3; NL3; all the Spanish cases and all the UK cases.

Having already noted the preponderance of provision at post-graduate level it is not surprising that this is reflected in the entry requirements noted above. Not only do a number of cases require 1st cycle qualifications, some require 2nd cycle qualifications and in addition, may be restricted to employees or professionals from specific sectors or areas of practice and/or with existing experience of the field. In respect of the UK, UK1 has no academic entry requirements but is only open to those already with a specified amount of experience in the relevant sector; while for UK2 adults who may not meet academic requirements can be accepted on the basis of APEL or RPL or on completion of an introductory or preparatory course. UK3 is the only case offering true open access for entry to 1st cycle programmes for adults.

It has been suggested that APEL/APL can play a major role in providing access to higher education for adults with experience and knowledge but lacking traditional and/or formal qualifications. Indeed, since the 1990s the EU has stressed the importance and attempted to promote its development not only at a national level but through an integrated and regulated approach at the level of the EU. Merrill and Hill (2003) provide an overview of this history and noted that:

APEL processes could contribute towards the need, manifested by globalised capitalism, for a mobile workforce within Europe as the European Union moves towards economic union. While recognising that there is currently some employment mobility occurring the implementation of APEL for this purpose would enable more people to take up the opportunity. Higher education institutions would play a central role in this process. APEL, through a portfolio or a demonstration of skills and knowledge for accreditation would enable employers to assess the employability of potential workers from another European country, dependent upon an individual's fluency of the appropriate language. The APEL process could be a joint scheme involving higher education institutions and employers. In reality employment mobility within Europe is likely to be more attractive to younger adults and/or those without family ties as they are less likely to be tied geographically to a particular locality. Refugees, particularly the skilled and professionals may also be a group for whom APEL would be a benefit. A more fluid system in relation to employment would also help to erode national boundaries within the European Union. (Ibid. p66)

However, as we have outlined earlier for the UK in reality, while there may in theory be the possibility to gain accreditation or recognition of prior learning or prior experience, its use varies not only across and within member states but within institutions only certain programmes may allow recognition of prior credit or experiential learning. A similar lack of action is apparent across the THEMP member states. In Italy and Germany, although legislation on prior learning exists, it is not widespread practice among universities; in the Netherlands, it appears that in general only the Open University has procedures to facilitate APL; while in other countries, for example, Spain, the Czech Republic and Hungary development of systems for the recognition of prior learning are at an early stage although in all case legislation has been passed and the importance of prior learning in improving access to higher education recognised.

The focus of the majority of the programmes is on a specific area, sector or profession with the most obvious example of this being perhaps the Police Academy of NL3; although all the accredited programmes presuppose entry to or progression within a specified field or profession. This is also perhaps reflected in the underlying drivers of the development of programmes with a number created in collaboration with sectoral or professional organisations and/or regulatory bodies or in the case of HU3 a joint operation between the university and a private sector HR organisation. Others are as a result of government legislation as in CZ1 and CZ3; or of collaboration with local enterprise organisations in the case of IT1.

The final category in Table 3 relates to the cost of the course and how much is the responsibility of the individual student as research has shown that costs are a major barrier to adults seeking to access higher education. There is considerable diversity in the range of costs of the case programmes varying from free, through hundreds of Euros to the most expensive costing over €7500. It should be noted though that a number of courses which are classified as CPD often attract some form of employer support.

The final area of interest in this section relates to the role of evaluation and assessment of the case studies.

The three UK cases are all firmly embedded and integrated into their respective universities and as such are subject to the same quality assurance and academic standards in relation to regulations on assessment as any other degree. They are also subject to internal evaluation procedures which include student feedback at course and modular level as part of university regulations and externally through the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA); and for accredited programmes by the relevant professional regulatory body. They all operate a system of student representation at course level. A similar system of academic regulation and evaluation also applies in DE2; NL3; ES1

Formal and detailed systems of feedback and evaluation were incorporated in number of other cases (DE1; DE3; IT1; IT2; IT3; ES2; ES3) and critical issues raised through this process are subject to action. In addition, in DE1 and NL3 alumni feedback provides evidence of the effectiveness of the programme in real life settings; while in IT1 and IT2 longer term evaluation of the impact is also collected. In HU3, a complex system of evaluation was operated jointly by the university and its private sector partner which included a mentor to facilitate feedback between students and programme representatives.

For some cases in which accreditation plays a role in terms of outputs, regulation may well be in part collaborative and include both academic and professional standards in terms of skills and competences achieved (NL3 and the UK cases are examples). For others, evaluation as in CZ1 and HU1 is internal and non-standardised; while in CZ2 it was external and feedback considered in revisions to the design of the programme; and perhaps surprisingly there was no official evaluation of CZ3 although informal feedback was sometimes offered by participants. In the case of HU2, evaluation took the form of constant market research and discussions with key stakeholders and experts to provide on-going feedback to programme design. Finally, due to the nature of the programme NL2, which is the result of mutual negotiations and planning and subject to change to meet the needs of participants and their organizations; it could be argued that informally the programme is under constant evaluation.

Summary

The case studies outlined briefly above illustrate a range of provision serving a variety of target groups often focused on a specific career direction. This is reflected in the number which either provides participants with CPD for employment or accredits practice in professional areas. It could also be argued that this accounts for the number of courses which adopt at least in part a *Situated* teaching approach with an emphasis on problem solving, project work and collaborative learning.

We also noted a range of flexible practices being adopted which as noted earlier are seen as important in creating opportunities for adult and the employed to access higher education qualifications. Even in courses where face-to-face teaching was the main method of delivery, many utilised VLEs (Virtual Learning Environments) to provide students with a degree of flexibility in accessing materials and taking part in discussion forums. Only a few of the cases actively used APEL and RPL to allow those with relevant experience to gain credit which could then be used in lieu of formal entry qualifications.

However, if we look for evidence of provision specifically focused on attracting mid-life adults (those over 45 years) we find that while many of the courses often attracted those fitting that criteria in substantial numbers, this was often more likely to be related to the fact that many of the course either required 1st or 2nd cycle qualifications; or experience in a specific profession or role and thus were unlikely to be an option for young students. Moreover, if we recall the aims of Europe 2020 and the need to increase the number of adults with 1st cycle qualifications in order that member states would be able to compete in the *knowledge economy* and global forces only the UK cases seem to provide such opportunities. In part, this is perhaps related to the long historical tradition of adult education in the UK which is perhaps not mirrored elsewhere. It is also suggested that higher education funding systems also play a part in the provision offered at both sectoral and institutional levels although given the present economic crisis, it is uncertain whether funding for adult education will be seen as a priority in the coming years.

A further factor in the provision and opportunities for adult learners to access 1st cycle higher education in cases UK2 and UK 3 is the degree of flexibility they offer in terms of entry routes, timing and pace of learning allowing adults to gain SCQF credits and progress at their own pace and maintain work and family commitments. However, in order to negotiate such flexible systems learners require sophisticated support and guidance systems and a considerable amount of time and money has been invested by both UK2 and UK 3 in the development of systems and structures to provide information guidance and support at all stages of the learner's journey. They have also invested heavily in the training of specialised support personnel who themselves have 1st cycle and often 2nd cycle qualifications and each student is allocated a named advisor or tutor.

Finally we must recognise that in the current crisis; with cuts in many member states to budgets for health education and welfare, it is unlikely that adult education will escape unscathed.

6. Future challenges for TLL in HE in Europe

It has long been recognised that Europe is facing a number of socio-economic and demographic challenges. Increasing globalisation, rapid technological change and ageing population and the demands of a more knowledge- and skills-intensive European labour market, have resulted in the need to provide adults with opportunities to increase their skill levels in order to meet these challenges (European Commission, 2010).

It has been suggested by some that one way to meet these challenges is to widen participation in higher education (HE) among adults. This is an area in which the European Commission has a long standing interest. The 1991 Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community called on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to support an increasing knowledge driven economy and society through widening access to higher qualifications and to create opportunities for updating and renewal of qualifications, increase preparatory courses and also to do more to recognise prior learning and experience.⁸¹

Very recent, persistent, turbulent and fluctuating conditions in global markets of competitiveness and an extremely low rate of growth in EU regions provides a sharpened and more urgent need to ensure: that universities, as major sources of highly skilled, knowledge intensive human capital, embrace the modernisation agenda; that Europe continues on its trajectory towards becoming *one of the most competitive knowledge economies in the world*; and to ensure this occurs, current and future generations of adults are provided with opportunities to expand, deepen and modernise their skills in environments where they can successfully do so.⁸²

As noted briefly earlier in Section 1, the use of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) has recently come to the fore in policy debates around the role of higher education in meeting the challenges of the knowledge economy. The communication *Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems* is clear in what technology can bring to higher education, namely in providing learners with a much higher degree of flexibility that in turn can improve the relevance of their received education. The communication prompts member states and higher education institutions to “better exploit the potential of ICTs to enable more effective and personalised learning experiences, teaching and research methods (eg. eLearning and blended learning) and increase the use of virtual learning platforms” (EC 2011d: 6).

⁸¹http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/2011/higher_en.pdf

⁸²<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7311&langId=en>

This emphasis has been reiterated by the Commission in two subsequent communication ‘Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes’ (2012) and ‘European higher education in the world’ (2013). The former encourages higher education stakeholders to explore “new ways of learning, characterised by personalisation, engagement, use of digital media, collaboration” (EC 2012: 9) that, although emerging, have not yet been systematically exploited. The latter, along similar lines, states that “Europe must take the lead in the global efforts to exploit the potential of digital education - including the availability of ICT, the use of OER and the provision of MOOCs - and to overcome the systemic obstacles that still exist in quality assurance, student assessment and recognition, as well as funding” (EC 2013: 7).

Finally, the ‘Opening Up Education’ Initiative launched by the European Commission in September 2013 provides a further push in the direction of exploiting ICT in the education sector. This seeks to mobilise and popularise communities of practice using new technologies in education at all levels, from kindergarten to higher education. This also reinforces the connection to the Digital Agenda for Europe, one of the Flagship Initiatives of Europe2020. A critical part of the Digital Agenda includes the mainstreaming of e-learning at all levels of education, and in particular, encouraging policy-makers to shape more actively new learning technology adoption.

However, in the UK as elsewhere in the EU a neo-liberal agenda has emerged which promises nothing but austerity in order to address the results of the global financial crisis. In a period of increasing inequality and decreasing living standards for many of those groups and individuals mentioned in the EU communiques cited above, the expected positions in the public and third sector that might have been expected are disappearing and the private sector shows little sign so far of providing the impetus for growth that EU Finance Ministers repeatedly state.

In the UK at least, job creation has been concentrated at the lower end of the labour market. According to *The UK's low pay recovery* (TUC, 2013) 77% of net job creation since 2010 has been in low paid industries, although the low paid⁸³ sector accounts for less than a quarter of total employment. Moreover, while 23% of net new jobs were in the high paid sector, there were no new jobs created in the middle paid sector of the economy which accounts for almost 75% of overall employment. Given the size of the middle paid sector, it is likely that it contains a large number of graduate level and graduate entry level jobs; precisely the type of jobs that participants in the case study programmes will hope to enter. Moreover, a number of programmes in the case studies produced graduates and professionals for the public sector which according to *The Public Sector in Crisis* (ETUI, 2010a) is suffering budgets cuts resulting

⁸³ The TUC defined low pay as gross hourly pay below the 25th percentile

in cuts to services and related employment; casting further doubt on the employment prospects of graduates and professionals in health, welfare and education.

Finally, however, critics of the knowledge economy more generally have suggested that one of its seeming truisms, that it would lead to a large rise in demand for graduates and associated with this the idea of more learning automatically translating into more earning is no longer as tenable as it once seemed.⁸⁴ They question the notions underpinning both the Leitch review in the UK⁸⁵ and Europe 2020⁸⁶ and critique both Human Capital and Skill Bias theories⁸⁷ and suggest that we need to rethink our assumptions about the relationship between education and employment in an increasingly global graduate labour market.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Lauder,, H. et al (eds) (2012) *Educating for the Knowledge Economy? Critical Perspectives*, London: Routledge.

⁸⁵ http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/leitch_review_index.htm

⁸⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

⁸⁷ The Global Auction, Skill Bias Theory and Graduate Incomes: Reflections on Methodology Hugh Lauder, Phillip Brown and Gerbrand Tholen Ch3 in Lauder,, H. et al (eds) (2012) *Educating for the Knowledge Economy? Critical Perspectives*, London: Routledge.

⁸⁸ Brown, P. Lauder, H. and Ashton, D. (2011) *The Global Auction: The Broken Promises of Education, Jobs, and Incomes* , Oxford: OUP.

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8. Annex 1: Interview schedules extracts relevant to pedagogy and teaching and learning issues.

Lecturer's schedule:

Programme design and content

- What is the subject of the programme and what are the goals. To what extent does the programme respond to the needs of the learners, or the needs of the employers, or other beneficiaries/stakeholder?
-
- What kind of activities informs the teaching and learning process?
 - Probe
 - Is the programme oriented to use the work situation of the students in the learning process?
 - Is the programme oriented to have an impact on the work performance or the labour situation of the student?
 - In what way, if any, does the programme tune into professional practices of the participants, or of their professional peers in their home organisations, or of their organisations as such.
 - does it allow individual learning paths
 - Does it open ways of self directed and self regulated learning?
 - What methods are being used within the programme?
 - *Do these methods promote or evoke receptive learning, or do they stimulate the active involvement of the learners? Are there significant difference in the methods used for adult learners (lifelong learning programmes) and traditional students (initial programmes)?*
 - In what ways do you think that this programmes has been beneficial for the students?⁸⁹
 - Probe
 - Professional Learning:**
 - Technical knowledge, competences and skills
 - Provided additional qualifications
 - General Learning:**
 - self-confidence
 - self-esteem
 - changes in aspirations and motivations
 - *engagement in organisational/social/community/political activities*

⁸⁹ Also contained in revised form in Learner's schedule

Learner's schedule

- Have the lecturers/trainers – trainers fulfilled your expectations, in general terms?
- Do the lecturers/trainers use methods of instruction designed to gain your active participation in learning or is it more of a passive learning experience? If so could you describe?
- In what ways do lecturers provide guidance, mentoring or other support in relation to your work/learning interactions and is this formal or informal?
-
- How do expectations of the TLL and real experience differ?

Probe of detail

- Content
- Workload including exams and assessment
- Teaching and learning methods
- Practical orientation
- working independently/in group
- Attendance requirements
- Student/teachers relationship
- Student – student relations
- Use of the electronic means

9. Annex 2: Extracts from questionnaire relating to teaching and learning.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- II.3. How much has your lifelong learning programme enabled you to develop different skills and abilities?

This time, put a cross in the one box beside each capability that indicates how much you feel you have developed as a result of your studies. If there is some other capability that your studies have helped you to develop, please include it at the end of the list.

	Not at all	Not Much	Fairly	A great deal
• Ability to analyse numerical data				
• Ability to apply knowledge				
• Ability to work in teams				
• Computer literacy				
• Critical analysis				
• Evaluation skills				
• Interpersonal skills				
• Leadership skills				
• Oral presentation skills				
• Self-discipline				
• Self-reliance				
• Time management				
• Writing skills				
• A real expertise in my subject				
• Technical skills related to my profession				
• Practical skills related to my profession				
• Other capabilities (please specify)				

II.4. What have you learnt from your studies in the programme?

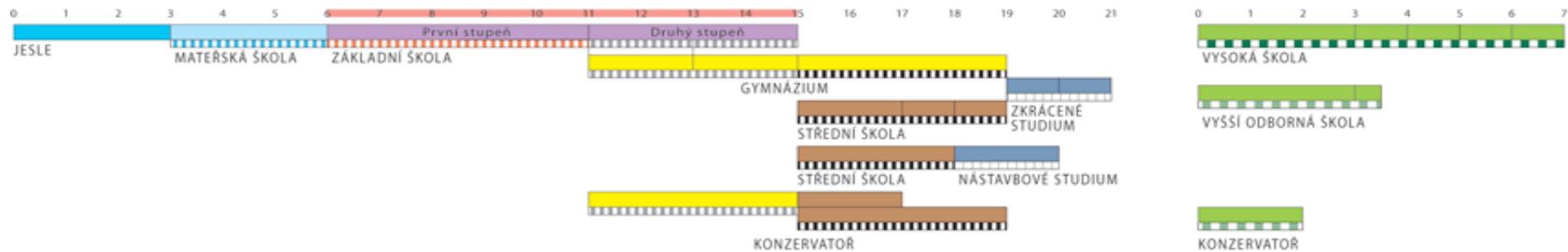
The following are list or item ‘descriptors’ concerning the intended outcomes of lifelong learning programmes in different subject areas. Put a cross in one of the two boxes <No> or <Yes> beside each outcome to indicate whether you feel that you have learnt this from your studies.

If you accidentally choose two boxes for any statement or leave a box blank, it will be difficult to use any of your responses, so please check that for each statement there is a single clear response. If there was something else that you expected to get out of higher education, please include it at the end of the list.

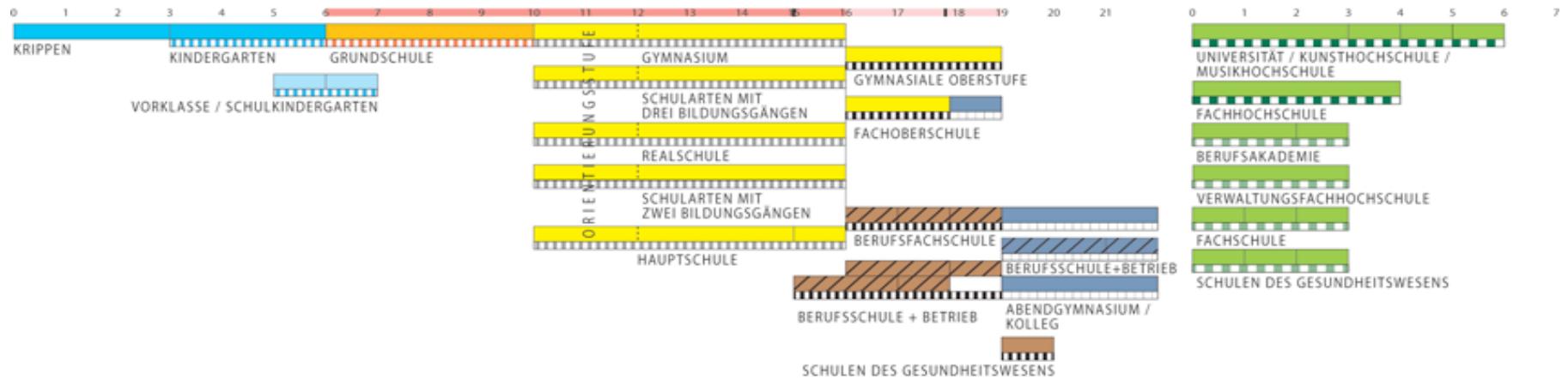
	Yes	No
• A systematic understanding of key aspects of my (new) professional area		
• The ability to deploy established techniques of analysis and enquiry at work		
• The ability to sustain arguments and solve problems using up-to-date ideas and techniques from my (new) professional area		
• An appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge		
• The ability to manage my own learning and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources		
• The capacity to communicate information and ideas, problems and solutions		
• The capacity to exercise initiative and personal responsibility		
• The ability to cite evidence and make judgements about its merits		
• The ability to contrast points of view		
• The awareness of social diversity		
• The ability to recognise the ethical dimensions of research and advances in knowledge		
• A view of my professional area which is predominantly guided by the lecturer		
• A wide knowledge and understanding of a broad range of professional areas and the detailed relationships between these, and their application and importance		
• A view of my professional area which is influenced by a variety of learning sources including the lecturer, fellow students and independent study		
• Self-awareness and a capability to operate effectively in a variety of team roles including leadership		
• The ability to access information from a variety of sources and to communicate the outcomes both orally and in writing		
• The ability to plan, execute and present an independent piece of work (e.g. a project) within a supported framework in which qualities such as time management, problem solving as well as interpretation and critical awareness are evident		
• An understanding of ethical issues and the impact on society of advances in knowledge		
• The ability to record data accurately, and to carry out basic manipulation and interpretation of data		
Effective strategies for updating, maintaining and enhancing my knowledge		
• Others (please specify)		

10. Annex 3: Education systems of selected countries.

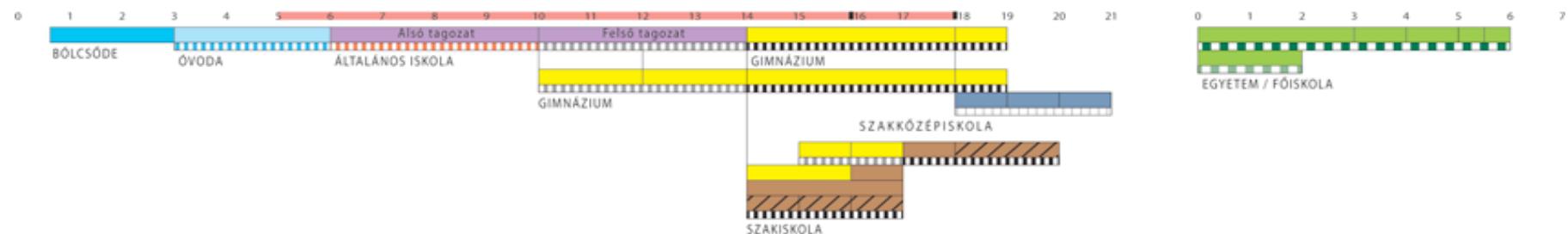
Czech Republic (CZ)



Germany (DE)



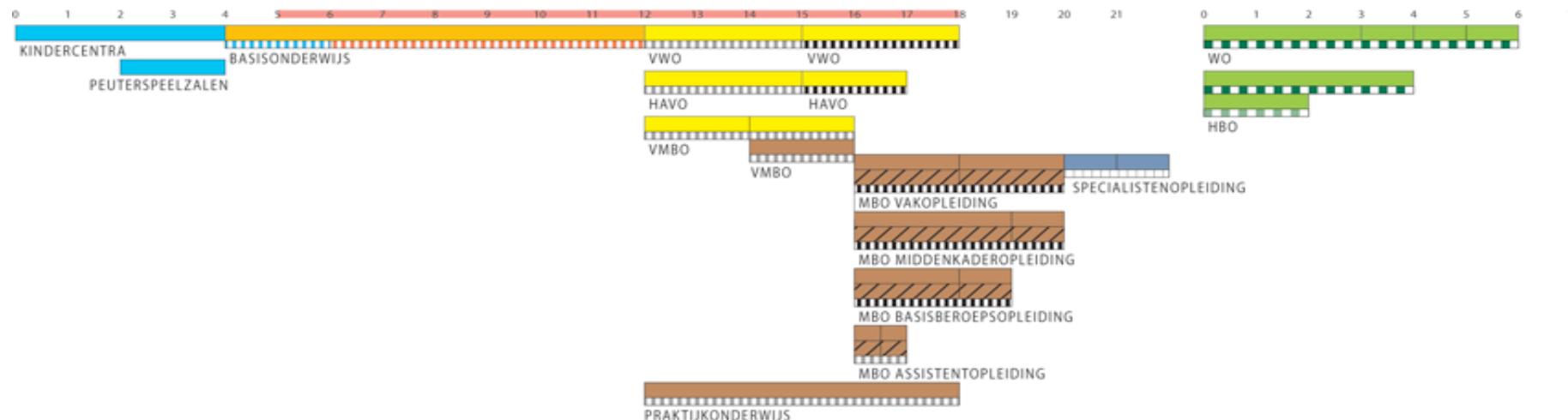
Hungary (HU)



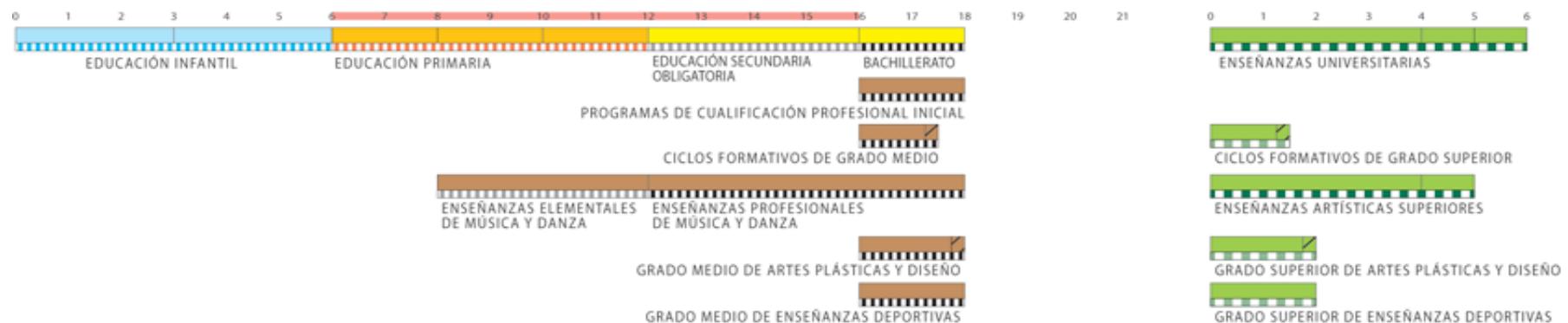
Italy (IT)



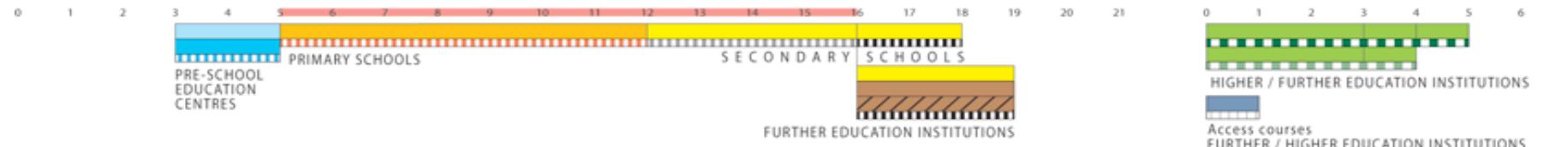
Netherlands (NL)



Spain (ES)



United Kingdom – Scotland (UK)



Main challenges of the ageing knowledge economy are constant upgrading of the skills of the active population and mitigating new and old social risks. In the aging society and the globalised knowledge economy, the people in mid-life are increasingly exposed to social risks of exclusion from the labour market. They are also excluded from formal Lifelong Learning (LLL), specifically Tertiary Lifelong Learning (TLL). The access of mid-life learners to TLL and their retention in the system have an increasing relevance for the socio-economic sustainability of the ageing European knowledge society. TLL is considered a key to develop more inclusive and responsive universities. Opening HE for mid-life learners, designing flexible pathways from VET and professional experience to higher education, flexible learning arrangements conciliating family-work life and learning and the adaptation of didactical methods in HE are challenges to affront problems of the aging knowledge society. Opening Higher Education (HE) to this group is still a minor aspect of education and training reforms, but it is a strategic goal to raise the skill level of the adult EU population, as well as closing the mismatch between supply and demand for high-skilled workers.

The project THEMP aims to study the TLL of HE institutes in several countries with respect to inclusion of mid-life learners. At the core stands a comparative study with concrete example analysing statistically available data, making series of interviews with decision makers, stakeholders, lecturers and mid-life learners. The study will analyse the efficiency of TLL programs in achieving the integration of mid-life learners in terms of access to and retention in programs, their duration, the creation of learning pathways and didactical innovation. The results of this study will allow advances in the design of core conditions of socially and economically effective TLL programs for mid-life learners. The project will use a combination of social research and active participation of the university under scrutiny facilitating mutual learning between HE-decision-makers, stakeholders, practitioners and learners.

For the social research, the project uses an innovative combination of Transitional Labour Market approach to define and measure situation of social risks; and the Capability and Capital approach to operationalize employability and well-being. It will provide differentiated tools to analyse TLL programs and their integration in the general higher education systems based on adequate definitions of efficiency and quality to evaluate the inclusion of mid-life learners. It will also analyse the regulation of the TLL system, not only with respect to labour markets and society, but also its internal regulation in terms of access, learning pathways, certifications, recognition of prior learning and funding. Special attention will be paid to the relation to the Bologna three-cycle system and the ECTS. Another area of analysis will be the analysis of didactical innovation in the TLL programs to assure the retention of non-traditional students in the TLL-system.