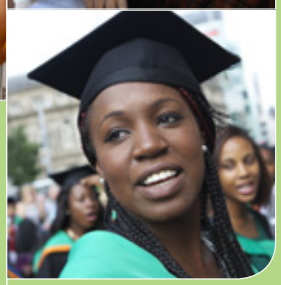

# The Role of Higher Education in Promoting Lifelong Learning

Edited by
Jin Yang, Chripa Schneller and Stephen Roche

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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# FOREWORD

The idea for this publication emerged from a seminar held in 2012, in collaboration with the University of Hamburg, to mark the 60th anniversary of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Entitled The Role of Universities in Promoting Lifelong Learning, this seminar brought together scholars and education practitioners to discuss ways of expanding higher education to facilitate lifelong learning in a variety of geographic and socio-economic contexts. The specific objectives of the seminar were to exchange experiences of teaching and learning, to explore opportunities for collaborative research to inform national and regional policies, and to discuss ways to develop the capacities of policy-makers and practitioners to promote lifelong learning. The seminar covered a wide range of topics, including adult education, validation of prior learning, Third Age learning, access to higher education, teacher training and ethics in education.

Some of the chapters in this book were written by speakers at the 2012 seminar, while others were solicited subsequently. Together, they address various ways that higher education can promote lifelong learning, paying due consideration to regional disparities and specificities. These include responses to the learning needs of senior citizens in China, the challenge of implementing recurrent education in Japan, European efforts to develop a common approach to lifelong learning at university, and how a lifelong learning approach is transforming higher education in Australia.

We hope that this book will help the reader gain a better understanding of the theoretical frameworks and practical implementation of lifelong learning in higher education, both within their own regional context and globally.

Arne Carlsen
*Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning*

# INTRODUCTION

*Jin Yang, Chripa Schneller and Stephen Roche*

UNESCO's vision of lifelong learning encompasses all *contexts* (formal, non-formal and informal) and *ages* ('from cradle to grave') of learning. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and its predecessor, the UNESCO Institute for Education, have promoted policy and practice in this field for more than four decades. The decision to produce this volume was prompted by an observation that lifelong learning – both as a concept and in its many practical manifestations – is becoming a staple of education policy discourse around the globe. At the same time, we noted that understandings of lifelong learning differ widely, not only between countries, but also across the sub-sectors of education systems.

The human population of the world is not only larger, but also older than it has ever been. Moreover, the proportion of older adults is still rising. These people have much to contribute to the development of society. Therefore, it is important that they have the opportunity to learn on equal terms with the young, and in age-appropriate ways. Their skills and abilities need to be recognized, valued and utilized.

There is no doubt that universities have a vital role to play in promoting lifelong learning, and in recent decades the international education community has discussed the implications of lifelong learning for higher education. In 1997, the *Agenda for the Future* adopted by the 5th International Conference on Adult Education called for institutions of formal education, from primary to tertiary level, to open their doors to adult learners, both women and men, adapting their programmes and learning conditions to meet their needs. It was stated that they should do this by six principal means:

1. Developing coherent mechanisms to recognize the outcomes of learning undertaken in different contexts and to ensure that credit is transferable within and between institutions, sectors and states;

2. Establishing joint university/community research and training partnerships;

3. Bringing the services of universities to outside groups;

4. Conducting interdisciplinary research on adult learning and education with the participation of adult learners themselves;

5. Creating opportunities for adult learning in flexible, open and creative ways, taking into account the specificities of women's and men's lives; and

6. Providing systematic continuing education for adult educators (UIE, 1997).

The Cape Town Statement on Characteristic Elements of a Lifelong Learning Higher Education Institution, developed at the Conference on Lifelong Learning, Higher Education and Active Citizenship in October 2000 traced the outline of a lifelong learning higher education institution (UIE, 2000). Nine years later, the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education urged investment in higher education to help build inclusive and diverse knowledge societies and to advance research, innovation and creativity. In its communiqué, this conference affirmed the role of higher education in lifelong learning with statements that "the knowledge society needs diversity in higher education systems, with a range of institutions having a variety of mandates and addressing different types of learners" and "the training offered by institutions of higher education should both respond to and anticipate societal needs. This includes promoting research for the development and use of new technologies and ensuring the provision of technical and vocational training, entrepreneurship education and programmes for lifelong learning" (UNESCO, 2009).

Given the on-going process of globalization, demographic shifts in many countries, and the rapid pace of technological advancement, higher education institutions face a strategic imperative to broaden access to lifelong learning opportunities and to move from an elite to a mass system, ensuring that education and learning are available to a diverse student population. Broader access to higher education should not be confined to the continuing professional development required by a fast-changing labour market. It must also respond to a growing demand for the personal development and cultural enrichment opportunities that higher education offers. Nor is the role of Higher Education Institutions in promoting lifelong learning limited to what they offer students; they also make a vital contribution through initial and continuous training of teachers, research into lifelong learning, and the provision of community learning opportunities.

This book begins with a chapter by Michael Osborne, Russell Rimmer and Muir Houston entitled *Adult Access to Higher Education: An international overview*. As the title suggests, this chapter looks at how adult access to higher education is becoming an ever more important factor in societal and economic success. Most parts of the world have seen a dramatic rise in HE participation rates over the last five decades, so much so that some countries might be described as having moved from an 'elite' to a 'mass' or even a 'universal' system of higher education. This trend is accompanied in many countries by demographic change (ageing societies) and an increasingly technological labour market. The cumulative result is a growing need for higher learning opportunities throughout life. Yet, access, though broader, is far from equal. The authors of this chapter explore the many factors underlying unequal access, including disability, socio-economic class, race, gender and location, and present a method for redressing inequality based on three levels of reform: regulatory and policy diversification; structural and functional diversification; and ways of developing more open institutions. In conclusion, they pose the question whether access on its own is sufficient, and argue for the development of more flexible modes of learning provision, to improve not only access but also retention and progression.

The second chapter, by Françoise de Viron and Pat Davies, both of whom have worked for many years with EUCEN, the European Association for

University Lifelong Learning, presents a brief overview of how the idea and practice of lifelong learning was adopted by European universities during the period 2005–2012. Entitled *From university lifelong learning to lifelong learning universities: Developing and implementing effective strategies*, this chapter begins by looking at the diversity of provision and the resulting difficulty in developing a common definition for University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) in Europe. It then presents the current context in European universities and the rationale for their development of ULLL. The authors highlight the main trends in ULLL development and its implementation over the last ten years, and identify the various approaches taken. They then present the tools and methods developed by EUCEN and its members to promote the inclusion of LLL in universities' strategy, and conclude by offering some perspectives on how to strengthen the development of LLL in the future. This chapter proposes a proven approach and several tools for universities to develop their own strategy to become Lifelong Learning Universities, involving all relevant internal and external stakeholders.

The chapter by Karsten Krüger, Nestor Duch, Marti Parellada, Mike Osborne, Michele Mariani and Laureano Jiménez entitled *The social efficiency of tertiary lifelong learning: Initial insights from a European research project* tackles an issue that affects most industrialised countries: the challenges and opportunities associated with an older (and therefore larger) workforce. It examines how Tertiary Lifelong Learning (TLLL) can contribute to the well-being of older learners, and how European universities can respond to increasing demands for lifelong learning opportunities. It presents data gathered during the 'Tertiary Higher Education for People in Mid-life' (THEMP) project, an EU-supported study that looked at TLLL provision by seven universities in seven EU member states. The THEMP project was aligned with the European Commission's Action Plan for Adult Education, which argues that member states should 'invest in education and training for older people and migrants, two groups with enormous potential yet which often face disadvantage in the labour market'. Focusing on relevant labour market programmes and the age of the participants, the project evaluated how these programmes impacted on participants' employability and quality of life. The authors conclude that adult learners require a greater variety of learning and teaching methods than learners coming directly from school,

and their cost/benefit calculations are more directly oriented to the labour market. Their research confirms that cost/benefit calculations are not purely financial, but must also consider economic, human, cultural and social capital.

Shirley Walters' chapter on *Higher education in lifelong learning in South Africa* argues that lifelong learning policies in a middle income country such as South Africa necessarily balance the political and economic pressures of a young population with the need for learning opportunities throughout life to redress the failures of the school system, particularly for the poorest citizens. This article reflects on the last decade of higher education in lifelong learning, drawing on a national study on the impact of the South African Higher Education Qualifications on adult learners and a case study of one historically black university, University of Western Cape. It describes the competing social, economic and political currents that influence adult access to and success in higher education, and describes in some detail the work of adult and lifelong learning advocates and activists in keeping equitable spaces open for adult learners. The author concludes with a critical look at the shortcomings of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQF), and some recommendations for the successful implementation of a lifelong learning approach in the South African higher education sector.

Yukiko Sawano's chapter entitled *Higher education and lifelong learning in Japan: Why is it so difficult to promote recurrent education?* begins with an overview of the development of lifelong learning policy in Japan since the 1970s and its influence on the planning of higher education. This is followed by a review of the various measures that have been taken to increase the participation of older students in Japanese higher education and an analysis of statistical data on enrolment. Finally, the author recommends ways of boosting participation and improving support mechanisms for adult students in higher education. This chapter argues persuasively that the two key factors for the successful engagement of adults in higher education are individual support systems for older learners and collaboration between universities and employers to facilitate re-training and re-learning. "Universal Access" to universities is likely to be realized and enhanced by the prevalence of innovations such as Massive Open On-line Courses (MOOCs). She

also recommends, as a matter of urgency, the establishment of a National Qualification Framework to promote lifelong learning in higher education in Japan.

The chapter by Minxuan Zhang and Jinjie Xu on *The role of universities in elder education: The experience of Shanghai and Shanghai Normal University* discusses how higher education can help to meet the learning needs of senior citizens. While drawing lessons that can be applied far beyond China, the authors concentrate on the cases of Shanghai and Shanghai Normal University. Shanghai has been a pioneer of elder education in China, partly because its population has aged faster than those of other large cities in China. In 1997 Shanghai Normal University established its Elder University, initially aimed at retired SHNU staff. Since then it has grown rapidly and now (2012) caters to nearly 7,000 elder learners (aged 60+) each year. SHNU, as well as providing higher learning opportunities to seniors has also become a leader in research and policy development in this field, contributing to many government documents on lifelong education and elder education, including the section on lifelong education in The Shanghai Mid-and-long-term Guideline for Education Reform and Development 2010–2020. While examining the factors upon which the success of elder education in Shanghai has been built, this chapter also points out that government support, together with commitment from the university sector, is crucial in making lifelong learning for senior citizens a reality.

Allie Clemans' chapter entitled *Lifelong learning in practice* explores, based on the example of a specific lesson at an Australian university, the potential of lifelong learning to increase learners' engagement and application of knowledge within a variety of contexts. By identifying various lifelong and life-wide learning aspects in the lesson case, the author outlines how learners come to see the value of a lifelong learning approach, are able to acknowledge multiple forms of knowledge, and make more immediate connections between what they come to know and what they do in response. The author identifies key factors in delivering a successful learning experience: the expertise and approach of the educator, collaborative learning and a safe learning space. By collating various life-wide and lifelong learning experiences and putting them into practice, learners recognise the value of a lifelong learning

approach and are better able to acknowledge multiple forms of learning. This chapter demonstrates that lifelong learning may extend its reach into higher education, transforming practices within it and positioning learners to engage more fully with a wide range of formal, non-formal, community and workplace learning.

Bjarne Wahlgren's chapter on *The parallel adult education system: A Danish contribution to lifelong learning at university level* looks at how the principles of lifelong learning have been implemented in Denmark's universities, particularly through practice- and skills-based master's programmes. Denmark's dual approach to academic qualification, established in 2001, allow university programmes to be organized according to one of two principles: the systematic acquisition of research-based knowledge, which increases in complexity; or knowledge acquisition based on the student's (social and vocational) competences. The Danish master's programme thus builds a relationship between the professional competence with which the students enter university and the research-based knowledge which the university can provide. This chapter begins by examining the policy underpinnings of this strategy. It identifies the rationale that adults in the labour market must have 'access to learning and skills development throughout life'. It then describes the procedures followed to evaluate skills in such a way that these can be said to equate to a formal competence (RPL) and considers the challenges inherent in blending practical and theoretical knowledge, including development of curricula.

The volume concludes with a case study by Roger Boshier entitled *From Marx to Market: Limitations of university-led 'collaboration' in the Yangpu Innovation Zone (Shanghai)*. The author first describes China's 'Plan 2011' initiative, through which universities were urged (and funded) to study foreign models (e.g. Silicon Valley) and establish strategic alliances with businesses and communities. Yangpu, an old industrial district in Shanghai, which half a century ago produced 5% of China's (and 22% of Shanghai's) GDP, was keen to join this scheme, having already created a 'Knowledge Innovation Zone' in 2003 to encourage business start-ups and transition to a knowledge economy. Though the Plan 2011 scheme was intended to emulate the easy flow of money, knowledge and people between private and public

institutions in California, there are many stark differences between these two environments, even bearing in mind that Shanghai is probably China's most highly developed city. This chapter systematically examines the factors that favour and impede Yangpu's chances of becoming the leading "technology centre" in China.

Overall, this volume constitutes a searching and wide-ranging exploration of how to expand and transform the role of universities in promoting lifelong learning. The main conclusions that can be drawn are threefold. Firstly, increased access to universities is not enough; the higher education system should ensure retention and progression of all learners, and of adult learners in particular. Especially in communities with an ageing population, universities need to facilitate learning for adults and senior citizens with support from the public and private sectors. Secondly, teaching and learning at universities can be transformed by linking learning to the wider issues of life, by recognising shared responsibilities, by creating innovative curricula and by capitalising on the diverse experiences of learners. Innovation in higher education can be crucial in terms of changing attitudes and values and helping to cultivate the necessary capacities for lifelong learning. Thirdly, the reform of higher education goes beyond mere pedagogy and didactics; it is a social process which links teaching and learning to students' personal and individual life patterns, their social and cultural context, and their chosen discipline. Given rapid changes in labour markets and societies, universities are expected to become more responsive to the work and life situation of adult learners, helping them not only acquire skills and knowledge, but also maintain and improve their position in society and ultimately enhance their quality of life.

With this book, we hope to promote a common conceptual understanding of lifelong learning among university stakeholders and advocate for the integration of the lifelong learning perspective in institutional policy and practices.

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# 1

# ADULT ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION: AN INTERNATIONAL OVERVIEW

*Michael Osborne, Russell Rimmer and Muir Houston*

## Abstract

The issue of adults throughout the world seeking access to higher education (HE) is becoming ever more important. This is because the numbers of adults in HE are falling, even though increasing adult access to HE would benefit both the individuals involved and society as a whole. Although participation rates in HE across the world have improved, inequality (in connection with parameters such as disability, socio-economic class, race, gender and location) remains rife. Adult education policies are disjointed and incoherent due to weak relationships between formal policymaking and practice. Societies and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) therefore need to work together to provide adults and young people with greater access to learning, while also supporting an increasingly knowledge-driven society. They can do this by diversifying regulations and policies, and cultivating structural and functional diversity. HEIs should allow adults the opportunity to demonstrate potential in alternative ways, widen access to higher qualifications, and increase collaboration with communities and employers.

## Introduction

The issue of equitable access to Higher Education has attracted the attention of policymakers and practitioners across all continents for a number of decades. Both national governments and international bodies such as UNESCO and the OECD have argued that there are strong economic and wider societal reasons for increasing access to HE and for widening its constituency

by including groups who have traditionally been excluded. As reported a decade ago, this reasoning, under the banner of 'lifelong learning', was based on arguments about 'the economic imperatives created by global competition, technological change and the challenge of the knowledge economy, individual responsibility and self-improvement, employability, flexibility of institutions and individuals, social inclusion and citizenship' (Osborne, 2003, p. 44). Whilst adult participation constitutes only one of the many issues surrounding access to HE, this chapter will focus on that constituency. In the first instance, however, we provide a picture that covers all age groups.

Relative emphasis on the economic versus the social imperative varies from society to society, although the distinction is somewhat exaggerated. Although individual motivations for educational participation by adults are multiple, complex and subject to change (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999), improving personal economic prospects is highly ranked in many studies of all age groups seeking to enter HE. As far as many of the advocates for widening access to HE are concerned, the important issue is that the opportunity to achieve better qualifications, leading in turn to improved employment prospects and increased financial well-being, becomes available to all sections of society.

Many also argue that access to HE benefits not only individuals, but also society as a whole. For this reason it is seen in some societies as a public good that should be financed by the state. This tendency, however, is in decline, especially in Western societies. For example, although European Ministers of Higher Education in both the Prague and Berlin Communiqués of the Bologna Process have clearly pronounced that provision of HE is both a public good and a public responsibility, this has not been translated into practice in all nation states of Europe (Bergan, 2012). Indeed, in countries such as England, which recently increased tuition fees, the reverse would appear to be the case.

On quantitative measures, the aspiration to improve access has already been achieved. In many parts of the world there has been an increase in participation in HE over the last five decades – so much so that some countries might be described as having moved, in the language of Trow (2000), from an 'elite' to a 'mass' or even a 'universal' system. For Trow, an 'elite' system is one in which less than 15 % of young people attend HEIs, and in which HE is therefore a privilege of birth or talent or both. In a 'mass' system, by

contrast, this figure rises to 50 %, and HE is regarded as an obligation for the middle and upper classes. According to recent statistics, '62 % of young adults in OECD countries will enter university-level programmes during their lifetimes if current patterns of entry continue', this number having risen by 25 percentage points in the period from 1995–2010 (OECD, 2012). Many of these individuals will be well beyond the traditional school-leaving age when they enter HEIs for the first time.

## Who are the beneficiaries?

These quantitative changes, however, are not necessarily accompanied by a concomitant diversification of systems in terms of who enters what type of institution or programme. The Council of Europe (1998) has pointed out that, in a fair system of access, HE systems should reflect the diversity of the society they serve. This principle has underpinned a number of initiatives internationally, including for example Australia's *A Fair Chance for All* programme of over two decades ago (DEET, 1990). Performance rewards for HE in this programme were based on equity indicators for six groups with historic disadvantage[1].

However, an increasing proportion of the population entering HE has not always meant a related increase in benefit for targeted groups. For example, in the Australian case, absolute numbers of HE students increased in the period from 1996 to 2004. However, with the exception of women, enrolment in the six targeted groups did not increase accordingly (Nelson, 2005). Similar examples elsewhere show that increasing access does not always equate to broadening of access, as traditional beneficiaries may simply obtain more opportunity and maintain their relative advantage (Shavit et al., 2007).

For example, in Latin American countries, access to HE has improved: the region now boasts twice the number of university entrants than it did in the 1980s. Yet, as in other parts of the world, this does not necessarily lead to greater equity. The basic issue, as the World Bank indicates, is that

[1] These were: indigenous Australians; people from a non-English-speaking background; people with disabilities; people from rural and isolated areas; women, particularly in non-traditional disciplines such as science and technology; and people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

'higher education in Latin America remains largely elitist, with the majority of students coming from the wealthier segments of society' (Holm-Nielson et al., 2005). For example, even though technical and professional workers represent no more than 15 % of the general population, their children account for nearly half the total enrolment in HE. A decade ago the World Bank (2000) reported that this tendency is accentuated in some of the best public universities, such as the University of São Paulo and the University of Campinas in Brazil, the Simón Bolívar University in Venezuela, and the National University of Bogotá in Colombia. This parallels the situation in some European countries, especially in elite disciplines such as medicine (see McGavock and Osborne, 2005). The phenomenon reflects higher rates of poverty and extreme poverty amongst indigenous and minority race populations in most countries.

A specific problem affecting a number of Latin American countries is that there are huge disparities in access to HE among indigenous peoples and those of African descent. In Mexico, for example, only 2 % of indigenous people in the 18–25 age cohort advance to higher education, and of those, only one in five graduate. Among non-indigenous people, by contrast, 22 % gain access and one in three graduate (Navarrete, 2008). In Brazil, although the proportion of non-whites in higher education increased from 22 % in 2001 to 32 % in 2007, they are still under-represented in a society where approximately half the population self-identifies as non-white (Schwartzman, 2009). These statistics are replicated across the region according to the Ford Foundation (Dassin, 2009).

Gender and geographical situation are also factors that mediate access. In Peru, for example, an indigenous woman from a rural area is nearly four times less likely to enter higher education than a white urban male and furthermore is *less* likely to do so than an indigenous male from a rural area (De Belaunde, Trivelli and Israel, 2008).

Access to HE in all countries in the region is therefore influenced by multiple and conflating factors, such as race, ethnicity, gender and location. That being said, many initiatives exist in Latin America to combat social exclusion and to promote the 'third mission' of universities. Strong popular education and social movements also push in this direction (Kane, 2013). The efforts of, for example, the Developmental University in Uruguay (Arocena and Sutz, 2010) and Popular Education and Social Change (Jara, 2010), if linked

systematically to those of HEIs themselves to improve access, could provide a basis for change.

These illustrations from Latin America are paralleled in other parts of the world. Elsewhere, the groups that benefit disproportionally and those who are excluded vary, but the core issue remains the same: most systems of higher education contain systemic bias towards some groups. The factors that contribute to this tendency are explored later in this chapter. For example, in Australia a national review of HE using data on participation and educational attainment demonstrated that indigenous Australians, those of low socio-economic status (SES) and those living in rural areas are under-represented (Bradley et al., 2008, p. 27). A study by the Asian Development Bank (2012, p. 38), appropriately entitled *Access without Equity*, states:

> *Despite many policy initiatives in recent years, broader post-secondary participation has not benefited all sectors of society equally. Various studies of countries in the region show that, despite greater inclusion, the 'privileged' classes have retained their relative advantage in nearly all nations.*

There are variations on the theme of privilege across Asian nations. In Cambodia, already poor progression rates from school to university for girls are exacerbated by poverty and rurality (UNIFEM, 2004, p. 190). A similar situation pertains in India (Singh, 2006), exacerbated by historical and cultural impediments. Regional disparities, poverty and poor schooling are also reported in Thailand (Laovakul, 2009). In Vietnam, Nguyen (2007) points to family wealth as a key factor: the very wealthy occupy 40 % of all places in HE, whilst the poor take up only 15 %. In Laos, those from certain ethnic and religious minority groups are reported to have difficulties in accessing their share of state-allocated places in HE (Jahangir, 2010).

In Europe, many forms of intervention have attempted to widen access, influenced in the last two decades in the European Union by a common and coherent set of policies that have crossed most of the continent. A succession of statements from the European Commission (EC), starting in 1991 with the *Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community*, have expressed a common set of sentiments that have included adult access as a specific focus. The 1991 Memorandum challenged HEIs to support an

increasingly knowledge-driven economy and society by widening access to higher qualifications. It also urged them to create opportunities for updating and renewing qualifications, to increase preparatory courses, and to do more to recognise prior learning and experience (EC, 1991).

There followed a *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (EC, 2000). The project to increase adult participation in HE was given further impetus by the *Lisbon Strategy* (Council of the European Union, 2000) which sought to make Europe 'one of the most competitive knowledge economies in the world', and by the European Commission's Communication, *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* (EC, 2001). In that Communication the EC stated that Member States would aim to improve the quality and effectiveness of EU education and training systems, ensure that they are accessible to all, and open up education and training to the wider world. The achievement of these objectives would require enhancing quality in HE across Europe, removing barriers to teacher and student mobility, promoting lifelong learning and guidance, and encouraging language learning. Most directly relevant to adult access was the aim that, by 2020, 40 % of the cohort aged 30–39 should possess a tertiary level qualification[2].

There certainly have been improvements in the numbers of young people accessing HE in European OECD countries. Only Finland and Hungary show small declines in the decade from 2000–2010. In Finland's case, the small decline was from having achieved the world's second highest percentage participation rate in 2000; and for Hungary the decline is more than balanced by increasing vocational provision of Tertiary-type 5B[3]. For twenty-one EU countries overall there was a 25 percentage point increase from

[2] For more detail on the development of European Union policy in adult education see Osborne (2013). Similar objectives are seen in other parts of the world in individual nation states. For example, in Australia there were two key targets in the Bradley Review, aimed at increasing the proportion of the Australian population with high-level skills and reducing social inequalities in HE participation. These targets are: 1) that by 2025, 40 % of 25 to 34-year-olds should have attained at least a bachelor-level qualification; and 2) that by 2020, 20 % of higher education enrolments at undergraduate level should be people from low SES backgrounds (Bradley et al., 2008, p. xiv).

[3] According to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), first stage tertiary programmes beyond compulsory schooling that have an academic orientation are termed classification type 5A and are largely theoretical. Those tertiary programmes with an occupational orientation are termed type 5B. Type 5B programmes are often shorter than type 5A and have a specific labour market orientation.

1995 to 2010. In 2010 there was an average 60 % participation rate in Tertiary-type 5A provision, but the increase in Tertiary-type 5B provision over the same period was only by two percentage points (to 15 % in 2010).

Despite these figures, however, some groups continue to benefit more than others in European countries. For example, in the UK, which has some of the most longstanding policies with regard to access, factors such as socio-economic class and disability continue to pose challenges despite considerable investment (see Osborne and Houston, 2012).

It is evident from this short summary that, whilst participation rates in HE across the world have increased, gains are not demonstrated in all sections of society. Given the high proportions of populations that access HE in many countries, the equity issue stands out. There have been clear gains with regard to women's participation (as UNESCO (2012) reports, there is now overall female dominance in participation in HE across the world), but considerable pockets of gender inequality remain. As Calvo (2012) reports, despite the targets set for the HE sector by goal 5 of the *Dakar Framework for Action 2000 of Education for All* (EFA) and target 4 of the United Nations *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs), two regions still show unequal participation of women: South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, as demonstrated in the preceding section, many countries still show considerable access disparities based on socio-economic class, race and ethnicity, religious belief, geographical location and disability[4]. As is shown by many studies of access to all forms of education, individuals are often subject to multiple forms of disadvantage (see for example Piquet, 2006; Brunner et al., 2006).

## What is accessible and what is not?

Even when access appears to be extensive, questions have to be asked about what part of the HE system is accessible and to whom. The formal delineation of Tertiary-type 5A and 5B provides one distinction, and a number of studies show that vocationally oriented provision, often of short duration

[4] See also Altbach, Reisberg and Rumley (2009), who have produced a report on trends in global HE for the 2009 UNESCO World Conference on HE which contains extensive statistics on access.

(one or two years), is predominantly accessed by both young people and adults from lower socio-economic groups (Gallacher and Osborne, 2005). Short-cycle providers such as the Further Education Colleges of the UK, the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Colleges of Australia and the US Community Colleges tend to be more accessible and to have more flexible entry qualifications. For these reasons they are attractive to many who find the prospect of HE daunting. Adult learners are often particularly attracted by the fact that such providers are deeply embedded in their local communities and offer qualifications which are clearly oriented towards local and regional labour markets. Furthermore, for personal, geographic and employment reasons, many adults may wish to limit the time that they take out of the workforce.

Historically, the credentials offered by Australian, UK and US short-cycle providers have been regarded as procedural or terminal in nature (Cohen and Brawer, 2008). However, as more graduates with Tertiary-type 5A qualifications emerge and compete for jobs in stagnant economies, Tertiary-type 5B qualifications may begin to have less value for employment. Furthermore, despite the introduction of national credit framework systems in many countries, their transfer value through articulation to the later years of Tertiary-type 5A programmes may also be limited.

These limitations are linked to the formal and informal differentiations that exist in many countries. Scott (1995, p. 35) has classified HE systems as dual, binary, unified and stratified. Both dual and binary systems contain alternative forms of HEI; in the case of the latter, new institutions have been set up to complement and rival existing traditional structures. In unified systems there is no formal differentiation of institutions; in stratified systems, institutions are allocated a role within a total system. Whether or not formal differentiation occurs or is blurred over time, the most important feature of HE systems is the composition of demand for places. Institutions which enjoy a high ranking in the many league tables that now exist are highly selective, whilst those that rank lower are forced to compete for students. Students without traditional entry qualifications, including those seeking transfer, are much less likely to achieve entry to selective HEIs. This is demonstrated by a number of studies (see Wheelahan, 2009; Osborne and Maclaurin, 2003). As with short-cycle providers, entry to such institutions may limit future opportunity. For example, in the Republic of Korea, the HE system has been expanded largely by increasing the number of places

in lower-status institutions, including those whose provision does not allow progression to post-graduate study (Grubb et al., 2006).

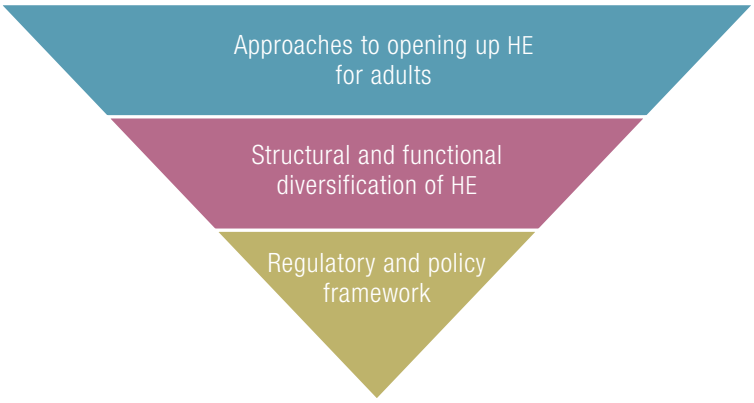
## A clearer understanding

It would appear, then, that despite the efforts that have been made in a number of countries, targets for increasing the proportion of young people enrolling on degree courses are not being reached. This is particularly the case where the marginalized and less privileged are concerned. While this goes on, the stock of adults who are denied access to HE is growing, and the problem of providing access for adult learners is widening. This stock of adults is likely to contain greater concentrations of young people who have been inequitably treated in the past, and who suffer multiple disadvantages.

If we are to understand the degree to which particular regions or countries facilitate adult access to HE, we must first gain an understanding both of the diversity of structural and institutional forms of HE in those regions and of how their regulatory and policy frameworks inform this diversity. The issues to consider are represented in Figure 1:

A HEURISTIC FOR ADULT PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Figure 1




'Regulatory and policy frameworks' encompasses legislation, regulation, policy, governance, finance and funding. These are rooted in the history, culture, traditions and values of countries, and impinge on the diversity on

offer in various societies. This aspect of analysis is informed by previous work, including the EURYDICE (2010) report on the impact of the Bologna process on national higher education systems in Europe and the UNESCO reports Trends in Diversification of Post-Secondary Education (UNESCO, 2011) and CONFINTEA VI (UNESCO, 2009).

Structural and functional diversity within the higher education sector influence widening adult participation, and as such, are worth classifying and analysing. *Structural* diversity is the degree to which diverse institutional forms co-exist within a national system. For example, Osborne (2003, p. 8) notes that 'in many European countries, there exist two or more distinct parallel sectors of higher level provision within a dual or binary system and a set of tertiary establishments outside the university sector that is largely unconnected to these'. *Functional* diversity is the degree to which institutional types differ in their function as new tasks and purposes arise. This occurs in connection with the changing needs of societies and economies, as manifested through the impact of globalization and the resultant functional and structural changes to labour markets, including an increasing demand for higher level skills and competencies (CEDEFOP, 2008; UNESCO, 2011).

The third component presented in Figure 1 concerns forms of higher education which differ from the traditional approach and which have the specific intention of opening and widening HE participation for adults. A three-point *openness* typology (Osborne, 2003) provides an overview of the factors that facilitate or inhibit the participation of adults in higher education. This is based on the concepts of *in-reach, out-reach* and *flexibility*. These concepts link to notions of improving supply, increasing and stimulating demand from new groups, and fundamental structural change in systems of HE.

Figure 1 is called a 'heuristic'. The principal reason for this is that there is no intention to imply relationships (causal or otherwise) between areas of knowledge. Rather, the intention is to convey how available knowledge in the field can be organized. It is likely that there is evidence supporting relationships of a causal form between some of the concepts. For example, among adult students, there is evidence to support a causal link between success with current study and continuation with that study, although this may have a disciplinary dimension (Houston, Knox and Rimmer, 2007). On the other hand, it is likely that there will not be clear associations between other concepts subsumed within the components of the figure.

## Regulatory and policy diversification

The CONFINTEA VI report (UNESCO, 2009) takes a global view on adult education and training and examines how far appropriate policies have been introduced to facilitate increased participation in lifelong learning education and training systems. It summarises policy features, which it suggests are shared by a number of countries, as follows:

- 'Adult education policy is usually subsumed under general education policies. It is rarely mainstreamed within comprehensive development frameworks. Adult education policies are incoherent and fragmented – more like a patchwork of measures responding to specific issues than a framework of linked principles and programmes.

- There are wide gaps between legislation, policy and implementation, and weak relationships between formal policymaking and practice. Adult education policymaking and reform tend to take place in a vacuum: high-level councils and elaborate advisory structures exist, but have little concrete impact, with the risk that these arrangements become a proxy for implementation. Coordination of policy and action within government and between government and stakeholders is often ineffective – decentralization to regional and local levels is more apparent than real.

- Responsibilities – including those for the funding of adult education programmes and activities – are more likely to be delegated than are decision-making powers. This shows that the "command and control" model of organization and governance remains predominant, undermining local autonomy and flexibility and lowering civil society participation,' (UNESCO, 2009, p. 29–30).

In spite of this rather gloomy assessment, CONFINTEA does recognize examples of more integrated and comprehensive policy environments that

'give equal visibility to initial and continuing education for young people and adults' (op. cit.), noting Sweden's Education Act as an example. It also notes legislative actions and policy implementations which specifically address elements of adult education.

While primarily concerned with the Bologna process, the EURYDICE (2010) report also provides details on forty higher education systems in Europe. A number of indicators are of relevance. For each national system, these include:

- the monitoring of under-represented groups;
- whether an independent system of quality assurance operates;
- whether Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is regulated and subject to specific legislation;
- the status of RPL in obtaining access to higher education; and
- whether national qualifications frameworks and credit systems are in place.

A further area of interest as regards regulatory diversification is funding (EURYDICE, 2008). One obvious distinction is public vs. private with regard to institutional ownership or between non-profit and for-profit institutional forms. This is augmented by the (sometimes related) mediating role played by the state in funding institutions and/or students (EURYDICE, 2009; FINST, 2011). In their examination of trends in diversification, Varghese and Püttmann (2011) acknowledge that, while in the past the state was the dominant funder of higher education and in many cases might have held a monopoly, in recent years this has started to change. However, the pace of change differs according between countries and regions. In some cases, for example East Asia, the World Bank (via Structural Adjustment Programmes) has required countries to privatize services, including education. This may be viewed as part of a growing trend to develop more market-oriented higher education, which in many cases is accompanied by measures that shift the burden of cost away from government. In parts of the UK, for example,

individual students are obliged to finance a greater share of the cost of their higher education than in other areas. Australian HE students have been financing their own education for decades now through the Higher Education Contribution System (HECS).

However, Varghese and Püttmann state that, while privatization may imply the removal of state funding, in practice, a quasi-privatization model with accompanying state funding is more common (ibid.). They note differences between the introduction of private capital in higher education and in other sectors, and suggest that 'in the context of diversification, private higher education institutions can be differentiated by their orientation and sources of funding:

- State-supported private institutions: some private institutions of higher education receive funding support from the government. The support can be minimal or substantial.

- Not-for-profit private institutions: private non-profit institutions are owned and operated by trusts that rely heavily on endowments and fees collected from the students. Most of them are self-financing institutions. Some of the best universities in the United States, such as Harvard, MIT, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale, are private and have large endowment funds.

- Religious agency-supported private higher education institutions: Christian and Islamic Organizations are active in providing private higher education in different regions. The Roman Catholic Church is active in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America; the Protestant Church pioneered private universities in the United States. Islamic organizations are more active in countries such as Egypt, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

- For-profit higher education institutions: some private institutions by design operate at a profit. Some of the private for-profit institutions are run by corporations and trade the "Stocks and shares of educational institutions" (Ruch, 2001).' (Varghese and Püttmann, 2011, p. 23–24.)

In addition, Varghese and Püttmann highlight the existence of satellite campuses, where renowned public universities in one nation set up operations in another and administer their funding according to local rules for private sector organizations. They suggest that, in developing countries at least, this is becoming more important.

## Structural and functional diversification of institutions

Structural diversification is mid-field in the heuristic of Figure 1 and has already been alluded to in connection with Scott's (1995) classification of HE systems as dual, binary, unified or stratified. Within such systems a range of forms of HE co-exist. Varghese and Püttmann (2011) adopt another fourfold typology covering universities, colleges and non-university institutions, tertiary short-cycle providers, and post-secondary non-tertiary educational institutions. Universities are classified as either 'top-tier' or 'teaching' institutions, and colleges as academically or vocationally oriented. On the subject of diversity within national systems of HE, the authors note the example of France, where the *Grandes Écoles*, universities and *Instituts Universitaires de Technologie* (IUTs) co-exist yet serve quite distinct functions, as anyone who has read Bourdieu knows.

The second category, consisting of colleges and non-university institutions, also exhibits elements of diversification. In some cases colleges may confer academic degrees in conjunction with a university partner or affiliate, while non-university institutions tend to be more practical and vocationally oriented. Varghese and Püttmann (2011, p. 9) cite the OECD (1973) classification used to differentiate three levels of institutions in this category:

1. 'the multi-purpose model, corresponding to the US pattern of community colleges and the first two-year programme of undergraduate education;

2. specialized model institutions, offering vocationally oriented, short-cycle courses in continental Europe;

3. a binary model of polytechnics, offering degrees distinct from, but comparable to, those offered by universities (this type gave rise to the development of non-university sectors in tertiary education).'

The third category identified by Varghese and Püttmann consists of short-cycle institutions which for the most part concentrate on vocational and technical education and degrees below the bachelor level. 'In general, these institutions offer courses between the post-secondary, non-tertiary, and the bachelor levels, and they include institutions that are not university level, such as "tertiary short-cycle education", "alternatives to universities", and "sub-degree education"' (op. cit.). Varghese Püttmann (op. cit. 19) utilise the OECD classification of short-cycle tertiary education on the basis of:

1. 'goals – whether vocational preparation or a wider range of learning is the aim;

2. levels of instruction – basic vocational preparation or higher-order occupational skills;

3. service to local communities – locally relevant research and local access'.

The fourth and final institutional classification of structural forms concerns post-secondary, non-tertiary institutions that operate between school and degree levels and confer sub-degree vocational certificates or provide access to HE. While these are below the ISCED levels recognized as delineating HE (levels 5 and 6), in some settings they do serve to widen participation through the provision of preparatory or access courses for HE.

'Functional diversification' refers to changes in the functions institutions provide. Changes in the labour market and wider economy cause changes in demand for different subjects and new industries (e.g. environmental or green technologies) and technological advances. In the competitive global economy, the supply of a highly educated workforce is seen as a major requirement in order to attract and sustain inward investment and high value-added jobs. The OECD report *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge*

*Society* (2008) reports that knowledge development and associated labour market demands together constitute one of the key drivers for diversification in institutional functions.

In addition to economic imperatives, calls for greater social justice, democratization and social inclusion have propelled the widening participation agenda, as well as contributing to functional differentiation. The shift from an elite through a mass to a universal system has been accompanied by a functional change: from preparing individuals for elite roles in society to adapting the population as a whole to rapid societal and technological change (see Trow, 1974 and Scott, 1998). Moreover, as knowledge becomes more specialized, one other form of diversification in function can be identified, namely the blurring of traditional disciplinary boundaries. Some research and learning centres either linked to or independent of universities adapt to the demands for increased specialization and interdisciplinary work. It seems also that new developments cause old divisions between subjects or disciplines to become more blurred.

> *Higher education systems need to respond to prospective changes and future challenges, and develop greater capacity for innovation. The capacity to respond to new developments, foreseeable or not, becomes more important for every post-secondary education system and each single institution. Diversification is again seen as a prominent means to reach this, based on the assumption that a diverse system with differing institutions bears the greatest potential for various and adequate innovations. Specialized institutions can respond to these specific requirements faster than others. (UNESCO, 2011, p. 16).*

Currently, the literature indicates that many HEIs have not responded fully to these important challenges. Changes in demand for labour imply a need for responsive HEIs that adopt a lifelong learning perspective. Whilst it may be possible to anticipate some of the skills needs of tomorrow, there are many requirements that cannot be predicted or catered for by existing provision. This puts a greater premium not only on initial access, but on continuing access to HE for adults, in order to prepare them for the high-value jobs of the future.

## Openness

Osborne's threefold openness typology (introduced earlier) is also relevant to Figure 1. First we consider *in-reach*, which refers to activities that prioritize recruiting potential students to the institution, such as adult access courses and summer schools. *In-reach* therefore refers to actions on the part of HEIs which relate to existing supply, creating new ways for students to access programmes that are already part of provision. These include alternative entry tests for adults, customized courses, and other procedures that allow a second opportunity to demonstrate potential. They are often accompanied by a relaxation of entry requirements. The degree to which these arrangements represent radical departures from standard practice and a real commitment to openness is variable.

Openness by *out-reach*, Osborne's second term, relates to more proactive (compared with in-reach) efforts to widen participation and create partnerships with one or more of employers, schools and the wider community. Examples include work-based initiatives, VET/HE links and community-based access programmes. The primary objective of out-reach initiatives is to target individuals who believe that HE is 'not for them'. Under such schemes, HEIs move outside their own boundaries to actively engage with under-represented groups and the socially excluded. Out-reach therefore means taking action to counter dispositional barriers by creating greater awareness of what might be possible and thereby stimulating new demand.

Osborne's third term, *flexibility*, is concerned with space and time. More concretely, this means making changes that allow students access to education in locations and modes and at times of their own rather than institutions' choosing. *Flexibility* also refers to the mechanisms that challenge prevailing constructions of what constitutes knowledge at HE level and the means by which knowledge can be acquired and demonstrated: most notably, RPL and validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL). Flexible arrangements and out-reach activity overlap, for example in links between VET organizations and universities, which may or may not be accompanied by collaboration.

The literature contains many examples of forms of openness for adults that fall within these three categories. For example, in Malaysia there are policies to create 'alternate pathways of entry, part-time studies, distance ed-

ucation, special financial incentives and arrangements, recognition of workplace training and according academic credit for it' (Asian Development Bank, 2012, p. 40). Many cases from Europe, North America and Australia have also been described (Osborne, 2003).

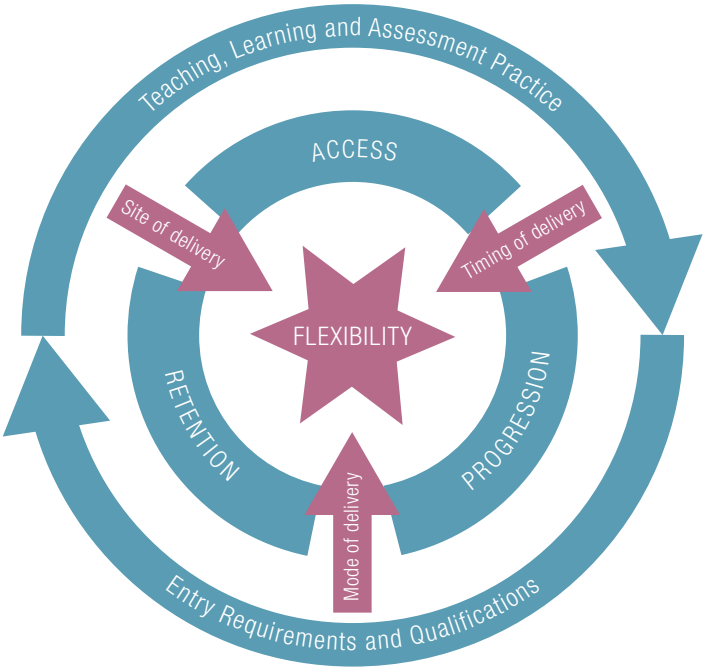
## Is Access Enough?

Describing the situation with regard to adult access to Higher Education in different parts of the world requires taking account of factors such as regulatory and policy diversification, structural and functional diversification of institutions, and the openness of provision. The precise relationships between these factors will vary from country to country. A highly regulated system may or may not be one that facilitates a diverse set of institutions. In short, whilst diversity in institutional structure may provide a range of opportunities to access HE, it may be that only some of the institutions concerned will provide these opportunities.

It could therefore be argued that, to a significant degree, the problem of facilitating adult access to HE has been 'solved'. This, however, is not the end of the story. There certainly are many forms of provision to choose from, and a good deal of knowledge of what works: the main issue that remains is the willingness of the state and institutions to put access into practice. Furthermore, simply gaining access is not enough: once enrolled in HEIs, questions of retention and progression arise. Flexibility is therefore not only about access to the system, but also about the delivery of learning thereafter. A comprehensive overview of these issues in the context of the UK was undertaken recently (Houston, McCune and Osborne, 2011).

HEURISTIC OF ELEMENTS OF FLEXIBILITY

Figure 2




The graph presented in Figure 2 is taken from this work (p. 4). It summarizes the different elements of flexibility in learning provision and identifies how these might impact not only on openness and access, but also on retention and progression. This figure is not meant to convey a causal model; rather, like Figure 1, it is intended as a graphical representation or heuristic, in this case of different elements of flexibility. Flexibility has been placed at the centre of the image, surrounded by the possible outcomes: improved access, retention and progression. On the outside are what might be termed 'procedural issues' relating to differing forms of learning and teaching delivery (e.g. blended learning, alternative assessment regimes, e-learning, and student- or learner-centred approaches such as personalized learning, peer support or mentoring), and of entry requirements (including the use of non-traditional and vocational qualifications, accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) and credit transfer). The arrows outside the circle are meant to imply forms of dynamism. It is suggested that the procedural issues are, or can be, mediated via the arrows indicating site, mode and timing of delivery.

Issues pertaining to spatial and temporal adaptations, structural modification and recognition of other knowledge are not just challenges with regard to access to HE, but potential features of provision itself. As such, they have significant implications for teaching and learning. Altman, Reisberg and Rumbley (2009, p. 45) quote a number of examples, including students of colour in the US, whose completion rates are lower than those of the majority. They point to the need for support mechanisms within HE to address disparities of this kind. Adults throughout the world seek access to HE; societies and HEIs might likewise seek to facilitate learning for both adults and young people in an increasingly flexible fashion that not only meets the changing needs of modern society (including recognition of 'massified' or 'universal' HE in Trow's (2000) terms), but also fits more closely with modern pedagogical thinking, recognizing the problem of continuing lack of access among the sectors of society that are still not able to participate fully in HE.

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# 2

# FROM UNIVERSITY LIFELONG LEARNING TO LIFELONG LEARNING UNIVERSITIES: DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

*Françoise de Viron and Pat Davies*

## Abstract

This chapter presents a brief overview of the state of play of Lifelong Learning development within European Universities over the period 2005–2012. It highlights the wide diversity of provision and the resulting difficulty in elaborating a common definition for University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) in Europe, even if the one proposed by EUCEN is beginning to be largely accepted.

For the authors, this diversity hides the real implementation of ULLL and gives at first glance the impression that ULLL develops very slowly. The reasons usually cited for this protracted pace are the lack of workable implementation strategies, the lack of an effective funding system, and stakeholders' resistance to change. Although the authors are convinced of the pressing need for an adequate funding system, the purpose of this chapter is to present ways to overcome the other two difficulties. It proposes a well-founded and already proven approach together with several tools designed to enable universities, in collaboration with all relevant internal and external stakeholders, to develop their own specific strategy for becoming Lifelong Learning Universities. The concepts of strategy and strategizing are used and adapted to the specificities of ULLL.

## Introduction

Jarl Bengtsson[1] wrote shortly before his death that 'on the one hand lifelong learning is accepted, in policy terms, by all OECD countries and many other countries, but on the other hand there is an uneven and slow pace of implementation of lifelong learning' (Bengtsson, 2013, p. 1). EUCEN[2], a European membership organization comprising 191 members (mainly universities) from 36 countries, comes to a similar conclusion concerning University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) based on its network knowledge and project results. Higher education ministers in Europe have definitively adopted a voluntary discourse inviting higher education institutions (HEIs), including universities, to develop lifelong learning in their core activities. Their successive communiqués – Prague in 2001, Berlin in 2003, Bergen in 2005, London in 2007 and finally Leuven-Louvain-la-Neuve in 2009 – have established lifelong learning as one of the ten priorities for 2010–2020 (see for instance the Bologna Process website: http://www.ehea.info/). They stress the importance of going beyond continuing education and adult education towards a more comprehensive implementation of LLL within universities by 2020.

Meanwhile, a number of universities have developed provision for a greater variety of lifelong learners, such as young adults without a university degree, individuals seeking professional development, unemployed adults, migrants, and so on. They have created innovative collaborative projects and accumulated a great deal of good practice. However, despite the quality and quantity of these initiatives, the results so far appear insufficient to external stakeholders and fragile to internal ones, since they are highly dependent on the leaders of each university.

For Bengtsson (2013), the main reasons for the slow pace of LLL implementation in general are the lack of workable implementation strategies, the

[1] Jarl Bengtsson, Professor of Education, was for many years Head of the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation at OECD. He was also President of the PASCAL Observatory.

[2] EUCEN (European University Continuing Education Network) is an international non-governmental non-profit-making organization, and is the largest and oldest European network focusing actively on ULLL. EUCEN aims to contribute to the economic and cultural life of Europe through the promotion and advancement of lifelong learning within higher education institutions, and to foster universities' influence on the development of lifelong learning knowledge and policies throughout Europe.

lack of an effective funding system, and stakeholders' resistance to change. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the first and third of these reasons. Of course, we also remain convinced of the pressing need for an adequate funding system (Davies, 2009*a*; de Viron et al., 2011*a*).

Firstly, we present the current context in European universities and synthesize the reasons (the rationale) for their development of ULLL, which in many cases goes beyond the recommendations of the European higher education ministers. Secondly, we present the main trends with regard to ULLL development and implementation over the last ten years and highlight the diversity of approaches taken, based on overviews led by EUCEN. We then present the tools and quality methods developed by EUCEN and its members to promote the inclusion of LLL in universities' strategy. We conclude by offering some perspectives on how to strengthen the development of LLL in the future.

## The context: demand, needs and opportunities

Beyond the general forces – demographic change, globalization and technological evolution – which affect all societal endeavours including adult learning, Merriam et al. (2012) highlight life transitions. Citing Aslanian and Brickell (1980), they point out that '83 % of adult learners were engaged in learning activities because of some transition in their lives' (ibid., p. 92). Transitions may include marriage, retirement, job changes, the birth of children, etc. Aslanian (2001) found that in 2001 participation in higher and continuing education was largely due to career transitions.

For a variety of reasons, new patterns of career and working life have emerged for both men and women whereby the traditional sequence of education – work – retirement has been replaced by several entries to and exits from the labour market. As EUCEN (2009*b*) points out, transition points (where the main concern is often to avoid long-term unemployment) are becoming the most important moments in individuals' personal and professional pathways. Moves between jobs and between employment and training increasingly have to be managed by individuals themselves. This presents both a need and an opportunity for universities to create new forms of provision to support alumni involved in such transitions over the long term and to

offer flexible responses to the challenges they face. Institutions will have to take into account what people have learnt from previous activities, assessing and validating this non-formal and informal learning and opening up new pathways to further learning and new employment opportunities. This does not mean an exclusive focus on employability: personal development and citizenship are also important. The challenge in our societies is not only to face rapid changes in the economy but also in social, community and family life (EUCEN, 2009*b*.)

In today's 'knowledge society', acquiring new knowledge is possible outside of traditional spatial and temporal boundaries. The key questions are now 'where to learn' and 'when to learn' throughout life (Carneiro, 2007). Seen from this perspective, universities are not only the places where well-adapted formal learning programmes are delivered and where non-formal and informal learning are recognized and validated; they are also the places where fragmented knowledge (Pellert, 2009; Carneiro, 2007) can be re-structured and re-organized into a coherent whole, and where workplace-based learning is designed and analysed.

## State of play – diversity of provision

Bengtsson (2013) identifies wide diversity in LLL provision in general. This is certainly the case with regard to University LLL. Over the period 2005–2012, EUCEN, with the support of the European Commission, undertook a number of projects (see www.eucen.eu for a full list) which included surveys of the development of LLL in universities. It should be noted that the responses did not constitute a representative sample of all European HEIs (given the diversity just mentioned this would be a very difficult task). The major bias is due to fact that data were produced by the projects' partners, many but not all of whom were members of EUCEN and therefore experienced or at the very least interested in developing LLL. We must therefore be wary of drawing general conclusions about all European universities from these results. Nevertheless, all data, case studies, visit reports and questionnaires were designed, collected and analysed in scientific ways. The most interesting aspect of the results is the light they shed on developments, trends and innovations in the field of ULLL (see for instance, Davies, 2009a).

A range of other studies have given similar results in some respects. In particular, studies and projects undertaken by the European University Association (EUA) have shown that universities have adopted different definitions and strategies to develop ULLL influenced by cultural and institutional factors and that they have established partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders in order to do this (see for example the Trends Report (Sursock and Smidt, 2010) and the SIRUS (Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies) project (Smidt and Sursock, 2011)).

Although many collaborative projects have been undertaken both within and between various European universities, diversity remains the overwhelming characteristic of the field (Davies, 2007; Davies, 2009*a*). This is apparent in a number of ways, not least in terms of nomenclature. Significantly, what is called 'lifelong learning' in one country might be called 'adult education', 'postgraduate studies' or 'continuing education' in others; and what is included under the label in one country may not be included in another. For example a bachelor's or master's degree with a professional orientation may be classified as LLL in one country but be part of the range of regular diploma courses in other countries. In some countries the label attaches to the provision, in others to the learners or target groups, and in others to the mode of delivery (full or part time, distance or on campus, academic or professional, customized/individualized or general).

The range and number of courses offered varies enormously. In some countries LLL includes services such as advice, careers guidance, alumni contacts, and validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL[3]), while in others such services are located elsewhere on the institutional map. The term 'VNFIL' itself covers a variety of approaches and practices and goes by a number of different names: 'validation' is sometimes replaced by 'recognition', 'accreditation', 'assessment' or 'certification'; 'learning' is sometimes replaced by 'competences', 'skills' or 'experience'. The target groups are diverse: individual learners; specific groups of learners such as the unemployed, women or migrants; and organizations of all kinds (public, private, not-for-profit, professional, cultural).

[3] VNFIL is an acronym used in Observal and Observal-Net EUCEN projects, building up a European Observatory of validation of non-formal and informal learning. It is similar to the RVA acronym used by UNESCO for recognition, validation and accreditation of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning.

All universities are involved in a range of partnerships with different kinds of stakeholders for reasons related to LLL development, such as the analysis and forecasting of training needs, the identification of target groups, and the marketing, promotion, delivery and evaluation of courses. Employers were reported in the EUCEN survey to be the most frequent partners; regional authorities and social partners were also very important. This is consistent with the fact that much of ULLL is professionally oriented, so employers and social partners are key players, alongside regional authorities who are responsible for professional and vocational training in many countries.

The way LLL is organized and managed varies between faculties of the same university, between universities in the same country, and between countries. Nevertheless, a number of different models can be identified. Some universities have their own special LLL unit, which may or may not be exclusively devoted to LLL; in others a particular department or faculty is responsible. Others rely on an external organization which is linked to and/or controlled by the university in some way (such as a foundation or university company). A hybrid model with a mix of approaches for different kinds of provision or service is also possible.

This diversity at all levels reflects the fact that universities usually have more than one purpose in offering LLL and that purposes vary between institutions. Common purposes include responding to the needs of the labour market, stimulating personal development by providing personal development programmes for postgraduates, encouraging the participation of non-traditional learners, attracting new groups into the university, meeting the needs of citizens in all aspects of life, supporting the social, cultural and economic development of the region, and/or seeking new sources of revenue.

Such diversity is clearly a source of great strength and richness for universities, stakeholders and learners alike. It demonstrates that institutions can be proactive and responsive, and can reach out to and meet the needs of learners and stakeholders far beyond the traditional constituency for higher education. However, this diversity might also be a weakness from the point of view of official agencies or politicians, since it is difficult to measure on a national or European level. If it cannot be counted or measured easily, how can its impact be demonstrated? How can it be 'valued'? How can it be made accountable? How can its quality be assured? If it is for everyone,

everywhere, anywhere, does it disappear in a mist? If it is 'all things to all men', how can it have a clear voice and how can that voice make itself heard? (Davies, 2009*a*).

## State of play – strategy development

What also emerges from these studies is that many HEIs have developed LLL provision in a largely *ad hoc*, responsive and opportunistic way (in both the positive and negative senses). In some countries there is a fairly strong national policy framework, often (e.g. in Austria, Belgium, France and Finland) significantly influenced by the HEIs that were already active in the field prior to its development. Similarly, institutional strategy has tended to develop one step behind practice. The survey conducted by the BeFlex Plus project (www.eucen.eu/BeFlexPlus/index.html) showed that although all respondents were offering LLL of some kind, only 13 % considered LLL strategy the top priority, 55 % considered it important along with other priorities, and 29 % considered it not yet a priority (Davies, 2009*b*). In 2010, the EUA Trends study (Sursock and Smidt, 2010) found that only 39 % of the responding universities were developing a strategy for LLL (the most advanced being in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, the UK, the Czech Republic and Lithuania). There is little evidence to show that ULLL provision has developed or expanded significantly since then. Whilst there are of course a number of reasons for this, it seems reasonable to postulate (coming back to Bengtsson, 2013) that the absence of a strong institutional strategy is among them.

Nevertheless, it does seem that some universities are becoming more engaged in developing a lifelong learning strategy. There are often powerful reasons for them to do so. A transversal in-depth analysis of ten European universities (de Viron et al., 2011*a*) undertaken as part of the ALLUME project (http://allume.eucen.eu) focused in part on the reasons why these universities had started to develop and implement an LLL strategy. The study found that the dominant external driver was societal pressure: the desire to be socially aware and active and to react to the needs of society and the nation. The second driver to develop an LLL strategy was the existence of a legal framework within which to do so: national, regional or local policies,

or a government decision. Six other reasons were identified; of these, the most frequently cited were markets (internationalization, globalization), the economic situation (crisis), and Europe (social fund, policies). It is noteworthy that in seven of the ten cases, the national or regional economic situation was thought to impact negatively rather than positively on the development of an LLL strategy.

Internal as well as external drivers for developing an LLL strategy were mentioned: the most frequently cited was the need to broaden access in order to respond better to demand. Many of the universities who cited this motivation saw it as their mission to increase the volume of LLL and/or adult learners. They also mentioned that the existence of a culture of LLL based on previous experience could act as an internal driver, and that changes in internal organization and structure could therefore be a positive factor in the process of developing an LLL strategy.

The European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning (EUA, 2008) identified a set of ten commitments from universities regarding the development and implementation of lifelong learning strategies and a set of matching commitments from governments and regional partners to support universities in their social engagement. The Charter has clearly had some impact on the development of LLL strategy at the institutional level. The SIRUS project led by EUA (http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area/projects/shaping-inclusive-and-responsive-university-strate.aspx) focused on the ten commitments from universities, while bearing in mind the role of governments and external partners. The project report (Smidt and Surcock, 2011) discussed the different developmental steps towards an integrated lifelong learning strategy:

- First comes the **adaptation stage,** in which universities design a continuing education strategy and develop and communicate an *ad hoc* service to administer it. At this stage universities are willing to respond to demand and to take into account external opportunities. Nevertheless, this continuing education strategy remains separate from the strategy concerning traditional activities. At this stage universities do not mention the concept of ULLL explicitly or try to define it.

- Second comes the **organizational stage,** in which universities try to integrate the LLL strategy into other strategic decisions. They create specific programmes for lifelong learners or adapt degree programmes in order to enlarge their audiences. Usually they also create services and specific units to attract and manage a broader pool of students.

- Third comes the **cultural stage,** in which LLL is fixed within the universities' DNA such that they consider themselves Lifelong Learning Universities. This implies a major cultural change within universities. In this ideal state of affairs, all learning initiatives are learner-centred; learning is shared, lifelong and lifewide; learning is valued wherever and whenever it takes place; and the experience of learning is enjoyable and rewarding. All stakeholders are engaged in the process as the LLL University is an open system. In addition, universities undertake research in the field of lifelong learning and practice organizational learning at all levels (Davies, 2009*a*).

It is clear that as yet there are few universities at the 'cultural stage'. Much remains to be done to create the strong institutional frameworks and strategies that are necessary to implement coherent and expanding LLL provision.

EUCEN (2009*a*) argues that it would be more efficient to take stock of the now well-documented diversity in LLL provision and to invite universities to concentrate their efforts on specific objectives in line with their individual competences and resources. In other words, diversity should be recognized and even celebrated. Universities should define their own strategy for LLL adapted to their particular environment and legal framework. They should prioritize their own development, academic and research strategies, and partnerships with international and regional stakeholders (including small, medium and multinational companies and enterprises). In addition, more attention should be paid to networking universities in order to involve as many actors as possible in the establishment of links with local populations for the promotion of sustainable development.

## Strategy and 'strategizing' – tools for strategy development

The difference between a university which has LLL (ULLL) and an LLL University (LLLU) is that the latter has LLL firmly embedded in its mission, strategy and culture. Through various European Commission supported projects, EUCEN, its partners, its member universities and the European professional community have built up a large set of methods and tools over the last ten years to help universities develop their own strategy to become LLLUs fully adapted to their environment and legal framework. Diversity is also a characteristic of this set: even if universities pursue the same global goal, different approaches and subgoals are developed in different contexts, all are attempting to contribute to the achievement of an LLLU.

We begin this section by presenting a schematic overview of the process of changing from University Lifelong Learning to Lifelong Learning Universities. We then set out our approach to strategy and strategizing, and describe some tools to support this approach. These are drawn mainly from the results of the ALLUME project (de Viron et al., 2011*a*).

### 1. The global process: how to become a Lifelong Learning University

We propose a conceptual map to present a global view of the whole process of change involved in 'becoming an LLL University' (Figure 1).

SCHEMATIC VIEW OF THE PROCESS OF 'BECOMING AN LLL UNIVERSITY' **Figure 1**

Figure 1 illustrates that the process of change is not linear but circular and recursive. In other words, it is an ongoing and continuing process. The phases described above – analysis of context and internal situation, design of objectives and action plans, operational development, implementation and monitoring of action plans – are the ones commonly agreed in the literature to be part of any change process, even if specific content or boundaries may vary (Johnson et al., 2011).

In this chapter we focus on the two first phases: strategic analysis and strategic planning. Nevertheless, 'strategy as practice' is a comprehensive approach which goes beyond these phases and includes the subsequent phases of development, implementation and monitoring. Strategy therefore plays a role in all phases.

## 2. The Strategy-as-Practice Approach

'Strategy is about how to reach a desirable future. This means firstly imagining the potential futures; secondly assessing which of these potential outcomes may be more desirable than others, and thirdly identifying ways and making decisions to influence the outcome in the desired direction.' (Durand, 2008, p. 281).

In order to design a vision and roadmap for the most desirable future, organizations usually undertake some form of diagnosis, self-analysis and benchmarking. The tools most often used for this are SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and/or environmental scanning, such as PESTEL analysis which considers political, economic, social and environmental factors. While strategic goals and objectives may vary from one university to another depending on their specific capacities and environment, the practices and activities involved in elaborating the strategy – the strategizing process – may be similar, so the methodology is transferable.

One of the main premises of this study is that the ways a strategy is elaborated are as important as the content of the strategy. Universities were invited not only to develop the content of their strategy – their vision, their objectives, their action plan – but also to set up an active, collaborative and permanent way of doing strategy: 'LLL strategizing' (de Viron et al., 2011*a*). This is aligned with the strategy-as-practice approach proposed by Whittington (1996, 2002), whereby strategy is seen as something that is *done* within an organization, rather than something an organization *has*. The 'strategy-as-practice' school of thought (Whittington 1996, 2003, 2006; Jarzab-

kowski, 2004) considers strategy a process carried out through concrete and formal actions such as team meetings, presentations and workshops. This is in line with the broader 'practice paradigm' in social science theory since the 1980s, which focuses more on 'people than on organizations, the routine as opposed to change, and situated activity rather than abstract processes' (Whittington, 2003, p. 118). This paradigm recommends focusing on the strategists themselves, i.e. the people engaged in the real work of strategizing ('strategizing' meaning 'doing strategy') (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007).

For the purposes of LLLU strategizing, the ALLUME project adapted a formal framework based on Whittington's approach (2003, pp. 119–121), but focusing on an institutional perspective (de Viron and Hesse, 2012). Five key questions were identified:

1. Why does the process of LLLU strategizing begin? What are the external and internal drivers of change?

2. Who are the people involved in LLLU strategizing? Who are the internal actors? What are their roles: are they doers, influential persons, researchers, decision makers? Who are the external actors? What are their roles?

3. How is the process of LLLU strategizing enacted and organized? Is it a formal or informal process? What is its level of development?

4. What are the tools and techniques used for LLLU strategizing?

5. How are the products of LLLU strategizing communicated?

The rationale behind the choice of the strategy-as-practice approach was partly to promote wide acceptance of major change within the institutions, to organize the cultural and organizational changes necessary, and to address resistance from internal and external stakeholders. However, the approach was also chosen in order to integrate the evolution of the strategic content right from the beginning. As mentioned above, due to the limits of the ALLUME project (in particular the time frame), the strategizing approach was

applied only to the design of the strategy: strategic analysis and strategic plan, the two first phases of the change process represented in Figure 1. The approach could also be adopted for the development, implementation and monitoring phases.

Using the strategy-as-practice approach and based on analysis of ten European universities and on testing in six other universities from a total of fourteen countries, a five-point approach was established for developing and implementing an LLLU strategy. The five points are not to be seen as linear or successive stages within the strategizing process, but rather as permanent guiding principles which are activated continuously during the process. These five principles are represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

FIVE PRINCIPLES IN THE LLLU STRATEGIZING PROCESS


1. **From a tacit, isolated and un-diffused strategy to an explicit, formulated, shared and communicated strategy**
   Independently of the position, role or function of the people involved in the 'strategizing' process, the strategy should be formulated explicitly and shared as much as possible with colleagues, institutional leaders, representatives of other institutional units, and external stakeholders. It should be communicated effectively both internally and externally in order to develop a shared vision for the future.

2. **Leadership to pilot the change**
   As complex organizations, universities should identify diverse leaders, all of whom play different roles in the LLL strategizing process. A strong unit specifically devoted to LLL to drive forward change and coordinate developments is an advantage.

3. **Sustainable commitment of senior managers, vice-chancellors, heads of faculties, LLL council and so on**
   The commitment of these institutional leaders is crucial to achieve sustainable development. This goes hand in hand with the creation of a shared vision of the future through strategic documents, concrete and measureable objectives, and plans to make these commitments binding.

4. **Use of existing tools**
   A large set of guidelines and tools has already been developed. There is no need to begin strategizing by designing new tools. The set of questions adapted from Whittington (2003), presented above, and the tools developed as a result of the ALLUME project provide a tried and tested starting point for this process and are flexible enough to support some degree of local adaptation.

5. **Recurrent and collaborative work within the institution**
   The strategy process, or 'strategizing', should be a continuous process subject to evolution in the internal or external environment (action plans may need to be revised or adapted; goals may need to be changed). The strategy process is also a collective task growing around a common vision of what an LLL University is and a common understanding of the challenges involved in becoming one. This recurrent and collective work can start at different levels of the university's organization; there is no single 'best' or 'unique' pathway. Universities must adapt their LLL strategy process to their specific circumstances, using the tools and techniques available. They must decide on the approach to be used and on concrete actions

to be taken. Independently of the origin and direction of the LLL strategy process (top-down, bottom-up or middle-bottom-top), the LLL strategizing process should be undertaken at an institutional level and should be formally inscribed in the university's statutes. A great deal of dialogue is required in any strategy process. This could mean face-to-face discussion, focus group meetings, brainstorming or web-based dialogue as suggested by Kettunen (2010) in the context of a general HEI strategy.

## 3. Support tools for LLLU strategy

During the strategy process (more specifically, during activities such as self-analysis, benchmarking, objectives and action plan definition), the ALLUME project developed tools with which European universities can share their experiences with regard to LLLU strategizing. These tools[4] are intended to be reflexive in nature and to support universities in developing a lifelong learning culture and designing a lifelong learning strategy adapted to their specific needs. They also assist universities with the practical implementation of LLL by inviting them and other LLL actors to formulate concrete action plans in areas such as curriculum development, guidance and counselling, student recruitment strategy, community outreach, and designing the corporate governance of the university's social interaction.

Two tools were proposed for self-analysis and self-diagnosis and a third for benchmarking. The first self-analysis tool is dedicated to identifying and monitoring the LLLU strategy *process*: the strategizing. It invites universities to analyse in detail their way of 'doing' strategies. Based mainly on the questions set out above, it helps to identify the key internal and external actors involved in the strategizing process and the individual steps to be taken in enacting a strategy. This tool has a strong internal organization focus and helps universities to adapt to the five-point approach.

The second self-analysis tool is dedicated to the *content* of the strategy. It assists universities in arriving at an overview of their current LLL strategy, mission, vision and goals. Furthermore, it invites institutions to select three priorities which are key for the next five years and to work in detail on them,

[4] These and other related tools developed by EUCEN, EUA and other European partnerships are available on the EUCEN website (www.eucen.eu).

leading to a revision of the current LLL strategy and the formulation of an action plan.

The third tool invites universities to benchmark their performance against the ten institutional commitments of the European Universities' Charter on LLL (EUA, 2008). It also suggests further areas for improvement, encouraging universities to use this tool in combination with the second tool (for self-analysis of content) with a view to selecting priorities for the future.

These tools were developed on the basis of existing good practice in ten universities and on the insights and suggestions for improvement obtained during six testing visits to other institutions with less advanced LLL strategies (a total of sixteen HEIs in fourteen countries were involved). During the validation process in the testing phase, the supportive character of the process and the guidelines was recognized and appreciated. Three testing institutions confirmed that this supported institutional efforts to speed up discussions and to move LLL closer to the forefront of the university's concerns.

## 4. Conclusions and perspectives

It is clear that LLL is widely accepted as an important element of higher education in Europe, that most universities have implemented it in some form, and that its key characteristic is diversity. While this diversity presents challenges in the context of national and European policy making, it is also LLL's great strength, since it reflects the specificity of universities' relationships with their learners and stakeholders. However, as the national and European policy context shifts ('social dimension' is becoming the new term of choice rather than 'lifelong learning' in some circles (see for example EC, 2013, pp. 20–21)), it is not obvious that the elements are in place for institutions to become what we have called *lifelong learning universities*, or that this is happening on a large scale. As we have argued above, LLL activities have tended to be introduced in a responsive but rather *ad hoc* way, with strategy coming only later (if at all) when further development necessitates a more coherent, institution-wide approach.

Together with stakeholders' resistance, the absence of an integrated strategy for LLL is one of the key explanatory factors in the apparent slowing of progress. For a large majority of universities, LLL strategy appears not to be the highest priority; instead, it is seen as something to be managed alongside

many other priorities. Even in countries where there are national ministerial recommendations regarding LLL, the lack of a national and/or legal framework often constitutes an obstacle to implementation.

Despite these challenges, some internal and external stakeholders are aware of the need to change and indeed often act as drivers for change. Furthermore, we have shown that, despite claims to the contrary, there is in fact a wide range of tried and tested approaches available to address the challenges identified.

Looking again at the issues and challenges regarding LLLU, we can immediately conclude that time is a pre-requisite for developing an LLLU strategy. In all the universities which have either a well-established LLLU strategy or intensive ULLL activity, it was apparent that the design and implementation of a strategy are labour-intensive processes. However, time alone is insufficient: there is an obvious need for further work. In what follows we offer our agenda for the future.

Firstly, we propose that instead of developing yet more tools in yet more projects, we (as a professional community) should focus on strengthening the existing tools and methodologies whose efficacy has already been proven, and use these to develop a more holistic and coherent package of support for institutions. We need to consider how the tools relate to each other in order to understand and exploit their complementarity (a packaging issue). We also need to reinforce their consistency and consider making them available in more languages.

Secondly, we need to support the recurrence of the LLL process. This means constantly improving the tools to enhance the dynamic nature of the process (at present the tools mostly provide snapshots, i.e. they are based on one picture at one time).

Thirdly, we should do more to support the collaborative aspect of the process. This means improving functionalities such as networking and developing tutoring, mentoring, and the exchange of experience between universities with similar interests and strategies. The national and European networks have an important role to play here.

Fourthly, we need to develop monitoring and evaluation of existing ULLL strategies (both content and process) and of their integration in different academic settings. Although feedback on the testing and use of existing tools is almost unanimously positive, we have as yet no clear evidence for the long

term effectiveness of collaborative strategizing. There is therefore a comparative research agenda to be addressed and a link to be established with national evaluation and accreditation agencies.

Finally, we need to consider the financial dimensions of LLL and the implications for institutions of the cultural shift we have explored.

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# 3

# THE SOCIAL EFFICIENCY OF TERTIARY LIFELONG LEARNING: INITIAL INSIGHTS FROM A EUROPEAN RESEARCH PROJECT

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## Abstract

Today's working population is going through a noticeable transition: people are working to a much older age. This is due partly to the acceleration of the ageing process and partly to policies which delay the age of retirement. This shift raises a number of questions about how to engage older people in lifelong learning. This chapter makes some suggestions as to how Tertiary Lifelong Learning (TLLL) can contribute to the well-being of older learners, and how European Union universities might therefore respond to the increasing demands for lifelong learning. We present the project 'Tertiary Higher Education for People in Mid-life' (THEMP), an investigation that analyzed TLLL provided by universities in seven EU member states. Focusing on relevant labour market programmes and on the age of the participants, the project evaluated how these programmes impact on the participants' employability and quality of life.

This chapter further aims to check how viable the THEMP conceptual framework is for analysing the social efficiency of TLLL. The THEMP project found that the integration of universities as providers of lifelong learning for labour markets continues to pose challenges, and that for adult learners, innovation in learning and teaching approaches is a priority. There are indications that an older age group is increasingly interested in TLLL and that universities should therefore consider designing programmes to respond to this demand. We found that adult learners' cost/benefit calculations are strongly oriented to the labour market, and that the exchange of cultural and social capital is becoming more and more important in this respect.

## Introduction[1]

Learning has always been recognized as a means to improve personal quality of life (Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, 2008; OECD, 2012), and as one of the most effective tools for fighting social exclusion. Learning is particularly important in order to achieve certain labour market positions: one essential means of achieving well-being. In the globalized knowledge society, work environments are changing quickly, requiring proactive and reactive measures from citizens and enterprises in adapting their knowledge, capacities and competences. In this respect, European Union (EU) Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) play an important role in providing Tertiary LLL (TLLL) opportunities (see for example, Knapper and Cropley, 1985; Knust and Hanft, 2009; Schuetze and Slowey, 2000 and 2012).

This chapter presents the THEMP project, which targeted the TLLL provided by universities in seven EU member states. The project focused on relevant labour market programmes and on the specific cohort of learners aged 40 and above. Rather than limiting its remit to issues of employability and access to the labour market, it considered the wider impact of learning provided by HE on the overall quality of life of the learners.

The THEMP project was aligned with the European Commission's *Action Plan for Adult Education* which argues that member states should 'invest in education and training for older people and migrants, two categories with enormous potential yet who often face disadvantage in the labour market' (EC, 2007). The project asked: How can EU universities respond to increasing demands for LLL, and how does tertiary lifelong learning contribute to the well-being of learners in mid-life?

In this chapter we first discuss the conceptual framework used to analyse the social efficiency of TLLL. We consider TLLL an important tool to prevent, cope with, and mitigate social risks in an ageing knowledge society. We then give some insight into the European TLLL landscape, taking seven EU countries (the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and the UK) as examples. We present an initial case study from each of the countries and provide a summary of the results. This allows us to make a first reflection on how successful our conceptual framework is at measuring the social efficiency of TLLL.

[1] The authors would like to acknowledge financial support from the European Union under the Life Learning Programme (51169-LLP-1–2010–1-ES-KA1-KA1SCR).

## Measuring Social Efficiency[2]

In the past few decades, 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 citizens in education and training is seen as key to assuring quality of life and work. As such, it has become part of active labour market policies which aim to transform the European social 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, p. 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 and Auer, 1997). This approach links social risk management in transitional work periods with concepts of social equity dating back to Rawls (1971) and further developed by Sen (1999 and 2010) and Nussbaum (2007 and *2007a*). The TLM approach stresses the role of public institutions in managing situations of social risk, promoting proactive flexible public actions to avoid individual social risk, and reinforcing the qualitative rather than merely the quantitative dimension of labour market policies. It thus provides a framework for identifying specific social risk situations (transitions) and offers ways to mitigate the negative impacts of life changes.

During involuntary transitional periods, citizens should be able to count on different forms of institutional support, for instance direct financial support or the funding and organizing of LLL activities. However, in this regard, only institutionally supported formal LLL activities with a clear labour market orientation are considered part of transitional labour markets. Such university programmes for adult learners have considerable potential to help people manage life and labour market transitions. Table 1 provides a classification of labour market transitions based on a distinction between internal and external labour markets.

The TLM approach can therefore be seen as an effective 'social bridge' that prevents individuals from becoming trapped in exclusionary transitions.

[2] This section is a resumé of the conceptual framework exposed in three discussion papers elaborated by Krüger, Duch and Alvarez (available at www.themp.eu).

It increases the probability that, for example, non-standard jobs become 'stepping stones' to sustainable career jobs (Räisänen and Schmid, 2008).

Table 1

SITUATION OF LABOUR MARKET TRANSITIONS

| INTERNAL LABOUR MARKET |
| --- |
| • Adaptation to changes at the individual workplace<br>• Personal development<br>• Vertical professional development<br>• Horizontal professional development (from one workplace to another at the same level) |
| **EXTERNAL LABOUR MARKET** |
| • From unemployment to employment<br>• From one employment to another<br>• From one employment status to another |

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 occur.[3] Social vulnerability, on the other hand, is a measure of an individual's responsiveness – in short, whether one is limited to *responding* to a risk situation when it occurs, or whether one has the capacity to act *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, insufficient knowledge of socio-economic developments limits citizens' capacity to prevent future labour market risk situations. Further limited action capacity restricts citizens' ability to avoid (or stimulate) undesired (or desired) labour situations, to act proactively in advance of potential negative events, or to react.

[3] An example is the situation where an enterprise steps into a critical situation because of risky management decisions which are not communicated to the employees. The managers have knowledge about the possibility that these decisions could have a negative impact on the economic situation of the enterprise; for them it is a risk situation. However, the workers, who know only about the high productivity of the enterprise, do not have complete knowledge of the situation; they are exposed to a situation of social danger.

In order to measure the efficiency of TLLL programmes beyond the labour market and in a life-wide perspective, the TLM approach suggests a link to theories of social justice. Such theories have recently been expanded and developed under the heading of the *capability approach*. This perspective, especially in Sen's articulation, allows measurement of the quality of social insurance programmes beyond rates of active participation or employment, focusing instead on the quality of work and life. It comes 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.[4]

One main way to obtain resources is through the labour market, but an individual's 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 learners' qualifications and to provide them with new knowledge, thus supporting intellectual development and facilitating new social relations. However, seen through a labour market lens, achieved learning outcomes must be converted into resources: in other words, into human, cultural and social capital.[5] This involves a complex process of social bargaining in specific labour market fields. Such TLLL-acquired capital (or *capabilities* in Sen's terms) may open or restrict 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).

[4] Sen criticized the resource-based approach on the grounds that it ties resources to the aims of social and employment policies. But the resources can only be used to achieve other goals (or, in Sen's terminology, *functionings*).

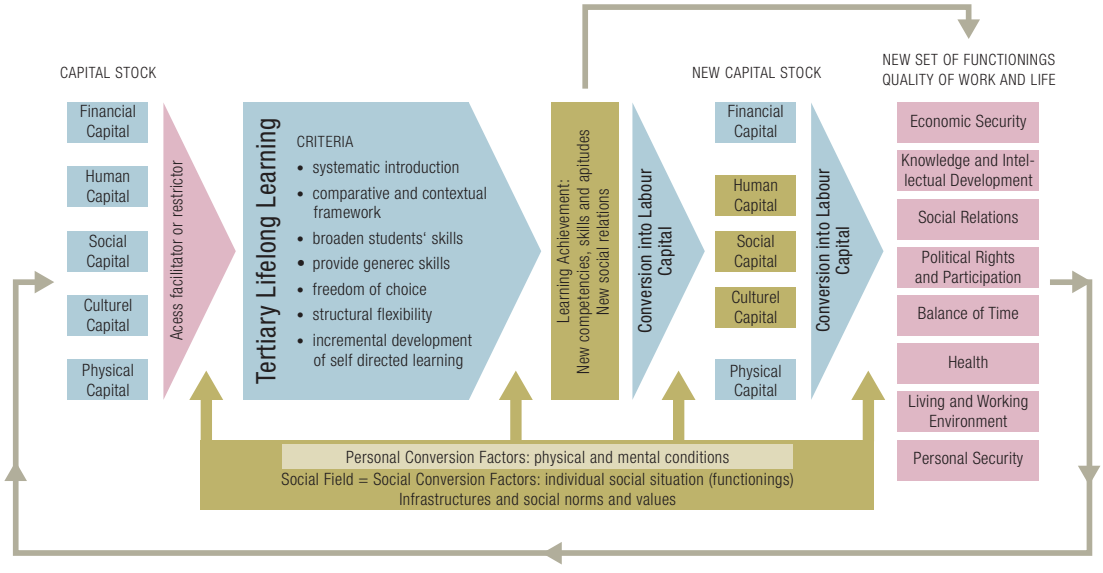
[5] Besides physical and financial capital, we refer to three types of capital that occupy prominent places in the social science debates: i) *Human capital* (Becker, 1964); ii) *Cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 1983 and 2005). It seems difficult to make a clear distinction between human and cultural capital. The two approaches are quite different in theoretical orientation, but both refer to the acquisition and use of knowledge, skills, competences and aptitudes during the course of life, with particular emphasis on 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*, defined by Bourdieu as individual investment in social relations or networks. This is also part of the definitions of Putnam and Coleman, who include additional elements such as trust and norms. We view these elements as forming part of the social fields (Bourdieu, 1979 and 1988) in which human action is embedded (Granovetter, 1985).

We will use the familiar 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 each individual's capital stock. An individual's capital stock and its valuation in labour market segments defines that individual's labour market position and occupational opportunities. Figure 1 shows the complex interrelation between capital accumulation, capability development, learning outcome and quality of life in a given socio-economic context.

It seems clear that, in order 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) their capacity to design adequate lifelong learning programmes; (ii) the institutional and financial support they provide to socially vulnerable persons in life and work transitions; and (iii) their capacity to adapt their own internal structures and procedures to new requirements on the part of the adult population and to changed labour market conditions.

Figure 1

TERTIARY LIFELONG LEARNING TO CHANGE
INDIVIDUALS' CAPITAL STOCK AND QUALITY OF WORK AND LIFE



## The European landscape

Within the European Social Model (ESM) there are multiple national, political, social and economic realities. For instance, the European labour market is nationally differentiated by labour legislation, systems of collective bargaining and economic structures. These national, regional and sectoral labour markets constitute social fields, which determine access to TLLL and the conversion of learning outcomes into economic, physical, human, social or cultural capital.

Sapir (2005) proposes a classification of EU countries into four categories based on two concepts: efficiency and equity (see Table 2).

Table 2

A TYPOLOGY OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODELS

| | | EFFICIENCY | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | LOW | HIGH |
| EQUITY | HIGH | Continentals (AT; BE, **CZ**; **DE**; FR, LU) | Nordic (DK, FL, **NL**, S) |
| | LOW | Mediterranean (**ES, HU**, GR, **IT**, P, PL) | Anglo-Saxon (IRE, **UK**) |

*Source: Sapir (2005, p. 9)*

Note: Bold type indicates the countries under scrutiny by the THEMP project

Without discussing these categories in more depth, this model demonstrates the considerable differences between the EU member states, as well as certain characteristics that some countries share. The sample of the countries under scrutiny by the THEMP project includes at least one country in each of Sapir's categories.

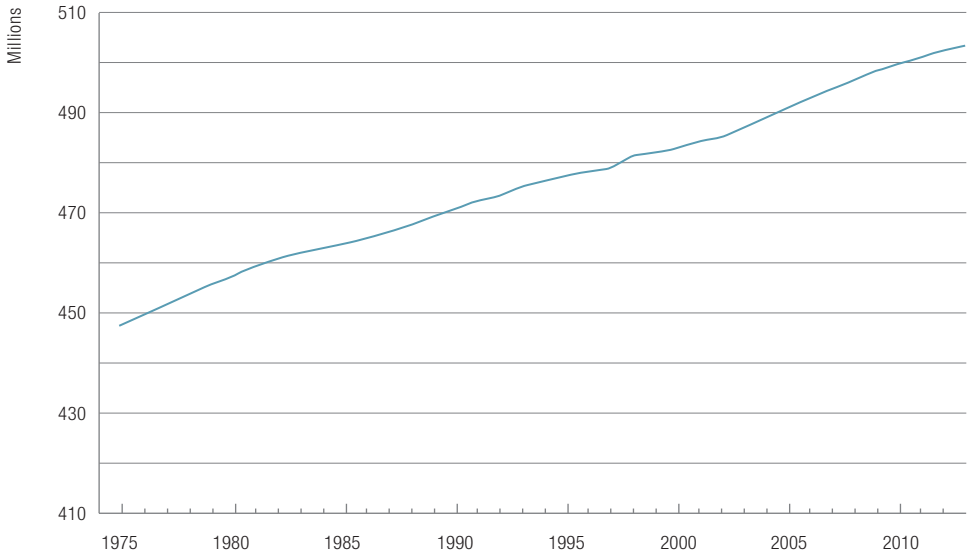
## Ageing of the European working population

Demographic trends show that the population of the EU-27 is growing and ageing. A turning point occurred in the early 1990s, when net migration became the main driver of population growth. It has since far outpaced natural change in the population. The impact of demographic ageing within the EU

is likely to be of major significance in the coming decades. Consistently low fertility rates and higher life expectancy are transforming the shape of the EU-27's age pyramid. The most important change is likely to be the transition towards a much older population.

Figure 2

THE EVOLUTION OF THE EU'S POPULATION, 1975–2011



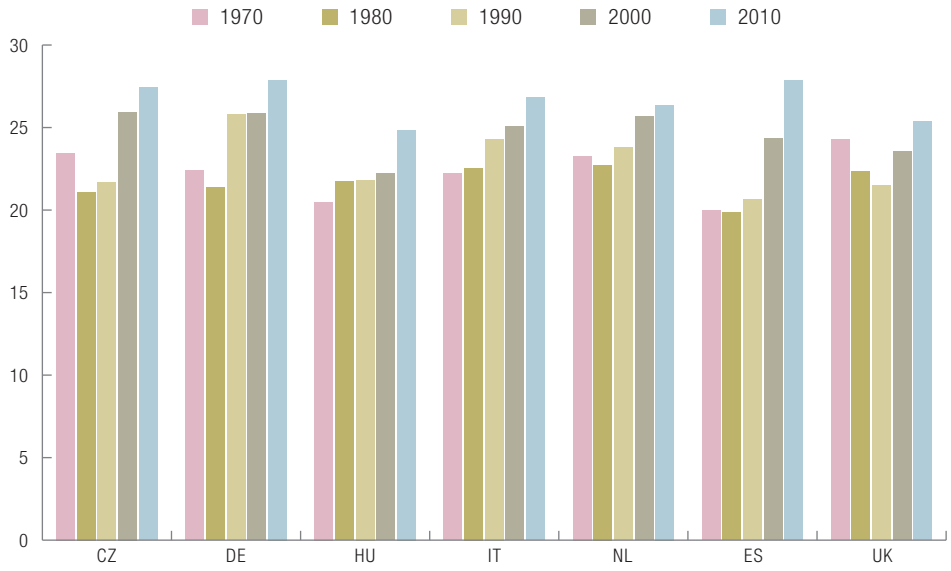

*Source: Eurostat*

As a result of today's ageing process and of the policies adopted by the EU and its member states to extend the age of retirement, the proportion of working people aged 45–64 will increase significantly in the coming decades (see EC, 2012). This simple fact will have deep consequences for the labour market. 'In OECD countries, less than 60 % of the people aged 50–64 have a job, on average. For prime-age people, between 25 and 49, the share in work is 75 %. If nothing is done, there could be one person employed for every retiree in EU Countries by 2050. As a result, the labour market could shrink by nearly 15 % in the EU-15 over the next five decades.' (Delsa Newsletter, OECD, 2006). It is thus of the utmost importance that EU countries find ways to strengthen the occupational share of the older segment of their workforce, and to change the fact that people above the age of 50 are often the last to be hired and the first to be fired (OECD).

In the THEMP countries, the segment of people in mid-life has risen from an average of 22 % of the total population in 1970 to 27 % in 2010. The growth rate of this group has accelerated since 1990, when the THEMP countries' average was a mere 23 % (Figure 3).

Figure 3

EVOLUTION OF THE SHARE OF POPULATION AGED 45–64 IN THE THEMP COUNTRIES, 1970–2010.




*Source: Eurostat*

Despite strong differentials, activity rates among THEMP countries have increased, on average, from 2000 to 2010. They are positively affected by education level, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

ACTIVITY RATES OF POPULATION AGED 45–64
BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED

| | ISCED 0–2* | | ISCED 3–4 | | ISCED 5–6 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2010 | 2000 | 2010 | 2000 | 2010 |
| EU-27 | 50.6 | 54.2 | 54.9 | 62.4 | 80.6 | 82.6 |
| CZECH REPUBLIC | 48.4 | 47.6 | 67.5 | 67.4 | 86.0 | 86.2 |
| GERMANY | 48.1 | 59.9 | 55.1 | 73.0 | 79.3 | 86.9 |
| SPAIN | 50.2 | 59.1 | 41.8 | 55.8 | 81.6 | 83.5 |
| ITALY | 41.2 | 45.8 | 43.3 | 53.4 | 80.6 | 81.8 |
| HUNGARY | 30.0 | 39.1 | 51.5 | 54.5 | 76.6 | 75.2 |
| NETHERLANDS | 47.7 | 58.2 | 55.3 | 64.4 | 77.3 | 83.5 |
| UNITED KINGDOM | 64.1 | 57.3 | 62.1 | 68.4 | 84.7 | 82.5 |

*Source: Eurostat*

*ISCED is the International Standard Classification of Education 1997. It established seven educational levels, 0–6, which are often aggregated to three: low, medium and high. 'Low educated' covers levels 0 (pre-primary education), 1 (primary education or first stage of basic education), and 2 (lower secondary education or second stage of basic education). 'Medium educated' covers levels 3 (upper secondary education) and 4 (post-secondary non-tertiary education). 'Highly educated' covers levels 5 (first stage of tertiary education) and 6 (second stage of tertiary education).

Not only does education impact on participation in the labour market; it also serves as a protection against unemployment. Table 4 shows the unemployment rates of people aged 45–64 in the different THEMP countries according to their education level. Once more, we see that more highly educated individuals are better protected against labour market risks and thus have lower unemployment rates.

Table 4

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES OF POPULATION AGED 45–64
BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED

| | ISCED 0–2 | | ISCED 3–4 | | ISCED 5–6 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2010 | 2000 | 2010 | 2000 | 2010 |
| EU-27 | 8.4 | 10.9 | 7.0 | 6.6 | 3.7 | 3.5 |
| CZECH REPUBLIC | 14.4 | 18.0 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 2.6 | 1.9 |
| GERMANY | 14.1 | 13.4 | 9.9 | 7.1 | 5.6 | 3.3 |
| SPAIN | 11.0 | 20.3 | 8.1 | 12.7 | 3.6 | 6.7 |
| ITALY | 6.5 | 6.8 | 2.7 | 3.4 | 0.7 | 1.5 |
| HUNGARY | 7.1 | 18.9 | 4.5 | 8.4 | 1.2 | 2.2 |
| NETHERLANDS | 2.8 | 4.7 | 2.2 | 3.7 | 2.0 | 2.9 |
| UNITED KINGDOM | 5.1 | 7.2 | 4.2 | 4.9 | 2.7 | 3.1 |

*Source: Eurostat*

Lower activity rates and higher unemployment rates for people aged 45–64 with lower levels of education imply a greater social risk for this age group. Table 5 shows the change in the share of the population in this age group that faces the risk of poverty or social exclusion by activity status and education level. The data shows a clear disadvantage for the unemployed. On average, the share of middle-aged people in THEMP countries over a five year-period (2005–2010) who face some risk of poverty or social exclusion has increased by 1.4 %, while the share of employed people in this age group has decreased by 1.3 %. At the country level, in four out of the seven THEMP countries the risk of social exclusion is greater in 2010 than it was in 2005. The opposite is true in the case of the employed, where the risk has decreased (with the exception of two countries, Germany and Spain).

Table 5

## CHANGE IN POPULATION AGED 50–64 AT RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION BY EDUCATION LEVEL AND ACTIVITY STATUS, 2005–2010

| | Change 2005-2010 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Employed | Unemployed | ISCED 0-2 | ISCED 5-6 |
| EU-27 | -4.6 | 3.6 | -8.0 | -1.9 |
| CZECH REPUBLIC | -0.7 | -7.6 | 0.6 | -1.6 |
| GERMANY | 1.3 | 21.4 | 8.3 | -2.7 |
| SPAIN | 2.8 | 8.3 | 4.6 | 1.9 |
| ITALY | -1.0 | 0.8 | -2.1 | 1.1 |
| HUNGARY | -5.6 | 6.2 | 2.1 | -1.2 |
| NETHERLANDS | -1.1 | -9.1 | -4.6 | -4.1 |
| UNITED KINGDOM | -1.3 | -12.7 | -1.4 | -0.5 |

*Source: Eurostat*

Note: A negative sign represents a decrease in the share of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

A similar picture emerges from education figures. On average, the share of 50 to 64-year-olds in THEMP countries facing some risk of poverty or social exclusion was lower in 2010 than in 2005 for those who have attained education levels equivalent to ISCED 5–6, but higher for those with ISCED 0–2.

In short, ageing and changes in labour market policies pose specific difficulties to people in mid-life, who become a vulnerable population segment. Education proves to be an effective way to mitigate this specific social risk.

## The TLLL landscape[6]

TLLL as well as LLL is rooted in a wider European tradition of adult education that can be traced back to the 19*th* century in most countries and even earlier in some (see Osborne and Thomas, 2003). Three main strands can be identified:

- **General Education:** offers a second chance for those who could not follow the traditional pathways to vocational or higher education (e. g. special examinations or courses for adults to access higher education).

- **Socio-cultural education:** offered to adults learning for personal interest in addition to traditional credit-bearing students (e. g. University of the Third Age and Liberal Adult Education).

- **Continuous Vocational Education and Training:** intended to improve the performance of individuals in their workplace and/or raise their position in the labour market (e.g. professional master's courses and other short course provisions).

A clear description of the TLLL and LLL landscape is difficult due to the fact that much of this type of education and training is located in the intersection between the education system and the labour market itself. It must therefore answer to educational as well as to economic requirements. Furthermore, because LLL is conceived as a key element of social policy in the sense of activation, political responsibility for it is often distributed between several ministries. In general, ministries of education are in charge of formal systems of initial education and training, but ministries of labour manage the vocational education and training subsystems which offer courses for the unemployed. Additionally, in some EU member states, responsibility for HE is decentralized (in Germany and Spain, for instance, HE is the responsibility of the individual regions). Neither can we talk about a homogeneous higher education system in the United Kingdom, whose systems are handled by its constituent countries.

[6] For further details see Makó, Csizmadia and Illéssy (2012) and Krüger (2012), but also the national reports available at www.themp.eu.

Focusing only on the vocational stream of TLLL, its development must be analysed in relation to regulated higher vocational education and training. In countries like the Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy, higher professional training pathways are provided by non-university HEIs. In Spain, too, higher vocational training is now considered part of HE, but these programmes are delivered at vocational training schools. This means that in these countries we can observe a more or less clear distinction between vocational and academic higher education, which of course takes place at universities.[7] But, as the Spanish case shows, the boundaries are often blurred. This increasing heterogeneity in formal higher education is complemented by an even more diverse and complex system of continuous vocational education and training.

Compared to the formal initial education and training systems, systems of adult education seem more regulated by market mechanisms, allowing them to respond flexibly to labour market demands. In this sense, adult education systems are oriented not only to companies' but also to individuals' needs. They offer a complementary educational package which often aims to improve students' labour market opportunities. Adult education also seems more flexible with respect to financing, since its various systems combine different sources. In general, we can distinguish three different types of (T)LLL funding:

- **Public funding** includes direct funding of public institutions and specific programmes.[8] This also refers to funding of education and training activities by social security through the contributions of workers and enterprises, or other state funds assigned to training measures for unemployed and employed persons.[9] In this category we also include several public fund-

[7] This separation is in fact even more fluid, as is shown by the example of the German *Fachhochschulen* (in English: Universities of Applied Science) which are now claiming the right to award accredited PhD degrees.

[8] For example, the *Workforce Development Programme* of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

[9] For instance in Spain, where these funds are managed by the Ministry of Labour and its institutions. Another example is Italy, where the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies allocates the resources among the Regions and Autonomous Provinces and distributes funds to them. In Germany, the National Employment Agency contributes substantial funds to the training activities of unemployed persons.

ing arrangements managed by private entities (UK), tax credits that employers and individual employees receive when they invest in education and training (Netherlands) or vouchers (Italy). Last but not least, we must mention that the European Social Fund plays an important role in all countries in funding training activities, especially for unemployed people.

- **Semi-public funding** refers to funds managed jointly by public administrations and social actors such as entrepreneur associations and trade unions, or only by the social actors themselves but supervised by governmental agencies. These funds are generally based on contributions from enterprises and workers, with complementary funding by the state.[10]

- **Private funding** refers, for example, to the funding of in-house training programmes by a company or external programmes funded by participation fees. It also covers learners' own financial contributions. In this category we also include the creation of corporate universities, which in some European countries have achieved certain relevance.

## Enterprises and TLLL: the Spanish case

Before presenting the case studies in detail, it is worth mentioning an important actor in the field of tertiary lifelong learning: the enterprises. At European level, there is limited research overall concerning the attitude of enterprises towards the learning possibilities offered by universities. For this reason, we refer in what follows only to the Spanish situation. In spite of this limitation to one country, we think that the opinions of managers of Spanish enterprises permit of some general conclusions about the attitudes of enterprises towards university lifelong learning.

[10] The tripartite foundation in Spain (*La Fundación Tripartita para la Formación en el Empleo*) is an example of this category, as are the Joint Inter-professional Funds in Italy and Labour Market Fund in Hungary. In the Netherlands there are collective agreements to finance continuous vocational education and training by Education and Development Funds.

The results of a survey carried out in 2010 (Fundación CYD, 2010) show that in that year, 15 % of Spanish enterprises took advantage of non-customized training courses offered by universities. Only 4 % of enterprises used tailor-made programmes. Amongst those who did not use the general training programmes provided by universities, 38 % did not know that such services existed. Another 23 % knew that universities offered this service but did not consider them as training providers. 23 % mentioned that the third most relevant reason for not taking up provision was that the programmes offered by the universities were not suitable for the enterprise. Table 7 shows figures subdivided into responses relating to general and tailor-made programmes.

Table 7

REASONS FOR NOT USING THE TLLL PROGRAMMES (% OF ANSWERS)

| REASONS | GENERAL PROGRAMMES | TAILOR-MADE PROGRAMMES |
|---|---|---|
| Did not know that the university offers this service | 38 | 43 |
| Knew about this service but not how to access it | 1 | 1 |
| Didn't consider the university as a training provider | 23 | 24 |
| Unsuitable courses or programmes offered | 23 | 16 |
| Inadequate conditions | 9 | 6 |
| Courses too expensive | 2 | 5 |
| Other | 3 | 2 |
| No response | 1 | 3 |

*Source: Fundación CYD (2010)*

Another series of question asked the enterprises their opinions on the relevance of different lifelong learning providers. In Table 8 we can see that the university is regarded as one of the least important providers, occupying the penultimate place. The most important providers, according to the managers, are their own human resource departments (HRD) followed by consultants, centres of continuous vocational training and entrepreneur associations. It is perhaps no surprise to observe that HRDs are by far the most used provider.

Table 8

TRAINING PROVIDERS OF SPANISH ENTERPRISES (% OF POSSIBLE ANSWERS)

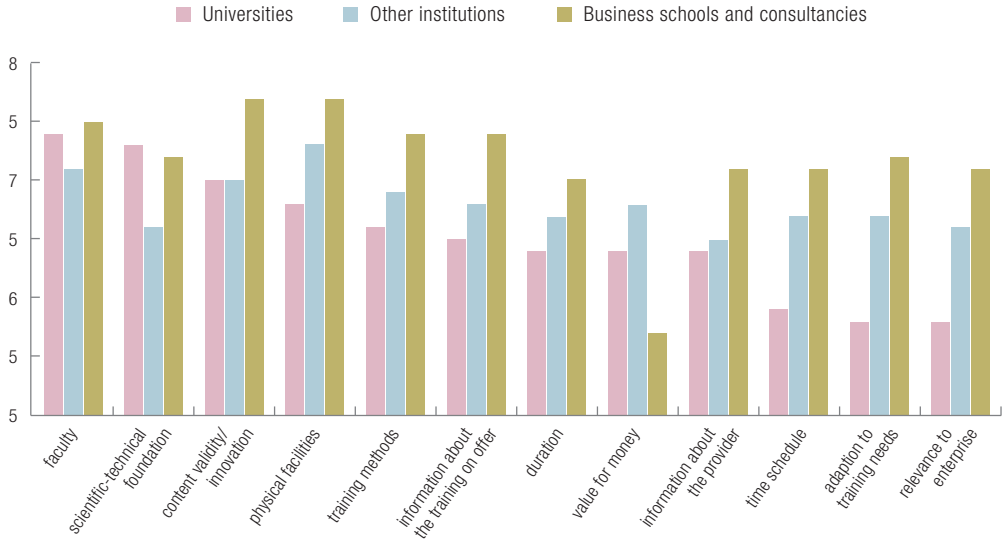
| | SELECTION | RECURRENCY |
|---|---|---|
| Own department responsible for training | 63 | 64 |
| Business Schools | 41 | 27 |
| Consultancy Enterprises | 60 | 26 |
| University | 25 | 25 |
| Centres of Continuous Vocational Training | 46 | 28 |
| Chambers of Commerce | 38 | 28 |
| Entrepreneur Associations, Professional Associations, etc. | 45 | 32 |
| Trade unions | 14 | 18 |
| Providers of equipment or materials | 39 | 34 |
| Mother company or linked companies | 24 | 39 |

*Source: Fundación CYD (2010)*

In a previous study (Parellada and Sanromá, 2001), Spanish enterprises were asked to evaluate several aspects of the continuing training offered by universities in comparison with other providers such as enterprises, training centres and (in particular) business schools and consultancies (see Figure 4). In nine of the twelve dimensions the universities received a worse evaluation than the other providers (especially with respect to adaption to training needs, training hours and relevance to the enterprise). The universities stood out only in terms of the technical-scientific foundation of their courses and faculty.

Figure 4

EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF TRAINING OFFERED IN 12 DIMENSIONS




*Source: Parellada and Sanromá (2001)*

The differences are particularly evident when universities are compared with business schools and consultancies, their direct competitors. Universities score higher than business schools and consultancies in only two dimensions: value for money and the technical-scientific foundation of courses. Even though the survey was carried out eight years ago, it seems that the situation has not changed substantially.

In a nutshell, the surveys from 2010 and similar surveys carried out in 2004 (Fundación CYD, 2005) demonstrate that universities are a long way from being among the most important players in this field. This indicates that Spanish universities still have not found their role in the lifelong learning market, despite being major providers of education and training. It is not clear whether the managers of enterprises in other European countries hold similar opinions to those expressed by the Spanish managers. If the Spanish case is anything to go by, it is safe to conclude that, in spite of official declarations of the importance of their third mission and of lifelong learning, universities have not yet met the needs of the economic and productive structure, nor have they established close relations with the labour market by giving support to the activities of enterprises.

## Insights from the first case studies[11]

The aim of this section is to present the distinguishing features the tertiary lifelong learning systems in the THEMP countries. This first sample of programmes shows a wide range of themes, including:

- a four-semester training school for consultants (Czech Republic);
- a tailor made five-module programme for people working in public affairs (Netherlands);
- a three-semester training programme for members of work councils (Germany);
- a university specialized in business affairs offering non-university two-year advanced vocational programmes (Hungary);
- postgraduate programmes for further specialization and master's programmes (Hungary);
- an orientation skills programme for people undergoing labour market transitions (Italy);
- a two-year programme on Human Resource Management (Spain); and
- a three-year full degree programme on Community Work (United Kingdom).

In the creation and promotion of these programmes universities are often cooperating with external actors, including enterprises, professional associations, public administration or trade unions. Obvious examples are the

[11] This is based on the presentations of the first case studies made at the First Mutual Learning Seminar of the Project THEMP. For further details see the proceedings of this seminar (available at www.themp.eu).

Czech, Dutch, German, Spanish and Italian courses, each of which features strong cooperation with external actors.

Although this selection of programmes is not representative, it does provide examples of courses where many of the learners are middle-aged. These programmes were selected to test the previously described methodology for measuring social efficiency. Even if they are not integrated in the HEI's overall strategy, the selected courses and their diversity still give insights into European TLLL programmes. As was expected, most of the courses are not aimed specifically at the 40+ age group. Nevertheless, in the Italian and Dutch cases the majority of learners come from this age cohort, and in all the other cases it represents a considerable proportion of the learners.

We will now outline some of the structural dimensions of TLLL provision, focusing on four issues: institutional integration, labour market orientation, teaching staff and methods, and funding.

## Institutional integration

TLLL provision at universities in the THEMP countries tends to cover the whole range of adult education mentioned previously. However, TLLL is not always managed by the same administrative unit that is responsible for labour market oriented courses. We have observed a wide range of possibilities for the integration of TLLL. Some institutions integrate it into their normal university structure, whilst others externalize it. Examples of the integrative approach include:

- The Dutch programme: Focusing on the public sector, this programme is offered by a TLLL centre which is integrated into the university structure and forms part of a faculty.

- The Hungarian university: This university, which specializes in business affairs, has integrated the management of TLLL programmes into their main structure in the form of an Adult and Further Training Centre.

- The Czech university, whose Faculty of Arts has expanded to include a centre of further education which organizes all TLLL-related activities.

- The UK university, which has developed a customized undergraduate degree programme in Community Development to serve the needs of a specific client group. This programme is integrated into the normal provision of the School of Education and managed in the same way as all other programmes.

The main approach in these cases seems to be the constitution of a specific administrative unit which manages courses together with faculty staff. Examples of externalization of TLLL within a university-owned organization include:

- The Spanish university: This university has opted for a foundation to manage technology transfer and a technology park. However, it also has a TLLL programme offering non-official master's courses as well as university specialist programmes for further specialization, extension courses and training on demand for companies.

- The German university. This university owns its own private company which provides academically rigorous, job-oriented continuing education for specialists and managers in companies, local authorities and other public sector organizations.

Examples of externalization based on public-private partnership include:

- The Italian case: This university has a specific institutional configuration: it cooperates with a private company which manages its TLLL programme. This configuration is necessary because the programme focuses on a specific issue (namely, labour market transition) and is aimed expressively at the specific target group of unemployed people.

## Labour market orientation

The TLLL programmes we have studied tend to have a strong orientation towards local labour markets at sub-regional level, such as the Metropolitan Region of the Ruhr, the Province of Tarragona and the Province of Bologna. The intention of THEMP was to select programmes with a strong labour market orientation, although only in some cases do we observe a clear orientation towards labour market transitions. These cases include the Italian programme, which focuses specifically on the transition (unemployment) period; the UK programme, which provides professional qualifications to people who are working on a paid or unpaid basis in the field of community development; and the Czech programme, which prepares learners for transition to a new occupation in the same environment.

The remaining programmes address the issue of labour market transitions to some extent. The German programme prepares learners not only for the improvement of their capability in Work Councils, but also for future employment, as most are unlikely to return to their previous position after working in the council. The Spanish course on human resource management touches on the theme of improving labour market position, even though its primary goal is to improve learners' work performance. The Dutch programme prepares highly qualified learners for the next step in their professional career in the area of public policy. Finally, the Hungarian business programme aims at further specialization of employees who hold a degree in various business fields, especially in finance and accounting.

In four cases there is no linkage to official certification as defined by the Bologna Declaration, so participation in these programmes does not confer credit within the European Qualifications Framework or any other national qualifications framework. However, the Czech, Hungarian and UK programmes do culminate in the award of an official, nationally recognized professional qualification. In the other cases which lack official certification, the validity of the qualification awarded depends exclusively on its relevance for and recognition by the labour market.

This relates not only to the quality of the programme but also to institutional engagement with the external environment. The Dutch programme is a good example of the engagement of a specific segment of a specific economic sector: namely, public administration and policymaking. The Spanish

programme provides an example of local engagement focusing on specific economic sectors in the surrounding areas, such as tourism or the food industry. The UK programme recognizes credit from the vocational sector; students may enter with credit from a cognate Higher National Certificate (HNC) taken at a Further Education College near the university.

The Dutch and the German cases are special as they are tailor-made programmes for selected client groups. The Dutch case focuses on public affairs, especially processes of monitoring and influencing policy and decision-making. The course is targeted at those who work in positions close to or in between governmental, non-governmental and private organizations and companies. The German case is aimed at people who work as employee representatives, especially members of enterprises' Work Councils (in some cases also members of the staff council). Admission to the programme presupposes a certain degree of professional education and work experience in the field of employee representation (the admissions process was itself developed in cooperation with members of Work Councils). The other programmes are not tailor-made but they do have a clear orientation to professional profiles (Human Resource Manager and Business) or occupations (school consultants and community workers).

## Teaching staff and methods

The strong practical orientation of the programmes studied implies that their teachers do not come exclusively from academic backgrounds. All programmes try to find an appropriate mix of academic teachers and teachers with professional experience in the relevant labour market. The German case features a combination of trainers, professionals and professors with an economic background (macro-economics, human resource management, business mediation). The Dutch programme features teaching by senior practitioners such as politicians, journalists, and managers working in the public and semi-public sectors. In the UK case, whilst the teachers are all employed by the university, they occupy distinct positions as either lecturers (teaching and research), university teachers (teaching only) or placement officers (observing and assessing in the workplace as well as liaising with employers).

The strong emphasis on practice is also reflected in the fact that some programmes opt for participatory or interactive teaching and learning methods (for example in Italy, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK). A number of programmes also feature placements in enterprises and/or workplace- and project-based teaching (Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Germany). This reflects the well-known argument that learning programmes for adults require a more student-centred and participatory approach (see for example Brookfield, 1995; Knowles, 1992 and many others) in which teachers become facilitators of the learning process (Apps, 1991) and take into account the professional experience of the learners.

The programmes analysed focus not only on the acquisition of new professional skills and competences – convertible to human capital – but also on broader skills and competences – convertible to cultural capital.[12] The Italian and Dutch courses focus on the development of broader competences. However, programmes often aim not just to develop learners' competences, but also to help them establish social networks. In the German and Spanish cases, the creation of new social contacts is fostered by social events involving current and older learners and experts. Similarly, in the UK case, the use of placements creates contacts that can be built on to develop new and enhanced employment opportunities for those already in work.

## Funding

Fees are payable in the Czech Republic, Spain, the Netherlands and Germany, but are often paid by the enterprise rather than the individual learner. In some countries, such as Spain, individuals' participation can be paid for by a private-public fund (in this case the Tripartit Foundation). In Italy learners do not pay fees, as the programme is either publicly funded or privately funded by enterprises. In the UK access is free for the individual since the programme takes place in Scotland, where there are no undergraduate tuition fees.

[12] The Hungarian case is probably an exception as the programme is focused only on professional skills.

## Conclusions

The principal objective of the first research stage of THEMP was to check the viability of our conceptual approach for measuring social efficiency, based on insights into national TLLL systems and the first set of case studies.

As we have seen, a considerable number of TLLL activities organized by or with universities have a strong labour market orientation. However, this does not imply that these activities can be classified as part of the Transitional Labour Market. For this, TLLL must have an explicit intention to avoid, cope with and mitigate labour market risks and dangers. The first case studies contain some examples which could be included in such a category, most notably the Italian programme, which is specifically aimed at people in labour market transitions. To some extent, we can also include the British programme for community workers. In all of the other cases we find an orientation towards labour market transition, but we cannot define the programmes as part of the Transitional Labour Market. The integration of universities in networks as providers of lifelong learning to support labour market policies is therefore still an open issue.

The case studies also indicate a weak connection between lifelong learning and traditional learning programmes. In general, the programmes studied did not offer credit which could be used to obtain official certification at bachelor's or master's level, nor (with the exception of the UK case) was credit offered for prior or experiential learning. Given EU policies that point firmly towards the permeability of traditional higher education and vocational training and towards the recognition of prior learning, the question is how to link these learning strands.[13]

[13] The 1991 Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community called on Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) to support an increasingly knowledge-driven economy and society through widening access to higher qualifications. HEIs were also urged to create opportunities for updating and renewing qualifications, to increase preparatory courses, and to do more to recognize prior learning and experience (EC, 1991). In subsequent decades the Lisbon Strategy (Council of European Union, 2000) and a succession of other documents have emphasised these themes. The Commission Communication, *Adult Learning: It is never too late to learn* (EC, 2006) and its associated Action Plan (EC, 2007) encouraged Member States to increase and consolidate learning opportunities for adults and to make learning accessible to all. Amongst five principle actions of the Action Plan, one was to '*develop systems for the recognition and validation of learning outcomes, based on common principles which enable Member States to measure and value learning*'.

At the beginning of the project, we did not expect to find many programmes with a specific orientation towards workers with significant professional experience. In all courses, however, we found a considerable number of older students; and in two examples – the Dutch and Italian cases – we found a specific orientation towards this age cohort. It is too early to speak about a trend towards the stronger integration of this age cohort in universities. But the evidence does indicate that older people are more interested in TLLL than they may have been in the past, and that universities should therefore consider designing their programmes in response to this demand.

Given the strong labour market orientation of the selected programmes, it is only natural that the development of professional skills and competences stands at their centre. However, the development of non-technical competences may be even more important for TLLL. The Italian programme is a good example, but the more elite Dutch programme also indicates that a broader competence approach can be applied. This is a strong indication that cultural capital is becoming more important in the labour market, making innovation in learning and teaching methods a priority. Adult learners require and demand a greater variety of learning and teaching methods than learners coming directly from school, and their cost/benefit calculations are more directly oriented to the labour market. Our preliminary research confirms that such cost/benefit calculations are not purely financial. Rather, they include economic, human, cultural and social capital.

This broader perspective is also reflected in the fact that TLLL programmes are developing more and more additional services, such as labour market stocks and social events. The German and Spanish cases, which include additional network-building services, testify to the increasing importance of the establishment of social relations through TLLL programmes. A look at the internal master's programmes[14] offered by Spanish universities and business schools, which permit access to closed labour markets, confirms the impression that the exchange of cultural and social capital is becoming more and more important.

[14] These contrast with the state-recognized masters programmes.

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# 4

# HIGHER EDUCATION IN LIFELONG LEARNING IN SOUTH AFRICA[23]

*Shirley Walters*

## Abstract

The political and economic pressures which exist in a middle income country like South Africa make the successful implementation of lifelong learning both difficult and essential. Young people make up a large proportion of the population, but there is also an acute need for ongoing access to learning opportunities throughout life, as the primary focus on schooling is proving inadequate for the majority of impoverished people. This chapter reflects on the role of higher education in lifelong learning in South Africa over the last ten years or so. It draws on two studies in particular: a national study on the impact on adult learners of the South African Higher Education Qualifications (Sub-) Framework (DLL, 2010*a*), and a case study of one historically black university, the University of the Western Cape. It describes the competing social, economic and political currents that influence adult access to and success in higher education, and describes in some detail the work of adult and lifelong learning advocates and activists in keeping equitable spaces open for adult learners. It then highlights some lessons from a policy perspective.

## Introduction

The commitment made in the South African Higher Education Policy document of 1997, that the education system would 'open its doors, in the spirit

[1] This draws on published work by Shirley Walters (2012): Higher education in lifelong learning in a middle income country: but by the grace of champions? Slowey, M. and Schuetze, H. (eds), *Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learners*. London and NY, Routledge.

of lifelong learning, to workers and professionals' (Department of Education, 1997, p. 17), raised expectations that provision for the education of adults in South Africa would be taken seriously. Yet a study on 'Equity, Access and Success of Adult Learners' carried out in 2004 and 2005 by Michele Buchler and colleagues found that adult learners remained poorly served at all levels of higher education, and that this problem was exacerbated by a shortage of information on programmes that admit large numbers of adult students or that cater specifically to them (Buchler et al, 2007). The study set out to investigate whether a higher education system that facilitates access, equity and success for adult learners exists or is being formulated. It concluded that adult learners are apparently not a high priority at a time of scarce resources and competing challenges. However, the authors urge that:

> *' … the education of adults in a society such as South Africa is a political, moral, historical and economic issue – and it is not merely one of these, but all of them. Adults have a critical role to play in the development of South Africa because of their accumulated knowledge and experience, which can be mediated by educational processes to strengthen it and make it socially useful.' (Buchler et al, 2007, p. 152.)*

Since then, little seems to have changed.

The South African situation is certainly not unique. It is reasonable to assume that, in low and middle income countries, spaces for supporting adult learners and encouraging them to embrace higher education opportunities can easily close down in the face of resource constraints and political pressures. Moreover, the myth persists that the higher education system exists mainly to serve young, able bodied, middle class, urban people, who have the good health, resources and time required to concentrate solely on their studies.

I begin this chapter by setting the scene as regards lifelong learning in higher education in South Africa, posing the question: who are adult learners? I highlight in particular the demographic profile of the country and its implications for understanding priorities in education and training. I draw on a

case study[2] of the University of the Western Cape, an institution that has been at the forefront of lifelong learning advocacy. This study reveals a number of critical tensions surrounding the implementation of lifelong learning in South African higher education institutions, particularly with regard to the impact of the HEQF on adult learners (DLL, 2010*a*). Having discussed this study, I then draw together lessons from a policy perspective. First, however, by way of a backdrop, I provide a thumbnail sketch of higher education in South Africa.

The Higher Education Act of 1997 made provision for a unified and nationally planned system of higher education. It created a statutory Council on Higher Education (CHE) which provides advice to the Minister and is responsible for quality assurance and promotion. The Act aimed to replace the previous racialized and unequal system of apartheid with a new system which emphasized redress, equity and quality. Between 2003 and 2005 a major restructuring of public higher education institutions (HEIs) was undertaken. This resulted in 36 HEIs being merged into only 23 (11 universities, 6 comprehensive universities and 6 universities of technology). These institutions vary greatly in size, scope and history. Between them, they enrolled a total of 837,779 students in 2009 (684,419 undergraduates and 128,747 postgraduates). There is also a growing private higher education sector which occupies niche areas. In 2011 there were 87 registered and 27 provisionally registered private higher education institutions.[3]

A report published in 2008 concluded that, although the higher education system had made major advances towards greater equity and efficiency, the legacy of apartheid lingered on. Participation rates among black youth remained low, and young black people were not performing as well as other 'population groups'. The authors stated that 'students are dropping out of higher education at alarming rates often because they cannot afford to stay at university' (Breier and Mabizela, 2008, p. 278).

In 2009 a new policy was introduced to build a differentiated post-school system (CHE, 2009). The Department of Education was split into the De-

[2] This preliminary research was conducted by Prof. Astrid Von Kotze in close consultation with the author from September-November 2010 on behalf of the Division for Lifelong Learning (DLL) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), with valuable input from members of the Adult Learning Working Group of the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) and financial support from the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

[3] The statistical information in this paragraph was sourced from www.che.ac.za, accessed on 26 April 2011.

partment of Higher Education and Training and the Department of Basic Education, which oversees schooling for youth. As Michael Cosser (2010) claims, the unbundling of the departments forced a re-examination of the entire education and training system and paved the way for a comprehensive redrawing of the post-school landscape. Cosser highlights the major problems that result from a dearth of intermediate education and training opportunities. He points to the estimated 2.8 million 20–24 year olds not in employment, education or training, who constitute a serious concern for politicians. These young people create a lever for certain immediate policy imperatives that have knock-on implications for adult learners.

## Who are adult learners?

It is a truism that lifelong learning is for people at all ages and stages of life, even though in popular parlance the term is often assumed to refer to adult or 'non-traditional' learners. Using Tom Schuller and David Watson's 'four life stages' approach to lifelong learning systems development and resource allocation, higher education caters primarily for those in the latter part of stage one (0–25 years) and stage two (25–50 years) (Schuller and Watson, 2009, p. 1). Writing with the UK in mind, Schuller and Watson suggest that all people in the first stage should have access to learning and development. Learning in the second stage should aim at 'sustaining productivity and prosperity, but also at building strong family lives and personal identity'. The authors describe the second stage as 'a new mosaic of time with different mixes of paid and unpaid work and learning time'. Defining adult learners in the context of South African higher education is no easy task. Bourgeois, Duke, Guyot and Merrill (1999, p. 3) define 'mature adults' as having had 'a significant break, with other life- [experience] and work-experience, prior to entering higher education'.

In the literature on lifelong learning, the changing age profiles (particularly in highly developed economies) are key drivers of debate. From an international perspective, the question of changing demographics raises interesting and sometimes paradoxical issues for lifelong learning. A key observation in a middle income country like South Africa is the very large proportion of young people. 51 % of the 48 million people in South Africa are under

25 years old. The age profile and trend is therefore very different to that of most highly developed economies. For example, 0–14 year olds make up 32 % of the population in South Africa (for comparison, the figures are 20 % in Australia, 28 % in Brazil, 33 % in India and 18 % in the UK). Those over 60, by contrast, comprise only 7 % of the South African population, as against 18 % in Australia, 9 % in Brazil, 8 % in India and 21 % in the UK. Life expectancy at birth in South Africa in 2007 was 50 years. This compares with UK figures for 2004–2006 of 77 for men and 81 for women. These figures are also highly influenced by social class and race/ethnicity: whereas the demographic profile of middle class South Africans may be similar to that of middle class people in the UK, it is overwhelmingly the poor majority in South Africa who carry the burden of ill health and premature death (Walters, 2008).

This situation presents a challenge for researchers in the low and middle income countries. The fundamental demographic differences between countries of the political 'South' and the political 'North' are very significant, owing to the colonial histories of many 'Southern' countries and to the related fact that people in the South often tend to defer to those in the North (which is, after all, the source of most of the literature in the field). The logic of the development of education and training systems therefore needs to be carefully interrogated so as to avoid inappropriate borrowing of theories and practices between North and South.

Having said this, there are situations in the South which can benefit greatly from some of the theories emanating from the North. Schuller and Watson's 'four life stages' theory is a case in point. In previous work (Walters, 2012) I have elaborated on this by focusing on the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is currently impacting on all aspects of people's lives in South Africa. The growing number of child-headed households, owing to the loss of parents to AIDS or other illnesses, redefines what it means to be an 'adult', since huge numbers of children are now carrying 'adult responsibilities' through their economic, family or community commitments. They bring complex life experiences to the learning environment, and their time is often very constrained precisely because of their multiple roles and responsibilities. This poses challenges as regards the provision of learning opportunities for both children and adults. For example, it raises fundamental questions about which capabilities should be covered on curricula at each of the four life

stages in order to maximize learners' ability to maintain a sustainable livelihood (Walters, 2010).

At the same time, poor economic circumstances force many school-age young people to enter school late or to drop out and re-enter. As a result, poor young people are often older than their middle class contemporaries by the time they finish school. This further complicates the definition of 'adult', and demonstrates that chronological age alone is an insufficient criterion by which to define the word. A working definition of adult or mature learners which I have found useful is the following: 'an adult learner is someone who carries multiple responsibilities; is over 25 years old; frequently working while studying; has had significant time out from study and has had work or community engagement experience; and often lacks formal access requirements' (DLL, 2010*a*).

As mentioned above, of the 48 million people in South Africa, 51 % are below the age of 25 years, with the majority of these being black and poor. 70 % of South Africans over the age of 20 have not completed secondary school. It is not surprising, given the racialized history of South Africa, that education levels are lowest among black people and highest among white people. Having said this, the general level of education of adults in South Africa is improving significantly. The younger the adults, the more likely they are to have received at least a primary education (Walters, 2008, p. 25). These demographic realities make the definition of 'adult learners' cited above highly relevant. This definition recognizes the possibility that people might lack the formal access requirements for entering higher education. It also takes into account experience of community engagement, as well as other kinds of work. For these reasons, it is used as a touchstone in this chapter.

I turn now to sketching the position of adult learners in higher education in South Africa, before looking in more detail at one case study.

## What about adult learners in higher education in South Africa?

As the study by Buchler et al (2007) states, one of the first acts of the new South African government was to establish the South African Qualifications Authority (DoE SAQA Act 1995). SAQA was established to oversee the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), whose pur-

pose was to assist in the creation of an integrated education and training system that would overcome the fragmentation and inequalities of the past. The development of an NQF in South Africa was strongly influenced by qualifications framework discourses and practices elsewhere. It was informed by the same ideas about lifelong learning, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and flexibility and portability of credits and qualifications that have come to characterize NQFs around the world. At the same time, however, South Africa's NQF is strongly rooted in the country's individual history, in particular the labour movement and the struggle of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) to have workers' knowledge recognized (Lugg, 2009; Parker and Walters, 2008).

The policy documents emanating from the government over the last fifteen years and more have made explicit and frequent reference to the need to broaden the base of higher education in South Africa. Thus, the projected new system is claimed to reflect 'a broadening of the social base in terms of race, class, gender and age' (DoE, 1997, p. 17). In addition, 'the system will open its doors, in the spirit of lifelong learning, to workers and professionals in pursuit of multi-skilling and re-skilling, and adult learners whose access to higher education had been thwarted in the past' (ibid.). These commitments are direct political responses to the inherited disparities of access, opportunity and resources for staff, students, and institutions across racial, gender, class and geographical lines.

Following these earlier documents, the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) advocated an increase in the general participation rate in public higher education in South Africa, with the aim of facilitating lifelong learning, developing the skills base of the country, and redressing historical inequities in educational provision (DoE, 2001). The Plan acknowledged that, in the short to medium term, a shortage of qualified school leavers made the targeted increase (from 15 % to 25 % of the population over a period of 10–15 years) unlikely. It therefore suggested that participation rates in public higher education could be augmented by recruiting increasing numbers of 'non-traditional' learners, identified as workers, mature adults, women and disabled people. This should be 'an important policy goal in its own right' (DoE, 2001). However, the NPHE noted that institutions had done little to initiate RPL opportunities or 'programmes to attract workers, mature learners, in particular women, and the disabled, who were denied access to higher

education in the past'. It further noted that the 1996 census data indicated a 'large potential pool of recruits': 1.6 million adults were then in the 25–39 age group with a school leaving certificate.

The NPHE was finalised during a period of rapid increase in the total number of students enrolled in higher education. Concerns emerged in government and among bodies like the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) about the effects this growth would have on quality of provision and throughput rates. One government response has been to review growth rates and to insist that, in the short-term at least, the system should be focusing on retention (including quality of provision and improvement of throughput) and not growth. More recently this approach has shifted due to political concern about the growing numbers of school leavers who are not in employment, education or training. Pressure to expand access to education for young people in particular is therefore an urgent political issue. The long queues of expectant prospective students to be found snaking around higher education institutions at the start of each academic year bear testimony to this.

So what about the adult learners? Buchler et al (2007) found that the percentage of adult learners in the system was far higher than anticipated: over 50 % of students were over 23 years of age (80 % of these being at undergraduate level). The authors argue, however, that it is not enough for large numbers of adults to have access to higher education, since adult learners also raise pedagogical challenges that HEIs need to confront more fully. For Buchler and her colleagues, this is an important issue for society, because it raises the question of whose and what knowledge is privileged, and of how accumulated experience becomes part of collective social knowledge. They argue that, in order to achieve access, equity and success for adult learners in higher education, deep transformation is required right through the system, from the micro level of teaching and learning relationships through the meso level of institutional cultures to the macro level of provincial and national environments.

The authors of the study performed a detailed interrogation of three higher education institutions and found great unevenness in the recognition and treatment of adult learners. I turn now to a detailed discussion of one of these case studies in order to shed light on contemporary trends.

## Case Study: University of the Western Cape (UWC)

UWC is an historically black university that was founded in 1960 to fulfil the need for 'coloured bureaucrats and professionals' to service the apartheid political vision. In 2010 it had about 17,000 students, most of whom were black, poor and working class and nearly 60 % of whom were women. From the beginning, part of its mandate was offering evening classes to working students.

An analysis of UWC as a lifelong learning institution has already been performed (Walters, 2005). In this analysis I used the key categories identified in the Cape Town Statement on Characteristic Elements of Lifelong Learning Higher Education Institutions (DLL, 2001). I do not intend to rehearse the same arguments here; instead I want to reflect briefly on some trends that have occurred since then, in the hope that this may have resonance for other institutions in similar economic contexts elsewhere.

To recap briefly, the six categories from the Cape Town Statement indicate a systemic awareness of the interconnections between the macro environment, the meso organizational context and the micro cognitive and affective learning interactions. As noted previously, a lifelong learning framework forces our gaze both inwards towards individual and organizational learning and outwards towards relationships in the broader society (Volbrecht and Walters, 2000).

In a brochure on lifelong learning at UWC the following points are cited as being worthy of note:

- Approximately 45,000 students have enrolled at UWC as part-time students over the last 20 years.
- The Division for Lifelong Learning, a small advocacy, service and research unit working across all faculties, was established in 1999 to promote the lifelong learning mission of the institution.
- The Senate Lifelong Learning Committee, chaired by the Rector with other senior leadership representatives, was established in 2005.

- The University provides RPL services to thousands of students, encompassing advice, counselling and a portfolio development course. These services are seen as leading the way in RPL provision nationally.

- Over 200 registered and quality-assured continuing education courses are run annually.

- Dedicated services for part-time students, who make up about 20 % of the student body, have increased through an innovative After Hours Study Zone.

- The ability to become a lifelong learner represents one of the three 'graduate attributes' that all UWC students are expected to attain.

- Lifelong learning awards are made annually at the graduation ceremony to inspirational students in four categories. These include part-time students, alternative access students, and students who are over 50 years old (DLL, 2010b).

While there has been significant progress in embedding a lifelong learning philosophy at UWC, the understanding of what this means continues to change. For the purposes of this discussion, I will highlight three current challenges to the provision of ongoing support for adult learners:

(i) Mainstreaming of lifelong learning to include all students;

(ii) Blurring the lines between part-time and full-time students;

(iii) Exploring and expanding 'flexible provision'.

As mentioned above, the political lever in the higher education system at present is the large proportion of young people who are unemployed and not in education or training. These people constitute a political time bomb. As a result, great pressure is being exerted to absorb as many of them as possi-

ble into universities. Given that there are few colleges in the post-secondary school system that could absorb them, most of these young people want to go to university. This poses major problems for institutions like UWC, most of whose students come from poor and working class schools which are not able to prepare students adequately for university. The government, in turn, is not funding universities sufficiently to allow them to provide the support needed to ensure these students' successful academic development. The pressure caused by the numbers of would-be students from poor working class schools prompts some faculty members to push for the discontinuation of part-time or after-hours classes. As it is primarily part-time and adult learners who benefit from these classes, including those who have come through alternative access routes, this has worrying implications for the future trajectory of provision for adult learners.

Concurrent measures are being taken to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning at UWC and in the system more broadly. This is partly a result of the new funding formula which emphasizes efficiency and successful throughput – goals which are not necessarily compatible with part-time adult learners coming in and out of learning over a longer time period. The assumption can therefore reasonably be made that the funding formula is in fact working against the lifelong learning intentions of the policy.

The UWC teaching and learning strategy sets out 'graduate attributes' for all students. These relate to: 'scholarship and the development of a critical attitude to knowledge'; 'critical citizenship and the social good'; and 'lifelong learning, which describes an attitude or stance toward themselves' (UWC Charter of Graduate Attributes, November 2009). The introduction of 'lifelong learning' as a graduate attribute has opened up a space for staff and students across the campus to engage more fully with the concept of lifelong learning, which many previously perceived as being of interest only to adult learners or part-time students. While this greater openness is welcomed by the staff of DLL, it also saddles the university's small unit with the dilemma of how to continue to support both full-time younger students and more marginalized adult learners.

At the same time, the distinction between full-time and part-time students is gradually becoming blurred. There is ambiguity in the very definition of 'full-time' and 'part-time', since these are self-selecting categories. Students' motivation for categorizing themselves as one or the other is driven by a

complex set of economic and social factors, among which are access to accommodation, insurance cover, and student financing. Whether students categorize themselves as full-time or part-time therefore cannot be used as a reliable indicator of their workload, the time of day they study, or whether or not they are in full-time or part-time work.

In addition, it is increasingly full-time students who are attending after-hours classes. After-hours teaching programmes are offered from Monday to Friday between 16:30 and 21:00, on weekends, and during dedicated block periods in academic holidays (DLL, 2010*c*). While there is a high correlation between being a part-time student and studying during after-hours, an evaluation of the after-hours booking statistics of 2008 shows that up to 30.4 % of after-hours classes are listed as 'full-time'. This highlights the confusion that surrounds the naming of courses as 'part-time' or 'full-time' – confusion which continues even though the point has been made on numerous occasions that it is the students, not the courses, who are full- or part-time.

In 2010 a proposal was adopted to research more systematic ways of developing 'flexible provision' for the university (DLL, 2010*c*). Why this interest in flexible learning provision? In recent years most countries in the world have made significant advances in the development of technology. While internet access remains significantly less widespread in lower and middle income countries than in highly developed economies (Walters, 2008), rapid progress on this front is nevertheless being made. This has provided new opportunities for teaching and learning, but has also created new demands on institutions to prepare students for working and learning in a rapidly changing world. In addition, the boundaries between the creators and the sources of knowledge are continually being blurred.

Just like in other parts of the world, students at UWC are changing. Those who go straight from school to UWC belong to a generation which is often loosely referred to as 'generation y', the 'millennium generation' or the 'net generation'. What separates this group from previous generations is their familiarity with the internet and its accompanying gadgets. Cell phones, iPods and other electronic devices are basic staples of existence for many of them (85 per cent of South Africans across all social classes have access to cell phones). Nevertheless, UWC also attracts students from previous generations who are accustomed to 'chalk and talk' teaching and learning environments and to accessing knowledge from books.

The interest in 'flexible provision' also relates to increasing pressure on the use of the physical space. In 2010 the number of full-time students at UWC increased by 2438, creating tremendous pressure on teaching and venue capacity and necessitating a rethink on how the facilities could be used more efficiently. I have already described how this pressure threatens after-hours provision. The paradox is that this issue and 'flexible provision' are being discussed in parallel as if they were two separate matters, when in fact it is clear that after-hours classes are an important *form* of flexible provision. In order to keep the 'doors of learning' open, it will be essential to explore ways to make more extensive use of both the hours available (after 16:30, weekends, block courses and third semester) and the full range of modes of delivery (face-to-face, mixed mode and e-learning).

The blurring of lines between various constructs has led increasing numbers of scholars to theorize 'flexibility' – what it means, why the concept has such currency, and what the implications are for understanding our changing practices. Debates are taking place on the subject of the 'knowledge wars', which were first brought to attention by Tara Fenwick (2010). Fenwick uses actor network theory (ANT) to discuss and theorize the 'blurry lines' between the concepts of full- and part-time study; traditional and non-traditional students; distance and face-to-face teaching; daytime or after-hours study; what it means to work or not work; whose knowledge counts, when, where, and in whose interests; 'open source' versus proprietary approaches to information and knowledge, and so on. Lifelong learning is right in the middle of these generative theoretical developments, which move beyond what Fenwick refers to as 'tired theories'.

In sum, the picture for adult learners at UWC is mixed. To be more precise, it is riddled with contradictory pushes and pulls. There have been important gains: the lifelong learning approach is becoming more deeply embedded, and is gaining more universal acceptance as it does so. However, the future of quality support for adult learners remains fragile and reliant on ongoing support from a small group of advocates and activists within the institution. Without a commitment to lifelong learning in the mission statement, support from the Vice Chancellor, and a dedicated unit with professorial leadership and access to institutional power through committee structures, it is difficult to imagine being able to sustain UWC's vision for 'becoming a lifelong learning institution'.

In order to update ourselves on how far this commitment to lifelong learning is replicated in other parts of the country, we at the DLL undertook a preliminary study into the intended or unintended consequences for adult learners of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQF) (DLL, 2010*a*). The purpose of this study was to catalogue any existing prejudicial factors with a view to making recommendations on how adult and other non-traditional students might be better supported. The key findings were:

(i) The majority of prejudicial features relating to the HEQF are not in the framework as such but in the way individual academics and administrators interpret and seek to enact it.

(ii) There are no incentives or mechanisms for encouraging and supporting institutions that attempt to address issues outside the norm, such as part-time study and working adult students. Within universities, part-time studies are for the most part regarded as the 'poor cousin'.

(iii) As long as RPL remains an unfunded mandate within the system, many potential adult learners will not be able to access HE with or without the HEQF.

(iv) There are serious problems and anomalies with regard to credit accumulation and transfer within and across HEIs.

(v) The equity or social justice dimension of programmes seems to be reliant on a handful of individual 'champions' who work hard against the odds to transform their practices and to support others who do likewise. Even in HEIs whose mission statements include a commitment to transformation and social justice, there is reluctance to offer financial support and incentives to such 'champions'; indeed, many face what they describe as an 'uphill battle'. Generally, the focus appears to be shifting away from addressing social injustice (by, for example, paving the way for adults to study at HEIs) and towards what could be called a 'financial efficiency model' – in

other words, 'time to degree' has become central to the funding formula.

(vi) More research is needed in order to gain a more accurate and multifaceted picture of the costs and benefits of promoting adult access to higher education – for the HE system, for society and for individuals (DLL, 2010a).

These findings are not unexpected given the current national and global economic climate and the political pressures that stem from the large number of poor, unemployed and poorly educated youth in South Africa. Moreover, attempts to improve adult access to higher education are often hampered by the 'knowledge wars' over whose knowledge and what knowledge counts as really useful.

The South African situation is certainly not unique. As suggested above, it is reasonable to assume that within low and middle income countries, resource constraints and political pressures can often cause the spaces for encouraging and supporting adult learners to close down. Poverty and health issues like the HIV and AIDS pandemic amplify the relevance of the lifelong learning approach. The advocates and activists within the higher education system therefore play a crucial role in holding onto and incrementally enlarging the higher education space for lifelong learners.

From a policy perspective, a number of factors are necessary for the successful implementation of the lifelong learning approach. First of all, continuity of commitment from senior managers within the university is essential. This is helped by inscribing the vision of 'becoming a lifelong learning institution' in the university's mission statement and systematically pulling it through in institutional operating plans for different sections of the university. A high level senate committee, chaired by the rector and featuring senior managers, academics and students, is very important as a space for envisaging the implementation of the lifelong learning mission and for monitoring progress. A dedicated unit with senior academic leadership is also essential, as the lifelong learning philosophy can easily be trumped by other competing conceptual frameworks. Scholar-activists need to be recognized as integral to attainment of the lifelong learning vision. They therefore need to be supported and encouraged to continue against difficult odds.

The university itself, of course, operates within national and international frames of reference. Enabling environments must therefore be nurtured at national and international levels. The role of agencies like the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) is to work alongside others to help create these.

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# 5

# HIGHER EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING IN JAPAN: WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT TO PROMOTE RECURRENT EDUCATION?

*Yukiko Sawano*

## Abstract

In Japan, research and teaching have long been considered the most important functions of higher education institutions. Since the introduction in the 1970s of the concept of lifelong learning, there has been a growing expectation among policy makers that the function of 'extension' should be added to the list, and that higher education institutions should become institutions for lifelong learning. Although various policy measures have been introduced to open the door of higher education to non-traditional adult students, recurrent education has nevertheless failed to develop as expected in Japan. The reasons for this can be found both in the Japanese education system itself and in the stagnant economic conditions which have prevailed in the country in recent years.

Recent higher education reforms implemented by the Japanese government, which were intended to create a more knowledgeable society in order to meet the demands of globalization, seem to have set the bar for adult entry to undergraduate courses even higher. Nevertheless, increasing numbers of adults are enrolling in graduate schools, non-degree courses and short-term extension programmes in universities. This creates a need for an individual support system to meet the various needs of adult learners. Universities and workplaces will need to collaborate in order to facilitate adult learning. Innovations such as the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), which improves access to universities for otherwise marginalized groups, will need to be taken more seriously. Moreover, the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework for Japan has become an urgent task.

## Introduction

Higher education in Japan was institutionalized in 1877 with the establishment of the University of Tokyo, which integrated several governmental schools originating in the Edo period. Following the example of nineteenth century German universities based on the ideas of Wilhelm von Humboldt, Japanese universities focused on research and on teaching selected young elites. The latter half of the twentieth century saw an expansion of both the quantity and quality of higher education. With this came the expectation among policy makers that educational institutions should become lifelong learning institutions. The third function of higher education, 'extension', thus came into the spotlight.

In the twenty-first century, higher education in Japan is facing major challenges. The sector is struggling both to meet the demands of the new knowledge-based society and to cope with the massification of higher education caused by declining numbers of 18-year-olds[1] in Japan's ageing population. Improving higher education has therefore become a national priority in order to revitalize the international competitiveness of the Japanese economy. Providing universal access to higher education for people at all stages of life is one of the most important aspects of this goal.

This chapter begins by giving a brief overview of the development of lifelong learning policy in Japan since the 1970s and its influence on the planning of higher education. This is followed by a review of the concrete measures that have been implemented to increase numbers of adult students in Japan, classified by the transition of function. Next comes an analysis, based on official statistical data, of the trend of enrolment of non-traditional adult students in higher education. Finally, some remarks are made on what might be the most fruitful ways of supporting individual adult students through higher education and helping them to fulfil their aim of studying at university and becoming competitive lifelong learners in today's globalized world.

There are four types of higher education institutions in Japan:

- **Universities** which provide four year courses leading to a bachelor's degree. Courses in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and veterinary medicine take six years. Master's degree cours-

[1] The normal age for entering higher education.

es take two years and Ph.D. courses three, but these terms admit of some flexibility, as will be explained later. As of 2012 there were 783 universities, of which 86 were national, 92 local public (municipal and prefectural) and 605 (77.3 %) private. There were 2,560,909 undergraduate students and 263,289 graduate students, of whom 41.9 % were women.

- **Junior colleges** which provide two or three year courses leading to the title of 'Associate'. As of 2012 there were 372 junior colleges, of which 94.1 % were private. There were 141,970 students, of whom 88.4 % were women.

- **Colleges of technology** which provide five year courses leading to the title of 'Associate'. These are aimed at lower secondary school graduates. As of 2012 there were 57 colleges of technology, of which 89.5 % were national. There were 58,765 students, of whom 16.2 % were women.

- **Professional colleges** which provide courses of two years or more leading to a 'Diploma' and courses of four years or more leading to an 'Advanced Diploma'. As of 2012 there were 2847 professional colleges, of which 93.6 % were private. There were 578,119 students.

In 2012, 47.6 % of upper high school graduates went directly to universities, 6.9 % to junior colleges and 16.8 % to professional colleges.[2]

## The development of lifelong learning policy and its influence on higher education

The concepts of *shougai-kyouiku* ('lifelong education') and *shougai-gakushu* ('lifelong learning') were introduced to Japan by UNESCO and OECD between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s and were elabo-

[2] In this chapter, junior colleges, colleges of technology and professional colleges will be referred to as 'non-university higher education institutions'.

rated and disseminated during this period of rapid economic growth. A report entitled 'Recurrent education: a strategy for lifelong learning' published in 1973 by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) of OECD was translated into Japanese in 1974 by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (Monbusho) and went on to have considerable influence on higher education and lifelong learning policy in Japan. The Swedish recurrent education system and the theory of the 'learning society' were also introduced to Japan by comparative education researchers in the 1970s.

The proportion of upper secondary school graduates proceeding to university increased from around 10 % in 1960 to 35 % by the mid-1970s (Kaneko, 2013, p. 175). A plan to expand re-enrolment of adults in higher education and to open up more opportunities for them to study by way of extension courses was already included in the Higher Education Plan made by Monbusho for the period of 1976 to 1980. The Higher Education Plan for 1981 to 1986 stated that higher education would be 'a place for lifelong learning' and that the so-called 'learning society' would be 'realized soon' if higher education institutions would open their doors to working adults (MEXT, 2012*b*, p. 10).

In 1981 the Central Council for Educational Reform submitted a report to the Education Minister entitled 'On Lifelong Education' which identified the difference between 'lifelong education' and 'lifelong learning'. Lifelong learning is intended to improve individual learners' lives and to offer them self-fulfilment and enlightenment. It encourages learners to use their initiative to take control of their own learning methods. Lifelong education is the process which supports the lifelong learning of each citizen. In order to promote lifelong learning it was considered necessary to make the higher education system more flexible and accessible to adults. The report proposed concrete measures to be taken in pursuit of this goal, such as making it possible for working adults to attend courses in both the daytime and the evening (Chukyoshin, 1981).

In 1987 a provisional council established under Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone and known as Rinkyoshin submitted a final report to the Prime Minister which aimed to create a lifelong learning society to cope with social and economic changes and to systematize the various lifelong learning opportunities existing in Japan, including higher education. The report focused in particular on ways to overcome the problems among young people caused by excessive competition to enter prestigious universities, known as 'examination hell'. A law entitled 'Development of Mechanisms and Measures for the Promotion

of Lifelong Learning' was implemented in 1990. These top-down efforts to promote lifelong learning occurred in the 'bubble' period of Japan's economy when people expected that the economy would continue to grow and that ordinary citizens would soon have more free time. In this optimistic atmosphere the concept of lifelong learning was welcomed not only by those in charge of education but in the industrial and business sectors as well (Sawano, 2012).

The New Higher Education Plan for 1986 to 1992 emphasized lifelong learning and planned to implement a system whereby adult students could be sure of the opportunity to pursue their studies in higher education institutions. It recognized the necessity of making active use of broadcasting and other media, as well as various forms of education such as evening classes etc., to promote lifelong learning. The number of 18-year-olds in the population was at this point predicted to reach its lowest point in 1992, but as this was expected to be offset by increasing demand for higher education from adults and international students, policy makers decided not to alter the number of places available at universities, junior colleges and higher professional colleges (MEXT, 2012*b*, p. 10).

The University Council (Daigakushin) was established under Monbusho in 1987 to advise the Education Minister on issues related to university education.[3] In the late 1980s and 1990s the Daigakushin submitted several important reports to the Education Minister recommending greater flexibility in the higher education system. The Standards for the Establishment of Universities enacted by Monbusho in 1956, which set minimum requirements for university environment and guidelines for establishing new universities and/or reorganizing existing faculties or departments, were loosened significantly following the 1991 policy shift. This shift introduced a quality assurance system in which 'universities were asked to decide their own goals and then check their activities based on these goals' (Yoshida, 2013, p. 207).

In 1993, when the population of 18-year-olds reached its lowest point of 2 million, it was suggested that the quality of education might be improved by diversifying universities according to their main function. For example, some universities could focus on research, and others on teaching or lifelong

[3] From 2001 the ministries were reorganized to include Daigakushin in the Central Council of Education (Chukyoshin) together with other councils such as the Council for Lifelong Learning and Council for School Curricula. Daigakushin then became the University Section (Daigakubukai) of Chukyoshin.

learning. It was estimated that 30,000 adults would enter formal higher education by 2000. In 2000, it was re-estimated that the same number of adult students would enroll by 2009 (MEXT, 2012*b*, p. 10).

However, the 'bubble' period in Japan's economy ended precisely when concrete measures to promote lifelong learning were being planned and executed. There followed an unprecedentedly rapid increase in unemployment and part-time work among higher education graduates. The ensuing two decades of recession are now referred to as 'the two lost decades'. The Japanese government had to undertake a major structural reform of its administrative and financial systems in order to recover from the stagnation. The reforms took a neoliberal approach that emphasized competition, decentralization and the deregulation and privatization of public services. Lifelong learning and higher education were no exceptions to this policy: the reforms proposed by Rinkyoshin already followed a similar neoliberal approach influenced by the direction of education reform in the UK. Thus began the 'centralized decentralization' (Mok, 2008) of Japan's higher education sector.

Until 2003 the expansion of higher education institutions was restricted by the Ministry of Education, but it was permitted to increase the number of students taking evening and distance learning courses. Universities admitting adult students, international students and Japanese students returning from abroad were allowed to expand, as Japanese society was considered to be particularly in need of these groups. In 2003 restrictions on the expansion of higher education institutions were loosened, and the Standards for Establishment of Universities were liberalized to bring them more into line with the deregulation policy of the Koizumi cabinet. It became much easier to establish universities, and both the number and the enrolment ratio of small private universities increased as a result (Yoshida, 2013, p. 208). At the same time, quality assurance systems were strengthened through self-evaluation and external evaluation of higher education institutions.

On 1 April 2004 the National University Corporation Law was enacted and all national universities became National University Corporations with greater independence from state control. With the revision of the Private School Law in 2004, all private schools including higher education institutions were required to become School Corporations. These were 'prohibited from making a profit, or diverting benefits derived from educational provision to an outside party' (Kaneko, 2013, p. 181).

In 2005 the Central Council of Education published a report which strongly recommended that all universities should specialize and thus become more diversified. The following seven functions were suggested as examples:

1. Base for global research and education
2. Development of highly specialized professionals
3. Development of a broad range of professionals
4. Comprehensive liberal arts education
5. Education and research in a specific field (art, physical education, etc.)
6. Base for local lifelong learning opportunities
7. Functions that contribute to society (contribution to local community, collaboration between academia and industry, international exchange, etc.) (Chukyoushin, 2005).

The government introduced the 'Centres of Excellence (COE)' programme in 2002. National, public and private universities were invited to present proposals to establish COE programmes; those selected were given subsidies of between one and five million yen (Kaneko, 2013, p. 183). Research-oriented universities which won subsidies could be classified in category 1 above. It was recommended that each university should independently choose its own profile and characteristics.

In December 2006 Japan enacted the first revision of the Basic Act on Education, passed in 1947 while Japan was under US occupation. Article 3 of the revised law refers to the concept of lifelong learning. It stipulates that 'society shall be made to allow all citizens to continue to learn throughout their lives, on all occasions and in all places, and apply the outcomes of lifelong learning appropriately to refine themselves and lead a fulfilling life'. As the original law contained only one Article on school education and no specific provision for higher education, the new law added Article 7 which stipulates that:

'Universities, as the core of scholarship activities, shall cultivate advanced knowledge and specialized skills, inquire deeply into the truth and create new knowledge, while contributing to the development of society by broadly disseminating the results of their activities. (2) University autonomy, independence, and other unique characteristics of university education and research shall be respected.' (Kyouikukihonhou shiryoushitsu, 2006, p. 6)

Another important change in the revised law was the newly added Article 17 which established a Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education:

'In order to facilitate the comprehensive and systematic implementation of measures for the promotion of education, the government shall formulate a basic plan covering basic principles, required measures, and other necessary items in relation to the promotion of education. It shall report this plan to the Diet [Japan's bicameral legislature] and make it public. (2) Local governments, referring to the plan set forth in the preceding paragraph, shall endeavor to formulate a basic plan on measures to promote education corresponding to regional circumstances.' (ibid.)

The first national Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education was approved by the cabinet in July 2008. It was designed as a five year plan from 2008 to 2012 and set further goals to be achieved in ten years. The second Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education for 2013 to 2017 was approved in June 2013.

The first Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education aimed to create an 'Education Nation' by implementing education as described in the revised Basic Act on Education. It justified this on the basis that the development of human resources is the key to individual well-being and the foundation for the development of nation and society. The Plan set the following two goals:

1. To have all children complete compulsory education so as to enable them to live independently in society.

2. To create a pool of well-educated human resources to support and develop society and to lead Japan on the international stage. (MEXT, 2008.)

Only the second goal is relevant to higher education. Concrete measures recommended to realize this goal included establishing quality assurance mechanisms for universities and providing lifelong learning opportunities

for more citizens, as well as improving the quality of Japanese universities so as to make them world class centres of education and research, thereby attracting more international students (ibid.).

After the Great East Japan Earthquake on 11 March 2011, the direction of educational reform had to be reconsidered to meet the demands of recovery from the disaster. The second Basic Plan therefore emphasized the importance of 'independence', 'collaboration' and 'creativity' and the need for each individual to take control of their own learning. The first Basic Plan was criticized for placing insufficient emphasis on lifelong learning and for dividing its goals according to educational stages. The second Basic Plan therefore set out the following fourfold vision relevant to every life stage:

1. Nurturing the competences necessary to survive in society.

2. Educating human resources for the future.

3. Establishing a safe environment for learning.

4. Actively strengthening community bonds. (MEXT, 2013.)

Where higher education is concerned, the second Basic Plan emphasizes the need to increase the number of adult students in order to create a lifelong learning society. Concrete goals corresponding to each of the four visions include the following:

1. To teach problem solving skills to university students and to double the number of adult students.

2. To increase the number of students studying abroad from 60,000 to 120,000 and to receive 300,000 international students in Japan.

3. To increase the number of students who can receive loans and other financial support to pay tuition fees.

4. To encourage universities to function as centres of community. (MEXT, 2013.)

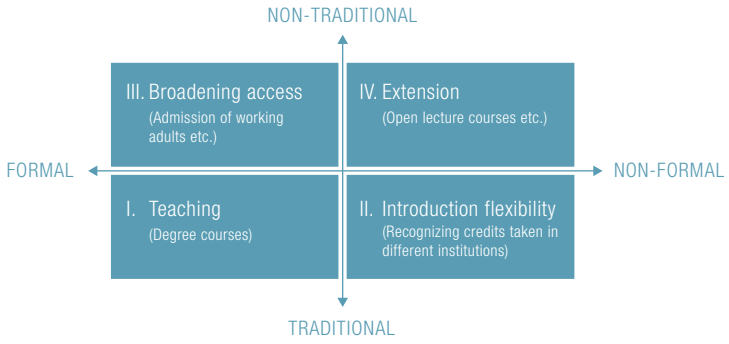
These goals reflect the recent recommendations made by Chukyoushin Daigakubukai and the Education Rebuilding Implementation Council under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

## Concrete measures taken to increase numbers of adult students

Various measures were implemented as part of the higher education reforms discussed above. These included improvements to curricula and teaching methods and the introduction of new entrance examinations and a new type of graduate school and courses. In order to enrich the function of higher education institutions as lifelong learning institutions, a number of steps were taken to open the door to non-traditional students and members of the local community.

According to Saruta (2007), higher education has four functions. The first (and most traditional) function is to provide formal course instruction leading to the acquisition of a degree. The second is to introduce flexibility in formal teaching. The third is to extend knowledge to members of society outside the university. The fourth is to open the door to non-traditional learners so that they too can become formal students (see Figure 1). Making universities lifelong learning institutions means extending university education in two directions: vertically and horizontally. Vertical extension means extending the object of university education from traditional young students to non-traditional adult students. Horizontal extension means extending the form of university education from formal to non-formal by making curricula and teaching methods more flexible.

**Figure 1**




*Source: Saruta, 2007, p. 66.*

The first stage of making universities into lifelong learning institutions involves extending their function from I to II, III and IV. The second stage involves integrating the functions organically with each other (ibid.).

Extending the function of higher education institutions from I to II means making the requirements regarding curricula and credits more flexible in order to encourage existing students on formal degree courses to learn more widely. This was done in Japan by, for example, creating a programme whereby universities and junior colleges can exchange credits with professional training colleges. This was facilitated by the deregulation of the curriculum standard in 1991, which also enabled some higher education institutions to give credit for non-formal and informal learning experiences both in and outside campus, such as voluntary activities.

Extension from I to III means opening formal courses to non-traditional students such as working adults, retired people and housewives. In order to make this possible, various reforms were made to the admissions system and to teaching methods. For example, in 1988 the Ph.D. course was made more flexible so as to admit candidates who do not have an M.A. but who have nevertheless pursued a career in academic research. For B.A. and M.A. courses, since the early 1990s increasing numbers of universities have introduced a special selection system for adult students. In 2010, 524 universities had such a system in place for undergraduate courses and a total of 1,774 students were admitted. For graduate schools the figures were 432 and 16,940 respectively (Kokyouseisaku kenkyukai, 2012[4]).

In 1991, in response to Daigakushin's report on the improvement of undergraduate education in universities and junior colleges, a 'daytime and evening course system' was put in place for adults who are not free to study during working hours. This enabled adult students to concentrate on their studies in the evening and on Saturdays, while taking occasional classes in the daytime on weekdays. The system was later extended to include graduate as well as undergraduate courses. In 1989 evening courses were made available for M.A. students; in 1993 this was expanded to include Ph.D. students. In 2010, 37 university undergraduate courses and 314 graduate schools offered the 'daytime and evening course system', whilst 17 undergraduate universities and 26 graduate schools offered evening courses.

[4] Except where otherwise stated, all of the statistical information in the rest of this section is taken from this source.

The 'subject or course registration system' for non-degree students who want to earn credits in one or more subjects in a particular course was first implemented at the University of the Air (since 2007 known as The Open University of Japan) in 1980 and was expanded in 1991 to include other universities and professional colleges. In 2009, 727 universities offered the system and 18,267 students were making use of it.

Distance learning at both undergraduate and graduate level was expanded for adult learners as part of the reforms, not only at the University of the Air but also in other universities. In 2010, 44 universities offered undergraduate courses by correspondence and 224,314 students were enrolled, 77,269 of these at the University of the Air. As for graduate schools, 26 offered correspondence courses and 8,429 students were enrolled.

In 2002 a 'long term enrolment system' was introduced to allow students who are not able to attend university every day because of work or other commitments to take degree courses over a longer period of time than usual. As of 2009, 281 universities had introduced this system but only 2,444 students were making use of it. Of these, 2,376 students were attending graduate schools.

In 2003, professional graduate schools were systematized in order to provide practical education to train specialists with high professional competence. In 2010 there were 128 such professional graduate schools, of which 75 were for law and 25 for teacher training.

From 2000 the duration of M.A. courses (formerly two years) was made flexible so that students can obtain the degree in a minimum of one year or in more than three years. This also applies to professional graduate schools. In 2010, 69 graduate schools had short-term courses which take one year and 150 had long-term courses which take three to four years or longer.

Since 2003 lectures have been given at so-called 'satellite auditoriums' so as to make them accessible to working students, which was previously allowed only in graduate schools, was made possible in undergraduate courses. In 2009, 115 universities had satellite auditoriums.

The extension of function from I to IV is the most traditional means of extending university education. Keio University and Tokyo Kaisei School (which later became the University of Tokyo) both established public lecture houses in the 1870s and organized academic and political lectures not only for their own teachers and students but also for people from different institutions (Yamamoto, 2013). In 2008, 1,044 universities organized a total of

32,245 open lectures which were watched by 1,311,670 people (ibid.). Open lectures are the most direct way to broaden the scope of research and education in universities and other higher education institutions, and to provide high level learning opportunities to the local community.

The other new means of university extension is the 'certificate system' implemented in 2007. This enabled universities and professional colleges to offer courses of over 120 hours to adults who are not formal students of the institutions. Those who finish the programme receive a certificate. In 2009, 72 universities offered 130 programmes under the certificate system. Around 50 % of these were directed towards high professional qualifications and improving knowledge and skills related to a particular occupation. Around 20 % aimed to update skills and provide lower-level vocational qualifications in fields such as medical care or English-speaking tourist guiding. The remaining 10 % were liberal arts programmes such as human sciences, foreign languages and current affairs.

## What has been achieved?

Although a great many reforms have been implemented in the past twenty years to open the doors of higher education institutions to non-traditional adult learners, the number of adult students enrolled in formal degree courses at such institutions remains small.

Figure 2 is often cited in recent policy papers concerning higher education reform. It shows that the proportion of students over the age of 25 in Japanese universities in 2009 was only 2 %, which is lower than in all other OECD countries. According to OECD data from 2005, the proportion of older or 'adult' students in Japan in that year was 2.7 %. It therefore decreased by 0.7 % points over a four-year period (Yamada, 2013). The proportion of older students in non-university higher education institutions was higher at 16.5 %, but this was still much lower than the OECD average (Figure 3).

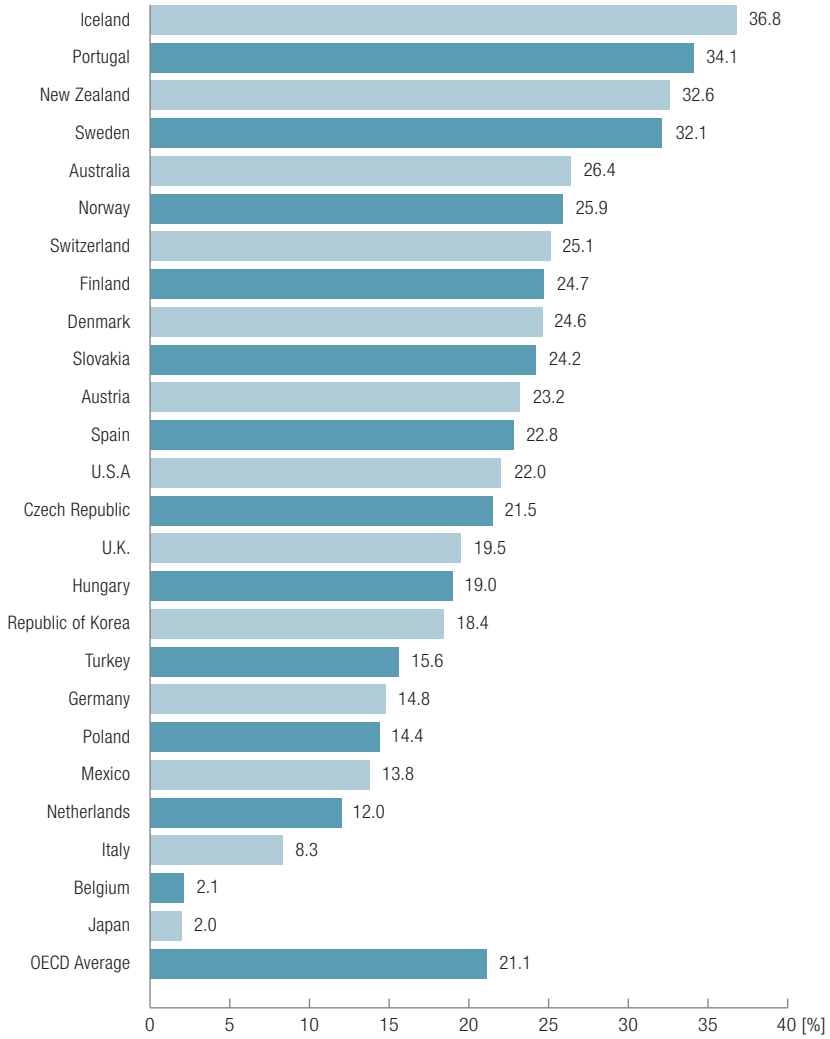
Figure 4 shows the number of newly enrolled adult students in university undergraduate courses. This reached a peak of 17,340 students in 2001, but has been decreasing since then. In 2011 the number went down to 12,008. The most significant decrease can be seen in the number of adult students enrolled in on-campus courses. Compared to undergraduate courses, the num-

ber of adult students entering graduate schools has increased significantly in the past 20 years. However, this too has been gradually decreasing since reaching a peak of 18,779 in 2008 (Figure 5).

Despite these figures, more and more adults are taking non-degree extension courses. Figure 6 shows that the number of adults taking open lecture courses is increasing steadily.

Figure 2

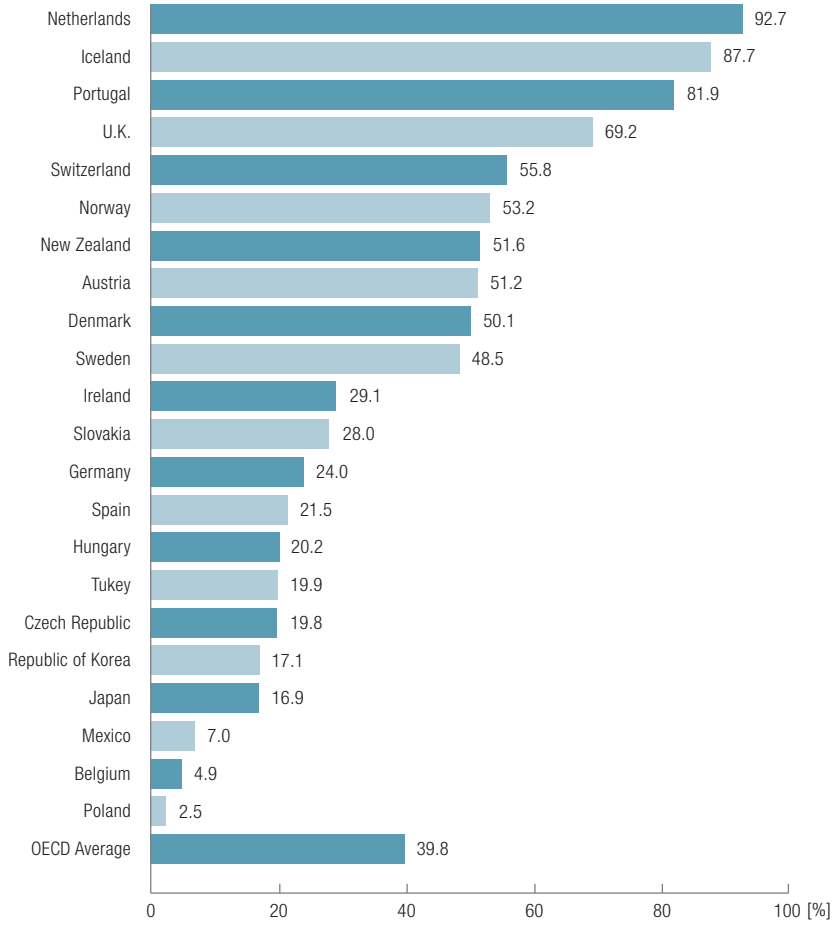
PROPORTION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS OVER THE AGE OF 25 (%) IN 2009




*Source: OECD Database, MEXT School Basic Survey, and other data from MEXT in MEXT, 2012c, p. 5.*

Figure 3

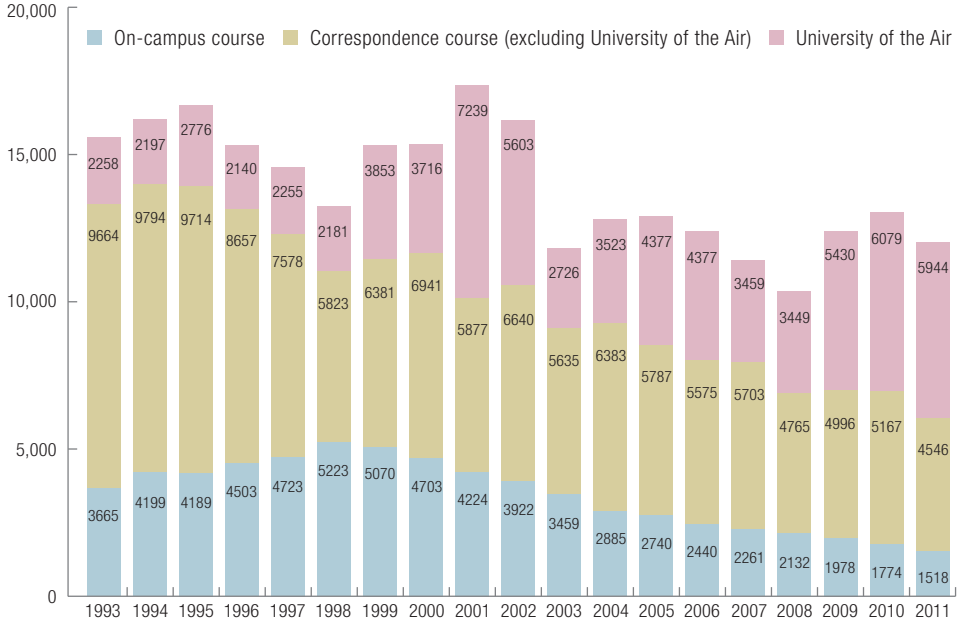
## PROPORTION OF STUDENTS OVER THE AGE OF 25 IN NON-UNIVERSITY HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (%) IN 2009




*Source: OECD Database, MEXT School Basic Survey, and other data from MEXT in MEXT, 2012c, p. 5.*

Figure 4

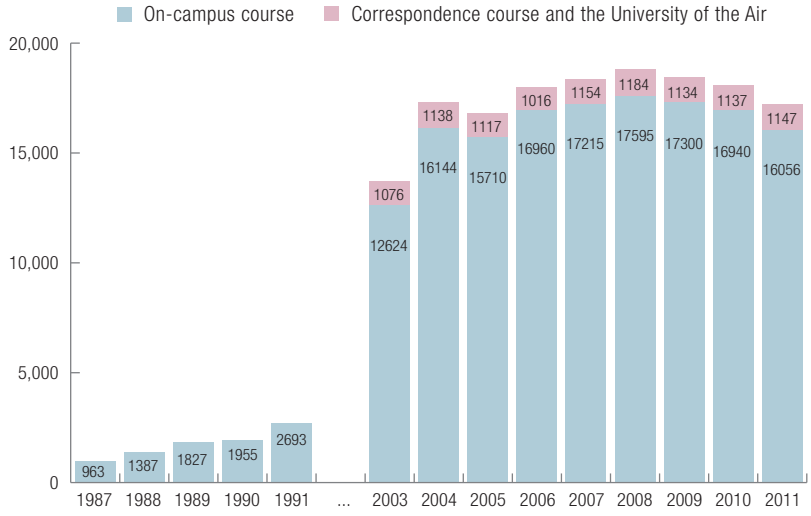
## NUMBER OF NEWLY ENROLLED ADULT STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE COURSES IN JAPAN




*Source: MEXT School Basic Survey, and other data from MEXT in MEXT, 2012c, p. 6.*

Figure 5

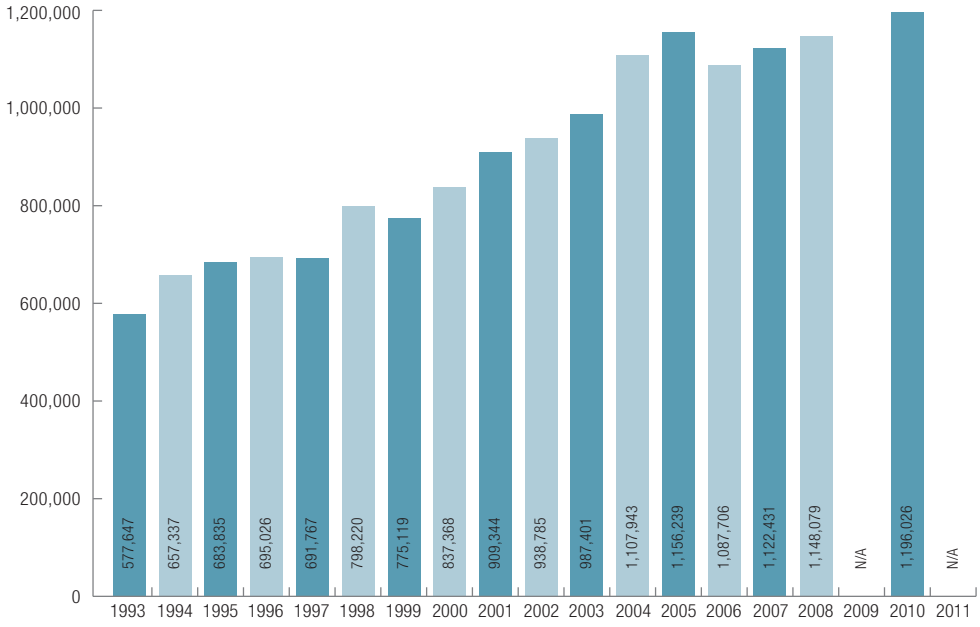
## NUMBER OF NEWLY ENROLLED ADULT STUDENTS IN GRADUATE SCHOOLS IN JAPAN




*Source: MEXT School Basic Survey and other data from MEXT in MEXT, 2012c, p. 8.*

Figure 6

TOTAL NUMBER OF ADULTS PARTICIPATING IN HIGHER EDUATION
INCLUDING NON-DEGREE AND EXTENSION COURSES



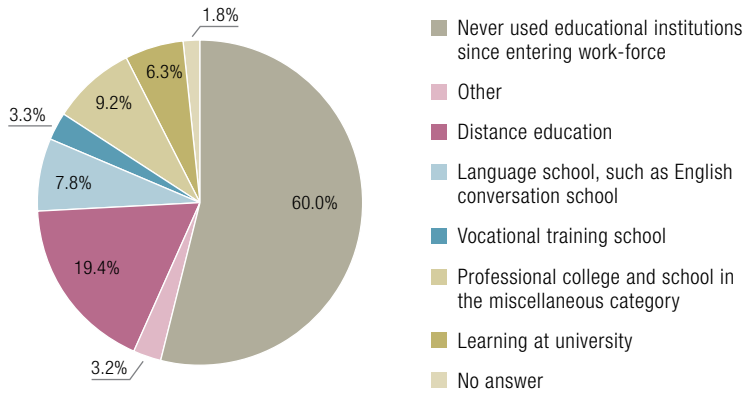

*Source: MEXT School Basic Survey and other data from MEXT, in Koyouseisakukenkyukai, 2012, p. 16.*

According to a survey of working adults conducted in 2008, 60 % did not make use of educational institutions after getting a job. Those that did used distance education, foreign language schools and professional colleges more than universities (Figure 7). University graduates were more likely to use universities for further learning than those with lower educational attainment.

Approximately 90 % of adult workers said that they are interested in or would like to take part in recurrent education (Figure 8). 46.4 % would like to study at graduate school, and 19.5 % at university. There is also data indicating that most adults (74 %) think that attractiveness of curriculum would be the most important factor in choosing where to study. However, most think that they are too busy with work (72.3 %) or that the cost is too high (71.0 %) to participate in recurrent education (Figure 9).

Figure 7

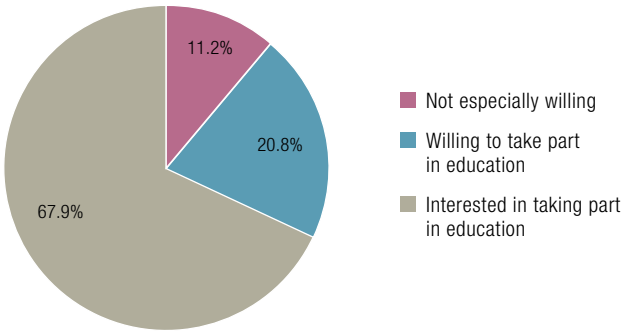
## USE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS BY WORKING ADULTS




*Source: Recruit Works Research Institute 'Survey on Working Persons 2008'. N=6500 (Men and women between 18 and 59 years old, excluding students), in MEXT 2009, p. 8.*

Figure 8

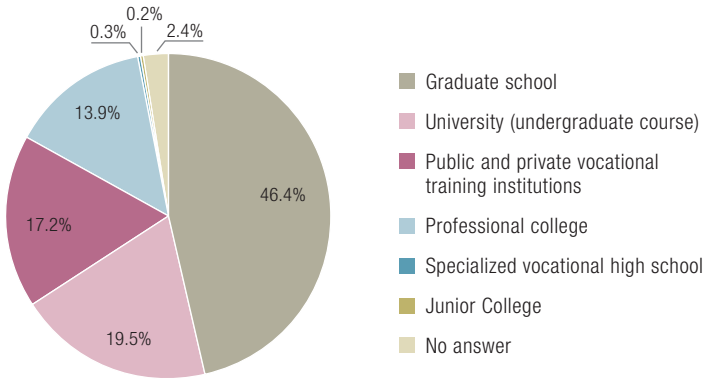
## WILLINGNESS OF ADULTS TO PARTICIPATE IN RECURRENT EDUCATION




*Source: Polytechnic University, Institute of Research and Development (2005), Research Report No. 128, in MEXT 2009, p. 9.*

Figure 9

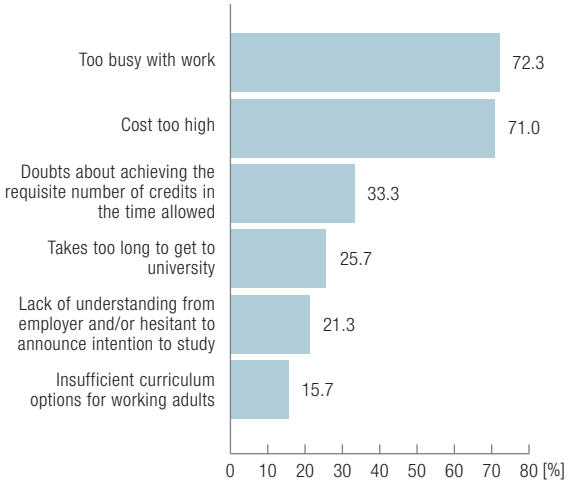
## EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WHERE ADULTS WOULD LIKE TO TAKE PART IN RECURRENT EDUCATION




*Source: Polytechnic University, Institute of Research and Development (2005), Research Report No. 128, in MEXT 2009, p.9.*

Figure 10

## EXPECTED CHALLENGES IN RECURRENT EDUCATION (%)




*Source: Polytechnic University, Institute of Research and Development (2005), Research Report No. 128, in MEXT 2009, p.9.*

Fuwa (2004) points out four factors which prevent adults from participating in higher education, especially in undergraduate courses. Firstly, entrance examinations to higher education favour young students who have just finished upper secondary school. Although the entrance examination system was made more flexible in the 1990s as part of Japan's higher education reforms, Fuwa argues that the examination is still more difficult for adult applicants to pass, as it is designed for younger applicants. The number of higher education institutions which implement the special selection system for adults remains limited. Fuwa also finds fault with the fact that adults are treated differently from ordinary students in that 'they are granted entrance generally as extra or "other" students' (Fuwa, 2004, p. 197).

The second factor Fuwa identifies as an obstacle to adult enrolment in higher education is the excessive emphasis placed on academic credentials in Japanese society. Eighteen is the most important age for social selection, as it is believed that the prestige value of the university a student enters at that age will influence his or her social status throughout life. This attitude prevents people from appreciating the importance of learning throughout life, including by participating in higher education (ibid, p. 198).

The third factor is the system of work-based vocational training for company employees, which keeps them very well trained. 'The companies therefore are not eager to access and interact with universities, for instance in regard to sending out their own employees as adult students to study new knowledge and skills produced at an advanced level' (ibid.). Recent structural changes in modes of production, labour and management caused by Japan's long economic stagnation have made it difficult for some companies to maintain their work-based training system without outside help. However, a mismatch still exists between companies' expectations regarding the knowledge and skills employees should possess and the quality of higher education available to impart these skills.

The fourth factor is prejudiced thinking among members of higher education institutions, some of whom tend to see non-traditional adult learners as 'others' and think that 'their entrance may make the academic standard regress' as their ability to study and research is low (ibid, p. 199). Fuwa points out that 'this prejudiced attitude disrupts the restructuring of universities from the present closed system to an open system, which is built on ideas and values to be an essential estate of the democratic realm in a society' (ibid, p. 199).

This might be the most serious obstacle to shifting the function of formal traditional education towards non-formal and non-traditional dimensions (in Saruta's terms, from I to II or III).

## Concluding remarks

The recent higher education reforms implemented by the Japanese government with the intention of creating a more knowledgeable society to meet the demands of globalization seem to be failing to make university courses, especially undergraduate courses, more accessible to adult learners. Courses continue to emphasize not only the quality but also the quantity of learning, such as the time spent studying each day, making it difficult for working adults to participate. Nevertheless, many working adults express a desire to study in higher education institutions, and increasing numbers of adults are enrolling in graduate schools, non-degree courses and short-term extension programmes in universities.

In view of these circumstances, it will be necessary to create an individual support system tailored to the specific needs of adult learners. The system will require extensive collaboration between higher education institutions and workplaces. It should support individual learners' needs by suggesting optimal combinations of programmes in terms of organization, duration and requirements. Institutions' roles and functions must be diversified in order to provide learners with a broader range of options.

Universal access to higher education for currently 'excluded' adult learners is likely to be greatly facilitated by such innovations as the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). These innovations should be considered much more seriously than they are at present. Although some prestigious universities such as the University of Tokyo and the University of Kyoto are participating in MOOCs developed by American universities, the fact that English is the language of instruction for most of these will present a barrier for most Japanese adult learners. Instead of viewing free online courses as a threat, as many Japanese higher education institutions currently do, they ought to make their own courses and educational resources freely available on the internet in Japanese. This would contribute greatly to the goal of ubiquitous adult learning.

In order to create a higher education system tailored to the needs of adult learners, it will be necessary to find ways of evaluating the outcomes of diverse forms of learning. This means introducing a qualifications framework to facilitate the validation of non-formal and informal learning by adults with various backgrounds. This is another issue on which Japan is lagging behind the global trend. The establishment of a qualifications framework for Japan has now become an urgent task, both to promote the function of lifelong learning in higher education institutions and to meet the needs of adult learners in today's globalized knowledge society.

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6

# THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN ELDER EDUCATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF SHANGHAI AND SHANGHAI NORMAL UNIVERSITY

*Minxuan ZHANG and Jinjie XU*

## Introduction

This chapter will concentrate on the functions of universities with regard to adult learning in later life (arbitrarily defined as above 60 years of age). Universities constitute one of the major groups of elder education providers in Shanghai. Although it is hardly a new idea in China, lifelong learning, especially for older people, has received particular attention and support in Shanghai in recent decades. There are three main reasons for this. Firstly, more and more middle-aged and older people need lifelong education in order to cope with changes in their working lives caused by rapid and radical shifts in the economic and productive structure in the past few decades. Secondly, more and more adults in the metropolis are reaching retirement age. Thirdly, the combination of sophisticated new technology and today's market-driven economy have encouraged people to learn new approaches to personal and social life. Shanghai's Municipal Government has therefore made a decision to adopt lifelong learning as a crucial part of its education strategy.

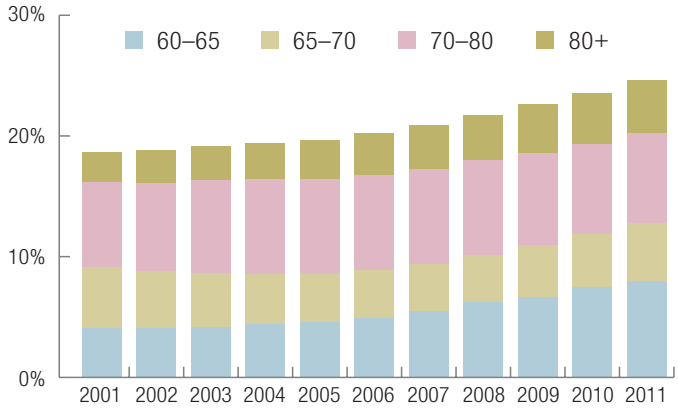
## I. The challenges posed to Shanghai's education system by today's ageing society

As well as being the largest city in China, Shanghai was also the first Chinese metropolis to become an ageing society. By 2012 Shanghai's population reached 23.8 million, of whom 14.2 million are permanent residents and

9.6 million temporary residents or commuters (Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, 2012).[1] Of the 14.2 million permanent residents, 3.67 million (25.8 % of the total population) are elderly (over 60 years old). Of these people, 2.45 million (17.2 % of the total population) are over 65.

Figure 1

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF CITIZENS
BASED ON HOUSEHOLD REGISTRATION IN SHANGHAI




*Source: Shanghai Statistics on Elder Population, 2012*

Shanghai's population has aged faster and more intensely than that of other large cities across the nation. The percentage of over 60s in Shanghai is around 10 % higher than in other cities in China.[2] It has been predicted that the elderly population in Shanghai would grow by 200,000 annually on average from 2011–2015, doubling the growth of the previous five years (2006–2010).[3]

Shanghai's ageing society has placed a heavy burden on government social security funds, causing a significant shortage in the pensions system which provides elderly people's primary income in Shanghai (see Figure 2 below). In view of these issues, policymakers are considering extending the retirement age from 60 to 65.

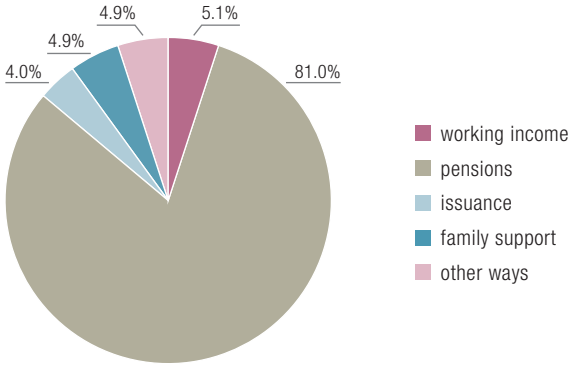
[1] Shanghai Municipal Education Commission. 2012. *Shanghai Statistics on Elder Education, 2012 (in Chinese)*. http://www.shanghai60.org.cn/content.php?id=667 (Accessed 25 November 2014.)

[2] http://news.xinhuanet.com/gongyi/2012–07/20/c_123447770.htm

[3] China's elder care woes. [EB/OL].www.shanghaidaily.com/feature (Accessed 26 June 2012.)

Figure 2

THE INCOME STRUCTURE OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN SHANGHAI




*Source: Shanghai Statistics on Elder Population, 2012*

The ageing of society has led to several potentially hazardous consequences for Shanghai: a shortage of pension scheme funding, shrinking numbers of working age people in the labour force, high healthcare costs, etc. The ageing problem is approaching so fast that government and individuals are not fully prepared for it, either psychologically or in terms of material resources. What, then, are the implications of the ageing society for Shanghai's education system, and what should be our responses?

- Re-affirming the value of education in response to changing educational patterns. 'Education is such a good thing – it is not reserved for younger people. There will be people of all ages who will want to study. There is great value in lifelong learning.' (Urquhart, 2013.) What learning framework or action plan should we set up to implement this new concept and change traditional views on education and learning?

- Resource supply. How can we mobilize sufficient resources to meet the learning and cultural needs of the growing older population? Many older people today remain mentally and physically active long after retirement.

- Functional roles. How can the education system respond to demographic and economic transitions? Measures will need to be taken to re-skill older people and to attract and retain sufficient numbers of talented older personnel in the work-place.

- Incentive mechanisms. What can government, educational institutions, industries, communities and other stakeholders do to foster a fertile environment for lifelong education?

This chapter argues that educational institutions should do more to provide lifelong learning opportunities for the older members of society. Learning for older people is not just an 'add on' but an integral component of the continuing process of upgrading skills and knowledge. In embracing lifelong learning, Shanghai's Municipal Government is embarking on a significant initiative which will involve expansion and reform of school education and making both schools and universities more open and flexible, the better to meet learners' diverse needs.

## II. Lifelong learning opportunities for older people in Shanghai

Elder education is not only a necessary component of lifelong learning, but also an important aspect of building a learning city. Today's retired people in Shanghai enjoy a higher educational and cultural level than ever before. A natural consequence of this is increased demand for abundant and high quality education resources. Promoting elder education to meet this demand is therefore becoming a pressing task for the Shanghai Municipal Government.

### Policy review on promotion of elder education

'Lifelong learning "from cradle to grave" is a philosophy, a conceptual framework and an organizing principle of all forms of education, based on inclusive, emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values' (UNESCO, 2009). According to the *Principles for Older Persons* identified by the United Nations in 1991, older people are entitled to protection of their rights to

independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity.[4] In 1999, the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly* stipulated that older people have the right to receive continuing education. This law obliges the State to develop education for the elderly and encourages society in general to take care over the running of all types of educational institutions for the elderly. It also stipulates that the people's governments at various levels should provide more effective leadership and coherent plans for the education of the elderly.

As early as 2002, the Shanghai Municipal Government held the first 'Municipal Conference on Elder Education'. In the following year, the Municipal Government issued a document entitled *Suggestions on Strengthening Elder Education in the Metropolis*. This document made fifteen concrete suggestions, one of which was 'encouraging universities and colleges to play their special roles in developing elder education in Shanghai'. In 2006 the government jointly issued another document entitled *The Building of the Learning City and Society* which reaffirmed the importance of elder education as regards both lifelong learning and the learning city.

In 2007, the Shanghai Municipal Education Committee and Municipal Bureau of Finance jointly delivered a document on further development of elder education and began to offer special funding to elder education institutions. In 2010, the Shanghai Government promulgated the *Shanghai Mid-and-long-term Guideline for Education Reform and Development 2010–2020* which highlighted the role of elder education institutions in an ageing society and affirmed that 'in order to strengthen elder education and to meet the demands of today's ageing society, the government should promote the development of elder education institutions, provider better learning and communication environments, and improve facilities (particularly ICT) in universities' (Shanghai Municipal Education Commission, 2010). Guided by the principles articulated in this plan, the Shanghai Municipal Government called on all stakeholders at municipal, district and community level to work together to build a learning city, where older people can develop their potential, learn whatever they want, find joy in learning and contribute to society.

[4] UN. 1991. *Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing and related activities*. http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r091.htm

## Current development of elder education in Shanghai

After years of unremitting efforts on the part of the Shanghai Municipal Government, elder education as a major civil engineering project in Shanghai has developed significantly, laying a strong foundation for the lifelong learning city. So far, Shanghai has built one municipal junction centre of satellite network platforms for lifelong learning and branch centres in nineteen districts. Satellite receiving terminals have been established in 215 streets in villages and towns in the region. Terminals in all community colleges, community schools, enterprise training centres, schools for the aged, township adult schools and information centres around the city will ultimately be connected to form a citywide satellite network of lifelong education.

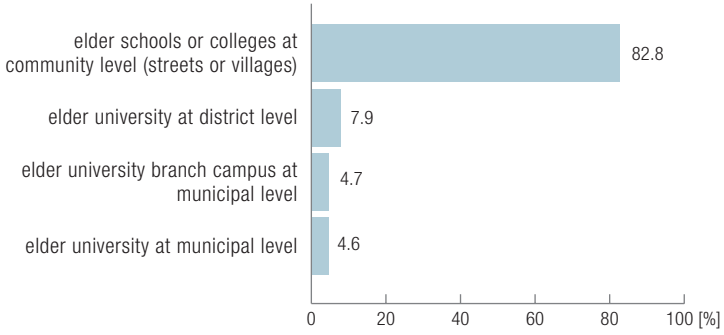
## Institutions and learning networks

At present there are a total of 284 elder education institutions in Shanghai, including:

- 4 elder universities (EUs) at municipal level: Shanghai University for the Elderly, Shanghai Senior Citizen University, Shanghai Retired Cadres University, and Shanghai University for Retired Workers;
- 37 branch EUs universities at municipal level, including 23 elder universities for retired civil servants and 8 elder universities set up by universities themselves, and 4 universities for retired workers;
- 29 EUs at district or county level;
- 214 elder colleges or schools at community (street or township) level.

Figure 3

THE DISTRUBUTION OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN ELDER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (SHANGHAI, 2012)




*Source: Shanghai Statistics on Elder Education, 2012*

One matter should be made clear. Although there are many institutions called 'elder universities' and 'elder colleges', these are not universities in the standard sense of higher learning institutions offering academic degrees. Rather, they are education centres offering various courses of interest to older people, from academic subjects to leisure activities and from primary to college level.

In addition to the elder education institutions detailed above, there are also 4,763 learning stations in local communities and villages, all of which help to create a more open and widespread learning network for older people in Shanghai (Shanghai Statistics on Elder Education, 2012). According to the Shanghai Education Yearbook 2012, 449,118 older people came to study in these institutions in that year, accounting for 12.9 % of the total elderly population in Shanghai. Moreover, 353,114 older people (8.7 % of the total elderly population) studied on distance learning courses organized by Shanghai elder universities. This means that over 20 % of over 60s in Shanghai participated in some form of lifelong learning or elder education. It is clear that the majority of older people in Shanghai prefer to study in community schools or colleges near where they live (see Figure 3 above).

### Distance learning and diploma education programmes

Shanghai has 4,957 receiving terminals which provide distance education to older people. The coverage rate of the receiving terminals has reached 90 %

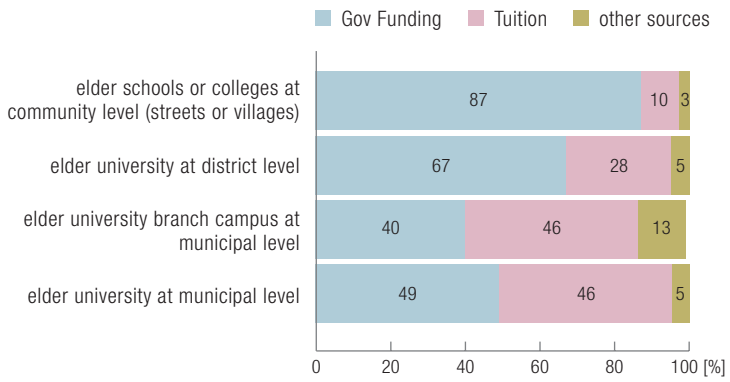
and above in 18 districts of Shanghai. In these areas, older people can receive about 50 minutes' distance learning once a week, 24 times a year. Of the 353,000 older people studying on distance learning courses in Shanghai, 304,000 (86 %) are over 60.

In response to the call to build a learning city, Shanghai TV University (now Shanghai Open University) set up its Open College for Elders in 2004, offering various knowledge- and skills-based courses ranging from academic subjects to healthcare and leisure. Shanghai Open University also offers higher education diploma programmes for older people through its online learning system and TV resources, such as a 'classroom on air' for older people provided by the Shanghai Education TV Station. If they obtain the requisite number of credits, older people can therefore make their dream of gaining a university diploma come true in two and a half years of distance education. The first 100 older people have already applied for these programmes. Shanghai Open University has begun the construction of a credit information base for diploma education and is exploring the idea of an online credit banking system.

## Teaching staff and government funding

Figure 4

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING IN ELDER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (SHANGHAI, 2012)




*Source: Shanghai Statistics on Elder Education, 2012*

Elder universities and colleges have few full-time teachers and rely mainly on part-time staff. 14,638 teachers staff work for elder education institutions in Shanghai. Of these, 919 (6 %) are full-time teachers and the other 13,719 (94 %) are part-time teachers (Shanghai Statistics on Elder Education, 2012). Government funding is still the primary financial source for elder education institutions, especially those at community and district level. By 2012, total funding for elder education institutions reached 139.4 million, of which 74 % came from the government. Elder schools and colleges at community level (in residential areas or rural villages) and elder universities at district level were over 50 % government funded, showing that educational resources in Shanghai flow to institutions and areas that cannot sustain themselves. However, excellent educational resources were still allocated to downtown and inner city areas, e.g. municipal level branch campus elder universities.

### Projects to establish a support system for elder education

The Shanghai Municipal Government is currently taking action to implement a development project called *'Ones, Tens, Hundreds and Thousands'*, which aims to improve older people's access to learning resources at all levels of the lifelong learning network. 'Ones' refers to the planned establishment of several high-quality elder universities, which are intended to shape a frontier or exchange platform for elder education in Shanghai. 'Tens' refers to the setting up of ten centres for theory and policy research, curriculum development, teacher training, information management, international exchanges and other functions, to act as a service support system for elder education in Shanghai. 'Hundreds' refers to the editing of 100 sets of teaching books and packages and the establishment of 100 model educational bases for older people to broaden approaches to learning. 'Thousands' refers to the plan to set up 3,000 receiving terminals for older people in rural villages, making learning more convenient and accessible.

## III. Universities in the service of elder education in Shanghai

A prominent educational gerontologist from the UK, Peter Laslett, gave us a positive portrait of older people's lives by introducing the concept of 'the

third age'. Laslett argues that learning and education continue throughout life and that there should be equality of educational opportunity, regardless of one's location on life's course.[5] His typology legitimizes elder education by placing it within the lifelong learning framework, which the Shanghai Municipal Government has already embraced as crucial to its education strategy.

### Universities as a special group of elder education providers

Elder education institutions in Shanghai can be divided into different levels with different functional emphases:

- Elder universities at municipal level, which are responsible for leading, guidance, research and modeling, in addition to offering some higher education courses;

- Educational institutions at district or county level, which are responsible for managing and guiding elder education within the regions;

- Educational institutions at community level, including street blocks, townships and rural villages, which concentrate on organizing and conducting elder education at grass-roots level.

Where do Shanghai's universities fit into this context? Educational provision for older people is the responsibility of a number of different types of institutions and organizations. At least three main kinds of provider exist:

- The Shanghai Municipal Government and government agencies are important providers of elder education at the municipal level. For instance, the Municipal Ageing Commission and the Bureau of Manpower and Social Security established Shanghai Senior Citizen University to deliver programmes explicitly for older adults in Shanghai. The Shanghai Bureau of Elder Civil Servants set up and continues to maintain Shanghai University for Elder Civil Servants. Shanghai University

[5] Brian Findsen. *Older adults and lifelong learning in Scotland* [EB/OL]. *http://www.docin.com/p-308586552.html*

for Retired Workers was set up by the Shanghai Trade Union with public financial support from the Shanghai Manpower and Social Security Bureau.

- Universities provide elder education as a kind of social service. Some universities in Shanghai have set up a special sector for elder education in order to meet the learning needs of their retired teaching and non-teaching staff and nearby elderly citizens. Those institutions are called the Elder University or Elder College of the university concerned (an example is the Elder University of Shanghai Normal University).

- District governments and local communities (residential areas, street blocks, townships and rural villages) have set up thousands of elder education centres, schools and colleges to meet the learning needs of local older people.

Compared to other providers of elder education in Shanghai, elder universities set up by universities themselves, especially by normal universities such as Shanghai Normal University, are expected to take full advantage of their unique and strong teaching, research and resource capacities in order to promote elder education in a specific and innovative way. Elder universities of this sort are expected to fulfil the following functions:

- Training a professional teaching force for elder universities or colleges (schools) across different levels;

- Providing training courses for middle and high-level administrative staff in order to develop the leadership of newly established elder education institutions;

- Developing curricula and teaching and learning materials for elder education institutions and for elder learners;

- Enriching existing theories on older adult learning by conducting a series of research projects on pedagogy and learn-

ing methods for older adults according to their psychological characteristics;

- Providing policy consultancy for government by conducting surveys or other applied research to help monitor and evaluate the ongoing performance of elder education providers in Shanghai;

- Collaborating with elder universities and colleges at district or county level to upgrade their teaching and to develop new school-based courses, textbooks and learning materials for them;

- Continuing to provide diploma courses to enable older adults to make their 'university dream' come true and to upgrade their knowledge and skills;

- Establishing exchanges or cooperative relationships with elder education institutions abroad or international organizations for elder education, in order to promote international elder education strategy.

### Taking action in elder education: the case of SHNU

At present, of the eight elder universities set up by universities in Shanghai, Shanghai Normal University (SHNU) is the most popular and highly regarded. According to *Shanghai Statistics on Elder Education 2012*, in that year 13,916 older people studied in elder universities set up by universities in Shanghai. Of these 6,685 studied at SHNU Elder University, accounting for 48.1 % of the total. How does SHNU attract so many older adults?

SHNU started as a French-style *grande école*, but is now a key comprehensive university in Shanghai offering 42 PhD programmes, 154 master's programmes and 85 bachelor's programmes to over 38,000 students. Among thousands of Asian universities, SHNU ranks 40th in the QS world rankings. According to the Thomson Reuters Essential Science Indicators, it ranks in the top 1 % in four disciplines (mathematics, chemistry, material science and engineering), whilst also scoring strongly (in the top 5 % to 20 % of Chinese universities) in linguistics, literature, history, education, psychology, urban planning, tourism and other disciplines. SHNU was the first university in

China to offer continuing education and professional training for in-service teachers: its alumni comprise over 70 % of school teachers in Shanghai. SHNU prides itself on having obtained first place in reading, mathematics and science in the PISA 2009 survey. SHNU also boasts several distinguished alumni, including top-ranked leaders at both national and municipal levels, well-known scientists, and ambassadors of the People's Republic.

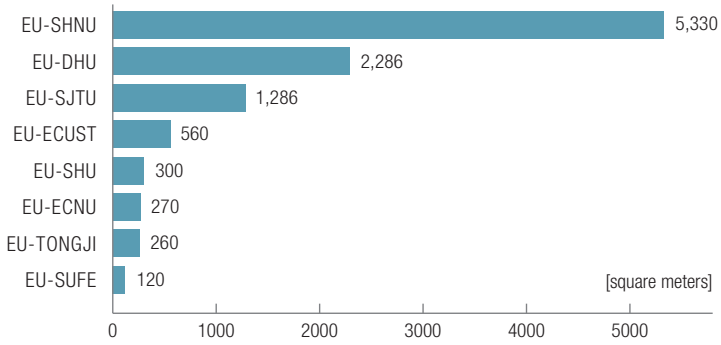
One of the earliest elder universities set up by a university in Shanghai, SHNU Elder University was initially set up in 1997 exclusively for retired SHNU staff. From then onwards, strong support from SHNU itself has enabled it to develop rapidly, providing high-quality elder education in over 130 classes and more than 50 different courses. In 2008, SHNU Elder University was awarded the title of Shanghai Model Elder University. SHNU supports elder education in the following five ways:

- **Human resources:** SHNU appoints the leadership team for EU-SHNU. Until now all EU-SHNU principals have been retired deputy presidents of SHNU, guaranteeing the maintenance of favorable ties between the two institutions. Moreover, half of the teaching and non-teaching staff of EU-SHNU (over 70 people in all) are retired or working professors and staff from SHNU. The middle-level management team of EU-SHNU is also composed of retired and some working staff from SHNU. Over 40 SHNU graduate students serve as teaching volunteers at EU-SHNU each year.

- **Facilities and resources:** Compared to other elder universities set up by universities in Shanghai, Shanghai Normal University provides its elder university with the most comprehensive and high-quality educational resources. SHNU offers about 5,330 square meters of space to EU-SHNU free of charge, including 6 offices, over 30 classrooms and other rooms for specific purposes, such as function halls. Teachers and students of EU-SHNU may use all of SHNU's facilities, such as pianos, computer centers and gyms. Elder students also have the same access to the university's libraries and canteens as ordinary staff and students (see Fig. 5 and 6 below).

Figure 5

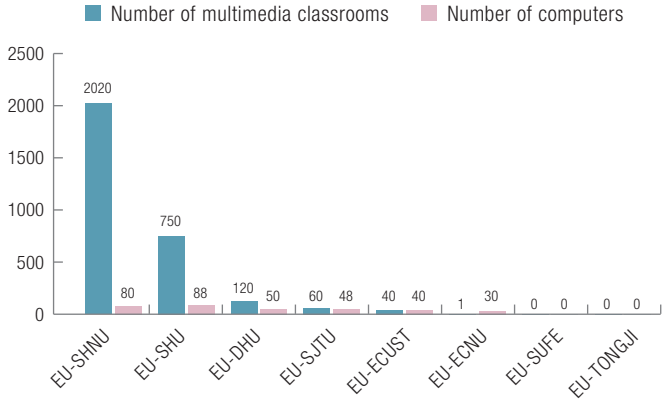
AREA ASSIGNED TO EUs FREE OF CHARGE BY THEIR PARENT UNIVERSITIES (SHANGHAI, 2012)




*Source: Shanghai Statistics on Elder Education, 2012*

Figure 6

FACILITIES PROVIDED FOR EUs BY UNIVERSITIES (SHANGHAI, 2012)




*Source: Shanghai Statistics on Elder Education, 2012*

- **Management and finance:** SHNU takes care of its elder university as if it were one of its own departments. For instance, the SHNU Registrar's Office arranges classrooms and facilities for EU-SHNU in the same way as ordinary classes, and the ICT Office maintains facilities for EU-SHNU in the same way as all other facilities for SHNU students and staff. In addition,

most of EU-SHNU's financial administrators and managers are retired skilled personnel from SHNU. Besides manpower and management, SHNU grants around 50,000–80,000 RMB Yuan to EU-SHNU annually, whilst lobbying for an additional 50,000–100,000 RMB Yuan for EU-SHNU every year from government funding, endowments and other donors.

- **Public service for society:** SHNU is actively engaged in providing services for other elder education institutions in Shanghai:

(i) SHNU has an agreement with Shanghai Retired Cadres University to provide teachers and assist in curriculum development.

(ii) SHNU serves as the first and only teacher training centre for elder education in Shanghai. Every year it trains over 150 teachers for other elder education institutions in Shanghai.

(iii) SHNU is a centre of research on the ageing society and lifelong learning in the metropolis, and a manpower base for other elder education institutions in Shanghai.

- **Innovation on educational concepts:** As a university with strong advantages in educational research, SHNU has carried out several research projects on elder education. It has innovated many useful ideas and concepts for EU-SHNU, such as the '7 Anys' and '5Ps'. '7 Anys' indicates that lifelong education can be for **any person**, in **any time**, at **any place**, for **any course**, at **any level** and at **any pace** or with **any approach** (such as through modern ICT). '5Ps' means that lifelong education can be evaluated by 5 crucial indicators, including:

- **Policy:** Whether or not a community has clear policies for lifelong learning. The establishment of a lifelong learning policy is a matter for political debate and consideration.

- **Programme:** Whether or not there are workable and varied lifelong learning programmes for adults. Programmes require skillful design and financial support.

- **Participation:** What proportion of the local population are adult learners and how often do they take part in the various kinds of learning activities.

- **Partnership:** Whether local community organizations, especially social and business units other than schools, contribute as partners to lifelong learning activities.

- **Performance:** How large a contribution lifelong learning makes to local employment, productivity, development and social security, including coherence and inclusion.

SHNU has also been an important contributor to many Shanghai government documents on lifelong education and elder education, including the section on lifelong education in The Shanghai Mid-and-long-term Guideline for Education Reform and Development 2010–2020. Through this work EU-SHNU has earned a high reputation in both the city and the nation. In ancient China there was an idiom: 'Living to an old age while learning to an old age'; in 21st-century China, meanwhile, a new phrase is becoming popular: 'Old and learning means old and happy!' (老有所学，老有所乐) As 'learning' becomes the demand of millions of older people, it is SHNU that will provide the service of teaching them!

## IV. Challenges and policy improvement

Elder education in Shanghai has developed a great deal through the process of building a lifelong learning city. This project has encouraged the government to focus on formal learning opportunities for older adults, in addition to conventional patterns of educational provision and non-formal learning. Although hardly new, the notion of lifelong learning has received much more attention in recent decades as local government has adopted the concept as

crucial to its education strategy. Nevertheless, Shanghai still lags behind other international metropolises when it comes to social awareness of the urgent importance of elder education and sustainable development in today's rapidly ageing society. This section aims to inform strategic thinking and stimulate reflection on ways to improve lifelong learning policies and to overcome the challenges currently facing elder education in Shanghai. To this end, we recommend focusing on the following goals:

- Improving the engagement of working class people in elder education. There is strong evidence that the middle classes are quite adept at looking after their own learning needs, at least in comparison with working class groups and ethnic minorities (Tuckett and McCauley, 2005). According to statistics, older adults registered in elder education institutions in Shanghai tend to be retired professionals from official organizations or educational, cultural and public sector institutions. These people enjoy a high level of education and a stable and relatively generous pension. This comes as no surprise, since prior education level is the best predictor of an individual's participation in further formal learning. The challenge is therefore to gain a better understanding of the material and social conditions of older working class adults, in order to work out how to encourage them to be more involved.

- Adapting educational provision in order to raise public awareness of the ageing society and of elder education. The complexity of educational provision for older adults matches that of provision for younger people. That fact that many older people do not currently assert their right to formal educational provision reveals their misguided belief that universities and classrooms are only for younger folk. Many people hold the view that elder education is confined to leisure and recreational pursuits, such as singing or dancing. These people are unaware of the other important purposes of elder education, such as intellectual fulfillment and social cohesion. The key is therefore to make them think about older people

in a more positive way and to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes.

- To improve the professional level of those who teach older people. It is known that the level of development of elder education can be measured by the professional level of the teachers. At present we lack a teaching cohort with rich and profound knowledge of pedagogy and learning methods suited to the psychological characteristics of older adults. One way to address this would be to bring together a group of experts in relevant fields, including theories on elder education, teaching for elder adults and school leadership. This group of experts would be complemented by a large group of volunteers, including young graduates, experienced teachers and trainers outside the education sector. These measures might be the optional solution to the problem of how to meet the learning needs of older adults.

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# 7

# LIFELONG LEARNING IN PRACTICE

*Allie Clemans*

## Abstract

In a university setting, lifelong learning has the potential to increase learners' engagement in learning and their application of knowledge within a variety of contexts. This idea is explored in this chapter through the use of a vignette which describes a specific lesson at an Australian university. The example demonstrates what a lifelong learning approach looks like in a higher education setting. By identifying various lifelong and lifewide learning aspects in the example, the chapter outlines how learners come to see the value of a lifelong learning approach, are better able to acknowledge multiple forms of knowledge through it and make more immediate connections between what they come to know and what they do in response. The choice to adopt lifelong learning as a feature of, and approach to, higher education must derive from a set of declared values about the purpose of learning *through* life and learning *for* life, i.e. learning that is both lifelong and lifewide. The impact of the adoption of lifelong learning in this way may extend its reach into higher education, transforming practices within it and positioning learners to engage more deeply with a wide range of formal, non-formal, community and workplace learning.

## Introduction

If I had a dollar for every time my university colleagues in Australia suggested that 'adult education approaches' were the ways to motivate disengaged university students, I would be rich! This has long struck me as a curious situation. University learners are all adults, so surely such approaches should

be the default rather than being regarded as distinctive solutions to increase engagement? Perhaps my colleagues are sensing a need that could be more productively fulfilled by the concept of *lifelong* learning. Lifelong learning offers possibilities to transform perspectives and practices in higher education: possibilities which could provide a response to my colleagues' quest to transform student engagement. This chapter explicates some of these.

In order to do this I must first define lifelong learning, which is the central concept of this chapter. I therefore offer a description of how the concept and its associated discourse first emerged and found favour.

> *Early proponents of lifelong learning argued that the concept of education – as lifelong education – should be freed of … constraints, so that it would become truly life-wide (including all learning contexts and epistemic categories) and lifelong (occurring at any time in the lifespan, according to learning needs). Lifelong education theory thus sought to broaden the concept of education to include all learning undertaken or acquired by human beings – including that undertaken and acquired through what has come to be labelled as 'informal learning'. Learning outcomes from non-formal education and informal learning were argued to be as valuable as those from formal education. (Bagnall, 2009, pp. 280–281.)*

Thus to incorporate lifelong learning within higher education means creating opportunities to broaden learning so that it acknowledges and draws productively on a wide range of learning contexts. Examples of such within Australian universities include macro-institutional policies such as formalizing pathways across learning contexts, establishing academic credit and recognition of prior learning (RPL) frameworks, and initiating social inclusion policies. However, such higher-level policy intentions do not always percolate down to the everyday teaching and learning practices within a university. Big plans often fail to be fully realised when the concrete work of enacting policy intentions begins – i.e. as learners participate in university teaching and learning. This chapter therefore examines the potential of a lifelong learning approach at the micro level of teaching and learning in practice. It considers ways in which the rich and diverse experiences encountered through lifewide and lifelong learning can be captured and put into practice.

To do so, I examine an approach I have taken in the context of my practice as an academic educator in a Faculty of Education within a research-intensive university in Australia. I begin with a short vignette of my teaching. By recounting my practice, I identify and explore the significance of particular aspects which, I believe, exemplify a lifelong learning approach. In this way, the chapter examines the potential for a more explicit acknowledgment of lifelong learning discourse within higher education. It names powerful practices that are already in place and signals the potential to transform teaching and learning practices and engage learners.

## Lifelong learning in higher education: a vignette of practice

In order to illustrate the role played by lifelong learning in my work in higher education, I describe a particular class conducted early on in an undergraduate course I teach. The course is designed to teach adult education theories and practices. Learners range in age from early 20s to 60 years and over. All are professionally involved in aspects of education and training, with significant workplace experience. They are often impatient, wishing I would jump straight into 'telling' them about 'how' to teach adults so that they can apply the ideas to their practice. While I understand this impatience, my challenge is to move learners beyond superficial and easy answers, and to help them learn about the importance of evaluating the theories that shape practice. A session in which I do this is described in the vignette below.

> *Learners begin by working in pairs to discuss and analyse a personally significant and positive learning experience they have had as adults. Next, as a group, each learner articulates reasons that made her/his learning significant. I draw upon these responses and seek to make explicit the common patterns that emerge amongst them. Typically, learners' experiences highlight themes such as the expertise and approach of their educator, the importance of collaborative learning and the need for a safe learning space to allow them to open up to opportunities for learning.*

*Only following this initial sharing of experience do we consider theoretical ideas by Knowles (1990) and others about adult learning as a self-directed endeavour. Prompted by a question from me, learners identify what they feel is missing in Knowles' theory. For example, they mention the ways in which the relationships and teaching expertise that they have just identified create significant adult learning experiences. Then comes the pièce de résistance: we evaluate the minimum level Training Certificate that officially certifies adult educators to work within training organizations in Australia. Some of the learners even 'teach' this Certificate to other educators in their workplaces. Within it (although unreferenced) are the very same Knowlesian ideas, drawn from readings we have previously discussed, that characterise adult education as a wholly self-directed endeavour. Learners discover how their professional worlds (represented in this Certificate) are influenced by these same ideas. Now, however, they 'read' them differently as a result of the process of critical appraisal that they have undertaken as scholars in an academic space.*

The vignette described above provides insight into how I draw in, and on, lifelong learning in my higher education practice. It highlights three aspects that exemplify how this approach opens up critical spaces for adult learners. First, the lifelong learning approach heightens learner awareness of different forms of knowledge and the ways in which these have become more or less valued within the academy. Second, it fosters spaces to bring in new ways of knowing, feeling and doing in order to expand the perspectives learners gain from academic knowledge. Third, it constructs bridges and creates dialogue between personal, professional and academic contexts and ways of knowing.

This practice is underpinned by a view of lifelong learning in higher education as a scholarly journey in which learners develop critical awareness. On this basis, learners are positioned to become increasingly discerning about the existence of multiple knowledges, the differentiated value attributed to these, and the ways in which they themselves can realize the power that higher education promises: to engage with and produce new knowledge that is evidence-based, contextually responsive and ethical. I deal with each of these aspects below.

## Positioning knowledge as having multiple forms

The vignette recounted above makes reference to students' drawing on, and working with, different forms of knowledge. Whilst their personal experiences constitute the point of departure, learners move fluently between personal, academic, and professional or workplace knowledge and practice. At specific moments, these knowledge forms are called upon separately; at others, they are put into 'conversation' with each other. Learners thus become aware of different forms of knowledge and of where they stand in relation to them. Through careful design, the personal and professional knowledge to which the learners have easy access serves as a bridge to the less familiar and more abstract theoretical knowledge which is expected in a higher education context.

The capacity of both teacher and students to recognize and move between these knowledges sits at the heart of the practice case. The significance of moving between local and abstracted knowledge is well explained in the work of Dorothy Smith (1987, 1997). Her work sought to articulate a feminist standpoint of knowing which she believed had traditionally been cordoned off by a tendency to attend only to more abstracted knowledge. Smith's work 'turned upside down the approach to knowing that required living in the head world' (Campbell, 2003, p. 7). She built her analysis on what she identified as a 'rupture' between the lived, material and everyday world [of women] and the conceptual world which comprised socially organized practices and knowledge forms. A 'line of fault' consequently emerged between the everyday experiences of women and the conceptual and abstracted knowledge used to describe their world, which consequently alienated their felt experiences. This created what Smith refers to as two worlds: ' … directly experienced from oneself as center (in the body) on the one hand and the world organized in the abstracted conceptual mode, external to the local and particular places of one's bodily existence' (Smith, 1987, p. 84).

Smith asserts that, by repositioning the origin of knowledge from the abstract plane to the local, embodied, everyday world, it is possible to expose the ways in which these two worlds are connected. The local 'everyday' world is integral to the organization and existence of the abstracted mode of knowing, but the social relations that govern the latter only become visible from the standpoint of the local. Starting from the abstract, on the other hand, makes these connections invisible.

How does this connect to lifelong learning? The point of Smith's work was to delineate a feminist standpoint as an alternative to the more dominant abstract standpoint that was often construed as neutral and rational. The gender aspect, however, is not necessarily the basis on which I draw a connection to lifelong learning. More significant in this regard is the recognition of how some knowledge forms are valued over others. The link between Smith's work and lifelong learning concerns the ways in which different forms of knowing – abstract and local – are called upon (or not) in higher education to promote learners' engagement and understanding. A lifelong learning agenda that values learning that is lifelong and lifewide must, by definition, draw in the multiple knowledges that learners bring with them into the university and purposefully construct a conversation between them. While it is not my intention to hold up the practice case above as a 'perfect' example, it does demonstrate an attempt to do this and describes the learning process which unfolded as a result.

As described in the vignette, beginning with learners' personal experiences of learning is a way of building a bridge toward theoretical knowledge about adult learning. At the same time, it validates the learners' personal experiences. Following Smith, the consequence of this (for women) was that it relocated the process of knowing such that it began from within: ' … the standpoint [of women] commits us to a subject discovering the social process from inside …' (Smith, 1987, p. 122). This draws our attention to the idea of learners' subjectivity and embodiment.

In the same way, the act of drawing on learners' subjective experiences and emotional states in higher education practice helps to construct learners' experience and embodied knowing as legitimate knowledge forms. In doing so, it achieves something significant. From the start, it positions learners who come into higher education as 'knowers'. It sensitizes them to the existence of multiple knowledge forms, some of which they are more comfortable and familiar with than others, and some of which they are just beginning to engage with. This can be seen in the vignette, as learners began to engage with the theory on the basis of how it connected to their personal experiences. The personal knowledge allowed them to find a way into the abstract knowledge, and to find their feet in the transition. In this way, learners necessarily recognized that there is more than one way to know something, but they did this from a position of knowing some aspects al-

ready. This avoided the sense of alienation that could come from treating learners as if they had arrived at the session knowing nothing, thus making them feel deficient.

If lifelong learning acknowledges the multiple forms of learning and different kinds of knowledge that we gain in different contexts throughout life, then lifelong learning practices in higher education practice must exemplify the same acknowledgement. This means explicitly drawing on these multiple knowledge forms in university learning spaces so that learners recognize them, are aware of their differences, and appreciate the ways in which different forms of knowledge are valued in different contexts. The work of Smith not only affirms the existence of different forms of knowledge (local and abstract), but also shows that abstract forms of knowledge tend to be held in higher esteem than local forms and analyses the significance of this recognition in the case of women. Within a university context that is committed to producing new knowledge and building theory through research, it is easy to overlook the ways in which abstract knowledge is privileged over other forms, with the result of disengaging learners. In an academic culture, it can be all too easy to restrict ourselves to lecturing about the theory and fail to make connections with how theory helps us to think through our everyday experiences or challenge our professional practices. The concept of lifelong learning, however, provides a sanguine reminder of the need to create a scholarly conversation around these connections. Practice that engages academic, personal and professional contexts demands that multiple knowledge forms are made explicit, acting as 'a form of decolonization, making way for the liberation of subjugated knowledge' (Lawrence, 2012, p. 77). In the vignette above, adopting a lifelong learning perspective required opening up spaces for the knowledges that learners brought with them, and positioning these as valuable additions to the scholarly knowledge they gained through higher education.

## Learning to know in multiple ways

The inclusion of multiple knowledge forms through the recognition of lifelong learning invariably means that learners acknowledge the variety of ways in which they come to know. The same acknowledgement should occur with-

in a university context. This is evident in the vignette which describes how learners were asked to recall their emotional states during a positive and significant learning experience and to analyse what made that experience significant. Learners thus articulated their knowing by first connecting with feeling. Another interesting aspect of the vignette is learners' responses to my prompt, which was designed to connect what they had come to know through this personal and local experience to the abstracted knowledge of Knowles' theory and to identify differences between the two. In response to my question about what they *felt* was missing from Knowles' theory, based on their experiences, one point is consistently raised when I use this approach, namely the importance of *relationships* for learning – that is, the ways in which relationships between learners influence learning. Did tapping into learners' emotional responses, as described in the practice case, bring insights to the surface that showed they valued connectedness and interdependence in ways that more cognitive teaching approaches might not have done? While there is no evidence to answer this speculative question, what is apparent is that if lifelong and lifewide learning draws in multiple forms of personal, professional and theoretical knowledge, learning is necessarily situated as much within the body (embodied) as within the mind. Emotional states must therefore be a part of learning.

The place of felt experience and embodied knowledge in learning has been acknowledged for its effectiveness (for example, Jaggar, 1989; Jordi, 2011; Henry, 2013; Forgasz and Clemans, 2014). Its merits have been explained by Jaggar in this way:

> *… time spent analysing emotions and uncovering their sources should be viewed … neither as irrelevant to theoretical investigations nor even as a prerequisite for it; it is not a kind clearing of the emotional decks, "dealing with" our emotions so that they do not influence our thinking. Instead, we must recognize that our efforts to reinterpret and refine our emotions are necessary to our theoretical investigations. (Jaggar, 1989, p. 164.)*

If adopting a lifelong learning perspective in higher education widens the possibilities for gaining knowledge in both cognitive and embodied ways, it is worth acknowledging that learning through the body or tapping into our

emotions is not a common approach adopted in a university context. Doing so challenges traditional assumptions about academic knowledge as 'objective' and/or rational. Merriam and Kim distinguish it in the following way: 'Knowledge in a Western paradigm is defined by propositional statements … is usually written, considered true, separate from the self, and permanent. Indigenous knowledge is that which we know in experience …' (Merriam and Kim, 2008, p. 73).

Smith's (1987) analysis of the rupture between local/embodied and abstract ways of knowing helps us to see why embodied knowing stands as a provocation and a challenge to conventional ways of knowing and the authority and power they hold. Knowing through feeling and emotions can even be seen as potentially subversive and dangerous. Making space for personal, embodied and emotional knowing sits uneasily with accepted forms of rationality. Some of our traditional social norms tend to more comfortably promote 'practices that are considered balanced, reasonable and restrained than those which might be seen to be more emotional and 'irrational' (Carson and Templin, 2007). Even within workplace contexts, emotions may be dismissed as unprofessional as we are taught early on to associate professionalism with the control and suppression of emotion. In this way, too, emotions are seen to threaten professional judgement and expertise, while rationality is assumed to underpin them.

A lifelong learning approach to higher education practice inverts such learned behaviours. As the vignette highlights, beginning with learners' everyday and embodied experiences creates openings for learners to get in touch with what they know and feel as they consider theoretical knowledge. It is important, however, to recognize that this does not mean that lifelong learning works only with experience. As Bannerji et al. (1992) point out, working with experience is not the end of the learning journey but the beginning:

> *"There is no better point of entry into a critique or reflection than one's own experience. It is not the end point, but the beginning of an exploration between the personal and the social and therefore the political. And this connection process, which is also a discovery, is the real pedagogic process …" (Bannerji et al., 1992, p. 67.)*

Lifelong learning as a concept influencing higher education practice therefore opens up more than one point of entry for learners, but its purpose is to find a particular destination. Opening up different entry points prompts us to see the connections between our everyday experiences and the larger social and economic forms often encountered therein (Smith, 1987). The vignette sheds light on the ways that such relationships become visible. The following section discusses the impact of what is sparked in learners when these are made apparent.

## Building and crossing bridges

As exemplified in the vignette above, adopting a lifelong learning approach means drawing widely on different knowledge forms. In the vignette, a range of ways of knowing were used to build bridges between personal, professional and academic knowledges. This can be seen toward the end of the vignette where learners come to recognize that some of the ideas in Knowles' theory on adult learning are present in the Certificate programme they have all completed and which some of them teach to others. Their newfound vision to see shortcomings in this theory has a bearing on the learners' re-evaluation of their own prior learning. Those who teach the programme also recognize that they perpetuate the theory's shortcomings by teaching it as if it were complete in its current form. A lifelong learning approach therefore not only locates different points of entry into knowing but also demands a return to those points of entry as a way of re-evaluating them. In some cases, this achieves changes in practice.

The purpose of adopting a lifelong perspective in higher education is to construct the learner as a scholar and to build his or her scholarly capacity and identity over the period of his or her academic journey. Importantly, however, it does more than this. As shown above, it constructs this journey as multi-directional. It involves transitions across bridges, back and forward, between where the learner is situated and the university. It transitions across personal, professional and academic knowledge as a means to build the latter. It also facilitates opportunities to return to professional contexts, construing these as evidence-based contexts of knowledge which have the power to modulate the significance of theory and to inform and/or reshape future professional practice.

The importance of this exchange is not apparent in the vignette itself, but it is brought to life in the following citation from a student's email following the class, which describes the impact the learning had on her:

> *I loved … the opportunity to start to critically think about what we do in relation to adult learning. [It] inspired me and even with a couple of points we discussed such as Knowles being silent around relationships between the learner and teacher, [a] good space to learn … I have begun (already) to ask questions in my workplace in regard to the programmes I deliver. I have delivered Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment since 2004 and I wish to explore and challenge the information I have been delivering to students. (Student D, personal email, 2013.)*

This student's response shows how the theoretical knowledge traditionally associated with higher education filters into the domain of her professional practice. Yet what comes across is not just the passive adoption of theory, but a more nuanced version of it that has been subject to critical evaluation. The learner thinks through the relationships between abstract and local (to use Smith's terms), as she sees the impact of teaching a programme that privileges particular knowledge forms over others. For example, she appears to have considered how it might be possible to teach adult learning, based on Knowles, in a way that prompts consideration of some different aspects of learning, such as relationships. She might, indeed, have considered whose interests are served by the promotion of particular forms of knowledge over others. She says that she is beginning to 'ask questions' in her workplace and, while her email does not disclose the nature of such questions, the sense is that she is beginning to question the ways of doing things that are taken for granted. In this way, bridges are being built between the university and the workplace, between the personal and the abstract, and a personally relevant dialogue has ensued.

For Smith, building bridges between different forms of knowledge in this way relocates knowledge, with the aim being neither to prioritize experiential knowledge over other forms, nor to dwell on or be contained in it. Rather, the aim is to reposition the process of everyday knowing so that it reveals the way things work and the reasons for this. '[T]he effect of locating

the knower in this way is [not] to divorce the everyday world of experience from the larger social and economic relations that organise its distinctive character' (Smith, 1987, p. 89).

The learning design exemplified in the vignette and the experience of this design through the eyes of the students mirrors Harris' (1999) description of the 'Trojan horse model of RPL' which aims to 'build bridges two-ways … This would involve … supporting development of alternatives to the "theory to practice" orientation of many programs … considering new ways of integrating theory and practice including using practice to critique theory rather than only to exemplify it …' (p. 135). Although RPL is not the focus of this chapter, discussion of this model is nevertheless relevant because it mirrors the features of teaching and learning practices that occur when a lifelong learning perspective is adopted in a higher education context. Practice in this way is not intended to replace dominant knowledges with subjugated knowledges, but to make different forms of knowledge visible and recognizable. Personal and professional experiences reshape the academic knowledge encountered: '[w]hen people are encouraged to return to these texts [of representation] and add insights as new versions, they engage recursively with the representation as an object …' (Fenwick, 2006, p. 296).

Working in these ways develops learners as scholars but not just through the learning they acquire while they study at university. They develop as scholars through the exchange of knowledges across the different forms of knowledge they engage with, through a purposeful dialogue that is constructed across the multiple sites of learning they inhabit. In other words, this approach inspires learning that is more authentically lifelong and lifewide.

## The implications of adopting lifelong learning in higher education

Through analysis of the vignette recounted at the start of the chapter, I have identified three important changes that need to be made in order to make universities more open to the diverse forms of knowledge encompassed by lifelong learning. These are:

1) the need to heighten learner awareness of different forms of knowledge and the value attributed to them;

2) the consequent need to base learning on different ways of knowing, feeling and doing in order to expand perspectives on academic knowledge; and

3) the need to facilitate learner transitions between personal, professional and academic contexts and ways of knowing.

When viewed together under the overarching rubric of lifelong learning, these three factors comprise more than the sum of their parts. It is important to articulate clearly what it means to embrace lifelong learning in universities, as the standpoint taken on this fundamental idea strongly influences the way that learners learn and teachers teach. 'Standpoint' in this sense refers to a particular commitment that must be made by an individual, a faculty or an institution about the purpose of lifelong learning and how it should be enacted in a university context. This can be problematic, since the ways universities promote lifelong learning through teaching and learning depend on how the term is understood by their members – something which is not always easy to define. Lifelong learning is a slippery concept which holds within it diverse and potentially conflicting ideas that may direct one toward or away from certain practices. Any consideration of the role of universities in promoting lifelong learning must therefore rest on an articulation of the meaning of 'lifelong learning' for a particular institution and, by extension, the values and practices associated therewith.

It is challenging to articulate this position for three reasons. First, as just described, lifelong learning 'is an umbrella term that embraces a multiplicity of ideologies' (Lee, 2007, p. 362) in which competing values hide. Unravelling these values requires advocates to be clear about which of them should be adopted in a particular setting. Second, the concept of lifelong learning is often employed in contemporary policy discourses in a way that suggests that it has lost touch with its beginnings. Its articulation by Faure (1972), which was subsequently adopted by UNESCO, made reference to lifelong as well as lifewide learning and laid emphasis on individual development and community building 'within a social democratic framework' (Bagnall, 2009, p. 278). Contemporary application of the term, however, especially in Australia, tends to align more with a market-oriented discourse that is focused on developing individuals' skills in order to strengthen their employ-

ability in today's economically and technologically driven workplace climate (Crowther, 2004; Lee, 2007; Clemans, Newton, Guevara and Thompson, 2013). This contemporary framing has travelled quite some distance from its original inheritance. The situation has been vividly described by Bagnall as:

> *… impoverished and mutant to the extent that it has shed the holistic, social, democratic agenda of educational development that characterised the concept of lifelong education, replacing it with an agenda more singularly focused on learning to be flexibly responsive to the changing workplace skill and value demands of a globalizing, economistic, capitalistic culture and to helping individuals accept and adjust (reactively) to other contemporary cultural, economic, and technological changes. It is a mutant construct, inspired and driven by neo-liberalism and its attendant instrumentalism and individualism. (Bagnall, 2009, p. 278.)*

Navigating through and resolving these competing ideas about lifelong learning as it applies within higher education is complex. Ultimately, resolution lies in commitment to a particular set of shared values about learning *through* life and learning *for* life. This brings us to the third challenge regarding the adoption of a standpoint for lifelong learning in higher education. The value base of the first advocates of lifelong learning had a socially progressive orientation. Their call to embrace lifelong learning was intended to extend what they saw as the limited horizons of formal institutional education which was based on a narrow view of learning that valued disciplinary over professional and personal knowledges, and was concerned more with youth than with the adult population.

The early proponents of lifelong learning were therefore explicit about their social-humanist orientation. These values have been diluted, narrowed or even negated in the evolution of the concept of lifelong learning. For example, Australia does not have an explicit federal policy regarding lifelong learning itself, yet it does have an elaborate policy agenda that supports lifelong learning for the sake of enhancing employability. There are those who argue that it is not needed:

> *In a sense, Australia does not have a policy because it does not need one: our whole approach has encouraged lifelong learning (p. 14). […]*

> *Australia does not have a life-long learning policy as such. Nevertheless, the level of adult participation in education and training in Australia is very high, and Australia could claim to be at the forefront of lifelong learning, at least in terms of formal higher education and TVET. (Karmel, 2004, p. 18.)*

On the other hand, there are those who believe that the absence of a formal policy on lifelong learning in Australia is evidence of the lack of attention paid to learning aspirations that go beyond enhancing employment opportunities. Kearns, for example, argues:

> *To date [1999] the Commonwealth government has shown no interest in monitoring other types of educational outcomes such as personal satisfaction, increased self-esteem, community involvement or social skills. Yet these outcomes are important indicators of an inclusive education system and an individual's motivation to become a lifelong learner. (Cited in Karmel, 2004, p. 17.)*

Motivation in Australia to articulate a standpoint around lifelong learning is divided. Yet, a lifelong learning approach in higher education holds significant implications for learning, as my vignette has shown. The choice, therefore, to adopt the concept in higher education must stem from a set of declared values about what counts as lifelong learning and why it matters. As illustrated above, the various and current understandings of the purpose of lifelong learning range from an individualistic orientation focused on skill-building to a socially-inclusive orientation centering on communal well-being. Before we can successfully implement lifelong learning in higher education, we must be sure about why we want to commit to this and what we seek to achieve as a result. This preliminary groundwork would influence the teaching and learning approaches that would subsequently be encouraged and adopted.

In conclusion, this chapter has examined the potential for making the role of lifelong learning in higher education more explicit. By means of a vignette describing practice in a particular university setting in Australia, I have explored how a lifelong learning approach might be implemented in teaching and learning. I have discussed the significance of certain key features of

the lifelong learning approach for higher education students. In summary, this chapter argues that adopting a lifelong learning approach to teaching and learning at university means drawing on expansive knowledge forms to deepen the impact of learning. Such teaching and learning practices achieve three things. First, they heighten learners' awareness of different forms of knowledge and the value attributed to them. Second, they encourage learners to engage with learning that draws on the body as well as the mind. Third, they enable learners to draw on and apply their learning across personal, professional and academic contexts. This approach must, however, be grounded in a clear articulation of how the concept of lifelong learning is to be interpreted and applied in a higher education context. When this is done, the concept of lifelong learning may indeed extend its reach into higher education, transforming practices within it and positioning it to engage more fully with the wide range of formal and non-formal, community and workplace learning contexts in which higher education learners are also situated.

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# 8

# THE PARALLEL ADULT EDUCATION SYSTEM: A DANISH CONTRIBUTION TO LIFELONG LEARNING AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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## Abstract

University courses can be organized according to two different principles. The first involves the systematic acquisition of increasingly complex research-based knowledge and skills within a particular professional field. The second involves acquisition of further knowledge and skills based on the student's own existing social and vocational competences. From a lifelong learning perspective, this second principle offers the best development possibilities. The Danish Master programme is a forward-looking contribution to the process of adapting Danish universities to lifelong learning. It aims to create a relationship between the professional competence which students bring to university and the research-based knowledge which the university can provide. This chapter identifies some preconditions and challenges related to the implementation of this programme.

## Introduction

University programmes can be organized according to two different principles. The first involves the systematic acquisition of increasingly complex research-based knowledge which is related to the skills required in a given professional field. The second involves building research-based knowledge on the basis of the student's own existing social and vocational competences[1].

[1] In this text the term 'competence' includes the student's experiences, skills, knowledge and attitudes. Competence thus means the ability and willingness to act in relation to a task.

University courses are traditionally organized according to the first principle. From a lifelong learning perspective, however, the second provides greater opportunities for competence development.

The Danish university system includes two parallel programmes: a traditional academic programme (Candidatus) and an alternative practice-based programme (Master). Established in 2001, the practice-based programme is part-time and takes half as long to complete as the traditional programme. Training is based on the student's existing vocational competences and experiences, and aims to combine these with formal research-based knowledge acquisition.

This chapter identifies preconditions for the implementation of the Master programme and describes some challenges encountered along the way. It discusses difficulties associated with measuring prior learning and pedagogical problems related to combining vocational experience with formal school-based knowledge. Although these difficulties are significant, experience indicates that they can be overcome.

## A practice-based university education

In the 1996 report to UNESCO by The International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century entitled *Learning: The Treasure Within*, the chairman of the commission, Jacques Delors, identifies some guidelines that universities must observe in order to optimize their efforts to promote lifelong learning. Universities, Delors argues, should function as meeting places for learning throughout life. They must therefore open their doors to adults 'who wish either to resume their studies and develop their knowledge or to satisfy their taste for learning in all areas of cultural life' (Delors, 1996). Moreover, universities must ensure that the content of their courses is continually tailored to the needs of the economy.

These ideas are echoed by the Danish Ministry of Education, which in 1997 published the report *National competency development: Business development through skills development*. This report recommends that lifelong learning be strengthened and more emphasis placed on a combination of general and vocational qualifications within what is called the 'parallel educational system for adults' (Undervisningsministeriet, uå.). One of the out-

comes was a new focus on continuing education and training programmes at university level. The Danish parliament passed an 'Act of vocational education and higher education (further education) for adults' which came into effect on 1 January 2001. This act marked a new approach to adult education and lifelong learning and led to the development of the Master programme.

The Master programme aims to give adults the opportunity to improve both their vocational and their general academic competences. Students work towards obtaining a formal competence[2] based on an already acquired vocational competence combined with further formal training. The formal competence thus obtained must be on the same level as an equivalent competence acquired within the ordinary academic system. However, because the student must have at least two years' professional experience before starting the Master programme, it can be completed in less time. The vocational competence therefore stands in place of a formal academic competence. Enabling students to achieve a practical university qualification in half the time of a traditional academic degree represents a breakthrough in the promotion of lifelong learning.

The Act specifies that the content and organization of Master courses must take into account adult students' work and life experience and make it possible for them to combine education with concurrent employment (hence the courses' part-time nature). The legislation speaks of building on both work experience and life experience, both believed to be important factors in overall competence. The rationale behind the strategy is that adults in the labour market must have 'access to learning and skills development throughout life'. By developing professional skills in a systematic way, the Master programme renders adults competent 'to perform highly qualified functions in enterprises and in institutions'.

The programme is implemented according to the following guidelines:

- Training is aimed at people who hold a job and have at least two years' professional experience.

- Training is part-time so that it can be combined with full-time paid work.

[2] In this text the term 'formal competence' denotes a competence that is recognized in the education system and accepted by the labour market.

- Students' prior learning is equivalent to (parts of) a traditional formal competence.

- Prior learning combined with formal competence acquisition provides students with a master's degree in half the time of a traditional academic education.

- Despite differences in content, the Master programme leads to the same academic level as the traditional programme.

- The Master programme is based on the student's overall competence: that is, educational, vocational and personal skills.

These principles rest on two preconditions. One is that students' existing competences can be described and assessed. The other is that they can be combined with the academic competences offered by the university. These two preconditions are discussed below.

## Validation of prior learning

Training based on practical knowledge and skills relies on the availability of a reliable method to describe and measure that knowledge. This raises a number of problems. Various answers have been proposed to the question of how to measure prior learning with sufficient validity, reliability and relevancy (Andersson and Harris, 2006; Ehlers, 2010; Stenlund, 2012), but almost all opt for either an identity-based or an equivalence-based model.

On an identity-based model, assessors look for identity between the skills the students already have and the skills the training is supposed to provide. If such identity is established (i.e. if the student is deemed already to possess the skills imparted by all or part of a training programme), the relevant part of the programme is approved and the student receives corresponding credit. The expectation that students will have already mastered at least some of the content of a particular course of study through prior learning constitutes the rationale for the shorter training period.

According to the identity model, therefore, students' skills are measured with the same yardstick used in traditional university education. The method solves the problem of how to measure a student's skills, but it may fail to account for their full breadth.

In an equivalence-based model, assessors examine whether the competence the student possesses is at the same level as the competence a university education should provide. The two sets of competences are therefore not required to be the same, as in the identity model, but merely equivalent. For example, a practical approach to problem-solving in a particular field can be assessed as being at the same level as a theoretical approach to problem-solving in the same area. Similarly, practice-based knowledge of a given topic can be recognized as being at the same level as knowledge of the same topic obtained from indirect sources. Equivalence is measured on the basis of whether the competence in question has functional value; i.e. whether it enables the student to solve a task in the relevant area.

On the equivalence model, students' competences are measured using a different yardstick than in traditional academic education. The method presupposes that the student posesses broad and relevant competences that may be appropriate in coping with routine tasks and solving new problems in the field concerned. This model makes measurement problematic, because it is difficult to assess whether different types of competences are on the same level. However, the model is faithful to the underlying principle of building upon students' existing competences. The Danish Master follows an equivalence model according to which (at least) two years of professional experience is equivalent to one year of academic instruction in the same area.

The master's degree in adult education provides a useful example to illustrate the difficulties encountered when prior learning is taken as a starting point for further education, including the measurement problem alluded to above. The programme is aimed at students who have worked in the field of adult education for at least two years. From a lifelong learning perspective, it makes sense that such people are keen to embark on a science- or theory-based continuing training course. It also makes sense to assume that the practice-based competences they possess, in the form of experience in teaching and educational planning, would constitute a good foundation on which to base the training programme. The participants in the programme

may have worked in various areas of the adult education system as teachers, planners, managers, or in human resource development. They will bring very useful but also very different experiences and competences to class. The challenge is to describe and evaluate their skills in such a way that these can be said to equate to a formal competence.

Besides solving technical problems associated with the recognition of prior learning, the implementation of a master's programme based on the principles stated above requires political support. It requires willingness on the part of politicians to accept that the competences acquired in an individual's social and working life can be equivalent to those acquired in formal education. This topic has been much discussed throughout Europe in recent years and a number of reports have been published suggesting different organizational and pedagogical solutions (see for example Bjørnåvold, 2000; Cedefop, 2009; Colardyn and Bjørnåvold, 2004; European Council, 2004).

## Prior learning must be combined with formal competence

The pedagogical principle underlying the Master programme is the combination of solid business and personal competence with formal academic competence. Training must therefore be organized in such a way that there is a functional link between the student's prior learning and the research-based competences taught at the university.

Traditional university curricula are based on the principle of systematic and ultimately comprehensive acquisition and understanding of increasingly complex subject matter relating to a future professional function, such as technician, administrator, doctor, lawyer, teacher, scientist or researcher. In practice-based education, however, the pedagogical principle is different: the aim is to create a relationship between the professional competence with which the students enter the university and the research-based knowledge which the university can provide. The Danish Master programme is built on this principle. This structure generates (at least) two pedagogical challenges. One is how to integrate the participants' diverse experiences so that they complement and inform the research-based knowledge imparted. The second is how to make that research-based knowledge functional and useful in the students' future professional practice.

The first of these challenges has already been addressed. It constitutes a key element of the experiential pedagogy espoused by educational theorists in the middle of the last century such as John Dewey (1933) and continued by later adult educational theorists such as Peter Jarvis (1995). According to these thinkers, learning, and especially adult learning, is based on experience and its development. University teaching must therefore be organized in such a way as to link experience and knowledge. This is often realized through problem-based courses and/or educational projects based on specific and current issues. Students are trained to reflect on their own practice and systematize these reflections through the inclusion of evidence-based knowledge. To apply a concept drawn from Donald Schön, the student must be trained to become a competent reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983). The pedagogical philosophy of the Danish Master programme is based on these ideas. It takes the student's own experience as the central point around which formal academic knowledge is built. The two are integrated by working with and solving specific practical problems associated with former and future jobs.

The second challenge concerns the transfer of knowledge and skills from university to work. Research in this field finds that there is often a gap (sometimes described as a 'practice-shock') between the training students receive and their ability to put this training into practice. Results suggest three steps that can be taken to help close this gap:

- Encouraging students' self-efficacy, particularly the motivation to transfer their skills to a real work context.
- Incorporating more practical elements into the teaching process so as to bring training closer to real work.
- Making the workplace climate more amenable to skills transfer (Billing, 2007; Russ-Eft, 2002).

These conditions have important implications for the organization of the Master programme. Above all, they highlight the importance of linking educational content as closely as possible to the conditions of the student's potential future workplace.

Returning to the example of the master's in adult education, we can now realize that the students graduating from this programme will fulfil many different job functions. The diversity of prior learning and experience that students bring to class constitutes a challenge for the teacher, who must find a way to integrate these diverse experiences into a meaningful and coherent teaching process. In order to do this, a common baseline must be established for the communication of experiences. This means, firstly, that students should learn to see the common elements which underlie superficially diverse experiences. Secondly, it means that the teacher must find and disseminate rigorous theoretical knowledge that can shed new light on the different experiences and systematize them according to a coherent principle. An inductive teaching method is preferred. This requires considerable pedagogical and subject-specific insight.

The Master programme is based on students' prior learning and existing competences, which are presupposed at the point of departure. The programme aims to increase students' competences so that they become better able to put these into practice. A traditional academic university programme measures the outcome of study in terms of the students' *potential* for action. The Master, by contrast, is based on real and demonstrable *current* actions. The evaluation of a Master student is linked to behavioural competence, i.e. the ability and willingness to practise a profession appropriately and competently. He or she must therefore be assessed in a practical context.

## A new curriculum

If the competences a student brings to university are at the same level as traditional formal competences but significantly different in content, then two different learning processes (practice-based and academic) are taking place. This means that there must be two different curricula. In a practice-based curriculum, practice itself defines what knowledge and skills are relevant. Curriculum content and learning processes must therefore be closely related to actual practice and to problems encountered therein. As mentioned earlier, a master's degree programme should train students to become reflective practitioners, aware of and able to analyze their own experiences. They should be able to answer questions like: What is experience? What experiences do

I have? How did I acquire them? How can I systematize my experiences in relation to formalized knowledge? What knowledge have I gained from my experiences? How does this knowledge relate to the lessons learned in class? One way to equip students with this reflective capacity is to incorporate workplace-based and experiential learning into university tuition (McLernon and Hughes, 2004; Pouget and Osborne, 2004).

Participants in the Master programme will often attend university with experience from the world outside which is more technologically up-to-date than the programme itself. It is not uncommon for university teachers to have been inactive in professional practice for many years. Some teachers may never have worked outside the university. It is therefore a continual challenge to ensure that the knowledge delivered by the university system remains relevant to a constantly evolving labour market. University teachers must have uninterrupted access to knowledge from practice and be able to relate both teaching and assessment to it.

A further pedagogical challenge is to deliver a broad and comprehensive education as well as specific practical knowledge. The quality of an educational programme is measured in terms of the extent to which the competences acquired enable the student to practise the corresponding profession in a qualified and competent manner. At the same time, however, training must enable more general practice and wider professionalization. The learning process must therefore systematize individual skills and experiences in a way that enables students to apply their new competences in a variety of different situations.

## Lifelong learning and the university

The establishment of parallel adult education at university level in Denmark has provided a sustainable and valuable contribution to lifelong learning. Today, more than ten years after the Master programme was established, more than fifty students complete the programme on education every year. Almost one in ten of all Danish university students are Master students.

As discussed above, implementing a university programme based on students' prior learning poses a number of challenges. There are difficulties associated with measuring prior learning and with developing appropri-

ate teaching methods. There are difficulties associated with evaluating the competences acquired and with ensuring the effective application of these competences. Nevertheless, experience indicates that these difficulties can be overcome.

The implementation of the Danish Master programme represents an important step forward with regard to the incorporation of RPL into higher education. This is reflected in the Bergen Communiqué from the Bologna Process:

> *We see the development of national and European frameworks for qualifications as an opportunity to further embed lifelong learning in higher education. We will work with higher education institutions and others to improve recognition of prior learning including, where possible, non-formal and informal learning for access to, and as elements in, higher education programmes. (Bologna Process, 2005.)*

In sum, the Master programme is a forward-looking and successful contribution to the process of adapting Danish universities to lifelong learning.

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# 9

# FROM MARX TO MARKET: LIMITATIONS OF UNIVERSITY-LED 'COLLABORATION' IN THE YANGPU (SHANGHAI) INNOVATION ZONE

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## Abstract

One of former President Hu Jintao's farewell gifts to China was 'Plan 2011' through which certain universities were funded to form collaborative relationships with businesses (in science parks) and communities. The aim was to foster innovation. Yangpu, an old industrial district in Shanghai, got in line for Plan 2011 money. Yangpu officials are fascinated by Silicon Valley. But China is not California and numerous impediments block Yangpu's desire to be a leading technology and innovation centre. First, many Chinese citizens have campaign fatigue and ignore Party exhortations. Second, when told to collaborate with businesses and communities, overworked Shanghai university professors prefer other duties. This leaves local government officials with the responsibility to lead collaboration initiatives. All over the world, it is a formidable task to get universities into collaborative relationships. Yangpu has special advantages and formidable problems. Given the fact China is a low trust society and the Communist Party controls most aspects of daily life, it will not be enough to merely copy California's Silicon Valley. Innovation is more of a socio-cultural than a managerial issue so, if Yangpu wants universities to nurture innovation, there will need to be a more freewheeling academic culture that rewards, rather than punishes, risk-taking, independent thinking and creative acts. Nothing fails like success. Because of land speculators taking advantage of Yangpu's preoccupation with 'knowledge', soaring rents and property prices are forcing start-ups to head for the suburbs.

## Learning for collaboration in China

Chinese like numbers. Hence, in 1995, as part of efforts to secure world class status for China's elite universities, the Ministry of Education launched a '211' project to improve privileged institutions. About ¥37 billion renminbi ($6 billion) went into disciplines, digital campuses, faculty development and infrastructure at ten (and, later, 112) Chinese universities. Three years later a '985' project was launched. In this effort, 40 universities would share ¥14 billion ($2.28 billion) and be told to become 'world class'. Another 30 were instructed to work on becoming 'well-known'.

On 24 April 2011, during a speech celebrating Tsinghua University's 100$^{th}$ anniversary, Hu Jintao stood in the Great Hall of the People at Tiananmen and called for creation of university-led zones of collaboration. Following Chinese naming traditions, the initiative was called 'Plan 2011'. President Hu urged universities to study foreign models (e.g. Silicon Valley) and establish 'cooperation' and strategic alliances with businesses and communities. Partners were urged to share resources and carry out major scientific projects to achieve practical goals. Later, the Chinese Minister of Education called for 'in-depth structural reform' of universities, along with 'academic freedom' and 'independent thinking' (Liu, 2013). Plan 2011 was modest in scope – involving three phases and only four years ('China launches plan', *People's Daily Online*, 9 May 2012, p. 31). However, it offered new money for partners and, on the banks of the Huangpu river in Shanghai, ambitious officials were keen to get their share.

## Yangpu jumps on the bandwagon

Shanghai contains 19 districts. Yangpu, an historic industrial district on the Huangpu river has a population of 1.3 million people and contains about 60 % of Shanghai's universities. In the 1930s, its factories attracted foreign adult educators and hosted learning programmes as a front for Communist organizers (Boshier and Huang, 2007*b*). In the 1960s, Yangpu still had more than half a million industrial workers. However, its influence waned when Pudong district, a glitzy rival across the river, came to prominence in the 1990s.

China is not a top-down fiefdom where the Beijing dictator issues edicts and expects instant compliance from outlying areas. In fact, China would be a better place if local officials were more amenable to obeying environmental (and other) regulations coming from Beijing. Instead, because of China's immense size and diversity, local governments enjoy considerable autonomy and Shanghai's districts, like those of all major cities, energetically compete with their neighbours.

In 2003 Yangpu created a 'Knowledge Innovation Zone' with a 'Central Intelligence District' (to rival the downtown 'Central Business District'). Daxue Road, a 700 metre long street, is modelled on University Avenue in Palo Alto. In 2009 they launched a 'high-level talent and innovation' programme and tried to understand lifelong learning. Mechanisms designed to ease access to different forms of learning and education were billed as 'flyovers' (like those on Shanghai's famous elevated freeways).

Chinese habitually source good ideas from abroad and Shanghai officials are fascinated by California's universities and science parks. For them, Silicon Valley is the model for China. What they most admire about Silicon Valley is the flow of money and people between private and public institutions ('Similarities to Silicon Valley,' *China Daily,* 26 September, 2014, p. 6). Most noticeably, Yangpu officials rarely highlight (or even acknowledge) the crucial importance of freewheeling Californian political culture and grassroots initiatives at Stanford University. There are five research universities (including Stanford and the University of California – Berkeley) but only five national research laboratories in California's Silicon Valley. But, unlike in China, there is clean air, good urban environments, protected parks and open spaces. Even more important, the central feature of California's Silicon Valley is acceptance of failure and risk.

In contrast, Yangpu people breathe bad air and their universities are run by a President and Communist Party Secretary. In addition, there are few (if any) incentives to lure faculty or graduate students into collaborative relationships with business or communities. Many academics consider 'innovation' a codeword for profiteering from land sales. Risk and failure are not widely-accepted and in direct conflict with the deep-rooted Chinese need to 'save face'. Moreover, after the catastrophic '100 flowers movement' of the 1950s, academics have good reasons to be sceptical of calls for collaboration, independent thinking or risk-taking. Anyone doubting the need for caution

could ask Mao Hengfeng – a 'relentless campaigner for women's reproductive rights' (Amnesty International, 2012) who was incarcerated in a Yangpu police detention centre and then shipped to a labour camp for 'disturbing the social order'.

Along with face-to-face universities (such as Fudan and Tongji) Yangpu contains a massive 'learning world plaza' (at 228 Guoshun Road) with an Open University. On Huangxing and Siping Roads, near a desolate sunken square at Wujiaochang, the People's Liberation Army has a big residential and training establishment. The PLA owns several Yangpu businesses (such as the Lan Tian hotel on Huangxing Road). Fudan, Tongji, the Shanghai University of Sport, a reforestation school (and numerous other educational establishments) are in the same neighbourhood.

For a long time, China demonstrated an ability to accomplish large and difficult projects not modelled on foreign examples (see Winchester, 2008). Compared to the West, there are few consultative processes, only loose planning requirements and many malleable officials. Hence, large and difficult projects are possible and take little time. Despite formidable opposition, in 2003 Shanghai spent ¥2.6 billion ($450 million) to build a Formula 1 race track. After the first grand prix (in 2004) the track started to sink and, in 2007, circuit manager Yu Zhifei was convicted of embezzlement. Seeing the new track, former motor-racing champion Jackie Stewart shrugged and said 'no democracy could afford this' (McGregor, 2010, p. 206).

Yangpu is in a vigourous contest with Zhongguancun, the self-declared 'national innovation and science hub' associated with Tsinghua university in Beijing (High-tech parks and incubators, *China Daily,* 26 September, 2014, p. 7; Wang & Leng, 2011). Along Guoshun Road (near Siping), at the epicentre of the knowledge economy in Yangpu, is the soaring postmodern learning world plaza containing the Shanghai Distance Education Group (DEG) and Open University(OU) – created from remnants of the old Shanghai Radio and Television university founded in 1960.

In its heyday, the Shanghai Radio and Television University did valuable research, had an active publishing programme and nurtured close relationships with adult educators and university departments of adult and higher education. The Shanghai RTVU was renamed Open University in 2012 and, by 2014, claimed to have enrolled more than 500,000 non-degree students. Officials said there were 4,210 teachers at the Shanghai Open University

and, best of all, rural migrants comprised 33 % of enrollees in 45 degree programs. Numerous migrant food hawkers operate in streets only feet from learning plaza fences. Fortunately, the firewall does not impede the coexistence of noodles, dumplings and high-technology.

By 2015, adult education was a relic of the past in Shanghai. Instead, the word 'digital' was at the centre of Yangpu's effusive propaganda about innovation, brains and investment. Following Silicon Valley, in happy advertising, land developers (like Hong Kong's Shui On) urged budding entrepreneurs to 'live, work and play' in the Yangpu Knowledge and Innovation Zone. Chinese love big displays and, in Yangpu, the 'Bay Area-Yangpu Digitization Park' touts itself as the landing pad for U.S. and international companies making a foray into China. With local start-ups being driven out by high rents and rapacious landlords, space is created for foreigners.

## Innovation Triangle

While other parts of the world contributed to an architecture for lifelong education through UNESCO's Faure (1972) Report, Chinese educators were humiliated, immobilised or killed by Mao's Cultural Revolution. After Mao died (in 1976) Deng's 1978 embrace of 'reform-and-opening' created fertile ground for lifelong learning. Hence, a Chinese learning initiative was well underway during the first decade of the 21$^{st}$ century, and there were (and still are) creative and spirited attempts to build learning streets, villages, townships, districts and cities (Boshier and Huang, 2006; 2007*a*). Two of the most fascinating examples are the Shuang Yu learning village and the effort to build a learning Communist Party (Boshier & Huang, 2007a).

UNESCO is impressed with Chinese attempts to foster learning in formal, informal and non-formal settings. In return, Chinese officials do their best to support UNESCO. In 2010 the Shanghai Bureau of Education and UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning co-sponsored the 'Better City, Better Life' international conference in conjunction with Expo-2010 (Boshier, 2011; Yang and Valdés-Cotera, 2011). Momentum from this 2010 Yangpu conference was carried over to October 2013 when Beijing and UNESCO co-hosted an international conference on learning cities. Very significantly, the central government sent their stimulating and congenial Vice Premier Liu Yandong

(the only women in the Chinese Politiburo group-of-nine) to address international delegates.

Shanghai has long been a haven for Chinese and foreigners in search of money or adventure. In the 1930s, the disgusting and dangerous Yangpu silk filatures (factories) were made famous by Communist activists and foreign sympathizers such as New Zealander Rewi Alley (Boshier, 2006), Lebanese-American George Hatem, American Edgar Snow (Boshier and Huang, 2008) and renowned New York YWCA adult educators such as Maud Russell (Boshier and Huang, 2007b). Rewi Alley took U.K. poets W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood (1939) out to see Shanghai factories. They were appalled by meeting children who had been bought for $20 and forced to work in Yangpu factories for meagre scraps of food (but no wages).

> *"The silk filatures of Shanghai had been amongst the more nightmarish of the places I had been inspecting. There are long lines of children, many not more than eight or nine years old, standing for 12 hours over boiling vats of cocoons, with swollen red fingers, eyes inflamed, eye muscles sagging, many crying from the beating of the foreman, who would walk up and down behind them with a piece of No. 8 gauge wire as a whip. Their tiny arms were scalded if they passed a thread incorrectly in rooms full of steam. We had been trying to get central boiler systems set-up but managements would not agree. Wages were pitiful" (Alley, 1976, p. 15).*

Prominent Yangpu industries of the past included textiles, shipbuilding and papermaking. In the 1950s Yangpu accounted for 5 % of China's (and 22 % of Shanghai's) GDP. By 2011 there were 5,077 science and technology-oriented businesses and, by 2015, officials claimed they had successfully transformed an 'old industrial' into a 'knowledge economy'. But, despite Yangpu's history of accomplishments, it is still difficult to get universities, businesses and communities working together. Just telling people to collaborate is not enough.

Because they value academic freedom and research for-its-own sake, Western academics are usually reluctant to get into bed with businesses and are mostly critical of university administrators in cosy relationships with captains of industry. Hence, although the University of British Columbia in Van-

couver has a science park, few people from the arts, education or humanities know what happens there. Despite climate change, a forest was felled to make way for the UBC science park and a cloud of resentment hangs over its operations. Science parks are not always seen as evidence of 'progress'.

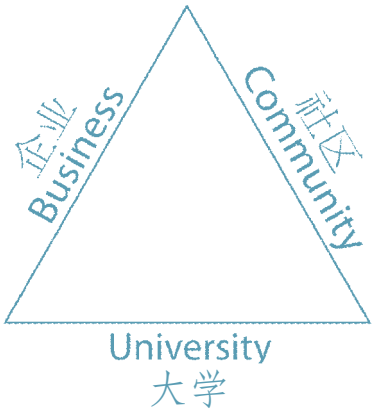
China lacks anything like the Western concept of community. In Yangpu, 'community' refers to party – or government-led – organizations. A leading Hangzhou scholar claimed Yangpu 'is full of lonely and unhappy people who do not even know their neighbour' (Wang, 2012). Yet Chinese find it hard to understand Western notions of community and even elite Yangpu graduate students are puzzled by how NGOs can operate in parallel to government.

In Hu Jintao's Plan 2011, 'community', referred to social organizations of the Communist Party. Hence, at the 2012 Yangpu conference on innovation – mostly held in the massive learning plaza on Guoshun Road, elderly (and lively) Party members in a book-reading club were honoured as an example of community in action (Collected papers, 2012). At the time, the book club was discussing the autobiography of former Premier Zhu Rongji.

Plan 2011 was elaborated during centennial celebrations of Tsinghua University held at the Great Hall of the People at Tiananmen where, having the university president sit in the audience was a clear indicator of who runs Chinese universities (Hayhoe, Li, Lin and Zha, 2011). While the Party controls what is possible in Chinese universities, few administrators, faculty members or students dare raise critical questions about collaboration. Even so, for many Chinese scholars, there is nothing troubling about the top-down nature of the Yangpu innovation triangle (see Figure 1). For them, collaboration is a 'technical' or 'managerial' problem, much like building a railway or bridge. Every Yangpu official with whom I discussed this issue emphasized links between three sides of the innovation triangle (and between knowledge, innovation and education). Hence, Yangpu district Party Chief Jin Xingming identified universities, businesses (in the science park) and communities as 'joint players in the innovation zone'. By integrating the 'three sections', Yangpu hoped to link learning to research and production (Jin, 2012).

Figure 1

HYPOTHESIZED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTNERS IN THE YANGPU LEARNING AND INNOVATION ZONE




There are twelve university-based science parks in Yangpu where the municipal government 'cleared its best land for universities in order to achieve local expansion and cancelled industrial and real estate projects to make way for science parks' (Jin, 2012, p. 10). Among developments expedited by government were the Fudan Xinjiangwan campus, the Tongji-Rim science park and the Wujiaochang sub-city centre (linked to the People's Liberation Army). Of the 86 national science parks in China in 2012, those associated with Fudan, Tongji and the Shanghai University of Science and Technology were listed among 17 'A-level' parks. The Shanghai University of Finance and Shanghai University of Electric Power were among 47 'B-level' parks. However, walking in these neighbourhoods, it requires considerable poetic license to apply the term 'park' to what was once farmland but now bristles with steel and glass skyscrapers or mediocre buildings squeezed into crowded lanes.

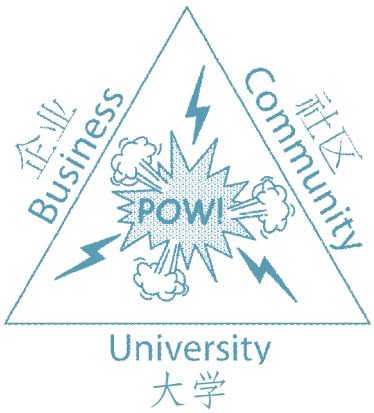
In the West many people believe research-intensive universities should not run errands for businesses. These hesitations arise from different mandates, a collision of cultures and, in many cases, a contest for scarce resources. In China, Plan 2011-type collaboration should (but probably won't) create worries about academic freedom and university autonomy. Even so, it is hard to decline money and Hu Jintao opened up opportunities for academics to gain a foothold in business and provided job opportunities for graduate students.

Hu Jintao urged participants to pay attention to overseas models. With this in mind, Yangpu staged a lively international forum in 2012 bringing

together Chinese and foreigners (Collected papers, 2012). The author was at this meeting and witnessed two discourses. In the dominant discourse, true believers were keen to build the innovation triangle. At the edges of the meeting, sceptics worried about pushing farmers off their land and having universities, communities and business cavorting in the same bed. Figure 2 portrays what many academics (including the author) consider the optimal relationship between universities, businesses and communities. Because each have a separate mandate there must be creative tension between them.

Figure 2

OPTIMAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES




Run by the Party Secretary, Chinese universities are committed to the latest (usually very narrow) notion of 'scientific modernization' where there is widespread disdain for subjective perspectives. There is also little respect for qualitative research methodologies and very weak understanding of what is meant by learner- (or student-) centered pedagogy. Within universities there are grave doubts about the huge expansion in student numbers (so-called 'massification') and quality of graduate programmes (see Boshier, 2014).

As long as the Communist Party directs almost every aspect of life it will be hard to replicate the freewheeling intellectual atmosphere of Silicon Valley or other Western universities and science parks. With this as the backdrop, the remainder of this chapter highlights aspects of university, business and community culture in China challenging the kind of collaboration envisaged in Plan 2011.

## Universities

From 1966 until 1976 (when Mao died), Chinese universities were either closed or in chaos. During the Cultural Revolution, intellectuals were condemned as the 'stinking ninth' category and 'book learning' was labelled bourgeois and irrelevant to revolution. Intellectuals were humiliated and killed or had their books burned by Red Guards – often sons and daughters of high Party officials (MacFarquhar and Schoenals, 2006).

By 2014 there were many very attractive university campuses in Yangpu and other parts of China. But too many faculty were still undervalued and poorly paid (compared to Western counterparts). In 2013 a lecturer with a Ph.D. at the Shanghai University of Sport in Yangpu earned ¥4000 (about $650) per month – not sufficient to pay a mortgage on a modest flat in Wujiaochang. A lecturer without a Ph.D. teaching English in a Hangzhou university earned ¥2000 (about $327) per month (plus bonuses and other rewards).

Libraries had only meagre collections of vital material and, even in elite universities, too many bleak classrooms and ill-tempered bureaucrats. Despite their knowledge of proxy servers, Yangpu academics know very little about what is happening elsewhere. Hence, during the October 2014, Occupy Central protests by peaceful students in Hong Kong, television screens went black while state media – such as *China Daily* – carried wildly misleading stories of 'violent action against police officers' in Hong Kong ('Let reason prevail.' Editorial in *China Daily,* 30 September, 2014, p. 10).

Being underpaid, many Chinese university faculty members juggle consulting work with efforts to improve teaching, research and the student experience. But faculty research usually yields few firm conclusions and too many unanswered questions to simple questions. Businesspeople are easily frustrated by the academic tendency to give ambiguous answers. People wanting to launch products too often find academics incapable of making meaningful contributions to business projects and roll their eyes at the prospect of 'collaborating' with university researchers. 'They just don't get it', said the leader of an internet start-up on Chifeng Street at Tongji. In much the same way, professors snort at the prospect of working with (not always trustworthy) businessmen motivated by short-term goals and pragmatism.

By 2014, elite Chinese universities had moved up Times Higher Education 'reputation' rankings. But the fact that no Chinese university had come close to entering the top-100 in Shanghai Jiaotong global rankings[1] created a loss of face because having world-class universities would demonstrate the superiority of the Chinese system. According to Shanghai Jiaotong rankings, the best five universities in the world (in 2014) were Harvard, Stanford, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University of California – Berkeley, and Cambridge. In 2014 the best Chinese universities were Peking (Beida), Shanghai Jiaotong and Tsinghua – all ranked between 101–150 globally. Fudan University (in Yangpu) was in the 151–200 ranking band and Tongji (also in Yangpu) in the 301–400 band of the Jiaotong system. The University of Toronto was ranked 24$^{th}$ best in the world, the University of British Columbia (UBC, Vancouver) 37$^{th}$ and McGill University (Montreal) 67$^{th}$ – all in the coveted top-100 (world class) position and thus far above the nearest Chinese competitor.

If student numbers are the criteria, China has the largest higher education system in the world. Yet, Yangpu graduate students (with whom I discussed it) are not aware of the innovation triangle. Many have no time for Party proclamations or theatrics and are not seriously engaged with university life. Exams are their only preoccupation (Boshier, 2014).

Ethical hazards surrounding collaboration between universities and government were demonstrated on 24 January 2013 when Han Weili, then a software instructor, posted a notice attempting to recruit Fudan Ph.D. students to help improve the widely-despised Great Firewall of China. Chinese residents trying to get onto Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, the New York Times or numerous other forbidden websites are cut-off. In particular, the firewall intercepts messages involving 'sensitive' words or concepts (e.g. 'June 4$^{th}$', 'Tibet', 'Falun Gong,' 'Umbrella revolution', 'Hong Kong protests'). It also catches variants of 'June 4$^{th}$' like 'April 65$^{th}$' or 'March 96$^{th}$' and isolates material that could promote social instability ('The machinery of control', *The Economist*, 6 April 2013, p. 5).

Chinese scholars need to know about Fudan academics like Han Weili because, in September 2014, Professor Ilham Tohti of Minzu University in Beijing received a life sentence for using a Web page to promote separatism. 'The court heard the former teacher spread lessons containing separatist

[1] www.shanghairanking.com

thoughts via the website Uygur Online' (Uygur teacher sentenced to life in prison for forming separatist group, *China Daily*, 24 September, 2014, p. 4). Scots, Quebec and Catalonian separatists would not last long in China.

By 2014 the firewall easily caught websites like Uygur Online and, as demonstrated during 2014 Hong Kong protests, had undermined the ability of Internet users to reach proxy servers previously used to sidestep censors. Han Weili of Fudan spent more than 12 years working on the firewall and, in 2008–2009, was a visiting scholar at Purdue University in the USA. In a notice posted on a software notice board at Fudan university he invited Ph. D. students willing to do firewall work to 'contact me'. When the public heard about university/government collaboration efforts it provoked a furious debate about ethics at Yangpu universities. Han – who won promotion to an Associate Professorship – was frustrated but unmoved. 'There is no big deal,' he said. 'I am just a scientist providing a kind of technology.' Besides, the firewall 'has a false report rate that is too high'. Even so, authorities were not impressed and invited Han for tea. 'Dammit,' he said, 'now both sides hate me' ('The Art of Concealment', *The Economist,* 6th April 2013, p. 9).

While Han worked on the firewall, Yangpu citizens were told innovation rides on four pillars (or 'spirits') and they should take risks. Hence, they must have been confused in April 2013 when President Xi Jinping ordered citizens to guard against 'Western perils' threatening Party hegemony and stability. Among these 'perils' were Western constitutional democracy, universal human rights, civic participation and media independence ('Xi's Seven perils', *New York Times,* 20 August 2013). In his perils discourse, Xi seemed to ignore the fact Chinese socialism was built on Western ideas (in the form of Marxist thought from London, Berlin and Moscow). Western perils have deep roots in China. Many Western enlightenment values (such as civic participation) were evident in China before the West even existed! In many respects, Xi's perils are more Chinese than Western! Moreover, like other intelligent people, Xi understands that the dichotomy of 'East' and 'West' is false (Saunders, 2013, p. F2).

In Plan 2011, Hu Jintao was not at all preoccupied with 'Western perils'. On the contrary, he endorsed active collaboration with Westerners and set an example by going to visit Bill Gates at home in Seattle. In significant ways, Hu's offer to universities was a continuation of the process launched by Deng Xiaoping's 1978 'reform-and-opening'. In contrast, Xi's perils echoed hoary and historic obsessions with China's 'one hundred years of humiliation' (by

foreigners). Isolationist xenophobia is a Mao-era relic and university professors need to be careful about collaboration. In current circumstances, would they want to take risks, think independently, foster collaboration with communities or civic participation? Is it better to sit on the side and wait to see if Western perils turn out to be empty threats? A time-honoured strategy is to practice self-censorship. Defer to the emperor and watch which way the wind blows.

Unfortunately for Yangpu, Han Weili's work on the firewall became international news. These days the focus is on vacuous good news from Fudan. Hence, in the middle of Hong Kong protests, *China Daily* devoted an entire column to a Fudan MBA programme where 25 students provided business hints to five Finnish companies (Fudan's iLab program pays off, *China Daily,* 30 September, 2014, p. 5). No new knowledge was created and it is hard to see what is innovative (or interesting) about this programme. However, although the story lacked news value, it highlighted how universities transfer orthodox knowledge but have a hard time discovering anything new.

Very little new knowledge comes out of 21st century Chinese and Western universities where, because of the publish-or-perish ethos, there are a lot of literature reviews and rehashing of old ideas. Along with impediments familiar to Westerners, creating new knowledge in China is eroded by fear, reticience, overwork, distrust, bureaucratic mean-spiritedness and the search for one right answer. The big problem is the lack of a 'friendly institutional environment in which favourable conditions for networking and deep technological learning can occur' (Leng and Wang, 2013, p. 231). There is also corruption.

Several high-profile Yangpu people, such as Zhou Zhenyi, have been jailed for illegally acquiring state land. In a related matter, Yangpu's Li Yufang spent more than a decade campaigning to be compensated for the 'forced requisition of her family home' (Li Yufang arrested for 'obstructing official business', *Human Rights in China,* 14 July, 2014). Jiang Zhuoqing, former head of Yangpu district, got a senior position in the central government after Shanghai politician Zhu Junyi was charged with bribery and resigned from the National People's Congress. According to China's Ministry of Science and Technology, researchers have embezzled research grants. In 2014, Beijing sent inspectors 'to uncover 11 violations including obtaining funds with false projects or fake invoices, misappropriating the funds, applying for excessive funds and use of funds to cover personal expenses'. The focus of this

corruption investigation was on 'scientific institutes with a high volume of … projects' (Science authorities to curb R & D fund-related corruption, *China Daily,* 30 September, 2014).

Evaluating Plan 2011 has been a challenge – partly because officials are puzzled by how to get past land transactions to measure cultural change, trust and deep learning. As demonstrated at the 2014 Zhongguancun Forum, it is easy to talk about money (Index reveals zone's clout, *China Daily,* 26 September, 2014, p. 7) but hard to know what scientific break-throughs have emerged from trying to hook-up universities with communities and businesses. In contrast, it is easy to see how land speculators and the local government have grown rich. In 2000 the Yangpu government brought in ¥1.6 billion; in 2011 its revenues were ¥6.45 billion – with the service sector contributing 77 % (Building on innovation and integration, *Shanghai Daily,* 29 November, 2013, p. C2). In January, 2007, land in New Jiangwan township (Yangpu) cost ¥6,500 a square metre. Six months later (June, 2007) it cost ¥12,500 a square metre.

Certain Yangpu academics dismiss 'knowledge' and 'innovation' as superficial brands designed to enrich property 'developers'. Because 'knowledge' became a codeword for land speculation many academics long ago lost interest in 'collaboration' and 'innovation'. For them 'science-parks' became 'real-estate parks' (Wang and Leck, 2011). In addition, critically-minded Yangpu academics dislike the tendency of Chinese officials to offer 'innovation' as an excuse to push farmers off land (and then offer inadequate compensation).

As a concept, 'knowledge' means money – and lots of it. Major corporate players include Shui-On from Hong Kong, the Yangpu Knowledge Innovation Investment Company (YKIIC), Yangpu Central Intelligence District (CID) Development Corporation. The Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) is active around Wujiaochang. The Yangpu government, Shanghai Metropolitan Administration (and others) are major shareholders in many of these companies. Nothing breeds failure like success. Soaring rents and real estate prices now threaten plans to have entrepreneurs and their start-ups living, working and playing in science parks next to elite Yangpu universities. Hence, they are moving away.

Yangpu officials rightly focus on local (municipal) matters while top Fudan and other university researchers need to delve into national or interna-

tional questions. Architects of global university rankings like world-knowledge. What most matters are Fields Medals and Nobel prizes – awarded for fundamental research. Few prizes are given for investigating local questions or collaborating with businesses or 'communities' created by the Communist Party. Hence, the local focus of the Yangpu innovation zone runs counter to the national need for world-class universities.

A comparison of Northwest Beijing's Zhongguancun and Shanghai's Yangpu districts found both regions 'struggling' – but Beijing doing better than Yangpu. Elite universities are supposedly engines of growth, but especially in Yangpu, 'visible and invisible walls … discount efforts to foster a university-centred innovation hub'. Beijing was outperforming Yangpu because of 'better institutional arrangements for linking various actors in the region' (Leng and Wang, 2013, p. 219).

Despite corporate razzmatazz and lavish advertising extolling innovation, there are many unhappy students in Yangpu's educational institutions (Boshier, 2014). This is partly because pedagogy involves a lecture, supported by powerpoint, in crowded classrooms. In second tier universities at Wujiaochang, teaching blocks are constructed so there is no alternative to the lecture. Furniture is bolted to the floor. Teachers who need chalk and a blackboard duster must sign for it at the teaching office – where humourless bureaucrats hold them accountable if supplies are not returned after class. When classes are not in session, teaching blocks are locked. Electronic notice boards showing class locations resemble flight information displays at airports. Guards patrol doors, there are no chairs in foyers and nobody can enter a library without a university identity card. Campus loudspeakers or blaring television sets in student cafeterias ensure conversation is mostly impossible. There are formidable challenges to learning 'out-of-school' in Yangpu.

## Businesses

Many people think innovation flows from bringing people together in a Microsoft or Google-like campus. Proximity can be good and inhabitants of Yangpu science parks were soon in touch when Jack Ma Yun became the richest man in China after launch of Alibaba on the New York stock exchange ('IT the new 'it' industry for rich', *China Daily,* 24 September, 2014, p. 1).

However, clusters do not necessarily spawn innovation. Even more important than geographic proximity is the need for an open and democratic atmosphere free of fear.

For businesspeople, the best research brings new products to market as fast as possible. Businesspeople want facts, not opinions. For good reasons, businesspeople get frustrated with academic tentativeness, delayed projects or those lacking clear outcomes. They need a 'scientific' attitude to research and are not impressed with equivocation or complaining about a need for more funds or further research.

Businesspeople should be interested in matters beyond their immediate neighbourhood. But, friendly chats in Wujiaochang suggest they have no time to engage with an explosive Gini coefficient, protests in China's periphery regions, traffic chaos, sullen migrant workers, a failing healthcare system, bad air, smelly rivers, water shortages, rising sea levels or social unrest triggered by demolition, ethnic conflict, land confiscation or corruption. For them, environmental questions and creative dissidents like Yu Hua or Ai Weiwei are questions for government. These are not 'business' matters.

As well as having different cultures, geographies and timelines, Yangpu universities, Research and Development (R & D) institutes and businesses compete for funds. Unlike those doing basic (or frontier) research, businesses need useable mid-range knowledge. University faculty members provide consulting services but not many have the interest, time or ability to launch large-scale R & D projects in partnership with business – where everything must be done by Monday.

Academics are rarely impressed by the sense of urgency that infests businesses. Nor do academics welcome surveillance by Party-sanctioned 'community' organizations. Universities can supply cheap (and often unhappy) graduate students to businesses. But graduate students suffer high levels of stress and rarely stay long in one job. Graduate students do not remain focused long enough to bring products to market

Because each party in the innovation triangle protects its interests, collaboration usually involves only low-level training, inconsequential consulting or minor hardware development. Despite harmony or equilibrium implied by the innovation triangle, the most active participant in the Plan 2011 system is the Yangpu government (Collected papers, 2012). Academics know articles in reputable journals count more than collaboration with business-

people. Hence, faculty members and students were not prominent at the 2012 Yangpu forum.

For businesses, there is also the problem of pragmatism, strategic (*guanxi*) relationships and lack of trust. When asked about partnering with other firms, Yangpu businessmen with whom I discussed the matter chuckled, rolled their eyes and mostly said 'impossible'. During the Mao era, stultifying *danwei* (work units) controlled every aspect of a citizen's life – such as work, education, health care, even marriage partners. The *danwei* has now gone but the tradition of developing trust relationships only with family or clan members remains (Zhou, 2005). Even on Chifeng Street (near Tongji) there is intense competition among software firms and companies offering similar products. Hence, what is the purpose of 'collaboration?'

## Communities

Prior to 1949 it was meaningful to talk of Chinese 'communities' – much like those in Western countries. But, since 1949, 'community' has referred to party organizations. The Yangpu Party is in favour of John Dewey's notion of 'learning by doing' and Swedish ideas of community embodied in study circles. It also acknowledges that Chinese education needs to become less teacher- and more learner-centred. As the Yangpu Party-Secretary said, we 'require every group and organization in society to become learning-oriented. Learners at all levels – besides those from schools – are to become part of a learning community' (Jin, 2012, p. 14).

When the Communist Party talks about communities, it is not referring to NGOs, neighbourhoods, communities of scholars, or clubs and groups based on ethno-cultural identity or common interests. Rather, 'community' refers to the lower ends of government. The community is 'ultimately responsible for implementing the guidelines, policies and initiatives made by the Party and government … the community is responsible for organizing residents to drive civilization' (Lemos, 2012, p. 200). Hence, 'social organizations' or 'communities' do not make suggestions of their own. They implement ideas from the top.

When Yangpu officials load visitors into a minibus to tour their Urban Planning Exhibition Centre they point at photos of old industrial plants –

like silk filatures and waterworks. But few local people realise these factories once nurtured innovative (and revolutionary) adult education programmes. Before the Communist Revolution, humane and politically astute adult educators worked in industrial-era Yangpu (Boshier and Huang, 2007b). Regrettably, the decline of graduate programmes in adult education at Chinese universities (and their replacement by an emphasis on human resource development) triggered the loss of important Yangpu adult education history.

Historical research is thought to yield only meagre job prospects. Hence, pragmatic graduate students look for 'better' subjects and chortle at the idea of studying adult education in old Yangpu silk filatures or waterworks. At home, parents look askance at children interested in the humanities; instead, they encourage their one child to study engineering and computers. All over China too many engineering and computer science students resent being forced into mandatory 'general' (or liberal) studies courses.

The community point on the innovation triangle is very weak because it denotes Party-sanctioned organizations. President Xi Jinping citing 'civic participation' (or a strengthened civil society) as one of the 'subversive currents coursing through Chinese society' has further eroded the possibility of expanding discourse about community. Some people thought Xi's perils speech could be ignored. But, by late 2013, Western perils were the focus of Party study sessions. Ignoring them was a diminished option because they came from the so-called 'engine room' of the central leadership. Although Hu Jintao's 'harmonious society' was ridiculed on Chinese social media, it was more benign than Xi's 'Western perils.'

## Critical reflections

Yangpu is competing with other districts for a central role in China's modernization. Officials there are committed to replacing industrial-era textile factories with the clean, green products of the so-called knowledge economy. In this regard, Yangpu's enthusiasm for learning as a core element of innovation represents a continuation of its historic expertise in adult and higher education. However, because of widespread disdain for (and ignorance of) history, there is only a weak understanding of how old forms of adult education shaped Yangpu society. In addition, few citizens have any confidence

in official exhortations and most do not believe Party orthodoxy (Cheek, 2013). Hence, even when dressed up in digitized special effects (such as at the Yangpu Urban Planning Exhibition Centre), slogans calling for innovation are easily ignored by jaded citizens.

Ever since China joined the race to build world-class universities, students and professors at Yangpu universities have shouldered heavier workloads. Before he stepped down, Premier Wen Jiabao doubted the ability of Chinese universities to provide students with needed skills and said 'the ability of … higher education … to enhance … economic competitiveness will depend on fostering more creative, independent thinking' (Postiglione, 2012).

Yangpu doctoral students are forced to publish scientific papers as a requirement of graduation. Although this helps boost research output in Chinese universities, many papers are of a poor quality and not likely to be cited elsewhere. Even more galling is the fact that, on Shanghai Jiaotong global rankings, foreign Confucian-heritage universities (such as Taiwan National University, the National University of Singapore, Hong Kong University and Seoul National University) routinely out-perform elite Chinese mainland institutions.

Despite limits on collaboration there are many positive sides to the Yangpu story. From most parts of the district there is a view of a stunning bridge carrying the inner ring road over the river to Puxi. This sophisticated double-towered and cable-stayed bridge was completed in September 1993 and, because of soft soil and other engineering challenges, stands as a monument to Yangpu research and ability to tackle grand and complex projects. This bridge signals the fact nobody should under-estimate the ability of Yangpu people to launch and complete large, difficult and knowledge-intensive projects.

The most profound limitations impeding tripartite collaboration in Yangpu do not stem from malevolence, a lack of goodwill or feeble motivation on the part of academics, communities or businesspeople. Instead, limitations arise from nervousness inside the Communist Party, fondness for big (though often empty) displays and a university culture which rewards docility and punishes acts of creativity. Despite Wen Jiabao's call for independent thinking in universities, in the current climate, prudent scholars have plenty of reasons to stay out of sight.

Despite limits on collaboration, using Plan 2011 as a slingshot, Yangpu created a model worth watching. Best of all, the Yangpu government is will-

ing to share their experience with others. Given new engagement imperatives forcing universities to collaborate with others, observers will want to follow progress in Yangpu. Unless the current regime provides new funds, Plan 2011 will expire in April, 2015. At that time it would be salutary to find out what was accomplished during the four-year effort to get universities into collaborative relationships with communities and business.

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# AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

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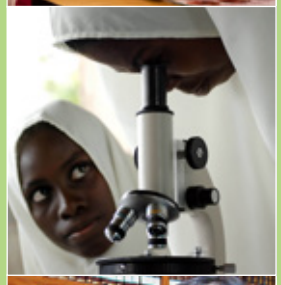

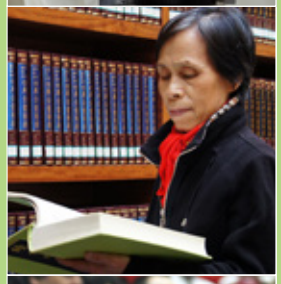

Given the on-going process of globalization, demographic shifts in many countries, and the rapid pace of technological advancement, Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) face a strategic imperative to broaden access to lifelong learning opportunities and to move from an elite to a mass system, ensuring that education and learning are available to a diverse student population. Broader access to higher education should not be confined to the continuing professional development required by a fast-changing labour market. It must also respond to a growing demand for the personal development and cultural enrichment opportunities that higher education offers.

This book, which emerged from a seminar held in 2012 to mark the 60th anniversary of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, addresses various ways that higher education can promote lifelong learning, paying due consideration to regional disparities and specificities. These include responses to the learning needs of senior citizens in China, the challenge of implementing recurrent education in Japan, European efforts to develop a common approach to lifelong learning at university, and how a lifelong learning approach is put into practice in higher education in Australia. It is hoped that this book will help the reader gain a better understanding of the theoretical frameworks and practical implementation of lifelong learning in higher education, both within their own region and globally.

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