

Models of partnership and collaboration in Work-based/- related learning in higher education

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Background

Work-based and work-related learning in higher education for adult learners is seen as crucial to address the predicted labour market skills gap identified in such EU communiqués as:

[New Skills for New Jobs: Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs](#); and,

[An Agenda for new skills and jobs: A European contribution towards full employment](#) as part of the [Europe 2020](#) strategy.

It was also explicit in the UK's Leitch Review [Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills](#)



Asia-Europe Meeting
ASEM Education and Research Hub
for Lifelong Learning

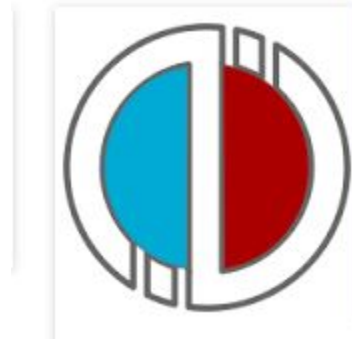


The partners



Navreme Boheme

Fundación **C Y D**



The project brief

The project aimed to study the TLL (Tertiary Lifelong Learning) strategies and programs of higher education institutes in partnership and collaboration with external agents and organisations in relation to their potential to improve the quality of work for learners (learners' perspective) and the quality of their work performance (enterprise perspective).

At the core of the project were

- (a) a comparative study of the potential, the possibilities, and the obstacles of universities' TLL in partnership and collaboration with external agents;
- (b) the development of differentiated tools to measure the impact of TLL programs on the quality of work and the quality of work performance; and,
- (c) facilitating a space for mutual learning for stakeholders of University LL-programmes about the potential and obstacles between universities and labour market actors.

A review (1996)

Government sponsored review of WBL

... it is the case that the closer integration of learning and work is a central theme of policy debates across Europe about skills formation of the workforce and strategies for economic competitiveness and enterprise renewal (Brennan and Little 1996)

Four key reasons underlying current interest in work based learning:

- (i) **economic restructuring and productivity changes;**
- (ii) **workplace reorganisation;**
- (iii) **knowledge assets as the source of competitiveness;**
- (iv) **financing of continuing training**

(Sommerlad, 1996).

learning *for* work; learning *at* work; learning *through* work

- learning *for* work broadly encompassed 'anything which can be labelled vocational ' (delivered in school, college, from television *etc.*);
- learning *at* work related to training and development delivered in-company;
- learning *through* work was integrated into the doing of the job
- In higher education terms, learning *for* work may well include elements of learning *at* work and learning *through* work.

Basic information on national preconditions/strategies

- **GE:** Rather low relevance of TLL:
Successful approach of combining IVET & HE: “Dual studies”; combining workplace learning of an apprenticeship and a bachelor programme
Established and nation-wide recognised CVET system (Meister, Techniker)
- **ES:** Continuous training for people with HE-certificates
No priority for universities
2 years NON-Bologna programmes
Depending on students’ demand
- **UK:** Long history of TLL
Divergence between England and Scotland
Fragmentation due to neo-liberalism (market driven approaches) in England
More integrated approach in Scotland between VET & HE

Basic information on national preconditions/strategies

- **FI:** Lifelong Learning high on the agenda
Focus on internationalisation/export of programmes
Variety of options: Degree, Professional development, open university programmes
Variety of funding mechanisms
- **CZ:** No strategy towards TLL
Rather short-time programmes/internships
Increasing private provision with closer links to industry
Focussing on unemployed
- **TR:** LLL important issue since the foundation of Turkey
Rather low ratio of tertiary-educated adults
Universities offer short-time courses for workforces
Open education / distance learning
Focussing on unemployed

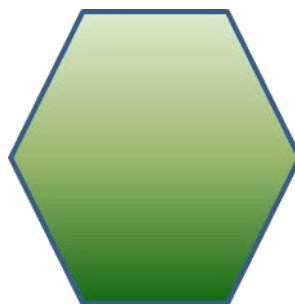


Some figures

	2007						2014					
	Male			Female			Male			Female		
	0-2	3-4	5-8	0-2	3-4	5-8	0-2	3-4	5-8	0-2	3-4	5-8
EU28	27.8	49.0	23.2	30.8	45.5	23.8	23.7	48.4	27.9	24.3	45.0	30.7
CZ	6.1	<u>79.0</u>	14.8	12.8	<u>74.6</u>	12.6	4.8	<u>74.5</u>	20.7	8.8	<u>68.8</u>	22.4
DE	12.6	<u>59.6</u>	27.8	18.6	<u>60.6</u>	20.8	11.3	<u>58.3</u>	30.5	14.9	<u>61.4</u>	23.7
ES	49.7	21.7	28.6	49.0	21.1	30.0	45.2	22.0	32.8	41.6	21.9	36.5
FI	21.7	47.2	31.1	17.3	41.1	41.7	16.1	48.7	35.2	10.8	40.7	48.5
UK	23.5	44.9	31.6	29.8	37.7	32.5	19.6	41.2	39.2	22.0	36.1	41.9
TR	66.9	20.5	12.6	79.8	12.4	7.7	61.3	21.0	17.8	73.6	13.6	12.8



Spain



EU28



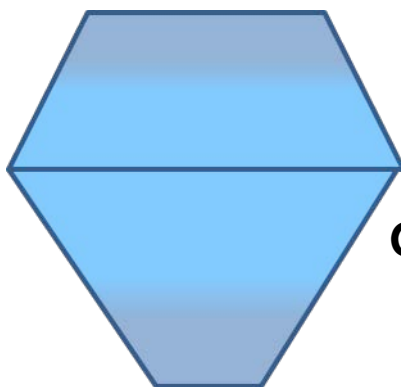
UK



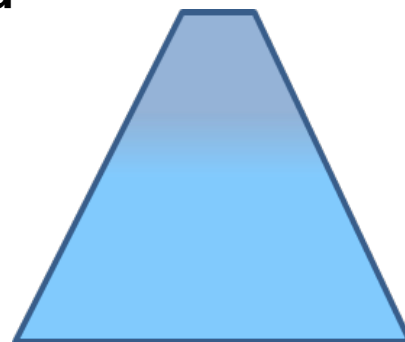
Finland



Czech



Germany



Turkey

Permeability – two approaches

- HEFCE is responsible for funding universities in England.
 - Creation of 6 Private universities; 4 ‘for-profit’ providers; and 2 privately funded charitable bodies
- Further education has also been subject to market pressures
 - a very conservative estimate of 2x as many private providers than those originally in the public sector; with the funding regime changing 3 times in the last 10 years
- Careers and guidance has also suffered fragmentation
 - schools directly responsible for career guidance and support for pupils and National Careers for adults – young people sit somewhere in the middle
- Scotland on the other hand has made considerable moves towards consolidation
 - Formation of single funding council (SFC) with responsibility for both FE and HE institutional funding
- Regional mergers of individual local authority colleges
 - 13 regions and 27 colleges; in 10 regions one ‘super’ college has been created
- Creation of an integrated careers service as envisaged as part of policy in relation to economic strategy
 - Skills Development Scotland (SDS) was created in 2008 by merging a number of agencies involved in careers, skills and training at regional and national levels

Alternate frames of analysis

1. **The State** – regulating and funding public community services through Single Outcome Agreements
2. **Labour** – promotion of member's interests in relation to upskilling, progression and security
3. **Capital** – corporate response to skill shortages mid-level partly as result of demise in training in aftermath of privatisation

1. **Organic** – local champions in field using personal networks and connections at community level
2. **Bottom up** - approach led from shop-floor and 'owned' by union members
3. **Top-down** – recruitment and demand led by corporate agenda and manpower requirements

Case study 1

- **Bachelor of Arts in Community Development**

- First Cycle (Level 5 EQF; Level 9 SCQF)
- 3 years full-time
- Collaboration rather than partnership



Academic Institution



Professional Accreditation Agency



Placement Provider

- **Entry requirements:**

- Applicants with no formal qualifications are encouraged to apply; all applicants must have at least two days per week of paid or unpaid work in the broad field of community development

- **Format of programme:**

- 1 ½ days Sept to May Years 1 & 2; 1 day per week (academic attendance); Year 3 placement 12-16 hours/week – plus reflective practice assessment on students own work (paid/unpaid) in Years 1 & 2

- **Academic/work-based/-related element**

- Assessment is based 60% on academic assessment and 40% on placement and practice assessment
- *in terms of getting the professional accreditation we have, students have to complete fourteen hundred and fifty hours of community development practice across the three years.*

(lecturer)

Entry

- *... this course came up here, I realised it was a work-based practice course...no formal educational requirements,..... it was all based upon my interview,.. I didn't have experience working with groups within the community,... But I spoke to them, ... "Go and get some experience." I'd been doing some volunteering, but just one on one, so I got a lot more experience with groups. And that fitted the bill.*

Placement

- *Already, I mean the brilliant part, brilliant, amazing, dialectic part of the course is I'm, where I'm working, I'm learning so much with the vast experience of the people in the community. The people that have been working in the community centre... then also I'm bringing the theory to that workplace as well.*

Future

- *I'll be the most accredited person within that organisation, and that's not to discredit anyone that's—there's other people with diplomas in other... But in terms of a Glasgow University degree, I will be the most accredited person, and yet, probably the most naïve in terms of (laugh) of what actually works on the job. (Male, 40)*

Case study 2

- Bachelor in Engineering (Hons.)
 - First Cycle (Level 6 EQF; Level 10 SCQF)
 - Credit Accumulation model with expectation of 6 years part-time
 - Partnership model academic/trade union/employer



The Open University

Scotland



Rolls-Royce

- **Entry requirements**
 - True open access practised by academic partner, options for credit transfer and APEL/APL, trade union member and employee of Rolls Royce
- **Format of programme**
 - Credit based modular system – 30/60 Credit point modules; part-time students but full-time employees
 - 360 credits required for Honours degree
- **Academic /work-based element**
 - Work hosted and supported and modules work-related but not work based (exception may be work-based practice project)

Impact on learners

Support

- *I see it going on with a lot of the cohorts, a lot of individuals who's taking learning, they buddy up, they help each other. I think people seem more confident that when they've got a problem they come and ask us and encourage managers to become the mentor for these individuals and at that, once that happens there would probably be a more full integration.*

Work Life Study balance

- *Sometimes you haven't the energy or the inclination. Other times you don't have the time and then there's times when you, I mean it's, there can be days where both me and Brian will sit in front of a computer all day and then we have to go home and sit in front of a computer again. Do you know what I mean?*

Case Study 3

- **Foundation Degree in Electrical Power Engineering**
 - Intermediate First Cycle (Level 5 EQF, SCQF 8)
 - 3 years Sandwich with final year in industry
 - Partnership model between Aston and Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) with UHI responsible for Scottish provision



- **Entry Requirements:**
 - Two good A-Levels, preferably including Maths or Physics but recruitment through corporate HR
- **Format of programme**
 - 26 weeks over two years block release (two to three weeks)
 - Second year at Aston
- **Academic/work-based element**
 - Additional in-house courses and third year in Industry
 - Industrial project in 2nd year

Impact on learners

- *My father works for the company and so I knew about the opportunities and a bit about the company in terms of culture and some expectations of what was required and on balance I thought starting in the company and being paid was a better option than doing a traditional electrical engineering degree at university. And it was local!* (Female, 20)
- I tried university and did a year at Edinburgh but did not really like it – worked as a chef for a while and then started with SSE on the overhead lines. Did a conversion course at Inverness college to get my maths up to scratch and then one of my pals had just graduated from the SSE programme so I applied. I really like getting out and about, the travel and the variety. (Male, 24)

Some issues

- Lack of data on scale and scope of 'work-based' learning in HE at both national and EU levels
- How should it be defined
- APEL/APL – much rhetoric but little concrete action
- Tensions
 - Assessment – academic and practice learning
 - Content and control
 - Set up costs and sustainability
 - Finance – costs/fees/
- Impact on learner/worker
 - Work/life/study balance
 - Issues of flexibility –
- Issues of who supports and when
 - Block release, distance, part-time
- University administration and structures
 - Timetabling
 - Flexibility (or lack)
 - Truly tradable credit transfer?

But

- New 'quality' job creation has stalled since crisis
- Many jobs created are in low-pay, precarious employment
- Growth is low – UK productivity consistently below competitors
- Youth unemployment still very high in some EU members states
- Adult education programmes and funding cut in a number of EU states
- Increasing evidence of mismatch between qualification level and job requirements



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Many thanks for attention,
comments and remarks!

www.letae.eu

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