Austria

SP 5 National Report

LLL2010: Sub-Project 5: Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe-The Contribution of the Education System.

Social Inclusion in Formal and Non-formal Adult Education. Findings from Austrian Institutions and Government Representatives.

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Education system in Austria:
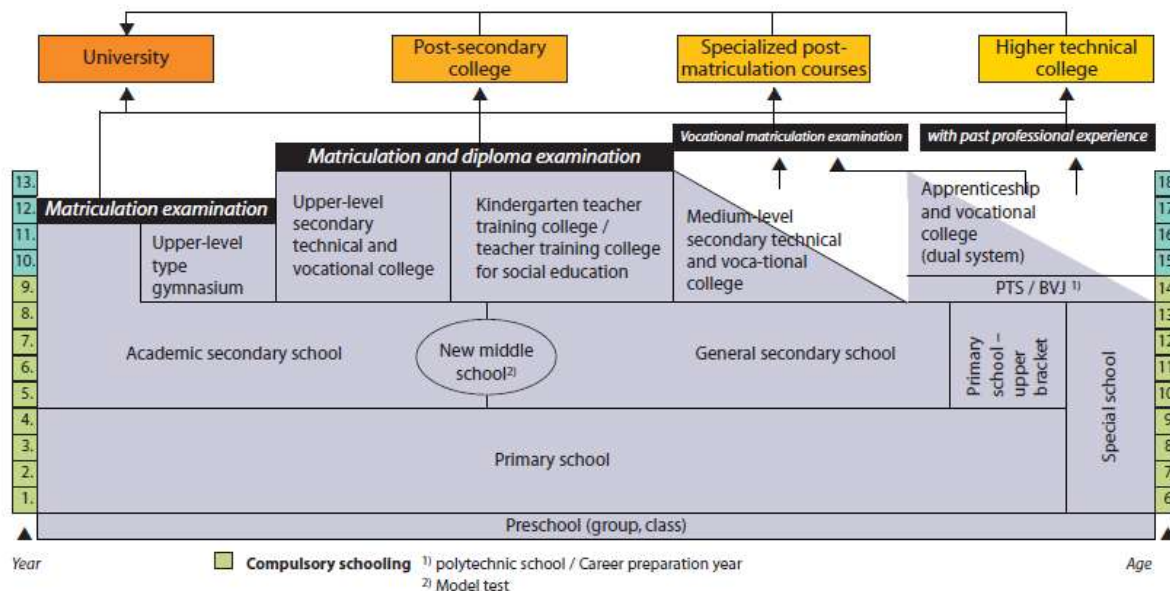
Source: Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture, bmukk
http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/17684/bw_engl_grafik_09.pdf

The following section of this text (Interaction with the initial education system) has been written for the national Austrian report on SP3. I add it here for your information, because it might help interpreting parts of the policy developments I will refer to later in this text.

Interaction with the initial education system

Looking at the initial education system, we can eventually see strong effects on adult education in Austria. As the general secondary school (Hauptschule), where a significant part of Austrian students in initial education pass lower secondary school, subjects are organised in three streams according to ability and this can lead to the necessity of graduates passing entrance qualification at upper secondary (vocational) schools. Entry exams then need to be passed in the subjects German, English and Mathematics if students passed these subjects at lower streams at Hauptschule. Such entry exams do not exist if students have passed lower secondary education at an academic secondary school. In order to enter the first grade of academic secondary schools, students need to pass the fourth and last form of primary school with 'very good' or 'good' marks in German, Reading and Mathematics. This leads to the fact that already at the age of 9.5 to 10, Austrian children are separated into two school-types for passing lower secondary education, which for many years has been criticised as early tracking (and is followed within Hauptschule by streaming, which more

recently is also being criticised) [1]. At a political level some efforts are being made in introducing comprehensive schooling for all students at least until the age of 14. Some model test has already been introduced ("Neue Mittelschule", new middle school) within the system, aiming at a collaborative school-type that 'merges' Hauptschule and AHS. At a system level, final decisions on changing lower secondary schools into a true comprehensive school for all (oriented towards Scandinavian models) have been pending for several years now due to political conflicts over this issue between the parties forming the actual government coalition.

One can say that through indirect social effects, early tracking within initial formal education does provide graduates from different school types with different opportunities to continue their education, especially concerning tertiary level. Empirically one at least can say that continuing formal education up to tertiary level is more common among students from academic secondary schools who are more likely to study at universities and for graduates from vocational upper secondary schools who are more likely to study at universities for applied sciences.

Policy developments and documents on access to (adult) education in Austria.

The most recent government declaration from 2008 issues statements concerning education in general and lifelong learning in particular. With regards to children and youth, the chance for all to receive education and training regardless of family background is being mentioned while at the same time the special role and importance of parents and caregivers is emphasised. Permeability and social justice / equal opportunities within the education system should be increased (Regierungserklärung 2008).

The topic of access to education in Austria is partly a topic for the initial school system (see section above on the system of tracking from lower and upper secondary level), but reform here has been practically blocked for the last decades due to a basic disagreement on this issue between the two biggest political parties in Austria. Another difficulty within the Austrian school system lies in the fact that responsibilities are split between the Federal state level and the Laender (regions) level depending on different types of schools or branches of education, which complicates reform[2]. Within

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[1] The early segregation of the school system can been viewed as relevant for the high social selectivity of the Austrian education system. See for example http://www.armutskonferenz.at/armut-nimmt-zukunft.doc (German only). Regional differences in provision with academic secondary schools are still considerable. Children with low socio-economic background tend not to visit academic secondary school even if they fulfil qualification. One problem here for making valid scientific statements is the fact that evaluation of students' achievements can show bigger differences between schools of the same type than between different school types.

[2] The Laender (regions) are responsible for primary schools and general secondary schools (Hauptschule). This leads to the fact that different teachers with different training work in general secondary schools and in

the current government there are moves towards reducing tracking at secondary level I, but these developments are still not implemented thoroughly and the political dispute lying behind has not been finally resolved. Still, already in 2007 Austrian social partners[3] have issued a paper where they argue for a comprehensive school system for secondary level I (Chance Bildung 2007) in order to do away with early tracking.

Vocational education as part of the school system includes the strong column 'dual system' consisting of apprenticeship and vocational school/college (see figure above), which is seen as a relevant model by social partners from both employers and employees perspective. Although the adult education version of apprenticeship has become increasingly important, it is still mostly initial education for young people between 15 to about 18 or 19 years of age. This education leads to a status as skilled worker, but does not include university entrance examination. In recent times the necessity to make university entrance exams available for this group (and also for adult apprentices) have been recognised, first reforms have been going in this direction, but up to today it is still rather special versions of this education that connect apprenticeship final examination with university entrance through including further and different schooling. The above mentioned Social Partner paper generally emphasises the importance of permeability between different tracks within the Austrian education system and mentions the increase of apprentices who also pass education leading to university entrance examination as important task in Austria (Chance Bildung 2007). The paper also sees the now ongoing implementation of a national qualification framework in Austria and increased national and international comparability of degrees and exams as important for higher permeability of the education system at all levels. The social partners have stated that making formal adult education up to secondary level II available for all learners at all ages without charging fees should be implemented in Austria. Also the government declaration states that this shall happen within the referred-to time period (2008-2013), but also mentions that therefore co-financing models between the federal state and the Laender (regions) need to be worked out (Regierungsvereinbarung 2008). Though some reforms recently go that direction, a systematic implementation of this demand has not happened so far.

In the general media, access at least on an explicit level is mostly a topic for tertiary education in Austria. Most statements and discussions here do not refer to tertiary education as adult education, but as initial education. Access policies are often seen as related to changes within the tertiary

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academic secondary schools, leading to resistance within the academic secondary school teacher trade union concerning attempts to reform secondary I level.

[3] The following social partners have issued this paper: chamber of labour, chamber of commerce, chamber of agriculture and the federation of Austrian trade unions.

education system in Austria (recently mostly driven through the Bologna Process, but also through a restructuring of state universities which gained more legal autonomy from the historically steering Federal Ministry of Science in the 1990s - a process[4] which has been criticised by some as worsening the decade-long under-financing of state[5] universities in Austria) and within parts of the economy (change in the demand of qualifications moving from secondary level II to university level). Depending on how adult education is defined, in the field of tertiary education it is not always easy to clearly distinct between initial and adult education. As many students in Austria need to earn money while studying at the tertiary level, in recent time the question of extra-occupational study programmes has become more important. While social partners propose increased offers and raising target numbers of working students at universities and universities of applied sciences, the federation of rectors of Austrian state universities has recently issued a statement where increased supply of study programmes targeting working students is linked to claiming more money for universities from the state. Bachelor programmes targeted especially towards working students at state universities are seen as not necessary 'due to lacking demands' (Position paper 2009). On the other side, the Chamber of Labour critically states that bachelor degrees in Austria (newly introduced in recent years due to the Bologna process within tertiary education) are not yet accepted by decision-makers within the labour market. Approximately 80% of all students (this number refers to all students, not explicitly to 'adult students') in Austria currently participate in a master degree programmes directly after achieving a bachelor degree. The Chamber of Labour criticises that so far extra-occupational master degrees (as initial education, not as postgraduate programme) are not available at universities in Austria.

Fees for tertiary education institutions are highly disputed within Austria. Fees for universities and universities of applied sciences have not existed anymore in Austria since the 1970s. Between 2001-2008, study-fees for universities were in place and have been practically abolished for state universities again with 2009. Universities of applied sciences can charge tuition fees of €363 per Semester, but in some regions (Laender) these institutions do not charge fees if the region that co-finances these tertiary institution chooses not to do so. In February 2010 the newly appointed Minister for Science and Research has made it clear that she advocates the reintroducing of study

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[4] The relevant law has the German name Universitätsgesetz 2002, it was revised 2009.For Information in German see:
http://www.bmwf.gv.at/wissenschaft/national/gesetze/organisationsrecht/ug_2002/

[5] In Austria state Universities are still the most relevant providers within the university sector as far as participation numbers are concerned. Private providers exist, but the role of the state is still strong also within the tertiary sector. The legal reform of state Universities (see footnote 3) is not to be mistaken with a withdrawal of the state as such from the university sector.

fees for universities, but so far there seems no political majority for this plan within the current government coalition. When talking about fees, it is also necessary to see that the grant system in Austria is not very effective, meaning that students receiving state grants (which is a small group of all students) are often not freed from being financially dependent on their parents or, more likely (since these students come from families with little income), on gainful employment / work. In general, it is difficult to discuss study fees as this is linked to policy referring to steering and management of the state university sector as such. Lacking steering possibilities concerning study places at universities are seen as major problem by state university management (Forderungsprogramm uniko 2008). Unlike in other countries, a fixed number of study places for programmes in Austria exists for universities of applied sciences (a younger part of the tertiary system) but not for state universities. Political code-words like 'free university entrance' (without officially planning and steering numbers of study places at universities) have always been standing in marked contrast to the fact that in the most popular university programmes more students want to study than teaching personnel and infrastructure at universities can handle[6], making study conditions in some programmes hard to bear and increasing drop-out numbers. This latter fact has also been seen as hidden social selection by some, it could at least be seen as hidden *de-facto* steering of study places (those who lose their nerves or motivation will drop out). Still, Austria has a lower number of graduates from tertiary education than comparable countries in Europe, so the argument that resources for the university system are lacking can be seen as strong. In recent political debates arguments like 'too many students studying in certain fields' have been issued, diminishing hope that access also as a question of social justice (and of course as question related to innovation and economic competitiveness) will be the core of coming reforms, but more likely narrow predictions of market demands for university graduates.

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[6]There is no *numerus clausus* entrance barrier at Austria, Matura / matriculation examination is part of the school system, grades so far have not been important for access to university programmes. Yet, for a small number of study programmes like e.g. medicine entrance examinations have recently been introduced. This has been justified with the fact that an increasing number of German students who due to the German numerous clauses system cannot apply for such programmes in Germany have started 'flooding' Austrian universities.

Policy recommendations

- Free access for all age groups to formal adult education including secondary level II is a proposal already mentioned in the current government declaration (Regierungsvereinbarung 2008). Within our research we have shown that programmes like basic education, Hauptschulabschlusskurs (programme preparing for general lower secondary school certificate) and apprenticeship for adults are extremely relevant. Within the current described research, socially disadvantaged groups like migrants or prisoners were found to be profiting from such educational programmes. Free access to such programmes for all groups at all ages including a programme leading to university entrance examination (Berufsreifeprüfung BRP) should be systematically implemented as soon as possible.

- Another recommendation affects adult centeredness of adult education. If our first recommendation is taken seriously, this means adapting requirements for education to the needs of adult learners. To make use of adult learners' experience like through accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) as much as through accreditation of prior learning (APL) also need to be taken into account here. Some requirements like, for instance, the necessity for adult learners to complete education a polytechnical school that is designed for initial education should be adapted to the needs and abilities of adult learners.

- In our research we have found that factors like socio-economic background, gender or ethnic / cultural background still are strong factors influencing educational decisions of (potential) learners and most likely also shape educational offers of institutions. Policy recommendations here also need to look at relations between supply and demand. While Volkshochschule, an adult education institution with a long tradition now finds it difficult to attract men while groups like young male (second generation) migrants are seen as a socially disadvantaged concerning education in Austria. At the same time educational programmes in the fields of engineering, technology and in the majority of natural sciences in Austria are still extremely male dominated. Making access to, and vocational and personal outcomes of, educational programmes in all fields available and attractive for all social groups needs support over all fields and types of educational provision.

- Adult education within the tertiary sector is important also regarding initial education. In Austria, studying is still mostly seen as something done at an early age. Extra-occupational programmes for adults could be one central aspect for increasing the lifelong learning orientation within all tertiary sector institutions. It is important to make sure that lifelong learning within the tertiary sector includes undergraduate as much as postgraduate programmes. State policy here must include financial incentives for all institutions. For the academic world also 'immaterial' incentives for universities (to make lifelong learning and adult education part of an institution's reputation) seem to be necessary in order to help implementing a culture that makes orientation towards lifelong learning possible.

Formal Tertiary Institution 1 (FT1)

(both interviews)

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Background Profile

A Background data to profile target groups for access strategies:

In Austria an under-representation of low socio-economic groups can be noted in all higher education systems, whereas universities of applied sciences show a more equal composition of students with respect to the educational backgrounds of their parents.

According to the national report about student's social conditions in 2006[7], the proportion of students, whose parents have academic background, still is double as high as when compared with the entire generation of fathers. Still, only a third of students, whose fathers obtain education on compulsory educational level or whose fathers obtained an apprenticeship start tertiary education, even though those father generation amounts to two third in the whole population.

B Funding sources for Formal Education

The Federal Ministry of Science and Research is the national funding authority for Austrian state universities. Third party funds have become increasingly more important within Austrian universities over the last decades.

The Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture is responsible for schools in Austria. The regions are responsible for public services law considering basic education (primary school and general lower secondary school 'Hauptschule'). Therefore also differences between the federal state and the Austrian regions are relevant when we look at school policy system in Austria.

At the federal level the split of competencies between the Ministry for Education (responsible for schools, parts of teacher training, adult education) and the Ministry of Science and Research (responsible for tertiary education including teacher training at university level) need to be taken into account.

C Features of the institutions

The University does not offer a mission statement, but on its website offers a self-description also including its main goals. Teaching and research are there described as an inseparable entity, research-guided teaching in combination with application-orientated research are seen as making

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[7] IHS (Ungar, Martin; Wroblewski, Angela) 2006: Studierenden-Sozialerhebung 2006. Bericht zur sozialen Lage der Studierenden.
http://ww2.sozialerhebung.at/Ergebnisse/PDF/sozialerhebung_2006.pdf

the institution highly attractive "for the sharpest minds". At this level of self-description and presentation LLL or access are not mentioned as relevant topics.

Within the university's strategic plan for 2009[8], the issues of social inclusion, outreach and access for traditionally underrepresented groups are only touched upon the heading of "Diversity Management"[9]. First and foremost diversity is defined here as a variety of regional, national and cultural backgrounds of students (in terms of language diversity) and is supposed to be enforced by further internalization and mobility programs.

In second instance also diversity in terms of gender (including childcare-responsibilities), age, socio-cultural background and different religious and sexual orientation is mentioned. In order to manage this, new strategies and service should be provided by the human resources department and clear rules against discrimination and victimization should be put in place. Furthermore a virtual network platform about Diversity Management is going to be developed, where everybody can get informed about regarding scientific results, initiatives and service offers. Awareness raising and demonstration of diversity is a main target in this project.

What regards lifelong learning, a brief statement can be found (see page 30). However, it exceptionally refers to educational offers for graduates but doesn't tackle the permeability issues concerning people without a degree. Further education is acknowledged as important task of the university and found to be facilitated by the implementation of the 3 phase structure of the degree courses (bachelor, master, PHD). The development of internationally recognized Master Program's, respectively high quality degree programs (Universitätslehrgänge) for graduates are highlighted in this respect. Moreover, in order to provide graduates and professionals with more flexible and adequate educational offers, it is planned to also develop shorter courses, which can be completed in a modular-structure.

Literacy was not found as a topic within the strategic plan.

D Background information on availability or otherwise of free or reduced childcare generally for socio-economically disadvantaged groups

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[8] Development plan 2009 of the university ("Entwicklungsplan")

[9] The term diversity management is an English loanword in German, so no German phrase with that meaning exists. From this fact alone one can see that the concept does not origin from an German-speaking social background. Still, diversity management is a widespread concept now in Austria also on institutional level, though originally mainly due to EU-level policy developments and jurisdictions. But also local social movements (like gay-rights activists, activists among people with disabilities, feminist activists, anti-racism activists) in Austria are making use of this concept, as it can be seen as possibility to increase access to mainstream-society for marginalized social groups.

There are reductions for students in some of the universities childcare facilities. The university's Children's Office is specialized in offering flexible child care to parents. Its aim is to consider the individual needs of parents, especially of those who are integrated in academic life (students, scientific and non-scientific personnel) in its service.

E Background information on availability or otherwise of free or reduced fees for formal and non-formal education generally for socio-economically disadvantaged groups

Austrian students can apply for study grants under certain conditions. Income of parents is taken into account, and the studies need to be achieved within a short time period. Students can only apply for state grants for their first tertiary education programme. When beginning their studies, in order to receive a grant students need to be maximum 30 years of age (can be expanded to a maximum of 35 years in case of gainful employment, disablement or childcare). Generally, the Austrian grant system reaches a minority of students and the grants are not high enough to free students from gainful employment or their dependency on parental financial support. This is also stated by one of our interview partners (see below 5 admission policies / grants)[10].

F Summary of most significant findings from SP3 for your country that impact upon access and social inclusion

Most of ISCED 5 Level Institutions offer Educational Fairs to Promote Access 'Often'. Please give more details on this model of good practice so that it could be used elsewhere.

The big educational fair called BEST[11] (short for occupation and education information fair) is a very well known event, where all kind of formal and informal education institutes can present their offers. School classes, but also single persons who are interested in further education regularly visit this educational fair. According to the interviewee from management level and what regards the concerned university, the fair is very well organized, as there is a central administrational unit, which is in charge of inviting all departments to participate and which arranges all the stands and, if required, also lecture rooms.

„That means, when I go to this facility, and when I am willing to prepare something to inform the students, it is possible to present the degree programme in a very well directed way. In the area of teachers training we are always presented there in an intensive way all the time, because it is a big request of us, that students come to university with the right information." (FT1M, 122)

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[10] For Information on study grants in Austria see

http://www.stipendium.at/stbh/fileadmin/download/PDF/grants_english.pdf

[11] http://bestinfo.at

The same interviewee assumes that the educational fair is funded by the corresponding ministries, which are the Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Science and Research. Another funding institution is the national public employment service (AMS).

The interviewee from operational level discovers potential for improvement for this practice. According to an internal research, just 8 percent of the students visited this educational fair before they started to study. Thus more promotion in schools should be done:

"Well, pupils often do not understand why they should go to this fair, only already motivated pupils go there. People from disadvantaged groups don't go there, they rather see it as a day they can take off (…) And the teachers do not push them to go there, either, they see no reason for that. So that does not work as it should." (FT1O, 162-163)

Does your institution offer paid in-service training for staff? Please give more information on the amount and different types of this training at your institution, whether it is sufficient and how it could be further developed?

Next to the human resources department, which for years is offering trainings in teaching skills for university staff, like presentation techniques and project management, a new big project called "centre for teaching and learning" was mentioned by the interviewee. It is a very well prepared and well funded project, closely linked to the vice director. Moreover, transmitting e-learning competences is an important part of this program. (FT1M)

This centre started its activity beginning 2009 and is supposed to advice and train teaching staff in a comprehensive way.

The trainings for teaching staff are offered extra-occupational and usually take place apart from teaching times, therefore it is easily possible to attend there. (FT1M, 136)

Although this new projects seems to have much potential, and awareness rising for professional didactic in tertiary education institutes is considered to be on a good way, the interviewee from management level would welcome a further extension of teachers training. In order to increase the access of teachers training it was suggested to make educational measures obligatory:

„There should be obligatory measures for teaching staff and at the same time on an international level. That means, not only the (name of university) develops concepts for itself, but more universities from international areas get together and offer a summer school or a week of further training in didactic skills and competences. In my perception, scientific research in the area of tertiary level didactic should be enhanced and promoted; which doesn't exist yet in the centre of teaching and learning." (FT1M, 132)

The interviewee from operational level criticized that next to paid training, also the expenses, which emerge when attending international conferences should be fully refunded, which is not the case at the moment. (FT1O)

Reduction of enrolment fee as a way to promote access only occurs in 19.4% of institutions in Austria. How could your institution be facilitated to adopt this strategy more in the future?

General study fees have been abolished (for students from Austria and other EU countries) in January 2009; reduction therefore is no real option anymore to promote access. Nevertheless the interviewee from management level claims, that additional support offers are necessary:

"…qualitative support in terms of initiatives to raise awareness, so that universities in Austria open their doors also for socially disadvantaged groups. It should be made clear, that we in a way need all, all who perform well, and this initiative should go into a national discourse, including media work and schools, because schools prepare for studying at universities and the course is set there." (FT1M, 134)

The interviewee from operational level states, that a well developed grants system would be more effective in promoting access than a reduction of enrolment fees:

*"If I would collect enrolment fees and use this fees in order to promote people well directed by providing them grants, this would be a much better strategy than this kind of watering-can, where nobody has to pay fees. Here in any case those people benefit, which wouldn't have any problems with paying study fees." (*FT1O, 170)

Can offering remedial classes in your opinion be helpful to students with special educational needs within ISCED 5 level institutions? Do they exist at your institution? How could they be established / increased?

No remedial courses are offered. The interviewee from operational level explicitly states, that helping students with special educational needs is not seen as task of the university:

„No, I don't think that this exists. You can improve certain framework conditions like improving accessibility for handicapped [sic] people, these things make sense and are also done in the university, but that's all (that can be done)." (*FT1O, 172*)

At tertiary level, some institutions offer preparatory programs. Is this also true for your institution? If yes, please give details. How in your opinion does it differ from other such programmes in Austria?

At the concerned university no such preparatory programs are offered.

How is access service offered at your institution? Please give details.

While the interviewee from operational level referred to the offers provided within his particular department like online information about the degree program and consultation hours, the interviewee from management level primarily referred in the answer to the university wide facility.

„As far as I know this would be *Studentpoint[12]" (a facility within the university in charge of informing students about the different educational offers and requirements), but also the single departments within the single degree programs, that (inform) in a more targeted way. Apart from the access service in legal terms like if I have all documents etc., in terms of content there is the already before mentioned event called „Uniorientiert"[13], where a wide range of degree programs present themselves in the framework of lectures and workshops before the beginning of the semester." (FT1M, 138)

See also description of orientation week "Uniorientiert" in section transition programs, question about community group visits.

Does your institution offer support services in order to facilitate access for socially disadvantaged groups? Please describe.

Neither of the interviewees could tell about any institutional support services in order to facilitate access for socially disadvantaged groups. However, for one of the interviewed persons, the Bologna process and linked European strategies are considered as very potential in this concern. This person is also involved in development of the Bologna process.

„ I would claim, I consider it as a very interesting aspect, that this is now issued Europe-wide. I think with the adaption of the curricula through Bologna doors can be opened a bit, as in the course of these reform things, which are supportive for socially disadvantaged groups can be included in the curricula. Whether they actually will be effective, this is again a question of creative willingness on side of the university or on political willingness on side of the politicians." (FT1M, 150)

Categories of Research

1. **Institutional Strategies, Structures and Review Processes**

Please describe the different groups currently present in your student population.

The interviewee from management level couldn't provide detailed data regarding distribution of population in the concerned university, but referred to results from scientific research in this area, which reveals, that there is an over-representation of students from upper social classes and under-

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[12] see model of practice 1

[13] see model of practice 2

representation of those from lower classes. This is true for all German speaking countries, and according to the interviewee, the concerned university in Austria is in line with this trend. (FT1M)[14] The interviewee from operational level could only make estimations with regards to the particular degree program, where he is teaching. Accordingly, a high proportion of students from middle class, and an over-representation of women were noted. What regards students with migration background, the proportion is estimated of approximately 10 percent, whereas it is necessary to divide between migrants of the second generations and those, who are just coming to Austria for studying. According to the interviewed person, the number of students from the latter group increased significantly in course of the widening of the European Union. (FT1O)

Please describe any success you have had in recent years in increasing access to your institution for traditionally underrepresented groups. What in your view are the main factors in this success?
According to the interviewee from management level, no particular success can be noted in increasing access for traditionally underrepresented groups in the institution, incentives from the State are not seen neither. However, the bologna process is considered as potential tool:
"In my opinion, the bologna process could (emphasized) be an opportunity to access so called educationally disadvantaged groups and is also issued in this context, as the first circle only takes six semesters, thus the sections are shorter. The degree is more prospective, you don't have a long time of studying in front of you. This could reduce barriers, at least mental barriers. Moreover, I consider a strong focus on information towards the degree program within the study entrance phase as helpful in order to counteract barriers" (FT1M, 6)
According to the interviewee from operational level, the expansion of teaching times in recent ten years and the implementation of E-learning can be considered as success. Particularly working students or people with care responsibilities benefit from this new developments. (FT1O)

In your opinion, in what ways could the State provide further incentives for third level institutions to increase access for risk groups?
According to the interviewee from operational level, the Austrian education system is very selective and doesn't provide adequate permeability. The promotion of access for risk groups to third level institution should therefore already start in secondary schools, as encouragement or discouragement

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[14] On the University's website information is given on students, showing only figures for Austrian and non-Austrian students and student beginners (both for men and women) for a certain semester. We do not know about further internal data on students and on access policy concerning this data within the university.

for further education mainly takes place in this stage. Universities later don't have this extent of influence anymore and besides might not be so interested in changing the selectivity neither:

"as we have the division in Austria in direction of universities and universities of applied sciences, and we tend to say, that people who educationally are kind of less advantaged rather should go to the universities of applied sciences… which is actually also happening, that there is a less selective access." (FT1O, 26)

The interviewee from management level confirms the lack of interest in widening the access accordingly:

"In my judgment, I don't see such incentives" (FT1M, 8)

Are there specific targets for percentage of students from risk groups in your college, and processes for monitoring implementation of these targets ?

"This (specific targets for percentages of students from risk groups) doesn't exist in universities at all. The system of tertiary education would refuse this strongly. The system of tertiary education is a highly selective facility and every kind of social component would be a contradiction in the concept (…) science is based on performance respectively based on tertiary education, that is based on performance" (FT1O, 32)

"Here I am the wrong person to ask to, you have to ask the vice director (…) I don't know about this" (FT1M)

Is there a Social Inclusion/Access/Lifelong Learning Committee at institution level to promote and implement an agenda for increased access in your college ? If yes, please give details

According to the interviewee from management level, LLL is a focus in the university and there is an initiative in direction of further education, but no further details can be given in that regard, as the interviewed person claims, not to be up to date. A particular committee, which deals with social or educationally disadvantaged groups doesn't exist as far as the person knows. *(FT1M)* Also the second interviewed person didn't know about such a committee and just mentioned that there are some initiatives like public lectures that kind of promote LLL. *(FT1O)*

"During my position as head of the bologna office, we regularly invited the official student's representatives, who frequently used to indicate, that for example studying next to working should be enhanced.(…) This didn't really attract a lot of attention in these days. However, in the meantime, as far as I know, more attention is paid to this area, people start to think about how extra-occupational degree programs could be made more students friendly, e.g. by reducing the requested ECTS credit points." *(FT1M, 20)*

Next to the reconcilability of studying and working the interviewee *(FT1M)* noted that in order to promote risk groups of students, generally more effort should be made in the development of the curricula, on the one hand side in respect of facilitating study progress, so *"that no time is lost because of very complicated requirements, which must be complied, or because of incorporated limitations", and* on the other side what regards the readability:

„Readability of curricula also means, that students, who don't have any idea of the subject but nevertheless want to inform themselves, that they can understand this curricula and know what this area is about and also, that they not, due to the used language rules in the curricula, feel a distance from the very beginning." (FT1M, 20)

Please describe representation, if any, of underrepresented risk groups on this committee
Doesn't apply

Please give details of targets for percentage of students from risk groups, processes for monitoring of these targets
"Not that I know" (FT1M)

Does your college have a strategic plan for promoting increased access and resources to implement this plan regarding access ?
There is no strategy of plan for promoting increased access as far as the interviewed person from management level knows. *(FT1M)*
The interviewee from operational level could imagine that this might be included as a point within the performance agreements between university and ministry, but doesn't know either. In any case increased resources would not arrive at the level of the single departments; the given resources are considered as much too little. *(FT1O)*

Can you provide any information on how evaluation of good practice is achieved with regard to promotion of access in your college for traditionally disadvantaged groups ?
No good practice could be mentioned in this regards of neither of the interviewees; there fore evaluation doesn't exist neither.
„This doesn't play a role at all within the evaluation of the departments, research is the main criterion." (FT1O, 46)

In your opinion, with regard to promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups, is your organization a) typical of most formal educational organizations, b) more developed or c) less developed ? Please explain your answer.

„I would estimate it as typical, as average, like other higher education institutes in the tertiary sector, particularly universities. I don't have the impression, that this is a priority in the universities at the moment, that they would start an initiative together in this direction" (FT1M)

Also the interviewee from operational level considers the organization as typical with regards to access for risk groups as there are other universities that have limited study places. Moreover, universities of applied sciences are often very strict in their entrance requirements, whereas the concerned department is relatively open. (FT1O)

2. **Institutional Climate**

What percentage of staff from target groups are employed in your institution. Please give details

What regards scientific staff, the department is oriented towards the general profile. There is an international composition of professors, also because internationality is a general request, but this doesn't have anything to do with migration background in the classical sense. There is no mix of social classes. *(FT1M)*

The interviewee claims, that there is a relatively little proportion of employees in the department who are from very high social classes. Furthermore a high proportion of women can be noted. However, this is also owed to the particular subject of the offered degree program. (FT1O)

What, in your opinion, are the advantages for your institution in having a diverse student population?

"I generally think that diversity is enrichment, just because it opens the whole societal spectrum of variety, so that perspectives from the whole societal broadness can flow in, and the discourse of a limited social class is not considered as universally valid. This I consider as a really important aspect, that disappeared from our view in the last ten or fifteen years, though. Most notably in respect of that it was tried to make educational institutions slimmer and more efficient, that it was tried in terms of input and output to increase performance. (…) Even though there were results from research already 40 years ago (about equal access to education) that indicated the importance, also for the economy, it just was no topic." (FT1M, 38)

The contents of the seminars and lectures are enriched and influenced by the diversity of students *(*FT1O).

What are the challenges for your institution in having a diverse student population ?

The interviewee from management level indicated, that diversity is often perceived as imminence, when there are difficult economic periods, this reduced perception in the society is considered as main barrier.

*„That means, the political perspective is trying to prioritize national interests and to politically put diversity on to the wall like a scaring monster." (*FT1M, 40)

What regards the teaching staff, no challenge is seen in coping with diversity. The interviewee noted however, that it is challenging for students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, to adjust to and understand the culture of universities.

"It's not a problem any more when people are already having an academic career, I think……. But with students, this has been proved, there are quite different expectations and different preconditions if they come from different social backgrounds. We have known about that for decades. It starts with language. No, it starts with people from less educated backgrounds experiencing the university as something strange. Those children coming from academic background, they know how things work because they have learnt about it in an informal way at home. Children from backgrounds far away from University, they need to be informed thoroughly, need to be supported, need to be socialised in a respective way. The university is also a social system, meaning they need to develop some understanding of the biotope university in the first place and they need support for this. That is the challenge." (FT1M 42).

The main challenges, identified by the interviewee from operational level are the language barriers. This refers at the one hand side to a lack of foreign language skills on side of teaching staff (not all languages can be covered), but also to a lack of understanding in the national language. (FT1O, 58)

3. Outreach

How does your institution build bridges to underrepresented communities to promote increased access? How do you think this will be developed further in future?

The institution doesn't explicitly build bridges to underrepresented communities; however the interviewee from management level considers enhanced attempts in informing students as an implicit measure to promote access. The institution recently got very active in organizing orientation events, implementing information facilities and in participating at education fairs.

*„…altogether it is about the concern, that students start their degree program with much information, so that they don't suddenly drop out in the fourth or fifth semester due to wrong expectations"(*FT1M, 44)

The interviewee from operational level again claimed that building bridges to underrepresented communities is not the mission of universities:

"That never occurred to me, that it is the mission to approach all groups of society. That is not its mission. Scientific education doesn't have this mission. It might be measured afterwards, but that's then more about factors lying behind." (FT1O, 64)

To what extent is your college institution's building available for evening and summer events for the local community and/or target groups. Please give details

There are a lot of events, that take place in the premises of the departments and there are certain regulations in place that try to handle the demand, also internal people have to pay a little rent, if they want to use a room, as the university should be available for the whole community. (FT1M) One event which is regularly organized is called "university for children", it addresses young pupils (from primary education level), who want to get an idea about the world of science and takes place in the summer months. However, in terms of educationally disadvantaged groups, the participants of these events usually show a rather unequal distribution according to the interviewee:

*"Well, they (the events) are completely open, but in our experience it is just so, that academic people rather have access to the university and they feel less barriers than those who are non academics. (…) If you for example look at the decisions of families, where they want to orientate their children, it is clear, that people without academic education have a big threshold fear towards academic education. Not because they don't believe in their children, but they don't have an idea about the extends and the financial possibilities" (*FT1M, 56)

The interviewee from operational level confirmed the availability of the institutions building for events and highlighted also the well prepared accessibility for people with disabilities. He mentioned open events that are organized in the departments' library but also admitted, that no offensive advertising is done in order to approach certain communities. (FT1O)

*"Everybody can come in. It is not closed and there is no portiere neither who would say: from here you are not allowed to go further" (*FT1O, 74)

4. **Opportunities for social Interaction, social network support**

Please describe any Peer mentoring practices in your college, if there are any (see template on models of good practice)

As far as the interviewee from management level knows, within the big mass subjects like psychology and law, but also within the degree program sociology or that of education science, there are certain

programs or attempts that go in direction of peer mentoring, especially for first year students tutorials are offered:[15]

„There is something like that: entrance tutorials, where students who enter the university can get integrated through these social networks". (FT1M, 58)

However, due to the high amount of students, there is no individual mentoring or buddy system:

„ You should not forget, that the university has thousands of students, finding and individual partner for each? Of course it would be a possibility, I know many such programs from other universities like e.g. in Switzerland, where really a big pool of students is trained as mentors, who in that way also learn something for themselves and build a 1:1 or 1:2 relationship. It this systematic form it doesn't exist at the concerned university though." (FT1M, 64)

As opposed to the statement from the management interviewee before, saying that there would be some attempts in certain degree programs, the interviewee from operational level, who represented one of these programs, negated the existence of such peer-mentoring practices in the concerned institution.

Please describe any opportunities for social interaction to promote social network supports among your students generally, and among your students from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds

Social interaction and networking exists, but is organized by the students themselves. Also tutorials for first year students are organized by the students on a voluntary basis.

"The students have their own representation. There are always more of such (…) there is this group, which is seeking this (social networking) and is also doing it very actively" (FT1O, 78)

Both interviewees stated that the offered tutorials are general ones, without special focus on traditionally disadvantaged background. (FT1M, FT1O) They are organized and dependent one initiative of students and students unions, who only have limited training and resources to fulfil this task.

Feedback from students regarding courses, regarding outreach strategies, regarding availability of relevant information to underrepresented risk groups, regarding access supports and entry process

The interviewee from operational level stated, that there is hardly now feedback, gained from the students on institutional level:

"No, not even individually, you would need to ask the head of the degree program, because if, it (the

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[15] Peer mentoring among students generally is not a practice in Austrian Universities. A peer mentoring Programme for female young scientists working at this university has been implemented a few years ago, but this programme is not directed at students and also does not reach an extensive number of graduates.

feedback) will arrive there, but speaking as an individual teacher, I don't get informed if somebody was threaded bad or good or if a certain system was good or bad for him." (FT1O, 84)

Transition Programmes

Please describe any preparatory, foundation courses: either on-campus or in the local community that are organized with your college (see template on models of good practice).

There are no preparatory or foundation courses as such, but according to the interviewee from management level, the obligatory students entrance phase (first year of each degree program) is supposed to provide a kind of preparation:

"There student entrance phases follow two target: On the one side orientation, this you could describe in a way as transition program, but on the other side also feedback about ones capability. That means, the students get an impression whether they fit into the degree program or not." (FT1M, 66)

There is nothing done at local level or within communities.

The interviewee from operational level just gave a vague listing of course offers within the university, which can be considered as preparation for different stages:

"We have 75.000 students; of course der is a lot. There are preparatory courses for foreigners (language), there are rhetoric trainings, courses how to write a theses for those who cannot write well. There is actually a lot, but these service offers are not run on level of the department but on level of the whole university" (FT1O, 94)

Please describe any School (secondary or primary school) or community group visits to your college campus to promote access for traditionally disadvantaged group: details on what these visits involve i.e., how long, how many, what do they get to see, who do they meet (staff, students) (see also template on models of good practice).

There is an open orientation week of the university in the beginning of the semester, where everybody is invited to come and to inform about the offers and services of the departments at different information stands and lectures. Not every student program or unit of the university is represented though, as participation is on a voluntary basis:

It takes place regularly for some years always for one week in September, everyday and in the rhythm of every hour one degree program has the option to present itself, partly the presentations also take place parallel in different lecture rooms. (see also model of best practice 2) according to the interviewee it is appreciated relatively well:

"In my perception it is used intensively by the degree programs. The number of registrations is always relatively high, whereas the number of actual participants is always lower, but in the meantime it should be better known already." (FT1M, 140)

Next to this, the already before mentioned "university for children" event takes place in the summer month, where children friendly lectures are held.

However, universities are not yet very active in approaching disadvantaged groups or schools; respectively they are not very successfully in trying it:

"It's not the case that university goes to schools, however in the meantime it is already considered. There are considerations that universities go to the schools and speak to the pupils. We tried this last year with students, who are involved in a teachers training program but we didn't get any reaction. That means, it is difficult also the other way round to get the contacts, even though we generally have good contacts to schools. (…) We invited them in September for an orientation week in spring (…) but nobody registered or only one pupil, therefore the program didn't take place." (FT1M, 70-72)

5. Admission policies

Please give details on any schemes your college provides for reserved places for traditionally disadvantaged groups: details of how this is arranged, criteria for choosing etc (see template on models of good practice).

There are no reserved places for traditionally disadvantaged groups, as there is free access to all universities in Austria.

The interviewee from operational level added though, that there could be some rules or contracts for students coming from foreign countries. (FT1O)

Please give details on scholarship, grants, fee reduction schemes operated by your college for traditionally disadvantaged groups: details on sources of funding, percentage of costs met, eligibility criteria (see template on models of good practice)

Since January 2009 first students don't have to pay student fees anymore, as long as they study in foreseen time. What regards scholarship schemes for traditionally disadvantaged groups, the interviewee from management level assumes that social background is taken into consideration, but also claims, that there are some gaps in the system:

„We don't have a sophisticated scholarship system. Scholarships exist, but when compared globally or internationally, it is not developed well." (FT1M, 78)

The interviewee from operational level explained, that scholarships and grants are mainly operated by the national grant authority. The university itself is not in charge of that and might just provide grants for students with good performances. No student loans are available in Austria. *(FT1O)*

6. Recognition of prior Learning

What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system?

The main obstacle to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience is, according to the interviewee from management level, concern about the quality respectively distrust towards other areas of learning.

"The universities, particularly those in middle European or in the German speaking areas, have a clear expectation of scientificness and of scientific performances. Informal Learning, which is brought in from different areas of experiences, is not necessarily recognized as sufficiently scientific." (FT1M, 78)

The interviewee from operational level sees the main obstacle in the lack of permeability in Austria:

"Actually there is no permeability in the Austrian education system. It is very marginal. Everything is build up on formal school leaving certificates and all education or competences that are gained outside formal certification, is not relevant yet, respectively only partly. What we accept is, if they do a single course somewhere else. That is something which we are doing now for maybe one year (…) however, it is looked very carefully, where this course is offered and what is standing behind. Thus, it is still a far way till we get there, reaching so far, that if they are coming from an university of applied sciences, they have such barriers, that further studying on the university is practically impossible" (FT1O, 120)

How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome?

According to the interviewed person from management level, recognition of prior learning is already discussed by the head of the university and it is tried to make a change in attitude. However, from side of those, who are directly in touch with the students, like the single departments and degree program leaders, more suspicions/reservation can be noticed. This is usually owed to personal experiences that have been made with students who came from alternative educational path and who might have failed on a certain point. *(FT1M)*

According to the interviewee from operational level, there are two barriers that need to be overcome:

"On the one hand side it's related to finances and on the other hand related to the fact, that the universities is still an institution, that - how can I say – is considered as an elitist facility. This means

an institution focused on science and research and not an institution, which wants to attract many people. This is very much related to resources and with the prevalent understanding of tertiary education in Austria". (FT1O, 122)

Please describe any Initial Assessment of needs and skills, including Literacy Skills in your college

According to the interviewee from management level, skills and needs of the students are not really assessed in the university in terms of providing individual support accordingly. This is no overall strategy and there is no initial assessment of literacy skills before students enter either. *(FT1M)*

The interviewee from operational level added, that certain skills are just required:

" no assessment takes place here, certain competences are expected. They are supposed to write, being able to calculate and to read and this is no criteria for grading neither, meaning that there isn't any kind of checking, there is no provision of extra support neither. It is a precondition. They gain it in course of the general school leaving examination ("Matura") and so to speak it is assumed, that they also bring in this (skills)" (FT1O, 124)

Partly some degree programs offer introduction seminars in scientific writing. Altogether the student's entrance phases are organized very differently though.

"… there are cycles of lectures, knock-out exams up to taster seminars; everything is offered in the range between 8 and 45 credit points. Every curriculum has defined for itself what they want to have and what they think would make sense. I could not say in general that there is a kind of assessment of literacy skills before students start studying" (FT1M, 84)

7. Supports

Please describe any Emotional Support services in your college, if there are any (see template on models of good practice).

There is a psychological support facility within the university, where personal counselling is offered. The support ranges from stress management trainings to capability or study interest tests up to free therapeutic offers. As far as the interviewee from management level knows, the engaged psychologists are doing a good job. *(FT1M)*

The interviewee from operational level stated, that emotional support services don't exist in a systematic way (apart from the one mentioned above to which he did not refer but which does exist), but that it is possible to get informal counselling from the professors:

"We don't have someone, who is in charge of helping out, when there are problems with students. That we don't have, but it is surely happening, that many students ask the professors advice or go to them when they are in troubles." (FT1O, 128)

Please describe any Career/Academic Support services in your college, if there are any (see template on models of good practice).

There is a career centre, which is an outsourced unit within the organization. They organize events and reduced soft skills trainings and inform students about trends and possibilities on the labour market and how they can use their studies.

When it comes to academic careers plans, counselling can also be gained by going to the single departments who run the degree program, they offer personal student counselling as well. Furthermore student point (see section about access service) provides general information about the study conditions, and about the ranges of degree program offers within the university. *(FT1M)*

The interviewee from operational level considers the possibility for student to work as a research assistant within the department, as academic support service. (FT1O)

Please describe your Access Service, if your college has one (see template on models of good practice)

Access Service is understood as the administrational facility within the university, where it is checked, if the student has the formal eligibility to access the degree program. The interviewee from management level referred to this university wide facility (description below). The interviewee from operational denied the existence of an access service, probably because he couldn't connect to this term/expression.

Student point: provides information for Austrian and non-Austrian students and applicants interested in studying at the university. It offers multilingual counselling via e-mail, telephone and in personal counselling as well as online and printed information in several languages. The information comprises the choice of studies and the range of degree programs offered at the University, organizational and administrative matters, tuition fee and matters regarding study law. See model of practice 1.

Regarding your Access Service: Is it full time? Who funds it? What are its named target groups ? Is there an outreach role, if yes, specify details

Doesn't apply

Please describe any Literacy Support Services in your college, if there are any (see template on models of good practice)

This is no institutional strategy according to the interviewee from management level. *(FT1M)*

The interviewee from operational level mentioned the existence of academic writing courses in a section before, but didn't go in details on that further. (FT1O)

Please describe any Additional Academic Support Services in your college, if there are any (see template on models of good practice)

Besides the already before mentioned career centre, no additional academic support service came in the mind of the interviewees. It was just noted, that there might be particular support offers within single departments, like e.g. obligatory or voluntary internships, that try to support students in their occupational orientation.

Please describe any Financial Support Services for students at risk of poverty in your college, if there are any (see template on models of good practice)

Financial Support Service for students at risk of poverty is provided by the national scholarship authority and is not provided by the single departments. (FT1M, FT1O)

According to the interviewees from management level, the system of scholarships in Austria is not very sophisticated, as the number of students, who get an allowance, is too low:

"Other countries, who thoroughly have high study fees, nevertheless enable theirs students, given they perform well and by offering a scholarship, that they might have to pay back afterwards, to complete a study without distraction. Whereas our scholarship system is constructed in a way that only a very small group of students can profit from it and in case they get it, the amount of money is on a level which nevertheless makes it necessary to work additionally. We have a relatively high proportion of students, who work." (FT1M, 108)

8. **Distance education**

Please describe any Distance Education Services in your college, if there are any (see template on models of good practice)

The university doesn't intent to offer solely Distance Education, presence is considered as essential. However in terms of a didactic setting e-learning respectively blended learning is enforced in the strategy of the department. *(FT1M)*

The interviewee from operational level explains that lectures, where no presence is required, are supported very strongly with blended-learning platforms:

"The (name of university) has a very big learning platform, which is included in nearly every course. You have to be present in seminars, but in all other kinds of courses, mainly in lectures, you don't have to. Today you can complete a lot of courses without need to go there, because you get provided with

all the material, which is partly also interactive. Thus, there are a lot of different possibilities and offers." (FT1O, 142)

Has your college made any links, directly or indirectly, with traditionally disadvantaged areas/groups to actively promote distance education in these areas? Please give details

As there is no exceptional distance education offer at the concerned department, the question of promotion doesn't really apply. Moreover, the interviewee from operational level doesn't consider it as adequate to make links with traditionally disadvantaged groups when it comes to teaching:

"We definitely don't do that. What regards research there are these contacts of course, but research doesn't have to do with teaching. This is something completely different." (FT1O, 144)

9. **Course Content and effects of recession**

Is there any central college or departmental strategy to promote learning that is activity-centred and learning as a social practice? Please describe

According to the interviewee from management level, there is no comprehensive strategy that includes activity-centred learning or learning as a social practice. However, the new curriculum allows choosing complementary course modules , where social competences and additional skills are focused on. Moreover, project work and team work might be included in some single curricula. (FT1M)

"Of course there is time and again project orientation within the curricula. In the curricula something like team constellation is included, where students have to work in teams" (FT1M, 116)

The interviewee from operational level confirms that there is some activity and focus in the field of transmitting soft-skills:

"Yes, it exists. We have a particular focus in the degree program, addressing soft-skills. That is, I guess, five percent of the degree program. One or two of the teacher are just busy with that." (FT1O, 146)

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on access policy and practice, for traditionally underrepresented groups, for formal education in your country?

While the interviewee from operational level didn't want to give prognoses, the interviewee from management level expressed concerns about the effects of recession:

"Like mentioned before, I am afraid, that it (the recession) will have a bad impact, because what regards traditionally disadvantaged groups and their representation in universities, there is a

discrepancy already now. I don't think that the recession will reduce this deficit but rather contribute to a tightening of the situation, as it was not even tackled sufficiently in economic wealthy times, where it would have been possible to deal with it." (FT1M, 120)

Next to the financial impact of the recessions, the interviewee also highlighted the relevance of the political willingness and the important role of performance agreements in this context. Only when social aspects respectively the inclusions of disadvantaged groups are included in these agreements, things could change. At the moment other demands are seen as more important:

"Now we rather focus on things like internationalization, mobility, reduction of drop-outs rate. These things are first priority rather than increasing the number of students coming from educational or socially disadvantaged classes." (FT1M, 120)

Details on a model of practice 1: "Student point"

Objectives of the practice

Information and career counselling for students and people interested in starting a university programme, directed at people from Austria and from other countries. First-level support for Students. planning and implementing projects at the interface Schools / University.

Target groups

People from Austria and abroad who are interested in studying at the university, study-beginners, and students.

Funding sources (including non-standard funding sources)

The university and third party funds (sponsoring).

History/background of the model (when established, its developmental progress)

In 2001 fees for Universities where introduced in Austria (which have been abolished again for students from Austria and other EU countries in January 2009). This led to the development of Student point as an advice centre for (potential) students – originally as a call centre in 2001, more in its current form since 2002. Since 2004 a special focus is put on the interface School / University and tries to find measures for supporting pupils coming from school in choosing the right study course. The model aims to support the university flexibly regarding current needs.

Number of participants/service users annually

approx. 120,000 telephone calls

approx. 40,000 counselling face to face

approx. 37,000 emails

approx. 2,200 visitors at UNIorientiert (see below models of practice 2), approx. 100 schoolvisits per year.

Location

At the university campus (counselling room Student Point, guided information tours), at schools, at study information fairs.

Perceived strengths

- Flexibility

- Networking inside and outside the university

- attendance of students until graduation

- strong orientation towards target groups

- non-bureaucratic ways of acting

Weaknesses

- expanding measures at the interface schools / university

- improvement of website regarding information on study-programmes / -courses

- in need for shorter waiting time for counselling via telephone or face to face (strong increase in demand concerning enquiries in the last years)

Priority needs for expansion of the model/service (this would include perceptions of implications of the current recession for this model)

- Resources (time, personnel, finances)

- more cooperation partners (interface schools / university)

Methods of feedback, evaluation

- Online-survey done with students (beginners) who are enrolling via internet at the university: here some questions are related to information and choice concerning studying. This survey also consists of specific questions related to Student Point.

All offered services are being statistically monitored (quantitatively, but also concerning topics). Therefore it is possible to react flexible to changing needs.

Feedback through email or an internet forum is taken very seriously.

All colleagues working for the project (also those working only periodically) are asked concerning their impression, experiences, ideas for improvement – also to avoid routine-blindness.

Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model

At the moment there are no negative effects concerning sponsoring, as contracts are on mid-term basis. If sponsors leave the project there would be a need to look for new possibilities of financing. At the moment there is an increase in enquiries as more people see possibilities and necessities to take part in further education. Also students who have already accomplished their fist degree are interested in continuing towards a master or doctoral qualification, but on this it's hard to estimate how much is due to the economic crisis.

We agree with the estimation that this programme or measure is not focussing on disadvantaged groups. Access is at least seen as a general topic within this programme, but again hardly any special measures directed at disadvantaged groups can be found.

Details on a model of practice 2: "UNIorientiert"

UNIorientiert is on special measure of "Student point"

Objectives of the practice

The measure provides pupils (last grade before Matura = higher education entrance qualification-exam at the end of upper secondary level, but also one-but-last grade) with information as basis for their decision making concerning choice of degree programmes. Pupils are offered workshops, participating in lectures and interviews with university teachers and students in order to gain insight into the different university programmes.

An other aim is to confront the expectations of pupils regarding specific degree programmes (e.g. journalism, psychology, nutrition science, …) with reality.

The university aims at making less known degree programmes or those which are not noticed as being part of this university more visible and wants to promote these programmes.

Target groups

Pupils in the last grade before Matura (= higher education entrance qualification-exam at the end of upper secondary level), but also one-but-last grade, students beginning their studies.

Funding sources (including non-standard funding sources)

Project related funding from the university, third party funds (sponsoring).

History/background of the model (when established, its developmental progress)

In 2001 fees for Universities where introduced in Austria (which have been abolished again for students from Austria and other EU countries in January 2009). This led to the development of Student point as an advice centre for (potential) students. This new department is also responsible for information on degree programmes. UNIorientiert is a measure of Student point located at the intersection between schools and university. UNIorientiert took place for the first time in 2005, since then it is a yearly information week every September. In 2005 mostly those degree programmes participated in UNIorientiert where there exists an interest in attracting more students. The offer was enlarged from year to year. Increasingly also such degree programmes, about which students often have wrong expectations about study contents or job profiles, started taking part in UNIorientiert, (e.g. nutrition sciences, psychology). For the future the aim is to present all offers of the university within UNIorientiert.

Number of participants/service users annually

Rising numbers of participants:

2008: 1,600

2009: 2,200

Location

Location at the university site.

Perceived strengths

This initiative informs pupils while they are in an early stage in their decision making process (on their studies).

Participation for potential students is non-binding and cost free.

Visitors can talk directly to representatives of the degree programmes in an open atmosphere.

Cooperation with educational advisors at schools works well – the date of UNIorientiert has been rescheduled after consultation with schools.

Other offers coming from other institutions help communicating information on studying at an early stage (chamber of labour, Austrian study grant authority[16], psychological counselling centres[17]).

Weaknesses

advertisement

cooperation partners

number of degree programmes taking part

We agree with the estimation that disadvantaged groups are not mentioned as target group within this programme / measure.

Priority needs for expansion of the model/service (this would include perceptions of implications of the current recession for this model)

Resources (personnel and other resources), convincing, awareness among pupils that they need to begin informing and deciding at an early stage.

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[16] For Information on study grants in Austria see
http://www.stipendium.at/stbh/fileadmin/download/PDF/grants_english.pdf

[17] For information on psychological counselling centres for students see:
http://www.studentenberatung.at/studentenberatung/en/offers-for-students.htm

Methods of feedback, evaluation

The degree programme directors involved in UNIorientiert are giving feedback. Concerning the degree programmes participating in UNIorientiert the number of first year students and the number of drop-outs are being counted (but here UNIorientiert is just one part of a mix of measures in order to reach improvements).

Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model

Currently there are no sponsors pulling out as their contracts are medium term. If sponsors would drop out, new ways of financing would have to be found.

Formal Tertiary Institution 2 (FT2)

(Both interviews)

Inhaltsverzeichnis

I.   Institution's Profile

General Information

The tertiary educational institution our interview partners work at is a university of applied sciences. It is located in four different locations in a region which has a strong industrial tradition. It is organised in four different faculties: one for informatics, communications and media, one for applied health and social sciences programmes, one for management and a faculty for engineering and environmental sciences.

Universities of applied sciences in Austria have come into existence with 1994/95. This type of tertiary institution was then newly founded, unlike in other European countries no institutions were changed to this new type of university. Universities are publicly financed on national and regional level. The federal government co-funds study programmes on the basis fixed rates for study places. Founding this new type of university in Austria had several aims. One of these is to make tertiary education available for students with practical backgrounds (mostly apprenticeship or medium vocational school background) who did take a university entrance exam as part of their formal education (initial schooling).

Students at this tertiary institution generally do not pay any fees.

Target Groups

For the academic year 2009/10 approx. 4750 students are enrolled. 5070 students have graduated within the time period 1996-2008, over 80% of those graduating in technology-orientated study programmes. For 2009/10 45 study programmes are available, consisting of 24 Bachelor (duration: 4 semesters), 24 Master programmes (duration: 6 semesters) and one diploma programme. Nearly 35 % of all students are female, in technology-orientated programmes only 20 % of the students are female. For 2009/10 7 Bachelor, 10 Master programmes and the diploma programme are organised as extra-occupational programmes for working students.

In Austria, after completion of compulsory education (year 8 at school), more than half of the pupils opt for a pathway in the VET-sector (vocational education and training) which doesn't lead to a general higher education entrance qualification "Matura". There from 16% attend one of the full time VET schools and 38% go in for part-time vocational schools within a dual education scheme in companies, also called apprenticeships. (BMBWK statistics 2006)

Prerequisites of access to studying (degree programs) is usually Matura that is gained at the end of general education schools or VET colleges on upper secondary level. Without Matura, a general university entrance exam "Berufsreifeprüfung" or the previous, still existing form called form exam

"Studienberechtigungsprüfung", are possible alternatives. These alternative pathways are still widely regarded as second chance education.

The "Studienbefähigungslehrgang" (studying capability programme / bridge course / transition course or study preparatory program) like the one offered by the observed institution, is a particular offer for future students lacking higher education entrance qualification. Successful completion of the preparatory course, which is lasting 2 semesters, is leading to university acceptance or vocational/professional qualifications with additional certificates.

The concerned University of Applied Sciences offers this course for free. Passing the course qualifies only for study programmes offered at this one institution.

Funding sources

The concerned university of applied sciences is publicly funded, at almost equal parts by the federal government and by the regional government. Third party funds play a relatively marginal role, our second best practice example is co-financed by the regional branch of the Austrian publice employment service (AMS).

„We are mainly funded from the national state level, however, actually up to 50 percent also by the holder of the region, when you see it in relation. The region supports our institution in a very high extent, that must be said. Within the framework of these financial resources, we have to coordinate and steer from the side of the management. There are no real financial possibility besides this."
(FT2M 105)

Institution's mission statement

The concerned University of Applied Sciences is a vocationally-oriented higher education institution which provides academic programmes at university level to over 4000 students. It is a decentralized institution, comprising four schools in four different towns of the region. For the moment more than 40 programmes in total at Bachelor and Master level are offered.

Practice is an integral part of the philosophy, in all programmes students spend a designated period of their studies working on projects within a compulsory industrial placement in a company.

Strategic plan

The interviewed manager focused in the answer on the issue of Life Long Learning and the role of extra occupational courses, these aspects both are considered in the strategic plan. Also e-learning facilities are provided to strategically promote LLL:

"…that's why we also established the two platforms *knowledge management* and *e-learning*, which have been used internally for both students and employees. We also provided technology and infrastructure accordingly; respectively we try to develop this continuously. Things like E-Learning and Blended Learning are of course very expensive, but these are issues, that we want to deal with, deliberately" (FT2M 24)

same text section at page 10

Background organizational context

Childcare

The institution doesn't provide any childcare facilities internally. The interviewed manager just mentioned, that for one special course, which particularly addressed women after maternity leave (explained later as best practice) childcare was offered:

„In relation to this degree course for maternity returners and in cooperation with the city (name of the city) we also engaged ourselves in terms of childcare, in order to ensure, that women can be relaxed during the time (of the courses)." (FT2M 51)

Fees

The institution does not charge tuition fees. Universities of applied sciences can charge tuition fees of 363 € per Semester, but in some regions (Laender) the universities of applied sciences do not charge fees, these regions who co-finance these tertiary institutions choose not to do so.

All offered transition and degree courses at this institution are free of charge. Students at universities of applied sciences (and at traditional universities) can apply for state grants (particularly for federal student benefit). State grants are given und social eligibility circumstances for Austrian Students.

Summary of most significant findings from SP3 for your country that impact upon access and social inclusion

Most of ISCED 5 Level Institutions offer Educational Fairs to Promote Access 'Often'. Please give more details on this model of good practice so that it could be used elsewhere.

On a national level, the institution is present actively on all well known fairs in the area of career planning and educational advice. What regards the international level; this is done more selective, as a big stock of partner universities exists already. Furthermore an evaluation of these activities takes place:

"We are just evaluating the possibilities of exchange and examine the actual partnership of the partnerships. Thus we already became more selective compared to the past" (FT2O)

Moreover tight cooperation exists with the local school authority, which allows sending representatives of the tertiary education institution to secondary schools. Direct marketing also takes place within the Federal armed forces, where young men who make their conscripted military service are informed.

Does your institution offer paid in service training for staff? Please give more information on the amount and different types of this training at your institution, whether it is sufficient and how it could be further developed?

According to the operational officer, the structure for further education of employees is quite good and the training offers are adopted well by the teachers. There is an internal department that is in charge of making corresponding programs and it assesses educational demands and requirements regularly. All of the standard employees and some of the free lancers have access to further education, whereas it is tried to include more and more of the teaching staff which just work on part time/free lance basis in educational measures. Further education is offered within working time. (FT2O)

Reduction of enrolment fee as a way to promote access only occurs in 19.4% of institutions in Austria. How could your institution be facilitated to adopt this strategy more in the future?

[FT2M not asked]

Information policy and entrance qualifications are considered more important topics than enrolment fees, as such fees are generally not charged by this institution (see section "fees").

In order to broaden the access of students, targeted information is considered to play a crucial role. Particularly what regards new potential groups of students, it is important to inform them well about all possibilities and conditions of the curriculum. However, it is also highlighted by the interviewee (from the operational level), that it is important to check, if the qualification of the potential students is sufficient, so that the ability to complete the studies is given. (FT2O)

Can offering remedial classes in your opinion be helpful to students with special educational needs within ISCED 5 level institutions? Do they exist at your institution? How could they be established / increased?

Additional support for students with learning difficulties is considered as very important and is also offered in the observed institution:

"(The offer is) ranging from German language courses to support on demand. That can be in particular degree courses that need special training in mathematics. That is done and unfortunately necessary. It would be good, to already know from the entrance qualification , that everything is ok,

but if this is not the case, we in any case provide support with corresponding courses or offers for the students" FT2O <u>00:59:33-1</u>

At tertiary level, some institutions offer preparatory programmes. Is this also true for your institution? If yes, please give details. How in your opinion does it differ from other such programmes in Austria?

See below example of practice – transition course.

How is access service offered at your institution? Please give details.

It was agreed by the interviewee, that access service generally exists and is common in tertiary education institutes. These services consist mostly of information on admission policies and requirements. FT20

Does your institution offer support services in order to facilitate access for socially disadvantaged groups? Please describe.

What regards support services in order to facilitate access for socially disadvantaged groups, and ways to implement such a service, difficulties are seen:

"I am afraid, that could be a bit difficult, trainers and scientific staff as well as administrational officers, who are more or less always the first when it comes to advice, could be overstrained with that." FT2O <u>01:10:36-6</u>

According to the interviewee, at the moment they just respond, when there are specific inquiries for support. In order to do it properly many aspects and contacts must be kept in the head of the advising person, which is considered as rather difficult. The only support offer in this direction, which the interviewed person could imagine for the future, is the creation of a written guidebook:

"I could imagine, that support could also be offered in the direction of a guide book or reference book, which is available in the education institutions. Where you can say, in case of need, it is possible to look their under a certain term and to at least get a first contact or possibility of contact. However, advice competence is expected too much." FT2O <u>01:10:36-6</u>

Categories of Research

Institutional Strategies, Structures and Review Processes

<u>Student population: gender, age</u>

Universities of Applied Sciences are known for great awareness regarding social permeability and inclusion. Access to the study programmes is manifold. Apart form qualifications providing access to higher education from initial formal education system (different school types), there are access through alternative pathways linked to adult education in Austria ("Berufsreifeprüfung" and "Studienberechtigungsprüfung", two kind of examination-processes providing university entrance qualification) According to the management, a wide range of target groups are addressed in the observed institution.

"This means, we do address all social stratums or groups, basically. We in (name of region) have quite a broad approach. We have started pretty early, in 1998 with the first target group specific study course in Austria. That is a study course in Mechatronics and Business and it still exists today. There, very precise target groups are being addressed. We have then, in order to support women and young people in the field of technology, two years ago we developed a study programme that is targeting women returning to the job market from maternity leave. That's adopted very well." (FT2M 6)

The different groups that are present in the student population vary strongly with each degree course. In some degree courses up to 20% of the participants come from the dual education system, respectively have completed an apprenticeship, whereas this proportion is only 10% for the whole tertiary institution. (FT2O) These students have a vocational background and can be seen as non-traditional students within the Austrian system of tertiary education. Universities of applied sciences have been founded in Austria with the explicit intent to form a practice-related tertiary institution where these groups of non-traditional students shall be enabled to participate in higher education that has strong links to vocational fields.

Also what regards gender, the distribution depends on the type of course. However, it is claimed that there is, altogether, equal participation from males and females. When looking at statistics on participants provided by the institution-website, we see that gender distribution is related to fields of study. Technology and engineering is male dominated (about 80 % male students), the field of management has approx. 45% percent male participants, while 20 % of the participants in health and social science are male. Generally, universities of applied sciences are among the tertiary educational institutions with the lowest participation of women. This is related to the historical development of these universities that still mostly have a strong emphasis on technology, engineering or business

related fields. As far as technology and engineering are concerned, unequal gender participation in these fields already holds true for related higher secondary schools.

*"The gender distribution is relatively equal when looking at the whole institution. There are certain degree courses – predominantly in technical areas – where simply too few women are enrolled. We are however very anxious to change that. We also have special degree courses for maternity returners that are offered in order to tackle also the issue of *women in technology* and to enforce their participation actively." FT2O* 00:03:31-7

The age structure is mixed as well (according to the interviewed management person it ranges from 23 to 52 years of age), and particularly in the extra occupational courses a relatively high proportion of older workers engage in further qualification. (FT2M)

"We throughout also have older people up to 50 years or even a little bit more, who are studying here and simply want to make a change in their professional situation or who just want to more or less fulfil themselves a dream, that they then want to put in practice accordingly." FT2O 00:04:02-6

Altogether both interviewees consider the current student population as a good mixture of different groups and appreciate this:

"It is very vital, when so different groups work together and study together, for example people with "Matura" (completion of upper secondary school leaving exam which provides general access to higher education) or with corresponding pre-qualification and then there are this people coming from vocational practice that we qualify in a one year transition program (Studienbefähigungslehrgang) and again have a completely different approach and bring in different impulses into the university of applied sciences" FT2O 00:02:26-0

„I experience it from an outside view, that it is very vital, that the older support the younger, and the other way round, when it is coming to questions of technology…" (FT2M 16)

The interviewed Manager also mentioned the cultural aspects, and how it is tried to enforce intercultural and international exchange. For incoming students from abroad, e.g. a buddy support system is in place, moreover a particular centre was established which deals with intercultural competences:

„For the area of intercultural competences, we also established a particular centre of competence at one of our departments, namely in (name of the place). There, the team of Dr. (name of person) exclusively deals with this question and how it is possible to integrate intercultural issues in the curricular or in courses. This is done out of the background, that we want to increase the rate of incoming students and that we want to make mobility more attractive" (FT2M)

<u>Increasing access for underrepresented groups</u>

One of the successes in increasing access for traditionally underrepresented groups, that both of the interviewees in the observed institution experienced, was the pre-qualification of people coming from the dual education system by offering a particular transition program. This course is extra-occupational free of charge, and lasts one year.

"In the meantime we were able to double the number of approximately hundred, who used to enroll these transition courses, to more than two hundred. (…) It was definitely a success in enforcing the proportion of the dual educational track and also the permeability of the educational offer. (…) And it is also a success when the people – however not all of them make it – when they successfully complete this two semester long transition course and later can follow well in their studies or even become brilliant students. That was a success." FT2O <u>00:05:43-4</u>

„In comparison to other universities of applied sciences, we have very high proportion of people coming from the dual education system. And I think that we really can describe this as a success story" FT2M <u>00:06:43-1</u>

The main factors for this success were seen in the clear support and commitment of the local authorities and of the executive director, who both welcomed the idea, as well as the good performances in carrying out the program, which also includes the area of marketing and broad distribution of information. <u>00:06:32-7</u>

Another success that was mentioned by the interviewee from the operational level, was the implementation of particular degree courses for maternity returners, which aim to promote female engagement in technical study programmes. (F2O)

<u>State incentives</u>

According to the interviewee from the operational level, in order to increase access for risk groups to third level institutions, the state, respectively the responsible provinces have to make a clear order to do so and provide the necessary financial resources. Furthermore, people with migration background have been identified as particular subgroup, which should be provided with more support to increase their study abilities:

„First of all pre-qualifying them, so that they are generally able to join a transition course, but then also pre-qualifying them for the access to universities of applied sciences. That's what we are just planning". (F2O)

The official moreover told us that there are already concrete plans to widen access for people with migration background by offering special pre-transition courses for them within the institution. According to him good experiences have already been made with this group:

"By enhanced advertising, we want to achieve, that really good participants are recruited. There are some among the students, who are really skilled and who developed themselves – especially what regards their marks in German – from a mark like not sufficient to satisfying up to even good, like the level of the upper secondary school leaving exam, and that within just one year. However they work very intensively on that, get support from our side and also use it well" FT2O <u>00:09:31-9</u>

The manager of the institution also mentioned European initiatives as very supportive, like the European Qualification Frame (EQF) and the "Euro pass", where informal learning can be made transparent. In order to increase access for risk groups, also didactic concepts should be revised according to this interviewee:

"Well, it surely requires also a revision of classical didactic concepts. Here I think we already made progress, also in relation to e-learning and blended learning offers. I think, this is also a big chance for the society, to not completely ignore the informal aspect and only acknowledge certificated qualifications, just when it comes to permeability for lets say less advantaged social groups..." FT2M <u>00:10:34-8</u>

<u>Targets concerning students from disadvantaged groups</u>

The institution doesn't define a specific target for percentage of students from risk groups, however, both of the interviewees claim, that a culture of permeability and inclusion is lived, which doesn't make it necessary:

"There is no concrete target, but at least the intention exists to include this group increasingly, and we are successful in doing it. That's why we don't need specific targets." FT2O <u>00:10:42-1</u>

"We defined target groups in all of our degree courses, this is a formal requirement in the course of accreditation activity, but at the other side also our own request. Thus, heterogeneity can be found in all of our current 32 degree courses. But we don't directly set processes or targets in terms of quantity or something like that. This is simply also because of the situation of applicants, how the according market demand is." FT2M <u>00:13:16-5</u>

While there are no specific targets for percentage of students from risk groups in the institution, general monitoring takes place in the framework of the different degree courses, respectively it starts to get implemented professionally:

"We will just start in this year to also keep track of the people's development and to see, how the system has proved itself. What regards the integration of the particular groups in the university of applied sciences; there are records and processes, which have already been started in the last years." *FT2O* <u>*00:11:37-0*</u>

The respondent from the operational level admitted not to know anything about the existence of a committee responsible for social inclusion / LLL / access, but suggested to ask the colleague. However the idea to implement such a structure was considered as very good, particularly as lifelong learning represents an overall cross sectional issue. (FT2O)

"Directly regarding a committee (in charge of social inclusion) I don't know anything right now. Maybe you better talk to the other interviewee about this. But you make me think this would be a good idea, to introduce certain structures concerning this, to have some committee that organises things and looks at the whole topic. This is a good idea. As I said, there are some bodies which are dealing with this. But one to look only at this? Lifelong learning in our institution means access through extra-occupational programmes, where we can support this, so it is already a topic, it is a cross sectional issue." FT2O 00:12:40-9

The interviewed manager doesn't see demand in implementing such a committee:

"Also here we put the emphasis on the kind of culture that I mentioned before, which is already set well in the (name of the institution). This is simply in the heads, we don't need to steer or set impulses by committees" FT2M 00:14:22-9

Does your college have a strategic plan for promoting increased access and resources to implement this plan regarding access?

Strategic plans and ideas for promoting increased access exist, however their realization depends on the available resources

"I just submitted two different plans (for 1014), one normal plan and one development plan, and according to the financial resources, the one or the other will be realized." (FT2O) 00:13:58-2

The interviewed manager focused in the answer on the issue of Life Long Learning and the role of extra occupational courses, these aspects both are considered in the strategic plan. Also e-learning facilities are provided to strategically promote LLL:

"…that's why we also established the two platforms *knowledge management* and *e-learning*, which have been used internally for both students and employees. We also provided technology and infrastructure accordingly; respectively we try to develop this continuously. Things like E-Learning and Blended Learning are of course very expensive, but these are issues, that we want to deal with, deliberately" FT2M 00:15:25-7

Evaluation of good practice (for promotion of access)

The manager explained that in addition to the obligatory standard evaluation, a survey among graduates is carried out, to find out in which direction they developed. Also the applicants are analyzed every year, in order to examine new target groups and corresponding demands of support:

"From which areas are the students coming? Do students from certain social groups or from particular educational tracks need concrete support? I am thinking here of tutorials or special measures in the framework of the transition courses, that we have already done in order to ensure our standards in quality of education". (FT2M)

The other interviewee said that the numbers of people who enroll in degree courses without having the "Matura" (upper secondary school leaving exam which provides general access to higher education), respectively who got access by one of the transition courses[18], are analyzed. Evaluation also takes place in the framework of the maternity returner project that is carried out in cooperation with the public employment service. (FT2O)

Moreover, the learning performances of the students as well as new learning methods are evaluated:

"Another evaluation, which might not concern disadvantaged groups directly but maybe indirectly, is carried out in the area of e-learning. The effects of certain strategies on learning success and quality in teaching are examined in a singular research project." FT2O 00:15:55-4

In the context of good practice and evaluation, the interviewee also wanted to highlight, how important it is to prepare the students in advance:

*„One thing is also very important for us, that there is preparation – especially for those people, who are already far away from studying. With entrance seminars or preparation of learning, people should learn to adjust themselves and – particularly with regards to extra-occupational degree courses - get an idea, what can be expected, so that dropping out can already be prevented a little bit in advance."*FT2O 00:17:32-9

Self-assessment concerning own institution (promotion of access for underrepresented groups):

The interviewed manager finds it hard to asset the own institution in comparison with others:

"I think that we have good offers, however if we are further developed than others I cannot say, and also don't want to say, because I think, it is such a specific story, such a specific demand, that it is probably not possible to generalize and to make a comparison" FT2M 00:18:59-4

The interviewee from operational level provided a comparatively clearer estimation:

"I am not an expert in this respect, but I am really fully convinced, that we are very well developed and that we have the role of pioneers in many areas, also what regards access. We try to include people with migration background and also from the dual education system. Here we definitely are pioneers in Austria, which was also confirmed in multiple ways." FT2O 00:18:43-3

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[18] See example of practices

The same interviewee also asked, if there would be any other groups that can be considered as underrepresented and showed interests in adapting to this. When the issue of people with disabilities emerged, he mentioned a measure aiming to include hearing impaired people. The institution is going to initiate a particular course for hearing impaired the following year and therefore is already engaged with preparing their integration. (FT2O)

Institutional Climate

Staff with non-traditional background

Both interviewees find it hard to provide numbers or estimation about staff members who come from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds.

„ This is really hard to quantify (…) in the meantime we now have almost 400 full time employees, including administration, apprentices and the scientific area, and I don't have in mind all their CVs, we actually never made a corresponding statistic." (FT2M) 00:20:22-2

However, it is claimed that there always is the attempt to give people a chance, which don't have a high level of formal education. (FT2O)

There are also many trainers who are coming from the dual education systems and a few who used to make a transition course in the same institute and therefore could progress with tertiary education and later make a career as scientific assistant. (FT2M) The manager also mentioned that the institute started to engage disabled apprentices.

What regards women in higher position, the interviewee from operational level makes the following statement:

"In my estimation, the proportion of women in typical leading position is very low. What concerns middle range positions yes, there it is equal, but in leading positions there are too few" (FT2O) 00:21:09-5

Advantages of diverse student population

The advantages of having a diverse student population are seen in a vital dynamic and in the possibility to exchange a huge variety of experiences. According to the interviewee from operational level, diversity is also found positive by new teaching colleagues, particularly when it comes to the extra-occupational degree courses, where a high level of cooperation (between the students) is required. *"Everybody sees this quite positive. Diversity brings a lot of dynamic and lots of experience, that can be shared then between students. We see this as something very positive. Also new teaching colleagues feel that this (a diverse student population) is something positive, if I ask them. They do*

appreciate that here different groups can work together, especially concerning the extra-occupational programmes, where even more cooperation is necessary." (FT2O) 00:22:52-7

The interviewed manager highlights the development of social competences as advantage of a diverse student population. As already mentioned before, there is also a center of competence, in the institution, that deals with this topic:

"Here it's exactly about experiencing this diversity management in a way, this we are also doing. We have a few students, who are in a wheel chair, and I think also one or two who are blind, where it is necessary to act and communicate differently with those people, and I think, that's very good for the students, learning to know also this kind of world…" (FT2O) 00:23:11-2

Challenges of diverse student population

From the managers point of view, time restrictions is the main challenge, that the institution has to face when having a diverse student population. As there is a legal time frame for all first circle degree courses, the possibility to react to the needs of certain groups of students is limited:

„I think, this is a certain limitation, as in case of impairment or diversity, might be in terms of language barriers or in terms of barriers of qualification, you just need a bit longer and knowledge cannot always be transmitted in a formalized time frame. (…) Unfortunately this is related strongly with the very restrictive financial tracks in the sector of universities of applied sciences. We really try hard, as I mentioned before, to offer additional support in order to make it possible for the students to complete it in the given time, but I think it must be revised also in respect of the society, that things are provided with the time they need. This I think is a main factor." FT2M 00:24:41-7

According to the interviewee from operational level, the main challenges in having a diverse student population are the language barriers. The problem is among others that

"people, respectively a minor part, who don't know the language so well - partly also foreign students - , that they don't have an easy access to apprenticeships, where teaching language is German" (FT2O) 00:23:22-7

What regards the courses in the institution itself, an increasing number of English course offers was indicated, however there are also some problems attached:

„There are one/two degree courses that are only held in English. Generally English is included in every degree course, just mostly when there are language deficits it effects both languages, German and English, that's the problem." (FT2O) 00:24:16-3

Outreach

Building bridges

In order to promote increased access to underrepresented groups, a regionalization respectively decentralization of the educational offers is enforced, moreover it is tried to approach different communities by making lectures or information events in related institutions like e.g. technology centres or youth service centres. There is also cooperation with schools, where information and motivation of students takes place regularly. Also offering video conferences or E-Learning is a common practice to build bridges to the people, according to one of the interviewees. (FT2O)

The institutions manger added the existing (and already mentioned before) cooperation with the national employment service, where maternity returners have been addressed for particular courses, to the list of measures which aim to promote underrepresented groups. What regards the promotion of women and equality in general, the interviewee considers his institution as relatively well placed, even tough there are no explicit guidelines developed yet:

„… it was a hint of one of the experts during the last institutional evaluation, that we don't have any gender guidelines. We haven't been aware of this till that time, because we have always been really living it. You can also see it in the leading committees. When there are really qualified women, they are promoted and supported. No difference is made here and there is not even the consideration, that there could be a difference. It is just lived like that." (FT2M)

At the end the interviewed manager concluded, that in respect of all underrepresented groups, an open culture is lived:

„With us everybody is welcome, who is interested and who wants to go in for further qualification, there are no limitations. From that point, I could not think off any other offer or measure that we could set". FT2M 00:27:04-2

Availability of building for evening / summer events for local community / target group

The institution has four different sites in four different local communities within the federal state. According to both of the interviewees, the institutions buildings are used very well around the year, also by the community:

" … We try to use the building also in the summer, for example by organizing activities for children. That we have already planned in details for this year. The different locations offer a kind of university of applied sciences for children. That would be one example, but it is also used for evening courses. Access and utilization should be given the whole year long." (FT2O)

Children's Universities in recent years have become a popular measure also among some Austrian Universities and some other tertiary level institutions. Usually during summer some events including

lectures are organised trying to address the special target group of children from primary school upward. [19]

„Here we have strong cooperation. It is also foreseen in the ownership structure, that all of the 4 municipals, where the locations are based, obtain ownership. Therefore also the cooperation between the corresponding communities, the mayors and the city halls are very strong. There is a very intensive exchange, different cultural events are offered like expeditions and balls. Open days are organized, where the inclusion of the community is focused." FT2M 00:28:14-2

Opportunities for social Interaction, social network support

Peer mentoring

Please describe any Peer Mentoring practices in your college, if there are any (see template on models of good practice)

The interviewee from operational level suggested asking the colleague for more information on that, as he is not competent to give closer information on that.

The manager first responded to the question with regard to the employees of the organization, how new staff members are introduced in the organization. After asking about students, the interviewee referred to the Austrian tutor system, which is mainly organized on a voluntary basis by the students themselves:

„The students created this very well with their own initiative and there are different opportunities how they support each other, ranging from accommodation search, learning groups up to cultural and leisure time offers. We have sport unions, so there are many different possibilities. We now also created networks by using alumni unions, where students and graduates can meet for conversations, where it is in a way and in terms of self organization to a certain extent also about mentoring. So there is a variety of offers I would say." FT2O 00:30:11-7

Social interaction

Opportunities for social interaction are offered, respectively initiated by providing E-Learning platforms, where students can make networking. This is found to be a good way to also bring in contact rather less advantaged groups. (FT2O)

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[19] For more information on children's universities also on an international level see the European Children's Universities Network http://eucu.net/

„Just in the transition course this is happening now. Starting from learning communities to groups for social interactions, which get in contact via the E-Learning platform and support each other in this way! "(FT2O) <u>00:29:10-1</u>

This kind of networking is expected to promote both: virtual and real life interaction and according to the interviewee good experiences have been made with this also in terms of improved study performances. (FT2O)

"I made some analyses, that revealed, that people (…) who are actively connected in virtual spaces, also have significant better marks" (FT2O) <u>00:29:55-0</u>

The interviewed manager introduced the initiative called „practice days" as a good opportunity for social networks. These days are organized by the different study programs in the framework of the vocational internships that have to be completed by the students. The experiences made during these practical projects outside the institution are shared with the other students at some stage in this event:

"They make small presentation, small sessions, partly also representatives from the corresponding vocational fields are invited. Teachers who work at the university extra occupationally are invited as well. I like going to these *practice days* as well, because I like to see what is going on at the moment. I think there is a broad space of possibilities to exchange, also in terms of permeability, as mentioned before" (FT2M) <u>00:31:40-8</u>

<u>Feedback from students</u>

According to the interviewee from the operational level, feedback processes already start with the registration of the student, where information about how people found out about the educational offer, is obtained. It revealed e.g., that the web presence plays an increasing role. (FT2O) <u>00:31:38-6</u>

Another result, which was gained by feedback, was the existence of a demand of courses adjusted for shift workers. This group can be considered as vulnerable in terms of their working conditions and the possibility to attend education. Therefore it is now tried to adopt this feedback and to develop some future plans in this direction:

"People are then informed accordingly and kept on track of what is being developed. One thing, that we have already adopted, is to also offer an intensive course. This was also developed due to a suggestion that has been made or due to a few suggestions. Anyway, shift work is a current issue, that is not easy to tackle, but we have started to deal with it."

FT2O <u>00:32:01-5</u>

The interviewee from management level indicated, that the internal evaluation comprises a broad variety of questions, covering not only the quality of courses, but also cultural aspects and general aspects of study life in the concerning institute and that good feedback can be obtained from that. Furthermore it was mentioned that at least once per semester meetings with student representatives take place, where they can bring in problems and suggestions for improvement what regards basic conditions, possibilities of funding, issues of permeability and so on. This is considered as good possibility to obtain feedback as well. FT2M 00:33:48-3

Transition Programmes

Preparatory, foundation courses

In the observed institution, transition courses have already been offered from the beginning (1994) and have been extended within the last three years. They mainly address people who have not obtained an upper secondary school leaving exam, but who completed an apprenticeship or a medium VET school, which in Austria does not provide general access to higher education. After this transition course it is made possible for the student to enroll every degree course that they want within the offers of the concerned University of Applied Sciences. Potential students do have to decide beforehand which of the three fields (technology and engineering, management, health and social sciences) they want to study in, as the curriculum of the transition course is different for each field. In order to facilitate the access to this transition courses, these courses are offered in all four different locations of the institution, also it is tried to pack the contents in intensive learning packages:

„We also tried so pack all of that in three evenings with a very intensive educational offer plus extra ordinal compressed seminars, plus a proportion of E-Learning to optimize it. And without any question we have very good successes with that." 00:33:19-3

There is no final exam or certification at the end of the course, but the performances are assessed permanently:

„They have to participate regularly. There is no final examination or exam, this doesn't exist here. However, in order to make sure, that they really … they have to be positive in every area, no matter which subjects are concerned. We also have a big focus on German and English, this is often neglected when it comes to engineers, but we put a big focus on that." 00:34:10-7

Next to the aforementioned transition course, the manager of the institution lists some further measures that are or have been done by the institution on a community level. For example events about transmitting scientific knowledge to the public audience were organized, as well as special courses for children in order to make them familiar and interested in science:

„What we also do, you could say as an early promotion of young people, we have a particular offer for children, where young people or very young children in primary school age are guided towards further education, also made interested in continuous learning and exploring." FT2M

Furthermore, the manager mentioned, that the institution doesn't offer any courses, which cost money and which would be otherwise available at the free market :

"These courses, where you have to pay for, don't really address this group. That is not our aim either, because there are institutes for adult education and local schools and so on, where we don't want to enter." FT2M 00:35:50-2

School or community group visits to your college campus:

Next to general open days, school visits are very frequent in the observed institution and follow a certain structure. It is either one day or half a day, which is dedicated to the visiting schools during the school year. In summer there are also activities, which last three days or a week long including different programs and emphasis.

"We also have the possibility, just within the different locations, labor and other rooms, that we can show the present equipment or even make a small "knoff-hoff"[20] show. We also try to motivate the young people, to invite them, up to making lectures in schools, which are also very successful. Here we are very engaged, also in terms of Children University, that we are doing in summer, children activities." FT2O 00:35:30-8

Mainly teachers and other employees get in contact with the students during these days.

The visitors comprise all age groups and levels. There are activities for talented pupils from higher secondary schools, where e.g. it is tried to raise their interest through offering them internship with the institution, but also customized offers for very young children in primary school age, where contents are transmitted in adequate ways, like e.g. by building robotics with Lego bricks or by initiating a drawing competition. FT2M

„On request individual guidance is offered at any time, also small lectures. Like mentioned earlier there is a strong cooperation with the regional education authority, thus we offer all pupils to get a first glimpse." FT2M 00:37:57-6

Admission policies

Reserved places for traditionally disadvantaged groups

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[20] 'Knoff-hoff-show' (from 'know-how') is rreferring to a TV-show on German public broadcasting networks that was also a very popular science related TV-programme in Austria for many years.

According to the interviewee from operational level, reserved places exist in the framework of the proposal to the authorities for universities of applied sciences.

"Yes, this exists. In most of the agreements (for the singular degree courses) it is formulated explicitly that, depending on the application situation, places for certain groups should be available." FT2O 00:37:02-6

The interviewed manager stated that actually no place is ensured:

"Here I have to advert to what I said earlier. This is not necessary with us, Because if somebody wants to study and he or she can prove the qualifications, then it is no problem. Thus we don't need any regulation, also in terms of targets, I think it is not necessary. The culture is really open." FT2M 00:38:41-8

As in Austria generally positive discrimination is not a policy instrument favoured by most actors on policy level or institutional levels, we interpret these contradictory statements in the way that they also describe different levels of regulation. On the level of singular courses there seem to be declarations of intent concerning social inclusion (not necessary using such a term). On a more general level of the institution as such there seems to be no regulation concerning reserved places or target numbers. This latter statement is very much in line with what we know from other tertiary educational institutions (see also our report on a University) where reserved places for any social groups are not regarded as necessary or even desirable.

Scholarship, grants, fee reduction schemes for traditionally disadvantaged groups

As there are no study fees in the concerned institution, no need of remission exists. According to the interviewee from operational level, some grants for best students performances exist though. What regards disadvantaged groups, rather special service offers than financial support is provided:

"They get support indirectly, because we offer them things like additional lessons, either in subjects like German, as mentioned earlier, or in terms of the deaf people issue, where the [deaf] union or the local government funds the translation activities, but also we have additional effort that we of course bring in from our side." FT2O 00:38:27-2

The interviewed manager indicated that the institute by its own doesn't have any resources for providing scholarships or grants for disadvantaged groups, this is not foreseen neither. However, financial support can be gained through the general national scholarships authority. (FT2M)

Recognition of prior Learning

Obstacles for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience

According to the interviewee from operational level, formalization doesn't really help when it comes to recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experiences and it should rather be looked individually on the requirements that are needed for further education:

„The experience that you have made in your professional life is a different and also very important one. However, it also requires additional information about the theoretical frame, which also has to be transmitted. Many things cannot be recognized from the vocational life. For example I am formally recognizing knowledge in physics from people who made electrical engineering (…) however, I still suggest them to also attend the lectures because different things are taught there, particularly what regards the education in terms of basic theoretical knowledge" FT2O 00:40:45-1

Also the management considers the wish of standardization as a big obstacle. It is difficult to assess and to compare qualifications obtained from formal and non formal learning, which often results in heavy and also emotional discussions. However, the possibilities of recognition within the universities of applied sciences are considered as relatively good when compared to others:

"I think the legislative body, at least what concerns in the area of universities of applied sciences, is still generous, as the competence of decision and assessment is left with the corresponding head of the degree program. There is a possibility of recognition for every single course, and if the applicant can prove adequate qualification, this is accepted. The problem is just, that this informally gained knowledge cannot be presented in a certified form. How could you bring it in a frame, so that it satisfies the standards of both: the authorities and the adopting organization respectively university of applied sciences? It is actually not good neither for the learning person, the student, if he attends the degree course and it emerges that he or she cannot complete it due to a lack of qualifications" FT2M 00:42:30-0

How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome?

In order to overcome the obstacles, the possibility to decide about cases individually and to make individual offers (also in terms of additional support courses) is seen as very helpful. This flexibility is also given in the concerned institute in the framework of the different degree courses.

„There are also some people who have problems in mathematics during their studies, and who repeat basic mathematics in the transition courses, or in preparation courses. Here we have very individual solutions to overcome these obstacles." FT2O 00:42:52-8

Please describe any Initial Assessment of needs and skills, including Literacy Skills in your college

What regards the transition courses, no systematic initial assessment of students exists:

"…we here accept all people and look at them individually, where we have the feeling, there is potential, and that is just the case with most of them. There are barley people, where you could say, it's maybe better not to study." FT2O 00:44:53-3

The interviewee adds that during the transition courses, there is 2 semesters time to really convey competences in a way that students come to a level more or less similar to the level of the upper secondary school leave exam, at least what reading and writing skills. In contrast, it is not possible to take this for granted for students in a normal degree course. There are small support offers, which they can use during their studies, but this is not considered as sufficient in extent.

What regards initial assessments for the normal degree courses, they don't really exist either according to the interviewed manager. Just the general capacity of the students is tested:

„We make aptitude tests, where we just check, if the applicant has the potential to complete a degree course. Here we cooperate with (name of an institute), who have a standardized psychological aptitude test. Reading and writing qualification in a narrow sense or skills are not assessed. We do this, one could say, indirectly by viewing the CVs, herewith it's possible to get a certain picture." FT2M

Furthermore, all applicants who proved to have potential to study are invited to an interview, in order to also get a personal impression. This is considered as important as well. FT2M

On the other side, during the first phase of the study ("Studieneingangsphase") demand of special support is assessed and students, who lack special skills or knowledge, can catch up by attending certain parts of the preparation or transition courses. FT2M 00:44:45-3

Supports

Emotional Support services

The interviewee from operational level couldn't tell about any emotional support service in a narrow sense:

"As the structure of the degree programs enables a manageable amount of people, this function is taken over by either the leader of the programs or the assistants, however, a direct service doesn't occur to me." (FT2O) 00:45:58-2

The interviewee from management level stated that emotional problems and burn out related issues are topics within the institution and that awareness exists and is raised among teaching staff:

"There always can be situations in the life of students, might it be illness, the death of a family member, where they are very much burdened. In this respect, our teachers and study program leaders are really consciously addressed, that they should look very close, that they should react very sensitive. And we now have already a few students, who are attended very individually by us. There are counselling possibilities up to that we try to develop individual counselling or supervision concepts with the corresponding experts." (FT2M) 00:50:33-9

Career/Academic Support services:

Both of the interviewees have been unsure, whether the question about career/academic support service was related to students or employees. The person from operational level focused in the answer on the support service for students and graduates:

„There is a very strong career-related support offer: ranging from the provision of insights into companies or professional fields by the people, to internships within the companies up to support, when graduates want to establish their own business. We have an own department for that." FT2O 00:46:56-0

The manager did only speak about support for employees. Scientific staff is promoted by senior researchers and integrated into teaching:

"We developed a career model for young academics, particularly for the area of research and development, but also teaching. (…) What we have for three years is an internal further education program. Here, all employees can attend in house trainings in different areas like didactics, personality development and special professional competences etc. This is adopted very well and is of course also supportive in terms of career development". FT2M 00:54:28-8

Access Service

Both of the interviewed professionals found it hard to catch the exact meaning of Access Service and referred to the offered transition course (see best practice 1) when answering to the question.

"(Access) Services? How would you define that?" FT2M 00:54:44-3

Next to the transition courses and the special degree course for women (maternity returners) (see best practice 2), special German language courses (for foreign students) are offered in order to widen access. According to the interviewee from operational level, target groups, that are not covered sufficiently by now, but who are going to be more included in future measures are students from abroad, hearing impaired, and people with migration background. FT2O

The interviewed manager also mentioned the libraries of the institute, which are accessible for everyone. Moreover some public lectures are held in the evening:

„ What we also do regularly are singular lectures in the evenings. Our young academics like to do that: innovative topics but also topics that in a way address the society are presented in these events to the public. (…) That are things, that can be described as services" FT2M 00:56:05-9

Literacy Support Services

Next to German courses offers, an obligatory training in scientific writing is part of the curricula in every   bachelor   degree   course:

"Here (in these courses) it is not only about the empirical aspect, but actually about looking at how

the students can improve their competence in reading. We gave them a lot of practical tips." FT2M <u>00:58:25-1</u>

<u>Financial Support Services for students at risk of poverty</u>

There is no Financial Support Services from the institute itself, but students are linked to the responsible authorities:

„Where we support and in a way provide some links or lines, is in direction of support from federal or regional facilities, partly also support from municipalities. Here it's also often about financing accommodation and about making a living somehow. Here we just try to support, but we don't have own pots in that sense in the university of applied sciences." FT2M 00:59:14-8

It must be noted, however, that there are no study fees charged for any of the study courses in the observed institution.

Distance education

<u>Distance Education Services</u>

In the opinion of both of the interviewees, e-learning is considered as important, but only in addition to personal contact, no solely distance education is offered or intended by the institution. E-learning platforms, video-conferences, pod casts however are common tools that are used. Particularly for the extra occupational degree courses these virtual possibilities to interact with the students are considered as very helpful. According to the manager, E-Learning above all stands for innovation:

„We also use "i"-learning internally. I don't know if my colleague (name) has told you that the "i" is really supposed to be spelled like that, because we said "i" stands for innovative learning and teaching, and not only for electronic." (FT2M) <u>01:00:45-7</u>

<u>Links with traditionally disadvantaged areas/groups to actively promote distance education in these areas</u>

The interviewed manger didn't have any idea in respect of this question, the interviewee from operational level indicated a few measures:

Next to regionalisation of the study locations, some cooperation exists with youth service facilities and the municipals in terms of informing about the existing educational offers. For instance information and invitations are also included in community letters or sent to the union of the hearing impaired in order to recruit interested people from there. Organizations and the university are often approaching each other reciprocally. (FT2O)

Course Content and effects of recession

Learning that is activity-centered and learning as a social practice

What regards new learning and teaching approaches, a "network of knowledge" is established within the concerned University of Applied Sciences, where among others didactical and social structures are examined and discussed. This facility is linked with other national and international organizations, particularly when it comes to e-learning. FT2O 00:53:45-3

The interviewed manager highlights learning as a social practice and that this is enforced by small and heterogenic learning groups.

„… That is just starting to run, we have already made good success with it, in bringing together full time students and part time (extra-occupational) students in certain trainings. Just to see, how they interact. Do they get together? Are they able to cope with heterogeneity? So, very exiting experiences up to that it is looked in terms of internalization and incomings, to integrate them consciously in groups, in order to initiate a certain dynamic and exchange." FT2M 01:02:28-3

Another issue mentioned is a module-like organized program called "social competence" which is part of all 32 different study programs available at the time of the interview. Issues like creative competences, teambuilding or outdoor training are part of this module, which functions as cross-sectional for all programmes. The manager of the institution tells us that diversity (including gender but also ethnic origin, disablement, sexual orientation) issues are currently in a state of planning in order to be integrated as another cross-sectional matter that should be part of all educational programs offered and also part of organizational development activities. This is a reaction to an external evaluation report that suggested that further activities concerning question of gender balances   within   the   researched   institution   made   sense. The same external evaluation result has lead to the development of a special program offer directed at female maternity leaves returning to the job market. (see also section "outreach")

Effects of recession on access

The recession is expected to have different effects; according to the interviewee from operational level, it could enforce but also reduce the access of underrepresented groups in formal education. In a short term perspective the recession provides people with more time for education, as they might have less or no work. However people still must be able to make their living and in a long term perspective this might not be ensured:

„To study by doing short-time work) or educational leave is a great thing, there are possibilities. Just in a long run I am afraid, - that is my personal opinion – that the funding of the studies is just not sure anymore for singular groups." (FT2O)

According to the management, after the recession, it will be difficult to provide financial support, particularly for socially disadvantaged groups like e.g. long term unemployed. In order to overcome these social discrepancies, the recognition of informal learning is seen as possible solution:

„Making it possible to acknowledge informal learning, that would be an interesting thing, but as I said, the discussion about it is relatively difficult, there are partially very emotional disputes. I have to admit, that this is sometimes not really comprehensible for me, because it actually would be good, if you could say, you could develop or move something in the society in this respect" (FT2M)

The interviewed manager also brought in the issue of early promotion of children; more development towards fulltime kinder gardens is requested in order to promote equality:

„That is a societal phenomenon, that children are put in private kindergartens, so that they don't have to get in contact with so called marginal groups. It probably will need some time till it is settled in the heads, that this is nothing bad or terrible. The contribution, that we can make, in terms of our scientific activity, is to examine this empirically and to contribute again and again to awareness building" FT2M. 01:06:37-8

Details on a model of practice 1 "transition and preparation courses"

Objectives of the practice

The objective is to enable people, who are coming from the dual education system (vocational apprenticeship) or a three year VET school and therefore are without general access to higher education, to study in certain fields. After this transition course it is made possible for the student to enrol every degree course that they want within the offers of the concerned University of Applied Sciences. The course is extra-occupational, free of charge, and lasts one year. (FT2O)

The main focus is on degree courses in the technical field (engineering and technology) as the offer of the concerned university of applied sciences comprises to a proportion of 75% courses in this classical technical areas. (FT2M)

The transition and preparation courses are tailored specially for this institution and do not compete with programs offered by other (adult) education institutions. Potential students participating in these preparation courses are qualified corresponding exactly to the demands of a particular degree course:

"There are also university entrance qualification examination offered at the university, and corresponding preparation courses offered in adult education facilities. We said, we really only want to qualify the people adequately according to our own requirements, adapted to the concerned study program and in close cooperation with the corresponding course leader and the study program manager (…) We never aimed at generalizing that or to suggest in a way, that with this course the student is able to study in all other higher education institutes on third level." FT2M 00:07:59-7

There is no final exam or certification at the end of the course, but the performances are assessed permanently:

„They have to engage themselves regularly. There is no final examination or exam, this doesn't exist here. However, in order to make sure, that they really … they have to be positive in every area, no matter which subjects are concerned. We also have a big focus on German and English, this is often neglected when it comes to engineers, but we put a big focus on that." FT2O 00:34:10-7

Target groups

The main target group consists of persons who did not obtain an upper secondary school leaving exam, but who completed an apprenticeship or a three years VET school, which in Austria does not provide general access to higher education.

„In comparison to other universities of applied sciences, we have very high proportion of people coming from the dual education system. And I think, that we really can describe this as a success story" FT2M 00:06:43-1

Funding sources (including non-standard funding sources)

The concerned university of applied sciences is publicly funded, at almost equal parts by the federal government and by the regional government.

„We are mainly funded from the national state level, however, actually up to 50 percent also by the holder of the region, when you see it in relation. The region supports the (name of the university of applied sciences) in a very high extent, that must be said. Within the framework of these financial resources, we have to coordinate and steer from the side of the management. There are no real financial possibility besides this." FT2M <u>00:56:50-8</u>

History/background of the model (when established, its developmental progress)

In the observed institution, transition courses have already been offered since the establishment in the year 1994 and have been extended within the last three years.

"at the very beginning, it was called supplementary course for engineers and it was a targeted offer for those students, who have completed an vocational apprenticeship and consciously strive for further/higher education" FT2M

The transition course was originally initiated in the fields of technology and engineering. It has later been widened and now is available for all study fields offered by the concerned institution, i.e. also for studies in the field of management and those in the field of applied health and social sciences.

Number of participants/service users annually

"In the meantime we could double the number from approximately hundred, who in the beginning enrolled these transition courses, to more than two hundred. (…) It was definitely a success in enforcing the proportion of the dual educational track or also the permeability of the educational offer. (…) And it is also a success when the people – however not all of them make it – when they successfully complete this two semester long transition course and later can follow well in their studies or even become brilliant students. That was a success." FT2O <u>00:05:43-4</u>

Location

The transition course is offered at all four locations of the educational institution. Potential students have to decide beforehand which of the three fields (technology and engineering, management, health and social sciences) they want to study in, as the curriculum of the transition course is different for each field. After successful participation in an transition course students can enroll in degree courses at the concerned University of Applied Sciences. In order to facilitate access

transition courses are offered in four different locations. Furthermore timely compacted intensive courses and e-learning are available:

„We also tried to pack all of that in three evenings with a very intensive educational offer plus extra ordinal compressed seminars, plus a proportion of E-Learning to optimize it. And without any question we have very good successes with that." 00:33:19-3

Perceived strengths and weaknesses

The advantages in having a diverse student population are seen in a vital dynamic and in the possibility to exchange a huge variety of experiences. According to the interviewee from operational level, diversity among students is also found positive by new teaching colleagues, particularly when it comes to the extra-occupational degree courses, where a high level of cooperation (between the students) is required. (FT2O) 00:22:52-7

The interviewed manager highlights the development of social competences as advantage of a diverse student population.

According to the interviewee from operational level, the main challenges in having a diverse student population are the language barriers.

"Some people, respectively a minor part, who doesn't know the language so well - partly also foreign students - , that they don't have an easy access to apprenticeships, where teaching language is German" (FT2O) 00:23:22-7

What regards the courses in the institution itself, an increasing number of English course offers was indicated, however there are also some problems attached:

„There are one/two degree courses that are only held in English. Generally English is included in every degree course, just mostly when there are language deficits it is in both languages, German and English, that's the problem." (FT2O) 00:24:16-3

Priority needs for expansion of the model/service (this would include perceptions of implications of the current recession for this model)

From the managers point of view, time restrictions is the main challenge, that the institution has to face when having a diverse student population. As there is a legal time frame for all first circle degree courses, the possibility to react to the needs of certain groups of students is limited:

„I think, this is a certain limitation, as in case of impairment or diversity, might be in terms of language barriers or in terms of barriers of qualification, you just need a bit longer and knowledge cannot always be transmitted in a formalized time frame. (…) Unfortunately this is related strongly with the very restrictive financial tracks in the sector of universities of applied sciences. We really try hard, as I mentioned before, to offer additional support in order to make it possible for the students

to complete it in the given time, but I think it must be revised also in respect of the society, that things are provided with the time they need. This I think is a main factor." FT2M <u>00:24:41-7</u>

Methods of feedback, evaluation

Feedback processes already start with the registration of the student, where information about how people found out about the educational offer, is obtained. The numbers of people who enroll the degree courses without having the "Matura" (upper secondary school leaving exam which provides general access to higher education), respectively who got access by one of the transition courses, are analyzed on a regular basis.

The internal evaluation comprises a broad variety of questions, covering not only the quality of courses, but also cultural aspects and general aspects of study live in the concerning institute and that good feedback can be obtained from that. Furthermore at least once per semester meetings with student's representatives take place, where they can bring in problems and suggestions for improvement what regards basic conditions, possibilities of funding, issues of permeability and so on. Moreover, the learning performances of the students as well as new learning methods (e.g. e-learning) are evaluated.

Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model

The recession could enforce but also reduce the access and interest of underrepresented groups in enrolling degree courses. In a short term perspective the recession provides people with more time for education, as they might have less or no work. However people still must be able to make their living and in a long term perspective this might not be ensured. (F2O)

Details on a model of practice 2 "courses for maternity returners"

Objectives of the practice

A new course has been implemented aiming at women who wanted to return to the labor market. The study course "Product design and technology-related communication" (Bachelor couse) has been developed in cooperation with the regional public employment service (AMS). Potential female participants are prepared by the public employment service and receive information and financial support   there.

The course aims at strengthening female participation in technical study programs at the institution. Its other aim is to provide mothers who want to (re)-enter the labor market with qualification that enables them to hold jobs in technological branches. Gender segregation is a strong phenomenon within the Austrian labor market, but also within the education system, where participation rates of females in technological education programs still is very low.

Target groups

Female maternity returners, in order to enhance female (educational and job related) engagement in technical   areas.

One study course "Product design and technology-related communication". 20 study places with October 2008, 15 for academic year 2009/10.

Funding sources (including non-standard funding sources)

The regional branch of the public employment service AMS is a co-sponsor for the costs of the course (co-financing it in together with the university of applied sciences) and supports each participant with 753 € per month at minimum.

History/background of the model (when established, its developmental progress)

The course started with October 2008, it was developed in 2007.

> *"Two years ago we developed a study programme that is targeting women returning to the job market from maternity leave. That's adopted very well." FT2M* 00:05:08-2

Number of participants/service users annually

Academic year 2008/9: 20 study places, academic year 2009 / 10: 15 study places. Bachelor course, duration: 6 semester.

Location

One of the four locations of the researches institution, a town within an industrial region in Austria.

Perceived strengths and weaknesses

strength:

Childcare provision here is made available through a financial cooperation with the local municipality where this programme is located. (FT2M)

Priority needs for expansion of the model/service

This would include perceptions of implications of the current recession for this model

Methods of feedback, evaluation

Courses for maternity returners have been developed in reaction to an external evaluation process that had stated a lack of gender related guidelines within this university of applied science. (FT2M) Evaluation takes place in cooperation with the public employment service. (FT2O)

Non formal education institution 1 (NF1)

Interview 1 management level (NF1M)

Individual Interview Presentation – Non formal education institution

Index

Background Profile

Background data to profile target groups for access strategies:

See other interview (NF1O), though there we focussed more on education programmes for people who have achieved little formal education so far. This interview with the general manager of the volkshochschule gives more information on the institution, while the other interview is more specific on two programmes we consider models of practice.

The institution we present here is a volkshochschule in a big Austrian city and there among the biggest of these institutions with currently about 50 employees and more than 300 trainers.

Funding sources for Non Formal Education

The organization has three different funding sources: approximately 20% of the money is gained by subsidies from the regional government (city), further 20% are gained by third party funds, 10% other funds and 50% by course fees from participants.

From the website of the institution the information is accessible stating that revenues amounted to 3.4 Million Euros for 2008.

Features of the institution's mission statement

The volkshochschule our interview partner represents in its mission statement refers to a broadening of access to education and learning as an aim of the institution. *"The volkshochschule is especially concerned about supporting and empowering people to self-determinately cope with modernisation processes. Concerning economic and social processes need to be harmonised. It is a central goal to contribute to social cohesion."* (Mission statement).

The mission statement lists the following measures through which the volkshochschule targets to reach its aims:

- Open access to educational offers – all interested groups can participate
- Broad range of offered education taking different needs and circumstances into account.
- Good price performance ratio: high quality education at a reasonable price.
- Easy to reach, so learning can be brought closer to the learners
- Special vocational offers tailored towards individual for individual learning interests and needs.

- Expansion of e-learning in order to take the needs of extra-occupational learners better into account.

Strategic plan (if any) which are relevant to:

a. social inclusion
b. access to the institution for traditionally underrepresented groups
c. outreach strategies

Background information on availability or otherwise of free or reduced childcare generally for socio-economically disadvantaged groups

Childcare was not a topic in this interview. We have the impression that childcare provision is not considered as part of this institution's offers. See also other interview (NF1O) point 9. on Development strategy for the non-formal sector.

Background information on availability or otherwise of free or reduced fees for formal education generally for socio-economically disadvantaged groups

A smaller part of the offered lectures are sponsored by the chamber of labour and therefore only require very low fees.

Categories of Research

BACKGROUND ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Please describe the different groups currently present in your student population.

In Austria the majority of students in this kind of adult education centres have a middle range educational level, between completion of lower secondary and upper secondary school. Twice as many women than men attend classes. According to the interviewee, the proportion is even higher (90 to 95 %) when it comes to educational offers in fields like health and exercising. This might reflect a different attitude of females towards learning. What regards age, no statistics are available; however, compared to other adult education centres a higher proportion of younger people can be noted in the concerned institute. The interviewed manager ascribes this to strong cooperation with vocational schools. (NF1M)

What regards people with migrant background, the interviewed manager estimates the proportion to 10 percent, no reliable numbers are available yet, though. It was noticed, that the number of

participants with migration background increased, not only in the sector of German language courses, but also what regards second chance education. (NF1M)

Please briefly describe the history of your organization. When was it established, by whom?

The organization was established in 1995 as an independent association. It is located in a big city and there in a traditionally more working-class quarter. From the beginning it was tried to cooperate strongly with vocational schools, which are located close to the institute. The cooperation worked well and also led to regional activities, which aimed to promote lifelong learning. According to the interviewee, cooperation - not only with the vocational schools but also with other organizations and facilities - have always played an important role. The institute has also been engaged in European education projects from the beginning, like those promoted by ESF (European Social Funds)[21], and is still benefiting from them. (NF1M)

What are your organizations a) funding sources? And, b) approximate annual budget

The organization has three different funding sources: approximately 20% of the money is gained by subsidies from the regional government (city), further 20% are gained by third party funds (for example from the public employment service Austria AMS), 10% other funds and 50% by course fees from participants. The annual turnover is estimated to approximately 3 million Euros and 52 full time employees are engaged. This makes the concerned institute to the second biggest adult education centre (volkshochschule) in the city. (NF1M)

What are your organization's stated objectives,

The stated objective of the organization is to support people living, working or studying in the region in their learning processes and to provide them with adequate offers. Furthermore a central aim is to:

"Make it possible for those people, who are disadvantaged in terms of education and social capital, to access further education." (NF1M, 30)

See also section above on mission statement.

Have the numbers of your courses increased or declined in the past 5 years? Have the numbers of participants attending your organization's classes increased or declined in the past 5 years?

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[21] For general information on ESF funding and programmes in Austria see:
http://www.esf.at/?page_id=15&lang=en

According to the interviewed manager, the course offers increase, while the participation in terms of bookings decreased slightly within the last two years. This gap, however, can be balances by third party orders by e.g. the public employment service. The interviewee noted that e.g. the demand of English language beginner courses declined at the private sector due to an improved level of foreign language education in schools, but it plays an important role in terms of second chance education. (NF1M)

In your opinion, with regard to promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups, is your organization a) typical of most non-formal educational organizations, b) more developed or c) less developed? Please explain your answer.

The interviewed manager didn't describe the institution according to the offered categories, but sees the advantage of the volkshochschule in its strong local and regional connections:

"We are embedded in political and social structures on local level in the region or in the district. This I think is a big advantage. However, I think we nevertheless have the same problems like other institutes what concerns to the actual accessibility to target groups, who are educationally deprived." (NF1M, 40)

According to the interviewee a lot of considerations and efforts have been made recently on how to approach these disadvantaged groups. However it revealed, that there are certain borders and that offering classical courses does not necessarily lead to success.

"I also have to see and to accept: not everybody necessarily has to attend courses in order to get further education, even if we wished it." (NF1M, 40)

As an alternative to courses, making links to informal learning was found to be a good way in order to build bridges for those people. One example to facilitate such learning processes is organizing informal conversations between experts and learners. In order to make links between the informal and formal learning sector currently a "framework curriculum" for the field of adult education is being developed under participation of this institution. This initiative was just started by the organization and is considered as very innovative by the interviewed manager. (NF1M)

People, who participate only in a single part of the program can get higher ranking certification, when a connection between these courses is created. Providing a certain framework for the contents is very important in the field of non formal and informal education.

„This I consider as a great success, because for adult learner the question of meaningfulness is very essential. If I just have a collection of single courses – what is the case in parts of our program – then it's just a vendor's tray, which I don't feel so good about." (NF1M, 40)

COURSE CONTENT

What courses/classes do you think are particularly helpful in giving adults with low levels of prior education?

a) Confidence to continue in education,

In order to give educationally deprived adults confidence to continue in education, non formal ways of learning and particularly "mini-courses" are considered as very helpful. This low threshold offers are much more attractive for the target group.

Mini courses started to be regularly offered by the institution and revealed to be very successful, they can be seen as short "trial" lectures and are held at the central public library of the city and also at the volkshochschule. Here, people can try out participating in education in a very low threshold format thus can build up motivation and the necessary confidence to also attend a course later. As these mini lessons are free and only last two or three hours, there is nothing to lose for the participants. The interviewee gave an example of a success story of this practice:

after attending a mini course in IT basics, a woman who before felt very insecure with computers, got enough confidence to ask her work colleagues for help and she decided to continue with a education where these skills are required. (NF1M)

It was also noted that considering **time economy** in the courses is very important, because many people are charged with a lot of work and stress in their professional and private life. This applies particularly to some targets groups like also young people. What regards the methods of teaching, old formats have to be questioned:

"Sometimes I have the impression, that many of the methods, which were developed during the last years and decades and which are mainly based on group dynamics alienate different people. Today I have the impression, that particularly the youth need clear orientation and a framework, instead of long lasting babbling (…) before getting to the actual topic. Today clear structures are necessary; therefore we need to change our didactical formats here again." (NF1M, 46)

It seems that people from working class prefer formats like public lectures, which cannot be classified as typical classes. The interviewee told us that within the program "university meets public"[22], which has been running for more than ten years, the proportion of people with lower educational level is much higher than in standard course offers, which are rather organized like in school. (NF1M)

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[22] Lecturers from different universities in the city cooperate with different volkshochschulen. Every semester there are several hundreds of lectures given on many different subjects for considerable low fees. Universities see this as participating in LLL. These programmes do not lead to certificates; they are directed towards a very general public without requiring any prior qualification.

b) Confidence to contribute to their community/local area? Would it be possible to get further details on their content?

The institute is just starting to research about necessary framework conditions and requirements, which would contribute to community development and which would support participation processes. The idea is to try open formats like e.g. organizing a small party in community housing estates in order to approach educationally disadvantaged people.

So far, there are only a few offers in that direction like e.g. excursion to democratic or governmental organizations. There is also cooperation with certain regional working groups, which for instance organize youth parliaments in certain districts. However the interviewed manager thinks, that this is not enough yet and that there is need to look for new formats in adult education. (NF1M)

Please describe the content of your classes available currently and in the past year Can you provide a proportion/percentage breakdown by type/category e.g. literacy, personal, vocational, mixed etc.?

Within the last years, offers in the area of basic education (reading, writing, mathematics and computer literacy) and preparation courses for lower secondary final exam (Hauptschulabschluss) have been extended strongly. The focus was to offer second chance education up to the upper secondary school leaving exam (Matura), which provides general qualification for university entrance. Bridges were built between basic training and formal education certificates and, among others, it was worked on a new form of university entrance examination course (Berufsreifeprüfung[23]): a system was developed, where counselling before and supervision during the courses was integrated, also drop out management plaid an important role. (NF1M)

The area of second chance education is considered as strategically very important and worth to be extended:

"Just in the area of basic education and in the meantime also what regards lower secondary school, I still see a lot of potential, a lot has to be done here, also in cooperation with other institutions. This I think has to be enforced even stronger today in direction of: which additional courses in the vocational area do I have to offer in order to provide a level, where better access to employment is given. This seems to be the main element at the moment for me." (NF1M, 50)

Programmes offered by the institution researched:

- Literacy and basic education[24]

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[23] Examination providing general access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools

[24] See our other interview from this organization where we focus on this programme.

- Computer and Internet
- Health and physical exercise
- Communication and rhetoric
- Arts and culture
- Learn to learn and learning aid
- Mathematics and natural sciences
- Politics and society
- Social skills
- Languages
- Economy and job-related offers
- Second chance education: basic education, "Hauptschulabschluss"[25] (preparation courses for lower secondary final exam), Berufsreifeprüfung (examination providing general access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools).

How does your organization contribute to personal development?

Through classes:

a) Involving the arts: drama, creative writing, music, visual arts

There are also educational offers involving arts in the concerned intuition. They are considered as very important by the interviewed manager, as creativity and intrinsic motivation can be very supportive for the learning process.

"Actually my vision is, that everybody can speak different languages, that everybody (…) could play at least one music instrument. I think we should try to get there, because in my opinion, many questions and problems regarding further learning can be solved by itself then. I think, that there is an enormous potential inside". (NF1M, 52)

There are some singing classes organized in the organization. Moreover the interviewee told us, that a small internal project is going to start soon, where a "**theatre pedagogical"** approach is planned to be implemented in different new areas and it is tried to promote personal development in a new way. (NF1M)

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[25] see our other interview from this organization where we focus on this programme.

b) Conflict resolution skills, self-awareness programmes, parenting skills, coping with bereavement, life skills, coping with addiction

Rather few classes involving topics like parenting skills are offered, the interviewee thinks, that it is better to leave those areas to specialized facilities. (NF1M)

"There are singular offers in the area of parenting skills, but rather few. The problem is, that only parents are reached, who – with quotation mark - do not really need it. Life skills in general are a topic, that is important for us, but special things like coping with bereavement, there are facilities and associations which are simply more competent and which can do it better than we." (NF1M, 54)

c) Leadership skills, psychology, sociology, philosophy classes

What regards leadership skills, psychology, and sociology, there are some offers. However, according to the interviewee they are not really in demand. General education and personal development is seen as strongly linked with each other and also leadership is, according to the interviewed manger, present in almost everybody's life. (NF1M)

d) Other, please specify

The interviewee also mentioned classes in sports/exercising:

"Music, creativity, physical exercise, in my opinion these are topics that must become more important in the future. They are important for modern education and for our modern society." (NF1M, 60)

How does your organization contribute to community development, i.e., ownership of and representation by members of the local community, fostering community leaders, developing learning goals together with the learners?

There is cooperation with representatives of the local community and also learning goals are developed together. For example the head of the local district council is member of the supporting association and therefore has a seat in every board meeting. Here it is tried to make connections between the contents and the region on a low threshold level, regularly exhibitions or other educational activities are taking place.

"Also in summer we created together with the head of the district a program with the aim, that all parents should be able to afford sending their child there for one week. (…) With the city gardening authority we are just in process of creating a program. We want to go in the community housing estate, give the people a flower present and at the same time teach them a little bit about how to plant small things on the own balcony. This is very low threshold and oriented towards the region". (NF1M, 62)

What courses are most popular?

„Most popular are those (courses), which are connected with the own deepest interests, this however is not always reflected in the demand, because many things I just have to do. I am very sceptical, what regards survey about subject preferences, because they only reflect, what can be found in the educational offers." (NF1M, 64)

STAFF CONDITIONS

Are tutors on a) short-term contracts, b) long-term contracts, c) no contracts ? Please explain reasons for this situation

Employees in the organization usually work with short-term contracts, which are extended every semester. However, there is a regular workforce of 30% to 40%, who have long-term contracts. The tutors usually have freelance contracts and therefore have less security than employees. Remuneration is according to the collective agreements, every lesson is multiplied with the factor 1.5. Besides it is possible for the tutors to additionally make organizational work, in order to receive full day employment. (NF1M)

How would you describe the rates of pay for tutors in your organization, especially compared with the formal educational sector?

The basic remuneration for a language tutor is 18 Euro for a lesson of 50 minutes; additionally taxes have to be paid on this in case of a freelance contract. The employer pays for insurance. The interviewee admits, that the rate of pay is not very high but also noted, that the concerned organization– in the meantime – is not the one which pays worst. (NF1M)

Is funding for your organization from year to year, or longer term? Please describe

The institute is funded with a proportion of 25.1% by the city government and since the beginning of 2008 the funding agreements have a period of 5 years, which is considered as very important. Before the subsidies were negotiated annually. (NF1M)

TARGET GROUPS

Are there noticeable gender differences in those attending classes generally, or particular classes? How in your opinion could your organization take more steps to reach and engage with the underrepresented gender? What steps do you currently take?

The interviewee noted that in general and particular what regards certain fields like physical exercising lessons, men are underrepresented. Different attempts have been made in order to attract more men, e.g. it was tried to offer male role models, who the target group could identify with, and this worked quite well. Once, even a former boxer could be engaged to offer exercising classes. However young men and those with migration background are still hard to reach. (NF1M)

What groups attend your classes which the formal education sector might find more difficult to reach? How does your organization achieve this?

„People don't come to us without us attracting them, good experiences have been made with days of open doors, particularly what regards handicapped [sic] people. It is necessary to go out (to the people) but at the same time also to open the doors for them" (NF1M, 86)

See also question below : What in your opinion is the distinct role the non-formal education sector can play in contrast to the formal education sector ?

What is the typical size of your classes? Maximum/Minimum

The typical size of classes on average is 8.5 to 9 people, however the interviewee noted, that this number tends to decline and that groups are getting smaller, this is different from sector to sector though. Altogether the size ranges from minimum 5 to maximum 25 participants. (NF1M)

CONNECTIONS TO THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Are there paths for progression through more elementary, to more advanced classes? And for progression into formal education?

Paths for progression are integrated in all offers of second change education, like basic education, Preparation course for lower secondary final exam (Hauptschulabschluss) or examination for university entrance (Berufsreifeprüfung). Additionally, together with an attached vocational school, specially developed promotion classes are offered. (NF1M)

What more, in your opinion, could formal educational institutions do to recognize prior learning, including non-formal learning?

According to the interviewed manager, Austria would need its own model of recognition, the current attempts to recognize prior learning are considered as not sufficient.

„There need to be bigger models, which are created in Austria. I consider this as crucial, I need to know which competences the people are bringing with them, this is questioned everywhere. Best would be to deal with this topic on a bigger scale and within an own project. There should be an internal portfolio of competences like if people move to another institution or company, information about the learning process, about special assignments and problems should be consigned as well."
(NF1M, 98)

What more, in your opinion, could the non-formal education sector do to promote greater links with the formal education sector?

The institute cooperates with the formal education sector to a small extent; basically it is cooperation with a vocational school, where preparation courses are offered for university entrance examination (Matura)

What regards tertiary education institutes, there is no cooperation with the concerned institute in terms of classes, however the regional mother organization offers courses, which prepare for certain degree programs (Studienberechtigungsprüfung). Furthermore links are promoted with the program "University meets public" where almost all local universities are engaged in; they make free lectures and course also in the premises of the institute.

Moreover, according to the interviewee, many of the courses offered by the adult education centres (e.g. project management) have a very high level, which is also certified and comparable with tertiary education. (NF1M)

What practical steps does your organization take to build bridges for your learners to the formal education system? Do you facilitate outreach events from formal educational institutions? Do you organize visits for your learners to formal educational institutions?

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system ? How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome?

According to the interviewee, obstacles can be found mainly in the institutional area and they can be overcome by cooperation.

"There is still a strong mistrust from side of the schools e.g. toward adult education institutes. However, it also improved a little bit. I think, that with a common framework and a adequate control, a good basis of trust can be created." (NF1M, 110)

OUTREACH TO MARGINALISED GROUPS

How do you reach your potential adult participants in your classes?
What steps in particular to you take to reach those who are most socio-economically disadvantaged? How do you bridge the information gap to reach them?
Are there models of good practice you use for outreach which could be applied in other countries?
[Not asked for with manager, but answers can also be found in questions above:
What courses/classes do you think are particularly helpful for adults with low levels of prior education …]

Are your classes free of charge? If not, how much do they cost ?
Some courses (like mini courses and literacy courses) are free of charge, others are not. According to the interviewed manager, a normal course, e.g. a language class costs 6 Euros per hour. (NF1M)

Where exactly are your classes located?
Is there any cooperation with other organizations to inform adults about your classes, particularly those who might be hardest to reach?

TUTOR TEACHING METHODS

[Not asked for with manager]

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

What courses/classes would you like to see expand in availability? Why?
In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing your organization in the next 5 years? In your opinion, what are the biggest hopes/opportunities for your organization in the next 5 years?
According to the interviewed manager, the biggest challenge for adult education centres is to find a good position within the area of labour market policy and to point out the specialties of this sector

instead of adapting to others. It is considered as very important to keep the typical broadness of adult education, particularly when facing financial crisis. (NF1M)

What in your opinion is the distinct role of the non-formal education sector can play in contrast to the formal education sector ? i.e., what would attract adult learners to your organization compared to going to formal educational institutions ?

According to the interviewed manager, non formal education institutions, in contrast to formal education need to be active in social inclusion:

"Everybody should have the right to catch up with education, no matter in which age. This has to be granted always, it must possibly be free of charge up to upper secondary level" (NF1M, 118)

Furthermore a distinction to the formal sector of schools is seen in the methodical approach, which should be targeted to adults. While it is important in the work with pupils to keep alive their curiosity, in the work with adults it is important to acknowledge their professional experiences they made. (NF1M)

DEVELOPING STRATEGY FOR THE NON-FORMAL SECTOR

Is there a national strategy in your country to develop the non-formal education sector ? Is there a regional strategy in your country to develop the non-formal education sector ?

The interviewee recognizes some national strategies, for example the process of developing a national framework of qualifications. Furthermore there are some attempts to improve funding for second chance education; common standards, strategies and new ways of funding are developed between federal government and federal state government. Moreover, great processes in the area of career counselling have been started; the concerned institute addressed some demands to the federal government, which are related to a lack of availability. (NF1M)

If not, what do you think need to be the main features of such a strategy?

[Not asked]

What advice would you give to someone trying to establish informal education in a particular area for the first time ? What in your opinion are the strengths and weaknesses of the non-formal education sector generally? How could links between non-formal education and the workplace be better established?

[Not asked]

How could childcare support be developed for those attending classes ?

[Not asked]

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on non-formal education in your country?

The interviewee thinks that with a delay the recession will also affect adult education centres; particularly what regards offers in the areas of interest based education a decline is expected. Demand could change towards more professionally oriented courses. The manager would regret this development and hopes that it is possible to counteract by providing special discounts. Altogether it is considered as important to keep the broadness of the offers and at the same time to provide a good and clear framework for the courses. (NF1M)

Index

Categories of Research

1.   BACKGROUND ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Please describe the different groups currently present in your student population.

This text describes our interview with an employee of the volkshochschule working at operational level. Our interview partner is responsible for a unit of the volkshochschule where basic education on one side and preparation courses for lower secondary final exam on the other side are being provided.

Concerning the programme for basic education, the age of the student population in the programme is very diverse ranging from 16 years to 40 years or older. The participants are partly within a procedure for accessing the right of asylum, the residence permit status of the person however is no problem for admission according for the interviewee. Only a very small proportion of the participants are native Austrian employees, unemployed or job returners. The vast majority of the student populations are people with migration background who lack local language skills, even if the target group would be illiterates with German mother tongue[26]. (NF1O).

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[26] "Since Austria did not participate in the IALS (Adult Literacy Survey), there is no valid data about illiteracy available in Austria. The UNESCO estimates that one to three percent of an industrialized country's population is illiterate. This would mean that there could be up to 300,000 illiterate persons in Austria. Experts in the field

"Originally it was planned to address people with German mother tongue (…) however fact is, that people who are immigrating just have no problem with getting alphabetised, but the target group of German speaking people is just very hard to reach, not only for us, but for everybody who is working in that area, because it of course is a kind of taboo topic." (NF1O, 12)

What regards preparation courses for lower secondary final exam (Hauptschulabschlusskurs) the participants are usually in their middle twenties. All groups of people, including migrants, job returners, jobless people and people within an asylum process have access to this educational offer; only professionals/employees do not. As all of the participants are either unemployed or at home, therefore there is also no demand for offering evening classes. Usually people are sent from different NGOs or public authorities; however it is also possible to come individually to the organization and ask for support. Most of the participants did not go to school in Austria. According to the estimations of the interviewed the proportion of those, who went to school in Austria but failed and now want to catch up with secondary school leaving certification is only 10%. (NF1O)

As it is necessary to apply for the program and as there is more demand than offers, the organization chooses the participants with consideration of a balance mix between gender and nationalities/ethnicities and languages. (NF1O) This, however, only applies to the courses for preparation courses for lower secondary final exam, the other courses (basis qualification respectively literacy) are open and do not require application. Generally a higher demand from women can be noted which leads to a proportion of females in the open courses.

Please briefly describe the history of your organization. When was it established, by whom?

Next to the main offers of the organization (the volkshochschule where the here described programmes are part of), there has always been a strong second pillar comprising projects form the federal welfare authority (Bundessozialamt), the Austrian public employment service (AMS), ESF (European Social Funds)[27], and different youth projects. This facilitated the development of the regarded offers in the area of second chance education and basic education. (NF1O)

What are your organization's a) funding sources? b) approximate annual budget

The area represented by the operational officer is mainly funded by two third party funds: ESF (European Social Funds) and sponsoring of the ministry of education.

Information about the annual budget could not be provided by our interview partner.

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of illiteracy estimate that Austria has a much higher number: 600,000." (Jörg Markowitsch, Silvia Benda-Kahri, Günter Hefler (2006): National Report Austria. LLL2010 Subproject 1 : 11)

[27] For general information on ESF funding and programmes in Austria see:
http://www.esf.at/?page_id=15&lang=en

What are your organization's stated objectives,

According to the interviewee the objective of the educational program is similar to the general objective of adult education as seen by the volkshochschule:

"To promote lifelong learning, and in particular to facilitate second chance education, integration into the labour market and higher qualification." (NF1O, 36)

Have the numbers of your courses increased or declined in the past 5 years? Have the numbers of participants attending your organization's classes increased or declined in the past 5 years?

According to the interviewed officer, the course offers increased since autumn 2007. Within this time frame particular courses in the area of basic education and literacy increased: there have been 3 participants at the beginning and there are 37 participants now. What regards the course for completion of lower secondary schools, the number of participates only rose virtually: as there are always some who drop out, more participants were planned in the beginning in order to have the planned group size of 15 participants at the end. (NF1O)

In your opinion, with regard to promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups, is your organization a) typical of most non-formal educational organizations, b) more developed or c) less developed? Please explain your answer.

The interviewee considers the organization as more developed with regard to promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups, this mainly because of the individual counselling[28] which is offered to interested participants. It is tried to find the best and the most adequate educational offer for every person, whereas personal benefit is favoured over company benefit.

"…when somebody is coming and wants to catch up with a school leaving certificate or requires basic education, we first of all try to adopt him and to find out what the person needs. Does he fit here or does he fit there? If he does not fit with us (a certain education program) maybe he needs a German language course or we recommend the person to another project" (NF1O, 50)

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[28] We have the impression that especially within the here offered programmes counseling is more than just career orientated. It is also on how to live in Austria, how to deal with state bureaucracy and with the education system and on life skills. As clients very often have a migration background, their problems as migrants are taken into account. Psychological counseling in a narrow sense though most probably can not be offered within the counseling talks our interviewee refers to right here. More likely clients could receive advice on where to find such psychological counseling. From work on another project we have heard experts state that although psychological counseling for migrants has recently increased at least in city regions in Austria, there still is a lack of provision (especially if it comes to services like psychotherapy for migrants).

Furthermore they try to promote permeability between the courses. According to the interviewee there have already been cases where people started with basic education and continued with a lower secondary school leaving certificate. The target would be that those people also go for a vocational training/apprentice training later and that they then can come back to the institution in order to get general qualification for university entrance (Berufsreifeprüfung) if they want to. (NF1O)

COURSE CONTENT

What courses/classes do you think are particularly helpful in giving adults with low levels of prior education?

a) Confidence to continue in education,

According to the interviewee the basis education offer with its individual approach is particularly helpful in giving adults with low levels of prior education confidence to continue with education. There is always an extremely heterogenic group of participants within these courses, which requires individual adaptation of the contents to the regarded participants. This entails a different way of teaching, which also aims to ensure understanding.

"People just notice, that everything is adapted very individually to them and that this is a different form of learning than they might have experienced at school (…) fear of contact is reduced. We make it possible that everybody can notice directly an increase of learning outcome." (NF1O, 57)

As contrast, within the other programme, the courses for completion of lower secondary school level (Hauptschulabschluss), transmitting predetermined contents is prioritized over checking individual understanding. This is because people have to pass a particular exam. (NF1O)

In order to help people who applied for the lower secondary school leaving certificate course (Hauptschulabschlusskurs) but do not yet have access to the therefore necessary skills, a bridging course is offered by the institution. The course is included in the basic education program and aims at teaching the participants how to learn and at giving them more confidence. Also contents like personal development, learning that includes understanding and general knowledge of the country are covered in this course. Particularly for people with migration background it is sometimes difficult to understand certain contents without knowing basic things about the culture of the country and without having a national context; this is why a kind of cultural training and 'second socialization' is very helpful. (NF1O)

b) Confidence to contribute to their community/local area? Would it be possible to get further details on their content?

Sometimes additional workshops or afternoon classes are offered in the area of personal development. Contents like political education or self-perception and social implications of being a woman are covered there and might stimulate and promote civil knowledge and active citizenship indirectly. (NF1O)

Please describe the content of your classes available currently and in the past year Can you provide a proportion/percentage breakdown by type/category e.g. literacy, personal, vocational, mixed etc.?

Within the last years, offers in the area of basic education and preparation course for lower secondary school certification (Hauptschulabschluss) have been extended strongly. The proportion of this program within the institution volkshochschule described here in financial terms or in terms of employees is estimated to 10 – 20%. (NF1O, 80)

How does your organization contribute to personal development? Through classes a) involving the arts: drama, creative writing, music, visual arts

Next to the courses an additional offer is made in the area of theatre pedagogue (theaterpädagogisches Angebot) which is called "Playshop". Participants from basic education as well as from the lower secondary school leaving certificate course can take part and it is open to come and go any time. The "Playshop" is carried out by social pedagogues and together with an national ESF partner and another institute and aims at promoting social competences and key competences. Topics are among others: future, power relations, family issues. (NF1O, 86)

c) Conflict resolution skills, self-awareness programmes, parenting skills, coping with bereavement, life skills, coping with addiction

If certain issues emerge, like e.g. dealing with traumatic experiences, drugs, crime, law or gender inequality; experts are invited to speak about this issue with the group. If a participant really suffers from a problem very strongly, social pedagogues try to help or to transmit him/her to a facility which can help. (NF1O)

d) Leadership skills, psychology, sociology, philosophy classes

What regards leadership skills, psychology, and sociology, offers can be found in other parts of the volkshochschule rather than in the department for basic education. (NF1O)

e) Other, please specify

The interviewee highlights that it is very important for the project that the participants are accompanied by social pedagogic professionals, who help them with learning and their lives in general. (NF1O, 96)

How does your organization contribute to community development, i.e. ownership of and representation by members of the local community, fostering community leaders, developing learning goals together with the learners?

There is no cooperation with political representatives of the community, but there is cooperation with other facilities like e.g. a national network of literacy and basic education, where experience and knowledge can be exchanged. Networking is also done in the area of educational /career counselling. (NF1O)

What courses are most popular?

The most popular course is the preparation course for lower secondary school certification (Hauptschulabschluss). (NF1O)

STAFF CONDITIONS

Are tutors on a) short term contracts, b) long term contracts, c) no contracts ? Please explain reasons for this situation

Tutors work with short-term contracts, which are usually extended every semester. According to the interviewee from operational level, there is no high fluctuation among the free lance trainers. There are also 3 employees who are engaged for the period of the ESF project (for the lower secondary school certificate course), which lasts until august 2010 and might be extended. (NF1O)

How would you describe the rates of pay for tutors in your organization, especially compared with the formal educational sector?

The basic remuneration is considered as very bad by the interviewee and also leads to problems when recruiting new tutors:

"It is a catastrophe what tutors earn. It is different with freelancers, because they have a higher hourly wage, but therefore other conditions they suffer from. However, what regards standard employees, the grading is awful. (…) I just had a phone call today with a woman who complained like mad about the job advertisement that we have published what cheek it is. (…) I understood her point, because you should have a university degree, various additional competences and experiences in

particular areas and at the end you get just 800 or 900 Euros after tax for a 20 hours job[29]." (NF1O, 118)

Is funding for your organization from year to year, or longer term? Please describe

The particular program is fully sponsored by ESF funds. When the sponsoring period runs out, the program does as well. However, the interviewee is in good hope that the funding will be extended afterwards until 2013. (NF1O)

Question: Now we ask about financing concerning the institution or your department. Have I understood this correctly, you are not financed on a year to year basis, but through ESF-money, which is assigned to you for a period of three years? So the project duration is three years?

Answer: *Exactly, three years.*

Question: Will you receive ESF financing after this time period?

Answer: *As far as I have heard, we could receive ESF financing until 2013.*

Question: It now looks like the financing will be extended until 2013?

Answer: *Yes, it should be extended.*

Question: And this would mean that then for this time period the Ministry (of Education) would also continue its financial contribution?

Answer: *Yes.*

(NF1O, 121-128)

TARGET GROUPS

Are there noticeable gender differences in those attending classes generally, or particular classes ? How in your opinion could your organization take more steps to reach and engage with the underrepresented gender ? What steps do you currently take ?

There is an internal quota in order to ensure equal participation of men and women in the classes for lower secondary school leaving certificate. However the demand of women is always higher and when it comes to basic education no quota exist. No steps are taken to reach more men for basic education, but it is tried to engage more male tutors. (NF1O) Male tutors could help attracting more male participants, though this clearly can not compensate for lacking strategy to attract more men.

"No, we do not make attempts to reach more male participants within this basic education programme, there is nothing concretely." (NF1O 132)

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[29] This refers to net income per month, so it's 800 to 900 Euro after taxes per month for 20 hours working time per week.

We have talked already about gender ratios in our field, would you like to add anything on this?

" *We also try to take this into account within our team of trainers and teachers, but it is difficult as very few men are working in this field[30]. But we try (laughs)"* (NF1O 130).

What groups attend your classes which the formal education sector might find more difficult to reach ? How does organization achieve this?

Many groups are reached through word of mouth advertisement; participants recommend the institute to friends or relatives. Furthermore cultural or religious communities as well as migrant associations are contacted by the organization in order to bring information to people, who are difficult to reach. However, there is no proof whether this practice works well or not. (NF1O)

What is the typical size of your classes? Maximum/Minimum

What regards basic education, the minimum number of participants is 3 and the maximum 8. For preparation course for lower secondary school certification (Hauptschulabschluss) at least 12 people must be participating and maximum 20 are allowed to. According to the interviewee this framework works well and a small number for basic education is national and international standard. What regards the lower secondary school leaving certificate course, the average number of participants is even below the average of other educational institutes which offer the same courses. Small groups were also mentioned as one of reasons why the course is so popular in this particular institute. (NF1O)

CONNECTIONS TO THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Are there paths for progression through more elementary, to more advanced classes? And for progression into formal education?

After basic education people can apply to continue with preparation course for lower secondary school certification (Hauptschulabschluss) at the same institution. After that it is open to them to continue with any other formal education offer on upper secondary level. Some people then try to participate in intensive vocational training offered by the public employment service (extraordinary final apprenticeship examination). Others take up education in other areas like e.g. training for health professions. In order to get admission to some of the higher secondary schools, participants might need a prevocational school called "Polytechnischer Lehrgang", situated after four years of lower

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[30] In Austria, at least concerning the service sector or fields like education, jobs that offer poor income possibilities often are typically female.

secondary education. This school usually takes one year, but can also be completed within two month. (NF1O)

What more, in your opinion, could formal educational institutions do to recognize prior learning, including non-formal learning?

The interviewee from operational level has positive experiences with using the "Europass"[31], a kind of standardized balance sheet that makes competences visible and comparable on European level. Every participant of a preparation course for lower secondary school certification (Hauptschulabschluss) is working on this document in the course of his/her stay together with a social pedagogue. (NF1O)

The Euro pass tool helps to make informal competences more visible and therefore recognizable. The interviewee hopes, that employers will get more familiar with this tool when people start to add it in applications. Besides, it is tried to strengthen the personality of the participants and to make them more confidence in their own skills and competences. Efforts are made to also raise public awareness on the issue of informally gained competences.

What more, in your opinion, could the non-formal education sector do to promote greater links with the formal education sector?

The interviewee noted that, according to gained feedback, people who come from the concerned institution find it particularly hard to complete higher education somewhere else in the formal sector. Thus, it would be helpful if upper secondary schools - which are very required – offered targeted preparation courses (Aufbaulehrgänge) for people coming from non formal education institutes. It was suggested that even non formal institutes could offer a learning support and prepare interested people for certain schools and trainings on upper secondary level. At the moment it is very hard for this people and the institute cannot do much:

"What we do is trying to support all people who generally have the ability to go to a further school to do so. However, with the end of the project also the possibility of support is ending." (NF1O, 168)

An additional barrier with respect to linking non formal and formal education sector is the formal requirement of making a prevocational school (Polytechnische Schule) before doing a vocational training, in case that only 8 years of school have been completed. That means that even if somebody

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[31] More information from the National Austrian Europass Centre in English:
http://www.europass.at/article/articleview/85/1/8
Here you also find links to all EU-27 Europass Centres.and the EFTA/EEA countries including Norway and on Turkey.

passed the lower secondary school examination in the age of 35, the person needs to make this prevocational school. This requirement makes it very hard for adult learner and is not really considered as necessary by the interviewee. (NF1O)'

It is not the case that each higher education institution has a separate entry exam in Austria. On the contrary, within the formal system it is mostly sufficient for potential participants to have succeeded in formal education that leads to the higher institution, though grades can matter and can lead to entry exams at some institutions. This has more to do with the split of lower secondary schools into basically two types ('Gymnasium' and 'Hauptschule'), where Gymnasium has more prestige than Hauptschule, The programme here refers to Hauptschule. Even within initial education, young people from Hauptschule are much less likely to achieve Matura at the end of upper secondary level at a higher institution, and are even more unlikely to succeed in finishing tertiary education. In this text we refer to adult learners who study towards a final degree from Hauptschule, those have even more difficulties in higher schools than young people, as the education system in Austria is still not open enough to take care of special needs and difficulties of such adult learners if they proceed in higher education. Continuing education at higher schools will last another four to five years and therefore is very hard for these learners. But if they, after succeeding in lower secondary school examination, also succeed in a vocational training/apprentice training later, they then can come back to this institution in order to get general qualification for university entrance (Berufsreifeprüfung). Our interviewee mentions that some (though few) learners manage to do so.

What practical steps does your organization take to build bridges for your learners to the formal education system? Do you facilitate outreach events from formal educational institutions? Do you organize visits for your learners to formal educational institutions?

There is no cooperation with other formal education institutes in order to facilitate their outreach strategies. However the interviewee is open to any form of collaboration. Sometimes visits to educational fairs are organized by the institution. Open days in schools could be attended as well in groups if there is demand; however there is no particular school which is visited regularly. Besides, sometimes excursions to museums or potential employers take place in course of the lessons. (NF1O)

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system? How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome?

According to the operational officer recognition of prior non-formal learning can best be enforced by lobbying activities, which particularly should raise awareness on the side of social partners. Different,

well working instruments have already been developed and are used by many educational and social organizations to make informal competences more visible. The different tools would complement each other and should become more publicly known and used. (NF1O)

"Question: what is your experience with the recognition of prior learning?

Answer: Well, concretely none. But in general, I could just generally say that it is needed to do lobbying work among the social partners in Austria and everywhere. Because, I do see that all these institutions in the social- and education sector, they do already work with these instruments. There is a 'Zukunftszentrum' (centre for the future) in Tyrol (region in Austria), where people get trained. And I know of another project working in this direction." (NF1O 190).

OUTREACH TO MARGINALISED GROUPS

How do you reach your potential adult participants in your classes?

What steps in particular to you take to reach those who are most socio-economically disadvantaged? How do you bridge the information gap to reach them?

Are there models of good practice you use for outreach which could be applied in other countries ?

The institution offers information evenings and also requires attending one of these information events from applicants of the lower secondary school leaving certificate course. The project is presented to a small group and questions can be asked. What regards basic education, a first counselling is offered on one day a week without appointment. This reduces the perceived barrier for many people and the counsellor can make sure personally that the respective information arrives. (NF1O)

As a good practice to reach potential adult participants the already before described word to moth advertisement was mentioned. Former participants recommend the course to others, as they can prove the success. Staff also takes care that students feel well and that there is a good working climate. (NF1O)

Which groups do participate in your programmes that are hard to reach through the formal education system? _How do you reach these groups? I guess you mostly deal with groups who are very hard to reach through the formal education system. You already mentioned a little on how you reach these, having a good reputation (within ethnic communities) and cooperating with other institutions

"Exactly, and word-of-mouth recommendation from other participants".

On this I wonder if you have participants coming from one generation to the next, or participants being relatives or friends of other participants?

"Exactly, relatives, friends are being accompanied to our institution; other participants get them registered here and so on. And I too try to, I am not sure what effect this has, but I directly write to

migrant associations within our borough".

You write to counselling institutions?

"No, to the cultural associations, I also write to parishes. I just try to advertise. I don't know how much this has an effect. But I try to reach those working within these communities".

So you participate in networking with those ethnic communities, cultural and religious associations, like such

"I address them, I would not call it networking as I never ask them what they think of it, that I do not know." (NF1O 133-140)

Are your classes free of charge? If not, how much do they cost ?

Basic education courses and courses for completion of lower secondary school are free of charge, only exam fees have to be paid for. (NF1O)

Where exactly are your classes located?

Lessons take place in one of the 6 class rooms of the institution from Monday to Friday. The institution is located in a big Austrian city. (NF1O)

Is there any cooperation with other organizations to inform adults about your classes, particularly those who might be hardest to reach?

E-mails are regularly sent to organizations or to people who might be able to distribute the information to the people who are illiterates. Also information events are organized where responsible people (e.g. operational officers of the public employment service or teachers) are trained about how to discover illiterates and how to get in touch with them. (NF1O)

TUTOR TEACHING METHODS

Is there any prior training for your tutors ? Is there any ongoing professional development for your tutors ?

All tutors for the lower secondary school leaving exam are professional teachers or bring in a high level of experience in this area. As to the basic education offers, all tutors have received special training in a centre of illiteracy. For other areas of the organization the interviewee cannot give an answer. Professional training for tutors exists. Twice a year a further education program is distributed by the pedagogic unit of the organization and employees can choose from the offer on a voluntary basis. (NF1O)

Is there any explicit commitment that your tutors use adult education learning principles (i.e. constructivist ones) involving:

a) **active learning on behalf of the learner,**

"Yes" (NF1O)

b) **dialogue and opinion sharing during the classes,**

"Yes" (NF1O)

c) **opportunity for shared learning goals,**

"Yes" (NF1O)

d) **Attempts to relate the class content to the learners' life experiences ?**

"Yes, I also made a trainers guide book and every trainer who starts here gets it, no matter if he/she is employed or free lancer. In this guide contents ranging from pedagogic to gender mainstreaming are included; also pedagogic aims and values are defined." (NF1O)

How is feedback provided from participants on a given class ?

There is a standard feedback questionnaire which is given to all participants in the organization after a course. For the lower secondary school examination course a special questionnaire was developed asking about satisfaction with each trainer, satisfaction with learning materials and facilities, relevance , as well as satisfaction with the work of social pedagogues and administration staff. For the basic education course documentation is made by the tutor and also by the participants as soon as she/he is able to write. It is about their learning goals and whether they achieve it or not – thus more qualitative information. (NF1O)

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

What courses/classes would you like to see expand in availability? Why?

The interviewee from operational level would like to expand the before mentioned area of continuative upper secondary schools. Together with other suppliers which offer preparation course for lower secondary school certification (Hauptschulabschluss) in the non formal sector, modules should be developed to prepare people for the most wanted vocations, respectively for higher vocational schools. Secondly the interviewee wants to expand and change the offer of basic education. It should become more flexible and individual by implementing a modular system. (NF1O)

In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing your organization in the next 5 years? In your opinion, what are the biggest hopes/opportunities for your organization in the next 5 years?

According to the interviewed officer, the biggest challenge for adult education centres is making advertising for the area of literacy, respectively to access illiterate people in a better way as *"folder cannot be read by somebody who cannot read"* (NF1O, 246)

Furthermore a challenge is seen in the collaboration with lower secondary schools. They work together on educational standards, so that all students can pass the exam, no matter if they got trained in the formal or the non formal education sector. The implementation of E-Portfolios and the attestation of competences will also be a relevant issue in the future. (NF1O)

The biggest hope of the interviewee relates to politics. A new approach towards people with migration background is desired. The educational system should make sure, that everybody gets basic education and passes lower secondary school level, no matter where the person comes from. (NF1O)

What in your opinion is the distinct role of the non-formal education sector can play in contrast to the formal education sector ? i.e., what would attract adult learners to your organization compared to going to formal educational institutions ?

The interviewee thinks that non formal education institutes deal with the participants in a different way than schools of the formal education sector do. In the non formal education sector individual learning and the progress of each individual person is in the focus. (NF1O)

"I think, we perhaps deal differently (than formal institutions) with our learners, we have people coming to us who have made negative experiences with school, they sweat at a lot when only coming to our information evening. I think we are different due to individualised learning we practise also in groups, also there we can afford to do so due to the small size, we have the learners at the centre of what we are doing and we do not need to get things (contents of learning) through. The meaning of what we do is to help people (learners) on." (NF1O 258)

The non-formal education sector could also play a distinct role in providing further training for people at the workplace. According to the interviewee, lacks of basic skills among staff members could be discovered and overcome easily with the cooperation of companies.

The institution also offers optional classes in the extent of 100 hours, where former participants can get individual help within the job seeking/application process. This is organised as extra offer because there is not enough time available to integrate it into the course for lower secondary school examination. However, the interviewee thinks, that this offer should be integrated into the normal course programme and that it should be compulsive for every participant in order to archive the goal of labour market integration. (NF1O)

DEVELOPING STRATEGY FOR THE NON-FORMAL SECTOR

Is there a national strategy in your country to develop the non-formal education sector? Is there a regional strategy in your country to develop the non-formal education sector ?

[Not asked]

We have could not ask this question within this interview due to time problems. We have asked this question, however, when interviewing the other person from this institution (NF1M). We deliberately decided so, as NF1M is in a high management position and responsible for strategic topics and policy expertise.

Here is the answer from the interview with NF1M (Institution_NF1_Interview1_comm.doc, page 13):

> *"The interviewee recognizes some national strategies, for example the process of developing a national framework of qualifications. Furthermore there are some attempts to improve funding for second chance education; common standards, strategies and new ways of funding are developed between federal government and federal state government. Moreover, great processes in the area of career counselling have been started; the concerned institute addressed some demands to the federal government, which are related to a lack of availability".* (NF1M)

See also our interview with government authorities' representatives on this issue.

If not, what do you think need to be the main features of such a strategy?

[Not asked]

What advice would you give to someone trying to establish informal education in a particular area for the first time ? What in your opinion are the strengths and weaknesses of the non-formal education sector generally? How could links between non-formal education and the workplace be better established?

[Not asked]

How could childcare support be developed for those attending classes ?

At the moment no childcare facilities are available in the institution at all. As far as the interviewee knows, there is only one particular course for which the institution is functioning as a partner institution, which is addressing migrant mothers (*Mama lernt Deutsch*) and where childcare is included in the concept. This course takes part at schools and is organised by different volkshochschulen and associations and is supported by the city administration. The interviewee considers the idea of implementing childcare support as very good and important, however many conditions have to be fulfilled to do so. The practical implementation would not only require more

money and resources, but also a strategy how to manage childcare in a flexible way, as the demand of childcare is always changing. (NF1O)

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on non-formal education in your country?

The interviewee does not see any effects in the area of literacy and second chance education. However a decline of participants within the standard courses can be seen, particular when education was funded by companies. (NF1O)

Details on two models of practice

The interview presented in this text mostly deals with the two programmes we both consider as models of (good) practice, so please take everything above into account as well.

Objectives of the practice

Basic education:

apart from other smaller offers (like the above mentioned Mini-courses), where reading, writing, mathematical skills and it skills are offered, the volkshochschule provides a basic education programme (which was described within the interview) for both people with German mother-tongue and for Migrants who have learnt no method of reading and writing.

Hauptschulabschluss Vorbereitungslehrgang:

Preparation courses for lower secondary final exam (Hauptschulabschlusskurs): starting with cost-free information evenings this course takes place at the site of the volkshochschule. The final examination is taken externally at a public lower secondary school which is the official cooperation partner for this programme. The preparation course provides participants with basic knowledge, mainly in mathematics, German and English. The aim is to then participate in the course leading to final examination.

Target groups

See above 1. Organizational backgrounds and 6. Outreach to marginalised groups

Funding sources (including non-standard funding sources)

See above point 3. Staff conditions.

The area represented by the operational officer is mainly funded by two third party funds: ESF (European Social Funds) and sponsoring of the ministry of education.

Information about the annual budget could not be provided by our interview partner.

History/background of the model (when established, its developmental progress)

We were not able to discuss the development / history of the concrete models with our interview partner in length, but see 1. Organizational backgrounds. Generally, it can be stated that in Austria

funding through the ESF (European Social Funds) have played a great role in developing and extending educational offers like those described here. [32]

Location

The courses take place in a site of the volkshochschule within a big Austrian city. The unit specialised on the described programmes is located within a special building very close to the main building of the volkshochschule.

Perceived strengths and weaknesses

Not discussed within the interview. Perhaps childcare issues could be developed further. Also linking with formal education seems to be a topic, partly as strength but also as something where still much needs to be done and which is not easily done due to structural problems. For the basic education it seems very hard to reach illiterate German speakers ('native Austrians'), while outreach within migrant communities has become more and more successful.

Priority needs for expansion of the model/service (this would include perceptions of implications of the current recession for this model)

See 8. Future developments

Methods of feedback, evaluation

See 7. Tutor teaching methods

Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model

See 8. Future developments and 9. Developing strategies for the non-formal sector.

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[32] LLL is one of 6 focal points within the current ESF programme in Austria, see http://www.esf.at/?page_id=237&lang=en

Non Formal Education Institution 2 (NF2) (both interviews)

Index

Background Profile

Background data to profile target groups for access strategies:

The main target groups for the access strategy are women, who are still disadvantaged in income and career opportunities due to the existing, gender-related horizontal and vertical division of professional fields.

Women rarely choose career paths in the field of technology, engineering or crafts which are traditionally assigned to men. By providing women with orientation and education in the above mentioned fields, their chances of good paid and secure jobs can be increased clearly.

Funding sources for Non Formal Education

The public employment service can be considered as the main funding source for non formal education in Austria. According to the annual report of the concerned non formal education institute, nearly 90 percent of all the orders can be assigned to this contracting authority, which has shared responsibility for different regional areas. Further funding sources came from governmental authorities like the educational ministry or small local entities. Only 5 percent of the entire budget was gained from private service offers for small and medium range companies, affiliates groups, public suppliers or private persons.

Features of the institution's

Mission statement

The aim of the organization is "*equality for women and men on the labour market.*"

They understand themselves as "*platform between women within different demands regarding labour market on the one side and companies facing recent policies with regards to labour market, economics and social affairs and equality on the other side.*"

In 2008, roundly 3.000 participants received qualification and counselling within 35 different projects, - ranging from long term educational offers to counselling offers to social economic companies.

Strategic plan (if any) which are relevant to:
- social inclusion
- access to the institution for traditionally underrepresented groups
- outreach strategies

Background information on availability or otherwise of free or reduced childcare generally for socio-economically disadvantaged groups

Childcare is a topic, if a target group consists of women with very young children this is also provided within the programme. In other cases, if possible it is aimed to cooperate with other providers of childcare or to enable women to make their partners take their share of responsibilities concerning childcare. (NF2M 96)

Background information on availability or otherwise of free or reduced fees for formal education generally for socio-economically disadvantaged groups

The majority of offered programmes by this institution are free of charge for participants as many are directed there through the public employment service.

Categories of Research

BACKGROUND ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Please describe the different groups currently present in your student population.

The variety of courses and services offered by the organization mainly addresses unemployed women; predominantly single mothers, migrants, maternity returners etc. Also employees, who feel in danger of losing their jobs, are included in the programmes. When it comes to qualification and consultation with regard to family work, also men are included. According to the manager of the organization she registers an increasing proportion of men who want to go on child leave in order to be an active father or who want to push through more time for family against the company. On structural level, the organization has also been engaged strongly in counselling human resource managers in small and medium enterprises with regards to qualification of employees and equality between genders. (NF2M)

Regarding the educational backgrounds of the participants, a quite diverse student population can be noted, as the whole spectrum of educational offers range from low threshold measures up to courses for company managers.

The interviewed person from operational level was engaged in a particular project, which was about promotion of women in technical professions. Therefore the groups involved are women and according to the interviewee they are adults in every age and coming from very different educational backgrounds ranging from non completed compulsory school to academic graduates. (NF2O)

Please briefly describe the history of your organization. When was it established, by whom?

This non-profit organization (NPO) was established in 1992 in the framework of a pilot project about qualifying female job-returners, so that they can get a well paid job in the labour market. It was about linking educational and labour market policy. The strategy was to combine professional training with empowerment and the promotion of social skills. The model has been very successful because of the strong link between practical and theoretical learning. However, after the budget was reduced, the organization changed into a classical social economic company. (NF2M)

"Here (in social economic companies) there are also elements of education, but what we used to do earlier - and this was at the end also adopted by the European Union as Austrian model after the entry in 1995 – this was much more learning by doing combined with theory, we had an incredible high educational budget at that time." (NF2M, 101f)

The organization expanded its offers continuously and in course of cooperation with EQUAL development projects 2002 and 2005, a lot of innovation took place. In 2006 the concerned NPO covered ten branches in urban and two rural areas, working on 23 projects and with 3.000 women yearly.

Owing to recent changes in the public allocation policy, which according to the interviewee prefers a *"competition of price to a competition of quality",* the organization suffered a loss of budget and didn't get funding for sophisticated labour market measures anymore. Also funding through the EQUAL partnership has run out in *2007. (NF2M, 182f)*

According to the annual recent annual report, in the year 2008 2.749 participants have been provided with qualification, coaching and counselling in the framework of 35 projects ranging from long term qualification, counselling offers to socioeconomic companies. (Annual Report 2008, p.34)

The history of the organizations sub-project "women in technics", which was described by the interviewee from operational level started 6 years ago. The initiative comprises different areas within the educational landscape in Austria, among others there have been initiatives in schools but also in universities. The main idea of the project was to widen perspectives for women and to provide them with an education in the field of technology/ engineering and crafts. The concerned organization initiated a pilot project with focus on unemployed women, where they got provided with information, orientation and training with respect to new professions. The pilot project started in the city and revealed to be very successful. Therefore it was expanded on regional level later. *(NF2O)*

The particular subsidiary, where the interviewee from operational level is working exists since the beginning of 2009 and is addressing women from rural areas. *(NF2O)*

What are your organizations' a) funding sources? And b) approximate annual budget

The concerned NPO is financed only through projects; there is no particular sponsor who provides basic funding or structural promotion. This is perceived as a big challenge by the organization.

"This is sometimes a difficult situation, because we really didn't get any Euro of subvention or promotion in the period of these 17 / years, always only project work, we also finance our structure with it." (*NF2M, 135f*)

The annual budget (respectively turnover) of the last year (2008) was 4 million Euro, for the actual year it is strived for 3.5 million. (NF2M)

According to the annual report of 2008, most of the projects and services (nearly 90%) of the institution are funded by the public employment service, which shares responsibility for different regional areas. Further funding sources come from governmental authorities like the educational ministry or small local entities. Only 5 percent of the entire budget was gained from private service offers for small and medium range companies, affiliates groups, public suppliers or private persons. What regards the concrete project "women in technics", where the interviewee from operational level is engaged, the total funding is gained from the local branch of the public employment service. (NF2O)

What are your organization's stated objectives,

According to the manager of the NPO, the main element of their work and activities is to secure *"financial and social livelihood for women".* However, the aim lying behind is *"to enhance equality of men and women on the labour market". (NF2M, 123f)*

The organization also supports the development of policies and tries to make a link between private companies and societal demands by providing education and counselling. Social inclusion therefore is also issued in economic terms:

"All our educational and counselling activities aim at supporting structures or people in enhancing equality and diversity, which at the end is also covering things like employment, social coherence and economy" (NF2M, 90f)

The interviewee from operational level underlines the same objectives and emphasizes the big variety of sub-projects within the institution.

"… Supporting women so that they can plan their future in a satisfying way. Maybe this will mean a completely different profession or the same they are having now. The (name of the concrete project, where the interviewee is engaged in) is only a small part of it, as the whole institution is very comprehensive, considering all the counselling centres or very particular promotion of migrants…" (NF2O, 60)

Have the numbers of your courses increased or declined in the past 5 years ? Have the numbers of participants attending your organization's classes increased or declined in the past 5 years?

According to the interviewee from management level, the proportion of participants in educational measures declined within the last 1,5 years, due to the changes in public allocation policy mentioned earlier. As small NPO, the organization finds it hard to compete in price with the big educational supplier. This resulted in a shifting from the classical sector of qualification and further education to the sector of educational counselling. This development is not really welcomed by the manger though:

"Occupational counselling is surly important, it's about clearing and finding the right offer for the right woman, but actually for me/us professional qualification together with transmission of soft skills and learning arrangements is a very important factor, and this has decreased within our organization, because we couldn't win the big course measures" (NF2M, 198f)

What regards the specific project "women in technics", which is carried out on local level by the interviewee from operational, an increase of offers can be noted.

"In 2008 the collaboration between the national employment service and (name of the concerned centre) was only consisting in offering a widening of perspective seminar for the clients and a basic qualification. Now we have counselling, clearing and a second round of perspective widening as well as a second round of basis qualification – and this already before the end of the first term of the year. In course of the year 2009 we basically will offer 6 or 7 basic qualifications (?) and 5 widening of perspective seminars." (NF2O, 74f)

See also about the effect of the federal act on public tenders below point 3 on staff conditions.

In your opinion, with regard to promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups, is your organization a) typical of most non-formal educational organizations, b) more developed or c) less developed? Please explain your answer.

In the opinion of the interviewed manager, the concerned organization is definitely not typical of most non-formal educational suppliers with regard to promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups. The issue of access is a very central topic, which is strongly linked to the target group of the organization. Concretely a lot is done for women and their access to well paid, mostly men-dominated professions, e.g. they go on promotion tours with an "education bus", where employees of the organization place themselves in front of kinder gardens in rural areas to approach women.

"We are very strong what concerns the issue of access, we are well versed in picking up the people and how to let them consider education as something valuable and necessary." (NF2M, 56)

The concerned organization also supports access strategies by providing counselling for personal recruiting units in companies. By applying particularly developed tools, they help companies to recognize actual, but not certified competences of women.

Furthermore they hold the view, that looking at the resources of the people is more important than looking at potential deficits, respectively that it is less important to care about the content of educational measures, but more important to get the right people in it.

One of the slogans of the organization argues that *"not women are distanced towards technology/engineering, but technology/engineering is distanced towards women".* (NF2M, 253f)

Also the interviewed person from operational level considered the organization as comparatively more developed with regard to promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups. Improving the possibilities of access for certain targets groups was the basic aim of establishing this institution.

"It is about promoting women in different areas, here a lot of effort is made and not only in the direction of females. The (name of the concerned institution) doesn't only deal with the topic of gender but also with diversity, and this is going beyond gender." (NF2O, 78)

COURSE CONTENT

What courses/classes do you think are particularly helpful in giving adults with low levels of prior education a) confidence to continue in education, b) confidence to contribute to their community/local area? Would it be possible to get further details on their content?

The manager of the institution gave two examples of measures that are particularly helpful in supporting adults with low levels of prior education.

The first measure was a project, where the organization tried to approach the target group directly from where they are located. They went with laptop/PC to communities in urban and rural areas and placed themselves there in front of libraries or fire brigade houses in order to provide basic computer trainings for the local target groups. By choosing this regional approach, the organization also tried to connect people with policy makers. As education is also seen as a very political issue, an indirect aim of the project was to also promote the opportunity for community development. (NF2M, 64)

Secondly there is a strong focus on learning experiences within the courses provided by the organization. It is tried to pick up the people at their own sphere of experiences and to include this background in further work and in learning arrangements. According to the interviewee this strategy should be applied in all labour market related educational offers.

"With learning arrangements I don't only mean learning how to learn, but also how to organize a framework in the system of learning. I always – as manager, as pedagogue, as trainer or mentor - have to provide the people with a framework in the system where I am, so that they are able to adopt education." (NF2M, *68)*

According to the interviewee from operational level, heterogeneity within learning groups can contribute in a positive way to the development of more confidence for adults with low levels of prior education.

„Some have completed 3 or 4 years of lower secondary school and did not obtain the best marks. Basically I made the experience that it is good for those women to sit in a group together with one who has general qualification for university entrance and to be accepted and respected in the same way like by women coming from the same educational background." (NF2O, *86)*

But also respectful handling, empowerment and motivation of the women are considered as crucial. Women, particularly those who have been excluded from the educational system for a longer time or used to be housewives, need to get independent and self confident in order to be successful in future:

"A basic condition – particularly for women whose educational level is not so high – is that they are motivated. That it is a group, defined after 'Rosenberg', that is able to communicate together without violence. This includes acting respectfully, appreciation, authenticity. The rest are contents, where it is necessary to look in details what fits for the moment. In this case it is very important, that we accompany and support the women." (NF2O, *88)*

Please describe the content of your classes available currently and in the past year Can you provide a proportion/percentage breakdown by type/category e.g. literacy, personal, vocational, mixed etc.?

What regards courses, they currently offer trainings in IT/EDV, office management, finance/book keeping, gender competence, planning maternity leave and carrier, and in professional and labour market orientation. Furthermore technical training for women who seek employment in non-traditional job-areas and a variety of single day classes are offered.

Trainings and further education measures for the labour market are always adapted to the demands and developments of the economy.

According to the interviewed manger, at the moment a lot of educational counselling and labour market counselling is offered by the institute, mainly also with focus on non-traditional areas of professions for women like engineering and trade. (NF2M*)*

This trend goes align with the implementation of the particular project 'women in technics', which is described in detail by the interviewee from operational level and which is presented at length in the section of best practice.

It was noted by the interviewee from operational level, that in course of this project multiple qualification activities by trainers started to take place within the same institute comprising professional and personal training:

"When I started, a lot was outsourced, now professional training like workshops with specialists, languages and subjects like mathematics and technical drawing, physics, all these are included in order to provide the women already here with the possibility to prepare themselves (for entrance exams or a further education…). Partly, women are not familiar anymore with learning, so we also enhanced learning to learn." (NF2O, 90)

The interviewee at operational level told us about perceived difficulties with the term "training" or "course", as some offers go far beyond this. Putting in relation the amount of personal counselling and professional training, the latter one is offered to a higher extent. However, according to the interviewed tutor it also depends on the demand of the particular woman and it should be noted, that an extensive counselling actually takes place before entering in the particular qualification measure of this project. Usually, next to the training, everybody has one hour extra per week reserved for counselling. Besides women are taught and supported in organizing their own learning process during a training called "widening of perspectives", which can also be considered as a kind of counselling or personal development process. (NF2O)

How does your organization contribute to personal development?
Through classes a) involving the arts: drama, creative writing, music, visual arts b) conflict resolution skills, self-awareness programmes, parenting skills, coping with bereavement, life skills, coping with addiction c) leadership skills, psychology, sociology, philosophy classes d) other, please specify

There are no arts or theatre classes offered in the institution, however there are classes involving communication and conflict resolution skills and there are special support workshops for women returning to a job. Furthermore some kind of parenting training for men and self-awareness programmes are included in the programme of the organization. Besides, professional counselling is offered in different branches, where problems like addiction could be dealt with by forwarding clients to specialists.

The interviewee from operational level noted, that it doesn't make much sense to differentiate between professional training and personal development in adult education. Therefore normal trainers recently got instructed to make basic qualification as well. They are now covering all the important contents including key skills:

"Everything what regards personal development, orientation, support for researching, whatever emerged, respectively the contents of learning how to learn or key qualifications and application training, all what was important". (NF2O, 112)

"They (participants) are provided professional contents in the area of communication, conflict management and key skills. A very important aspect is that the women work in their own personal responsibility and that it is always pointed out 'what is important for me'?" (NF2O, 88)

How does your organization contribute to community development, i.e. ownership of and representation by members of the local community, fostering community leaders?

According to the interviewee from operational level, a link to the home-community of the course participants is not always given and depends on the particular region. Some municipalities contribute to the education of the participants in terms of refunding travel costs or by providing childcare facilities, this is sometimes also initiated by the organization:

"In a concrete case this was solved in that way, that the major of a small municipality got active and started looking for more women, who might need childcare facilities, as a certain number of women with children was required." (NF2O, 125)

Developing learning goals together with the learners

As already mentioned earlier, the organization puts a strong emphasizes on the learning experiences of the participants. It is tried to pick up the people at their own sphere of experiences and to include this background in further work and in learning arrangements. Furthermore they try to provide structures for participation, where participants get the opportunity to decide by themselves about the way of learning. Trainers here act more as coaches, who supervise and encourage people in their learning progress. Good experiences have been made with this approach by the organization:

"I would like to work much more with these participation models. We also used to do it in the course of EQUAL, this was great." (NF2M, 396*)*

What courses are most popular?

The interviewee from management level found it hard to tell about the most popular courses, which are offered, as they are only partly underlying the rules of market demand. However, considering the educational offers which are paid by the participating women themselves and not by the public employment service, orientation measures would probably be most required:

„I would even guess that, if in adult education a broader range than the focus on job existed, the demand of the people would be much different. Of course they would all like to have a job to make their living, but it probably would give much more demand for orientation and information, or the earlier mentioned tools of basic trials, not only counselling but also looking deeper into new professions, in new possibilities, in different professional sectors. I think there would be demand." (NF2M, 102*)*

This kind of orientation would enable the participants to decide, which job is the right for them and afterwards they could go for a proper qualification accordingly in order to place well on the labour market.

In the framework of a quality circle, the organization regularly examines new educational demands together witch the colleagues. After that it is tried to communicate this demands to policy makers. (NF2M)

The interviewee from operational level considered the professional qualification courses as most popular and highlights their good quality, particularly what regards IT. However, also support of the women in terms of personal development and job orientation is recognized as very important. Thus, the whole project 'women in technics' how it is carried out in the branch of the interviewed person is considered as very significant and successful, which is also proved by the high demand. There are more requests than free places at the specific measure:

"Surprisingly yes, a few women are now waiting. There are not so many offers at the moment. (…) I say surprisingly because (name of the region) is not necessarily a metropolis like the (name of the city), but more rural and the approach to technical professions there might be different to a big city, were people get more confronted. Just considering the external conditions, the interest is very high" (NF2O, 139)

STAFF CONDITIONS

Are tutors on a) short term contracts, b) long term contracts, c) no contracts ? Please explain reasons for this situation

The manager told us that before the federal act on public tenders (Bundesvergabegesetz) was in place, all tutors and staff members have been fully employed by the organization, a particular model was created, which even included employees with working times of only 5 hours per week. With this federal act, however, the market changed and therefore most of the employees are now engaged with only freelance contracts. Thus, also the continuity and quality of human resource development decreased.

"Now we are 63-65 employees, but there from already 40 are freelancers. That means, there has been a big change, and this is something, which I do not consider good as responsible person. However, if I don't do that, I would not have any orders anymore, thus also no freelancers anymore neither, that's reality." (NF2M, 83)

Next to the stronger price competition, that the new federal act on public tenders entailed, the interviewee criticizes, that the public employment service, which is in charge of the allocation, sets insufficient quality standards what regards the formal qualifications of tutors. An example was cited,

where a tutor, who teaches at the technical university, was considered as not adequate for the training measure.

"The public employment service desperately tries to bring in quality criteria, because there are suppliers of courses who take anyone cheap (…) but at the same time we have the dilemma, that we can not engage qualified employees." (NF2M, 86)

According to the manager, the same applies for older employees who are good but too expensive. This results in a paradox since elderly employees are at the same time a defined target group of the organization, which is tried to be addressed by course measures.

The staff conditions and financial conditions within the sub project, as described by the interviewee from operational level, seem to be different to those of the mother organization. According to the interviewee all employees (course leaders and consultants) have long term contracts and standard employment. Only trainers from particular professional modules are freelancers, whereas fluctuation is rather low. (NF2O)

According to the interviewee from operational level, all trainers are females, as this is also corresponding with the main target groups of the measures.

How would you describe the rates of pay for tutors in your organization, especially compared with the formal educational sector?

A new collective agreement was introduced for employees in social and health professions, which according to the interviewee led to wage dumping in the area of labour market suppliers:

"Compared to those tutors, who teach in schools, I can never provide the same security, not even for fully employed people. My problem rather is, that I desperately try to keep the best of them, because what do I do as organization, when I don't have any good employees? When I don't have any orders and I have to let them go, that is a catastrophe for us". (NF2M, 85)

The staff conditions within the sub project where the interviewee from operational level is engaged also seem to be better in terms of salary when compared to the mother organization. The concerned interviewee estimated the payment of tutors as relatively high:

"High. This has always been the statement of (name of the organization). The (name of the organization) have been refusing for a long time to go down with the remuneration for freelancers in the same way than others. They have been far above 20 Euros per hour for freelancers while others have already been far beneath. Also what regards the employment contract, the salary is much higher than the one based on collective agreements." (NF2O, 153)

Is funding for your organization from year to year, or longer term ? Please describe

The Mother-Organization is funded only via projects, whereas the contracts are rather shorter term. The manager is trying to look for sponsors, who can provide some basic funding. (NF2M)

In case of the concerned sub-project of the organization, funding is guaranteed rather long term for a period of 3 years with a high likelihood of extension. However, the interviewee noted, that this is rather seldom the case within projects of the public employment service and that they have been lucky to win the tender. (NF2O)

TARGET GROUPS

Are there noticeable gender differences in those attending classes generally, or particular classes ?

Classes mainly address women (also see first section). Only within a particular sub project, which is addressing job returners after paternity leave, also men are included.

"When men, e.g. educate their child alone and take paternity leave and maybe have problems later to get a job as a single father." (NF2O, 173)

How in your opinion could your organization take more steps to reach and engage with the underrepresented gender ? What steps do you currently take ?

There is no need in the organization to reach and engage underrepresented gender, as women are already the main target group. However disadvantaged groups in terms of social background are tried to be approached in different ways. Information events are organized, flyers and brochures are distributed and also word of mouth advertising works well. In this respect also networking with other institutions like information centres, branches of the public employment service and municipalities who can distribute the information, is considered as important by the interviewed person. The internet, however, is not necessarily the best way to transport information, as many of the addressed women still have problem in accessing and using this medium properly. (NF2O)

What groups attend your classes which the formal education sector might find more difficult to reach ? How does organization achieve this?

The groups are mainly sent from public employment service, which generally provides equal access for everybody in need of further education measures.

What is the typical size of your classes? Maximum/Minimum

According to the interviewee from operational level, a typical class comprises 12 or 13 participants. Within the professional trainings, group might be smaller, depending on the time of the year. 8 would be the minimum number and 15 the maximum. (NF2O)

CONNECTIONS TO THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Are there paths for progression through more elementary, to more advanced classes? And for progression into formal education?

The interviewed manager noticed a lack of progression paths in the national education system, particularly what regards the theoretical and applied sphere of knowledge. The interviewee would require more networking and concrete collaboration between universities and social organizations, respectively educational or equality institutes in charge of carrying out education policies. It was criticized that there are not enough incentives for bringing this further:

"Universities of applied sciences and universities are way too little linked with each other, but in the meantime both sides have not enough resources in order to build something up regarding this topic. It would need political willingness, but also structural offers – like for example Equal[33] used to be"
(NF2M, 415)

Furthermore it was suggested, that incentives could be given, by providing extra points in the tender process for educational institutes in the non formal sector, which collaborate with formal ones.

Within the described sub project 'women in technics', a clear path of progression is given, as this is part of the programme (see section best practice). For every part of the internal programme (widening of perspectives and basic qualification course) a certificate is handed out to the participants including the description of the contents. Further trainings in the chosen professional field are certified as well. (NF2O)

„We live in a country, where it is important to give prove by certificates and certifications, then people also believe it" (NF2O, 218)

What more, in your opinion, could formal educational institutions do to recognize prior learning, including non-formal learning?

In the opinion of the interviewee from operational level procedures for the recognition of prior non formal learning – particular with respect to work related learning -should be extended in all educational levels. At the moment this is only elaborated for apprenticeships.

„What regards apprenticeships, people who work in a profession for so and so long, can catch up with it. This means, they go to the chamber and require it. (…) they have the opportunity to find out, which

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[33] EQUAL was an EU-Initiative that co-financed activities in the field of employment with focus on social inclusion in all EU-member states, it run from 2001 until 2008.
"EQUAL is part of the European Union's strategy for more and better jobs and for ensuring that no-one is denied access to them. Funded by the European Social Fund, this initiative is testing since 2001 new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality experienced by those in work and those looking for a job. "
(http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/index_en.cfm)

exams in theoretical knowledge they still need. This is something that only exists in this particular case, as far as I know" (NF2O, 218)

What more, in your opinion, could the non-formal education sector do to promote greater links with the formal education sector?

In order to promote greater links with the formal education sector, the interviewee from operational level suggested making lectures and information events in schools. By enforcing this strategy it can be demonstrated, that there is not only the classical way of schools but that here are also alternative paths. (NF2O)

What practical steps does your organization take to build bridges for your learners to the formal education system? Do you facilitate outreach events from formal educational institutions? Do you organize visits for your learners to formal educational institutions?

The institution has a good network to other education supplier, where women are sent after the offered basic qualification. It is also obligatory for every participant in the programme 'women in technics' to visit educational fairs or information events in order to afterwards choose a profession or education. (NF2O)

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system ?

The main obstacle concerning recognition of prior learning is seen in the lack of permeability with regards to the education system and in inefficient bureaucratically structures to bring things forward. According to the interviewee, there should be more flexibility e.g. by assembling modules; this should be enforced within educational institutes but foremost also politically.

"A fast change or a modular design, so that I still have the opportunity to change after I have deciding in Austria in the age of 14, and when I suddenly notice, it was not the right thing for me, or when I recognize informal gained competences. This assembling and changing must be facilitated." (NF2M, 275f)

The interviewee quoted an example of the existing problem in the area of caring professionals, where it is particularly difficult to build up to their gained qualifications and start a new (educational) career:

"I am a professional nurse with certification, certificate and experience, and when I than want to change, I suddenly don't have a formal certification for anything anymore." (NF2M, 283f)

It is considered as necessary by the interviewed manger to make bridges for those people, so that they can build up on linked professions and to provide them with future perspectives, as doing this kind of job is very demanding on a long term. (NF2M)

The interviewee from operational level pointed out the problem of recognition with regards to tertiary education institutes. Particularly for adults without general qualification for university entrance, who want to do a degree on a later stage in their lives, the present structures represent an obstacle, not only in economic terms but also in terms of time.

"It would be very different for people who want to go for it by second chance education. A 36years old women with a 6 year old son, to first make the Studienberechtigungsprüfung34 and than go to university of applied sciences, this lasts altogether at least 4.5 years. Its not possible to go under. The Studienberechtigungsprüfung takes 1.5 years, the first degree at university of advanced studies takes 3 years, so the barrier is high. These are very big timeframes." (NF2O)

The same interviewee noted that the situation would be much easier if only certain subject-related contents and a preparation period of half a year would be required for university entrance, than it would be possible to get a degree in 3.5 years. Many people have acquired a lot of knowledge informally, which is not recognized by tertiary education systems. In a few universities of applied sciences there are already attempts to facility entrance for those people; however the current offers are not covering a large area yet.

Generally, universities of applied sciences are found to be better adapted in recognizing prior learning than universities. At a different part of the interview, the interviewee from operational level noted, that participants of the programme „women in technics" would favor going to universities of advanced studies over universities. This also gives evidence of the better prospective, that they find there, to complete their studies. Universities of applied sciences are better adjusted to adult education and extra-occupational students. (NF2O)

"Their statistics show, that there are on the one side little drop outs and secondly that relatively many people who completed a bachelor there, immediately find a job." (NF2O 38)

How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome?

According to the interviewee, there are already some ambitions to improve the interface problem of the educational system, starting from kindergarten to university graduation. However, the bureaucratically obstacles are considered as very big:

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34 examination providing general access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools

"One thing I know for sure, this madness with the thousands of responsibilities from federal and national authorities for schools, this federalism, if this is not (…) a cleaning of the system could only be positive for the new challenges and developments" (NF2M, 294)

A further strategy to overcome obstacles is seen in a change of learning experiences:

"If the coming generation cannot experience learning in a different way from what it is happening now, we will have the biggest troubles in 2020. Because this demand on flexibility, that all of us, and the next generation even more, has to deal with, this every day learning, when the current experiences with schools continue I am sure the system will collapse" (NF2M, 304f)

OUTREACH TO MARGINALISED GROUPS

How do you reach your potential adult participants in your classes?

What steps in particular to you take to reach those who are most socio-economically disadvantaged?

How do you bridge the information gap to reach them?

Are there models of good practice you use for outreach which could be applied in other countries ?

The interviewee told us about a project, where the organization tried to approach the target group directly from where they are located. They went with laptop/PC to communities in urban and rural areas and places themselves there in front of libraries or fire brigade houses in order to provide basic computer trainings for the local target groups. (NF2M, 320f)

The interviewee from operational level confirmed, that the organization has been doing a lot on regional level, like distributing flyers in small municipalities or approaching people, who would find it hard to get in contact otherwise. Mobile educational measures have been offered particularly to the target groups women and migrants in rural areas. (NF2O)

Are your classes free of charge? If not, how much do they cost?

The majority of the offered classes are free of charge for learners, as they are sponsored by the public authorities or companies.

For participating on the particular programme "women in technics" for example, the women only have to be registered at the public employment service as a job seeker. They receive a grant of on average 35 Euros per day during the time of the educational measure, even if they are not eligible for general unemployment benefit. (NF2O)

Where exactly are your classes located ?

There are different branches of the mother organization in urban and rural areas, but most important areas are Vienna and eastern regions of Austria. The specific subproject is directed

towards women of a specific rural area not too far away from Vienna. These women come to Vienna in order to participate in the programme, almost all of them come by car, by public transport they travel for about an hour. (NF2O).

Is there any cooperation with other organizations to inform adults about your classes, particularly those who might be hardest to reach ?

[Not asked]

In a prior question (see section target group) the interviewee indicates, that there is networking with other institutions like information centres, branches of the public employment service and municipalities in order to distribute the information. (NF2O)

TUTOR TEACHING METHODS

According to the interviewee from operational level, tutor teaching exists and is in the responsibility of the project leader. Trainings are offered depending on the particular requirements that emerge. (NF20)

Is there any prior training for your tutors ? Is there any ongoing professional development for your tutors ?

The interviewee from operational level stated, that all tutors have made a corresponding prior training. They come from different academic and non academic backgrounds in the fields of psychology, pedagogic and training/coaching. (NF2O)

Is there any explicit commitment that your tutors use adult education learning principles (i.e. constructivist ones) involving:

- **Active learning on behalf of the learner,**

According to the interviewee from operational level, using adult education learning principles is absolutely common and also necessary in the organization. It is state of the art and it is also more fun to make active learning on behalf of the learner.

"This (the application of adult education learning principles) is absolutely necessary. Without that it is not feasible, no women would keep sitting there." (NF2O, 269)

- **Dialogue and opinion sharing during the classes,**
- **Opportunity for shared learning goals,**
- **Attempts to relate the class content to the learners' life experiences ?**

a-c not asked at this point but answers can be found in sections above

There is a strong focus on learning experiences within the courses provided by the organization. It is tried to pick up the people at their own sphere of experiences and to include this background in further work and in learning arrangements. (See section 2 course contents - learning arrangements)

How is feedback provided from participants on a given class ?

Feedback is an integrated part within the organization and the learning process, like the interviewee from operational level explains:

"Yes, after completion of every course there is always an official feedback in order to see what comes back. This is the only way to react on it. Nobody is perfect and I need feedback to see, if everything is good, like it is done. If it is not o.k. it needs to be considered, what should be changed". (NF20, 275)

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

What courses/classes would you like to see expand in availability ? Why ?

The interviewed manager would like to increase offers that follow an "integrational path". In this approach, people first get information, orientation and clearing about job opportunities and in a next step can try out those professions with the help of workshops or doing internships. If they like, what they have chosen, basic qualification is offered to them for the regarding field and in a last phase, a more specialized training can be completed, that provides them with a formal certificate. (NF2M, 377)

In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing your organization in the next 5 years ? In your opinion, what are the biggest hopes/opportunities for your organization in the next 5 years ?

Not asked – see section about funding and effects of recession

In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing the non-formal education sector in your country in the next 5 years? In your opinion, what are the biggest hopes/opportunities for the non-formal education sector in the next 5 years ?

Not asked – see section 5 connections to the formal education system.

The interview partner from management level underlined the importance of cooperation at the intersection between formal (higher) education institutions like universities or universities of applied sciences and institutions like the one presented within this text. The interviewee mentioned a lack of resources hindering all concerned institutions to continue working on these transmission topics. She also stressed that politically and structurally she sees lack of support concerning this cooperation (NF2M).

What in your opinion is the distinct role the non-formal education sector can play in contrast to the formal education sector ? i.e., what would attract adult learners to your organization compared to going to formal educational institutions ?

DEVELOPING STRATEGY FOR THE NON-FORMAL SECTOR

Is there a national strategy in your country to develop the non-formal education sector ? Is there a regional strategy in your country to develop the non-formal education sector ?

No strategy was mentioned. We asked the question, but the interview partners' answer is centred on the institution she represents and does not state on a general strategy. On this topic, see also our interviews with government authorities' representatives, especially the interview gov_Austria_1.doc, page 8-9 (basically stating that the national strategy on non-formal education in Austria is very weak and mostly influenced through European Union-initiatives and –ideas that are only just beginning to show effects on Austrian policies).

If not, what do you think need to be the main features of such a strategy?

One strategy in order to develop the non-formal education sector was found to be active self promotion of the single institutes. The interviewee mentioned that is particularly hard for small educational suppliers, that their offers get acknowledged by the public or in economy. Therefore new ways have to be opened, which requires a high competence in finding solution and the engagement to go first steps alone. (NF2M)

"When a university, a university of applied sciences or a (name of a big national educational supplier in the non formal sector) is doing it, it suddenly has another value, even if it is not necessarily better. And this is something, where I sometimes start to think, however what regards things like that, we just try to find new solutions" (NF2M, 525f)

The interviewed manager cited two examples, where own initiative revealed to be very successful. In one case it was about the collaboration with a big national educational supplier in the non formal sector. As the certificates provided after the book keeping course of the concerned institution were not acknowledged by the companies, the manager made a agreement with the big supplier, so that exams could be made and issued with them. A further attempt that was mentioned was the promotion of a tool called "balance sheet of competences", which has always been important for the work of the concerned organization. They keep trying to convince the authorities step by step to include such tools in their labour marked policies.

What advice would you give to someone trying to establish informal education in a particular area for the first time ? What in your opinion are the strengths and weaknesses of the non-formal

education sector generally? How could links between non-formal education and the workplace be better established?

Not asked – see section recognition of prior learning

How could childcare support be developed for those attending classes?

Childcare is considered for every course concept, it needs to be assessed from case to case and accordingly to the target group, whether it is a necessary tool for success or not. (NF2M)

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on non-formal education in your country?

Given that the big decision makers in the country acknowledge that there is need for a big change, the interviewed manager thinks, that the recession might even have a positive effect on the non formal education sector. When social corporate responsibility increases among the economic companies, when they need to be attractive for employees again, and when politicians foster topics like work life balance and job security, NPOs like the concerned institutions might become more important.

"We (the society) pay for work that doesn't exist and there is a lot of unpaid work, which nobody pays for. Here actually new job options are included. And if this is more and more recognized, the sector of education will be very big. And I am including also child care, for me this is also educational work. The same applies for the social sector, when there is more development and demand for quality, we definitely can succeed with our knowledge." (NF2M, 650

Details on a model of practice "Women in technics"

Objectives of the practice

Translated the whole name of the concerned programme/practice is: "women in technics – basic qualification and professional orientation for technology/engineering and trade". The interviewee from management level also used the term "integrational path" (NF2M, 76) when describing the practice.

The objective of the practice is, to support women, who want to try and learn professions in the field of technology and engineering, which are traditionally male vocations. By providing them with orientation and education in the above mentioned fields, their chances of good paid and secure jobs can be increased.

The programme is a path divided into three sections.

- First there is an orientation course called "widening of perspectives". The women can make workshops and internships in companies and get valuable insights in the practical conditions and demands of the vocation. At the end, two possible career plans are developed together.

- After they got interested in a certain field, they can continue with step two, a "basic qualification", which consists of different modules. The offered training covers basic contents of subjects, which are relevant for the chosen vocation(s), like IT, mathematics, technical drawing, physics, English and German, but also key qualification and social competences are transmitted. Furthermore the participants have to make an internship with a company. The workshops are all carried out by professional women, who also work in these nontraditional fields, this is considered as an important symbol in terms of role model.

- After completion of a basic qualification, the participants can choose to continue with a further professional training outside the organization. A further education in one of the prosperous technical areas is funded by the public employment service as well. According to the annual report, 80% of the participants take this offer. Depending on the formal education level of the women, further education can be made in form of apprenticeships, secondary schools or in a tertiary education institute like universities of applied sciences.

Also during this last stage, the women are supervised by the organization.

"The aim is to not only accompany the women till they start a professional training, but until they also find a job." (NF2O, 105)

Next to counselling during and after the education the programme offers an outplacement service for those, who can't find a job immediately after.

The minimum duration of the programme is 8 weeks and covers counselling, clearing and widening of perspectives, however, only a career plan can be developed in this time. The maximum duration is hard to define:

"Considering 8 weeks of counselling and clearing, 9 weeks widening of perspectives and 15 weeks of basic qualification it would make 31 weeks." (NF2O, 50)

In the recent year, 62 women completed the programme.

Target groups

Target groups are women living in specific districts of a certain (rural) region in Austria, who are interested in technical professions which are usually men-dominated. Usually they do it as a second chance education to improve their current job situation.

Funding sources (including non-standard funding sources)

The project is funded by the regional branch of the public employment service. The initiative can be seen as one that is based on regional actors, but it is linked to national level policy or at least actors (though the consistency and strength of this national policy can be argued against). The public employment service is organised strongly within the different Austrian regions, where also the social partners have regional branches, so it is typical for Austria to find some national (public) actors/institutions also located on regional level. Definitely this here referred to project addresses target groups (female adult learners) from specific regions in Austria, but the government of this region is not directly involved in funding this project .

History/background of the model (when established, its developmental progress)

The model of the practice was invented and developed in a city branch, however the different stages "widening of perspectives" and "basic qualification" have been spitted there timely and locally. In the integrated way, like it is carried out in the concerned branch of the organization, the practice has been just offered for not quite one year, therefore is relatively young.

"Here basic qualification, there widening of perspectives, counselling somewhere else, - they noticed that it is better to integrate everything in order to prevent an running idle.

It is also easier, it makes sense to accompany a women for some weeks, it is not something which can be decided in 2,3 weeks. It is a decision for the next decades." (NF2O, 42)

Location

The programme targets women from a rural area close to Vienna and is carried out in Vienna.

Perceived strengths and weaknesses

The strength of the practice is the long duration and the integrated character. The relatively long duration is facilitated by a longer than usual funding period from the contracting body. Besides, it was highlighted as a strength, that women are not forced into any decisions:

"That is also an important point. The women know from the beginning, that it is o.k. for whatever they decide. There is no force and there are no specifications. (…) Educations in the technical field are promoted, what concerns other areas, women have to seek other promotions or speak with their public employment service officer what else could make sense for them. I find it is a great programme, because it more or less covers everything. Starting from the minute where information is provided to the minute, where the women go in to a professional training". (NF2O, 20)

Priority needs for expansion of the model/service (this would include perceptions of implications of the current recession for this model)

   Not asked – probably more resources

Methods of feedback, evaluation

   See section 8. Tutor teaching methods – feedback of the participants is obtained after each course

Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model

   [Not asked]

Secondary School and School for employed (both interviews)

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Background Profile

The School for social pedagogy[35] has approximately 300 students totalling all forms of programmes (SCHO 10). At this site two educational programmes are offered: a five year vocational school at upper secondary level and a 4 semester long college for graduates from higher secondary education. The latter is also offered as an extra-occupational programme, then taking 6 semesters instead and based on 5 weeks each semester of "social phases" where students have to present at the school site. All programmes lead to a diploma for social pedagogy and lead to access to a professionalised working field.

The school exists since 1960. It is a VET school preparing for a specific profession, namely social pedagogues who are entitled to work with children and youths in specific youth institution and within structures related to youth outreach work. Three programmes are offered at the school: a 5 year school at upper secondary level where students gain Matura that leads to access to tertiary education and a diploma leading to access to regulated professional activities. The second form is a post secondary course for adults which is organised as part time education for people in employment. The third form is an add-on course directed at adult learners in employment. The latter require Matura[36] or Berrufsreifeprüfung[37].

Background data to profile target groups for access strategies:

The school has an access policy and certain preconditions for studying. For the initial education form students need to have successfully completed the 8th grade and need either a certain level of marks or otherwise can take entrance exams in the subjects German, English and Mathematics. For the adult education form students need the higher education entrance qualification provided by Matura. Candidates are also assessed through an entrance examination with regards to their creative abilities, within a group phase they are also tested for their social and communicative competencies. These assessment criteria exist for the school for which we provide information in this text and is connected to the type of education this school is providing. Social and communicative competencies

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[35] Social pedagogues assist and support people of all ages in different life situations and help them to lead their life in a better way. They work within institutions providing afternoon childcare, at youth welfare services, within orthopaedagogy and special pedagogy, but also within elderly care. (Information from school website).

[36] Upper secondary school leaving exam which provides general access to higher education.

[37] Examination providing general access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools. Berufsreifeprüfung is the main alternative pathway for adults without Matura to higher education.

are considered as necessary for future social pedagogues. Vocational orientation are also part of entrance interviews with potential future students.

The extra occupational adult education programme is tailored for participants aged 22 or older who have already worked in within the field of social pedagogy or within a different field. The school also offers further education for trained social pedagogues.

Those at risk of social exclusion seem to be more in the focus of the school's target groups concerning the social pedagogical work of the school's alumni. The inclusion of such social groups into the student population of the school did not occur as topics within the interviews. Social inclusion within the institution can indirectly be seen as part of the mission statement when this refers to mutual respect, democratic processes and the integration of all potentials for development into educational processes or to humanistic- holistic concepts of education (see below on mission statement).

Early school leavers are a topic within the interviews, but more on a theoretical level. We were – more implicitly – made to believe that early school leaving is not a common phenomenon within this school. On the other hand, a certain selective approach towards students seems to exist, as leaving this school is seen as something which can be necessary under certain circumstances and where support is important in order to make concerned students find appropriate educational alternatives. We have no evidence that this support for early school leavers happens on formalised grounds, but rather have the impression that this is arranged if possible.

Ethnic minorities are no topic within our interviews. Migrant students or students with eastern European background are being mentioned, though, especially when English as dominant foreign language in the Austrian school system is mentioned. Here some awareness on special needs seems to exist to a certain extent, but also criticism on the Austrian school system is being passed (see categories of research – 4. A curriculum to engage at risk students)

The school is located in a town close to one of the biggest urban regions of Austria. Students come from all over the country, especially regarding the initiall education branch of the school the student's home hosts students from different regions.

Funding sources for Formal Education

The school is state funded at the federal level. It is directly related to the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (www.bmukk.gv.at) which functions as supervisory authority.

Features of the institution's

Mission statement

The mission statement of the school deals with the institutions' mission, but also with its visions, values, with teaching and learning and with the social environment of the school. Constructively dealing with social change, adult learning and the schools educational programmes providing key competences are mentioned. All groups participating in school, namely parents, students, teachers are mentioned as participating in the schools' climate. Solution orientation, further development and democratic processes are referred to in relation to the institutions' visions. Humanistic- holistic concepts of education are mentioned as important values. Age-based methods of teaching and learning following up-to-date scientific knowledge and didactics form part of the statement on teaching and learning.

Social inclusion is not explicitly topic of the mission statement, although references to mutual respect, democratic processes and the integration of all potentials for development into educational processes can be interpreted as aiming towards inclusive practices.

Background information on availability or otherwise of free or reduced childcare generally for socio-economically disadvantaged groups
No childcare available.

Background information on availability or otherwise of free or reduced fees for formal and non-formal education generally for socio-economically disadvantaged groups
No fees are being charged within this institution.

Summary of most significant findings from SP3 for your country that impact upon access and social inclusion
No such findings regarding secondary schools.

Categories of Research

Introduction

In your view how could high schools in your country develop to ensure that more students continue at school until they are 18?

The Austrian system of repetitions of whole year classes is strongly criticised by the operative interviewee who is working as a teacher and as career counsellor. She states that it would make more sense to have students repeat subjects instead of grades, as the latter is a waste of one year of life time of students and leads to reduced motivation among students. Among students in higher grades being held back in a grade is also seen as increasing the risk of students dropping out of school. As second issue our operative interviewee mentions age adequate methods and ways of teaching and learning:

"Youths should feel that they are being taken into account also at their age and they should be able to bring their own spheres of life into school. That would be important. To stop using teaching methods that centre on the teacher and to make more use of project orientated teaching methods, to teach cross-disciplinary and to go outside and leave the school building in order to learn within situations and fields of instruction that concern life outside school" (SCHO 2)

Also a change of the role of teachers is suggested by our interviewee working at operative level. She states instead of just feeding students with knowledge teachers should be initiating and presenting more and see themselves as dialogue partner as far as topics and input are concerned. Also the legal framework should be made more flexible, as at different age stages student have different needs and abilities what regards attending classes, participation in class or disciplinary matters. In the opinion of our operative interviewee all these mentioned aspects could be influential on ensuring that more students stay at school until they are 18 and that they complete their education successfully.

The interviewed manager is of the opinion that the focus within the Austrian school system should shift from a deficit-orientated concerning students towards a strength-orientated approach, where *students' abilities and talents are taken into account stronger than now.*

"As I see it, at the moment students are mostly told about their lacking abilities. The focus on what their abilities actually are now is too small, and that frustrates them. I think that dropping out of school often is often not related to lacking talents, but also to a lot of frustration which students more often experience already within lower secondary general education." (SCHM 4)

The interviewed manager sees that lower secondary schools often already produce frustration among students which hinders them while continuing their education at a higher level. Students carry this negative attitude with them to higher secondary education, also to higher secondary vocational schools. One has to see that the school referred to within this text offers educational

programmes only on secondary higher educational level and on non-university post-secondary level. The latter refers to the college programmes, both fulltime and extra-occupational, where the adult education programme is located.

Does your school mission statement or strategic plan refer to lifelong learning, either directly or indirectly ? Please explain

Our operative interviewee stresses an emphasis on indirect learning which is to be found within the mission statement.

"I think for lifelong learning, at our school the overall concept is to strengthen talents and resources. That also assists the learning process in a sustainable way. I can see that aspect in our mission statement, that's how I would understand it." (SCHO 6)

The interviewed manager refers to the mission statement of the institution available on the schools website and does not want to add any statement to this (in order to save time for other interview questions).

In your opinion, with regard to provision of supports for students at risk of early school leaving, is your organization a) typical of most secondary school organizations, b) more developed or c) less developed ? Please explain your answer.

Our interview partner working at an operational level (i.e. teaching and counselling students regarding their occupational orientation) regards the school as more developed (b) than most other secondary schools. She explains that this is mainly due to the small size of the school.

"This small size, I see it as an advantage. A small school means direct contact between teacher and students respectively trainees at this institution, so there is a more intense form of contact. It's possible to deal with the concerns and problems of our students. That's a structural factor we have here, and we also make use of it " (SCHO 8)

Our second interviewee at management also level sees this school as (b) more developed than other secondary schools in Austria. She also remarks that students have to prove their adequacy for the vocational field before starting their education at this institution. This includes physical abilities as well as achievements in former school education (see A Background data to profile target groups for access strategies). Therefore a certain selection of students entering the school takes place.

"And it is important for us to look at students during first grade, whether they have the potential for higher secondary education. So we take face up to the problem, not only to cover the vocational field, but also to lead students to Matura (school leaving certificate granting access to higher education). And if we see that students are overstrained, that they are not able to accomplish these aims, we try hard to find alternatives. This then includes talks between parents, head mistress or master, didactic

teacher, also me participating in these talks, where alternatives are found so the student can find the school that really suits him or her" (SCHM 8)

The above mentioned situation refers mostly to students who do not accomplish the learning objectives of a grade and then have to repeat a grade. In order to avoid loosing one year when students are not seen as fit to improve their performance even when repeating a grade, the question of leaving school seems to become relevant. (SCHM 10)

In your opinion, with regard to provision of adult education, including distance education facilities, on your school site, is your organization a) typical of most secondary school organizations, b) more developed or c) less developed ? Please explain your answer.

Resources for distance education are being judged as not many, but existing. One interviewee focuses on the working situation of teachers within schools. This interviewee, who is working at operational level, states that teacher in Austria have to do part of their work at home. She sees this as a positive fact as schools do not provide enough equipment for teachers to do all their work at the school site. Staff rooms have only one computer workstation within this school.

"If you judge just the school site as workplace, then the working conditions are bad, because the workstation is permanently occupied. … But one part of the workplace of a teacher is usually at home, this is also officially declared. I think this is good. I don't think that teachers should spend all their working time within schools. That's nonsense. How should a teacher make preparations when the equipment does not exist at school? And within the private sector, jobs are increasingly outsourced, like home office. Now there are initiatives to make teachers work all their time within the school site. … Schools often lack behind 50 years from what is done in private enterprises." (SCHO 16)

The manager of the school sees the adult education provided within this institution as (b) more developed than most schools in Austria. The interviewed person herself states that in general adult education is still not strongly developed at Austrian schools. For the here researched school she refers to the extra-occupational form of the programme, explaining that the education offered is not one that can be done in form of distance education only (although it has elements of distance education), as at this school it's about education where social skills and relationship orientation are basic for the vocational field. The manager also mentions the model of examination for external candidates (see question 7 Distance education at the school site), but states that these students also have to be present at the school for some phases of the programme.

Supports for students to enable them to stay on at school

What supports are available for students in your school ?

The manager of the school mentions remedial classes[38] that are provided. Most of the young students live at the students' home which is also part of the school. For these young students mostly from initial education the manager mentions remedial education also on a more individual level and in contact with parents. Also students with dyslexia are being assisted, although this has to be paid extra by the parents. The manager gives an example of a class in last grade where many students had difficulties in mathematics and where remedial classes were organised for these students.

Are there supports for students a) with learning difficulties/special needs, b) literacy difficulties ? Please describe

For students with learning difficulties remedial courses and specific counselling are offered at this school. For dyslexia no support is offered, also this has been considered. One member of the teaching staff is trained for dyslexia, but there exist no financial resources for such a measure:

"*Then parents would have to finance this (support for dyslectic students) privately. The idea still exists, it's just a unsolved question how to finance this.*" (SCHO 20)

Students with physical handicaps are not permitted to study at this school, as physical fitness and aptitude are considered necessary for social pedagogues. There exists an aptitude test which people with disabilities are not considered to be able to take. (SCHO 20).

The manager reports that students with reading and learning difficulties are supported within the existing legal rules. This means, that parents are advised to have children with difficulties tested (which is not done by the school). Results of these tests are taken into account during appraisal of students achievements. Also remedial classes for this group of students are planned for the future.

Is there a counsellor available for students with emotional problems, including bereavement issues?

Our interviewee working as teacher is also educational counsellor for the institution. She is also confronted with emotional problems, like in the context of mobbing, and is trained in dealing with emotional and social topics, though she is not a psychotherapist or psychologist. Still her main field of work seems to be oriented towards school related topics.

"*(My counselling experiences) also include social problems. I also counsel concerning questions of dropping out of school of students lacking performance. Then students or parents come to me and we look at alternatives and at the necessities it takes to work things out.*" (SCHO 24)

The interviewee has the obligation of secrecy regarding issues that students or parents tell her as counsellor. Only in case of imminent danger our interviewee is released from this obligation, this

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[38] German: Förderkurse (pl.)

could include for example sexual abuse. She sees her function as transgressing educational issues in a narrow sense and as also dealing with personal development and personal and social issues.

The school manager, who is the school principal, sees the class teacher (form master) as first contact person concerning personal or emotional issues. Also the vocational subjects didactics and pedagogy are part of the curriculum and therefore professional staff is available who are trained for these problems. Also one teacher works also as guidance counsellor. External help is organised if a whole class is in need of extra assistance. For younger students in lower grades there exists an external supporting person, but what exactly this person does the manager did not tell us, but indicated she deals with conflict management. The manager also mentioned the school physician as potential person concerned with such issues. The manager emphasises that this school has strong elements within the education that is offered here that are strongly connected to personal development issues, so the syllabus can also be adapted to present needs. Issues like misuse have recently been dealt with in workshops that were conducted by an external child protection centre.

Is there a careers advice person available for students in your school ? Please describe what they do

A school counsellor who offers individual counselling also regarding career questions is mentioned by the manager we spoke to. If there are *students "for whom the education at this school does not fit, then we try to find something else"* (SCHM 32). Phases of practical training are part of the education, so students make experiences that help them in choosing which occupational field they want to specialise in within their professional career after school.

Schools for initial education in Austria have to offer school counsellors from lower secondary school level upwards. These counsellors are teachers who are trained for this task (they are not trained psychotherapeutically) and this task is counselling dealing with career related questions. Psychological counselling for pupils is organised differently, mostly through 77 psychological counselling centres with 140 psychologists for all regions in Austria.

Is the situation in your school regarding these above supports typical of other schools in your country, to your knowledge ?

The situation of this school is seen as typical. The person working on an operative level is engaged in a network of educational counsellors and sees much engagement within this field in different schools. (SCHO) Still one has to take into account that this school is specialised on a professional field, and that the network of educational counsellors referred to most probably extends to similar types of schools. Our interviewee compared her school with other schools offering education for social

The manager sees the school as further developed than other schools in Austria.

Please describe any services that exist to support and monitor those students who are not attending school regularly

"Staff meetings exist where teaching staff have a pedagogic discussion on each single school class, they have to be held at least once every semester. Here also problems with time of absence are being discussed, leading to talks with concerned students and to counselling and supporting measures" (SCHO)

Only for students up to fourth grade (primary educational program at upper secondary level) the rate of attending school is a factor that codetermines their marks. Generally rules on how students need to inform teaching staff / the school about absence are being communicated within the institution, so the school manager tells us.

The school manager sees little possibilities what teaching staff by law can do about students' attendance at school.

"We can tell them what advantages they have when they attend school regularly, but it depends on the kind of education / training. By law we can not do much if students don't attend school. The older … for the college type of education we offer it's even more difficult, and for students at the extra-occupational college, they we cannot even ask for an exculpation (written explanation), so basically I can not do anything. Everybody can pass any subject through the colloquium. But this is not how we see personal development, so we try to have individual talks and change students' attitudes through this." (SCHM 36)

The manager estimates that every second year one student drops out of school, so the drop-out rate is seen as very low. She distinguishes between students who are not able to perform accordingly and students who change their vocational plans.

In Austria state personnel especially responsible for monitoring non-attending students or school attendance officers do not exist.

What supports and services are put in place by your school for students at risk of early school leaving?

Students at risk of early school leaving are to be kept and eye on by the respective form teacher and by teaching staff in general.

"If we have the impression that it makes sense to try to have the student stay with our school, then we offer counselling and support. But we do not have any strategic or systematic approach here within this school. Nothing like this exists." (SCHO 35).

Are there individual education plans devised for any students, which would include learning goals and feedback, in dialogue with the student ? Please give details

"We use individually developed plans where individual achievements are recorded, like what is being used very successfully as portfolio method within adult education. This we use increasingly within our phases of practice instruction here within our school. We try, with the youths up from third grade and within our adult education programme during the whole two years of the programme, to use special, individualised achievement of learning objectives that regards certain working fields. You can not expect every student to make the exact same achievements, this would be very problematic. We use individual dialogues in order to define the aims of the practice training phase" (SCHO 37).

The small size of groups is seen as an advantage concerning these instruments, as they are more easy to implement in smaller groups. We estimate that group sizes with less than 25 or even 20 pupils can be considered small or at least 'not large'.

The school manager mentions projects that have been launched by the responsible state education ministry and that include issues on culture of feedback. Students' representatives on school level give feedback to teaching staff, in a way that the students' feedback has been made anonymous. Plans for students on an individual level are not implemented as a routine, but some teacher work with this tool.

"A culture of feedback has been developed for years, mostly for the vocational subjects where feedback is part of the education." (SCHM 44).

What extracurricular activities are available for students in your school ?

See next question (SCHO)

The school manager reports that the school's social community as a whole is connected to events that take place during the year. Music festival, Christmas and advent festivities are mentioned as examples for school events. The manager notices that especially students with lower achievements can be very successful in fields like music. She also refers to projects that are connected to the curriculum, as there are events and festivities that are organised by the school and its students in cooperation with other institutions from the social field.

"And there we can see very well which is the students' focus concerning their vocational development. Even if some achieve pretty low in general subjects, those very students (when participating in organising such events) can be very successful, because there they receive positive feedback that what they are doing is the right thing for them." (SCHM 49)

In addition the manager mentions training possibilities for students to become trainers in outdoor

activities like skiing and snowboarding, but also additional qualification in sign language. For the upcoming school year social management[39] is planned as additional offering.

Is there any extra attempt made to involve those at risk of early school leaving in these activities ? Please give details

Like in other schools, this institution offers project weeks and –days, periods dedicated to languages and other focuses connected to practical vocational training. All activities are directed towards all students regardless of their achievements or performance. There are no activities directed especially towards at risk students. (SCHO).

Please describe any attempts made by your school to target a) those students most at risk of early school leaving and b) their families for extra supports. What more in your opinion could be realistically done?

Older students of the upper secondary level are of legal age (which is eighteen), as are all adult learners. They come from all regions within Austria. The students of the school form stay within boarding school at the school site during term, adult learners have social phases of presence. Contact with families therefore exists mostly via telephone. Counselling and legally defined early warning talks also are mostly carried out via telephone[40]. The other instruments are the above mentioned staff conferences on classes (see above on question: Please describe any services that exist to support and monitor those students who are not attending school regularly'). The teacher we interviewed finds it hard to reflect on how to improve targeting at risk students and their families, as her ever day routine leaves little time for this and more the routines also determine views and perceptions of teachers. Realistically possible improvements are hard to imagine for her.

"Within these general discussions on developmental and learning standards in connection with achievements and learning targets of students, there exist attempts to improve these issues, but it is difficult"(SCHO 45)

The school manager explains that all students are integrated in the school's activity. Concerning support for families, the school attracts students from all over Austria, so contact with parents is

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[39] Management skills and -knowledge for professionals working in the field of social pedagogy or similar institutions offering social services / in the social economy.

[40] In Austrian schools the year consists of two parts (semesters). If a students is in danger receiving a 'fail' in any of these both semesters, the school is legally obliged to organize a counseling interview (early warning talk) including student, parent(s) and teacher. Legislation: § 19 Abs. 3a und 4 SchUG ('Schulunterrichtsgesetz', Legislation on school education)
Further information (German only): http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/service/schulinfo/fruehwarn.xml

often limited to telephone and very few face to face meetings. The school manager sees family work as an issue that teachers are not responsible and also not trained for respectively something for which teachers need extra training. For her, working with families is not task of schools. (SCHM 54) Questions on how schools and families are responsible for education of children and young people in Austria is traditionally a controversial topic (though a primary role of families as educators is not part of the constitution). This has to do with many factors that cannot be analysed extensively here. One factor is that school politics traditionally has been a controversial topic between social democrats and conservatives within the Austrian political party system. The highly stratified school system in Austria reproduces social inequalities rather than to counterbalance them. Only in recent years, also due to PISA results, but now also in connection with necessities to improve migration policy and the recent economic crisis, discussion goes in direction of introducing a more comprehensive school system. Most Austrian school types also are not organised as schools where children stay until late afternoon, but rather close in the early afternoon and only offer very limited afternoon classes – this also is being discussed now[41]. This again is connected with a very family-orientated notion of education which has until very recently been connected to conservative gender politics and expectations of mothers to be responsible for childcare, leading to most mothers taking long maternity leaves and working part time even when children are at (primary) school. The school we write about in this text is organised more on a whole day basis and the student's home (which is untypical for a state run school in Austria) plays a role for young students in initial education at this school.

Are there any strategies to make the school environment more flexible to accommodate the needs of those most at risk of early school leaving ? For example, flexibility of timetable etc. Please describe.

At risk students are offered opportunities to repeat tests and exams. Besides, teaching staff talk to them and try to figure out how they can make the necessary achievements in order to successfully end their term or grade. In case of long illness, physical or psychological, every attempt is made on the side of the teaching staff to secure that concerned students can complete their education successfully. Our teaching interview partner perceives the applied strategies as less general and strategic but more as individually tailored for singular cases. In her opinion it could be worth while to develop more strategic approaches within this school and to reflect more on what more could be

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[41] Many now active teachers are in fear of changes that could lead to longer working hours without financial benefits. Now almost all teachers do most of their preparatory work at home, they are not even provided suitable space for preparatory work within schools.

done. *" No, we do not have more flexible timetable or things like that, unfortunately. If we see that students are endangered of dropping out, which one can in most cases see before when their performance declines, then we try to help like offering the student extra dates for exams, tests or we offer them the possibility to take verbal examination. Students can negotiate this with teachers so they can take extra exams and still finish the term or school year with positive results[42]. Or for example if students have been ill for a long time. Also if students have mental health problems, here we make use of all legal possibilities and try to assist so students can successfully complete their education. Things like that. But not on a strategic level, but here special measures take place. But I think this is an interesting question and that we should think about what else could be done here."*
(SCHO 47)

 On the other hand, the school manager advocates strongly social work at schools. In her opinion social work needs to be implemented within the whole school system and is of special importance for young students at primary schools.

"In my opinion the root lies here (within primary schools). What can be positively changed at that that level will not lead to problems later on. That should also be social pedagogues who are trained for these issues and could be employed for working with families." (SCHM 61).

The school manager here sees a need to further develop the school system and to distinguish between teaching and social work within this system, in order to work on family related problems at schools.

Alternatives to suspension / expulsion

Approximately what percentage of students a) receive suspensions, b) are expelled from your school in one year ?

Expelling students does not take place. The interviewed teacher sees this connected to the type of school. Social cohesion is of high importance to many members of the teaching staff. Some general subjects are being taught by teachers who are trained for higher general education (Austrian school form at Secondary level); these teachers sometime demand more emphasize on disciplinary issues and on the possibility to expel students. But generally this hardly is applied in practice. Minor problems occurring like smoking in non smoking areas usually are dealt with through talking things out. (SCHO 49)

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[42] Failing to reach positive results can lead to the fact that students have to repeat a whole class respectively year of the programme (all subjects and not only subjects they failed in).

What alternative strategies and services are used by your school for students with behaviour/discipline problems as alternatives to suspension and expulsion ?

Generally, talking is the main strategy on this issue. The teacher we spoke to reports that some teachers complain about having to discuss so much with students, but she insists on it being important and necessary before using any harsher methods. *"We always talk, this is very important. It is very exhausting, many teachers complain that we have these 1000 talks here and ask why. But it is one of the view things we can do in order to make some changes. We talk a lot before we would utter a threat to make use of other methods."* (SCHO 53).

Our interviewee on management level tells us that since the school was founded in 1960 suspension or expulsion of a student have never taken place. Disciplinary problems hardly exist in her view. (SCHM 67)

A curriculum to engage at risk students

What changes, in your opinion, need to be made to the school *curriculum* to engage the interest more of those students at risk of early school leaving ?

The teacher we spoke to sees a necessity to differentiate more on how to take resources and strengths of students into account. Different interests of students should be taken more seriously. *"One could say, in a group not every person necessarily has to take the final exam in English. Some students have different mother tongues, like Russian or they speak Czech because of their historical background, so we could make some offers for them. Especially among adult learners, these people have big difficulties, if they have no knowledge of English as a foreign language; they have to learn English here and at the same time learn how to teach it, in order to be able to use it. There we could make changes. Or among youths, why must all learn Geography if some are not interested in it? It makes sense to have basic knowledge on one side and increased knowledge on the other side, but people should be able to choose. Students should be able to chaos if they are more interested in History, they should be able to choose to have two hours of history and only one hour of Geography. Make the whole system more flexible. That would be very interesting for the youngsters to choose according to their interests. Then it would be self-responsible. They would have chosen themselves. Otherwise they are forced to follow the time table. At that age they are able to decide for themselves what interests them. Also children at primary school can make these decisions. Then I (the student) would have decided and would have the opportunity to decide on how my education looks like through my own free decisions. That I would find very interesting, if that would be possible. "* (SCHO 57).

Generally, more flexible curricula are demanded by the teacher we spoke to. Students should have

more opportunities to make decisions and to act self responsible concerning their learning. The teacher we spoke to sees this as important also for younger children in schools.

The school manager states that students at upper secondary level education within this school (initial education, not adult education) need to be seen as young people who are still growing up and should be accepted with their needs as youths. *"I see this is also my job to make sure they (these students) can still be youths even with all the demands coming from the practical education."* (SCHM 71).

Please describe any innovative approaches to assessment which your school uses

The interviewee working as teacher tells us that assessment is meat to be done in a transparent way so that students have the chance to inform themselves at any time on where they stand concerning the assessments of their achievements. Educational standards and levels of achievements on the one hand, competences on the other hand are now in use. The transfer of these concepts into practice is now in development. Apart from these general developments no concrete measures or innovative approaches are being named. (SCHO 59).

The school manager tells us that there exist innovative assessment approaches at this institution within legal requirements. When asked directly whether she wants to give more explicit information, she declines. (SCHM 77)

Approximately how many hours are given per week to students personal development needs ? For example, self-awareness classes, relationship and sexuality classes, parenting or life skills, conflict resolution skills. Please describe any innovative models your school adopts in these areas

There are certain subjects as part of the educational programmes at this school that include didactic and practice work. Parenting, life skills and conflict resolution skills are major parts of the curriculum of this school we write about here. Self awareness is part of didactical practice and educational science. As the school trains students to become social pedagogues, personal development is a major part of the education offered. The teacher we talked to sees this as something that makes the training especially strenuous and demanding. (SCHO 65).

The school manager estimates personal development needs as given 2 to 4 hours a week within the different curricula used at different programmes. The college type programmes (older students / adult students) have more hours on these issues. (SCHM 79)

Approximately how many hours are given per week in the school curriculum to the arts and personal development, for example, through drama, music, creative writing or the visual arts ? Please describe any innovative models your school adopts in these areas

"Also arts are a focal point of the offered education here. Arts and music have more hours than within other tracks e.g. than within general higher secondary education in Austria. A theatre group and a music band exist at the school" (SCHO).

Students participate in arts and related subjects for 12 – 15 hours each week, so tells us the school manager. She explains the high numbers with the fact that these subjects are also related to didactical backgrounds within the school's curricula.

Active citizenship at school

In what ways, if any, does your school give recognition to students' contribution to their local community ?

"Community work is recognised on a case to case basis. Public Theatre performances are given as example" (SCHO).

The school is related to community work more indirectly, so tells us the school manager. Social projects and festivities do take place, but the school is not a prominent player within the local community (SCHM).

Are there any attempts made to foster a sense of active citizenship in students through arranging for them to participate as volunteers in activities beneficial to the community (e.g., charity fundraising, visiting the elderly, helping orphans, ethnic minorities, people living in poverty etc) ?

When asked if students are encouraged to participate as active citizens the teacher we spoke to referred to existing cooperation with social organizations (Lebenshilfe) where students work during their training. Students offer physical exercise classes within their practical training. Also festivities are being organised in cooperation with a big Austrian umbrella NGO in the field of people with disabilities, but also within the town the school is sited at. The latter also has the effect to make the know-how and expertise of the schools' students known within the region. Students are often asked to work with children and adults with disabilities in the region. Here also honorary work is done by students in their free time. As this school itself educates students for a profession in the social field, students are willing to engage in social work also on a volunteering basis.

"If a person decides to be trained in a social profession they are mostly more socially engaged from the first place. We as school are not of the opinion that they should do all their free time work without any financial gratification just because they chose this education we offer. They should also be paid. If somebody else did this work, they would be paid, too" (SCHO 77). Social engagement and voluntary

work is accepted and supported, but the image of the profession / vocation is seen as something that needs protection from being directed towards voluntary work[43].

The school manager states that students are obliged to do practical work within the social field as part of their education. Therefore the school does not animate them to do volunteer work as well. Also, the focus of the school lies more on a national level due to the fact that the institution is organised on a national level (see above, background profile). If students have more personal ties to certain local communities, the school manager assumes that this then would be their hometown. The school does not necessarily focus strongly on the local community it is situated at. (SCHM 90)

Does active citizenship play a role? Is this a relevant topic? And is your voluntary work visible here within the community?

"This does not fit with our school because our students have to do practical work at social institutions within their education here at school and we can not do more than that, we cannot tell our students to do extra work on voluntary basis. We do not exactly aim at the community here and also not on the region here, because our students do traineeships all over Austria and also our students come from all over Austria. This also means that on a political level our students engage themselves within the communities they come from if they are politically engaged at a community level at all" (SCHM 88)

Please describe any structures in your school for student representation (i.e. a student council etc)

In Austria student representation on a regional and national level in schools is regulated by a law called Schülervertretungengesetz (SchVG). [44]

Information material (in German only) directed at students in schools has been issued by the ministry recently:

http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/17624/wissenswertes_sv_09.pdf

In this school the by law regulated student representatives exist at level of classes and at the level of the school as a whole (student council). Apart from these structures, there exist talks between student representatives on school level and the school principal. Otherwise the structures do not

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[43] Austria historically has a strong social security system and social state tradition. Although voluntary work exists (often related to churches or to certain sectors like fire-brigades), sectors like social welfare and also (initial school) education are strongly perceived as responsibility of the state, although here differences among political parties exist.

[44] In Austria students' representatives are elected in all schools following primary school, but not in primary school, where parents take part in democratic processes, but not children in a direct or officially formalised way.

exceed the ones given by law. At end of term student representatives can join in the teacher conference where achievement of students is discussed. The teacher we interviewed sees that democratic structures for students need more strengthening.

When asked if any special democratic processes exist within the school that exceed the usual legal ones, the teacher we spoke to said:

"Our school principal continuously has talks with the those students representing the whole school. apart from this we are just beginning to introduce stronger structures. As far as I know we do not have anything apart from the democratic structures we need to have by law. Students' representatives can participate in staff meetings but not in those where educational achievements are discussed, but this is how it is regulated by law. Students can make themselves heard. I don't know of anything beyond that would be introduced in this school. But I think we could do more and develop new things. If I think of today, students have a strike today, but it is extremely difficult for them to organise themselves. For sure there is a need of further structures in order to actually live democracy at schools and to learn what are the preconditions so that students can find democratic approaches. But that's an issue not only for our school" (SCHO 81)

At the time of our interview school policy was discussed in public due to government initiatives to have increase in school working hours for teachers. Student protest against longer school hours for students were organised by student representatives on a nation wide level. In the perception of the teacher we spoke to students found it difficult to organise themselves. In her opinion this is a general phenomenon that holds true for schools in Austria in general, not necessarily especially for this school. (SCHO 81).

For each educational programme offered at this institution there are democratic students representatives within the legal framework. The manager we spoke to tells us that the school (higher secondary initial education) has its own students' representative on level of classes and at the level of the whole educational programme. The same holds true for the college programme and for the extra-occupational college programme respectively. As an innovative form of students' participation, the school manager mentions a meeting she has with the school-level students' representatives (highest level of representatives) every three weeks. A boarding school is also available for the youths at school; these students can vote representatives for their students' home. This latter form has been developed at the school without legal framework, as state boarding school at upper secondary level are not very common in Austria, so tells us the school manager. (SCHM 93). *"Most of them (of such state boarding schools) … have been privatised and therefore they have their own regulations now."* Other such boarding school institutions that have remained within state competency are schools for students with disabilities (SCHM 95).

Adult Education on the school site

What adult education classes take place in your school building ?

The school has a two year adult education programmes at the school site itself. In Vienna, the school offers also a programme for special education which takes three years and is offered as additional education for social pedagogues or kindergarten teacher. Both are directed at adults and are conducted extra-occupationally. The school is not in use during weekends (see below) due to lacking personnel resources and legal reasons. So the extra-occupational form taking place at the school still is organised during week time in form of modules. (SCHO)

The extra occupational adult education programme is tailored for participants aged 22 or older who have already worked in within the field of social pedagogy or within a different field. The school also offers further education for trained social pedagogues. *"For example, today we offer a two-day seminar on biography work"* (SCHM 102).

Are adult education classes available generally in schools in your region in the evening or at weekends ?

We spoke about adult education in general, not necessarily about the times of provision of these programmes. Schools in the sector of higher secondary vocational education offer colleges for employed people within this region. This refers to programmes we have investigated in SP3[45]: colleges of business administration and colleges of engineering. These educational programmes usually are available in the evening and at weekends.

Also secondary training college for nursery school teachers is offered in Vienna, which is not far from the region of this school. Schools for healthcare and nursery often can also be accessed by adults. (SCHO)

The school manager mentions prominent lecturers that give speeches at the school two to three times a year; these events are open to the general public. (SCHM 104)

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[45] SP3 refers to another part of this project where mostly participants in (and, to a lesser extent, also providers of) formal adult education where studied through survey research. Motivationand satisfaction of participants where of core interest to this research. About 1000 adult learners in each of 12 countries participated in this research.

What obstacles are there to use of the school building for adult education classes, or as a community centre, after school hours ? (e.g., territorial issues, insurance, security) How can they be overcome ?

Lack of rooms is mentioned as a major problem. Rooms are not big enough and there are not enough rooms available. Further education does take place within the site of the school, but this involves mainly alumni who come back for further education. The school does not function as a community centre. Resources are a problem, mainly concerning rooms.

The school is not used at weekends due to lacking personnel resources and due to security reasons and insurance problems, for the same reasons the school is not in use during summer break. The teacher we talked to thinks that one option could be cooperation with the national employment agency which funds most trainings programmes for unemployed in Austria. She sees that resources of the school exist that are not being used as much as they could.

"There is always a lack of room at this school, concerning all classes. Rooms are too small or we lack rooms. …"

How could the problem concerning lacking rooms be solved?

"We would have to rent some rooms. A basic problem is that it's a school and the building is closed on weekends. All resources are available at weekends, but it would also need some staff also and who pays for this staff then if we would offer seminars at the weekend? There are many factors to be considered"

So the building is not used on weekends?

"Yes"

Due to public services law?

"Exactly. We can not give lessons then. The building cannot be used during summer either. Of course we could rent it out, but who pays for the staff that then would need to be present? We'd need a porter. Probably it would be possible to find some solutions here, cooperating with the public employment service[46] or making use of overtime. But this a financial problem that needs to be solved. It is also a problem of insurance, who is liable if something happens? That we would need to change, concerning security. That there is someone taking care when events and courses take place. But as I said, like other schools we would have resources here."

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[46] The Public Employment Service (AMS) is a service agency under public law matching "candidates with job openings" and assisting "jobseekers and companies who turn to us by offering advice, information, qualification opportunities and financial assistance." (see http://www.ams.at/english/14595.html)

The school manager mentions the room situation as a problem. The institution originally is planned as a school only and not as further education institution, this leads to problems when classes have to move. *"I often have to look, how do I make changes within the house, who has to abandon a class room."* (SCHM 106)

The institution by law is also charged with further education, so there is a legal framework for these programmes, tells us the school manager. The manager does not mention any other problems concerning e.g. insurance.

What are the perceived advantages or disadvantages to your school in hosting adult education classes in the evening or at weekends ?

Adult education only is provided during the week and during the day. From the point of view of the teacher, she sees no disadvantages connected to this fact.

The school manager sees the problems of lacking rooms, but she sees that advantages overbalances this, as some lecturers for the adult education also stay and are available for contacts with younger students of the initial education programme as well, which the school could not afford to pay for otherwise. "Well I see the disadvantages (to the school in hosting adult education classes in the evening or at weekends) concerning lacking rooms, but it is not so big a disadvantage that we need to talk about this, to me the advantages matter more, because it means synergy for our students. If I can have a speaker (for the adult education branch) who stays here for longer time and offers something also for our students (of the initial education branch), we would not have been able to afford to have this person coming only for our young students. (SCHM 110)

Does your school cooperate with local services or other schools in disseminating information about evening classes for adults ? If yes, please describe

The school does not disseminate information about evening classes for adults at local schools, but information is given at Institutions where social pedagogues are working, and these institutions are within the region as well as in other regions. The school takes part in a national job, training and education fare "BEST" (http://bestinfo.at) aiming mostly at students in and graduates from higher secondary education, but also, though in a still considerable smaller amount, visited by people interested in adult education.

As far as the non-extra occupational (so to say non-adult-education) college for people with higher secondary education degree ("Matura") is concerned, school graduates from higher secondary schools are provided with information. Open days at the school provide high-school graduates with information on this college offered at the school. Also evening information events are conducted. For students who are still at school information activities at these schools take place. Still, cooperation

with other schools is strongest and works best for the education programme the here researched school that is directed towards graduates from lower secondary education. In short, the younger the potential students that are to be attracted to the educational programmes of this school are, the more and better organised information activities exist. We asked our interviewee (SCHO) on her opinion about this fact, and she sees the information activities directed towards 14 year olds as more consistent and better organised, one reason for this being that here parents are also addressed. For students graduating from upper secondary education (in Austria mostly between the age of 18-20 year olds) our interview-partner sees lacking assistance as far as educational and occupational planning and career decisions are concerned. In her opinion students who have finished compulsory schooling receive better assistance and counselling than graduates from higher secondary education. The latter are less assisted with deciding whether to enter the labour marked or to continue with tertiary education. (SCHO)

The schools manager refers to information folders that are sent out and to the institutions website.

"We are cross-linked with many institutions, mainly with tertiary education institutions, and there with teacher training institutions, but also with the Universities at Graz and Klagenfurt, also with SOS Kinderdorf, with the catholic education centre in Salzburg and with many others. We also edit the only professional journal on social pedagogy in Austria, and there of course we refer to lectures and always use this line: 'if you want more information, visit us at…' " (SCHM 112)

The manager tells us that the above mentioned journal edited by the school has readers and contributors in all German speaking countries and in Scandinavia. Here the special situation of the school as national institution is mentioned once again, which is no embedded in regional school administration but which is directly related to the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and culture (www.bmukk.gv.at).

Recognising the decline of educational monopolies over diplomas, is your school prepared to act to provide formal educational qualifications for adults ?

The interviewee working as teacher is also working as counsellor for the students. She sees other educational programmes in the field of social pedagogy as "no real competition" (SCHO 121).

"Until now there exists no other institution (than the state type of institution like this school, concerning the field of social pedagogy) where de facto *the same degree with the same qualification and professional entitlement can be offered. But we look critically at what is going on, because in the field of social professions or within social pedagogy where its about young people with many troubles, where it's also about a great deal of supporting - people (participating in alternative educational programmes in this field of social pedagogy) are just not adequately educated and trained if they only participate in training courses and modules. It is also about common public*

interest, as it is also financed publicly. This then is not adequate. We see ourselves as fulfilling a public mandate. In offering good educational programmes we fulfil public requirements. In offering good education we render a service to society, also concerning old and young people. I see this critically, that these educational offers of poor quality that impart little competence are becoming publicly active." (SCHO 121).

The school manager sees *that in the field of social pedagogy many different programmes are offered also by private institutions. "These are partly short programmes or of little quality, so they refer to limited vocational fields and also can be limited to a certain educational provider, or to a certain region (Land / county)."* She sees a need for explaining this to potential participants, as she sees lacking information. The institution she manages does not charge fees for the educational programmes (the home for students is not for free, though), and the diploma gained at this school is valid nationwide which provides access to a regulated profession accredited by the EU. Diploma holders of this school are also provided with a description of their degree in English and French. This is a distinction from other educational providers. And graduates are not bound to certain educational providers. Some employers in the field of child care work are also providers of educational programmes for their employees. The employees who participated in this form of training are obliged to work for this institution for 5-7 years after participating in this educational programme of their employer, so the school manager describes some educational programmes within this field. Not surprisingly, she sees this critically: *"Well, these are developments we do not like to see, naturally, but on the other side they are good for us, because very many participants then consciously choose our programmes."* (SCHM 118)

Are any classes for adults run on your school site currently given accreditation ?

The school programmes are all given accreditation. (SCHO 123, SCHM 120)

Do you know of other schools in your country which provide formal educational qualifications for adults ? Please describe

Within the Austrian school system, there exist other schools that provide programmes for people in employment, mostly colleges in the field of business administration and in technical fields. These adult education versions of the school type (initial educational) version of these programmes offer degrees at ISCED level 4 and have been part of our project survey within SP3. Our interview partner SCHO refers to these colleges offered by schools and also to secondary training college for nursery school teachers. These programmes all offer degrees at uppers secondary level. Other colleges address people who already hold higher secondary level degrees; they offer non-university based colleges, like the colleges offered at this school. Here young graduates from higher secondary

education still form the major target group these programmes are directed to, so tells us our interview partner. (SCHO 125).

The school manager refers to above mentioned adult education programmes at general and vocational schools at upper secondary level and is of the opinion that in Austria this form of adult education is very well developed. (SCHM 122 / 123).

Distance Education and the school site

What opportunities exist for the school to be a site for distance education for adults ? Are computers available for distance education to take place ? What else is required to facilitate the development of the school as a location for distance education for adults ?

The extra-occupational college has distance education elements, but also includes several phases of attendance usually of one week time. The school does not offer a programme based only on distance education. Externistenprüfung (school examination for external candidates) are also offered at the school. For this examination participants need to be present at the school during practical subjects, but can participate in theoretical subjects via distance education. The teacher we interviewed complains about the fact that this leads to extra work for teaching staff that they do not get paid for, she herself at the time of the interview is in charge of six external candidates. If possibilities for external candidates are to be enlarged, our interviewee strongly emphasises the need to secure extra payment for the teaching staff.

"(This model of examination for external candidates) could only be expanded if the extra payment for the teachers is secured. It's not that I begrudge them this possibility, but there's a disproportion. For the participants it's for free, but we have to do more work without payment. As teacher we only receive a small rate for the examinations of approx. 7 to 15 Euros depending on the different subjects." (SCHO 135).

Computers are available, though in a limited way. The school is equipped with one computer classroom for students. Teaching staff have access to a computer in the staff rooms. Laptops are not available. Extra-occupational participants are offered the same infrastructure as the other students. Contents of the programme employed adults are offered in blocked form. Students have to be at the school for a one week period. These are called social phases. Between these students take part in individual phases where they are supervised individually via distance education. At the school there are no structures providing that programmes can be conducted in a modular way. Students can not choose what to participate in, this in not part of the curriculum.

A credit point system is not available officially. The diploma degree is being expressed in a credit point version unofficially; it is just a service for graduates helping them to argue on the value of their

education. It is an informal rating of their degree and it is only available for the college programmes. The interviewed teacher stresses that this is not done officially. (SCHO 147)

What opportunities exist for the school to be a site for distance education for adults ?

The school manager thinks that for the education offered at this school an increase of the distance education elements within the adult education programme offered would not make sense. "*As child care worker to be trained through distance education only, this does not match with the occupational field.* "(SCHM 125). She sees differences between the here offered vocational education and other programmes like law or history, as the school offers social education which makes face to face contact necessary.

Are computers available for distance education to take place ?

The school manager tells us that "*of course the school would need more computers"* (SCHM 129)

Does your school allow for a credit or module based system for its students?

Neither a module based system nor a credit based system are available at the school. As far as credits are concerned, the school manager says that she has set up an informal arrangement. *"I do not have international accreditation, but I do have cooperation with tertiary educational institutions and universities, so our graduates can get credit for semester periods per weeks when taking up a social pedagogy university study programme or when participating in a teacher training programme at a teacher training institution at tertiary level.*" (SCHM 133)

The manager sees a new development regarding credits leading to cooperation between different educational institutions. Even if she calls this "*'bilateral' cooperation at personal level",* she at the same time refers to cooperation between different educational institutions. (SCHM 135).

Links between the school and third level.

Please describe any links your school has with third level institutions. For example, are there any outreach activities taking place from the college/university to the school ? Are visits arranged by your school for its students to the campus of third level institutions ? If yes, please describe

When asking on links between the school and the tertiary educational sector, our teaching interviewee says that students at the school are being informed on open days at universities or other tertiary institutions. As the school is comparatively small, she sees no interest of tertiary institutions representatives to visit the school, fewer students can be reached at this school than at others. (SCHO 151)

The school takes part in a national job, training and education fare "BEST" (http://bestinfo.at) aiming mostly at students in and graduates from higher secondary education, but also, though in a still considerable smaller amount, visited by people interested in adult education. (See also 6. adult education at the school site). The school manager also refers to here personal networks, she is also teaching at two Austrian Universities. Further she mentions the above mentioned professional journal on social pedagogy (see also 6. adult education at the school site). Not surprisingly, the school manager here seems to refer also to professional contacts and networks on a management and scientific level, which also includes contacts with tertiary educational institutions. Concerning how such contacts can be also accessible for students at the school, she refers to inviting guest lecturers from tertiary institutions (SCHM 137 - 139).

In your view how could third level institutions in your country become more accessible for students who are traditionally underrepresented at third level (e.g., ethnic minorities, adults living in poverty?)

Our teaching interview partner sees a need to adopt more foreign languages for use at tertiary institutions. She reports that a considerable number of students at this school have an eastern European language background and supports that eastern European languages are integrated better into the educational institutions.

Support for students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups needs to be increased in order to make education more accessible for these groups in the opinion of the teacher we spoke to. The same should be done for women with children who would need more financial assistance. This interview partner states that employed people find it hard to participate in tertiary education, as these education programmes are still mostly taking place during working week. She supports more flexible hours at which educational programmes take place and stresses that now time management is very problematic for employed people and even more for people who are not German-Speakers and have even more problems to organise their education.

"It is necessary to have educational offers at the tertiary level in more than one language (German). I do not only talk about English here. In our field the East (meaning eastern European countries) is very strong. I think about such languages. Financial help also should be increased remarkably for socio-economically disadvantaged people. To make things more easy for them. Also women with children need to be assisted to make education possible for mothers. More choices need to be available then. It is difficult to study when you are employed, if you work all week and educational offers only exist during the week. I can only laugh at this. That is problematic. Either programmes are opened and available during different times. To make offers also during summer and at weekends, not like at university where you need to be present on Tuesday from 11:30 am to 15:30 pm. How can one

organise this? This is very problematic. It is even problematic for Austrian citizens. If you have language difficulties as well, these are additional problems for getting oneself organised within this system. (SCHO 153)

When asked how third level institutions in Austria could become more accessible for traditionally underrepresented students, the school manager does not want to give any comment on as she claims not to have enough expert knowledge on this issue. Also she does not want to give any personal statement on this topic, as she sees this question as one about facts and not one about opinions. (SCHM 143).

School climate and inservice / preservice training for teacher

Please describe the extent of *inservice* training for teachers with regard to developing a) their conflict resolution skills, b) democratic, constructivist teaching methods ? In your view, is the amount of available inservice support sufficient to meet teachers (and students) needs ?

Inservice training for teacher exists, it is offered by state teacher training institutions (Pädagogische Hochschulen) but also by private institutions. The training also includes issues like conflict resolution skills and teaching methods, so tells us the teacher we interviewed. She sees the school supporting inservice training strongly, she is more critical on how the training is organised by the state teacher training institutions. She also mentions that many colleagues within the teaching staff apart from being trained teachers are also qualified as supervisors, counsellors or therapists or psychologists. This holds especially true for those colleagues teaching vocational subjects at this school. (SCHO 159)

The school manager refers to inservice training for teaching staff that are taking part within the institution at least once every semester, this seems to be compulsory, no special incentives are being mentioned by either interview partner. The school manager declares to strongly support teaching colleagues in their efforts concerning inservice training and claims this to be part of her concept of human resources development as much as organizational development. (SCHM 147). The manager sees the supply of training programmes as not enough and means that on federal state level this supply should be increased. Teacher taking part in inservice training can receive travel allowance, but fees *"which can be really quite high for good programmes"* (SCHM 148) have to be paid for by teaching staff themselves. She sees financial resources for fees as a more critical problem than time resources for having teaching staff taking part in training:

"Here (concerning time resources) I am very liberal, and for me it's important to increase inservice training, rather than saying this is not possible due to teaching commitments. Because it's always connected to our students, as the quality (of education) becomes higher (through inservice training)." (SCHM 150). The school manage sees enough possibilities like making changes within timetables or

making use of self study for older students in order to ensure timely resources for inservice training for teachers.

Please describe the extent of preservice training for teachers (i.e., in colleges of education) with regard to developing a) their conflict resolution skills, b) democratic, constructivist teaching methods ? In your view, is the amount of available preservice support sufficient to meet teachers (and students) needs ?

Concerning preservice training, the teacher we spoke to sees differences between the two types of teachers working at the researched school. One part has been trained at university for certain subjects considered as the more theoretical subjects at this school and associated to general education. The other group teach more vocational subjects, for this school different practical field related to social pedagogy. The later are trained at the above mentioned teacher training institutions. The teacher we spoke to sees that this second group as a better preservice training concerning the conflict resolution or teaching methods. The preservice training of academically trained teachers in Austria is often criticised as too theoretical and emphasising on the academic background of subjects but lacking practical techniques of teaching. The teacher we interviewed reflects this general discourse. She also sees problems within schools for young teacher to keep up their motivation and make use of any innovative preservice training. Democratic teaching methods or conflict resolution she sees as necessary, but difficult to achieve as curricula usually do not leave room for these issues. They are general issues that in this school are explicit topics within the curriculum, but in the vast majority of schools in Austria these issues find very little space in practical work.

"If a teacher does not do it from the start it is difficult to do it later. To proceed democratically or to use conflict resolution methods, within the structure of school – like what we talked about before, 'how many hours are used for this?' For those issues that are not part of the curriculum, I have to say 'when should I do this?' concerning the pressure that already exists. … There is no time. Within the curriculum, there are no hours devoted to 'examination of conflict handling skills' or 'conditioning of self-perception", this usually does not exist at schools. In our school these issues are part of the curriculum. We are an exception, because these issues exist within our curriculum." (SCHO 161 / 163)

The school manager we spoke to as well sees lacking preservice training for academically trained teachers for academic secondary (general) education in Austria. For those coming from this educational background and teaching at this school, she sees that in the beginning they strongly need to rely on support from other teaching staff within the school and states, that here more measures would be helpful (SCHM 156). An other group of teaching staff within this school are themselves trained child care workers, whose training the manager sees as more adequate for this

school. General subjects at this school are taught by teachers trained for academic secondary education.

What developments or reforms are needed, in your opinion, for the training of teachers in order to improve school climate and to encourage more students to stay on at school ?

The interviewed teacher advocated to address what education (Bildung) can be. In her view the person needs to be taken into account, through individualisation of education in terms of focussing on individuals instead of whole classes. Also she supports a discussion of the role of teachers in general.

"I myself do not see any definition of the role of teachers today. I experience that it is very difficult to define this role. On one side teachers should offer conflict resolution training and this and the other like life skills and to ask questions on how students see their future. On the other side teacher should impart knowledge and the quality of education and how good a teacher is working, this still is measured trough how much students know in exams. That does not work. There one has to ask basic questions 'what is a teacher today?'" (SCHO 165) She also sees that the legal situation needs to be modernised and that for example teacher training institutions and universities need to do research clarifying how teacher and pedagogues need to be defined as roles and job descriptions today. These legal and research activities in her opinion should lead to new definitions of roles and mission and functions of teachers who, in a second step, should be then given what they need to fulfil these demands. (SCHO)

The school manager emphasises the importance of well founded pedagogical training for teaching staff of all different subjects and it's positive impact on all students, not only at risk students. For teaching staff for academic secondary education in Austria which is being trained in Austria, she criticises that those future teacher have too little practical phases within their own education and preservice teacher training. *"They do not have the chance to try it out for themselves during their own studies[47] and (to see if they actually like teaching) or to say 'no, I'd better like to go into a scientific career and change my studies. Instead, now it's actually decided very early right at the beginning when people start university teacher training (offered for different subjects)"* (SCHM 162). She criticises the teaching training system for this group of teachers where future teachers only at the very end of their university studies have contact to 'real life experience' as a teacher, when it's

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[47] We understand this criticism as directed towards the fact that teaching practice at university takes place too late within the study programmes and therefore the socialisation within the practical professional field comes very late and mostly happens after teachers have finished their training (making it difficult for them to then change their educational and professional choice). The statement does not say that there exists no teaching practice at all within university programmes for teachers.

mostly too late for them to change their professional decision. Apart from fundamental changes within university studies for teachers including early phases of practice, the manager also recommends paid supervision for teaching staff at schools as very necessary measure that does not exist in Austria and needs to be put into reality.

Prison Institution (both interviews)

Index

Background Profile

Background data to profile target groups for access strategies

In Austria there are seven prison institutions (Strafvollzugsanstalten) for men, one for young people and one for women. Furthermore there are 3 more institutions for measure execution (German: Maßnahmenvollzug, i.e. special facilities for dangerously disturbed prisoners and for offenders undergoing withdrawal therapy) and 16 institutions for juridical imprisonment (gerichtliche Gefangenenhäuser, which are associated with a regional court. At these institutions for juridical imprisonment mostly prisoners awaiting trial and prisoners whose sentences are no longer than 18 month are situated.).

By the first of March 2008, 8,600 people have been in any form of detainment in Austria; there from 3,638 (42%) detainees obtain a foreign nationality, coming from around 100 different nations. 5 percent of the prisoners are women and 3 percent are young offenders between 14 and 18 years. The group of young adults (between 18 and 21 years) accounts to 8 percent.

The majority of the employees in juridical institutions are jailers (3,005), the rest (818) consist of other professions like administrational staff or medical staff, psychologists and social workers.

Funding sources for Prison Education

In 2007, the total costs spent on educational measurements in prisons, amounted to 406,421 Euros in Austria.

The sources for funding of prison education are generally coming from the national budget of the Ministry of Justice. However, some educational schemes (apprenticeships) are also supported and financed by the public employment service (AMS)[48].

We have not succeeded in researching much information on the described prison institutions' budget within our interviews. At general information website from the authorities for all Austrian prison institutions some numbers can be found[49], though, where also the amount of budget is listed that is generated by offers of these institutions which include the workforce of prisoners,. For 2008, the budget for all prison institutions amounted 319 Million Euro, of which approx. 162 Million Euros account for material cost and 157 Million for personnel expenditure, whereas revenue amounted to

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[48] The public employment service (AMS) is a public enterprise politically steered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and by social partners and financed on the basis of the public unemployment insurance system (paid by employers and employees).

[49] http://strafvollzug.justiz.gv.at/

48.7 Million Euro. Prisoners are obliged to work. Prison institutions in Austria include workshops and establishments in 50 different branches where orders coming from private enterprises can be fulfilled.

Features of the institution's

Mission statement,

According to the text on the webpage, the special focus of the determined prison institution is the social, familial and professional rehabilitation. One of the specifics in this institutions is the "loose enforcement of sentences" ("gelockerter Strafvollzug" according to § 126 StVG) which means, that up to 170 eligible inmates are allowed to regularly visit their families on the weekends. Furthermore up to 120 prisoners are eligible to work with companies of the free labour market during the week. Besides, also a variety of work and vocational training is offered within the prison.

The educational measures for prisoners are accompanied by a pedagogical and social counselling service. Inmates can get support and advice with their career plans and with their social, financial or familiar problems. The social service consists of 5 social workers, whereas also external stuff from the private sector or from network organizations is engaged occasionally.

Strategic plan (if any) which are relevant to:

No particular strategic plan has been published – see also relevant section in interview

Background information on availability or otherwise of free or reduced childcare generally for socio-economically disadvantaged groups

This was no topic in the researched institution.

Background information on availability or otherwise of free or reduced fees for formal and non-formal education generally for socio-economically disadvantaged groups

Generally prison education has to be paid for by prisoners if a programme is liable for fees. The prison institution represented by our interview partners does not pay for any external educational measures. The public employment service in Austria pays for most of the external educational programmes if certain requirements are fulfilled (e.g. if the educational programme takes part within the last 6 months of the sentence). This is valid for the researched prison institution, but this does not necessarily hold true for other prisons in Austria respectively for prison institutions in other provinces in Austria.

Categories of Research

Background Features of the Prison

According to the educational officer, the number of prisoners is fluctuating weekly, in average they amount to between 420 and 460 persons. The prison manager estimates the number slightly higher on an average between 450 to 600 inmates, and referred to the actual number of 465 that day. Generally an increase of prisoners can be noticed. The detainees of this penal institution are male only and in the age ranges from 18 onwards.

The institution used to be a reformatory for youngsters for many years and became a small penal institution in 1975. Later a new building was attached and it opened new as a big sized prison in the year 1998.

The security level of the prison is estimated between low (PM) and medium (PO)[50]. In general, the prisoners don't remain in the institution for more than 6 years. The observed prison institute is conceptualised as also including freewheeling sentences (gelockerter Strafvollzug)[51]. However, since there have been some changes in the law, the institute is now also taking remand prisoners (Untersuchungshäftlinge) for who a higher level of security applies. (PM)

What regards the promotion of access to education, the organization considers itself as more developed than typical other prisons, as a higher than average variety of educational schemes and possibilities are offered. The prison manager explains this with the historic tradition of the institute, where education has always been a main focus. The operational officer also highlights, that many of the educational offers are supported by the national job agency.

Education currently available in prison

Internally it is possible to make an intensive training for skilled work in 6 different professions, but also other courses are offered for the prisoners. For those who have a freewheeling execution, it is also possible to enrol a course or education outside the prisons premises.

When counting together all the different education schemes, including trainings outside the

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[50] In Austria prison institutions as such are not seen within the categories suggested by our interview manual, but three different forms of fulfillment of sentences are known, leading to different "mixes" of fulfillment in different prison institutions.

[51] Gelockerter Strafvollzug defines a form of correction where prisoners can leave their cells, move more freely within the prison institution and can in other ways live more free although they are still imprisoned. Participation in education requires that prisoners have this status which they only receive after some time of imprisonment and which is not allowed those prisoners who are considered dangerous or who have misused this status before.

institution and short term courses, the amount of prisoners, who receive any kind of education per annum is estimated on 200 or higher by the operational officer, this accounts to almost the half of all detainees.

*"Yes, 200, 220. If I really sum up all the "Hauptschulabschlusskurse"[52] all the support courses, respectively basis educational courses like German language trainings, stacking driver trainings,… if I really sum up all of that, one can act on this assumption" (*PO, 32)

The prison manager estimates the proportion on at least a third of all inmates, considering that it is hard to tell for prisoners on remand, who usually get enrolled in German language courses but often don't complete it. After inquiry, the manager stated, that approximately 10 to 15 percent of the prisoners during a year don't get any education, sometimes due to mental problems:

"I can say in percentage there might be a part (of the inmates), which due to a lack of German language skills (…) my god maybe 10-15%, where I say there is no opportunity from the beginning, maybe also due to a general lack of abilities or psychological problems. Of course there are also people like this" (PM, 00:03:42-2)

According to the information on the homepage, since 1975, the total number of more than 1,000 prisoners could complete a certified vocational training during detainment within the here described prison institution, which is considered as a peak value for Austria.

Is there a profile of which types of prisoner engage most in education?

There is no general profile of a typical prisoner, who is most engaged in education. It usually depends on the kind of offer which types of inmates participate.

"Looking at the intensive skilled workers training, rather the younger prisoners, who are early school leavers, are interested in it. That means, they have already started a vocational training and now want to complete it or they say: ok, I want to start up new. If an offer of a German language training is concerned, than it is certainly so, that foreign nationalities are interested, for whom German is an foreign language" (PO, 34)

According to the management, the age group of prisoners who engage most in education is the same like in the general population; intensive vocational trainings are predominantly attractive for younger inmates and less for older workers, who might already have completed such a professional education earlier in their life. (PM)

Also it depends on the duration of imprisonment, whether an inmate has the time (and therefore considers it as worth) to go in for a long term education. (PO)

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52 Preparation course for lower secondary final exam.

Is there a library in the prison?

There is a library in the prison, which for sure consists of at least 10,000 books, according to the estimation of the prison education officer. It is also possible to lend movies. The manager of the prison adds that many of the books are also available in foreign languages, so that as many inmates as possible can make use of this offer, moreover it is tried to consider trends and demands when purchasing new books.

What classes are available for prisoners? Please list all classes on offer.

The following trainings are available for the prisoners according to the homepage:

- Intensive vocational training for skilled workers, in 6 different professions (carpenter, painter, bricklayer, cook, plumber, locksmith, baker) with certification.

- Classes in stock administration, German for foreigners, ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence[53], an internationally standardised ITC training and certification programme) including certification, stock driver courses, first aid courses

- Given appropriateness, there is also the possibility for inmates to enrol and complete every education, course or training outside the prison premises. This also applies for higher education institutes like universities or universities of applied sciences.

The interviewed operational officer confirmed and complemented this information:

"There are classes, that are temporarily limited like German as foreign language, English, stacker driver courses, special promotion courses[54], basic skills courses, courses that lead to completion of lower secondary school level. We also just opened a new education track for house maintenance, a kind of a janitor or cleaning staff. However, the big part is the intensive training for skilled workers; an apprenticeship compacted into 12 month for people over 18 years" (operational officer, 34)

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[53] Further information on ECDL in Austria in German: http://www.ecdl.at/
Information on the ECDL Foundation in English: http://www.ecdl.org/publisher/index.jsp

[54] Special promotion courses are basic trainings in mathematics, reading and writing and particularly address people who left school at an early stage.

The compacted apprenticeship scheme (intensive apprenticeship training for skilled workers called "Facharbeiterausbildung" in German) that was mentioned in the quote is copied from the national job agency that offers the same programme for people outside the prison, who want to catch up on this kind of training in a shorter time. The normal apprenticeship training in Austria is usually meant as formal education option for young people after completion of compulsory education in lower secondary school. It is a dual vocational training scheme consisting of practical and theoretical parts. The practical part consists of employed work in an enterprise; the theoretical part is being covered by state run schools (Berufsschule) often two half days or one full day each week. However, it can also be applied for adults.

In prison the practical training is carried out within the premises (there is always need for craftsmen) and supervised by officials of the prison institute who are licensed to do so. External teachers proved theoretical education within the prison institution. According to the operational officer, effort is made, to add a new vocation every year, and – with support of the national job agency - it is tried to meet the needs of the labour market, so that participants can get mediated easier after leaving the prison. The national job agency bears the costs for this form of intensive apprenticeship training. (PO) According to the interviewed manager, next to the special programme intensive apprenticeship training and of the possibility to attend courses outside, also language courses and trainings about how to apply for a job are very popular offers in the observed prison.

Do prisoners have a free choice in which classes to participate? Is there an obligation or compulsion to attend classes?

According to the operational officer, there is no obligatory participation in education. Prisoners are obliged to work, but not to participate in education or training. All training offers are announced, and the prisoners can get in touch, when they are interested. First they have to have a conversation about their motivation to enrol in the course and later the authorities decide, whether they can take part or not.

A different approach than the non-compulsory one could be seen with regard to participants of the apprenticeship schemes. They have to take part in one of the above mentioned special promotion courses for basic skills, if the works manager considers it as necessary:

"For special promotion courses those people have to participate, who are doing an apprenticeship and where the works manager says 'he cannot even build a clear sentence' or 'he cannot even add together 2 and 2'." (operational officer, 78)

The interviewed manager of the prison highlighted, that particularly the intensive training for skilled workers is limited in available places, and that therefore certain preconditions and commitments must be agreed on in order to not waste internal resources. (PM)

Please explain How many hours per week of classes can a prisoner participate in? Maximum/minimum

The above mentioned short term courses take 5 hours per week, which would be the minimum duration. (PO)

People in an apprenticeship scheme have kind of a full time education (6 hours per day), as their training includes both, practical work and theoretical classes.

A working day of 8 hours per day is not manageable in the organizational framework of the prison and only applies for those few prisoners, who are allowed to work in an external company outside the prisons premises. (PM)

What incentives are there for prisoners to participate in adult education in prison ?

One incentive to participate in educational – at least what regards the observed prison institution – was found to be the possibility to be outside the inmate accommodation and to escape the daily routine of a usual inmate. The undertakings, e.g. workshops for practical training, are all in the freewheeling part of the premises[55] and therefore the prisoners have a lot of space to move and to come together with others. (PO)

Furthermore, there is a financial incentive. Those prisoners, who are enrolled in an educational scheme, are assessed in a higher category. In general all prisoners get paid for their work, but those in education get more, whereas the time in education is equivalent respectively accredited to the time of work they are obliged to (6 hours a day).

*"Let's assume, an inmate works in a prison factory and decides to enroll a course for completion of secondary level. It is not every day, but twice a week. He gets paid better for school than for working in the factory" (*PO)

The clear incentive for the prison manager is just seen in the increased chances that detainees have after their sentences, through education.

"saying o.k., I at least will use the time to optimize my later forthcoming, well, most of them recognize this by themselves, because they have the time and the offers" (PM)

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[55] Only prisoners who are allowed to „Gelockerter Strafvollzug" (see Footnote 4) are able to move more freely within these parts of the prison premises.

Are there processes or strategies used to help motivate prisoners to engage in education ?´

In order to motivate prisoners to engage in education, conversations with them are held on a regular basis:

"Particularly with the younger inmates it is consistently inquired 'wouldn't you like' and 'couldn't you…' and 'how do you plan your next future, wouldn't it be beneficial for you to…' and so on (PO)

Furthermore career counselling is offered and 4 times a year an information event is organized, where prisoners can inform themselves about trends on the labour market.

Are there any practices which might discourage prisoners from engaging in education, e.g., losing payments for work if attending classes ?

The only factor, which could discourage prisoners from engaging in education, is defamation or mobbing from other prison mates, who consider education as nonsense. Education doesn't necessarily have a good image, and particularly those in apprenticeships have to learn a lot and thus have to find – or even fight for - time, place and freedom to do so. The operational officer explains the difficulties, which this situation entails for the affected prisoners:

"Here they have to have a relatively good self confidence, for being able to ask the other three inmates to lower the volume of the television, or of their computer games, and generally to ask them for being more quiet, because he needs to learn."

The problem is, that there are no separate rooms for retreat and learning available in prison, often the detainees have to share their accommodation with 6 other people. Only few prisoners can be in a single cell and they are usually needed and reserved for non smokers or for people who have psychological problems. (PO)

The interviewed manager, in contrast, doesn't see any discouraging factors:

"Some prisoners just don't want because they are not interested. But in terms of discouragement? No, not at all. Every inmate of course takes advantage of every opportunity to get out of his cell, thus everything that is breaking the daily routine actually is much requested. We rather have to consider how to select, so that we find the right person for the corresponding measure" (PM)

Are there any practices of peer mentoring in education in prison?

The interviewed management representative couldn't tell about any real peer mentoring practice in prison. According to the operational officer, mentoring practices in education might only exist (or might have existed) in the framework of computer trainings respectively ECDL courses. Inmates, who know how to work with computer, can be appointed and train the others.

However, after making bad experience with that practice (one of the inmates, who was engaged for training, took advantage of the situation and dismantled parts of the hardware and cracked the

internet connection) they are now more careful and came to the conclusion, that it is not really possible to do this in prison.

Is there any option for accreditation of prisoners' learning in these classes? If yes, please give details

The operational officer told us that, if a prisoner already has a certain certificate, it is tried to build up on that and to qualify him in an appropriate way. By letting them enrol constructive classes, the prisoner prior learning is accredited and he doesn't have to start from the beginning. (PO) Also specialization is promoted:

"If a prisoner has already completed a vocational training as carpenter, it is made possible for him that he gets computer training in this area, because several things exist in this field." (PO)

Furthermore – at least for those who are allowed to – it is always possible to catch up on a formal certificate by enrolling a corresponding educational offer outside the prison. (PM)

What models of good practice are evident in the prison regarding adult education ? Please outline in detail

According to the operational officer the „Facharbeiterintesivausbildung"(intensive apprenticeship training for skilled workers) can be considered to be an evident good practice in prison what regards adult education.

This kind of educational measure already exists for 30 years in the observed institution and the interviewee recommends, that also other prisons should „*afford"* this measure. The main advantage of this intensive training is that people can attain a well founded education even within a short period of detainment. Especially those, who will soon be available again for the labour market outside benefit from this particular educational scheme.

"There are several young adults, who are sentenced to 2 or 3 years of detainment, whereas 3 years are not 3 years, because the period of remand has to be abstracted or one is released earlier. And I think we should give those people something to take with them, so that they can use their detainment in a meaningful way." (PO)

Apprenticeships for adults are also offered in four of the other big prison institutions in Austria; however they predominantly have long term detainees, and therefore can offer an apprenticeship training in the normal period of time. The extraordinary apprenticeship certification (intensive training for skilled workers) also exists in 2 other Austrian prison institutes, however only for one particular profession each. This practice is also considered as good considering the effects on the national economy. Qualifying the prisoners in that direction is very useful, as *"professional work force and skilled workers are simply necessary and demanded"* (PO)

The intensive training for skilled workers is was also mentioned as good practice by the interviewee from management level. Particularly the bakery was found to be excellent in terms of provided quality and performance on the market outside. (PM)

Where do the prison classes take place? Could you describe in detail the physical environment and how it facilitates or presents an obstacle to learning?

The prison classes take place in particular teaching rooms inside the institution, for the apprenticeships there are 2 rooms, one of which with computer equipment. According to both of the interviewees the rooms are sufficiently equipped and don't represent any obstacles for learning. Internet access is not possible for prisoners due to security reasons.

Furthermore, the operational officer mentioned that external teachers are engaged, which is also considered as positive, as they bring in social standards from the "outside world". The interviewee also pointed out, that external stuff is more reliable in terms of time, than a justice officer could be, if appointed for teaching.

Are there any classes with a personal development focus on a) life skills, b) conflict resolution skills, c) coping with addiction, d) artistic/musical expression ?

There is anti violence training offered in this prison institution, furthermore there are group and individual therapies offered, where issues like coping with addictions are dealt with. What regards general life control, a job coaching programme was mentioned, that supports the prisoners with their career orientation and with applications. (PO)

A training of social competences doesn't exist though; and neither do trainings towards artistic or musical expressions. The interviewed manager only mentioned that it is generally possible to bring a music instrument into prison and play.

Every detainee is free to get in touch with a psychologist, when there are certain needs. In case of drug addiction, the identified detainee is asked, if he wants do something against it and he can decide for an offer. Only if there is a juridical condition together with his sentences, than it is an obligation to do a therapy.

Are any classes given formal accreditation? Please describe.

It is found very important for the responsible person in the institution (operational officer) that the classes in prison can get accredited officially. Therefore it is agreed with every educational contractor, that certificates or at least a confirmation of the attendance is written for them.

However, most of the offered trainings are certified anyway, as they are also offered in the same way outside the prison, like e.g. the computer certification ECDL. (PO)

The aforementioned intensive training for skilled workers is officially certified. (PM)

Besides, for authorized prisoners, it is also possible to catch up with the final examination of the lower secondary level, or also with the upper secondary level which provides general access to higher education. This is made in cooperation with other educational institutes outside the prison. Given, that the behaviour of the inmate is adequate and several conditions are fulfilled, he can also go outside to study at a higher school or university. Still, this is not often the case. (PO)

"Their behaviour has to be given, so that you can say, there is nothing serious to expect. They follow the rules. If somebody goes every evening to a higher school from 6 to 10 p.m., a certain amount of trust must be here, that he really takes the tram at 10 to go back to prison. That is not easy!" PO

Background to prison education

Does the prison mission statement refer to a) lifelong learning, b) rehabilitation goals

The prisons mission statement, respectively the regarding law on a national level, refers strongly to rehabilitation goals. This is reflected by the answers of the two interviewees.

According to the operational officer, the daily routine in the prison is supposed to prepare the inmates to a normal life outside in terms of regular working times and leisure times. However, it was admitted, that there are *"no specific programmes, where social competences or life coping strategies are issued, or where a supervised reflection takes place"* (PO). This is considered as a general phenomenon in Austrian prisons institutes.

The interviewed manager, in contrary, highlighted more the importance of providing proper and time adequate education, when rehabilitation is concerned:

„The aspect of rehabilitation, to bring them back into society, without work or without adequate skills, it is going to be more and more difficult nowadays. That is our main task." (PM)

What regards the promotion of lifelong learning, there is no strategic plan per definition, the concept seems to be integrated on a low level, though.

The interviewed manager explained, that just motivating the prisoners and trying to prevent them from breaking up too early, is an important effort, that is done in order to support lifelong learning. The operational officer answered in a similar way:

"I think it's a matter of definition. What *is lifelong learning? In my opinion it is also learning and saying: 'o.k., I get up and care about my own things'. This is something, which surely is promoted. (…) If someone comes to me and says: 'couldn't you write me this or that', I say, 'no, you write it by*

yourself, but you are welcome to come again and I correct it for you'. That, form me, is already an effect of learning" (PO)

Learning is promoted on a daily basis, when situations emerge, that make it seem necessary. According to the operational officer, waiting for specific courses doesn't always make sense, as many issues should be tackled immediately. Moreover, it is often hard to plan courses, when it is insecure, how long the prisoner is going to stay. Particular what regards detainees on remand, there is hardly any possibility to plan, as they could stay in the institute for a period of just 2 weeks up to one and a half years.

"There is no possibility to plan; I cannot put a person in a course that takes one year, because he is maybe away after two weeks". (PO)

What are the sources of funding for adult education in prison? What percentage of the overall prison budget goes to education and/or rehabilitation services?

The interviewed prison manager could not give a concrete answer to these questions and suggested to ask in the direction or the responsible officer (same person, who was interviewed for the operational level) as there are always difficult single negotiations involved:

"We partly used to have teachers from school or we got fix staff positions (Planstellen) granted, we also used to have good financial provisions from the national job agency. In the meantime this all is very difficult up to hardly possible with the issue of single negotiations, as of course many things partly affect different Ministries and authorities. That means, getting teachers provided from the ministry of education is getting more and more difficult". (PM)

The only thing which could be said was that the funding consists of 3 parts, one part is coming from the budget of the justice resort in the ministry, and the two other parts come from agreements between the national job agency and another local education institute (BFI). The amount of money that can be collected was considered as not very much. (PM)

The responsible person (operational officer in education) has to present a budget plan to the ministry every year, where the amount of money, needed for educational measures, is included. In the interview with this person a clear number could be indicated:

"This year I requested 24.000 Euro for educational measures (...) just courses, trainers and education in a narrow definition" (PO)

The percentage of the overall prison budget that goes to education services is estimated to hardly a third of the overall prison budget by the operational officer. Particularly the apprentice scheme represents a big part of these costs. According to the official, the national job agency doesn't always give financial support in the same proportion to every prison, which makes it hard to say, though.

Beside the apprenticeship scheme, all other educational measures have to be paid by the prison institutions themselves, respectively by the ministry of justice. (PO)

The proportion spent for rehabilitation services as such (apart from education) was not mentioned by either of the interviewees.

Could you give a brief account of the historical development of education in the prison (e.g. when did it first start, how has it progressed or declined in recent years, where did the impetus come from to establish classes in prison, what advantages and difficulties have been experienced with prison education over the years)

The observed institution was in a way a starting point of education in prison institutes, as it used to be an educational institute for children before 1970, where education has always been the main focus. Initially with the reformation of the penal law in 1969, further education was statutorily recognised as important part of rehabilitation. From that moment on, all prison institutes started to think about resources and possibilities in order to put this into action and education in prison expanded. However, according to the operational officer, this year a distinct decrease in the educational budget was noticed for the first time:

"This year is the first, where one can say, we have a lot less budget. That is than a matter of negotiation with the economic department. To ask how much there is still left and what can we do this year. Than I say, o.k., maybe I do not engage a job coach from outside, but rather do it by myself or I look for qualified colleagues." (PO)

The prison manager also referred to the change in law that took place in the 1970s, from this moment on, educational influence – and particularly also language development - was an official goal for prisons. (PM) This refers to a great reform of criminal law in Austria that came into effect in 1975. The social democrats in government at that time reformed law in Austria, also criminal law (German: Strafgesetzbuch, StGB), emphasising resocialisation and social rehabilitation as aims of this legal reform. Within this reform also Strafvollzugsgesetz StVG (penal law) was reformed and modernised, abolishing forms of arrest like incarceration. Generally, this legal reform led to a modernisation of law with great influence on Austrian society, granting more rights to women within family law and abolishing the most harsh forms of legal prohibition of homosexuality and abortion.

The operational officer states that two main advantages have been experienced with prison education, particularly with the idea of combining education and practical work in apprenticeships. Positive effects on both, the personal development of the inmate and the financial situation of prisons, could be noticed:

"One advantage is, that people get qualified, the self confidence increases, and with every course and certificate the person notices, that he or she is skilled and that it is not true, that nobody can use him/her for anything. One further advantage surely is that through work/services that are offered by the prisons, additional money is gained. By offering high quality of carpentry on the free market money can return to the prisons." (PO)

The only difficulties that might have been experienced over the years with the implementation of education are sceptics among other colleagues, who might not always understand the meaning of courses and why it makes sense to spend money on it. In this case, the effort of legitimating is still required. (PO)

Do you still see problems that people working within the prison institution do not see how important education is for prisoners, do you see needs to legitimate this?

"Yes, again and again. Especially among my colleagues. To explain why this is worth it although it costs so much. This often is an issue. But it's not like I cannot handle it. But it is wearing if I have to justify again 'why again such a course'?" (PO)

The prison manger indicated that particularly older prison staff might have experiences difficulties in adapting to new approaches in prison and in dealing with more and more prisoners from different nationalities, which come in due to changing global developments:

"Well, when listening to older colleagues, it was of course difficult to deal with the general change. Years ago it was not even allowed to speak with the inmates (…) here a big change took place, particularly regarding communication and generally in terms of teaching and learning. 30 years ago it surly has been different". (PM)

Continuity of education

What structures or procedures are in place to allow for continuity of education for a prisoner after he/she leaves prison?

When the prisoner leaves prison, he gets probation assistance from an external person, which is not associated with the prison institute, but who provides social work. Besides, prison staff tries keep in contact with the national job agency, and to inform them about qualifications gained during imprisonment (PO)

According to the prison manager, the probation assistance already starts with its work at the end of the sentences, when prison staff is informed about the leave of the inmate. However in terms of education and structures to allow continuity of it, it is mainly all about motivation:

"Well, it is very difficult. We now for examples have the situation, when somebody is released earlier we have the opportunity by law, to leave him inside so that he can take part and complete his education. Partly, if it's an education measure sponsored by the national job agency, it might also be possible, that people can continue the courses outside and stuff, just if they then really continue or not, here we don't have an influence anymore. Here the probation assistant our partner for sustainability, to motivate the people that they continue. But that of course is the most difficult story" (PM)

Are individual education plans for prisoners (plans designed in consultation with the prisoner, to meet their learning needs and goals) ever developed ? If yes, please give details, if no, what obstacles do you envisage to their development?

According to the interviewed operational officer, who is in charge of educational affairs, education plans are developed in consultation with the prisoners. Some tests are made and it is talked about different ideas and expectations regarding future learning needs. (PO)

 According to the management, educational plans are only done in single cases. Furthermore it was added, that it is more difficult in the city than in the province, to organize something for the prisoners future:

"I used to work in a periphery region of Austria for a long time. There the social net is much narrower and there you have regular contact with companies and educational institutes. Here this form of sustainability is much easier, because also the social control is bigger, because they have smaller entities there; there it was very well possible (to make a plan). In the urban region I could say I lack experience, but I guess it is more difficult." (PM)

 Distance education

Are there any computer facilities for distance education modules ? Please describe. Are there any plans to implement this in the near future ?

According to the operational officer, in general everybody in prison can do distance education and organize printed learning material. However, due to security reasons it is not possible to use a computer with internet connection. Too much risk in terms of misuse is seen (and also was experienced) with the usage of modern communication media; therefore e.g. also usb-devices and CD writer are prohibited. The existing computer equipment is considered as sufficient and there are no plans to implement e-learning in the near future. (PO)

The prison manager had a contrary response to the question of distance education:

"... for the moment I cannot say, if some of the inmates take part in it, but generally there is a possibility to do it. I can remember in (name of another prison) there was somebody who made a

*fitness coach training partly inside and partly outside. We of course checked if there is any (…) because computers are in a way dangerous with internet and security (…) but in general it is possible. It is proved for the single cases." (*PM)

According to the manager, it is also planned to buy more computers for the prison, however the problem of security is still considered:

"We just have the problem, that it is said, a part uses them constructively and others for manipulation or things that are dangerous for security. This is this balancing act and we are a juridical institute, simply a prison. There are some plans, but I cannot tell you now, how far they are developed. I don't know, but of course it is considered." (PM)

What obstacles would you envisage to distance education in your prison ?

The obstacle for distance education simply is the consideration of the security risk. The staff are afraid, that prisoners e.g. could use the computer for dealing with drugs etc., like they also do with illegal mobile phones.

In exceptional cases, it is tried to avoid the risk by acting as personal transmitter:

"Once, there was one, who wanted to attend a college for applied sciences, so I organized the whole script on CD for him and checked the content before (…) he then got the exam from me, filled it in, and I submitted it".

However, this is a very time consuming service and therefore cannot be offered to a bigger extent.

Support services in prison

Are there any procedures for identifying prisoners with literacy problems? If yes, how does this initial assessment take place, please give details

There are no structural procedures or programmes in the prison for identifying prisoners with literacy problems. According to the operational officer, it is only possible to take notice them when they get in touch and want to do a course or education, however it is difficult for them to come out. It is hard to discover them also because they usually ask other prison mates to write them official letters when necessary. Thus, they are never detected when they don't want to be. (PO)

The prison manager, in contrary, has the opinion, that literacy problem will be discovered:

"My employees will notice it, when they arrive or when they have to fill out something. That you notice relatively fast. Let's say speaking skills are mostly given, but there are a few, who have a very low level of writing skills." (PM)

This interviewee also noted that the writing abilities of prisoners generally decreased in the recent years:

"I am active in prison education already for almost 10 years and if I compare the applicants from 10 years ago and today, there is a huge crash (…) it can be noticed, that when people don't write anymore by hand but only with computers all the time…"

Are there any procedures for identifying prisoners with specific learning difficulties? If yes, how does this initial assessment of these special needs take place, please give details

According to the operational officer, there are no procedures for identifying prisoners with specific learning difficulties, neither do initial assessments exist.

The prison manager mentioned single cases, that she remembers where dyslexia was discovered and that it is than tried to do something against it with external trainers.

Are there counsellors/therapists available for prisoners?

According to the operational manager there are social workers, psychologists and pedagogues available for the prisoners. In special services, initial conversations are made and in course of doing that, personal deficits of the inmates might be discovered. Generally, counselling and therapy is offered. (PO)

The prison manager points out, that there is a good network of institutions from outside, who offer these social services for the prisoners.

Prisoner Profiles

Is there any information available on the educational levels of prisoners ? Could you comment on the typical educational profile of the average prisoner (e.g., what level of education would they have attained?)

It is hard to define a typical prisoner for this particular institute, as they are coming from very different educational backgrounds. There are inmates who have been resistant to education in their past like early school leavers, but also people who have third level education up to doctorates. The presented prison institute attracts many prisoners with higher education, as a higher than average extent of education is offered and as it is specialized on the freewheeling sentences.

However, speaking generally for all Austrian prison institutes, the interviewee guesses, that there are more people with lower educational background in prison, as they are typically coming from socially disadvantaged environments, where unemployment, debts, violence and drug problems are highly prevalent. (PO)

The prison manager adds, that a higher level of education is more prevalent among older prisoners, who committed economical crime, but what regards younger people, they predominantly are early school leavers. (PM)

What differences are you aware of between male and female prisoners and participation in adult education in prison ?

This question doesn't apply; as there are no women in the prison institute (see section above). Furthermore the general proportion of female prisoners in Austria is very low.

Are there problems of discipline with the prisoners attending classes? Please describe

According to the operational officer, discipline is always a topic in prison, but problems are not related to education and don't emerge particularly when prisoners are in classes. When somebody shows bad behaviour during the lesson, the same can happen any other time and place as well, it usually is for other reasons. (PO)

The manager adds that there are of course also treatments, when bad behaviour is going over the limits.

"For some it has to come so far, that they just can not take part anymore. This is rather seldom, but it can happen" (PM)

Tutors in Prison

Are prison tutors on short term, long term contracts (or none at all) ?

According to the operational officer, prison tutors have a freelance contract and charge a fee according to the student units and there are no permanent or long-term contracts.

According to the prison manager, *there are two kinds* of tutors:

"Some are engaged for certain modules externally, and others are employees of the house, who have their working place here and additionally have a special qualification". (PM)

According to the manager, tutors are predominantly internal staff members, as the apprenticeship scheme is mainly running internally. Some of the employed officials are licensed to lead workshops and supervise the undertakings in the house.

Do the tutors use adult education/constructivist methods of teaching e.g., active involvement of the learner, relating the material to the person's life experience, democratic classroom atmosphere ?

As many tutors are coming from enterprises outside the prison, the latest methods and a good quality of teaching for adult learners can be assured. The teachers are in contact with vocational schools outside and regularly update their knowledge. This is stated by both of the interviewees.

Although very good experiences are made with engaging external staff, one problem still exists with this practice: *"some of the professional teachers don't want to work for the amount of money, which the prison can offer them."* (PO)

Future directions

What opportunities in your opinion exist for expansion of adult education in the prison, and other prisons nationally ?

What regards opportunities for expansion of adult education in prison, it is feared that the current financial crises rather will hinder further developments. As the number of imprisonments is rising again, the overall costs will do as well, and this means less investment in education. (PO)

However, it is hoped that the European Union will continue making interesting programmes where prison education is included; by getting involved in such projects the institutes could benefit from their resources and would not be dependent only on its own. (PO)

The prison manager stated, that the current status is already satisfying: *"I think, if we can keep what we have now, we are already good, and as there will always be the problem of the changing inmate's population, the main focus will stay on counteracting language barriers."* (PM)

What obstacles do you perceive to implementation of education in prison ? How can these be overcome in your opinion ?

The main perceived obstacle to implement prison education is the limited budget, for this both of the interviewee agree:

"Predominantly it is about money. It is not so much about acceptance or about a lack of ideas. (…) I could immediately bring folders with lots of things in it, that I would like to do." (PO)

"On the one hand side it could be the organizational side, but most of all the financial side is of course a problem. It is a problem of resources that you always have to watch out, how to manage it (…) do I have the required staff or the rooms and (…) and of course always, whether the inmates are appropriate in terms of motivation and security standards" (PO)

The operational officer ads, that in prison common fund raising instruments, like using the market, do not work. For example it is not possible to hang up posters to make advertisement for sponsors.

What obstacles do you perceive to expansion of education in prison ? How can these be overcome in your opinion ? Situational obstacles, attitudinal obstacles, financial obstacles, interpersonal obstacles, other obstacles

The main perceived obstacle to expansion of education in prison is the financial situation.

When considering other obstacles like attitudinal or situational ones, a further difficulty might be the missing acceptance for some of the educational tracks, expressed by other staff members. Some educational tracks could be considered as not necessary or stupid. (PO)

Moreover the population and the profiles of the inmates are changing relatively often, which makes it sometimes difficult to provide targeted offers. For example what regards language courses it is not always possible to find at the same time enough participants, who are coming from the same foreign nationality, which can then get served adequately in a special class, and doing it individually would be too expensive. The same applies for drug addicts, who would need special targeted educational offers, but this population is fluctuating monthly. (PO)

The prison manager does not see much potential to overcome certain obstacles in prison:

"We have to deal with humans, who got deviant and have certain basic problems. To counteract this is our main task and that is generally very difficult."

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on adult education in prison?

According to the operational officer, the recession might simply entail less money and a decrease in the national resources.

The manager worried most about the work, and effects that the recession might have on the mediation of prisoners to companies outside after release: "When times are bad outside, it is even harder to mediate our people than it is already in general". Toward the effects on adult education, estimation was refused.

Details on a model of practice: „Facharbeiterintensivausbildung" - intensive apprenticeship training (an apprenticeship compacted into 12 month for people over 18 years)

Objectives of the practice

The „Facharbeiterintensivausbildung" (intensive apprenticeship training) was considered to be an evident good practice in prison what regards adult education.

Target groups

People who are here having a shorter period of sentences and still should be provided with sustainable education. Especially early school leavers and young people who are imprisoned can benefit.

Funding sources (including non-standard funding sources)

Supported by national employment agency, who offer it the same way outside.

History/background of the model (when established, its developmental progress)

This kind of educational measure already exists for 30 years in the observed institution. (Since 1975)

Number of participants/service users annually

Since 1975, the total number of more than 1.000 prisoners could complete a certified vocational training during detainment in this prison institution, which is considered as a peak value for the Austrian area.

In 2007 within all Austrian prison institutions 69 inmates participated in the intensive vocational training. Furthermore 118 completed the certificated vocational training in the normal form and time. In the researched prison institution the interview partner on operational level stated that currently up to 60 prisoners per year participate in the Facharbeiterintensivausbildung.

Location & training

The practical training as well as the theoretical lessons takes place in the prisons premises. For the theoretical part professional external trainer come to teach.

Perceived strengths and weaknesses

The main advantage of this intensive training is that people can attain a well founded education even within a short period of detainment. Especially those, who will soon be available again for the labour market outside, benefit from this particular educational scheme,

"There are several young adults, who are sentenced to 2 or 3 years of detainment, whereas 3 years are not 3 years, because the period of remand has to be abstracted or one is released earlier. And I think we should give those people something to take with them, so they can use their detainment in a meaningful way."

Apprenticeships are also offered in four of the other big prison institutions in Austria; however they predominantly have long term detainees, and therefore can offer an apprenticeship in the normal period of time. The extraordinary apprenticeship certification also exists in 2 other Austrian prison institutes, however only for one particular profession each.

Furthermore it is good for the national economy, to qualify the prisoners in that direction, as

"professional work force and skilled workers are simply necessary and demanded"

Priority needs for expansion of the model/service (this would include perceptions of implications of the current recession for this model)

To keep the national employment agency as a sponsor.

Methods of feedback, evaluation

Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model

Fear of potential budget cuts which would also effect prison education. Expectation that the economic crisis could lead to rising the number of imprisoned persons.

It is difficult to tell how participants of this model are being referred to (prisoners, students, workers). It seems to depend on the context, but we would estimate that they are still seen primarily as prisoners, as the context 'prison institution' still is a very powerful context in society (e.g. leading to stigmatisation). Still, it also seems that those who succeed in participating in this programme are already in a better position than some other inmates with similar or less educational background, but probably also have had some preconditions (socially and psychologically) in the first place. Apprenticeship still [56] is a very well-known and widespread form of formal vocational education in Austria (dual system of vocational training combining school with learning in enterprises where apprenticeships are employed, though the income is mostly low). In this form of education working and learning are strongly connected, so the aspect of being a worker is always also in effect. Aim of an apprenticeship is to become a qualified worker; the qualification acquired should be transferable within the respective professional field. The context of being a student here might be the weakest one, but these are difficult estimations for us to make and therefore need to be used carefully. As learning environments within the prison institution still seem to be problematic (lack of room, need of justification of learning, …), it is difficult to judge if this leads to referring to apprentices in prison as students or not.

Within our interview material, the terminology used by our interview partners for apprentices was not really different than when talking about other prisoners and was mostly something like "inmates" or "people" or "prisoners", but we have to consider that we who conducted the interviews also used this terminology rather than "students".

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[56] Economic crisis, but also before a long term development of structural change leading to loss of manual labour on the one side but also to reluctance of enterprises to invest in this kind of programmes on the other side have led to declining numbers of places available for potential apprentice. The state has increased programmes trying to fill in, meaning that some apprenticeship programmes are now conducted within state sponsored organisations specialised on those trainees who do not find places in private enterprises. Enterprises or organisations belonging to the state sector (including government bodies) also employ apprentices.

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Appendix 1

Government Representatives Interview 1, 2 and 3

INTERVIEW 1 WITH AUTHORITIES' REPRESENTATIVES

(Number) = line of the original German transcript

Our interview partner works within the Ministry for Education and is responsible for Lifelong Learning/LLL. Higher Education in Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences is not part of the competency of this Ministry, therefore most of tertiary adult education is not directly part of the competencies of our interview partner. Still, this institution is the one with the strongest competencies in the field of LLL concerning ministries, though in Austria LLL competencies are highly divided among different government institutions and agencies on national, regional and municipality level.

STRUCTURAL ISSUES

Is there a central committee in your government department with specific responsibility for:

Social inclustion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"We only have a real panel assignment for LLL. There is also a steering committee for the whole LLL process which is based in our house. We are working closely with the Ministry of Science but there are many things were we quickly reach the limits of our responsibility. We also have a wider structure of plenary with other ministries, (e.g. cooperation with social ministry including the national employment service, ministry of economy in terms of further education in companies etc.) and social partners (34)

What regards social inclusion, people with disadvantages, we don't have any committees, but it is nevertheless a main focus in our work. We know where the problems are from several research results, experts consulting and evaluations, which have been carried out. We know what needs to be done and discuss this also with other concerned resorts".

If yes, are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in these committees ?

"No, we don't have that"(93) "We first discussed that with regards to LLL, but then decided to rather have topical workshops for specific aspects of the LLL process where they can participate in terms of consultation

In the steering group of LLL we tried to keep it small, as we considered it as not possible to include all the single groups on institutional level. If you invite one group, suddenly 10 others want to join as well, and it would be unfair to make a selection".

If no, are there any plans to develop committees to develop policy and monitor its implementation in any of these areas where there are no current committees?

"This is an on-going question for us. (121, rest of answer unclear) We noticed that we need to enforce strategic planning and improve the administrational structures, which in a way are very bureaucratic. Committees are discussed, however is difficult for my ministry to push this through alone; the council of ministers would need to agree etc. In order to bring fresh spirit into the system we are now trying to include new groups of people, different non governmental organisation are invited to participate by giving statements etc. We want the people who are affected to be part of it in the widest possible sense in order to design our models in a more differentiated way. (158) We have consulting processes, but no real committees".

What are the obstacles to establishing any of these committees in your government ministry ?

"There is the question of distribution of competencies particularly in this area. Anything which is outside of the classical educational paths of initial formal education up to the tertiary sector, including the education on company level, this is extremely difficult. (166)

As the federal government hardly has any legal power in this respect according to the basic law of the 1970s, all nine regions and the federal government itself would have to make the same legal decisions. That's never going to happen. (174)

There are no clear competencies, meaning the Ministry of Education can only act suggestively, trying to stimulate certain processes with the help of financial aid.(184)

The federal government has the right to distribute financial promotions but it does not have the right to influence the institutions' design of their programmes, nor the trainers' qualifications; in short, it can't suggest any focus"(190)

(197-203, part of the answer?) "Additionally there are other ministries affected and active for certain target groups, it is a challenge to find cooperation and to supplement each other. Some other actors like the ministry for social affairs, they are much further developed concerning dealing with vulnerable groups like the elderly, I must admit that.

This is the main difficulty, that there are in fact very few models showing how to set up these things well in order to establish some sort of institutionalised agreement. As it is, we start from scratch with every new programme by having to discuss it with our partners. There is no automatic solution. That's why I'm expecting a lot from the LLL process[57]. I think it's an advantage that we are past the operative process in this area and can discuss fundamental things like how to treat cross sectional matters. (204)

I like the fact that there are different places people can go to but we do have to improve our cooperation. In order to do that, we have to develop a model, together, possibly with the social partners. And whatever it is that's needed, we will know that there is this platform where I can put up everything and there will be a relatively short way to come to a decision. I don't have to look for my new partners and start from scratch every single time" (222)

Is there a position of responsibility in your government department, specifically to develop and monitor implementation on these issues:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

In other words, if progress is not made in these areas who takes responsibility to drive things forward?

"The LLL process, this is where I'm placing all my hope. To identify clearly who is responsible. As for the monitoring, it's probably a bit easy for the authorities if they can say 'We aren't really responsible'. Nobody puts all the parts together (241)

There are sometimes redundancies in monitoring, or it is only done in the areas LLL and Literacy, http: www.statistik.at/web_en/ but in between still quite a few big blanks. Everybody says "okay, this is very complex, it'll be too expensive for me alone, if it only concerns me partly", etc. (247) I think the LLL process has great potential to improve this situation"

We have started to work with Statistics Austria[58] in some areas, they have surprisingly many possibilities to gain new results with existing data we are trying to compile something like a report for adult education in cooperation with other stakeholders" (252)

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[57] The LLL consultation process on national level in Austria started in 2000 and is still continuing, including government representatives, social partners and experts.

[58] http://www.statistik.at/web_en/

There is commitment on the part of the Ministry for Economy to cooperate financing"(264)

I generally can already notice a kind of change in the culture and a positive climate for working together in the future".

Are there any specific structures for communication at a strategic level between regional, local and national level with regard to:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"It is a difficult field, for example with regard to monitoring, which is the most concrete thing where we are involved also in international networks, here there is a tendency to allocate all responsibilities to one only person in the ministry. However, not only the education ministry is in charge of LLL (indicator), much more ministries and stakeholders are affected and should be represented. It is incredibly difficult to locate responsibilities in terms of political things. Their perception is reduced and that's detrimental to the process. What regards the administrational level, this is reflected. There is on the one hand side the problem of competence, which is frustrating for people, who are good, engaged and want to set concepts in practise, but don't have the legal competence to do it. And at the other hand there is the issue of money, - particularly what regards disadvantaged groups – where no resources exist, therefore no responsibilities can be realised. Here I think we need to find new models of governance, also companies should be more included in order to access disadvantaged groups and to raise public awareness for LLL. And we need to develop a new image for LLL, reach people at the workplace, also through works councils" (375)

Does your government ministry provide any support for individuals with specific responsibility for developing adult education services at a local or regional level, i.e., Adult Education Organisers?

"Yes, there are. Selected, with very clear focus on disadvantaged groups. We are offering a number of courses via the Federal Institute for Adult Education for multiplicators. This often really targets the lesser qualified, the ones who have no access to education. It also segues into management tools. (389)

They have agreed on some kind of job description for adult education officers and this is being financed by the ministry with ESF funds. What we are also doing is this whole process of quality management. We are supporting this selectively.(397)

Those institutions who are rather small and with a high level of voluntary work, we are supporting them. We co-finance their workshops if they are doing something with external experts, to do our part. What is not successful but needs to be addressed in my opinion, is that these associations of adult education institutions have to find another form of institutionalisation for themselves, some cooperation. (407) Years ago I suggested that they should develop such a form of association, which would be supported by the government and would be of benefit for them, also in terms of communication processes.

It is very difficult for us because the contact persons keep changing. Where do we send our things? Do we get all the resources? Because they simply don't have the resources.(418) And it was interesting for me, that they nevertheless denied the proposal, they fear to then be controlled by the ministry"

Are there structures for dialogue and a common strategy on any of these areas, between government departments of Education, Justice and Employment? How can this dialogue be improved?

"We hardly have any links. There are a couple of model projects but that doesn't go beyond the pilot phase (451)

The justice department has a better view of what works and this in turn helps the inmates and works in their daily life. There is little from them, I think they should practice are more pro-active feedback environment. I have to be careful with our department because the budget limits are reached very quickly. With them, too, they address it immediately: It is education, and even though it takes place there, they say the ministry of education should have to pay for it. And we say, well, it should be part of your concern, it is within your institutional frame and you should pay for some of it. It would be a partial aspect if we achieved something here via LLL. We have the pilot schemes. There is some first experience in Austria. I think there is a lot of potential in this" (461)

"If the council of ministers adopts something, it doesn't mean that this will be immediately working the following month. It would just be the beginning of one way. To be realistic, this would have to be developed over the course of the next years" (483)

STRATEGIC ISSUES

Is there a national and/or government strategy for:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"I would say yes, but with one limitation national strategies. We have it in the ESF program plan, so you could say it's a national strategy where the Ministry of Economics, which is the contact for Brussels, the Ministry of Social Affairs, etc., draft a joint document. With the small aesthetic mistake, if you will, that this is not a national strategy which has come out of Austria, but instead has been coaxed with the not unimportant carrot that is the ESF funding, so they had to come up with something to break this down. As for the other aspects, there are partial strategies but I'm not really competent enough to answer this. The big picture is only the ESF. It was an important motor (497) (518-534 relevant?) *In course of the ESF, also a better climate of cooperation between different responsible authorities in Austria was initiated, which could also build the basis for future activities".*

If yes, are there specific targets set for progress in this strategy ?
If yes, is there specific funding allocated for progress on key elements in this strategy ? (answer for both questions)

"We, the Ministry of Education, have increased our efforts decidedly because these disadvantaged groups are recurring specifically in the ESF program. This is about programs for literacy, basic skills, basic education and finishing the Hauptschulabschluss (lower secondary school final examination) and the Berufsreifeprüfung[59]. These are our main topics for these target groups. The funds for the lower secondary school diploma courses have tripled since the year 2000, a certain dynamic emerged in course of ESF also with the offering institutions. Though we know there is even more potential. We are currently developing a co-funding model with the regional states where we can act a little independently from the ESF. Our plan would be starting 2011 a 50-50 funding with the federal provinces. We started this about a year ago: Adult education – LLL is becoming more and more important. We asked ourselves what can we do?
And we agreed surprisingly fast with the countries, that we want to make something in the area of basis qualification and lower secondary school diploma – so exactly also the contents of ESF. Here you have to be very flexible and that's why it is good to cooperate with each individual federal province. Here criteria are defined together and if it will work out successfully, the budget will increase exponentially".

What percentage of your government department budget goes on adult education: a) formal education, b) non-formal education?

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[59] examination providing general access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools

"This is very difficult to answer. The classical AE budget is about 9 million euro. Then there was a path of education for specific schemes. This takes us to roughly 13 million euro of national funds (632) From these 13 million about 4 million go into the structural support of the big adult education associations" (640)

"Another 2 million have to be deducted which are not really for the benefit of these target groups(658)

The rest is for the most part being poured into these target groups. As for formal/non-formal, this is really difficult for me in terms of definition but I'd say about 2/3 rather formal. Because the big chunks of the budget are the Berufsreifeprüfung and the Hauptschulabschluss[60](666)

(690-725 which question?) *I would like to add something; this doesn't concern adult education in a classical sense, but what I consider as very important are schools for employed adults, particularly those in the area of upper secondary vocational schools[61]. Some people might claim this are just schools, but the participants have already completed their compulsory education and just didn't go in for further education immediately after and now work or might also be unemployed. These paths, which are mainly offered extra-occupational in forms of evening colleges, should not be underestimated and as they are rather expensive due to the school-leaned remuneration system for trainers, they altogether take more than twice of the budget of classical adult education. Particularly for disadvantaged groups like e.g. migrants there is evidence, that these upper secondary vocational schools are adopted very well, these people when graduating from these schools manage to finally get their entrance qualification for tertiary level and it opens good chances for them on the labour market. This is especially true for professions in technical fields".*

Please comment on measures taken by national government to support adult learning outside the major cities in your country.

"This is very important for us. The OECD country check showed that Austria has indeed a very high regional coverage. We also achieve that partly via the structural promotion funds, and with measures concerning disadvantaged groups We are trying very consciously not to just go into the urban area (764)

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[60] Berufsreifeprüfung (granting access to tertiary level education) and Hauptschulabschluss (compulsory schooling final certificate) are exams that form part of the formal education system (actually classical second chance education), but both are provided mostly by adult education institutions, not schools.

[61] Within SP3 we researched the two main types of uppers secondary vocational schools for adults: colleges for engineers and colleges for business administration (see SP3).

The big master plan is missing, again owing to competencies (strong competencies of the federal provinces.) The Federal Ministry can only intervene by stimulating" (773)

Please comment on future plans by national government to develop lifelong learning at specific ISCED levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

"There are scattered schemes in the consultation paper. For us within the Ministry of Education there is a strong focus what regards school education on improving the quality of education and at the same time to develop the possibilities for care offers. Very important point is the free kindergarten. I would see all of this as parts of this strategy (787)

For the tertiary level there is now some dynamic movement because the Ministry of Science has initiated its LLL board and also wants to embed LLL within the performance agreements with universities. (795) This movement happened, according to my perception, because of pressure from the universities. (803) How this is going to lead to specific schemes in the tertiary sector, I cannot say.(809)Definitely we will enforce the collaboration with the federal provinces"

<u>NATIONAL POLICY: FORMAL SECTOR</u>

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions training teachers to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can be teachers at a) elementary school level, b) high school level?

*"I wouldn't have heard of it" (*833)

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?

"We need a different mix of teachers, especially in urban areas where certain ethnic groups may be represented more strongly. There is a strong interested on the operative level. We are still a little behind in strategic planning, which I think stems from the relatively wild re-orientation phase of the whole teacher training sector, with these new Austrian teacher training colleges where we "melt" more than 40 institutions (852)

On the whole I don't think there are big obstacles. We just have to do it. Maybe it isn't so much a problem of reserving admission, because I think that there are enough place" (862)

We just have to improve the attraction of teacher training for these groups, that's what I see as a problem (866)

I think we have to really address the communities pro-actively. Such as, for example, the Jewish community has managed. They have managed to recruit teachers for their specific needs. And I think that this works as well for others, if we really succeed to get into the group and to tell them that these things are useful for them" (872)

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions [[training teachers - omit]] to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can enter courses for professions of particular influence in their local community such as a) law, b) social work, c) youth work, d) psychology, e) other

"I'm not aware of anything" (896)

(896-903 relevant?) "The only thing I know is for the police in terms of de-escalation, that they try to include certain ethnic groups, because it is just helpful for them"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?

(912-924 relevant?) "Actually we have a higher than average proportion of foreign students in our tertiary education institutions, they are generally open, it think it is just again the question of promoting inclusion actively, particularly in the smaller sectors"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to use of the school building after school hours for adult education courses?

"This is a really important issue for us. It is easier with the federal schools which are administrated directly by the federal government. As owners, we have direct ways to act. This is where we have the distinct appeal to the directors. Their infrastructure is suitable to adults, with tables of the right height and IT work stations, etc. The elementary schools aren't really useful although they are being used partially. There we would have the infrastructure and we cannot progress because the commitment is based on individuals. They say we don't profit from this. On the contrary, I'm at a disadvantage because I have maintenance/cleaning costs. The personnel stops cleaning at 5pm, the people arrive at 6pm and the next day, the school is dirty. (942)

People working as school caretakers, for example, say: 'this is not in my contract'" (957)

That's where we have very banal everyday organisational problems. (959) We are sometimes moving within uncertain legal fields. It's a partial legal capacity, which we are thinking of introducing to get a specific frame of reference. I think it's okay if they participate at cost price.(968) I think that than there is more motivation to offer something, e.g. it is possible to say: "I would use the IT room and have a teacher teach specific modules" so they can improve their income a little. It makes everything look much better if they can say, okay, we can also benefit from this. It is inherently more difficult with the compulsory schools (which fall within the competencies of the federal provinces)" (974)

"It is a responsibility jungle in the federal government, just not possible to establish clear rules. I also see that especially with the vocational schools there is an interest both from the federal provinces and the government, to use the infrastructure, which in parts is really excellent, after hours, both in the

evenings, on Saturdays, etc. Because it really is an economic madness to have these schools empty"
(981)

Are there particular gaps in employment and training for adults that you envisage developing in the near future?

"Where we really have a huge deficit which becomes less and less justifiable owing to the dynamics of the labour market, globalisation, etc. is that getting support is difficult for people who want to retrain proactively. A classic example are the healthcare professions which are constantly lamenting the lack of personnel (1004)

To do the 3-year course at the healthcare school is basically they don't get any support for their livelihood. Usually the AMS doesn't pay for that, etc. Where everybody says: Okay, from an economical point of view retraining would be wonderfully sensible (1010)

I do understand that this is a risk for potential sponsors. The trainee participated in the course for half a year and then says: 'I was wrong, no thanks'. However, they also often say: 'I would really enter into an obligation and pay in instalments.' (1015)

This concerns more and more areas. I think with the rising life expectancy and the obligation for people to stay in the occupational process for longer, someone has to come up with something because the cases are piling up.(1018)

I think it's a tragedy that there is no solution that we don't find anything. That's potential that's being lost. This is particularly true for the social sector. These are people who really want to do it and are experienced. (1034)

I see this as an important point to start, where there are some first ideas and where should be done more in the future. (1040)

Besides this, also the possibility to catch up with the completion of vocational apprentice training exams within alternative paths is very important. I think this is competency of the Ministry of Economics" (1045)

NATIONAL POLICY: NON-FORMAL SECTOR

Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations ?

"Responsibility? Probably nobody (laughing), and everybody is doing a little. (1057)

From a political point of view it is the Ministries of Education, Economics and Social Affairs. I would say that the real existing responsibility lies within this triangle. But non-formal education is something that's being treated with a little negligence, we know that when we look at Scandinavia or the Anglo-

Saxon area. (1059) This is probably owing to the strong focus on formal vocational training and the strong orientation towards job profiles in Austria. (1066)

The European Qualification Frame is expected to bring forward the current situation. We hardly have anything yet what regards the section about non-formal learning and informal learning. At the moment it is discussed weather high qualified professionals (Meister) in vocational fields should be assigned to level 6 or also to 7 or 8, which at the moment is still only foreseen for universities. However, we are more concerned about levels 1-4, as here are the people, who are more distanced towards education. But generally the Ministries in charge and the social partners are working towards solutions here"

How would you compare the status and development of the non-formal education sector compared with 5 years ago? Has it expanded or increased over the last 5 years? Why?

"It has grown, yes, because the actual social development and the development of the labour market policies make this kind of learning inherently more important. (1115)

It becomes more and more important to learn within the company, also attending courses as an addition to working. (1119)

The social dynamics, these intercultural topics, this mobility… Actually it already starts with the holidays, where 3-year-olds are being confronted with other languages like Greek. This is a completely different learning process and it becomes increasingly important. (1122)

There is also empiric evidence (LLL study from statistics Austria) that informal/non formal learning is more dominant also in the daily life of the people when compared with participation in formal offers.

I think it is important that Austria sticks to the existing education schemes like the dual system in vocational training with apprenticeship, which have proved to be very successful, however the permeability in between the columns, the different levels and types of learning should be improved".

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *personal development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

"There are some key skills like IT skills, social competence, conflict management which – in the framework of the before mentioned working group between federal and regional governments - have been written into the curriculum for the lower secondary school leave certificate . Also with regards to basic education, it's not just literacy or language classes; it is a broader sense of cultural skills that we want to transmit – also in terms of citizenship, although we in Austria are still at a stage where every stakeholder has a different understanding of the concept of citizenship. (1173) The

general approach is that it has to be more than just literacy. We want to have aspects of citizenship of cultural and intercultural education included. That is also where there is some support. It should be free of charge with the only obligation that people would have to endure these aspects of education" (1186)

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *community development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

"I would repeat what I just said about personal development question, yes" (1200)

<u>**RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**</u>

What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system ?

"We have a very mundane organisational problem. There is no culture for that in Austria. A lot of persuasion will be necessary to get acceptance from the other educational institutions. (1209) Also from side of the companies: usually when employers have to choose between 10 candidates, wherefrom 2 made their diploma within the second education path, the later two are second choice. There is still something like a small stigma. There is the "proper" diploma, which is the original one and then there is the "doubtable" diploma, - somebody has somehow gotten there too. (1225) That's why we want to include all stakeholders to define criteria together.
If there is qualification, it has to be as valid as a certificate from initial education. (1233)
Especially on the employers' part, I can see reservation which has to be overcome, even more than within the whole societal process. (1238) Of course it is easier to assess the diploma that I know. There are enough international reference models, such as Portugal has it, where you could see how they did it and we could adapt it for our contexts and needs". (1252)

How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome?

See next question.

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State ?

"We probably have to start from two ends: One is the social question, a question of broad acceptance. But you also have to start with the institutions; here the tertiary sector will be challenged especially. There is a certain elitist awareness and they are more geared towards exclusion. (1268)

(1270-1287 relevant?) For accreditation the adopting institutions have to get certain incentives. It is mainly also about financing. That's also why it works better with universities of applied sciences, where every student brings in money, whereas at the scientific universities the financing system is not as transparently related to study places".

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State ?
"See last question – financial incentives respectively change of financing system especially regarding scientific universities in order to make these institutions develop intrinsic motivation to accept also students coming from non-traditional educational paths".

What changes do you hope will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation?
[Not asked respectively; only next question was asked due to lacking time]

What changes do you realistically expect will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation ?

Reserved places yes or no   *"No"*

Free childcare   *"Yes, I could imagine this in the next couple of years*

Access officers in each third level institution   **"***Yes"*

Outreach strategies for each community   **"***Again, yes"*

"There is a lot coming from the federal provinces governments. The province Burgenland is currently working on some sort of mission statement for adult education. The province Salzburg has had one for years. They are even more detailed, broken down into regions, this also regards the province of Tyrol" (1322)

Please list your priority target groups to improve access to third level education.
"Certainly people who don't have an upper secondary level qualification. These mundane things, that they are disqualified/falling out of jobs the quickest especially now in times of crisis. They are definitely an important area for us to operate in. Also all the people with a migration background. And even if this sounds a little absurd for adult education, the young adults. Because we are noticing that with the pressure on people to stay employed and at the same time jobs are becoming fewer, an immense pressure is building on the younger ones. This leads us to re-qualification, they are just not yet established well in the labour market. But here we still lack models that prevent people from

loosing their jobs in the first place (1331). We all know that if they have been outside of jobs for a year, then it becomes awfully difficult for them" (1347)

What are the biggest obstacles to progress regarding promotion of access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, as well as social inclusion, lifelong learning, literacy and the non-formal education sector ?

[Not asked due to lacking time, implicit answers see above]

<u>**PRISON EDUCATION**</u>

Are there specific plans to improve access to education for adults in prisons in your country ? Please specify.

"*No*" (1363)

What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to developing prison education ?

"*In terms of cooperation with the different authorities concerned with this issue, like mentioned in other questions about obstacles, the problems are similar*" (1356).

<u>**OUTREACH STRATEGIES**</u>

How, in your opinion, can national government support *outreach* attempts to reach those who do not traditionally engage in the formal education system or who have become alienated from this system ?

Are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in a) designing, b) implementing outreach approaches to reach those most excluded from education ?[62]

"*Very indirectly. It is very difficult, fair involvement evenly balanced across the lobbies. (1378) There is a certain design and we find some phrases in the governmental programme from some institutions' policy papers but it's not an institutionalised process as such*" (1386)

What government ministries support childcare funding and availability for adults who want to attend education courses, whether formal or informal? Please describe the supports provided

"*We have supported this partly via ESF schemes. There was some emphasis within the tertiary sector. We have also partly supported this in the classical area of adult education. As far as I see, this receives support from social projects. Again we have the problem of being too little coordinated. Too*

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[62] Both questions combined

little is known about who plays which role and in reality the organisations who are offering the services are left to their own devices and have to look for partners themselves" (1395)

Many people from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds have no space at home to study. What alternative physical sites do you think could be realistically made available for them for their learning?

"Yes. In several, well, pilot phases, well, we are still far away from having complete coverage. On one hand this is being supported via small associations, there are these women's associations in Vienna, some of which have study workshops for Latin-American women, where also childcare service is attached next door" (1412)

"We don't have these learning centres, such as there are in Great Britain, but these modern adult education centres and such, partly also other education institutions. Very important also the libraries that consider themselves more and more as learning rooms (1422) In the national library e.g. a lounge was established, which particularly attracts young people, as it is very modern and "hip" including computer places, couches and drink machines".

Have any efforts been made to get schools to be sites of adult education in the community ? Please describe

[Not asked due to lacking time]

Is there any national level strategy or support to provide for training/education of a) community leaders, b) teachers, in areas which experience most social deprivation and marginalisation ?

[Not asked due to lacking time]

Which government department funds the libraries in your country ?

"Financing of the libraries is very heterogenic, as it is a regional matter.

There is something like a basic financial aid, from the federal government for institutions for adult education, for the libraries' association which distributes it according to whatever guidelines, fact is that they are basically under-financed. There are some flagship projects but mostly in the federal regions' capitals, there is little anywhere else"(1458)

Is distance education run from any libraries in your country ?

[Not asked due to lacking time]

Please comment on ways to overcome the digital divide between different social groups

[Not asked due to lacking time]

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on lifelong learning in your country ?

"At any rate, I also see two effects. There will be increased demand in the direction of adapting education within the lower third of qualification, also transmitted by the national employment service (1471).

Within the upper third of qualification, they are very active in continuing education, have high costs for continuing education, both privately or sent from the companies because the entrepreneurs are investing. That's where I'm expecting a decrease. From what I hear from one of the main banks, etc., already now they are starting to cancel seminars in continuing education like crazy. (1474) I consider this as a very exiting process, what this will mean for their behaviour, if they – when companies don't pay anymore - will than increasingly spend money from their own pockets for their further education. I have to watch myself not to sound cynical but now there will be increased funds for the lower level of qualification and that politics put a stronger focus, I see this as a chance, yes, that may now really sound a little cynical but that's really what I mean. It's a little like the possibility, basically, to establish new benchmarks. This could than be continued also after the recession" (1487)

Questions based on the SP3[63] results

Can the reduction of fees for classes in formal education be a strategy to widen the access for adult learners? Which basic conditions would be necessary for this?

"The federal government/federal states government model does address these factors specifically and we try to do this justice by incorporating this into a regional model and right from the beginning include the budgeting. (1532)

One has to think of a well-specified mix. There is a lot of potential in the things, such as the education voucher, education bonus, etc., which exist in the other federal provinces. We know that basically the funding for specific segments is an important factor, for others not. (1550)

There is a certain incentive model, where companies get tax reduction when offering education for their employees. But I doubt that this is a very effective measure.

I can't find any effect in any statistical data that this has stimulated companies which to date haven't done anything in the field of continuing education. The SMEs clearly have not been targeted by this.(1560) An academic learner e.g. will take the reduction of course, but would maybe have done

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[63] SP3 refers to 'Subproject 3' of the LLL2010 Project, a survey research on participants in adult education.

the education anyway. Especially the people who have no access to education cannot be targeted with these models.

I need to know first which target group I want for which educational scheme. It's a mix of factors which needs to be balanced carefully. (1579)

In my estimation the current measures are not effective enough: Maybe only 10-20% are those people I actually want to target.(1586)

What regards people with medium income, maybe an interest-free loan would be an intelligent solution (1590) They might have the money for e.g. a post graduate Master, but can not put it on the table all at once.

I think we should think about this, certain offers for certain layers of income. And for those layers with no access to education, I have to get as many free offers as possible in terms of fees. (1597) Any learning opportunities above those have to be as affordable as possible, this mustn't lead to any barrier. Also savings models should be considered, this building society savings model doesn't really work properly. But there are also, basically in the Netherlands, partly elaborate models on how to set incentives. I think we should take a closer look at this" (1604)

Only few of those third level institutions we questioned for a different part of the project mentioned that they are reserving an allocation of admissions to the university for underrepresented groups. How can, in your opinion, a national strategy be developed to promote this action in Austria?

[Not asked as this topic lies outside the competencies of our interview partner]

Many third level institutions state that they offer advice on admission. What is your opinion on the influence of national politics in this matter? Do you see a link to supporting offers to facilitate access to third level education for socially underrepresented groups?

[Not asked as this topic lies outside the competencies of our interview partner]

In another part of our research almost half of the respondents of ISCED 2 level participants stated that personal or emotional problems keep them from pursuing their education. Are there plans on a national level to introduce supportive offers in Austria? In your opinion, how could this situation be improved on a federal level?

"This brings me back to the working group of federal government and federal provinces' governments and the plans concerning the lower secondary diploma. We have a strictly calculated size of pedagogical support because we said it's not working properly without. (1514) It is starting with the "visiting" education work, where we want to approach the target group proactively instead of waiting

for them to come by themselves. There must be somebody here for them permanently and a certain amount of time should be calculated for this kind of care"

INTERVIEW 2 WITH AUTHORITIES' REPRESENTATIVES

(Number) = line of the original German transcript

Our interview partner works at the Federal Ministry of Science, which is responsible for universities and universities of applied sciences in Austria. The School system, adult education or great parts of Teacher Training and related educational institutions are not part of this Ministries' responsibility. Our interviewee is an expert for LLL issues within this institution, although main responsibilities concerning LLL also reside with another Ministry.

STRUCTURAL ISSUES

Is there a central committee in your government department with specific responsibility for:

Social inclustion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

iteracy

The non-formal education sector

"There is one body within the Ministry of Science only for LLL. An advisory board has been established within the Department for universities and universities of applied Sciences within the Ministry of Science, of which external stakeholders are a part. The leadership for LLL and the development of a national strategy for LLL lies basically with the Ministry for Education, but the Ministry of Science takes part in this working group. I don't know anything about the other areas (a, b, d). Maybe about the non-formal education where the Ministry of Science is involved with the national qualifications framework, but this is also led by the Ministry for Education" (61)

If yes, are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in these committees?

"There are no representatives of these groups in the areas known to me. However, for the development of a national LLL-strategy, NGOs have been included and asked for statements" (84)

If no, are there any plans to develop committee's to develop policy and monitor its implementation in any of these areas where there are no current committees?

"In the light of the activities with regard to performance agreements, this is currently no issue; literacy doesn't affect the Ministry of Science.

Social inclusion is basically acknowledged as part of the activities enforced by the EU but there are no current plans to set up new groups"

What are the obstacles to establishing any of these committees in your government ministry?

"In the science resort, one of the main reasons is that mainly other Ministries are responsible for questions of central responsibility. The ministry as such is not capable of organising wider activities or to establish own committees, it only makes contributions for others by participating in advising boards etc. (106)

The Ministry of Science includes issues like social inclusion, access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups and non-formal education as part of LLL. I don't see the possibility of establishing a separate group for each of these issues concerning universities, because we would not get their acceptance for these issues. We rather use the LLL topic in general and then also give attention to the three mentioned issues (social inclusion, access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups and non-formal education). (121) The community/stake holders as far as universities are concerned would not consider these issues as relevant enough to spend staff resources on them. We deal with the topic under the header of LLL and partly also within the framework of European Qualification Frame or also NQF. More is hard to achieve at the moment. Reasons for the lack of acceptance from side of the community can also bee seen in the current conditions of time and budget in the higher education institutes. They feel already overcharged with their core business and therefore would not think about voluntary engaging in a different issue. (157) However, when it comes to international initiatives, like e.g. the LLL charter of the European University Association, universities are in a way forced to make statements on issues like permeability and disadvantaged groups, this is also part of the performance agreements. The rare staff resources have to be mentioned in this respect as well. (169) Staff resources have to be mentioned, that of course is the classical answer from all concerned institutions regarding reasons for overcharge2 (192)

Is there a position of responsibility in your government department, specifically to develop and monitor implementation on these issues:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

In other words, if progress is not made in these areas who takes responsibility to drive things forward?

"The respective unit responsible for the issue within the Ministry of Science is in charge. Universities have functioning monitoring structures. Part of the universities' active reporting towards the Ministry is to provide performance reports on their aims and activities. This is then also content of the meetings, which take place twice a year and at the end of a period the evaluation will also be used for further performance agreements between Ministry and the respective university (208).
The universities of applied science are free to report if they want, but they have to be evaluated during re-accreditation in certain time periods. So, for them other regulations apply; generally there is better monitoring and reporting in the sector of universities than in the sector of private universities or universities of applied sciences" (223)

[64]*"With regards responsibility to drive things forward, maybe this can be answered according to the different sectors involved (238) For the universities' sector it is the respective department within the ministries where conversations (and consequences) are made in the framework of the performance agreements. (245) As for universities of applied science, given the current structure, it can quite possibly also be the university of applied science's council in terms of the accreditation process, where this points are issued. (251)*
On a governmental level, there is also the university of applied science's financing and development plan which covers a five-year period. Here also regionalisation and enlarged access for marginalised groups are issued in a higher extent". (255)

Are there any specific structures for communication at a strategic level between regional, local and national level with regard to:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"For these five mentioned areas we don't have any real strategic structures on a departmental level. (305) This is so owing to the universities' and universities of applied sciences' autonomy and the reason that a different Ministry is responsible for LLL" (311)

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[64] Belongs to question above, see bottom part in previous section added by RG, which says more or less the same

Does your government ministry provide any support for individuals with specific responsibility for developing adult education services at a local or regional level, i.e., Adult Education Organisers?

"Since this Ministry is not responsible for traditional adult education, there is no such support. There is of course know-how transfer and information for educational institutions offering tertiary adult education, but nothing else as far as support goes2 (325)

Are there structures for dialogue and a common strategy on any of these areas, between government departments of Education, Justice and Employment? How can this dialogue be improved?

"I don't know anything about joint strategic developments between the departments mentioned, apart from LLL. There are individual activities, such as joint leaflets or events but I wouldn't call that a development of strategies.(346)

Links between the areas of education and work are seen as relevant, visible in the co-operations of at least the informational area.

I don't know about the area of Law.(367) For the tertiary educational sector I can only think of the aliens act (Fremdengesetz), regarding the access or admission of foreign students, respectively students from third countries" (356)

STRATEGIC ISSUES

Is there a national and/or government strategy for:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"I only know about a planned national strategy for LLL which is supposed to be submitted to the Ministers' Council within the year 2009. I don't know about anything similar in the other four areas" (383)

If yes, are there specific targets set for progress in this strategy?

If yes, is there specific funding allocated for progress on key elements in this strategy? [65]

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[65] These two questions combined

"As mentioned before [question 5, 169]. If there were activities in these four areas, it would in all probability come under the header of LLL for which financing strategies or prioritising would possibly be discussed"(394)

What percentage of your government department budget goes on adult education: a) formal education, b) non-formal education?

"I think that we cannot attribute parts of the budget. If desired, a quantification can be expressed by looking at the number of students in extra-occupational degree courses in universities of applied science or number of students who entered the program via non-formal access paths. But for the Ministry of Science this question can not really be answered, as there are not budget pots for adult education in the classical sense (408).

And you would have to look at the composition of students in the extra-occupational degree courses at the universities of applied sciences in terms of age groups and within the subjects in order to determine the amount of financing on national level[66], though you would have to establish if this can be attributed to adult learning in the first place" (425)

Please comment on measures taken by national government to support adult learning outside the major cities in your country.

"The performance agreements with the universities contain activities for society, with some universities being very active, having discovered a new target group. However, we cannot put a number on these activities or the funds at their disposal. It is decided on institutional level (universities), and no detailed reports of these singular activities are requested. I know of some examples where degree courses are offered for elderly people/seniors or public lectures are held on a regular basis" (439)

Please comment on future plans by national government to develop lifelong learning at specific ISCED levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

"I don't know about that because we aren't really responsible for ISCED level 2, 3 and 4 this. For ISCED level 5 I don't know something new on national level, I just know that (469). The OECD is discussing ISCED levels in general. (480)

I don't know what the development of LLL can be on its different levels. LLL for me is about vertical mobility not about horizontal development" (488)

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[66] The Ministry of Science as part of national government is responsible for state financing on national level, while many universities of applied sciences are strongly co-financed by Laender (provinces) in Austria.

NATIONAL POLICY: FORMAL SECTOR

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions training teachers to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can be teachers at a) elementary school level, b) high school level?

"Actually, I don't know anything about this. (525) Our Ministry is not responsible for this issue, but I also didn't hear anything about that in the communication with responsible government departments"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive ?

"There are chances regarding ethnic minorities, I am speaking now about contents of an other Ministry, because the discussion in Austria is progressing and it would be necessary and appropriate to have a certain inclusion.(533)

Obstacles on one hand can be because the teacher training colleges in Austria now basically have a new legal basis, not exactly like the universities' autonomy, but still other control elements have to be implemented, possibly leading to a concentration on organisational processes and less on actual aims and their content.

It can also be a chance in that the institutions have to take action themselves by defining their own strategies or develop a profile, thus they could also initiate a new national strategy. But in my experience, a fundamental change in structures leads to contents taking a back seat and it takes a very long time for new processes to be understood and implemented by everybody consciously.(538)

With regards to higher schools we generally have an open access to teacher training within the universities. If there are no incentives from the state, the departments at universities could get active in the framework of their profile development.

However, owing to political basic conditions there are limits to motivating institutions like universities. (573)

Anything going beyond the core business of a university or university of applied science will only be addressed once the core business has been secured. (578) A classical incentive would be the performance agreements between the Ministry of Science and the universities, provided that the necessary funds can be made available. (587)

The obstacle would be too little resources. (589)

The chance is that also on institutional levels initiatives on these issues can be developed, if institutional mission statements can lead to stimulation of a national strategy" (603)

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions [[training teachers - omit]] to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can enter courses for professions of particular influence in their local community such as a) law, b) social work, c) youth work, d) psychology, e) other

"In my perception this is no topic. Maybe I would add that the open access for psychological studies has been limited by admission exams but there are no intentions for reservation. This wouldn't be possible for universities owing to the open access but it could be resolved by way of the performance agreements, thus getting the universities to address the target groups.

Admission financing could be used to approach these questions, if it was part of the universities of applied science's development plans. (621) What regards the Universities of Applied Sciences this would be possible to enforce within the framework of the national development plan, which could also include strategies to widen access for non-traditional groups like working students. This would need to be discussed at the council of ministers within the Austrian national government"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?

"Resources, similar to the questions about obstacles and chances" (597)

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to use of the school building after school hours for adult education courses?

"That is not a question in our area, as we are not responsible for classical adult education and neither for schools" (665)

Are there particular gaps in employment and training for adults that you envisage developing in the near future?

"There is only a small area of relevance to the Department of Science, only when you consider that also students who are employed / working are included at the universities or universities of applied sciences. Concerning this issue, I don't know about any plans or activities for our department.(672) Generally, the aim is to increase the number of professional students in universities of applied science for the next period of performance agreement, as well as the aim to offer proper graduate programmes for them at universities. Particularly in the area of master programs at universities this should be implemented within the next years; due to lack of resources this might be not strongly pushed by universities, but still should be implemented" (681)

NATIONAL POLICY: NON-FORMAL SECTOR

Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations?

"According to our understanding, it's the Ministry of Education or for some professional areas maybe one of the other ministries" (712)

How would you compare the status and development of the non-formal education sector compared with 5 years ago? Has it expanded or increased over the last 5 years? Why?

"I don't feel the need [to address this question]" (719)

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *personal development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

"Our Ministry of Science deals with non-formal education, in cooperation with others rather under the aspect of access and the recognition of non-formal qualifications. (728)

This question addresses rather specific target groups which are not part of our responsibility" (726)

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *community development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

[Not applicable (see above)]

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system?

"One of the obstacles I mentioned is certainly the fact that the institutions rather prefer to stick to their core tasks owing to the limited budget, which in turn causes a lack of staff.

Also some groups of now established people who have themselves acquired access to tertiary level education via formal channels are basically very guarded when it comes to accepting other forms of access. Guarded owing to fearing the lack of quality management, but it is also partly a psychological reaction. (744) Especially what regards access to tertiary education greater reservation can be noted compared to other issues"

How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome?

"There is a demographic development which will show the universities and the universities of applied science their limit and at least on an international level I detect the readiness to discuss these questions increasingly. This will still need time to have an impact on the Austrian situation, as we still have open access to universities in Austria (and therefore a strong inflow of students), but this will also be an issue here in the future" (771)

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State?

"As far as I know there is the intent to develop an accreditation system on a national level which is currently met with reservation on the part of the institutions. From the Ministry of Science's point of view I would think that a lot has already been done for the Universities and Universities of applied science to provide them with autonomy. From a formal point of view of the authorities or a ministry or the Ministry of Science all that is left are instruments to be used to get the universities to including new target groups in their profiling and development plans and, if possible, to provide financial incentives which leads us back to budget limits.(801)

[Additional information, not pertaining to the question directly: ll.835 about permeability between Bachelor/Master/PHD courses between universities and universities of applied sciences. The three stages are still in development, thus not easy to assess at the moment. Also the doctorate will be reformed in future.] I think in the next time something will change here in respect of Master course offers and profile development. With defining a more specific target group, things will change concerning the permeability within the different school and university sectors in Austria. (887)

In Austria, the institution / university a person has studied at will become more important in future. Establishing a profile facilitates co-operations because the respective institutions' focal points can be assessed better. And with increasing active quality management of the respective areas the institutions' acceptance will be greater in other sectors. (902) This affects cooperation between schools and tertiary education institutions, but also institutions within the tertiary sector"

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State?

"There are no current plans.(922) What regards instruments to make incentives to increase the share of traditionally underrepresented groups, it is possible in the framework of performance agreements between the Ministry and universities. 934) Within the Universities of Applied Sciences inclusion is already an issue, for students with non-traditional access (who have no higher education entrance exam)"

What changes do you hope will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation?

"Basically there is a possibility for the institutions to take action in this area, by establishing their profile, thus putting the emphasis on certain target groups. However, owing to the current basic conditions (lack of financial resources) the change in this area will not be very big" (947)

What changes do you realistically expect will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation ?

Reserved places   **yes/ no**

Free childcare   **yes/no**

Access officers in each third level institution   **yes/no**

Outreach strategies for each community   **yes/no**

[Reserved places] *"Certainly not comprehensively / systematically" (966)*

[Free childcare] *"I have to admit I don't know if child care at universities is free of charge" (980)*

[Access Officers] *"I would think that the institutions' activities in this area will increase in terms of profile building and recruiting their target groups. If the educational guidance officers will provide advice on admissions on a broader scale, I cannot say" (1003)*

[Outreach Strategies] If this is taking place on a regional level *"Maybe for universities of applied science it can be said, that there is a regionalisation. The activities for distance learning are present but are also meeting with boundaries. (1018)*

Resources are being provided but experience shows that longer periods of attendance are necessary and the synergies people had been expecting somehow have not materialised"

Please list your priority target groups to improve access to third level education.

"I don't know about a specific new target group. The one people are talking about are individuals with vocational background who have completed an apprenticeship" (1037)

What are the biggest obstacles to progress regarding promotion of access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, as well as social inclusion, lifelong learning, literacy and the non-formal education sector?

"Within the tertiary sector everything is very much disconnected from these target groups because so many things are happening before that. A national strategy can basically be supportive or helpful but within the specific constellation of the tertiary sector and in face of the institutions' autonomy the really target-oriented activities have to emerge from there (1050)

The most efficient way is to raise the autonomous institutions' awareness for these target groups with the help of their strategic planning and profile building, and to check if they actually meet the

targets they have set themselves. The latter is the job of government representatives. Within the next five years budget limits will be the main obstacle in Austria" (1058)

PRISON EDUCATION

Are there specific plans to improve access to education for adults in prisons in your country? Please specify.

"I don't really know anything about that" (1079)

What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to developing prison education?

[Not applicable]

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

How, in your opinion, can national government support *outreach* attempts to reach those who do not traditionally engage in the formal education system or who have become alienated from this system?

"Much can be achieved by keeping this alive within the discussion of educational politics and in communicating this actively to the institutions" (1090)

Are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in a) designing, b) implementing outreach approaches to reach those most excluded from education ?

"I don't know if representatives of the risk groups will be included. I see them represented by the social partners and also through the ministries' representatives, who are referring to interests of these groups and who try to take these interests into account" (1107)

What government ministries support childcare funding and availability for adults who want to attend education courses, whether formal or informal ? Please describe the supports provided

"I don't know about any activities.(1118)

I only know about child care at universities in the framework of promotion of women, all activities that I know from have been co-financed with EU funds" (1130)

Many people from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds have no space at home to study. What alternative physical sites do you think could be realistically made available for them for their learning?

"I'd say all public institutions which, as long as they have capacities, can extend their opening hours to some extent. Maybe it would be possible to establish regional partnerships including tertiary

educational institutions to provide access to these premises explicitly to non-students who are also learning. According to my experience, the resources would be here and would not be overrun in the regions (1143)

And to tell this target group that they can have access to the library in order to study. Also there are public libraries. The fact that there are public rooms or premises is often overlooked. Sometimes the opening hours are dependent on voluntary staff. These places could be announced and used during specific hours. (1162)

School premises would provide more rooms and this could also create additional revenue for the schools because I think they are allowed to generate third-party funds" (1180)

Have any efforts been made to get schools to be sites of adult education in the community? Please describe

"This is not my area of expertise / competence" (1192)

Is there any national level strategy or support to provide for training/education of a) community leaders, b) teachers, in areas which experience most social deprivation and marginalisation ?

"Not my area" (1199)

Which government department funds the libraries in your country ?

"It depends on the sector. Universities and universities of applied science are financed by the Ministry of Science. The public and other libraries by the Ministry of Education, I think" (1213)

Is distance education run from any libraries in your country ?

"I don't know about that" (1230)

Please comment on ways to overcome the digital divide between different social groups

"I can't really assess this situation but there are people within our Ministry who are looking into these questions" (1244)

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on lifelong learning in your country?

"The current basic conditions are less favourable, hence the ministries and institutions are less active in these areas. We have already discussed that public funding cannot be extended but also the private households are rethinking the use of their funds in the segment of private higher education can imagine that there will be a decline in numbers of participants in areas where fees are charged. This regards to private universities and (CVET) university courses" (1256)

Questions based on the SP3 results

Can the reduction of fees for classes in formal education be a strategy to widen the access for adult learners? Which basic conditions would be necessary for this?

"Other than reducing or abolishing fees I would rather be inclined to think that linking fees for formal educational offers (here: tertiary level) with respective governmental aid for those who need it would be a more efficient solution. We have had both in Austria (this regards universities: fees and no fees) and we have seen that no big changes concerning non-traditional groups' access to universities have occurred. Now it should be looked at the effects of a real fee model if linked to a real sponsoring model, and on the effect this has also on the way public resources for education are distributed" (1300) [67]

Only few of those third level institutions we questioned for a different part of the project mentioned that they are reserving an allocation of admissions to the university for underrepresented groups. How can, in your opinion, a national strategy be developed to promote this action in Austria?

[Not applicable/answer see above](1315)

Many third level institutions state that they offer advice on admission. What is your opinion on the influence of national politics in this matter? Do you see a link to supporting offers to facilitate access to third level education for socially underrepresented groups?

"I do see a way to link these but it's limited by the respective funding of the institutions if they have to provide the funds. Basically this is a way to address a large target group and get it to attend universities/universities of applied science. (1346)

In Austria there is no such thing related to study guidance. It is only related to the formalities of the admission. (1367)

As far as the historical development goes, and my experience, there has never really been an approach to provide guidance for specific target groups in order to facilities their access. Advice on admission has existed within the institutions, but not with the idea of widening access. (1383)

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[67] Fees for universities are a highly controversial topic in Austria. After decades without any university fees for Austrian citizens (abolition in the 1970s) fees where re-established in 2001 and partly re-abolished in autumn 2008. At the end of 2009 this issue again is contested within the coalition currently in government. Fighting against a reintroduction of fees in autumn 2009 is a main issue of recent students' protest movements which also target considered unacceptable conditions for studying at Austrian universities.

In Austria's tertiary sector, the only area where I'd say we have some kind of study guidance is the universities of applied sciences owing to the possibility of alternative access (for potential students without higher education entrance exam) for these institutions. (1390)

Owing to their mandate in education policy these universities of applied sciences found it necessary to provide guidance, this was something they developed. (1398)

It would be an aspect for other tertiary institutions to offer a specific segment within study guidance which should be really responsible for admission guidance, thus answering questions like 'what are the prerequisites, how about the recognition of non-formal qualifications? How could I have access, under which circumstances?'(1409)

It's something to be developed further. (1419) It would be better to formulate it as admission guidance instead of access guidance also in terms of attracting/approaching new target groups like e.g. people with migration background. As a general rule, migrants have the same ways of access in Austria. (1434) - on the level of formal access, at least. Of course formal regulations concerning residence or citizenship are a background here" (1439)

In another part of our research almost half of the respondents of ISCED 2 level participants stated that personal or emotional problems keep them from pursuing their education. Are there plans on a national level to introduce supportive offers in Austria? In your opinion, how could this situation be improved on a federal level?

[Not applicable]

INTERVIEW 3 WITH AUTHORITIES' REPRESENTATIVES

(Number) = line of the original German transcript

Our interview partner has not worked long at the institution yet, and as the institution he works for has been restructured recently he holds a new position. The institution is now a GmbH (limited liability company), but state funded and state near. Our interviewee works in the sector of the entire tertiary education, specifically colleges of higher education, universities, teacher training colleges and private universities. In general the institution deals with student mobility, but also services for apprentices are available.

3.1 STRUCTURAL ISSUES

Is there a central committee in your government department with specific responsibility for:

Social inclustion

see b)

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

"Not that I know of (neither a nor b) and I know for sure not in my area of expertise"

Lifelong learning

"This is present since the Nationalagentur für LLL (National Agency for LLL) is part of the institution I work for"(35)

Literacy

"I know too little about the whole range of the services within my institutions" (57)

The non-formal education sector

"The National Agency LLL processes quite a lot in this area but I don't know about specific offers beyond the support and management of EU programs. It could be attributed to the National Agency LLL" (68).

If yes, are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in these committees?

"Not that I know of. But my knowledge is limited to a certain part of my institution" (94).

If no, are there any plans to develop committee's to develop policy and monitor its implementation in any of these areas where there are no current committees?

"Concerning tertiary education at our institution is a service and that just comprises me for now. It has been existing since the beginning of the year and is in the process of being established (111)

I don't know anything about this topic, I am not familiar with the strategic plans. For the tertiary sector no, so far there is now only me in charge of this. Our service has been existing since the beginning of the year and is in the process of being established"

What are the obstacles to establishing any of these committees in your government ministry?
[Asked, but no answer possible – see above]

Is there a position of responsibility in your government department, specifically to develop and monitor implementation on these issues:
Social inclusion
Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups
Lifelong learning
Literacy
The non-formal education sector

In other words, if progress is not made in these areas who takes responsibility to drive things forward?
"We can skip this because I know too little about that" (130)

Are there any specific structures for communication at a strategic level between regional, local and national level with regard to:
Social inclusion
Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups
Lifelong learning
"LLL is part of my portfolio. Structure and communication with the ministry departments are in place but not yet with regional departments. (142). This is being planned for the near future but it is not the focus for the time being or 2009. First of all, the service as such has to be introduced and awareness has to be created. (149)
We build up a service facility to advice institutions, which don't have the resources to do it alone, how to change their curricula according to the new structure of bachelor/master, ECTS etc.2

Literacy
The non-formal education sector

Does your government ministry provide any support for individuals with specific responsibility for developing adult education services at a local or regional level, i.e., Adult Education Organisers?

"No, speaking from side of Bologna office and my institution, this is not a topic, that's not our responsibility" (182).

Are there structures for dialogue and a common strategy on any of these areas, between government departments of Education, Justice and Employment ? How can this dialogue be improved ?

"No, it's not really a relevant topic with us. Maybe related with the question of Visa it could be a marginal topic, I could imagine, that the resorts could cooperate in issues like how to facilitate this for foreign students, but generally it's not a relevant issue in my perception"(294).

3.2. STRATEGIC ISSUES

Is there a national and/or government strategy for:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"I have to admit, I do not know. I hope that there are some intentions for social inclusion, but I don't know about it. I only know about plans regarding educational mobility. Concerning LLL I know that declarations of intent do exist (234), but I see it as my personal deficit of information"

If yes, are there specific targets set for progress in this strategy?

If yes, is there specific funding allocated for progress on key elements in this strategy?

"At universities, progress is encouraged and financed through performance agreements, although I think the role of LLL indicators is not that big. The degree of enforcement of the Bologna structures is more prominent. (246)

I know Austria lags behind in terms of social inclusion. According to the Lisbon council study Austria was in the last third but I don't know about specific aims or parameters in the performance agreements" (266)

What percentage of your government department budget goes on adult education: a) formal education, b) non-formal education?

"I don't know about that" (282)

Please comment on measures taken by national government to support adult learning outside the major cities in your country.

"It is a subject, I myself was with the Federal Institute for Adult Education in Strobl BIFEB[68], but I have no clue as to where they get their financing or support. (301)

I would consider that useful but I'm not sure if it exists or not"(313)

Please comment on future plans by national government to develop lifelong learning at specific ISCED levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

"I don't know anything about that, either. (321)

I just wonder, if it would make more sense to speak with another person, who is on a higher level with a better insight"

3.3. NATIONAL POLICY: FORMAL SECTOR

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions training teachers to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can be teachers at a) elementary school level, b) high school level ?

"No"(351)

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?

"I don't know anything about that. I'm really sorry" (361)

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions [[training teachers - omit]] to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can enter courses for professions of particular influence in their local community such as a) law, b) social work, c) youth work, d) psychology, e) other

"I don't know of incentives, for example in the performance agreements between the universities and the Federal Ministry. The only things I'm familiar with are things like career changers or the people coming from abroad...(391) …Internationalisation but nothing that would count as "social inclusion". Or trying to get people, specifically with a migration background, to go to university. That in promoting this it would mean financial incentives for the universities (396)

Might be that measures here exist, but that I'm unfamiliar with it. (408)

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[68] http://www.bifeb.at/wir_ueber_uns/english_version.html

But I have never heard of such a thing that a university tries to increase participation of say migrant students"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive ?

"Maybe the basic political atmosphere which doesn't increasingly promote input of funds in that area, but that's just a guess. Despite of that, I would see chances if it's true what the demographers have been predicting for years, that the body of students is decreasing. That universities with their very own interest at heart can only survive by 'tapping' into new layers of students. (450)
Vienna University or the other big universities just don't see the need to specialise now or to adjust their services accordingly because they haven't had any losses so far, nor receding numbers of students.(460)
Maybe in 15 years they will see need to do something, but for the moment there are other projects, which bring more prestige in the view of the universities"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to use of the school building after school hours for adult education courses?

[Mentioned but skipped due to lack of relevance in this case.]

Are there particular gaps in employment and training for adults that you envisage developing in the near future?

"Yes. I think there are gaps everywhere in this area, the bridges between tertiary education, university and the job market – also between higher education and adult education and also between adult education and the job market. It's not quite clear why it is like that. I believe that in future, also related with the National Qualification Frame, they will develop a relatively high number of jobs in mediation between the individual areas or translation of the contents of the job market and how this can be incorporated into adult education and how things can progress between adult and higher (tertiary) education. Just better agree on who is responsible for what. I think that the area of secondary tertiary education is too much occupied with its own agenda and has no capacities to open up further channels" (487)

3.4. NATIONAL POLICY: NON-FORMAL SECTOR

Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations ?

"Which one? Yes, BMUKK[69], i.e. the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture" (527).

How would you compare the status and development of the non-formal education sector compared with 5 years ago? Has it expanded or increased over the last 5 years? Why?

"I don't think that the growth was encouraged on purpose. I think that the term has just been used more often, describing many more things than what was being done 5 years ago. I think that very few people could provide a snappy explanation of non-formal learning.(543)

[Using the terms more often helps] To qualify more people in general and getting them on board. Like a rucksack of education everybody ties for themselves and into which they can throw all of their experience. At one point, the rucksack will be filled and can be exchanged for something else…a qualification on different levels//just a new way of calculation an exchange, a new exchange service. (550)

As long as you don't define the concept, there won't be a necessity to introduce a bigger strategy. It is a European criterion but I think the universities are hopelessly overwhelmed if they have to kick-start a big certification industry, and I don't think they really want it, either" (571)

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *personal development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

"I would be surprised if that existed. That people would receive active boosts of their confidence, decision-making and accountability and support for their careers. Maybe there is some sort of pilot scheme but nothing for the general public" (594)

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *community development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

"I would just repeat the answer to the preceding question" (612)

3.5. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system?

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[69] http://www.bmukk.gv.at/enfr/index.xml

"I can see a lack of quality management, one which is satisfactory and trustworthy for both parties. It will probably exist in future but the universities now, which are claiming to be practising quality assurance, thus legitimising themselves, will probably point to the fact that these are somehow individual situations where they cannot guarantee the quality or scope of how things work" (633)

How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome ?

"By getting past this the usual way, just by working together and developing something together on how to approach this. I think the interaction between the participating institutions is not established well enough for people to trust each other. It will work on an individual basis but the universities and institutions have to decide on what their resources are and if they want to do it, since they are operating at full capacity. Also if there are governmental grants or support to be had. If it is a political declaration of intent which is being promoted accordingly so people can be employed who will be responsible for that. I see financial limits and quality management problems" (647)

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State ?

"Difficult to say. Again, support for developing things together. It should come from the participating institutions themselves.(689) The role of the state could only be of enhancing discussion processes, not in centralising regulations, as now universities are to decide these issues autonomously"

3.6. FUTURE PLANS

What, in your opinion, is your government department's priority issues to improve access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation?

"I can't say as it is not relevant to my current position.(712)

My instructions are to put the Bologna objectives into practice.(721)

Social inclusion is maybe a sub- sub aim of the Bologna process, but for the moment there are other priorities, which are more relevant. First the main structure has to be put in place" (725)

What changes do you hope will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation?

"It's really difficult for me to say" (741)

What changes do you realistically expect will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation?

Reserved places yes or no	**"***No***"**
Free childcare	**"***No***"**

Access officers in each third level institution   "*No*"

Outreach strategies for each community   "*Yes, strategies can be developed*"

Please list your priority target groups to improve access to third level education.

"*They do exist. (791) People who are working, students with families, older students where flexibility is needed*" (797)

What are the biggest obstacles to progress regarding promotion of access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, as well as social inclusion, lifelong learning, literacy and the non-formal education sector?

"*The structures and equipment of the institutions*" (806)

PRISON EDUCATION

Are there specific plans to improve access to education for adults in prisons in your country ? Please specify.

"*It's none of my core instructions*" (813)

What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to developing prison education?

[Not asked]

3.8. OUTREACH STRATEGIES

How, in your opinion, can national government support *outreach* attempts to reach those who do not traditionally engage in the formal education system or who have become alienated from this system?

[No answer]. (824)

Are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in a) designing, b) implementing outreach approaches to reach those most excluded from education ?

"*No experience, therefore no answer possible*"(834)

What government ministries support childcare funding and availability for adults who want to attend education courses, whether formal or informal? Please describe the supports provided

"*No*" (839)

Many people from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds have no space at home to study. What alternative physical sites do you think could be realistically made available for them for their learning ?

"No" (849)

Have any efforts been made to get schools to be sites of adult education in the community ? Please describe

No [answer provided by the interviewer, as the interviewee does not work with the school sector] (846)

Is there any national level strategy or support to provide for training/education of a) community leaders, b) teachers, in areas which experience most social deprivation and marginalisation ?

[Not asked]

Which government department funds the libraries in your country?

"No" (849)

Is distance education run from any libraries in your country?

[Not asked]

Please comment on ways to overcome the digital divide between different social groups

[No answer]

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on lifelong learning in your country?

"If the resources are cut, there won't be many new strategies for LLL. The current active approaching of new groups and widening of the range of services, this will probably be postponed owing to financial shortages" (863)

Questions based on the SP3 results

Can the reduction of fees for classes in formal education be a strategy to widen the access for adult learners? Which basic conditions would be necessary for this?

"The fees as such are not a problem as long as they stay the same in Austria. The question is rather the social supportive measures behind it. There is agreement on fees for a certain range of services. This service should then also be fulfilled. The grants and support behind this are not yet where they

should be. It can be done more flexibly so that it could be made use of repeatedly. Picturing the reality of the people and not just some rigid system" (881)

Only few of those third level institutions we questioned for a different part of the project mentioned that they are reserving an allocation of admissions to the university for underrepresented groups. How can, in your opinion, a national strategy be developed to promote this action in Austria?

"Financial incentives and performance agreements. If it is a political declaration of intent and socio-politically desired, we need some kind of incentives which are relevant to the universities or the institutions.(899)
If it is profitable for the institutions, there can also be other forms of prestige gain, also immaterial prestige" (911 / 917)

Many third level institutions state that they offer advice on admission. What is your opinion on the influence of national politics in this matter? Do you see a link to supporting offers to facilitate access to third level education for socially underrepresented groups?

"The universities do but I don't know the extent to which this is based on governmental reasons or that this has been promoted specifically" (931)

(In another part of our research almost half of the respondents of ISCED 2 level participants stated that personal or emotional problems keep them from pursuing their education. – Not formulated in this way, as the interview partner does not work with ISCED 2 educational institutions) Are there plans on a national level to introduce supportive offers in Austria? In your opinion, how could this situation be improved on a federal level?

"It will be a subject in future. I also think it is happening now. With my partial experience of (Name of University), I cannot say. There is intent and a very wide range of languages for the helpdesk. I can imagine that this is being taken into consideration now, that the Studentpoint[70] team is employing people with a migrant background.(953)
I don't know if this was a strategic decision but it exists.(968)
I don't know about other universities" (977)

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[70] see model of practice at the description of Formal Tertiary Institution 1 (FT1)

Appendix 1

Government Representatives Interview 1

Government Representatives Interview 2

Government Representatives Interview 3

INTERVIEW 1 WITH AUTHORITIES' REPRESENTATIVES

(Number) = line of the original German transcript

Our interview partner works within the Ministry for Education and is responsible for Lifelong Learning/LLL. Higher Education in Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences is not part of the competency of this Ministry, therefore most of tertiary adult education is not directly part of the competencies of our interview partner. Still, this institution is the one with the strongest competencies in the field of LLL concerning ministries, though in Austria LLL competencies are highly divided among different government institutions and agencies on national, regional and municipality level.

STRUCTURAL ISSUES

Is there a central committee in your government department with specific responsibility for:

Social inclustion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"We only have a real panel assignment for LLL. There is also a steering committee for the whole LLL process which is based in our house. We are working closely with the Ministry of Science but there are many things were we quickly reach the limits of our responsibility. We also have a wider structure of plenary with other ministries, (e.g. cooperation with social ministry including the national employment service, ministry of economy in terms of further education in companies etc.) and social partners (34)

What regards social inclusion, people with disadvantages, we don't have any committees, but it is nevertheless a main focus in our work. We know where the problems are from several research results, experts consulting and evaluations, which have been carried out. We know what needs to be done and discuss this also with other concerned resorts".

If yes, are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in these committees ?

"No, we don't have that"(93) "We first discussed that with regards to LLL, but than decided to rather have topical workshops for specific aspects of the LLL process where they can participate in terms of consultation

In the steering group of LLL we tried to keep it small, as we considered it as not possible to include all the single groups on institutional level. If you invite one group, suddenly 10 others want to join as well, and it would be unfair to make a selection".

If no, are there any plans to develop committees to develop policy and monitor its implementation in any of these areas where there are no current committees?

"This is an on-going question for us. (121, rest of answer unclear) We noticed that we need to enforce strategic planning and improve the administrational structures, which in a way are very bureaucratic. Committees are discussed, however is difficult for my ministry to push this through alone; the council of ministers would need to agree etc. In order to bring fresh spirit into the system we are now trying to include new groups of people, different non governmental organisation are invited to participate by giving statements etc. We want the people who are affected to be part of it in the widest possible sense in order to design our models in a more differentiated way. (158) We have consulting processes, but no real committees".

What are the obstacles to establishing any of these committees in your government ministry ?

"There is the question of distribution of competencies particularly in this area. Anything which is outside of the classical educational paths of initial formal education up to the tertiary sector, including the education on company level, this is extremely difficult. (166)

As the federal government hardly has any legal power in this respect according to the basic law of the 1970s, all nine regions and the federal government itself would have to make the same legal decisions. That's never going to happen. (174)

There are no clear competencies, meaning the Ministry of Education can only act suggestively, trying to stimulate certain processes with the help of financial aid.(184)

The federal government has the right to distribute financial promotions but it does not have the right to influence the institutions' design of their programmes, nor the trainers' qualifications; in short, it can't suggest any focus"(190)

(197-203, part of the answer?) "Additionally there are other ministries affected and active for certain target groups, it is a challenge to find cooperation and to supplement each other. Some other actors like the ministry for social affairs, they are much further developed concerning dealing with vulnerable groups like the elderly, I must admit that.

This is the main difficulty, that there are in fact very few models showing how to set up these things well in order to establish some sort of institutionalised agreement. As it is, we start from scratch with every new programme by having to discuss it with our partners. There is no automatic solution. That's why I'm expecting a lot from the LLL process[71]. I think it's an advantage that we are past the operative process in this area and can discuss fundamental things like how to treat cross sectional matters. (204)

I like the fact that there are different places people can go to but we do have to improve our cooperation. In order to do that, we have to develop a model, together, possibly with the social partners. And whatever it is that's needed, we will know that there is this platform where I can put up everything and there will be a relatively short way to come to a decision. I don't have to look for my new partners and start from scratch every single time" (222)

Is there a position of responsibility in your government department, specifically to develop and monitor implementation on these issues:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

In other words, if progress is not made in these areas who takes responsibility to drive things forward?

"The LLL process, this is where I'm placing all my hope. To identify clearly who is responsible. As for the monitoring, it's probably a bit easy for the authorities if they can say 'We aren't really responsible'. Nobody puts all the parts together (241)

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[71] The LLL consultation process on national level in Austria started in 2000 and is still continuing, including government representatives, social partners and experts.

There are sometimes redundancies in monitoring, or it is only done in the areas LLL and Literacy, http: www.statistik.at/web_en/ but in between still quite a few big blanks. Everybody says "okay, this is very complex, it'll be too expensive for me alone, if it only concerns me partly", etc. (247) I think the LLL process has great potential to improve this situation"

We have started to work with Statistics Austria[72] in some areas, they have surprisingly many possibilities to gain new results with existing data we are trying to compile something like a report for adult education in cooperation with other stakeholders" (252)

There is commitment on the part of the Ministry for Economy to cooperate financing"(264)

I generally can already notice a kind of change in the culture and a positive climate for working together in the future".

Are there any specific structures for communication at a strategic level between regional, local and national level with regard to:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"It is a difficult field, for example with regard to monitoring, which is the most concrete thing where we are involved also in international networks, here there is a tendency to allocate all responsibilities to one only person in the ministry. However, not only the education ministry is in charge of LLL (indicator), much more ministries and stakeholders are affected and should be represented. It is incredibly difficult to locate responsibilities in terms of political things. Their perception is reduced and that's detrimental to the process. What regards the administrational level, this is reflected. There is on the one hand side the problem of competence, which is frustrating for people, who are good, engaged and want to set concepts in practise, but don't have the legal competence to do it. And at the other hand there is the issue of money, - particularly what regards disadvantaged groups – where no resources exist, therefore no responsibilities can be realised. Here I think we need to find new models of governance, also companies should be more included in order to access disadvantaged groups and to raise public awareness for LLL. And we need to develop a new image for LLL, reach people at the workplace, also through works councils" (375)

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[72] http://www.statistik.at/web_en/

Does your government ministry provide any support for individuals with specific responsibility for developing adult education services at a local or regional level, i.e., Adult Education Organisers?

"Yes, there are. Selected, with very clear focus on disadvantaged groups. We are offering a number of courses via the Federal Institute for Adult Education for multiplicators. This often really targets the lesser qualified, the ones who have no access to education. It also segues into management tools. (389)

They have agreed on some kind of job description for adult education officers and this is being financed by the ministry with ESF funds. What we are also doing is this whole process of quality management. We are supporting this selectively.(397)

Those institutions who are rather small and with a high level of voluntary work, we are supporting them. We co-finance their workshops if they are doing something with external experts, to do our part. What is not successful but needs to be addressed in my opinion, is that these associations of adult education institutions have to find another form of institutionalisation for themselves, some cooperation. (407) Years ago I suggested that they should develop such a form of association, which would be supported by the government and would be of benefit for them, also in terms of communication processes.

It is very difficult for us because the contact persons keep changing. Where do we send our things? Do we get all the resources? Because they simply don't have the resources.(418) And it was interesting for me, that they nevertheless denied the proposal, they fear to then be controlled by the ministry"

Are there structures for dialogue and a common strategy on any of these areas, between government departments of Education, Justice and Employment? How can this dialogue be improved?

"We hardly have any links. There are a couple of model projects but that doesn't go beyond the pilot phase (451)

The justice department has a better view of what works and this in turn helps the inmates and works in their daily life. There is little from them, I think they should practice are more pro-active feedback environment. I have to be careful with our department because the budget limits are reached very quickly. With them, too, they address it immediately: It is education, and even though it takes place there, they say the ministry of education should have to pay for it. And we say, well, it should be part of your concern, it is within your institutional frame and you should pay for some of it. It would be a partial aspect if we achieved something here via LLL. We have the pilot schemes. There is some first experience in Austria. I think there is a lot of potential in this" (461)

"If the council of ministers adopts something, it doesn't mean that this will be immediately working the following month. It would just be the beginning of one way. To be realistic, this would have to be developed over the course of the next years" (483)

STRATEGIC ISSUES

Is there a national and/or government strategy for:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"I would say yes, but with one limitation national strategies. We have it in the ESF program plan, so you could say it's a national strategy where the Ministry of Economics, which is the contact for Brussels, the Ministry of Social Affairs, etc., draft a joint document. With the small aesthetic mistake, if you will, that this is not a national strategy which has come out of Austria, but instead has been coaxed with the not unimportant carrot that is the ESF funding, so they had to come up with something to break this down. As for the other aspects, there are partial strategies but I'm not really competent enough to answer this. The big picture is only the ESF. It was an important motor (497) (518-534 relevant?) *In course of the ESF, also a better climate of cooperation between different responsible authorities in Austria was initiated, which could also build the basis for future activities".*

If yes, are there specific targets set for progress in this strategy ?

If yes, is there specific funding allocated for progress on key elements in this strategy ? (answer for both questions)

"We, the Ministry of Education, have increased our efforts decidedly because these disadvantaged groups are recurring specifically in the ESF program. This is about programs for literacy, basic skills, basic education and finishing the Hauptschulabschluss (lower secondary school final examination) and the Berufsreifeprüfung[73]. These are our main topics for these target groups. The funds for the lower secondary school diploma courses have tripled since the year 2000, a certain dynamic emerged in course of ESF also with the offering institutions. Though we know there is even more potential. We are currently developing a co-funding model with the regional states where we can act a little independently from the ESF. Our plan would be starting 2011 a 50-50 funding with the federal

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[73] examination providing general access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools

provinces. We started this about a year ago: Adult education – LLL is becoming more and more important. We asked ourselves what can we do?

And we agreed surprisingly fast with the countries, that we want to make something in the area of basis qualification and lower secondary school diploma – so exactly also the contents of ESF. Here you have to be very flexible and that's why it is good to cooperate with each individual federal province. Here criteria are defined together and if it will work out successfully, the budget will increase exponentially".

What percentage of your government department budget goes on adult education: a) formal education, b) non-formal education?

"This is very difficult to answer. The classical AE budget is about 9 million euro. Then there was a path of education for specific schemes. This takes us to roughly 13 million euro of national funds (632) From these 13 million about 4 million go into the structural support of the big adult education associations" (640)

"Another 2 million have to be deducted which are not really for the benefit of these target groups(658)

The rest is for the most part being poured into these target groups. As for formal/non-formal, this is really difficult for me in terms of definition but I'd say about 2/3 rather formal. Because the big chunks of the budget are the Berufsreifeprüfung and the Hauptschulabschluss[74](666)

(690-725 which question?) I would like to add something; this doesn't concern adult education in a classical sense, but what I consider as very important are schools for employed adults, particularly those in the area of upper secondary vocational schools[75]. Some people might claim this are just schools, but the participants have already completed their compulsory education and just didn't go in for further education immediately after and now work or might also be unemployed. These paths, which are mainly offered extra-occupational in forms of evening colleges, should not be underestimated and as they are rather expensive due to the school-leaned remuneration system for trainers, they altogether take more than twice of the budget of classical adult education. Particularly for disadvantaged groups like e.g. migrants there is evidence, that these upper secondary vocational

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[74] Berufsreifeprüfung (granting access to tertiary level education) and Hauptschulabschluss (compulsory schooling final certificate) are exams that form part of the formal education system (actually classical second chance education), but both are provided mostly by adult education institutions, not schools.

[75] Within SP3 we researched the two main types of uppers secondary vocational schools for adults: colleges for engineers and colleges for business administration (see SP3).

schools are adopted very well, these people when graduating from these schools manage to finally get their entrance qualification for tertiary level and it opens good chances for them on the labour market. This is especially true for professions in technical fields".

Please comment on measures taken by national government to support adult learning outside the major cities in your country.

"This is very important for us. The OECD country check showed that Austria has indeed a very high regional coverage. We also achieve that partly via the structural promotion funds, and with measures concerning disadvantaged groups We are trying very consciously not to just go into the urban area (764)

The big master plan is missing, again owing to competencies (strong competencies of the federal provinces.) The Federal Ministry can only intervene by stimulating" (773)

Please comment on future plans by national government to develop lifelong learning at specific ISCED levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

"There are scattered schemes in the consultation paper. For us within the Ministry of Education there is a strong focus what regards school education on improving the quality of education and at the same time to develop the possibilities for care offers. Very important point is the free kindergarten. I would see all of this as parts of this strategy (787)

For the tertiary level there is now some dynamic movement because the Ministry of Science has initiated its LLL board and also wants to embed LLL within the performance agreements with universities. (795) This movement happened, according to my perception, because of pressure from the universities. (803) How this is going to lead to specific schemes in the tertiary sector, I cannot say.(809)Definitely we will enforce the collaboration with the federal provinces"

<u>**NATIONAL POLICY: FORMAL SECTOR**</u>

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions training teachers to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can be teachers at a) elementary school level, b) high school level?

*"I wouldn't have heard of it" (*833)

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?

"We need a different mix of teachers, especially in urban areas where certain ethnic groups may be represented more strongly. There is a strong interested on the operative level. We are still a little behind in strategic planning, which I think stems from the relatively wild re-orientation phase of the

whole teacher training sector, with these new Austrian teacher training colleges where we "melt" more than 40 institutions (852)

On the whole I don't think there are big obstacles. We just have to do it. Maybe it isn't so much a problem of reserving admission, because I think that there are enough place" (862)

We just have to improve the attraction of teacher training for these groups, that's what I see as a problem (866)

I think we have to really address the communities pro-actively. Such as, for example, the Jewish community has managed. They have managed to recruit teachers for their specific needs. And I think that this works as well for others, if we really succeed to get into the group and to tell them that these things are useful for them" (872)

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions [[training teachers - omit]] to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can enter courses for professions of particular influence in their local community such as a) law, b) social work, c) youth work, d) psychology, e) other

"I'm not aware of anything" (896)

(896-903 relevant?) "The only thing I know is for the police in terms of de-escalation, that they try to include certain ethnic groups, because it is just helpful for them"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?

(912-924 relevant?) "Actually we have a higher than average proportion of foreign students in our tertiary education institutions, they are generally open, it think it is just again the question of promoting inclusion actively, particularly in the smaller sectors"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to use of the school building after school hours for adult education courses?

"This is a really important issue for us. It is easier with the federal schools which are administrated directly by the federal government. As owners, we have direct ways to act. This is where we have the distinct appeal to the directors. Their infrastructure is suitable to adults, with tables of the right height and IT work stations, etc. The elementary schools aren't really useful although they are being used partially. There we would have the infrastructure and we cannot progress because the commitment is based on individuals. They say we don't profit from this. On the contrary, I'm at a disadvantage because I have maintenance/cleaning costs. The personnel stops cleaning at 5pm, the people arrive at 6pm and the next day, the school is dirty. (942)

People working as school caretakers, for example, say: 'this is not in my contract'" (957)

That's where we have very banal everyday organisational problems. (959) We are sometimes moving within uncertain legal fields. It's a partial legal capacity, which we are thinking of introducing to get a specific frame of reference. I think it's okay if they participate at cost price.(968) I think that than there is more motivation to offer something, e.g. it is possible to say: "I would use the IT room and have a teacher teach specific modules" so they can improve their income a little. It makes everything look much better if they can say, okay, we can also benefit from this. It is inherently more difficult with the compulsory schools (which fall within the competencies of the federal provinces)" (974)

"It is a responsibility jungle in the federal government, just not possible to establish clear rules. I also see that especially with the vocational schools there is an interest both from the federal provinces and the government, to use the infrastructure, which in parts is really excellent, after hours, both in the evenings, on Saturdays, etc. Because it really is an economic madness to have these schools empty" (981)

Are there particular gaps in employment and training for adults that you envisage developing in the near future?

"Where we really have a huge deficit which becomes less and less justifiable owing to the dynamics of the labour market, globalisation, etc. is that getting support is difficult for people who want to retrain proactively. A classic example are the healthcare professions which are constantly lamenting the lack of personnel (1004)

To do the 3-year course at the healthcare school is basically they don't get any support for their livelihood. Usually the AMS doesn't pay for that, etc. Where everybody says: Okay, from an economical point of view retraining would be wonderfully sensible (1010)

I do understand that this is a risk for potential sponsors. The trainee participated in the course for half a year and then says: 'I was wrong, no thanks'. However, they also often say: 'I would really enter into an obligation and pay in instalments.' (1015)

This concerns more and more areas. I think with the rising life expectancy and the obligation for people to stay in the occupational process for longer, someone has to come up with something because the cases are piling up.(1018)

I think it's a tragedy that there is no solution that we don't find anything. That's potential that's being lost. This is particularly true for the social sector. These are people who really want to do it and are experienced. (1034)

I see this as an important point to start, where there are some first ideas and where should be done more in the future. (1040)

Besides this, also the possibility to catch up with the completion of vocational apprentice training exams within alternative paths is very important. I think this is competency of the Ministry of Economics" (1045)

NATIONAL POLICY: NON-FORMAL SECTOR

Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations ?

"Responsibility? Probably nobody (laughing), and everybody is doing a little. (1057)

From a political point of view it is the Ministries of Education, Economics and Social Affairs. I would say that the real existing responsibility lies within this triangle. But non-formal education is something that's being treated with a little negligence, we know that when we look at Scandinavia or the Anglo-Saxon area. (1059) This is probably owing to the strong focus on formal vocational training and the strong orientation towards job profiles in Austria. (1066)

The European Qualification Frame is expected to bring forward the current situation. We hardly have anything yet what regards the section about non-formal learning and informal learning. At the moment it is discussed weather high qualified professionals (Meister) in vocational fields should be assigned to level 6 or also to 7 or 8, which at the moment is still only foreseen for universities. However, we are more concerned about levels 1-4, as here are the people, who are more distanced towards education. But generally the Ministries in charge and the social partners are working towards solutions here"

How would you compare the status and development of the non-formal education sector compared with 5 years ago? Has it expanded or increased over the last 5 years? Why?

"It has grown, yes, because the actual social development and the development of the labour market policies make this kind of learning inherently more important. (1115)

It becomes more and more important to learn within the company, also attending courses as an addition to working. (1119)

The social dynamics, these intercultural topics, this mobility... Actually it already starts with the holidays, where 3-year-olds are being confronted with other languages like Greek. This is a completely different learning process and it becomes increasingly important. (1122)

There is also empiric evidence (LLL study from statistics Austria) that informal/non formal learning is more dominant also in the daily life of the people when compared with participation in formal offers.

I think it is important that Austria sticks to the existing education schemes like the dual system in vocational training with apprenticeship, which have proved to be very successful, however the permeability in between the columns, the different levels and types of learning should be improved".

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *personal development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

"There are some key skills like IT skills, social competence, conflict management which – in the framework of the before mentioned working group between federal and regional governments - have been written into the curriculum for the lower secondary school leave certificate . Also with regards to basic education, it's not just literacy or language classes; it is a broader sense of cultural skills that we want to transmit – also in terms of citizenship, although we in Austria are still at a stage where every stakeholder has a different understanding of the concept of citizenship. (1173) The general approach is that it has to be more than just literacy. We want to have aspects of citizenship of cultural and intercultural education included. That is also where there is some support. It should be free of charge with the only obligation that people would have to endure these aspects of education" (1186)

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *community development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

 "I would repeat what I just said about personal development question, yes" (1200)

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system ?

"We have a very mundane organisational problem. There is no culture for that in Austria. A lot of persuasion will be necessary to get acceptance from the other educational institutions. (1209) Also from side of the companies: usually when employers have to choose between 10 candidates, wherefrom 2 made their diploma within the second education path, the later two are second choice. There is still something like a small stigma. There is the "proper" diploma, which is the original one and then there is the "doubtable" diploma, - somebody has somehow gotten there too. (1225) That's why we want to include all stakeholders to define criteria together.
If there is qualification, it has to be as valid as a certificate from initial education. (1233)
Especially on the employers' part, I can see reservation which has to be overcome, even more than within the whole societal process. (1238) Of course it is easier to assess the diploma that I know.

There are enough international reference models, such as Portugal has it, where you could see how they did it and we could adapt it for our contexts and needs". (1252)

How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome?
See next question.

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State ?
"We probably have to start from two ends: One is the social question, a question of broad acceptance. But you also have to start with the institutions; here the tertiary sector will be challenged especially. There is a certain elitist awareness and they are more geared towards exclusion. (1268) (1270-1287 relevant?) For accreditation the adopting institutions have to get certain incentives. It is mainly also about financing. That's also why it works better with universities of applied sciences, where every student brings in money, whereas at the scientific universities the financing system is not as transparently related to study places".

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State ?
"See last question – financial incentives respectively change of financing system especially regarding scientific universities in order to make these institutions develop intrinsic motivation to accept also students coming from non-traditional educational paths".

What changes do you hope will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation?
[Not asked respectively; only next question was asked due to lacking time]

What changes do you realistically expect will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation ?

Reserved places yes or no	*"No"*
Free childcare	*"Yes, I could imagine this in the next couple of years*
Access officers in each third level institution	**"***Yes"*
Outreach strategies for each community	**"***Again, yes"*

"There is a lot coming from the federal provinces governments. The province Burgenland is currently working on some sort of mission statement for adult education. The province Salzburg has had one for years. They are even more detailed, broken down into regions, this also regards the province of Tyrol" (1322)

Please list your priority target groups to improve access to third level education.

"Certainly people who don't have an upper secondary level qualification. These mundane things, that they are disqualified/falling out of jobs the quickest especially now in times of crisis. They are definitely an important area for us to operate in. Also all the people with a migration background. And even if this sounds a little absurd for adult education, the young adults. Because we are noticing that with the pressure on people to stay employed and at the same time jobs are becoming fewer, an immense pressure is building on the younger ones. This leads us to re-qualification, they are just not yet established well in the labour market. But here we still lack models that prevent people from loosing their jobs in the first place (1331). We all know that if they have been outside of jobs for a year, then it becomes awfully difficult for them" (1347)

What are the biggest obstacles to progress regarding promotion of access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, as well as social inclusion, lifelong learning, literacy and the non-formal education sector ?

[Not asked due to lacking time, implicit answers see above]

PRISON EDUCATION

Are there specific plans to improve access to education for adults in prisons in your country ? Please specify.

"No" (1363)

What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to developing prison education ?

"In terms of cooperation with the different authorities concerned with this issue, like mentioned in other questions about obstacles, the problems are similar" (1356).

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

How, in your opinion, can national government support *outreach* attempts to reach those who do not traditionally engage in the formal education system or who have become alienated from this system ?

Are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in a) designing, b) implementing outreach approaches to reach those most excluded from education ?[76]

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[76] Both questions combined

"Very indirectly. It is very difficult, fair involvement evenly balanced across the lobbies. (1378) There is a certain design and we find some phrases in the governmental programme from some institutions' policy papers but it's not an institutionalised process as such" (1386)

What government ministries support childcare funding and availability for adults who want to attend education courses, whether formal or informal? Please describe the supports provided

*"We have supported this partly via ESF schemes. There was some emphasis within the tertiary sector. We have also partly supported this in the classical area of adult education. As far as I see, this receives support from social projects. Again we have the problem of being too little coordinated. Too little is known about who plays which role and in reality the organisations who are offering the services are left to their own devices and have to look for partners themselves" (*1395)

Many people from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds have no space at home to study. What alternative physical sites do you think could be realistically made available for them for their learning?

"Yes. In several, well, pilot phases, well, we are still far away from having complete coverage. On one hand this is being supported via small associations, there are these women's associations in Vienna, some of which have study workshops for Latin-American women, where also childcare service is attached next door" (1412)

"We don't have these learning centres, such as there are in Great Britain, but these modern adult education centres and such, partly also other education institutions. Very important also the libraries that consider themselves more and more as learning rooms (1422) In the national library e.g. a lounge was established, which particularly attracts young people, as it is very modern and "hip" including computer places, couches and drink machines".

Have any efforts been made to get schools to be sites of adult education in the community ? Please describe

[Not asked due to lacking time]

Is there any national level strategy or support to provide for training/education of a) community leaders, b) teachers, in areas which experience most social deprivation and marginalisation ?

[Not asked due to lacking time]

Which government department funds the libraries in your country ?

"Financing of the libraries is very heterogenic, as it is a regional matter.

There is something like a basic financial aid, from the federal government for institutions for adult education, for the libraries' association which distributes it according to whatever guidelines, fact is that they are basically under-financed. There are some flagship projects but mostly in the federal regions' capitals, there is little anywhere else"(1458)

Is distance education run from any libraries in your country ?

[Not asked due to lacking time]

Please comment on ways to overcome the digital divide between different social groups

[Not asked due to lacking time]

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on lifelong learning in your country ?

"At any rate, I also see two effects. There will be increased demand in the direction of adapting education within the lower third of qualification, also transmitted by the national employment service (1471).

Within the upper third of qualification, they are very active in continuing education, have high costs for continuing education, both privately or sent from the companies because the entrepreneurs are investing. That's where I'm expecting a decrease. From what I hear from one of the main banks, etc., already now they are starting to cancel seminars in continuing education like crazy. (1474) I consider this as a very exiting process, what this will mean for their behaviour, if they – when companies don't pay anymore - will than increasingly spend money from their own pockets for their further education. I have to watch myself not to sound cynical but now there will be increased funds for the lower level of qualification and that politics put a stronger focus, I see this as a chance, yes, that may now really sound a little cynical but that's really what I mean. It's a little like the possibility, basically, to establish new benchmarks. This could than be continued also after the recession" (1487)

Questions based on the SP3[77] results

Can the reduction of fees for classes in formal education be a strategy to widen the access for adult learners? Which basic conditions would be necessary for this?

"The federal government/federal states government model does address these factors specifically and we try to do this justice by incorporating this into a regional model and right from the beginning include the budgeting. (1532)

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[77] SP3 refers to 'Subproject 3' of the LLL2010 Project, a survey research on participants in adult education.

One has to think of a well-specified mix. There is a lot of potential in the things, such as the education voucher, education bonus, etc., which exist in the other federal provinces. We know that basically the funding for specific segments is an important factor, for others not. (1550)

There is a certain incentive model, where companies get tax reduction when offering education for their employees. But I doubt that this is a very effective measure.

I can't find any effect in any statistical data that this has stimulated companies which to date haven't done anything in the field of continuing education. The SMEs clearly have not been targeted by this.(1560) An academic learner e.g. will take the reduction of course, but would maybe have done the education anyway. Especially the people who have no access to education cannot be targeted with these models.

I need to know first which target group I want for which educational scheme. It's a mix of factors which needs to be balanced carefully. (1579)

In my estimation the current measures are not effective enough: Maybe only 10-20% are those people I actually want to target.(1586)

What regards people with medium income, maybe an interest-free loan would be an intelligent solution (1590) They might have the money for e.g. a post graduate Master, but can not put it on the table all at once.

I think we should think about this, certain offers for certain layers of income. And for those layers with no access to education, I have to get as many free offers as possible in terms of fees. (1597) Any learning opportunities above those have to be as affordable as possible, this mustn't lead to any barrier. Also savings models should be considered, this building society savings model doesn't really work properly. But there are also, basically in the Netherlands, partly elaborate models on how to set incentives. I think we should take a closer look at this" (1604)

Only few of those third level institutions we questioned for a different part of the project mentioned that they are reserving an allocation of admissions to the university for underrepresented groups. How can, in your opinion, a national strategy be developed to promote this action in Austria?

[Not asked as this topic lies outside the competencies of our interview partner]

Many third level institutions state that they offer advice on admission. What is your opinion on the influence of national politics in this matter? Do you see a link to supporting offers to facilitate access to third level education for socially underrepresented groups?

[Not asked as this topic lies outside the competencies of our interview partner]

In another part of our research almost half of the respondents of ISCED 2 level participants stated that personal or emotional problems keep them from pursuing their education. Are there plans on a national level to introduce supportive offers in Austria? In your opinion, how could this situation be improved on a federal level?

"This brings me back to the working group of federal government and federal provinces' governments and the plans concerning the lower secondary diploma. We have a strictly calculated size of pedagogical support because we said it's not working properly without. (1514) It is starting with the "visiting" education work, where we want to approach the target group proactively instead of waiting for them to come by themselves. There must be somebody here for them permanently and a certain amount of time should be calculated for this kind of care"

Appendix 2

SP5 SAMPLE AUSTRIA

Field	Institutions	Interviews	Coding of Institutions	Coding of Interviews
Formal Education: Tertiary Level Institutions	1 University 1 University of Applied Sciences	2 interviews – 1 model of practise 2 interviews - 2 models of practise	FT1 (formal tertiary 1) FT2 (formal tertiary 2)	FT1O[78] FT1M[79] FT2O FT2M
Non-Formal AE Institutions	1 Volkshochschule (adult education centre) 1 NPO Organisation specialised on empowering women for labour market	2 interviews, 1 model of practise 2 interviews, 1 model of practice	NF1 (non formal 1) NF2	NF1O NF1M NF2O NF2M
Secondary School	1 School in the field of social pedagogy – upper secondary VET school, VET college and extra-occupational VET college for adults	2 interviews	School	SCHO SCHM
Prison Institution	1 Prison with longstanding tradition in AE	2 interviews – 1 model of practice	Prison	PO PM
Government Department Officials	2 Ministries, 1 NPO service agency	3 interviews		Gov_Austria_1 Gov_Austria_2 Gov_Austria_3
TOTAL:	**5 Institutions in the field of (adult)**	**15 interviews**		

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[78] O stands for operational level

[79] M stands for management level

	education **1 Prison 3 Government administrative institutions**			

INTERVIEW 1 WITH AUTHORITIES' REPRESENTATIVES

(Number) = line of the original German transcript

Our interview partner works within the Ministry for Education and is responsible for Lifelong Learning/LLL. Higher Education in Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences is not part of the competency of this Ministry, therefore most of tertiary adult education is not directly part of the competencies of our interview partner. Still, this institution is the one with the strongest competencies in the field of LLL concerning ministries, though in Austria LLL competencies are highly divided among different government institutions and agencies on national, regional and municipality level.

STRUCTURAL ISSUES

Is there a central committee in your government department with specific responsibility for:

Social inclustion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"We only have a real panel assignment for LLL. There is also a steering committee for the whole LLL process which is based in our house. We are working closely with the Ministry of Science but there are many things were we quickly reach the limits of our responsibility. We also have a wider structure of plenary with other ministries, (e.g. cooperation with social ministry including the national employment service, ministry of economy in terms of further education in companies etc.) and social partners (34)

What regards social inclusion, people with disadvantages, we don't have any committees, but it is nevertheless a main focus in our work. We know where the problems are from several research results, experts consulting and evaluations, which have been carried out. We know what needs to be done and discuss this also with other concerned resorts".

If yes, are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in these committees ?

"No, we don't have that"(93) "We first discussed that with regards to LLL, but than decided to rather have topical workshops for specific aspects of the LLL process where they can participate in terms of consultation

In the steering group of LLL we tried to keep it small, as we considered it as not possible to include all the single groups on institutional level. If you invite one group, suddenly 10 others want to join as well, and it would be unfair to make a selection".

If no, are there any plans to develop committees to develop policy and monitor its implementation in any of these areas where there are no current committees?

"This is an on-going question for us. (121, rest of answer unclear) We noticed that we need to enforce strategic planning and improve the administrational structures, which in a way are very bureaucratic. Committees are discussed, however is difficult for my ministry to push this through alone; the council of ministers would need to agree etc. In order to bring fresh spirit into the system we are now trying to include new groups of people, different non governmental organisation are invited to participate by giving statements etc. We want the people who are affected to be part of it in the widest possible sense in order to design our models in a more differentiated way. (158) We have consulting processes, but no real committees".

What are the obstacles to establishing any of these committees in your government ministry ?

"There is the question of distribution of competencies particularly in this area. Anything which is outside of the classical educational paths of initial formal education up to the tertiary sector, including the education on company level, this is extremely difficult. (166)

As the federal government hardly has any legal power in this respect according to the basic law of the 1970s, all nine regions and the federal government itself would have to make the same legal decisions. That's never going to happen. (174)

There are no clear competencies, meaning the Ministry of Education can only act suggestively, trying to stimulate certain processes with the help of financial aid.(184)

The federal government has the right to distribute financial promotions but it does not have the right to influence the institutions' design of their programmes, nor the trainers' qualifications; in short, it can't suggest any focus"(190)

(197-203, part of the answer?) "Additionally there are other ministries affected and active for certain target groups, it is a challenge to find cooperation and to supplement each other. Some other actors like the ministry for social affairs, they are much further developed concerning dealing with vulnerable groups like the elderly, I must admit that.

This is the main difficulty, that there are in fact very few models showing how to set up these things well in order to establish some sort of institutionalised agreement. As it is, we start from scratch with every new programme by having to discuss it with our partners. There is no automatic solution. That's why I'm expecting a lot from the LLL process[80]. I think it's an advantage that we are past the operative process in this area and can discuss fundamental things like how to treat cross sectional matters. (204)

I like the fact that there are different places people can go to but we do have to improve our cooperation. In order to do that, we have to develop a model, together, possibly with the social partners. And whatever it is that's needed, we will know that there is this platform where I can put up everything and there will be a relatively short way to come to a decision. I don't have to look for my new partners and start from scratch every single time" (222)

Is there a position of responsibility in your government department, specifically to develop and monitor implementation on these issues:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

In other words, if progress is not made in these areas who takes responsibility to drive things forward?

"The LLL process, this is where I'm placing all my hope. To identify clearly who is responsible. As for the monitoring, it's probably a bit easy for the authorities if they can say 'We aren't really responsible'. Nobody puts all the parts together (241)

There are sometimes redundancies in monitoring, or it is only done in the areas LLL and Literacy, http: www.statistik.at/web_en/ but in between still quite a few big blanks. Everybody says "okay, this is very complex, it'll be too expensive for me alone, if it only concerns me partly", etc. (247) I think the LLL process has great potential to improve this situation"

We have started to work with Statistics Austria[81] in some areas, they have surprisingly many possibilities to gain new results with existing data we are trying to compile something like a report for adult education in cooperation with other stakeholders" (252)

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[80] The LLL consultation process on national level in Austria started in 2000 and is still continuing, including government representatives, social partners and experts.

[81] http://www.statistik.at/web_en/

There is commitment on the part of the Ministry for Economy to cooperate financing"(264)

I generally can already notice a kind of change in the culture and a positive climate for working together in the future".

Are there any specific structures for communication at a strategic level between regional, local and national level with regard to:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"It is a difficult field, for example with regard to monitoring, which is the most concrete thing where we are involved also in international networks, here there is a tendency to allocate all responsibilities to one only person in the ministry. However, not only the education ministry is in charge of LLL (indicator), much more ministries and stakeholders are affected and should be represented. It is incredibly difficult to locate responsibilities in terms of political things. Their perception is reduced and that's detrimental to the process. What regards the administrational level, this is reflected. There is on the one hand side the problem of competence, which is frustrating for people, who are good, engaged and want to set concepts in practise, but don't have the legal competence to do it. And at the other hand there is the issue of money, - particularly what regards disadvantaged groups – where no resources exist, therefore no responsibilities can be realised. Here I think we need to find new models of governance, also companies should be more included in order to access disadvantaged groups and to raise public awareness for LLL. And we need to develop a new image for LLL, reach people at the workplace, also through works councils" (375)

Does your government ministry provide any support for individuals with specific responsibility for developing adult education services at a local or regional level, i.e., Adult Education Organisers?

"Yes, there are. Selected, with very clear focus on disadvantaged groups. We are offering a number of courses via the Federal Institute for Adult Education for multiplicators. This often really targets the lesser qualified, the ones who have no access to education. It also segues into management tools. (389)

They have agreed on some kind of job description for adult education officers and this is being financed by the ministry with ESF funds. What we are also doing is this whole process of quality management. We are supporting this selectively.(397)

Those institutions who are rather small and with a high level of voluntary work, we are supporting them. We co-finance their workshops if they are doing something with external experts, to do our part. What is not successful but needs to be addressed in my opinion, is that these associations of adult education institutions have to find another form of institutionalisation for themselves, some cooperation.(407) Years ago I suggested that they should develop such a form of association, which would be supported by the government and would be of benefit for them, also in terms of communication processes.

It is very difficult for us because the contact persons keep changing. Where do we send our things? Do we get all the resources? Because they simply don't have the resources.(418) And it was interesting for me, that they nevertheless denied the proposal, they fear to then be controlled by the ministry"

Are there structures for dialogue and a common strategy on any of these areas, between government departments of Education, Justice and Employment? How can this dialogue be improved?

"We hardly have any links. There are a couple of model projects but that doesn't go beyond the pilot phase (451)

The justice department has a better view of what works and this in turn helps the inmates and works in their daily life. There is little from them, I think they should practice are more pro-active feedback environment. I have to be careful with our department because the budget limits are reached very quickly. With them, too, they address it immediately: It is education, and even though it takes place there, they say the ministry of education should have to pay for it. And we say, well, it should be part of your concern, it is within your institutional frame and you should pay for some of it. It would be a partial aspect if we achieved something here via LLL. We have the pilot schemes. There is some first experience in Austria. I think there is a lot of potential in this" (461)

"If the council of ministers adopts something, it doesn't mean that this will be immediately working the following month. It would just be the beginning of one way. To be realistic, this would have to be developed over the course of the next years" (483)

<u>STRATEGIC ISSUES</u>
Is there a national and/or government strategy for:
Social inclusion
Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups
Lifelong learning
Literacy
The non-formal education sector

"I would say yes, but with one limitation national strategies. We have it in the ESF program plan, so you could say it's a national strategy where the Ministry of Economics, which is the contact for Brussels, the Ministry of Social Affairs, etc., draft a joint document. With the small aesthetic mistake, if you will, that this is not a national strategy which has come out of Austria, but instead has been coaxed with the not unimportant carrot that is the ESF funding, so they had to come up with something to break this down. As for the other aspects, there are partial strategies but I'm not really competent enough to answer this. The big picture is only the ESF. It was an important motor (497) (518-534 relevant?) *In course of the ESF, also a better climate of cooperation between different responsible authorities in Austria was initiated, which could also build the basis for future activities".*

If yes, are there specific targets set for progress in this strategy ?
If yes, is there specific funding allocated for progress on key elements in this strategy ? (answer for both questions)

"We, the Ministry of Education, have increased our efforts decidedly because these disadvantaged groups are recurring specifically in the ESF program. This is about programs for literacy, basic skills, basic education and finishing the Hauptschulabschluss (lower secondary school final examination) and the Berufsreifeprüfung[82]. These are our main topics for these target groups. The funds for the lower secondary school diploma courses have tripled since the year 2000, a certain dynamic emerged in course of ESF also with the offering institutions. Though we know there is even more potential. We are currently developing a co-funding model with the regional states where we can act a little independently from the ESF. Our plan would be starting 2011 a 50-50 funding with the federal provinces. We started this about a year ago: Adult education – LLL is becoming more and more important. We asked ourselves what can we do?
 And we agreed surprisingly fast with the countries, that we want to make something in the area of basis qualification and lower secondary school diploma – so exactly also the contents of ESF. Here you have to be very flexible and that's why it is good to cooperate with each individual federal province. Here criteria are defined together and if it will work out successfully, the budget will increase exponentially".

What percentage of your government department budget goes on adult education: a) formal education, b) non-formal education?

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[82] examination providing general access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools

"This is very difficult to answer. The classical AE budget is about 9 million euro. Then there was a path of education for specific schemes. This takes us to roughly 13 million euro of national funds (632) From these 13 million about 4 million go into the structural support of the big adult education associations" (640)

"Another 2 million have to be deducted which are not really for the benefit of these target groups(658)

The rest is for the most part being poured into these target groups. As for formal/non-formal, this is really difficult for me in terms of definition but I'd say about 2/3 rather formal. Because the big chunks of the budget are the Berufsreifeprüfung and the Hauptschulabschluss[83](666)

(690-725 which question?) *I would like to add something; this doesn't concern adult education in a classical sense, but what I consider as very important are schools for employed adults, particularly those in the area of upper secondary vocational schools[84]. Some people might claim this are just schools, but the participants have already completed their compulsory education and just didn't go in for further education immediately after and now work or might also be unemployed. These paths, which are mainly offered extra-occupational in forms of evening colleges, should not be underestimated and as they are rather expensive due to the school-leaned remuneration system for trainers, they altogether take more than twice of the budget of classical adult education. Particularly for disadvantaged groups like e.g. migrants there is evidence, that these upper secondary vocational schools are adopted very well, these people when graduating from these schools manage to finally get their entrance qualification for tertiary level and it opens good chances for them on the labour market. This is especially true for professions in technical fields".*

Please comment on measures taken by national government to support adult learning outside the major cities in your country.

"This is very important for us. The OECD country check showed that Austria has indeed a very high regional coverage. We also achieve that partly via the structural promotion funds, and with measures concerning disadvantaged groups We are trying very consciously not to just go into the urban area (764)

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[83] Berufsreifeprüfung (granting access to tertiary level education) and Hauptschulabschluss (compulsory schooling final certificate) are exams that form part of the formal education system (actually classical second chance education), but both are provided mostly by adult education institutions, not schools.

[84] Within SP3 we researched the two main types of uppers secondary vocational schools for adults: colleges for engineers and colleges for business administration (see SP3).

The big master plan is missing, again owing to competencies (strong competencies of the federal provinces.) The Federal Ministry can only intervene by stimulating" (773)

Please comment on future plans by national government to develop lifelong learning at specific ISCED levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

"There are scattered schemes in the consultation paper. For us within the Ministry of Education there is a strong focus what regards school education on improving the quality of education and at the same time to develop the possibilities for care offers. Very important point is the free kindergarten. I would see all of this as parts of this strategy (787)

For the tertiary level there is now some dynamic movement because the Ministry of Science has initiated its LLL board and also wants to embed LLL within the performance agreements with universities. (795) This movement happened, according to my perception, because of pressure from the universities. (803) How this is going to lead to specific schemes in the tertiary sector, I cannot say.(809)Definitely we will enforce the collaboration with the federal provinces"

<u>**NATIONAL POLICY: FORMAL SECTOR**</u>

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions training teachers to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can be teachers at a) elementary school level, b) high school level?

*"I wouldn't have heard of it" (*833)

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?

"We need a different mix of teachers, especially in urban areas where certain ethnic groups may be represented more strongly. There is a strong interested on the operative level. We are still a little behind in strategic planning, which I think stems from the relatively wild re-orientation phase of the whole teacher training sector, with these new Austrian teacher training colleges where we "melt" more than 40 institutions (852)

On the whole I don't think there are big obstacles. We just have to do it. Maybe it isn't so much a problem of reserving admission, because I think that there are enough place" (862)

We just have to improve the attraction of teacher training for these groups, that's what I see as a problem (866)

I think we have to really address the communities pro-actively. Such as, for example, the Jewish community has managed. They have managed to recruit teachers for their specific needs. And I think that this works as well for others, if we really succeed to get into the group and to tell them that these things are useful for them" (872)

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions [[training teachers - omit]] to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can enter courses for professions of particular influence in their local community such as a) law, b) social work, c) youth work, d) psychology, e) other

"I'm not aware of anything" (896)

(896-903 relevant?) "The only thing I know is for the police in terms of de-escalation, that they try to include certain ethnic groups, because it is just helpful for them"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?

(912-924 relevant?) "Actually we have a higher than average proportion of foreign students in our tertiary education institutions, they are generally open, it think it is just again the question of promoting inclusion actively, particularly in the smaller sectors"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to use of the school building after school hours for adult education courses?

"This is a really important issue for us. It is easier with the federal schools which are administrated directly by the federal government. As owners, we have direct ways to act. This is where we have the distinct appeal to the directors. Their infrastructure is suitable to adults, with tables of the right height and IT work stations, etc. The elementary schools aren't really useful although they are being used partially. There we would have the infrastructure and we cannot progress because the commitment is based on individuals. They say we don't profit from this. On the contrary, I'm at a disadvantage because I have maintenance/cleaning costs. The personnel stops cleaning at 5pm, the people arrive at 6pm and the next day, the school is dirty. (942)

People working as school caretakers, for example, say: 'this is not in my contract'" (957)

That's where we have very banal everyday organisational problems. (959) We are sometimes moving within uncertain legal fields. It's a partial legal capacity, which we are thinking of introducing to get a specific frame of reference. I think it's okay if they participate at cost price.(968) I think that than there is more motivation to offer something, e.g. it is possible to say: "I would use the IT room and have a teacher teach specific modules" so they can improve their income a little. It makes everything look much better if they can say, okay, we can also benefit from this. It is inherently more difficult with the compulsory schools (which fall within the competencies of the federal provinces)" (974)

"It is a responsibility jungle in the federal government, just not possible to establish clear rules. I also see that especially with the vocational schools there is an interest both from the federal provinces and the government, to use the infrastructure, which in parts is really excellent, after hours, both in the

evenings, on Saturdays, etc. Because it really is an economic madness to have these schools empty"
(981)

Are there particular gaps in employment and training for adults that you envisage developing in the near future?

"Where we really have a huge deficit which becomes less and less justifiable owing to the dynamics of the labour market, globalisation, etc. is that getting support is difficult for people who want to retrain proactively. A classic example are the healthcare professions which are constantly lamenting the lack of personnel (1004)

To do the 3-year course at the healthcare school is basically they don't get any support for their livelihood. Usually the AMS doesn't pay for that, etc. Where everybody says: Okay, from an economical point of view retraining would be wonderfully sensible (1010)

I do understand that this is a risk for potential sponsors. The trainee participated in the course for half a year and then says: 'I was wrong, no thanks'. However, they also often say: 'I would really enter into an obligation and pay in instalments.' (1015)

This concerns more and more areas. I think with the rising life expectancy and the obligation for people to stay in the occupational process for longer, someone has to come up with something because the cases are piling up.(1018)

I think it's a tragedy that there is no solution that we don't find anything. That's potential that's being lost. This is particularly true for the social sector. These are people who really want to do it and are experienced. (1034)

I see this as an important point to start, where there are some first ideas and where should be done more in the future. (1040)

Besides this, also the possibility to catch up with the completion of vocational apprentice training exams within alternative paths is very important. I think this is competency of the Ministry of Economics" (1045)

NATIONAL POLICY: NON-FORMAL SECTOR

Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations ?

"Responsibility? Probably nobody (laughing), and everybody is doing a little. (1057)

From a political point of view it is the Ministries of Education, Economics and Social Affairs. I would say that the real existing responsibility lies within this triangle. But non-formal education is something that's being treated with a little negligence, we know that when we look at Scandinavia or the Anglo-

Saxon area. (1059) This is probably owing to the strong focus on formal vocational training and the strong orientation towards job profiles in Austria. (1066)

The European Qualification Frame is expected to bring forward the current situation. We hardly have anything yet what regards the section about non-formal learning and informal learning. At the moment it is discussed weather high qualified professionals (Meister) in vocational fields should be assigned to level 6 or also to 7 or 8, which at the moment is still only foreseen for universities. However, we are more concerned about levels 1-4, as here are the people, who are more distanced towards education. But generally the Ministries in charge and the social partners are working towards solutions here"

How would you compare the status and development of the non-formal education sector compared with 5 years ago? Has it expanded or increased over the last 5 years? Why?

"It has grown, yes, because the actual social development and the development of the labour market policies make this kind of learning inherently more important. (1115)

It becomes more and more important to learn within the company, also attending courses as an addition to working. (1119)

The social dynamics, these intercultural topics, this mobility... Actually it already starts with the holidays, where 3-year-olds are being confronted with other languages like Greek. This is a completely different learning process and it becomes increasingly important. (1122)

There is also empiric evidence (LLL study from statistics Austria) that informal/non formal learning is more dominant also in the daily life of the people when compared with participation in formal offers.

I think it is important that Austria sticks to the existing education schemes like the dual system in vocational training with apprenticeship, which have proved to be very successful, however the permeability in between the columns, the different levels and types of learning should be improved".

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *personal development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

"There are some key skills like IT skills, social competence, conflict management which – in the framework of the before mentioned working group between federal and regional governments - have been written into the curriculum for the lower secondary school leave certificate . Also with regards to basic education, it's not just literacy or language classes; it is a broader sense of cultural skills that we want to transmit – also in terms of citizenship, although we in Austria are still at a stage where every stakeholder has a different understanding of the concept of citizenship. (1173) The

general approach is that it has to be more than just literacy. We want to have aspects of citizenship of cultural and intercultural education included. That is also where there is some support. It should be free of charge with the only obligation that people would have to endure these aspects of education" (1186)

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *community development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

"I would repeat what I just said about personal development question, yes" (1200)

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system ?

"We have a very mundane organisational problem. There is no culture for that in Austria. A lot of persuasion will be necessary to get acceptance from the other educational institutions. (1209) Also from side of the companies: usually when employers have to choose between 10 candidates, wherefrom 2 made their diploma within the second education path, the later two are second choice. There is still something like a small stigma. There is the "proper" diploma, which is the original one and then there is the "doubtable" diploma, - somebody has somehow gotten there too. (1225) That's why we want to include all stakeholders to define criteria together.
If there is qualification, it has to be as valid as a certificate from initial education. (1233)
Especially on the employers' part, I can see reservation which has to be overcome, even more than within the whole societal process. (1238) Of course it is easier to assess the diploma that I know. There are enough international reference models, such as Portugal has it, where you could see how they did it and we could adapt it for our contexts and needs". (1252)

How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome?

See next question.

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State ?

"We probably have to start from two ends: One is the social question, a question of broad acceptance. But you also have to start with the institutions; here the tertiary sector will be challenged especially. There is a certain elitist awareness and they are more geared towards exclusion. (1268)

(1270-1287 relevant?) For accreditation the adopting institutions have to get certain incentives. It is mainly also about financing. That's also why it works better with universities of applied sciences, where every student brings in money, whereas at the scientific universities the financing system is not as transparently related to study places".

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State ?
"See last question – financial incentives respectively change of financing system especially regarding scientific universities in order to make these institutions develop intrinsic motivation to accept also students coming from non-traditional educational paths".

What changes do you hope will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation?
[Not asked respectively; only next question was asked due to lacking time]

What changes do you realistically expect will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation ?

Reserved places yes or no	*"No"*
Free childcare	*"Yes, I could imagine this in the next couple of years*
Access officers in each third level institution	**"***Yes"*
Outreach strategies for each community	**"***Again, yes"*

"There is a lot coming from the federal provinces governments. The province Burgenland is currently working on some sort of mission statement for adult education. The province Salzburg has had one for years. They are even more detailed, broken down into regions, this also regards the province of Tyrol" (1322)

Please list your priority target groups to improve access to third level education.
"Certainly people who don't have an upper secondary level qualification. These mundane things, that they are disqualified/falling out of jobs the quickest especially now in times of crisis. They are definitely an important area for us to operate in. Also all the people with a migration background. And even if this sounds a little absurd for adult education, the young adults. Because we are noticing that with the pressure on people to stay employed and at the same time jobs are becoming fewer, an immense pressure is building on the younger ones. This leads us to re-qualification, they are just not yet established well in the labour market. But here we still lack models that prevent people from

loosing their jobs in the first place (1331). We all know that if they have been outside of jobs for a year, then it becomes awfully difficult for them" (1347)

What are the biggest obstacles to progress regarding promotion of access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, as well as social inclusion, lifelong learning, literacy and the non-formal education sector ?
[Not asked due to lacking time, implicit answers see above]

PRISON EDUCATION

Are there specific plans to improve access to education for adults in prisons in your country ? Please specify.
"*No*" (1363)

What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to developing prison education ?
"*In terms of cooperation with the different authorities concerned with this issue, like mentioned in other questions about obstacles, the problems are similar*" (1356).

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

How, in your opinion, can national government support *outreach* attempts to reach those who do not traditionally engage in the formal education system or who have become alienated from this system ?
Are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in a) designing, b) implementing outreach approaches to reach those most excluded from education ?[85]
 "*Very indirectly. It is very difficult, fair involvement evenly balanced across the lobbies. (1378) There is a certain design and we find some phrases in the governmental programme from some institutions' policy papers but it's not an institutionalised process as such*" (1386)

What government ministries support childcare funding and availability for adults who want to attend education courses, whether formal or informal? Please describe the supports provided
"*We have supported this partly via ESF schemes. There was some emphasis within the tertiary sector. We have also partly supported this in the classical area of adult education. As far as I see, this receives support from social projects. Again we have the problem of being too little coordinated. Too*

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[85] Both questions combined

*little is known about who plays which role and in reality the organisations who are offering the services are left to their own devices and have to look for partners themselves" (*1395)

Many people from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds have no space at home to study. What alternative physical sites do you think could be realistically made available for them for their learning?

"Yes. In several, well, pilot phases, well, we are still far away from having complete coverage. On one hand this is being supported via small associations, there are these women's associations in Vienna, some of which have study workshops for Latin-American women, where also childcare service is attached next door" (1412)

"We don't have these learning centres, such as there are in Great Britain, but these modern adult education centres and such, partly also other education institutions. Very important also the libraries that consider themselves more and more as learning rooms (1422) In the national library e.g. a lounge was established, which particularly attracts young people, as it is very modern and "hip" including computer places, couches and drink machines".

Have any efforts been made to get schools to be sites of adult education in the community ? Please describe

[Not asked due to lacking time]

Is there any national level strategy or support to provide for training/education of a) community leaders, b) teachers, in areas which experience most social deprivation and marginalisation ?

[Not asked due to lacking time]

Which government department funds the libraries in your country ?

"Financing of the libraries is very heterogenic, as it is a regional matter.

There is something like a basic financial aid, from the federal government for institutions for adult education, for the libraries' association which distributes it according to whatever guidelines, fact is that they are basically under-financed. There are some flagship projects but mostly in the federal regions' capitals, there is little anywhere else"(1458)

Is distance education run from any libraries in your country ?

[Not asked due to lacking time]

Please comment on ways to overcome the digital divide between different social groups

[Not asked due to lacking time]

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on lifelong learning in your country ?

"At any rate, I also see two effects. There will be increased demand in the direction of adapting education within the lower third of qualification, also transmitted by the national employment service (1471).

Within the upper third of qualification, they are very active in continuing education, have high costs for continuing education, both privately or sent from the companies because the entrepreneurs are investing. That's where I'm expecting a decrease. From what I hear from one of the main banks, etc., already now they are starting to cancel seminars in continuing education like crazy. (1474) I consider this as a very exiting process, what this will mean for their behaviour, if they – when companies don't pay anymore - will than increasingly spend money from their own pockets for their further education. I have to watch myself not to sound cynical but now there will be increased funds for the lower level of qualification and that politics put a stronger focus, I see this as a chance, yes, that may now really sound a little cynical but that's really what I mean. It's a little like the possibility, basically, to establish new benchmarks. This could than be continued also after the recession" (1487)

Questions based on the SP3[86] results

Can the reduction of fees for classes in formal education be a strategy to widen the access for adult learners? Which basic conditions would be necessary for this?

"The federal government/federal states government model does address these factors specifically and we try to do this justice by incorporating this into a regional model and right from the beginning include the budgeting. (1532)

One has to think of a well-specified mix. There is a lot of potential in the things, such as the education voucher, education bonus, etc., which exist in the other federal provinces. We know that basically the funding for specific segments is an important factor, for others not. (1550)

There is a certain incentive model, where companies get tax reduction when offering education for their employees. But I doubt that this is a very effective measure.

I can't find any effect in any statistical data that this has stimulated companies which to date haven't done anything in the field of continuing education. The SMEs clearly have not been targeted by this.(1560) An academic learner e.g. will take the reduction of course, but would maybe have done

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[86] SP3 refers to 'Subproject 3' of the LLL2010 Project, a survey research on participants in adult education.

the education anyway. Especially the people who have no access to education cannot be targeted with these models.

I need to know first which target group I want for which educational scheme. It's a mix of factors which needs to be balanced carefully. (1579)

In my estimation the current measures are not effective enough: Maybe only 10-20% are those people I actually want to target.(1586)

What regards people with medium income, maybe an interest-free loan would be an intelligent solution (1590) They might have the money for e.g. a post graduate Master, but can not put it on the table all at once.

I think we should think about this, certain offers for certain layers of income. And for those layers with no access to education, I have to get as many free offers as possible in terms of fees. (1597) Any learning opportunities above those have to be as affordable as possible, this mustn't lead to any barrier. Also savings models should be considered, this building society savings model doesn't really work properly. But there are also, basically in the Netherlands, partly elaborate models on how to set incentives. I think we should take a closer look at this" (1604)

Only few of those third level institutions we questioned for a different part of the project mentioned that they are reserving an allocation of admissions to the university for underrepresented groups. How can, in your opinion, a national strategy be developed to promote this action in Austria?

[Not asked as this topic lies outside the competencies of our interview partner]

Many third level institutions state that they offer advice on admission. What is your opinion on the influence of national politics in this matter? Do you see a link to supporting offers to facilitate access to third level education for socially underrepresented groups?

[Not asked as this topic lies outside the competencies of our interview partner]

In another part of our research almost half of the respondents of ISCED 2 level participants stated that personal or emotional problems keep them from pursuing their education. Are there plans on a national level to introduce supportive offers in Austria? In your opinion, how could this situation be improved on a federal level?

"This brings me back to the working group of federal government and federal provinces' governments and the plans concerning the lower secondary diploma. We have a strictly calculated size of pedagogical support because we said it's not working properly without. (1514) It is starting with the "visiting" education work, where we want to approach the target group proactively instead of waiting

for them to come by themselves. There must be somebody here for them permanently and a certain amount of time should be calculated for this kind of care"

(Number) = line of the original German transcript

Our interview partner works at the Federal Ministry of Science, which is responsible for universities and universities of applied sciences in Austria. The School system, adult education or great parts of Teacher Training and related educational institutions are not part of this Ministries' responsibility. Our interviewee is an expert for LLL issues within this institution, although main responsibilities concerning LLL also reside with another Ministry.

STRUCTURAL ISSUES

Is there a central committee in your government department with specific responsibility for:

Social inclustion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

iteracy

The non-formal education sector

"There is one body within the Ministry of Science only for LLL. An advisory board has been established within the Department for universities and universities of applied Sciences within the Ministry of Science, of which external stakeholders are a part. The leadership for LLL and the development of a national strategy for LLL lies basically with the Ministry for Education, but the Ministry of Science takes part in this working group. I don't know anything about the other areas (a, b, d). Maybe about the non-formal education where the Ministry of Science is involved with the national qualifications framework, but this is also led by the Ministry for Education" (61)

If yes, are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in these committees?

"There are no representatives of these groups in the areas known to me. However, for the development of a national LLL-strategy, NGOs have been included and asked for statements" (84)

If no, are there any plans to develop committee's to develop policy and monitor its implementation in any of these areas where there are no current committees?

"In the light of the activities with regard to performance agreements, this is currently no issue; literacy doesn't affect the Ministry of Science.

Social inclusion is basically acknowledged as part of the activities enforced by the EU but there are no current plans to set up new groups"

What are the obstacles to establishing any of these committees in your government ministry?

"In the science resort, one of the main reasons is that mainly other Ministries are responsible for questions of central responsibility. The ministry as such is not capable of organising wider activities or to establish own committees, it only makes contributions for others by participating in advising boards etc. (106)

The Ministry of Science includes issues like social inclusion, access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups and non-formal education as part of LLL. I don't see the possibility of establishing a separate group for each of these issues concerning universities, because we would not get their acceptance for these issues. We rather use the LLL topic in general and then also give attention to the three mentioned issues (social inclusion, access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups and non-formal education). (121) The community/stake holders as far as universities are concerned would not consider these issues as relevant enough to spend staff resources on them. We deal with the topic under the header of LLL and partly also within the framework of European Qualification Frame or also NQF. More is hard to achieve at the moment. Reasons for the lack of acceptance from side of the community can also bee seen in the current conditions of time and budget in the higher education institutes. They feel already overcharged with their core business and therefore would not think about voluntary engaging in a different issue. (157) However, when it comes to international initiatives, like e.g. the LLL charter of the European University Association, universities are in a way forced to make statements on issues like permeability and disadvantaged groups, this is also part of the performance agreements. The rare staff resources have to be mentioned in this respect as well. (169) Staff resources have to be mentioned, that of course is the classical answer from all concerned institutions regarding reasons for overcharge2 (192)

Is there a position of responsibility in your government department, specifically to develop and monitor implementation on these issues:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

In other words, if progress is not made in these areas who takes responsibility to drive things forward?

"The respective unit responsible for the issue within the Ministry of Science is in charge. Universities have functioning monitoring structures. Part of the universities' active reporting towards the Ministry is to provide performance reports on their aims and activities. This is then also content of the meetings, which take place twice a year and at the end of a period the evaluation will also be used for further performance agreements between Ministry and the respective university (208).

The universities of applied science are free to report if they want, but they have to be evaluated during re-accreditation in certain time periods. So, for them other regulations apply; generally there is better monitoring and reporting in the sector of universities than in the sector of private universities or universities of applied sciences" (223)

[87]*"With regards responsibility to drive things forward, maybe this can be answered according to the different sectors involved (238) For the universities' sector it is the respective department within the ministries where conversations (and consequences) are made in the framework of the performance agreements. (245) As for universities of applied science, given the current structure, it can quite possibly also be the university of applied science's council in terms of the accreditation process, where this points are issued. (251)*

On a governmental level, there is also the university of applied science's financing and development plan which covers a five-year period. Here also regionalisation and enlarged access for marginalised groups are issued in a higher extent". (255)

Are there any specific structures for communication at a strategic level between regional, local and national level with regard to:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"For these five mentioned areas we don't have any real strategic structures on a departmental level. (305) This is so owing to the universities' and universities of applied sciences' autonomy and the reason that a different Ministry is responsible for LLL" (311)

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[87] Belongs to question above, see bottom part in previous section added by RG, which says more or less the same

Does your government ministry provide any support for individuals with specific responsibility for developing adult education services at a local or regional level, i.e., Adult Education Organisers?

"Since this Ministry is not responsible for traditional adult education, there is no such support. There is of course know-how transfer and information for educational institutions offering tertiary adult education, but nothing else as far as support goes2 (325)

Are there structures for dialogue and a common strategy on any of these areas, between government departments of Education, Justice and Employment? How can this dialogue be improved?

"I don't know anything about joint strategic developments between the departments mentioned, apart from LLL. There are individual activities, such as joint leaflets or events but I wouldn't call that a development of strategies.(346)

Links between the areas of education and work are seen as relevant, visible in the co-operations of at least the informational area.

I don't know about the area of Law.(367) For the tertiary educational sector I can only think of the aliens act (Fremdengesetz), regarding the access or admission of foreign students, respectively students from third countries" (356)

STRATEGIC ISSUES

Is there a national and/or government strategy for:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"I only know about a planned national strategy for LLL which is supposed to be submitted to the Ministers' Council within the year 2009. I don't know about anything similar in the other four areas" (383)

If yes, are there specific targets set for progress in this strategy?

If yes, is there specific funding allocated for progress on key elements in this strategy? [88]

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[88] These two questions combined

"As mentioned before [question 5, 169]. If there were activities in these four areas, it would in all probability come under the header of LLL for which financing strategies or prioritising would possibly be discussed"(394)

What percentage of your government department budget goes on adult education: a) formal education, b) non-formal education?

"I think that we cannot attribute parts of the budget. If desired, a quantification can be expressed by looking at the number of students in extra-occupational degree courses in universities of applied science or number of students who entered the program via non-formal access paths. But for the Ministry of Science this question can not really be answered, as there are not budget pots for adult education in the classical sense (408).

And you would have to look at the composition of students in the extra-occupational degree courses at the universities of applied sciences in terms of age groups and within the subjects in order to determine the amount of financing on national level[89], though you would have to establish if this can be attributed to adult learning in the first place" (425)

Please comment on measures taken by national government to support adult learning outside the major cities in your country.

"The performance agreements with the universities contain activities for society, with some universities being very active, having discovered a new target group. However, we cannot put a number on these activities or the funds at their disposal. It is decided on institutional level (universities), and no detailed reports of these singular activities are requested. I know of some examples where degree courses are offered for elderly people/seniors or public lectures are held on a regular basis" (439)

Please comment on future plans by national government to develop lifelong learning at specific ISCED levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

"I don't know about that because we aren't really responsible for ISCED level 2, 3 and 4 this. For ISCED level 5 I don't know something new on national level, I just know that (469). The OECD is discussing ISCED levels in general. (480)

I don't know what the development of LLL can be on its different levels. LLL for me is about vertical mobility not about horizontal development" (488)

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[89] The Ministry of Science as part of national government is responsible for state financing on national level, while many universities of applied sciences are strongly co-financed by Laender (provinces) in Austria.

NATIONAL POLICY: FORMAL SECTOR

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions training teachers to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can be teachers at a) elementary school level, b) high school level?

"Actually, I don't know anything about this. (525) Our Ministry is not responsible for this issue, but I also didn't hear anything about that in the communication with responsible government departments"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive ?

"There are chances regarding ethnic minorities, I am speaking now about contents of an other Ministry, because the discussion in Austria is progressing and it would be necessary and appropriate to have a certain inclusion.(533)

Obstacles on one hand can be because the teacher training colleges in Austria now basically have a new legal basis, not exactly like the universities' autonomy, but still other control elements have to be implemented, possibly leading to a concentration on organisational processes and less on actual aims and their content.

It can also be a chance in that the institutions have to take action themselves by defining their own strategies or develop a profile, thus they could also initiate a new national strategy. But in my experience, a fundamental change in structures leads to contents taking a back seat and it takes a very long time for new processes to be understood and implemented by everybody consciously.(538)

With regards to higher schools we generally have an open access to teacher training within the universities. If there are no incentives from the state, the departments at universities could get active in the framework of their profile development.

However, owing to political basic conditions there are limits to motivating institutions like universities. (573)

Anything going beyond the core business of a university or university of applied science will only be addressed once the core business has been secured. (578) A classical incentive would be the performance agreements between the Ministry of Science and the universities, provided that the necessary funds can be made available. (587)

The obstacle would be too little resources. (589)

The chance is that also on institutional levels initiatives on these issues can be developed, if institutional mission statements can lead to stimulation of a national strategy" (603)

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions [[training teachers - omit]] to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can enter courses for professions of particular influence in their local community such as a) law, b) social work, c) youth work, d) psychology, e) other

"In my perception this is no topic. Maybe I would add that the open access for psychological studies has been limited by admission exams but there are no intentions for reservation. This wouldn't be possible for universities owing to the open access but it could be resolved by way of the performance agreements, thus getting the universities to address the target groups.

Admission financing could be used to approach these questions, if it was part of the universities of applied science's development plans. (621) What regards the Universities of Applied Sciences this would be possible to enforce within the framework of the national development plan, which could also include strategies to widen access for non-traditional groups like working students. This would need to be discussed at the council of ministers within the Austrian national government"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?

"Resources, similar to the questions about obstacles and chances" (597)

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to use of the school building after school hours for adult education courses?

"That is not a question in our area, as we are not responsible for classical adult education and neither for schools" (665)

Are there particular gaps in employment and training for adults that you envisage developing in the near future?

"There is only a small area of relevance to the Department of Science, only when you consider that also students who are employed / working are included at the universities or universities of applied sciences. Concerning this issue, I don't know about any plans or activities for our department.(672) Generally, the aim is to increase the number of professional students in universities of applied science for the next period of performance agreement, as well as the aim to offer proper graduate programmes for them at universities. Particularly in the area of master programs at universities this should be implemented within the next years; due to lack of resources this might be not strongly pushed by universities, but still should be implemented" (681)

NATIONAL POLICY: NON-FORMAL SECTOR

Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations?

"According to our understanding, it's the Ministry of Education or for some professional areas maybe one of the other ministries" (712)

How would you compare the status and development of the non-formal education sector compared with 5 years ago? Has it expanded or increased over the last 5 years? Why?

"I don't feel the need [to address this question]" (719)

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *personal development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

"Our Ministry of Science deals with non-formal education, in cooperation with others rather under the aspect of access and the recognition of non-formal qualifications. (728)
This question addresses rather specific target groups which are not part of our responsibility" (726)

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *community development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

[Not applicable (see above)]

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system?

"One of the obstacles I mentioned is certainly the fact that the institutions rather prefer to stick to their core tasks owing to the limited budget, which in turn causes a lack of staff.
Also some groups of now established people who have themselves acquired access to tertiary level education via formal channels are basically very guarded when it comes to accepting other forms of access. Guarded owing to fearing the lack of quality management, but it is also partly a psychological reaction. (744) Especially what regards access to tertiary education greater reservation can be noted compared to other issues"

How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome?

"There is a demographic development which will show the universities and the universities of applied science their limit and at least on an international level I detect the readiness to discuss these questions increasingly. This will still need time to have an impact on the Austrian situation, as we still have open access to universities in Austria (and therefore a strong inflow of students), but this will also be an issue here in the future" (771)

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State?

"As far as I know there is the intent to develop an accreditation system on a national level which is currently met with reservation on the part of the institutions. From the Ministry of Science's point of view I would think that a lot has already been done for the Universities and Universities of applied science to provide them with autonomy. From a formal point of view of the authorities or a ministry or the Ministry of Science all that is left are instruments to be used to get the universities to including new target groups in their profiling and development plans and, if possible, to provide financial incentives which leads us back to budget limits.(801)

[Additional information, not pertaining to the question directly: ll.835 about permeability between Bachelor/Master/PHD courses between universities and universities of applied sciences. The three stages are still in development, thus not easy to assess at the moment. Also the doctorate will be reformed in future.] I think in the next time something will change here in respect of Master course offers and profile development. With defining a more specific target group, things will change concerning the permeability within the different school and university sectors in Austria. (887)

In Austria, the institution / university a person has studied at will become more important in future. Establishing a profile facilitates co-operations because the respective institutions' focal points can be assessed better. And with increasing active quality management of the respective areas the institutions' acceptance will be greater in other sectors. (902) This affects cooperation between schools and tertiary education institutions, but also institutions within the tertiary sector"

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State?

"There are no current plans.(922) What regards instruments to make incentives to increase the share of traditionally underrepresented groups, it is possible in the framework of performance agreements between the Ministry and universities. 934) Within the Universities of Applied Sciences inclusion is already an issue, for students with non-traditional access (who have no higher education entrance exam)"

What changes do you hope will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation?

"Basically there is a possibility for the institutions to take action in this area, by establishing their profile, thus putting the emphasis on certain target groups. However, owing to the current basic conditions (lack of financial resources) the change in this area will not be very big" (947)

What changes do you realistically expect will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation ?

Reserved places   yes/ no

Free childcare   yes/no

Access officers in each third level institution   yes/no

Outreach strategies for each community   yes/no

[Reserved places] *"Certainly not comprehensively / systematically" (966)*

[Free childcare] *"I have to admit I don't know if child care at universities is free of charge" (980)*

[Access Officers] "*I would think that the institutions' activities in this area will increase in terms of profile building and recruiting their target groups. If the educational guidance officers will provide advice on admissions on a broader scale, I cannot say" (1003)*

[Outreach Strategies] If this is taking place on a regional level *"Maybe for universities of applied science it can be said, that there is a regionalisation. The activities for distance learning are present but are also meeting with boundaries. (1018)*

Resources are being provided but experience shows that longer periods of attendance are necessary and the synergies people had been expecting somehow have not materialised"

Please list your priority target groups to improve access to third level education.

"I don't know about a specific new target group. The one people are talking about are individuals with vocational background who have completed an apprenticeship" (1037)

What are the biggest obstacles to progress regarding promotion of access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, as well as social inclusion, lifelong learning, literacy and the non-formal education sector?

"Within the tertiary sector everything is very much disconnected from these target groups because so many things are happening before that. A national strategy can basically be supportive or helpful but within the specific constellation of the tertiary sector and in face of the institutions' autonomy the really target-oriented activities have to emerge from there (1050)

The most efficient way is to raise the autonomous institutions' awareness for these target groups with the help of their strategic planning and profile building, and to check if they actually meet the

targets they have set themselves. The latter is the job of government representatives. Within the next five years budget limits will be the main obstacle in Austria" (1058)

PRISON EDUCATION

Are there specific plans to improve access to education for adults in prisons in your country? Please specify.

"I don't really know anything about that" (1079)

What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to developing prison education?

[Not applicable]

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

How, in your opinion, can national government support *outreach* attempts to reach those who do not traditionally engage in the formal education system or who have become alienated from this system?

"Much can be achieved by keeping this alive within the discussion of educational politics and in communicating this actively to the institutions" (1090)

Are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in a) designing, b) implementing outreach approaches to reach those most excluded from education ?

"I don't know if representatives of the risk groups will be included. I see them represented by the social partners and also through the ministries' representatives, who are referring to interests of these groups and who try to take these interests into account" (1107)

What government ministries support childcare funding and availability for adults who want to attend education courses, whether formal or informal ? Please describe the supports provided

"I don't know about any activities.(1118)
I only know about child care at universities in the framework of promotion of women, all activities that I know from have been co-financed with EU funds" (1130)

Many people from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds have no space at home to study. What alternative physical sites do you think could be realistically made available for them for their learning?

"I'd say all public institutions which, as long as they have capacities, can extend their opening hours to some extent. Maybe it would be possible to establish regional partnerships including tertiary

educational institutions to provide access to these premises explicitly to non-students who are also learning. According to my experience, the resources would be here and would not be overrun in the regions (1143)

And to tell this target group that they can have access to the library in order to study. Also there are public libraries. The fact that there are public rooms or premises is often overlooked. Sometimes the opening hours are dependent on voluntary staff. These places could be announced and used during specific hours. (1162)

School premises would provide more rooms and this could also create additional revenue for the schools because I think they are allowed to generate third-party funds" (1180)

Have any efforts been made to get schools to be sites of adult education in the community? Please describe

"This is not my area of expertise / competence" (1192)

Is there any national level strategy or support to provide for training/education of a) community leaders, b) teachers, in areas which experience most social deprivation and marginalisation ?

"Not my area" (1199)

Which government department funds the libraries in your country ?

"It depends on the sector. Universities and universities of applied science are financed by the Ministry of Science. The public and other libraries by the Ministry of Education, I think" (1213)

Is distance education run from any libraries in your country ?

"I don't know about that" (1230)

Please comment on ways to overcome the digital divide between different social groups

"I can't really assess this situation but there are people within our Ministry who are looking into these questions" (1244)

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on lifelong learning in your country?

"The current basic conditions are less favourable, hence the ministries and institutions are less active in these areas. We have already discussed that public funding cannot be extended but also the private households are rethinking the use of their funds in the segment of private higher education can imagine that there will be a decline in numbers of participants in areas where fees are charged. This regards to private universities and (CVET) university courses" (1256)

Questions based on the SP3 results

Can the reduction of fees for classes in formal education be a strategy to widen the access for adult learners? Which basic conditions would be necessary for this?

"Other than reducing or abolishing fees I would rather be inclined to think that linking fees for formal educational offers (here: tertiary level) with respective governmental aid for those who need it would be a more efficient solution. We have had both in Austria (this regards universities: fees and no fees) and we have seen that no big changes concerning non-traditional groups' access to universities have occurred. Now it should be looked at the effects of a real fee model if linked to a real sponsoring model, and on the effect this has also on the way public resources for education are distributed" (1300) [90]

Only few of those third level institutions we questioned for a different part of the project mentioned that they are reserving an allocation of admissions to the university for underrepresented groups. How can, in your opinion, a national strategy be developed to promote this action in Austria?

[Not applicable/answer see above](1315)

Many third level institutions state that they offer advice on admission. What is your opinion on the influence of national politics in this matter? Do you see a link to supporting offers to facilitate access to third level education for socially underrepresented groups?

"I do see a way to link these but it's limited by the respective funding of the institutions if they have to provide the funds. Basically this is a way to address a large target group and get it to attend universities/universities of applied science. (1346)

In Austria there is no such thing related to study guidance. It is only related to the formalities of the admission. (1367)

As far as the historical development goes, and my experience, there has never really been an approach to provide guidance for specific target groups in order to facilities their access. Advice on admission has existed within the institutions, but not with the idea of widening access. (1383)

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[90] Fees for universities are a highly controversial topic in Austria. After decades without any university fees for Austrian citizens (abolition in the 1970s) fees where re-established in 2001 and partly re-abolished in autumn 2008. At the end of 2009 this issue again is contested within the coalition currently in government. Fighting against a reintroduction of fees in autumn 2009 is a main issue of recent students' protest movements which also target considered unacceptable conditions for studying at Austrian universities.

In Austria's tertiary sector, the only area where I'd say we have some kind of study guidance is the universities of applied sciences owing to the possibility of alternative access (for potential students without higher education entrance exam) for these institutions. (1390)

Owing to their mandate in education policy these universities of applied sciences found it necessary to provide guidance, this was something they developed. (1398)

It would be an aspect for other tertiary institutions to offer a specific segment within study guidance which should be really responsible for admission guidance, thus answering questions like 'what are the prerequisites, how about the recognition of non-formal qualifications? How could I have access, under which circumstances?'(1409)

It's something to be developed further. (1419) It would be better to formulate it as admission guidance instead of access guidance also in terms of attracting/approaching new target groups like e.g. people with migration background. As a general rule, migrants have the same ways of access in Austria. (1434) - on the level of formal access, at least. Of course formal regulations concerning residence or citizenship are a background here" (1439)

In another part of our research almost half of the respondents of ISCED 2 level participants stated that personal or emotional problems keep them from pursuing their education. Are there plans on a national level to introduce supportive offers in Austria? In your opinion, how could this situation be improved on a federal level?

[Not applicable]

INTERVIEW 3 WITH AUTHORITIES' REPRESENTATIVES

(Number) = line of the original German transcript

Our interview partner has not worked long at the institution yet, and as the institution he works for has been restructured recently he holds a new position. The institution is now a GmbH (limited liability company), but state funded and state near. Our interviewee works in the sector of the entire tertiary education, specifically colleges of higher education, universities, teacher training colleges and private universities. In general the institution deals with student mobility, but also services for apprentices are available.

3.1 STRUCTURAL ISSUES

Is there a central committee in your government department with specific responsibility for:

Social inclustion

see b)

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

"Not that I know of (neither a nor b) and I know for sure not in my area of expertise"

Lifelong learning

"This is present since the Nationalagentur für LLL (National Agency for LLL) is part of the institution I work for"(35)

Literacy

"I know too little about the whole range of the services within my institutions" (57)

The non-formal education sector

"The National Agency LLL processes quite a lot in this area but I don't know about specific offers beyond the support and management of EU programs. It could be attributed to the National Agency LLL" (68).

If yes, are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in these committees?

"Not that I know of. But my knowledge is limited to a certain part of my institution" (94).

If no, are there any plans to develop committee's to develop policy and monitor its implementation in any of these areas where there are no current committees?

"Concerning tertiary education at our institution is a service and that just comprises me for now. It has been existing since the beginning of the year and is in the process of being established (111) I don't know anything about this topic, I am not familiar with the strategic plans. For the tertiary sector no, so far there is now only me in charge of this. Our service has been existing since the beginning of the year and is in the process of being established"

What are the obstacles to establishing any of these committees in your government ministry?

[Asked, but no answer possible – see above]

Is there a position of responsibility in your government department, specifically to develop and monitor implementation on these issues:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

In other words, if progress is not made in these areas who takes responsibility to drive things forward?

"We can skip this because I know too little about that" (130)

Are there any specific structures for communication at a strategic level between regional, local and national level with regard to:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

"LLL is part of my portfolio. Structure and communication with the ministry departments are in place but not yet with regional departments. (142). This is being planned for the near future but it is not the focus for the time being or 2009. First of all, the service as such has to be introduced and awareness has to be created. (149)

We build up a service facility to advice institutions, which don't have the resources to do it alone, how to change their curricula according to the new structure of bachelor/master, ECTS etc.2

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

Does your government ministry provide any support for individuals with specific responsibility for developing adult education services at a local or regional level, i.e., Adult Education Organisers?

"No, speaking from side of Bologna office and my institution, this is not a topic, that's not our responsibility" (182).

Are there structures for dialogue and a common strategy on any of these areas, between government departments of Education, Justice and Employment ? How can this dialogue be improved ?

"No, it's not really a relevant topic with us. Maybe related with the question of Visa it could be a marginal topic, I could imagine, that the resorts could cooperate in issues like how to facilitate this for foreign students, but generally it's not a relevant issue in my perception"(294).

3.2. STRATEGIC ISSUES

Is there a national and/or government strategy for:

Social inclusion

Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups

Lifelong learning

Literacy

The non-formal education sector

"I have to admit, I do not know. I hope that there are some intentions for social inclusion, but I don't know about it. I only know about plans regarding educational mobility. Concerning LLL I know that declarations of intent do exist (234), but I see it as my personal deficit of information"

If yes, are there specific targets set for progress in this strategy?

If yes, is there specific funding allocated for progress on key elements in this strategy?

"At universities, progress is encouraged and financed through performance agreements, although I think the role of LLL indicators is not that big. The degree of enforcement of the Bologna structures is more prominent. (246)

I know Austria lags behind in terms of social inclusion. According to the Lisbon council study Austria was in the last third but I don't know about specific aims or parameters in the performance agreements" (266)

What percentage of your government department budget goes on adult education: a) formal education, b) non-formal education?

"I don't know about that" (282)

Please comment on measures taken by national government to support adult learning outside the major cities in your country.

"It is a subject, I myself was with the Federal Institute for Adult Education in Strobl BIFEB[91], but I have no clue as to where they get their financing or support. (301)
I would consider that useful but I'm not sure if it exists or not"(313)

Please comment on future plans by national government to develop lifelong learning at specific ISCED levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

"I don't know anything about that, either. (321)
I just wonder, if it would make more sense to speak with another person, who is on a higher level with a better insight"

3.3. NATIONAL POLICY: FORMAL SECTOR

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions training teachers to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can be teachers at a) elementary school level, b) high school level ?
"No"(351)

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?
"I don't know anything about that. I'm really sorry" (361)

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions [[training teachers - omit]] to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can enter courses for professions of particular influence in their local community such as a) law, b) social work, c) youth work, d) psychology, e) other
"I don't know of incentives, for example in the performance agreements between the universities and the Federal Ministry. The only things I'm familiar with are things like career changers or the people coming from abroad...(391) …Internationalisation but nothing that would count as "social inclusion".

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[91] http://www.bifeb.at/wir_ueber_uns/english_version.html

Or trying to get people, specifically with a migration background, to go to university. That in promoting this it would mean financial incentives for the universities (396)

Might be that measures here exist, but that I'm unfamiliar with it. (408)

But I have never heard of such a thing that a university tries to increase participation of say migrant students"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive ?

"Maybe the basic political atmosphere which doesn't increasingly promote input of funds in that area, but that's just a guess. Despite of that, I would see chances if it's true what the demographers have been predicting for years, that the body of students is decreasing. That universities with their very own interest at heart can only survive by 'tapping' into new layers of students. (450)

Vienna University or the other big universities just don't see the need to specialise now or to adjust their services accordingly because they haven't had any losses so far, nor receding numbers of students.(460)

Maybe in 15 years they will see need to do something, but for the moment there are other projects, which bring more prestige in the view of the universities"

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to use of the school building after school hours for adult education courses?

[Mentioned but skipped due to lack of relevance in this case.]

Are there particular gaps in employment and training for adults that you envisage developing in the near future?

"Yes. I think there are gaps everywhere in this area, the bridges between tertiary education, university and the job market – also between higher education and adult education and also between adult education and the job market. It's not quite clear why it is like that. I believe that in future, also related with the National Qualification Frame, they will develop a relatively high number of jobs in mediation between the individual areas or translation of the contents of the job market and how this can be incorporated into adult education and how things can progress between adult and higher (tertiary) education. Just better agree on who is responsible for what. I think that the area of secondary tertiary education is too much occupied with its own agenda and has no capacities to open up further channels" (487)

3.4. NATIONAL POLICY: NON-FORMAL SECTOR

Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations ?

"Which one? Yes, BMUKK[92], i.e. the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture" (527).

How would you compare the status and development of the non-formal education sector compared with 5 years ago? Has it expanded or increased over the last 5 years? Why?

"I don't think that the growth was encouraged on purpose. I think that the term has just been used more often, describing many more things than what was being done 5 years ago. I think that very few people could provide a snappy explanation of non-formal learning.(543)

[Using the terms more often helps] To qualify more people in general and getting them on board. Like a rucksack of education everybody ties for themselves and into which they can throw all of their experience. At one point, the rucksack will be filled and can be exchanged for something else…a qualification on different levels//just a new way of calculation an exchange, a new exchange service. (550)

As long as you don't define the concept, there won't be a necessity to introduce a bigger strategy. It is a European criterion but I think the universities are hopelessly overwhelmed if they have to kick-start a big certification industry, and I don't think they really want it, either" (571)

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *personal development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

"I would be surprised if that existed. That people would receive active boosts of their confidence, decision-making and accountability and support for their careers. Maybe there is some sort of pilot scheme but nothing for the general public" (594)

What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *community development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?

"I would just repeat the answer to the preceding question" (612)

3.5. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

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[92] http://www.bmukk.gv.at/enfr/index.xml

What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system?

"I can see a lack of quality management, one which is satisfactory and trustworthy for both parties. It will probably exist in future but the universities now, which are claiming to be practising quality assurance, thus legitimising themselves, will probably point to the fact that these are somehow individual situations where they cannot guarantee the quality or scope of how things work" (633)

How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome ?

"By getting past this the usual way, just by working together and developing something together on how to approach this. I think the interaction between the participating institutions is not established well enough for people to trust each other. It will work on an individual basis but the universities and institutions have to decide on what their resources are and if they want to do it, since they are operating at full capacity. Also if there are governmental grants or support to be had. If it is a political declaration of intent which is being promoted accordingly so people can be employed who will be responsible for that. I see financial limits and quality management problems" (647)

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State ?

"Difficult to say. Again, support for developing things together. It should come from the participating institutions themselves.(689) The role of the state could only be of enhancing discussion processes, not in centralising regulations, as now universities are to decide these issues autonomously"

3.6. FUTURE PLANS

What, in your opinion, is your government department's priority issues to improve access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation?

"I can't say as it is not relevant to my current position.(712)

My instructions are to put the Bologna objectives into practice.(721)

Social inclusion is maybe a sub- sub aim of the Bologna process, but for the moment there are other priorities, which are more relevant. First the main structure has to be put in place" (725)

What changes do you hope will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation?

"It's really difficult for me to say" (741)

What changes do you realistically expect will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation?

Reserved places yes or no   **"***No***"**

Free childcare   **"***No***"**

Access officers in each third level institution   **"***No***"**

Outreach strategies for each community   **"***Yes, strategies can be developed***"**

Please list your priority target groups to improve access to third level education.

"They do exist. (791) People who are working, students with families, older students where flexibility is needed" (797)

What are the biggest obstacles to progress regarding promotion of access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, as well as social inclusion, lifelong learning, literacy and the non-formal education sector?

"The structures and equipment of the institutions" (806)

PRISON EDUCATION

Are there specific plans to improve access to education for adults in prisons in your country ? Please specify.

"It's none of my core instructions" (813)

What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to developing prison education?

[Not asked]

3.8. OUTREACH STRATEGIES

How, in your opinion, can national government support *outreach* attempts to reach those who do not traditionally engage in the formal education system or who have become alienated from this system?

[No answer]. (824)

Are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in a) designing, b) implementing outreach approaches to reach those most excluded from education ?

"No experience, therefore no answer possible"(834)

What government ministries support childcare funding and availability for adults who want to attend education courses, whether formal or informal? Please describe the supports provided

"No" (839)

Many people from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds have no space at home to study. What alternative physical sites do you think could be realistically made available for them for their learning ?

"No" (849)

Have any efforts been made to get schools to be sites of adult education in the community ? Please describe

No [answer provided by the interviewer, as the interviewee does not work with the school sector] (846)

Is there any national level strategy or support to provide for training/education of a) community leaders, b) teachers, in areas which experience most social deprivation and marginalisation ?

[Not asked]

Which government department funds the libraries in your country?

"No" (849)

Is distance education run from any libraries in your country?

[Not asked]

Please comment on ways to overcome the digital divide between different social groups

[No answer]

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on lifelong learning in your country?

"If the resources are cut, there won't be many new strategies for LLL. The current active approaching of new groups and widening of the range of services, this will probably be postponed owing to financial shortages" (863)

Questions based on the SP3 results

Can the reduction of fees for classes in formal education be a strategy to widen the access for adult learners? Which basic conditions would be necessary for this?

"The fees as such are not a problem as long as they stay the same in Austria. The question is rather the social supportive measures behind it. There is agreement on fees for a certain range of services.

This service should then also be fulfilled. The grants and support behind this are not yet where they should be. It can be done more flexibly so that it could be made use of repeatedly. Picturing the reality of the people and not just some rigid system" (881)

Only few of those third level institutions we questioned for a different part of the project mentioned that they are reserving an allocation of admissions to the university for underrepresented groups. How can, in your opinion, a national strategy be developed to promote this action in Austria?

"Financial incentives and performance agreements. If it is a political declaration of intent and socio-politically desired, we need some kind of incentives which are relevant to the universities or the institutions.(899)
If it is profitable for the institutions, there can also be other forms of prestige gain, also immaterial prestige" (911 / 917)

Many third level institutions state that they offer advice on admission. What is your opinion on the influence of national politics in this matter? Do you see a link to supporting offers to facilitate access to third level education for socially underrepresented groups?

"The universities do but I don't know the extent to which this is based on governmental reasons or that this has been promoted specifically" (931)

(In another part of our research almost half of the respondents of ISCED 2 level participants stated that personal or emotional problems keep them from pursuing their education. – Not formulated in this way, as the interview partner does not work with ISCED 2 educational institutions) Are there plans on a national level to introduce supportive offers in Austria? In your opinion, how could this situation be improved on a federal level?

"It will be a subject in future. I also think it is happening now. With my partial experience of (Name of University), I cannot say. There is intent and a very wide range of languages for the helpdesk. I can imagine that this is being taken into consideration now, that the Studentpoint[93] team is employing people with a migrant background.(953)
I don't know if this was a strategic decision but it exists.(968)
I don't know about other universities" (977)

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[93] see model of practice at the description of Formal Tertiary Institution 1 (FT1)