



**A Systems Level Focus on Access to Education for Traditionally
Marginalised Groups in Europe: Comparing Strategies, Policy and Practice
in Twelve European Countries.**



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SECTION 1.**SUMMARY**

Consistent with the key underlying goal of promotion of social inclusion, the aim of this research is to analyse the role of education institutions and non-traditional educational contexts in promotion of the access of adults to the education system, particularly those from backgrounds of social marginalisation. The primary focus for the purposes of this study on access to education is with regard to social inclusion, social exclusion and social class. A review of European Commission documents pertaining to lifelong learning and access observes that it is evident that the Commission is committed to a wider conception of access to education than simply that of formal equality. The concern with individual differences and needs, as well as with participation and outcomes, provide a broadening of focus into more substantive conceptions of equality of opportunity and outcome. It is also evident that access issues underpin the key strategic priorities of promotion of democratic values, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue, as well as of employability and personal, social and professional fulfillment of all citizens throughout the EU.

SECTION 1.**INTRODUCTION****1.1 EU context in brief: The strategic priority of access and lifelong learning as a means of fostering social inclusion**

Education is frequently seen as being central to helping people adapt to social and economic change, and calls for the encouragement of continuing or lifelong education and the creation of a 'Learning Society' have come from international organisations including UNESCO, the European Commission and the OECD, as well as national governments across the world (Faure et al., 1972, Delors 1996, Tight 1996, Belanger and Valdivielso 1997, Elliot 1999). The European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning 2007, identifies and defines eight key competences necessary for personal fulfillment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability in a knowledge society: 1) Communication in the mother tongue; 2) Communication in foreign languages; 3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; 4) Digital competence; 5) Learning to learn; 6) Social and civic competences; 7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; 8) Cultural awareness and expression (p. 3). A recent European Commission staff working document (2009) highlights that 'education and training is identified as a key element throughout the renewed Social Agenda for opportunities, access and solidarity. This stresses the role of education and training in relation to...combating poverty and social exclusion' (p.8).

Developments at European Council level regarding access to education and lifelong learning include the EU Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') (2009/C 119/02). The Council recognised that the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme which — in the context of the Lisbon Strategy — established for the first time a solid framework for European cooperation in the field of education and training, based on common objectives and aimed primarily at supporting the improvement of national education and training systems through the development of complementary EU-

level tools, mutual learning and the exchange of good practice via the open method of coordination.

Significantly the EU Council (2009/C 119/02) agrees that:

1. In the period up to 2020, the primary goal of European cooperation should be to support the further development of education and training systems in the Member States which are aimed at ensuring:
 - (a) the personal, social and professional fulfillment of all citizens;
 - (b) sustainable economic prosperity and employability, whilst promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue.

ET 2020 sets five major benchmarks, or outcome indicators, in relation to education. These are regarding early childhood, basic skills, early school leaving, tertiary education and lifelong learning. This extension of the Lisbon strategy to go further in relation to lifelong learning and social inclusion in ET 2020 amounts to an implicit recognition that, in the words of Nicaise (2010), 'Lisbon 2010 has failed to achieve more inclusion/cohesion because this dimension was neglected'. From his analysis of EU social inclusion policy in relation to education, in a keynote address for the EU Belgian Presidency Conference in September 2010, Nicaise further concludes that 'there is room for stronger coordination between social inclusion and education policies at EU level'. Nicaise (2010a) highlights the overall picture of growing income inequality in the EU, based on OECD (2008) research, and reiterates that 'recognising the failure of the Lisbon Strategy to reconcile both objectives [of economic growth and social cohesion] is a first step towards a smarter strategy for the future' (p.20).

These recent developments regarding ET 2020 expand and build upon an earlier foundation in relation to lifelong learning. For example, the European Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000) seeks to encourage and equip people to participate more actively once more in all spheres of modern public life, especially in social and political life at all levels of the community, including at European level. It recognises that change for active citizenship can only come about in and through the impetus of the Member States, with Community-level support and facilitation where appropriate. The Commission (2001) recognise in relation to lifelong learning that:

As well as promoting partnership at all levels, national, regional and local, Governments should lead by example by ensuring effective coordination and coherence in policy between ministries (p. 11).

Allied with a cross-departmental vision, this Commission document (2001) highlights that:

A prominent conclusion from the consultation, and one which cuts across all the building blocks, was that Member States must fundamentally transform learning systems, including initial education, with a view to making quality learning opportunities accessible to all on an ongoing basis (p. 11).

The State has a clear role in setting the agenda for transformation of educational systems with regard to access.

Setting out 'a strategic framework spanning education and training systems as a whole in a lifelong learning perspective', the EU Council (2009/C 119/02) goes on to state:

Indeed, lifelong learning should be regarded as a fundamental principle underpinning the entire framework, which is designed to cover learning in all contexts — whether formal, non-formal or informal — and at all levels: from early childhood education and schools

1. Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies.
2. Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship (p. 3).

This statement amounts to a reiteration of the wide scope of lifelong learning explicated in earlier documents of the EU Commission (2000; 2001).

Under ‘Strategic objective 3: Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship’, the EU Council seeks ‘to foster further learning, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue’, while stating that ‘Educational disadvantage should be addressed by providing high quality early childhood education and targeted support, and by promoting inclusive education’. The key dimension of access to education is made an explicit priority as follows:

Education and training systems should aim to ensure that all learners — including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with special needs and migrants — complete their education, including, where appropriate, through second-chance education and the provision of more personalised learning (p. 4).

Referring to ‘*Strategic objective 1: Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality*’, EU Council (2009/C 119/02) commits to ‘*Expanding learning mobility*’ as follows:

Work together to gradually eliminate barriers and to expand opportunities for learning mobility within Europe and worldwide, both for higher and other levels of education, including new objectives and financing instruments, and whilst taking into consideration the particular needs of disadvantaged persons (p. 9).

Significantly, the Commission (2006) clearly recognises wider social contextual factors associated with poverty that are key barriers to educational participation:

While education is often seen as a route out of social disadvantage, research shows that education policy initiatives alone have only limited success in removing inequalities and barriers to inclusion. If inequalities and disadvantage have multiple causes (which is nearly always the case), tackling them requires strategies that bring together multiple agencies and policies such as migration, employment, welfare, housing, justice and health (for example, Feinstein and Sabates (2005) on the positive effects of combining crime reduction programmes and educational initiatives). Combined social and educational strategies that tackle poverty, inequalities and related aspects of disadvantage at their roots are likely to be much more successful than purely educational interventions in influencing overall patterns of educational and social inequality and inequity (p. 9).

Moreover, the Commission (2006) distinguishes a number of different dimensions:

It is useful to distinguish between equity in *access* (the same opportunities for all to access to quality education), in *treatment* (quality educational provision suited to individuals’ needs once in the system) and in *outcomes* (the knowledge, competences, skills learnt and qualifications achieved within an educational system). In places, this paper and Communication also consider equity of *participation* in education and training, which means a combination of access to education and treatment of an individual once inside the system. To focus solely on equity in access without taking into account a number of variables including the socio-economic background of the learners, the type of

institution or its location could lead to the compounding of existing social and educational inequalities (independent from the potential of the individual learner) (p. 7).

Equity in access is formal equality in the Aristotelian sense of treating like cases alike, and unlike to be treated in an unlike fashion. While this Aristotelian formula masks the assumptions in the selection process for the criteria under which the like and unlike are to be judged, it is evident that the Commission is committed to a wider conception of access to education than simply that of formal equality. The concern with individual differences and needs, as well as with participation and outcomes provide a broadening of focus into more substantive conceptions of equality of opportunity and outcome. The need to challenge the effects of social exclusion in society through pathways which include access to education is a key assumption of this LLL2010 research; it is also evident that access issues underpin the key strategic priorities of promotion of democratic values, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue, as well as of employability and personal, social and professional fulfillment of all citizens throughout the EU.

1.2 Aim of research

Consistent with the key underlying goal of promotion of social inclusion, the aim of this research is to analyse the role of education institutions and non-traditional educational contexts in promotion of the access of adults to the education system, particularly those adults from backgrounds of social marginalisation.

This subproject builds on the strengths and gaps in practices and planning highlighted in previous subprojects of LLL2010, both nationally and comparatively across participating countries. This study aims at getting in-depth understanding in order to provide a broader framework. Interviews are conducted with senior management of education institutions as well as senior government officials and other stakeholders in adult education, such as non-formal education institutions and community groups and those involved at a senior level in prison education.

1.3 Research objectives

A solution-focused approach will be adopted throughout:

- As the focus is on promoting access for marginalised groups through system level change, a holistic systems level analysis is required to identify pathways for change;
- A cross-national comparative focus is being adopted to examine potentially transferable models, needs, themes, problems and gaps regarding access; this will also incorporate recognition of unique country specific issues;
- Key indicators to assess change will need to be developed: structural, process and outcome indicators;
- SP5 seeks to develop a clear agenda to promote institutional change to promote access;

- Models of good practice need to be illustrated with sufficient detail to allow their use in other contexts and countries;
- Identifying gaps needs to be followed up by assessment of the obstacles and opportunities to fill these gaps.

1.4 Scope of research

Poverty impacts on children significantly in that it causes psychological distress to parents, which in turn affects children and it also limits material resources available to them (Posner and Vandell 1994). In 2007, according to the EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), 7.4% of all children under 17 were living in consistent poverty and 19.9% were at risk of poverty. Nicaise (2010a) observes that 84 million Europeans live in poverty today, based on an estimate of the EU definition of relative poverty as 60% of the median disposable income per consumption unit. According to the OECD (2005) *Society at a Glance*, income and wealth inequalities vary across countries with the Nordic countries, Austria, the Czech Republic and Luxembourg having the lowest levels of inequality, and Portugal, the US, Poland, Turkey and Mexico the highest levels of inequality. Of the OECD data available in this 2005 study, only a few of the countries in the current research consortium of Subproject 5 of LLL2010 are represented on this income inequality scale. Of these countries, the lowest levels of inequality are in Austria followed by Norway, with Hungary, Ireland, and UK having higher levels of inequality along the scale. This scale is obviously prior to the current recession.

Currently families in Europe with a low-educated head face a poverty risk which is twice that of families where the head has completed secondary education (24% versus 13% on average for the EU 27) (Nicaise 2010a). It is recognised that poverty related barriers to lifelong learning include psychological aspects such as stress, depression, lack of sleep due to anxiety, lack of confidence (Downes & Maunsell 2007), as well as issues of time and space to read, lack of childcare support (Maunsell, Downes & McLoughlin 2008), discomfort of dwelling (Nicaise 2010), insufficient transport availability etc. These require a wider focus than one on access to education. Some of these issues will be engaged with through examination of a focus on institutional and national strategies and practice. However, many poverty related dimensions affecting engagement with education, including hunger in school (Downes, Maunsell & Ivers 2006; Downes & Maunsell 2007) and substance abuse (Downes 2003; EMCDDA 2003, 2003a), are largely outside the scope of this particular study. Moreover, a focus on important dimensions to access such as housing, taxation and health are outside the scope of the current study. This delimitation of the scope of this particular study is not in any way meant to minimise the key role of overcoming poverty and social exclusion for equalising access to education across social groups. Jonsson (1993), for example, emphasises that probably the major explanation for the declining association between social origins and educational opportunity observed at that time in Sweden was the equalisation of living conditions, a conclusion that Blossfeld & Shavit (1993) also applied to the context of the Netherlands.

The primary focus for the purposes of this study on access to education is with regard to social inclusion, social exclusion and social class. The European Commission (2001) describes social inclusion as being:

When people can participate fully in economic, social and civil life, when their access to income and other resources (personal, family, social and cultural) is sufficient to enable them to enjoy a standard of living and quality of life that is regarded as acceptable by the society in which they live and when they are able fully to access their fundamental rights (p. 34).

The social inclusion focus of this research with regard to socio-economic and social class barriers to educational participation does not preclude consideration of issues pertaining, for example, to access to education and disability, learners with special needs, those experiencing substance abuse, psychiatric problems, homelessness etc, especially as many of these other issues bring the consequent heightened risk of poverty. However, the central focus of this study is on socio-economic disadvantage, social inclusion, social exclusion and social class with respect to increased access to lifelong learning opportunities.

Terms employed throughout this report include reference to individuals and groups experiencing social marginalisation, social exclusion, and socio-economic disadvantage. These terms will be used interchangeably for current purposes. Social marginalisation is described by the World Health Organisation as the process by which certain vulnerable groups may be prevented from participating fully in social, political and economic life in a community. This occurs when the necessary intersectoral policies and support mechanisms are not in place to enable their full participation (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 1993). This strongly overlaps with the following perspectives on describing social exclusion. People are considered to be socially excluded if they 'are prevented from participating fully in economic, social and civil life and/or when their access to income and other resources (personal, family and cultural) is so inadequate as to exclude them from enjoying a standard of living that is regarded as acceptable by the society in which they live' (Gallie and Paugam, 2002). According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA 2003), social exclusion can be defined as a combination of lack of economic resources, social isolation, and limited access to social and civil rights; it is a relative concept within any particular society (CEIES, 1999) and represents a progressive accumulation of social and economic factors over time. Factors that could contribute to social exclusion are problems related to labour, educational and living standards, health, nationality, drug abuse, gender difference and violence (European Council, 2001). According to the European Commission's Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General, Public Health and Risk Assessment Directorate Health Determinants Unit, Expert Group on Social Determinants and Health Inequalities, the terms disadvantaged/ marginalised/ vulnerable are applied to groups of people who, due to factors usually considered outside their control do not have the same opportunities as other, more fortunate groups in society. Examples might include unemployed people, refugees and others who are socially excluded.

The variety of terms used to describe disadvantage is perhaps a reflection of the fact that it is a complex phenomenon resulting from the interaction of factors that are

usually construed as economic, social, cultural and educational (OECD, 1992). Kellaghan (2002) states:

While each of the terms emphasises a particular aspect, there is fairly general agreement about a number of factors. First, the condition is associated with low income and material poverty. Second, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds are marginal to the labour force, something that is most evident in rates of unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment. Third, disadvantage is transmitted across generations, and upward social mobility is limited. Fourth, individuals in disadvantaged circumstances rely heavily on the state for income support. Fifth, they generally have had limited schooling and/or poor levels of achievement. Sixth, disadvantage is often concentrated in what are called areas of social deprivation in cities, in conditions that breed crime, drug abuse, family breakdown, and general social disorganisation (see CMRS, 1992, Pallas, Natriello & McDill, 1989); however it is not confined to such areas (p. 17).

The interchangeability of these terms needs to be combined with recognition that their meaning and application may differ in a given country context. Recognition of the need for a somewhat differentiated approach to application of criteria of socio-economic exclusion/disadvantage is particularly pertinent in the area of access to education as the same indicator may have a different contextual meaning in a different country. Koucky, Bartušek & Kovařovic (2010), for example, trace the different implications for inequality in access to third level education for the dimensions of father's education, mother's education, father's occupation and mother's occupation in different European countries. They highlight that the most important family background factor in terms of access of young people to tertiary education currently is, in Austria, the occupation of their fathers, whereas in Belgium it is mother's education, in contrast with Denmark where the most important family background factor is father's education. While target groups may differ across countries regarding application of criteria of social exclusion, marginalisation, disadvantage etc, an important focus to be held throughout is on the effects of such socio-economic and socio-cultural factors on individuals and groups experiencing barriers to education, including barriers to deriving appropriate benefit from education, whether in school, university or in other educational contexts.

1.5 Research consortium

The research consortium engaged in this study is from the following institutions: Tallinn State University, Estonia; University of Nottingham, England; Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium; University of Edinburgh, Scotland; Slovenian Institute for Adult Education; Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research, Oslo, Norway; Tarki Social Research Institute, Budapest, Hungary; Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Lithuania; St. Petersburg State University, Russia; Danube University, Krems, Austria; Institute of Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia and the Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin, Ireland. While this is a cross-section of European countries, including Russia and Norway from outside the European Union, it is not being claimed that the issues raised across these twelve countries are exhaustive of institutional and national policy and practice concerns across the EU. Many European countries are not included in this research, with a particular gap being for many Southern

European countries (see also Sultana 2001 on the Mediterranean space as a regional unit¹). However, it is hoped that there is a reasonable balance between Central and Eastern European countries and those from Western European regions.

SECTIONS 2-4

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

SECTION 2.	SUMMARY
<p>As a key purpose of this research is to examine access policies of institutions in order to develop positive <i>system level</i> change, there is a need for a theoretical understanding of what a ‘system’ is. A central theoretical framework is Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) well-recognised ecological theory of systems in developmental psychology, where he distinguishes a range of different system level interactions, ranging from micro to meso to exo and to macro system levels. One significant limitation to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) framework of concentric nested systems of interrelation was that it tended to omit a dynamic focus on change over time. In order to address this temporal issue of bringing change to a dynamic system, Downes & Downes (2007) developed a framework in the context of social exclusion in education which is described as <i>organic</i> systems theory. On this view, static systems are alienated forms of a system; a static inorganic system is treated as a displaced form of more optimal systemic relations and interactions.</p>	
<p>Building such change criteria into features of a system, seeks to go beyond Bronfenbrenner’s framework, to identify structural features of an organic system that systemic relations can be sought to be moved towards. The following is a summary of important systems theory principles relevant to the promotion of a living organic system of education for system level change to improve access to education for traditionally marginalised groups: Sustained interventions, developing over time rather than once-off interventions; a focus on transition difficulties; developing links between different parts of the system and subsystems in a two-way flow; feedback built into systemic responses; promotion of growth rather than focusing on deficits; an organic system is dynamic and changing rather than static and inert; a multileveled focus is needed to bring about system level change; there is a need to move beyond static hierarchical models and beyond narrow unidirectional causal models of cause-effect. A range of criticisms of systems theory are examined as applying to static conceptions of systems rather than to dynamically changing organic systems.</p>	

2. General theoretical framework: Systems theory - Promotion of a living organic system of education

¹ This Mediterranean spatial region is largely excluded from the countries participating in this study, with the exception of Slovenia which is included; this is clearly a limitation of the current research.

2.1 Systemic change for access of traditionally marginalised groups to lifelong learning: The need for a systems theory focus

Rubenson (2008) observes the need to theorise from the ‘discrepancy between normative and empirical constructions’ in lifelong learning. Systems theory is one way to anticipate key issues regarding bridging the gap between policy and implementation in reality. As a key purpose of this research is to examine access policies of institutions in order to develop positive *system level* change, there is a need for a theoretical understanding to occur of what a ‘system’ is.

A key theoretical framework is Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) well-recognised ecological theory of systems in developmental psychology, where he distinguishes a range of different system level interactions, ranging from micro to meso to exo and to macro system levels. Focus on the meso² and exosystemic³ levels highlight that there is a key need for the dimension of *relations between* institutions and other groups to be included.

A systems level focus is gaining increasing attention in domains related to lifelong learning, such as community psychology, where a special edition of the *American Journal of Community Psychology* was dedicated in 2007 specifically to a systems level approach (e.g., Behrens & Foster-Fishman, 2007; Tseng & Seidman 2007). Similarly, youth development programmes and youth settings are frequently being viewed in systemic perspective by international researchers. For example, Durlak et al., (2007) offer a meta-analysis of studies relating to systems change in positive youth development programmes. In the US context, McLaughlin (2006) suggests that ‘in part this lack of attention to system learning within education reflects the fact that only recently has the system been considered as a unit of change’ (p.226). At a school systems level, including schools’ relations with their surrounding community, Downes (2009) has applied a variation of a systems theory approach with regard to preventative and intervention strategies for eliminating bullying. More recently, Ulicna, Ure & Werquin (2011, forthcoming) adopt a systems theory approach when using parallels with health care policies for analysis of the domain of lifelong learning at an EU level.

A systems level focus requires holistic thinking, seeing the ‘wholeness’ and going beyond individual levels of analysis (Foster-Fisherman & Behrens, 2007). The well-known Faure UNESCO report on lifelong learning (1972) touched upon the potential relevance of a systems analysis for education systems (p.128, p.161), though in a tangential and underdeveloped fashion. In doing so, it raised concerns with static conceptions of a system and highlighted the need to consider not so much a systemic approach, as an inverted non-system approach for education (p.161). This deschooling non-systemic approach, presumably influenced by Illich’s (1972) well-known work on deschooling society, understates the need to recognise that even attempts at a non-systemic approach invariably develop simply a different kind of system of relations

² A mesosystem- interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates- for a child- home, school neighbourhood and peer group. For and adult- family, work and social life (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 25).

³ An exosystem- one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by what happens in the setting containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 25).

requiring analysis. Insights of structuralism (Saussure 1954; Culler 1976; Jakobsen 1972; Lévi-Strauss 1962; 1963) and poststructuralism (Habermas 1987; Derrida 1982, 1997; Kvale 1992; Simons & Billig 1994; Usher & Edwards 1996) would emphasise that a systemic focus applies not only at the level of formal educational structures but also with regard to systems of relation for cultures and subcultures, including systems of language and meaning involved in constructing realities of such cultures. In other words, systems of relations need to be considered at different levels, and to ignore a systemic level focus in search of a non-system is a limited approach. The question is more as to how to develop dynamism and overcome inertia within different levels of systems and subsystems as part of system change. Denial of systemic levels of analysis does not assist with the task of going beyond static fixed hierarchical systems of relations.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) systems level framework in developmental psychology offers further development of a multilevelled focus for action to bring constructive system level change. This focus can examine strategies for overcoming imbalance or alienation within the micro, meso, exo and macro systems. The understanding of human development and lifelong learning demands more than the direct observation of behaviour on the part of one or two persons in the same place; it requires examination of multiperson systems of interaction not limited to a single setting and must take into account aspects of the environment beyond the immediate situation containing the subject (Bronfenbrenner, 1979 p.21). A wider institutional perspective has provided a useful paradigm for better understanding of social structural impacts on the educational phenomenon. Walters and O'Connell (1988 p. 1126) point out the value of a systemic analysis that 'educational change is an institutional process, and individuals make their choices within these institutional contexts'. In Nordhaug's (1990 p.198) study the concept of macro-level structures included 'material structures, population structures, and collective resources'.

Though emerging from developmental psychology, Bronfenbrenner's well established framework can bring together the different domains of psychology, education and sociology in order to examine pathways for progress in relation to access to education for traditionally marginalised groups across Europe. It offers insight into the key issue of examining relationships between different settings and institutions. Moreover, it is committed to allowing for understanding in naturalistic settings to bridge the gap between theory and practice⁴.

Systems theory is not a unified field. It encompasses a variety of differentiated approaches, most of which originate back to the first writings on systems in the second half of the twentieth century. As Schwarz (2007) noted, system sciences are essentially rooted in four fields, namely cybernetics (Wiener 1948; Foerster 1984), General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy 1968), Prigogine's far from equilibrium living systems (1984) and non-linear dynamics i.e. chaos theory (e.g. Lorenz 1963). The General Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) movement recognised the existence of systems in various disciplines and postulated general principles and laws that apply to them. It advanced the

⁴ In the language of psychology, this feature of Bronfenbrenner's work is a commitment to ecological validity. Concerns with ecological validity arise elsewhere in psychology where observations in a laboratory or clinical context may not generalize beyond the artificial setting in which the findings were observed (Neisser 1976)

development of subtypes of system sciences such as Miller's (1978) living systems theory (a further subtype of open systems) or Luhmann's social systems theory (1984).

2.1.1 The need for a systems perspective to include a dimension of change over time

One significant limitation to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework of concentric nested systems of interrelation was that it tended to omit a dynamic focus on change over time. This is a key issue in the context of lifelong learning and system change. Sultana (2008) highlights the importance of a temporal dimension, namely the *pace* of change, for educational system reform. Bronfenbrenner himself called the ecological model into question in the early 1980s because although studies of children and adults in real-life settings were by now commonplace there was a 'surfeit of studies on 'context without development''. He did acknowledge some responsibility for this lack of direction because *The Ecology of Human Development* had much more to say about 'the nature and developmental contribution of the environment than the organism itself' (Bronfenbrenner 1995, pp. 616-617). Criticisms which Elder directs at Bronfenbrenner include the lack of temporal perspective in his original ecological model from 1979 and also the limitations of the term 'ecological transition' in this work as it 'did not address developmental change nor the proximal processes that occur in organism-environment interaction' (Moen et al., 1995 pp. 122-123). These deficiencies have been at least partly addressed with the 'ecological concept of chronosystem' which captures 'all of these interacting elements over time- the developing person, the nature of the environment, and their proximal processes of interaction' (Moen et al., 1995 pp. 123).

In *The Ecology of Human Development*, Bronfenbrenner set out that 'learning and development are facilitated by the participation of the developing person in progressively more complex patterns of reciprocal behaviour with someone with whom that person has developed a strong and enduring emotional attachment, and when the balance of power gradually shifts in favour of the developing person.' (1979, p.60). Commenting on this formulation many years later, Bronfenbrenner sets out that it 'imposes an unstated limit on the sphere in which developmentally fostering activities operate. Activities are confined by default to the domain of interpersonal interaction'. He states that this is an 'unwarranted limitation' (Bronfenbrenner 1995, p. 614).

In order to address this temporal issue of bringing change to a dynamic system, Downes & Downes (2007) developed a framework in the context of social exclusion in education which is described as *organic* systems theory. On this view, static descriptive accounts of systems may be viewed as explicating alienated forms of a system⁵. In other words, a static inorganic system can be treated as a displaced form of more optimal systemic relations and interactions. Building such change criteria into features of a system, seeks to go beyond Bronfenbrenner's framework, to identify structural features

⁵ Habermas (1987) for example, criticizes Luhmann's conceptions of what the latter calls autopoietic systems as being in effect alienated, reified structures. Habermas (1992) also contends that systems theory basically provides a merely reductionist account of evolution as a process of increasing capacity for adaptation (Dews 1992, p.2)

of an organic system that systemic relations can be sought to be moved towards (see also Capra 1982; Downes 1993; Zappone 2002)⁶.

Against this backdrop, it is being sought to develop optimal features of an organic system of interrelations between Bronfenbrenner's different levels of systems and subsystems – and to apply these to policy and practice with regard to lifelong learning and access to education for traditionally marginalised groups. In doing so, it recognises the capacity for strategic interventions at different levels to bring about 'inter-influences'. 'Inter-influences' cause modifications in the system but:

Inter-influence is a particular type of relation between factors, events or (sub)systems. It is non-deterministic without being random, and it does not exhibit strict causality, while nevertheless showing an influence on the future state of the system. Inter-influences are pervasive in complex systems of the web type ... Inter-influences are one of the ways self-organisation takes place in a complex system (Hardy, 2001 p. 36).

Acknowledgement of such a system of interinfluences invites recognition that any assumption of a one to one relationship between an antecedent input and a consequent output and outcome is an unwarranted simplification (Rachlin 1984; Downes 2007). It is rare that one 'magic bullet' cause will bring about sustained systemic change.

2.1.2 Features of an organic system as a direction of progressive change to a system

The following is a summary of important systems theory principles which will be seen to be relevant to the promotion of a living organic system of education with regard to developing system level change to improve access to education for traditionally marginalised groups.

- 1) Sustained interventions, developing over time rather than once-off interventions
- 2) A focus on transition difficulties
- 3) Developing links between different parts of the system and subsystems in a two-way flow
- 4) Feedback built into systemic responses
- 5) Promotion of growth rather than focusing on deficits

⁶ Gergen's (1973) critique of social psychology was precisely in relation to its neglect of this temporal dimension generally in its research on human behaviour in society. In doing so, he implicitly followed concerns with temporal dimensions in the social sciences (see Popper 1957 on the social sciences as mere historical trends rather than universal laws) and the phenomenology of Husserl and early Heidegger (1927). Pace of change has also been a focus of Heller's (1978) account of Renaissance society in Europe which she describes as bringing an epoch marked by 'a quickening of the pace' (p.186) compared with the Middle Ages; Toffler (1970) characterizes Western industrial society as suffering from 'future shock' due to the rapidity of cultural and experiential change for the individual; Gergen's (1994b) more recent account of the impact of change of pace of experience on the individual emphasizes that the self becomes 'saturated' with experience and change.

- 6) An organic system is dynamic and changing rather than static and inert
- 7) A multileveled focus is needed to bring about system level change
- 8) There is a need to move beyond static hierarchical models
- 9) A holistic approach moves beyond narrow unidirectional causal models of cause-effect; it is solution-focused
- 10) A temporal dimension to system change includes focus on developed synergistic cohort effects

These features of an organic system will now be illustrated in more detail as informing a focus on system level change with regard to access to lifelong learning across the EU and other participating States in this research.

- 1) Sustained interventions, developing over time rather than once-off interventions.

Change to a system, whether a system of relations of behaviour, communication or otherwise, requires sustained interventions, developing over time rather than merely once-off interventions. As Tseng & Seidman (2007) state:

This disconnect between human resources and social processes likely explains why professional development activities that provide one-time, off-site training to teachers or staff fail to change the interactions teachers or staff have with youth

This dimension of programme intensity in order to embed change in a pattern of relations has been recognised internationally in the area of drug use prevention strategies (Morgan 2001) and for school bullying prevention and intervention (Downes 2009). A systemic focus recognises that a systemic inertia and resistance to change typically needs to be overcome and to challenge habitual patterns of relation the intervention must adopt an ongoing focus on implementation and change management.

Stanton (2008) states that a possible explanation for institutional inertia in education is a lack of “policy memory”. He criticised how the policies introduced in recent decades in the United Kingdom (National Curriculum, NVQs, GNVQs, Curriculum 2000, Modern Apprenticeship) failed to learn from previous mistakes, with an over-engineered learner assessment regime, at the expense of the promotion of learning. This need for a policy memory within an institution is a corollary of the principle of the importance of sustained interventions for change to occur.

- 2) A focus on transition difficulties.

A central focus of Bronfenbrenner’s systems theory is on transition difficulties across contexts:

The development potential of a setting in a mesosystem is enhanced if the person’s initial transition into that setting is not made alone, that is, if he enters the new setting in the company of one or more persons with whom he has participated in prior settings (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 211).

This extraction of a general principle of transition difficulties across contexts can be interpreted as being based on well-recognised transition difficulties within educational systems – such as those for students in moving from primary to post-primary school, and from preschool to primary school.

A systemic focus highlights that problems of transition are not simply those of the individual who is moving from one context to another, but is more centrally a system level problem due to discontinuities in the systemic environments or climates of educational institutions. Thus, for example, Downes, Maunsell & Ivers (2006) observed the system level disjunction between primary and post-primary school climates in a sample of designated disadvantaged schools in Dublin, Ireland. A statistically significant number of students differed between late primary and early post-primary with regard to perceptions of being treated fairly in school and willingness to ask a teacher a question in class about an academic issue. Such concerns with transition across contexts provides the rationale for school site based professional development (Dooley & Corcoran 2007; Kennedy 2007), in order to embed changed patterns of behaviour in the life-context of the educational institution.

Bronfenbrenner expands his account of transition level issues across systems, as follows:

The developmental effects of a transition from one primary setting to another is a function of the match between the developmental trajectory generated in the old setting and the balance between challenge and support presented both by the new setting and its interconnections with the old. The nature of this balance is defined by previous hypothesis specifying the conditions of micro- , meso- and exosystem conducive to psychological growth, with due regards to the person's stage of development, physical health, and degree of integration with as opposed to alienation from the existing social order (Bronfenbrenner, 1979 p. 288).

This is an amplification of the ecological validity concern already highlighted by Bronfenbrenner *inter alia*, in psychology. Bronfenbrenner's preoccupations here are important for contexts of education and relations between policy and practice across institutions. They can be construed as being part of a European tradition of concern with contextualism, going back to Montesquieu's dictum that it would be *un grand hazard*, a great coincidence, if laws in one country could be transferred in a meaningful fashion to another country's context. In the twentieth century, this contextual focus on meaning in European thought was implicitly echoed by Saussure, Wittgenstein and jurisprudentialist, H.A. Hart's analyses of language as a system or game of interrelated meanings. Wittgenstein (1958) and Hart (1961) in particular emphasised the transition and change across contexts for the meaning of even the same word or linguistic phrase.

- 3) Developing links between different parts of the system and subsystems in a two-way flow.

The development potential of a setting varies inversely with the number of intermediate links in the network chain connecting the setting to setting of power (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p.256). Bronfenbrenner presents a reformulation pertaining to the microsystem by adding in Mead's (1934) concept of the 'significant others' to refer to other people in the immediate environment. He states that 'the same force-resource model that captures the developmentally relevant characteristics of the developing person

can be applied as well to the developmentally relevant features of significant others...the belief systems of parents...may be especially important in this regard' and 'can function as instigators and maintainers of reciprocal interaction with the developing person' (Bronfenbrenner 1995 p. 638). Thus, interpersonal links are also key from this perspective. In the context of lifelong learning and the European Commission, Chabera (2011) has recognised 'persisting challenges' as including 'links between sectors, levels, forms of learning', as well as 'stakeholder coordination/involvement'. Such systemic linkages require a two-way flow between subsystems. Chabera (2011) goes on to highlight the need for more evidence regarding 'coordination of complex lifelong learning systems'.

4) Feedback built into systemic responses.

Mutual feedback generates a momentum of its own that motivates the participants not only to persevere but to engage in progressively more complex patterns of interaction. The result is often an acceleration in pace and an increase in complexity of learning processes. (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 57). Feedback is built into the very assumptions of, for example, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which gives the child the right to be consulted in matters affecting his/her own welfare, with due cognisance of age-related capacity.

Feedback through systemic responses would go beyond simply having one pathway for feedback but rather to allow for multiple channels of feedback. In the school envisaged as a system, it has been argued that for example, feedback from students in regard to bullying in school would need to be possible to more than one source such as the school principal, or year head (Downes, Maunsell & Ivers 2006; Downes 2009). Reliance on simply one source for feedback may result in a system level blockage and failure in communication. A similar underlying assumption of diversity in feedback pathways underpins Spillane et al's (2004) distributed leadership approaches which envisage multiple groups of individuals in a school context guiding and mobilising staff in the instructional change process through interdependency rather than dependency.

5) Promotion of growth rather than focusing on deficits.

Bronfenbrenner rejects the deficit model of human function and growth, in favour of research, policy, and practice committed to transforming experiments. Such a transformative approach challenges, alters and restructures the existing social order to make a more human ecology, to create a micro, exo, and mesosystems that better meet the needs of human beings (Bronfenbrenner 1979). He describes such a deficit model as follows:

[A] Deficit model of human functioning and growth assumes that human inadequacies or disturbance in human behaviour and development reflects a deficiency within the person or from a more enlightened, but fundamentally unaltered perspective, within the person's immediate environment (p.290).

A need to focus on growth rather than deficits has been an assumption of the humanistic psychology tradition of Maslow (1970) and Rogers (1961), as well as more recently of the positive psychology movement which includes positive school psychology. Similarly, in the health domain, health promotion rather than simply disease

prevention has oriented a similar shift of emphasis. Though this is perhaps better viewed not in either/or terms as being diametrically opposed alternatives⁷, concern has been raised regarding the negative, stereotyping effects of labelling individuals and communities in deficit terms as ‘disadvantaged’ (Spring 2007; Derman Sparks 2007; Downes & Gilligan 2007). A similar shift from a deficit model has occurred in the area of special education, where terms such as ‘handicapped’ are now viewed as inappropriate and offensive. Van Alphen (2009) makes the related point that even the term ‘early school leaver’ categorises people ‘*ex negativo* rather than to the specific characteristics they do possess (p.554).

6) An organic system is dynamic and changing rather than static and inert.

Bronfenbrenner’s conception of a systemic focus will be supplemented by a view of optimal systems as displaying features of organic systems as outlined by, for example, Capra (1982). Capra (1982) emphasises that a living system is never static:

A high degree of non-equilibrium is absolutely necessary for self-organisation; living systems maintain their self-organisation which ‘allows the system to remain in a state of non-equilibrium, in which it is always at work’...living systems are open systems that continually operate from equilibrium (p.291).

In other words, in systemic terms a static unchanging institutional or school culture is an inorganic system (see also Downes and Downes 2007). This resonates with the focus in LLL2010 SP4 on distinguishing reactive and expansive training cultures in the workplace. An inorganic institutional culture resists change; an organic institutional culture moves from being simply reactive to being proactive and expansive in embracing holistic paths for system change in relation to promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups.

7) A multileveled focus is needed to bring about system level change

An implication of systems theory for lifelong learning and access to education is that change amplifiers must be operative throughout the entire organism if they are to effect self-transcendent change (Downes 1993). They involve an interplay between *both* bottom up and top down forces for change. Such an interplay is a dynamic one where one direction does not subsume the other. This contrasts with Connolly’s (2003) description of the way in which the formal education system may inappropriately adopt methods from community education to suit its own purposes. While seeming to value the methodology of community education, specifically to target marginalised groups, Connolly (2003) argues that the formal adult education system borrows some of the approaches to force people to attend through ‘top-down, compulsory imposition on people who have very little social power’ (p.15) (see also Holford et al., 2008 on a social control dimension to aspects of lifelong learning). Furthermore, the community

⁷ Fromm (1957, 1980) for example, represents a humanistic psychology tradition that in contrast to Maslow (1970) and Rogers (1961), fully interrogates deficits and problems in human experience and behaviour, while also giving strong emphasis to positive human potential. Fromm’s humanism has been influential in adult education, via Freire’s (1972) conception of the *banking model* of education where information and knowledge is possessed; Freire explicitly derives his critique of banking education from Fromm’s account of an alienated *Having* mode of relation, in contrast with a *Being* mode of existence.

education sector is contained and deprived of resources, which she terms the ‘glass fence’.

8) There is a need to move beyond static hierarchical models.

As seen, Capra (1982) emphasises that a living system is never static and that ‘a high degree of non-equilibrium is absolutely necessary for self-organisation’ (p.291). Thus, a static unchanging school or institutional culture is an inorganic system. Capra (1982) further notes that because they are open systems, organisms ‘have to maintain a continuous exchange of energy and matter with their environment to stay alive’ (p.291):

These self-organising systems have a high degree of stability... [which] is utterly dynamic and must not be confused with equilibrium. It consists of maintaining the same overall structure in spite of ongoing changes and replacement of its components (p.292).

A key feature associated with the non-formal education sector is its relative lack of hierarchical differentiation between staff and students.

9) A holistic approach moves beyond narrow unidirectional causal models of cause-effect; it is solution-focused.

A systems change perspective recognises the need to go beyond simple one directional models of causality, as Hirsch et al., (2007) emphasise:

The unidirectional models we use to try to draw links between a set of variables and an outcome are not consistent with what we know about the complexity of the phenomena we hope to study (p.239).

systems thinking stresses chains of reciprocal, causal relations (p.241).

While developmental psychology has moved beyond simple linear causality to an understanding of interacting risk and protective factors (Rutter 1985; Downes 2003), a systemic perspective recognises the complex interplay of reciprocal factors (Hardy 2001) that challenge traditional causal models.

10) A temporal dimension to system change includes focus on developed synergistic cohort effects.

While this temporal dimension added to Bronfenbrenner’s framework has already been discussed above, it is important to emphasise another aspect of such a temporal focus which has been given attention in psychology, though not so much by Bronfenbrenner. Incorporating a temporal dimension to a system allows for what Gergen (1973) describes as a reflexive turn in psychology; understanding patterns of behaviour and systemic relation in historical-temporal terms allows for these patterns to be selfconscious and malleable at least to some degree. System malleability increases with such a temporal framework for understanding.

2.1.3 Critique of systems theory in lifelong learning

It is necessary to consider a range of important objections to systems theory, including from within the perspective of lifelong learning. Jarvis (2007) discusses Parsons' (1951) version of systems theory highlighting that this version 'presupposed the social structures and learning in a manner of adaptation so that the patterns of society should be maintained' (p.18). This avenue of critique implicitly echoes that which Habermas (1987) makes of Luhmann's autopoietic systems as inviting a conservative ideology. It arguably applies *a fortiori* to another application of a version of systems theory, such as Teubner's (1989) characterisation of the legal system as a quasiautonomous autopoietic system of norms, procedures and relations impervious to change and thereby largely unquestionable in its practices⁸. The critique by Jarvis and Habermas here is apt in relation to static, inorganic, alienated systems which do not invoke a key dimension of change over time to its structures. Similarly, mechanistic systems of computer models of mind in cognitive science (e.g., Newell and Simon 1972; Newell 1990; Simon 1996) are criticised at a systemic level for their static, and in effect inorganic, conceptions of space underpinning these models (Downes 2006; Downes 2010; Downes, 2010a).

Introducing dynamic features of organic systems that require a focus on change and time, also invites the pivotal dimension of human agency within this process of system level change. In doing so, this engages with a further concern of Jarvis (2008, p.120) regarding the loss of individual responsibility within the 'totality' of the system. A framework of organic systems theory does not deny that a reified, alienated system may tend to reify the individual within it. Neither is it being denied that much of the literature on management which Jarvis (2008) is critical of (e.g., Senge 1990) involves the problematic subsuming of the individual to the group and system⁹. However, the proposed framework of organic systems theory for education recognises the possibility of reciprocal interaction between an individual and the system and subsystems he/she is involved with, so that a temporal process of development of an organic system can facilitate human learning and agency, including change to that very system (see also Williams 1992; Downes 2003a). Yet the focus for current purposes is on the background system the individual operates within and engages with, rather than centrally on the individual's motivation per se, which was examined in a previous subproject, SP3, of the LLL2010 project. In doing so, it is not being argued that a systems theory explanation is a total or totalising one; it is but one lens for furthering understanding of these issues at crossnational, national, regional, local, community and individual levels.

⁸ Teubner's (1989) position is clearly unsustainable, unless through equating law simply as force. For example, Kelsen's (1945) *General Theory of Law and State* recognizes that the basic norm of a legal system, from which other legal norms are derived, is created by an act of will, and is not a conclusion from a premise based on an intellectual operation. Similarly, another major jurisprudential thinker, Hart's (1961) foundational 'norm of recognition' underpinning the legal system amounts to a recognition that this is merely assumed to be valid rather than justified intellectually. These are just some examples of how a self-contained, autonomous legal system of norms, procedures and practices is a logical chimera; it is governed by power relations and is not a deterministic process, *contra* Teubner's portrayal of the legal system.

⁹ The organic systems framework developed in Downes (1993) and Downes & Downes (2007), as a pedagogy of the 'processed', precisely critiques the passive processing of the individual into an inorganic educational system, thereby sharing much of the concerns outlined above by Jarvis regarding conformity in an inorganic mechanistic system.

Jarvis (2007) identifies a range of other significant objections to systems theory highlighted by Abercrombie et al., (2000, pp.354-355) from a sociological perspective. These include that systems theory cannot deal adequately with conflict or change and that its assumptions about equilibrium in society are based on a conservative ideology. For the reasons discussed above, these objections can be overcome with an organic systems focus (see also Capra 1982, on dynamic equilibrium as distinct from static equilibrium and Downes & Downes 2007 on different conceptions of imbalance in a system). It is important also to distinguish an organic systems theory framework from Edmund Burke's (1790) famous conservative understanding of prerevolutionary French society as an organic one overturned by the French revolution; organic systems are not to be equated with traditions and customs extolled by Burke which amounted to a premodern perspective anathema to human rights. A somewhat more appropriate reference point in European thought is Durkheim's (1933) tripartite distinction between mechanical, organic and contractual solidarity, though only in so far as an organic systems framework implies movement from a mechanistic system. An organic systems vantage point is more a framework for relations of change and can be also integrated with a contractual dimension with the proposed indicators for access to education for marginalised groups emanating from this research project. It is being sought to include a framework for movement from the mechanistic towards the organic, via a contractual indicators dimension. In doing so, it is not being claimed that a mechanical system is in the Durkheimian (1893/1984) sense of a societal relation based on the features of repressive law and solidarity by similarities, nor that an organic system is based on 'cooperative' (p.98) law as restitution and solidarity arising from the division of labour and assumptions that individuals are different from one another¹⁰. The organic systems framework being developed for lifelong learning is not being derived from a legal systems reference point in Durkheimian fashion, nor from a Durkheimian reliance on a body metaphor for the organic, also influential in the psychological thought of Freud (Downes 2011).

A variant of the criticism that systems theory cannot adequately deal with conflict or change is that it may be interpreted as offering a bias of the established. This would be through equating current, existing structures with organic, natural, self-evident ones. It would confer a false legitimacy on the actual. Yet this is far from being the case with an organic systems theory approach which interrogates structures as being alienated and inorganic, and thereby needing paths for change, while being cognisant of what Sultana (2001) describes as a 'sensitivity to the robustness of the ecologies of school structures and cultures' (p.25). An organic systems theory approach is not an epistemological bias of actuality over possibility, rather with time and change a focus of organic systems, its

¹⁰ A more detailed examination of the relation of an organic systems theory framework to Durkheim's tripartite distinction is beyond the scope of this research project. Suffice to highlight for current purposes three important limitations to Durkheim's (1893/1984) functionalism. These include: its minimizing of a role for individual agency in the 'determinate system' of a society 'with a life of its own' (Durkheim 1893/1984, p.39); his characterization of societies as 'primitive', 'savage' and 'the very lowest societies' (Durkheim 1893/1984, p.92) as being an example of a Western ethnocentrism common in psychology and sociology (see also Brickman 2003); the lack of feminist critique of the division of labour described by Durkheim (see also Fraser 1987).

priority is that of possibility¹¹. It investigates the features of pathways for possibility, for change towards organic systems and from alienated systems.

Other criticisms listed by Jarvis (2007) include that systems theory is so abstract that its empirical references are hard to detect, it is tautological and vacuous and that it is difficult to reconcile assumptions about structural procedures with a theory of action. The need for concretisation of systems theory is a real one; the indicators as benchmarks for change in relation to access to the education system which are being sought to be developed in this research report are one avenue towards concretising in practice a systems level approach.

A final criticism made by Abercrombie., (2000) and highlighted by Jarvis (2007) is a vital one, namely, systems theory's assumptions about value consensus are not well grounded. Systems theory discourse invoking terms like 'holism' etc can blur the underlying value differences and power differentials underpinning such terms; it can obfuscate competing values and silence dissenting voices from the 'whole'. Yet it is important to envisage organic systems theory as being as much a theory of implementation and of change implementation - as of one pertaining to selection of prior values for implementation. Concerns with issues such as sustained interventions, transitions and more subtle causal explanations than the traditional linear assumptions of change that A causes B, are all with respect to implementation issues. In the current case, it is being taken for granted that access to education for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups is an important social value that requires system level change and reform in order to further implement this value, in dialogue with relevant stakeholders. In this sense, systems theory may work optimally as a heuristic framework¹² in contexts where a shared, largely consensual value requires operationalisation in practice. This is not to assert that all or even most consensual values are necessarily optimal ones in any given society; nor is it to deny that implementation dimensions may bring their own value orientations. Conceived as mainly being a framework for implementation of system change, it by no means offers a full level of explanation; not only does it exclude a substantial theory of values underpinning selection of priorities for implementation, it also omits a framework for apprehension of power relations. This is a serious limitation to such an implementation framework.

Jarvis (2008) proposes his own system level vision for society and lifelong learning, based on a model of a core substructure of economic/technological forces surrounded by different layers of a superstructure at international, national, regional/local, individual/organisational levels (pp.46-47). This important vision of interrelating forces and subsystems impacting upon lifelong learning may perhaps be potentially amenable to interpretation within an organic systems theory framework, though not the static, reifying systems theory he rightly criticises strongly. Kjaer (2004)

¹¹ At an ontological rather than epistemological level, Kearney (1992) observes that Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927) involves a shift from an Aristotelian privileging of actuality towards a privileging of possibility as truth claims. A further feature here that is worth noting is that organic systems theory does not necessarily privilege continuity over discontinuity; Prigogine's (1984) systems theory account, for example, highlights the features of what he terms 'dissipative structures'. In Kuhnian (1962) language, it allows for paradigm shifts where the frames of reference change.

¹² It is important to note that organic systems theory is not what Lyotard (1984) would call a *metanarrative* purporting to be a total explanation or exclusive truth; it is but one lens or narrative to examine the issues of system level change for access to education.

further cautions that policy implementation in a systemic network, as opposed to a hierarchy, means that power and responsibility tends to become more diffuse – and accountability difficult to ensure. Thus, a systemic focus on access to education needs to be combined with other frameworks for accountability, such as that of structural, process and outcome indicators.

3. European, national and institutional indicators

SECTION 3.	SUMMARY
<p>Examination of institutions' access policies and practices takes place through the lens of complementary <i>structural, process and outcome</i> indicators. This builds upon a UN framework of indicators developed originally regarding the international right to health. Downes (2007) has applied this framework of structural, process and outcome indicators to examination of early school leaving in Estonia. Generally structural indicators are framed as yes/no answers. This facilitates questioning regarding gaps in services and supports in relation to access. Process indicators address two limitations of outcome indicators. They provide a better picture of the quality of services and better information for programme improvement (Stecher 2005). The process indicator, highlighting State or institutional effort is more a question of scale or degree. If a structural indicator level analyses the presence or absence of, for example, a policy, committee or law, a process indicator is focused more on its implementation dimensions. Quality related issues are centrally to be interpreted as process indicators. For a State to assert the presence of any given structural indicator, evidence may need to be furnished to validate this assertion.</p>	
<p>The benefits of European level structural, process and outcome indicators, as benchmarks of progress of Nation States in relation of access of marginalised groups to lifelong learning and for prevention of early school leaving, include: Offering transparent criteria for establishing a State's progress in this area over time, a framework for ongoing review and dialogue both within a State and across States; allowing for ipsative assessment (Kelly 1999) and progressive realisation, where the comparison point for progress is the State's previous performance in relation to these indicators; clear targets for progress can be established based on the indicators; distinguishing State effort in improving access from actual outcomes; offering an incentive for governments to invest in the area of access to lifelong learning; bringing greater unity to an area recognised as fragmented at national levels; providing recognition of diverse starting points of some countries relative to others.</p>	

The conclusion to Subproject 1 of LLL2010 highlighted that participating States in the research consortium tend to 'consciously or unconsciously' pick and choose between different EU policy priorities in relation to lifelong learning (Holford et al., 2008). In order to help overcome barriers to access for marginalised groups, and to ensure some degree of coherence across EU member states, it is thus essential to develop a list of common benchmarks and targets to measure change over time. It is envisaged that the interviews with the institutional representatives in this research will help lead to the development of these common indicators across participating European States, indicators which can be described as common structural, process and outcome indicators.

It is recognised that EU Commission documents (e.g., 2006; 2009) commit to the development of benchmarks and indicators in the area of education. Moreover, in May 2009 the Education Council revised the current set of benchmarks as part of the Council conclusions on the ET 2020 strategic framework. These benchmarks include the areas of early leavers from education and training, as well as higher education attainment and participation in lifelong learning. The Commission Communication (2007) observes that ‘good governance’ in the area of lifelong learning includes strong evidence-based monitoring and evaluation systems within national frameworks. However, the Commission staff working document (2006) highlights the slow progress made with regard to important outcome indicators for education and social exclusion:

However, progress against the benchmarks adopted under the Education and Training 2010 Programme has been slow, especially in those areas related most closely to social inclusion. Unless significant improvements can be made in reducing the numbers of early school leavers, raising upper secondary completion rates and the acquisition of key competences, an increasing number of citizens will face the risk of social exclusion, marginalisation and disengagement at great cost to themselves, to the economy and to society. According to recent research, in 2004, 75 million EU citizens were low-skilled (32% of the workforce) but by 2010 just 15% of new jobs will be for those with only basic schooling (p.5).

On the specific theme of access to education, a recent Commission staff working document (2009) makes the following criticism of national data available on participation of adults and adult priority groups’ participation:

Monitoring and evaluation measures require accurate data on participation and progress achieved, which is currently very scarce and often not comparable, mainly due to the lack of clear definitions and the fragmented character of the sector (p.84).

This Commission document goes on to note that only Estonia and Latvia provide predefined indicators in relation to participation in adult education and training out of all the national reports across Europe which describe their national strategies on lifelong learning (p.104). The wider framework being proposed here of structural, process and outcome indicators will hopefully, if adopted by the Commission, provide a renewed opportunity for scrutiny and transparency in the area of access to education for marginalised groups. Similarly, while it is to be welcomed that eight member states (Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain) set national targets for reducing early school leaving in their 2005 Lisbon National Reform Programmes (Commission staff working document 2008, p.37), an adequate roadmap to reach these this outcome indicator needs to include a pathway mediated by structural and process indicators for early school leaving prevention.

Nicaise (2010a) has also offered a critique of European Commission review processes of progress in relation to education with implications for themes of socio-economic disadvantage:

It must be admitted that the OMC [Open Method of Coordination] in E&T [Education and Training] has been rather soft until now – softer indeed than the OMC in the fields of employment, social inclusion, pensions and health care. Targets were set but not implemented, and there was no system of feedback based on (specific) national strategy reports. The lifelong learning components of the national Lisbon reform programmes

were insufficient and not focused on equity – let alone, social inclusion. The peer reviewing was mainly confined to good practice and not all stakeholders were involved. The cross-sectoral co-ordination between education and social affairs was weak, including at the level of the Commission and...even within the concept of the Lisbon strategy (p.15).

The benefits of European level structural, process and outcome indicators, as benchmarks of progress of Nation States in relation of access of marginalised groups to lifelong learning, are as follows:

- the indicators can offer transparent criteria for establishing a State's progress in this area over time;
- they offer a framework for ongoing review and dialogue both within a State and across States;
- they allow for what is called in another educational context, ipsative assessment (Kelly 1999); the comparison point for progress is the State's previous performance in relation to these indicators;
- clear targets for progress can be established based on the indicators;
- the indicators can distinguish State effort in improving access from actual outcomes; they can offer an incentive for governments to invest in the area of access to lifelong learning;
- the indicators provide a systemic level focus for change rather than reducing change to one simplistic magic bullet cause;
- they can include dimensions of progress which would be consistent with shift from an inorganic towards an organic system of education and relation between institutions concerned with policy and practice in education;
- they can bring greater unity to an area recognised as fragmented at national levels;
- the indicators provide recognition of diverse starting points of some countries relative to others (see Rajamani 2006 on this diversity in international legal contexts and Lewin 2007 on diverse starting points of countries in relation to access to education issues).

3.1 A framework of structural, process and outcome indicators for access to lifelong learning for marginalised groups

Examination of institutions' access policies and practices will take place through the lens of complementary *structural, process and outcome* indicators. This builds upon a UN framework of indicators developed originally regarding the international right to health. Downes (2007) has applied this framework of structural, process and outcome indicators to examination of early school leaving in Estonia. Moreover, Downes, Zule-Lapimaa, Ivanchenko & Blumberg (2008) have adopted this framework for developing indicators for human trafficking in the Baltic States.

Structural Indicators

In the words of the UN Special Rapporteur on the international right to the progressive realisation of health (2006):

‘ 54. *Structural indicators* address whether or not key structures and mechanisms...are in place. They are often (but not always) framed as a question generating a yes/no answer.

For example, they may address: the ratification of international treaties... the adoption of national laws and policies...or the existence of basic institutional mechanisms...'

Generally structural indicators are framed as yes/no answers. This will facilitate questioning regarding gaps in services and supports in relation to access to ensure that a solution-focused approach occurs for the analysis rather than simply a narrowly descriptive account. Examples of structural indicators could also include curriculum aspects, institutional admission criteria for entry etc. Another important dimension embraced by structural indicators is that of legislation in an area, for example, offering a statutory right to post-primary education. For a State to assert the presence of any given structural indicator, evidence may need to be furnished to validate this assertion. The detail of such evidence may depend on the kind of specific structural indicator and may require different levels of detail for different structural indicators. The level of detail may also depend on the form of the reporting process.

Process Indicators

In the words of the UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (2006), '*Process indicators* measure programmes, activities and interventions. They measure, as it were, State effort', whereas 'outcome indicators will often be used in conjunction with benchmarks or targets to measure change over time'. This renewed focus on temporal and change dimensions with regard to indicators parallels the need highlighted above for a temporal dimension to a systems theory view of access to education; to remedy the previous neglect of change dimensions at a systems level, a corresponding remedy is required to go beyond static outcome indicators as the sole or predominant kind of benchmark.

Process indicators address two limitations of outcome indicators. That is, process indicators provide a better picture of the quality of services and better information for programme improvement (Stecher 2005). The value of process indicators for research is that they are a measure of the services the education system is actually providing and information about system performance is critical for effective educational evaluation and reform. Those charged with setting education policy as well as those responsible for overseeing educational programmes cannot be effective without ongoing, valid information about the health of the system they govern (Stecher 2005).

In the process oriented models of mentoring, for example, Parra., (2002) emphasise the distal and proximal influences of mentors' self-efficacy and illustrate how self-efficacy beliefs shape the nature (activities, discussions, and obstacles) of the mentoring relationship and the degree of closeness that emerges in the mentoring dyad. They highlight the importance of structured interactions, training, and support for strengthening mentors' self-efficacy (2002, p. 272).

Process indicators will be sensitive to a community development focus (Mulkerrins 2007), for example, regarding the extent to which institutions include the target group of individuals and communities in the process of decision making concerning course content and the level of communication regarding the course(s) available in the institution. This also raises the issue of the percentage of staff members from the target groups that work at the institution, for example, with regard to gender, ethnicity, social class etc. Mindful of Wolf et al's (2000) contention that assumptions

made on behalf of minority groups can be both wrong and patronising, a process focus would investigate how much feedback and influence these groups have in an institution.

These indicators have a collective, as well as individual, dimension. Collective lifelong learning processes and outcomes embrace collective contexts varying from local community associations, and trade unions to professional and sectorial associations, as well as enterprises.

It is important to note that at this stage of development of these indicators, it is not being proposed that they necessarily exist within a rights-based framework. However, they are to be very much compatible with a rights based framework such as that outlined for structural, process and outcome indicators for the UN right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

Outcome Indicators

Outcome indicators measure the broader results achieved through the provision of goods and services. Outcome indicators will often be used in conjunction with benchmarks or targets to measure change over time (Downes et al., 2008, p. 287). For example, it is arguable that national rates of early school leaving is a relevant benchmark and outcome indicator with regard to the progressive realisation of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (Downes 2007; 2008). For such an outcome indicator to be developed as a dimension of the UN right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health¹³, early school leaving would need to be conceptualised as being a mental health issue (Kaplan, Damphousse and Kaplan 1994), as well as an education issue (Downes 2008a).

There are a number of limitations to outcome indicators. Outcome-based indicators provide little or no guidance for improvement (Stecher 2005). They do not explain why phenomena occur nor how they could be changed, nor obstacles to their change. Moreover, an individual's learner-centred focus may be in conflict with a generic outcomes focus (Downes 2007, p. 58). The causal factors underpinning a commitment to outcomes require a scrutiny beyond a simplistic one to one relation between a given intervention and a particular outcome. There is a tendency highlighted in both psychology (Rutter 1985) and education (Downes 2007) to overlook background contingent conditions for the cause to work. The impact and potential role of the other background variables supporting a significant main effect of the outcomes from an intervention needs to be given full recognition, as does the need to move beyond simple causality to complex causality in understanding outcome indicators (Downes 2007, p. 59).

¹³ The right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is given legal foundation by a range of international legal instruments, including article 25 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and article 12 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well as the right to non-discrimination as reflected in article 5 (e) (iv) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

3.1.1 Structural, Process and Outcome Indicators: The principles of community development, progressive realisation and common though differentiated responsibility

The principles explored here for the international right to health have direct relevance by analogy to the development of a framework of structural, process and outcome indicators regarding access to lifelong learning for marginalised groups. For example, the UN Special Rapporteur (2006) emphasises the importance of focus on ‘disadvantaged’ individuals and communities in relation to indicators of the right to health:

25. in general terms a human rights-based approach requires that special attention be given to disadvantaged individuals and communities; it requires the active and informed participation of individuals and communities in policy decisions that affect them; and it requires effective, transparent and accessible monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The combined effect of these - and other features of a human rights-based approach - is to empower disadvantaged individuals and communities.

A key theme highlighted by the Special Rapporteur, for example in his report on Romania (2005)¹⁴, is the importance of community participation in health policy making:

19. Participation of the population in health-related decision-making at the community, national and international levels, is vital to the fulfillment of the right to health. It is also linked closely with the human right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, and other human rights. A human rights approach to health requires active and informed community participation, including in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of health strategies, policies and programmes. Participatory policy-making better reflects the needs of local communities and vulnerable groups, including...minorities, and helps create conditions conducive for good health.

This amounts to a clear international recognition of the importance of the principle of *community development* dimensions to policy implementation and design, as well as to practice.

The then UN Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights (2006)¹⁵ on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Paul Hunt, notes that the right to health is subject to *progressive realisation* and this requires development of indicators and benchmarks:

22. According to international human rights law, economic, social and cultural rights are subject to progressive realisation¹⁶. Those in the human rights community focusing on economic, social and cultural rights have given particular attention to indicators because they provide a way of monitoring progressive realisation. Indeed, it is in this context that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993) emphasises the importance of indicators: To strengthen the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights,

¹⁴ 21 February 2005 United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Paul Hunt, Mission to Romania

¹⁵ United Nations Economic and Social Council 3 March 2006 Commission on Human Rights Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Paul Hunt

¹⁶ ICESCR, article 2, para 1 (United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 993, p. 3)

additional approaches should be examined, such as a system of indicators to measure progress in the realisation of the rights set forth in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [paragraph 98].

This amounts to a reiteration of the position of the Special Rapporteur in his 2005 report¹⁷:

33. The international right to physical and mental health is subject to progressive realisation and resource constraints. This has a number of important implications. Put simply, all States are expected to be doing better in five years time than what they are doing today (progressive realisation). And what is legally required of a developed State is of a higher standard than what is legally required of a least-developed country (resource constraints).

37. a State is obliged to use the maximum of its available resources towards the realisation of the right to health. And progressive realisation demands *indicators and benchmarks* to monitor progress in relation to mental disabilities and the right to health.

In the 2006 report¹⁸ the Special Rapporteur goes on to state:

29. the Special Rapporteur wishes to emphasise that there is no alternative but to use indicators to measure and monitor the progressive realisation of the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

He observes (2006) that indicators of the right to health help the State assess progress over time in relation to their right to health obligations as indicators and benchmarks:

35. can help the State to monitor its progress over time, enabling the authorities to recognise when policy adjustments are required. *Second*, they can help to hold the State to account in relation to the discharge of its responsibilities arising from the right to health, although deteriorating indicators do not necessarily mean that the State is in breach of its international right to health obligations

It is this feature of progressive realisation - involving indicators and benchmarks - which offers an important potential step forward in relation to developing States' commitments to access to education and lifelong learning. The reference point is progress compared with previous performance in an area, whether that of health or access to education.

Caddell (2008) extracts another important principle of *common yet differentiated responsibility* which he argues needs to be transferred from its recognition in environmental law to the context of human trafficking:

there is little attempt within the [Trafficking] Protocol to recognise the different pressures under which the social services of different countries currently operate, with no concept of the 'common but differentiated responsibility' as seen in many multilateral environmental agreements applied in the Trafficking Protocol to recognise that some states are in a stronger position in terms of resources to underwrite the practical demands of compliance with their international commitments (p. 125).

¹⁷ United Nations Economic and Social Council 11 February 2005 Commission on Human Rights Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Paul Hunt

¹⁸ Supra 3

Caddell's (2008) criticism of the lack of a principle of common but differentiated responsibility depending on resources, applied to the context of human trafficking, can also be applied to the area of access to education for marginalised groups. This principle would allow for different rates of progress in relation to investment in progress across benchmarks and indicators, based on resources of the country. Thus a framework of comparative assessment across States of success and failure in meeting indicators and benchmarks can be combined with ipsative assessment of States. In other words, assessment can take place of a State's progress with regard to its provision in this area, compared with its own previous level of performance in relation to access to education and lifelong learning. Such a framework allows for different dimensions of scrutiny and transparency regarding States' inputs and outputs with regard to improving access to education for marginalised groups.

Rajamani's (2006) authoritative account of the status of the principle of common yet differentiated responsibility in international law explores its contextual application in the areas of international human rights law, international economic law, international institutional law, as well as international environmental law. She observes the need at times to keep such a principle 'carefully hemmed in' (p.22) to specific contexts in the area of human rights – as, she notes, does the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) 1966 which goes on to recognise implicit norms of differential treatment, such as in Article 2(1), which requires each state to take steps, 'individually and through international assistance and cooperation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources' with a view to 'progressive realisation' of the rights recognised in the Covenant.

The universality claims of human rights require that differential treatment is only 'grudgingly permitted' (Rajamani 2006, p.47). 'The carefully circumscribed nature of differential treatment' (Rajamani 2006, p.23) can include the need for states to act expeditiously and effectively to implement key indicators – and recognise that a common and yet differentiated responsibility is appropriate only in so far as it 'furthers equality rather than entrenches inequality' (Rajamani 2006, p.6) and moreover this principle ceases to exist when the substantive differences in contexts cease to exist (Rajamani 2006, p.254).

Three obvious paths for a European review framework with regard to structural, process and outcome indicators for access to education for marginalised groups of these indicators are national assessments (e.g., by the Ministry for Education), external assessments of progress and institutional self-assessments. These are well recognised across a number of country reports in 2009 in relation to quality assurance¹⁹ and are

¹⁹ Drawing on the principles underlying the Common Quality Assurance Framework for VET (CQAF) that had been endorsed by the Education Council in May 2004 (9599/04 EDUC 117 SOC 252 du 18 Mai 2004), a recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council on the establishment of a European quality assurance reference framework in vocational education and training (EQUARF) (Recommendation of the EP and the Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for vocational education and training 2008/0069 (COD) LEX 1033 18 June 2009) was adopted in 2009. Obviously, the proposed framework here of structural, process and outcome indicators for access to education for marginalised groups is in a significantly wider context than only vocational education and training.

referred to in a recent Commission staff working document (2009 p.117). Another important level here is the establishment of a review process at the level of the European Commission. This would presumably work closely in tandem with evaluation of impact through the EU structural funds. As Nicaise (2010) observes:

...co-financing by the structural funds may serve as a positive incentive, if adequately linked to system reforms. A major strength of the structural funds is the systematic use of monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of co-financed measures (p.19).

3.1.2 Access to Educational institutions – Examples of potential Indicators

Examples of Structural indicators:

- *schemes for reserved places for marginalised and/or ethnic minority groups*
- *availability of counselling/emotional support services*
- *preparatory courses for entry*
- *career guidance services*
- *writing workshops in the institution*
- *outreach strategies for marginalised groups*

Examples of Process Indicators:

- *institutional staff from target groups (e.g., gender, social class, ethnicity)*
- *community involvement and representation in educational institutions*
- *social climate of institutions: peer mentoring, induction days*
- *teacher-student relations*
- *relevance of learning goals to local and regional community development*

Examples of Outcome Indicators

- *number of target group (enrolled, completing course)*
- *percentage of early school leavers per annum*

3.2 Equity and efficiency in relation to Indicators

The question arises as to the efficiency dimensions to such indicators pertaining to equity and access. Waddington (2011) highlights that the investigative process at national level into structural, process and outcome indicators is especially feasible for structural indicators, as this requires little financial investment and no statistical data as such; as structural indicators are basically yes/no answers as to structural features of a system. As data collection for process and outcome indicators does require a quantitative dimension, these kinds of indicators would need to be employed somewhat more sparingly.

Many of the process indicators are at institutional levels and would occur as part of self-evaluation processes to inform national level progress. The obstacles here are less in terms of financial resources and more in terms of changing institutional inertia and requiring access and participation for traditionally underrepresented groups to be an institutional priority. It may therefore require some change to institutional practices to ensure that this data is collected consistently. Höllinger (2010) summarises a list of

frequently made recommendations regarding selection and use of indicators. These include²⁰:

indicators should not only be available for an entire HE institution it should also be possible to break them into organisational units about which or by which decisions are made; it should be possible to make comparisons between various different disciplines; it must be clear which quality of a HE institution is being measured by an indicator or group of indicators, and this measurement must be made in a reliable way; it is important to distinguish between parameters that can be planned and controlled and those that the HE institution cannot influence (p.14)

Rajamani's (2006) classification of the principle of common yet differentiated responsibility in international institutional law may also be of relevance in constructing and implementing the proposed structural, process and outcome indicators for access to education for socio-economically marginalised groups in Europe. She distinguishes differential membership (differential eligibility to membership), differential decision-making (differential value of membership), differential contributions (differential costs of membership) and differential enforcement (Rajamani 2006, p.38). Moreover, she notes that implementation criteria may provide for differential timeframes (p.102), including delayed reporting schedules and 'soft approaches to non-compliance' (p.104), differential financial assistance including through additional and incremental finances and multilateral funds (p.108-109). These dimensions are all pertinent to the proposed indicators for access to education.

Green (2010) observes the importance of only a few outcome indicators to ensure both a clarity of purpose and for financial reasons. This is important to bear in mind for outcome indicators at national level which need detailed statistical data collection. However, such parsimony of outcome indicators needs to be combined especially with a wider range of structural indicators, and arguably also a somewhat wider range of process indicators. If access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups is to be a genuine European and cross-national level priority, then it is important that sufficient indicators are in place to ascertain not only if change is taking place, but also why and how barriers to change may also be occurring. Moreover, if access to lifelong learning for individuals and groups who traditionally have been marginalised and alienated from the education system is to be a real policy priority at European and national levels, then it is quite simply inefficient to invest organisational time and resources in this priority without developing a system of structural and process indicators to examine the progress of such investment.

4. Brief overview of access to formal education, non-formal education, prison education and secondary education

²⁰ Compiling the data must be easy and inexpensive and should preferably be done by means of electronic data processing; figures indicating the existing situation should be mean values, generally taken over a period of three years.

SECTION 4**SUMMARY**

A brief introduction to the domains of research in this comparative report (formal tertiary education, non-formal education, prison education, secondary schools) is provided. Some previous international research on barriers to access tends to focus on discrete issues rather than examining these issues in a holistic, systemic fashion. It is important to contextualise the limited scope of the expansion of higher education in a European domain. A Commission Communication (2005) highlights that while Europe is a highly educated society, only 21% of the EU working age population has achieved third level education, significantly lower than in the US (38%), Canada (43%) or Japan (36%), as well as South Korea (26%). However, as Ulicna et al., (2011, forthcoming) highlight, due to considerable investments and new financial resources (mainly due to EU structural funds) the participation rates in adult learning in the New EU Member States have increased in the period 2000-2007. Nevertheless, this observation needs to be balanced with the fact that over the period 2003(4)-2008 several new Member States have seen a negative change in the participation of adults which could indicate that the injection of new finances only led to an increase over a limited period of time.

For those traditionally alienated from the formal school system, the non-formal educational sector can serve as a key bridge towards social inclusion. Its climate tends to be more inviting and flexible for learners who are often extremely intimidated by the thought of 'going back' for more education after usually negative experiences of schooling from the past. According to international research, the non-formal system can play a key role for access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, through helping to overcome fear of failure, opportunities for recognition of wider dimensions for a person's success in education, outreach initiatives and education relevant to a person's emotional development, as well as culturally relevant themes offering opportunity for active citizenship and community development. Pervading all of these aspects is the recognition that a person's life experience is a starting point for learning to go beyond 'deficit' models of learning and experience.

Access to prison education as a dimension of lifelong learning strategies needs a more explicit focus, at both Commission and national levels. The Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Recommendation Rec (2006) 2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the European Prison Rules, includes the following, of particular relevance to lifelong learning in prison: 28.1 Every prison shall seek to provide all prisoners with access to educational programmes which are as comprehensive as possible and which meet their individual needs while taking into account their aspirations. It is notable that the Commission's 2001 Communication *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*, stressed the importance of lifelong learning for all European citizens, as its 2007 Communication, *Action Plan on Adult Learning: It is always a good time to learn* reiterates. The scope of the vision of these documents must thereby embrace prisoners' education, at least in so far as prisoners are European citizens.

The OECD report (Field, Kuczera & Pont 2007) has identified ten key steps to equity in education. It is arguable that while these key steps are important, they neglect the importance of emotional dimensions to early school leaving and the consequent need for emotional supports. Other indicators are required for early school leaving prevention.

4.1 Definition of formal education and a working definition of non-formal education for the purposes of this research

Formal education is defined in LLL2010 as education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions that normally constitutes a continuous ‘ladder’ of full-time education for children and young people, generally beginning at age of five to seven and continuing up to 20 or 25 years old. In some countries, the upper parts of this ‘ladder’ are organised programmes of joint part-time employment and part-time participation in the regular school and university system. Formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view. It leads to certification which leads to the next educational level. This definition is basically equivalent to the Eurostat definition.

It is important to identify the right terms (in the national language(s)) for formal/non-formal and informal education/learning. The working papers of Subproject 1 of LLL2010 show that every country has its own interpretation of these terms, because the definitions used reflect the needs, traditions, culture and policy of that country (Holford et al., 2008). Although it is not possible to aim for consistency in terminology between the participating countries in the LLL2010 project, it was deemed necessary to offer a working definition of these elements in each country report separately.

Two key features of non-formal learning for current purposes is that it does not directly involve certification or assessment, and its classes offer a potential bridge for the learner to the formal education system. Additional features to these aspects may need to be added for each country specific situation. For the purposes of the current research, it was required that each partner institution would specify in advance to the author of this comparative report their proposed candidate non-formal learning institutions on a case by case basis.

Non-formal education is defined by UNESCO as ‘any organised and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the above definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions, and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out of school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non-formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the ‘ladder’ system, and may have a differing duration’ (1997, p. 41). This definition adds a perspective on duration of a course that is implicit within our consortium working definition. It is very much consistent with our consortium working definition of non-formal education, not only in giving recognition to country context but also through defining non-formal education by way of contrast with a formal education definition.

It is important to distinguish non-formal education from informal learning. The latter is defined as by UNESCO as ‘...intentional, but it is less organised and less structured...and may include for example learning events (activities) that occur in the family, in the work place, and in the daily life of every person, on a self-directed, family-directed or socially directed basis’ (1997, p. 41).

4.2 Access to formal education: Brief theoretical introduction

As the EU Commission (2006) recognises:

increased participation in tertiary education in Europe has not enhanced equity. It has improved the absolute prospects of those from less advantaged backgrounds, but it has not improved their relative prospects. The average annual increase in the participation rates of young people from low socio-economic groups has in most cases failed to keep up with the increase in the total participation rates. The participation of young people in tertiary education has a strong correlation with the educational attainment of their parents and the socioeconomic background of their families. In many countries, those whose parents have completed some tertiary education are twice as likely to participate in tertiary education as those whose parents lack upper-secondary level qualifications (p. 23).

The Commission (2006) cites a number of sources to highlight that this correlation between the educational attainment of successive generations within families acts to limit inter-generational income mobility (Solon (1992), Björklund and Jantti (1997), Couch and Dunn (1997), and Checchi et al., (1999)). Much survey research has highlighted the structural constraints and opportunities in the form of socio-economic factors such as family of origin and hence class (Marks 1999, Merrill 1999, Tett 2000). It is also notable that according to international research using large scale surveys to examine inequality focusing on income inequality suggests that the middle classes have been the main beneficiaries of the expansion of higher education (Blanden, Gregg and Machin 2005).

It is important to contextualise the still somewhat limited scope of the expansion of higher education in a European domain. A Commission Communication (2005) highlights that while Europe is a highly educated society, only 21% of the EU working age population has achieved third level education, significantly lower than in the US (38%), Canada (43%) or Japan (36%), as well as South Korea (26%). However, as Ulicna et al., (2011, forthcoming) highlight, due to considerable investments and new financial resources (mainly due to EU structural funds) the participation rates in adult learning in the New EU Member States have increased in the period 2000-2007. Nevertheless, this observation needs to be balanced with the fact that over the period 2003(4)-2008 several new Member States have actually seen a negative change in the participation of adults which could indicate that the injection of new finances only led to an increase over a limited period of time.

In theoretical terms, entrance, retention and completion can be grouped into educational pathways of which there are at least four oppositions between, respectively:

- the individual and the institution
- an individual's subjective and objective situations
- school-based learning and extra-curricular experiences
- an individual's past experiences/achievements and future expectations (Stensen & Ure 2010).

Based on an international comparative study, Schütze & Slowey (2002, p.318) distinguished six institutional and macro-level policy factors which appeared to either inhibit or support participation by non-traditional students in higher education:

1. Institutional differentiation in the adult education system: horizontal and vertical differentiation, articulation and transfer routes, student choice and information, no dead-end routes, equivalence of general and vocational routes, coordination between different sectors/programmes. These characteristics are not only important with regard to adult education but also with regard to initial education;
2. Institutional governance: institutional autonomy and flexibility;
3. Access, for example, a specific policy and outreach strategy for lifelong learners, open or flexible access, recognition of work and life experience, special entry routes, involvement in regional development/service for the community;
4. Mode of study, such as modular courses and credit transfer, part-time mode, distance learning, independent study;
5. Financial and other support;
6. Adult education opportunities: provision of relevant courses, appropriate scheduling, affordable fee levels.

The Commission (2006) emphasises poverty related barriers to access:

evidence shows that the most disadvantaged are also the most risk and debt averse and, without a family culture of learning, they often prefer to begin earning straight away rather than enter higher education (Davis and Lea, 1995) (p. 25).

[...] In systems without loans, students have to rely heavily on their families' income to pay for accommodation, transport and food which has clear consequences for equitable access and participation (Barr 2004, Dur & Teulings, 2003 and Greenaway & Haynes 2004) (p. 25).

Moreover, Hoelscher et al. (2008) found that the most common reason given by students in England for choosing an institution (university or further education college) was its location (though, importantly, this does not concern distance learning). This was mentioned as a single reason for choice by one third of students regardless of the educational pathway chosen.²¹ Good location was defined as proximity with home or with family, proximity with a big city or well served by transport.

Some previous research on barriers to access tends to focus on discrete issues rather than examining these issues in a holistic, systemic fashion. For example, two major national surveys of participation (Carp, Peterson & Roelfs, 1974; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965) found the following to be especially significant barriers: cost, lack of time, inconvenient scheduling, lack of information about educational opportunities, job responsibilities, home responsibilities, lack of interest and lack of confidence. This research led to a well-known tripartite distinction between situational, dispositional and institutional deterrents to accessing education for marginalised groups. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) added a fourth category, namely, information barriers.

Johnstone & Rivera (1965) distinguished between influences external to the individual or beyond his or her control (situational deterrents) and those based on personal attitudes or dispositions toward participation (dispositional deterrents). Cross (1981) proposed a third category of institutional barriers giving as examples scheduling

²¹ General academic, academic and vocational, vocational, foundation and access

or location problems, lack of interesting or relevant offerings, procedural problems related to enrolment and red tape and lack of information regarding educational opportunities. In particular, among those items which had commonly been subsumed by Cross (1981) and others under the 'situational' category of deterrents, three distinct source variables emerged: one related to occupational constraints, one to family constraints and one to cost. In regard to prior intuitive conceptions of institutional deterrents, judgements of benefit (or, more precisely, lack of benefit) were observed as being conceptually distinct from perceptions of both cost and programme quality.

An institutional barriers focus directly implicates a role for state policy in helping to overcome these barriers. In Nordhaug's (1990) study, it is assumed that private colleges and universities, both not-for-profit and proprietary, have also been influenced by state structural factors including political or policy-related factors regarding their student compositions. Zumeta (1992) argues for this inclusion of a key state role, noting that the role of state policies takes new importance that affects or could affect independent higher education and exemplifies relevant state policies, such as student aid, direct appropriations, tax policies, tuition, enrolment, programmes and curriculums, governance and structures and planning process.

A review of barriers to access to adult learning (Cullen, Batterbury, Foresti, Lyons, and Stern 2000) shows that access to learning opportunities is among the main obstacles (after previous negative learning experience and financing). However, the most vulnerable adults are often reluctant to engage in training because of their distrust of formal schemes or representatives of authority. Indeed, European research projects suggest that an important determinant in the participation and learning of the most vulnerable young people is the trust built up between teachers and the learner (Power, 2006). This notion of trust or assumed connection between learner and teacher can be extended further to a conception of assumed connection between the individual and the learning institution conceived as a system of relations (Downes 2009). In contrast, an assumed separation is evident in McIntyre-Mills' (2010) observation of a hesitation in some Australian Aborigines where they avoid 'putting themselves forward' and are 'careful about what they said' (p.31)²².

The broad research questions explored for formal education institutions are as follows:

- 1) *How could educational institutions develop a systemic approach to better promote the access of adults to the education system?*
- 2) *Are schools and universities ready to change their admission policies and become institutions of lifelong learning? Which changes are planned?*
- 3) *What kinds of provision already exist that could offer examples of good practice (for example, distance learning, reserved places for educationally disadvantaged groups etc)?*
- 4) *Are the literacy needs of marginalised adult groups being satisfactorily met?*
- 5) *Which are the main obstacles to establish a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience for opening access of adults to the education system?*

²² See also Downes (2003; 2011) on cross-cultural structures to express relations of assumed connection and assumed separation respectively

4.3 Non-formal education as a key path to overcoming fear of failure in marginalised groups: Brief theoretical introduction

For those traditionally alienated from the formal school system, the non-formal educational sector can serve as a key bridge towards social inclusion. Its climate tends to be more inviting, informal and flexible for learners who are often extremely intimidated by the thought of 'going back' for more education after usually negative experiences of schooling from the past. The EU Commission (2001) recognises that:

Community and voluntary groups have unique opportunities to deliver targeted learning, to promote learning amongst (potential) learners and to articulate their needs and interests (p. 11).

A key issue raised by international research is the need for a non-threatening atmosphere to overcome the fear of failure. A plethora of educational theorists and educational psychologists recognise the danger of labelling learners as 'failures' (e.g. Glasser 1969; Warnock 1977; Handy & Aitken 1990; Kellaghan et al., 1995; MacDevitt 1998; Kelly 1999; Downes 2003; Jimerson 1999; Ferguson et al., 2001). Development of a failure identity is demotivating for learners and contributes to the alienation of learners from the formal education system. For many the formal system appears daunting and is associated with their previous negative experiences of education. There is a need here also to recognise that many potential learners have had extremely negative experiences of school (Downes & Maunsell 2007) and that highlighting the benefits of learning for this group needs to clearly distinguish lifelong learning activities from their past school environment. Against this backdrop, the non-formal education system may offer a more non-threatening pathway back into the education system. It is a key bridge potentially for access to learning for adults from traditionally disadvantaged groups.

The non-threatening environment of non-formal education offers an opportunity for learners to develop their sense of self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) describes self-esteem as feeling that you are 'good enough'. Self-esteem is positively associated with academic achievement (Purkey 1970; Brookover et al., 1964; Hay, Ashman & van Kraayenoord 1997). The words of Handy & Aitken (1990) would predict alienation and loss of identity for the less academic students without a bridge between the formal and non-formal system:

the loss of identity and sense of anomie of many students [occurs] in an organisation where such academic values are overemphasised and other experiences and achievements are under-expressed (p.28)

The non-formal system offers diverse pathways for recognition of the learner's contribution. MacDevitt (1998) highlights that one direction for educational reform in a European context is 'the recognition of achievement for all' (p.47) (see also Kelly 1999, p.141).

A focus on achievement would require a focus on developing primarily the strengths of the learner. Furthermore, non-formal education classes are less concerned with assessment processes, which is an important issue, given that there is evidence from numerous sources indicating considerable anxiety about assessment among both learners

and tutors (Merrifield, 2001; Watson, 2001; Campbell, 2006, Looney, 2008; Carrigan & Downes 2009). In the Canadian context, Campbell (2006) recommends that:

Students who are emergent readers and writers should not be subjected to formal, standardised tests during intake assessments, as these are reminiscent of their early school experiences. (p.65)

The non-formal education setting allows for less hierarchical student-teacher relations and a democratic climate emphasised in international research as being vital for motivation and learning.

A key opportunity provided by non-formal education is with regard to appreciation of the individual's previous life experience, for example, as part of personal development dimensions to education. Banks (1994) argues that insufficient attention to personal development is an important contributory factor to alienation in learning contexts. Glasser (1969) refers to the 'emotional bridge to relevance' in education. The non-formal education sector can provide both paths into emotionally relevant education and also culturally relevant education. Personal development classes, with an emotional bridge to relevance are particularly suited to engaging with an individual's life experience and to constructivist methods of active learning (see also von Glaserfeld 1995).

A further feature of non-formal education is its potential appreciation of wide ranges of intelligence. This echoes Gardner's (1993) examination of multiple types of intelligence in educational psychology, which proposes numerous different types of intelligence, e.g., linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic and personal. It offers a wide range of opportunities for success for the adult learner, a factor of vital importance for access in bringing people back into education who were previously alienated from the 'system'.

The non-formal education sector may offer a particular opportunity for outreach initiatives to engage many groups traditionally excluded from the mainstream education system. One of the key dimensions of the right to health indicators noted by the UN Special Rapporteur is that the community is consulted and participates in policy decisions that affect them with regard to health issues:

25. in general terms a human rights-based approach requires that special attention be given to disadvantaged individuals and communities; it requires the active and informed participation of individuals and communities in policy decisions that affect them; and it requires effective, transparent and accessible monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The combined effect of these - and other features of a human rights-based approach - is to empower disadvantaged individuals and communities.

These features are also elements of good practice for outreach contexts in education. As a key bridge to access education in the formal sector, classes in the non-formal setting with emphasis on themes of personal development and community development offer an opportunity for the adult learner to gain increased confidence academically and socially – and can be a key space for nurturing motivation to continue education into the formal educational setting. However, a French review of recognition of non-formal and informal learning shows that people with low or no qualifications are less aware of this possibility than people with higher qualifications (Besson 2008, p.15).

It is absolutely essential for access issues to include the non-formal sector, though this does not preclude some flexibility on how this would be interpreted in a country with

a very undeveloped non-formal sector. Improving access must involve a comparative focus on the gaps, as well as strengths, in the non-formal sector as a bridge for potentially excluded groups. Thus, the non-formal system can play a key role for access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, through helping to overcome fear of failure, providing opportunities for recognition of wider dimensions for a person's success in education, offering outreach initiatives and education relevant to a person's emotional development, as well as culturally relevant themes offering opportunity for active citizenship and community development. Pervading all of these aspects is the recognition that a person's life experience is a starting point for learning to go beyond 'deficit' models of learning and experience.

The broad research questions explored for non-formal education institutions are as follows:

- 1) *In what ways can the non-formal education sector be promoted?*
- 2) *How can the non-formal education sector be facilitated in being a key systemic bridge for access to the formal education sector ?*
- 3) *Which are the main obstacles to establish a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience for opening access of adults to the education system?*

4.4 Prison education as a domain of lifelong learning: Brief theoretical introduction

A Council of Europe Report (1990) emphasised that:

The education of prisoners must in its philosophy, methods and content be brought as close as possible to the best adult education in the society outside (p. 14)

Prison education can provide an opportunity for identification of literacy needs, especially as many prisoners are early school leavers and may have literacy problems (Morgan and Kett 2003; see also, a Home Office Report in Britain, McMahon et al., 2004 which evaluated basic skills provision in the probation services). Early identification of literacy needs is recognised as a critical component in supporting learners' needs (Watson, 2001, Looney, 2008). Learners however may be unaware that they have literacy needs. The Moser report in Britain drew attention to the fact that there can be a discrepancy between tests of adult literacy and people's perceptions of their own problems:

Various surveys have shown that many adults underestimate their need for help. Less than 5% of adults say they have a problem with reading and much the same small proportion acknowledge a difficulty with numbers. Only spelling is acknowledged as a problem by significant numbers - around 10%. Many people are unaware of their poor skills, and many, even if aware, don't regard it as a problem. And of course there is often a strong stigma in admitting to it (1999, 2.22)

Maunsell et al.(2008, p.29) emphasise the need to overcome institutional barriers to accessing education in prison, such as landings being locked or being transferred just prior to an exam. Reuss (1999) observes other interpersonal and environmental barriers to education in prison in the UK context:

The facilitative/experiential model of teaching was the preferred option for working with the prisoner-students on the degree course, although the course was structured around

daily lectures, seminars and discussion groups. Facilitative learning practices however, and their adoption within a prison setting, do not find favour in an environment where security takes precedence thus making it difficult for both teacher and students to work together with the learning both initiated and evaluated by the pupils themselves (p.114-115)

The Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Recommendation Rec (2006) 2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the European Prison Rules, Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 January 2006 at the 952nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, includes the following, of particular relevance to lifelong learning in prison:

28.1 Every prison shall seek to provide all prisoners with access to educational programmes which are as comprehensive as possible and which meet their individual needs while taking into account their aspirations.

28.2 Priority shall be given to prisoners with literacy and numeracy needs and those who lack basic or vocational education.

28.3 Particular attention shall be paid to the education of young prisoners and those with special needs.

28.4 Education shall have no less a status than work within the prison regime and prisoners shall not be disadvantaged financially or otherwise by taking part in education.

28.5 Every institution shall have a library for the use of all prisoners, adequately stocked with a wide range of both recreational and educational resources, books and other media.

28.6 Wherever possible, the prison library should be organised in co-operation with community library services.

28.7 As far as practicable, the education of prisoners shall:

- a. be integrated with the educational and vocational training system of the country so that after their release they may continue their education and vocational training without difficulty; and
- b. take place under the auspices of external educational institutions.

Other key aspects of these rules, with respect to lifelong learning in prison, are as follows:

Education of sentenced prisoners

106.1 A systematic programme of education, including skills training, with the objective of improving prisoners' overall level of education as well as their prospects of leading a responsible and crime-free life, shall be a key part of regimes for sentenced prisoners.

106.2 All sentenced prisoners shall be encouraged to take part in educational and training programmes.

106.3 Educational programmes for sentenced prisoners shall be tailored to the projected length of their stay in prison.

Release of sentenced prisoners

107.1 Sentenced prisoners shall be assisted in good time prior to release by procedures and special programmes enabling them to make the transition from life in prison to a law-abiding life in the community.

26.5 Work that encompasses vocational training shall be provided for prisoners able to benefit from it and especially for young prisoners.

26.6 Prisoners may choose the type of employment in which they wish to participate, within the limits of what is available, proper vocational selection and the requirements of good order and discipline.

27.6 Recreational opportunities, which include sport, games, cultural activities, hobbies and other leisure pursuits, shall be provided and, as far as possible, prisoners shall be allowed to organise them.

38.1 Special arrangements shall be made to meet the needs of prisoners who belong to ethnic or linguistic minorities.

38.2 As far as practicable the cultural practices of different groups shall be allowed to continue in prison.

38.3 Linguistic needs shall be met by using competent interpreters and by providing written material in the range of languages used in a particular prison.

The question remains as to the extent of nation states' commitments to these rules. The Council of Europe reports provide a system for monitoring of nation states' adherence to human rights, including the rights of prisoners to access to education.

Hawley (2010) notes that the total EU prison population was 627,455 in 2009, which includes almost 150,000 in pre-trial/remand imprisonment, a group for whom it is particularly difficult to provide meaningful education and training opportunities. It is notable that the Commission's 2001 Communication *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*, stressed the importance of lifelong learning for all European citizens, as its 2007 Communication, *Action Plan on Adult Learning: It is always a good time to learn* reiterates. The scope of the vision of these documents must thereby embrace prisoners' education, at least in so far as prisoners are European citizens. A Commission staff working document (2009) highlights that measures to develop key competences in education for offenders in custody were reported in a few countries, named as Cyprus, France, Italy, Latvia, Portugal and England. It referred to the English example of providing a new core curriculum for offenders.

Hawley (2010) also highlights key features of a rights based approach to prisoner education under international and EU law. At European level, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms states that 'No person shall be denied the right to education' (Art. 2)3. More recently, the Lisbon Treaty recognised the rights of EU citizens through the enforcement of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Article 18 of the Charter recognises that '*everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training*'. Hawley (2010) observes that 'Offenders face considerable barriers in accessing their right to education' (p. 5).

The broad research questions explored for prison education are as follows:

- 1) *How developed are current practices and future plans for providing adult prisoners with access to education in prison?*
- 2) *Which changes are planned?*
- 3) *How can prison education be promoted through system level change in prisons?*
- 4) *Are the literacy needs of marginalised adult groups in prison being satisfactorily met?*

4.5 Dimensions of early school leaving in secondary school: Brief theoretical introduction

As the overall title of the whole LLL2010 project is towards building a lifelong learning society, the scope of this current research also examines school institutions at secondary level to assess, for example, the extent to which traditional ‘constructivist’ (Freire 1972; Glasser 1986; von Glaserfeld 1995) adult education principles are implemented at this level, principles such as: a learner-centred approach giving student ownership over their own learning goals, non-hierarchical relations between student and teacher, and relating of material to the learner’s life experience.

It is notable that in 2007 the Commission undertook a public consultation on ‘Schools for the 21st Century’, involving key stakeholders and decision makers at national, regional and local levels. This informed a subsequent Commission Communication *Improving Competences for the 21st Century: An Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools* (2008). In November 2008, Council Conclusions endorsed the proposed agenda, while stressing the fundamental role of school education in establishing the foundations for lifelong learning – and also reiterating the need to tackle early school leaving and to stimulate social cohesion.

According to Machin’s (2006) report for the OECD, a feature of post-compulsory education and its connection to social disadvantage is that people from poorer backgrounds who do participate tend to enrol on courses, or in institutions, that yield lower economic and social benefits. This includes a lower likelihood of studying at ‘elite’ universities (Chevalier and Conlon 2003) and also a higher probability of studying for a vocational qualification rather than an academic qualification (Conlon 2002). Machin (2006) continues:

Social disadvantages experienced earlier in life also impact strongly on adult life chances (Bynner and Feinstein, 2004). This is clearly bad for them and for national prosperity, and research has shown that education is an important factor in explaining why these basic skills deficiencies arise. Studying the characteristics of the low basic skills group amongst the adult population shows them to very clearly be those who left the school system at the compulsory school-leaving age, who typically have no educational qualifications, and who come from poorer and more disadvantaged social backgrounds (p.12).

As the EU Commission staff working document (2006) notes, the United States foregoes \$192 billion (1.6% of GDP) in combined income and tax revenue losses with each cohort of 18-year-olds who do not complete high school. Increasing the duration of education for that cohort by one year would recoup nearly half those losses. The Commission Communication (2007) highlights the ‘persistent high number of early school leavers’ in Europe, nearly 7 million in 2006.

Freiberg (1999) states in the US context that ‘In practice, few [school social] climate measures tap students as a source of feedback’ (p.209). This may have been due to the slower reception of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) into US legal and educational culture, as under this Convention a child has a right to be consulted in matters pertaining to his or her welfare, consonant with the child’s capacities for decision-making. In their study carried out in the United States, Groninger and Lee

(2001) discovered that teacher-based social capital²³ helped to reduce the number of early school leavers and proved especially effective in a case of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and those who had experienced academic difficulties in the past. In general, teacher-student relations characterised by control, domination, managerial, rather than pedagogical focus, lack of connection and mutual respect may be perceived by some students as constraining and can lead to disengagement and rebellion against school culture (Lingard, Martino, Mills, and Bahr 2002; Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli 2003; Keddie and Churchill 2003).

A positive school climate has been associated with fewer behavioural and emotional problems for students (Kuperminc, Leadbeater, Emmons, and Blatt 1997). Additionally, specific research on school climate in high-risk urban environments indicates that a positive, supportive, and culturally conscious school climate can significantly shape the degree of academic success experienced by urban students (Haynes and Comer, 1993). US and Australian adolescents cite a sense of isolation and lack of personally meaningful relationships at school as significant contributors to academic failure and to their decisions to drop out of school (Institute for Education and Transformation 1992; Wehlage & Rutter 1986; Hodgson 2007; McIntyre-Mills 2010). Power (2006) and Meier (1992) cite personalised, caring relationships with teachers as a prerequisite for high school-level reform - to avoid students becoming 'eased out' (Smyth & Hattam 2004) of school.

The key role of school principals in contributing to the school climate and organisational culture of the learning institution must also be recognised (Gilligan 2002; Downes 2004). Furthermore, researchers have found that positive school climate perceptions are protective factors for boys and may supply students with a high risk of early school leaving with a supportive learning environment yielding healthy development, as well as preventing antisocial behaviour (Kuperminc et al., 1997).

Downes (2009) highlights the need for continuity between school and community subsystems with regard to promotion of a positive school climate, as community level stresses will impact upon school climate unless a holistic approach to intervention occurs in contexts of social-economic disadvantage. The mental health implications for early school leaving and exclusion from the education system are evident from Kaplan et al's (1994) North American study of 4,141 young people tested in 7th grade and once again as young adults. They found a significant damaging effect of dropping out of high school on mental health functioning as measured by a 10-item self-derogation scale, a 9-item anxiety scale, a 6-item depression scale and a 6-item scale designed to measure coping. This effect was also evident when controls were applied for psychological mental health as measured at 7th grade. Moreover, the significant damaging effect of dropping out of school was also evident even when controls were applied for gender, father's occupational status, and ethnic background. However, it needs also to be acknowledged that early school leaving can have different effects across countries (Van Alphen 2009).

The European Commission Communication on Early School Leaving (2011) highlights that only few Member States follow a consistent and comprehensive strategy

²³ The authors define the concept by the extent to which teachers support pupils' efforts to succeed in school and by teachers' reports about whether individual pupils receive guidance from them about school or personal matters (Groninger and Lee 2001).

to reduce early school leaving. It recognises the issue of mental health dimensions to early school leaving:

Networking with actors outside school enables schools to support pupils better and tackle a range of problems that put children in difficulty, which can include drug or alcohol use, sleep deficits, physical abuse and trauma.

Experiences of Member States, comparative data and analytical research suggest that the key issues for successful policies include the cross-sectoral nature of collaboration and the comprehensiveness of the approach. Early school leaving is not just a school issue and its causes need to be addressed across a range of social, youth, family, health, local community, employment, as well as education policies.

Significantly, it advocates the establishment of national strategies in every member state by 2012:

It is proposed that the Recommendation should set a common European framework for effective and efficient policies against early school leaving and that Member States should adopt comprehensive national strategies against early school leaving by 2012, in line with their national targets.

The EU Commission Staff Working Paper (2010) on early school leaving similarly adopts a holistic approach to early school leaving, giving cognisance to the need for emotional supports:

Difficulties at school often have their roots outside. Solving problems at school cannot be done effectively without tackling the range of problems that put children in difficulty, which can include drug or alcohol use, sleep deficits, physical abuse and trauma. Some of the most successful measures have been those which provide a holistic solution by networking different actors and so support the whole person. Partnerships at the local level seem to be highly effective ways of doing this.

The OECD report (Field, Kuczera & Pont 2007) has identified ten key steps to equity in education:

- Step 1: Limit early tracking and streaming and postpone academic selection
- Step 2: Manage school choice so as to contain the risks to equity
- Step 3: In upper secondary education, provide attractive alternatives, remove dead ends and prevent dropout
- Step 4: Offer second chances to gain from education
- Step 5: Identify and provide systematic help to those who fall behind at school and reduce high rates of school-year repetition
- Step 6: Strengthen the links between school and home to help disadvantaged parents help their children to learn
- Step 7: Respond to diversity and provide for the successful inclusion of migrants and minorities within mainstream education
- Steps 8 to 10: Fair and inclusive resourcing
- Step 8: Provide strong education for all, giving priority to early childhood provision and basic schooling
- Step 9: Direct resources to students and regions with the greatest needs

Step 10: Set concrete targets for more equity - particularly related to low school attainment and dropout

It is arguable that while these key steps are important, they neglect the importance of emotional dimensions to early school leaving and the consequent need for emotional supports (Downes 2010b). It is well recognised that there is not enough qualitative research on experience of the education system (Cohen 2006) and that emotions are difficult to measure (Cohen 2006; Downes 2007; Desjardins 2008). There is a need to increase focus on protective and not just risk factors for early school leaving. A protective factors approach engages with the provision of system level supports. Protective factors also help to neutralise supporting conditions for risk factors that 'cause' early school leaving (Downes 2006, 2007).

The broad research questions explored for secondary school education are as follows:

- 1) *What systemic supports are required to prevent alienation of students from the education system?*
- 2) *What systemic supports are required to promote active citizenship for students from the education system?*
- 3) *What system level changes are required to promote adult education on the school site, including distance education?*

SECTION 5**SUMMARY**

The in-depth qualitative research interviews involved a sample selected according to the strategies of ‘logic of maximum variation’ and ‘criterion’ (Miles & Huberman 1994). Institutions were selected for the national reports so that all major kinds of institutions providing adult education were represented. It was sought to include major state universities in each national report. Respondents were selected based on their position in the institution. The timeframe for the interviews for the national reports was between April and September 2009. All national reports were completed in 2010. Different interview schedules were made for each educational sector. All interview schedules contained a mixture of questions on (a) factual information, (b) factual information about plans/intentions, (c) perceptions of leading organisational figures. Each national report also contained a background profile of each educational sector. Across the interview templates, thematic headings for interview subsections were organised based on a systems theory level focus. These systems theory level dimensions included: Links, Transition, Chronosystemic focus on time, Sustainable rather than short-term interventions, Growth promotion, Feedback from life experience, Dynamic change rather than inorganic stasis.

Across the 12 national reports, 196 interviews took place in total, from 83 institutions, as well as from Senior Officials in relevant Government Departments in each country. Given the qualitative aspect of this research subproject, caution must be taken in generalising the responses from the interviewed institutional representatives to other institutions in the same country and beyond. Nevertheless, interviewees were asked to document their perceptions as to the typicality of their institution regarding availability and promotion of access for marginalised groups. A restriction to the scope of this research is that although lifelong and lifewide learning ranges as ‘a seamless continuum ‘from cradle to grave’’ (EU Commission 2000), this research does not interrogate access issues in a detailed way in relation to early childhood education and primary level education.

A range of underlying principles identified for interpretation of the national reports informed the process of extracting key issues and themes for more elaborated discussion in terms of indicators. A subsequent level of analysis involved the translation of these issues and themes into indicators, whether structural or process indicators. This two-stage process of analysis is an interpretative rather than simply mechanistic process, following in the tradition of narrative psychology and construction of meaning (Bruner 1992; Bruner & Amsterdam 2000) in cognitive psychology, rather than being simply an information processing type of psychological interpretation, reliant on applying static categories, in order to obtain the key indicators. This dynamic balancing of principles and perspectives is recognised as being the hermeneutic circle of interpretation (e.g., Heidegger 1927). In cognitive psychology, van Dijk & Kintsch (1983) describe such textual interpretation as being *both* a top-down ‘macrostructure’ process influenced by a prior theoretical framework and a bottom-up ‘microstructure’ process based on the detail of the texts produced. It is a dynamic balanced interplay between both approaches.

5.1 Sample selection

The in-depth qualitative research interviews involved a sample selected according to the following strategies observed by Miles & Huberman (1994), namely, 'logic of maximum variation' and 'criterion':

Logic of maximum variation: This focus seeks to locate different kinds of educational institutions with regard to course content, ethnically diverse student populations, different regions of a country, as well as national and local institutions. Each partner was also requested to bear these issues in mind when engaging in the interviews so as to avoid a situation for example, where all interview respondents are from the same gender, majority group ethnicity etc.

Criterion: The criteria also included non-formal institutional settings with a particular focus on those settings with ISCED 1 & 2 level students, including prisons and community based literacy education. Another criterion included that the institution has previously participated in SP3 and was revealed to be a particularly strong example of good practice regarding access or on the contrary, is an example of being particularly lacking in good practice. A focus on highlighting *barriers* to access was to be maintained throughout.

Institutions were selected for the national reports so that all major kinds of institutions providing adult education were represented. It was sought to include major state universities in each national report. Respondents were selected based on their position in the institution.

5.2 Emancipatory and reflexive research methods

Emancipatory research methods emphasise the importance of treating 'objects' of research as 'subjects' - and thereby giving voice to those being studied so that they are centrally involved in generating relevant research questions and hypotheses. In the words of Oliver (1992):

The issue then for the emancipatory research paradigm is not how to empower people but, once people have decided to empower themselves, precisely what research can then do to facilitate this process. This does then mean that the social relations of research production do have to be fundamentally changed; researchers have to learn how to put their knowledge and skills at the disposal of their research subjects, for them to use in whatever ways they choose (p.111).

This emancipatory focus is on the changing of the social relations of research production - the placing of control in the hands of the researched, not the researcher (Oliver 2004). Oliver (1992) suggests that there are three key fundamentals on which such a paradigm must be based; reciprocity, gain for and empowerment of the research subjects. The Belgian, Russian and Irish teams ran focus groups with individuals from marginalised backgrounds to generate some of the key themes and questions from their perspectives that would be relevant to ask institutions in relation to access. These themes and questions were fed back into the interview schedules. A similar iterative process took place between this subproject and the institutional questionnaire responses in particular of SP3 of LLL2010 in order to highlight key themes, gaps and problematic areas with

regard to access which emerge from SP3 and which could then inform the interview questions for the current study.

A reflexive perspective²⁴ was engaged in with regard to institutional actors' self-perception as to whether their institution is typical for their country with regard to access policy and practice, or is more or less developed than most in their country in promoting access. This approach recognises that an institution's typicality or dimensions of being a model of good practice may not be an all or nothing phenomenon (see also Rosch 1978 and Tajfel 1978 on categorisation as a simplification). In other words, the complex structure and culture of an institution means that it may have some dimensions of particular strengths, others of particular weaknesses and others of typicality for a given country. Moreover, rather than deciding in advance which category an institution may fall into, a reflexive perspective allows for documentation of the institution's *self-perception* of strengths, weaknesses, and representativeness, with regard to promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups. This institutional self-perception, while documented at face value, still nevertheless requires further interpretation and contextualising with regard to other background information for the sector and the institution.

Another adoption of a reflexive approach was taken through a facilitated session²⁵ of the consortium at a meeting in Nottingham in September 2009. There the various national teams engaged in group discussions to prioritise a number of emerging themes and issues from the interviews at a regional level and comparatively across Europe in relation to access. These identified issues and trends informed the analysis of the results for the comparative report.

At a subsequent meeting of the research project consortium in Sofia, Bulgaria, in June 2010, each national team was given the opportunity to select priority categories for analysis in the comparative report, based on their national team's perspective.

5.3 Guidelines for sampling for the 12 national reports

The following table summarises the guidelines agreed for sampling given to each national team after dialogue across the research consortium.

Table. 1 Requirements for sampling

A. Formal Education Organisation: At least 4 interviews, 2 institutions	1 Senior Management Person in the Organisation, 1 Tutor/Lecturer or Organiser of the Education Programme for each institution These may be institutions from SP3 if a rationale can be provided as to why they are centrally important institutions in your country, i.e., a major state university
B. Interviews with Senior Government	

²⁴ The paradigm of discursive psychology (Harre & Gillett 1994; Harre & Stearns 1995, p.3) emphasises its reflexive approach to interpretation of discourse; a reflexive focus is also a feature of postmodernism (Kvale 1992, p.2; Billig & Simon 1994, p.3) and Garfinkel's (1967, p.9) ethnomethodology.

²⁵ By Dr. Catherine Maunsell and Catherine Dooley, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9, Ireland

Department Officials with responsibility for State policy in relation to Access and underrepresented groups At least 2 interviews	
C. Prison Institution At least 2 interviews, 1 institution	1 Senior Management Prison Official 1 Tutor of Prisoners or Organiser of the Education Programme. In some countries where the education programmes for prisoners are external to the prison, the tutor or organiser may also be thereby external.
D. Non-Formal Education Organisation At least 4 interviews, 2 organisations	1 Senior Management Person in the Organisation, 1 Tutor or Organiser of the Education Programme for each Organisation
In addition to these twelve interviews which are essential in order to develop a comparative analysis leading to structural, process and outcome indicators across countries, each SP5 team is given discretion to choose the final three interviews with institutions. The interview schedule supplied for secondary schools could be employed for all three of these interviews. Or based on the discretion of each team and the specific situation in a country, there may be a particular need to interview another government department, another type of third level institution. When choosing these three interviews, a rationale needs to be supplied that can be part of the background template information, as to why these three interviews were chosen by the national team.	If the secondary school is being interviewed, it is recommended that 1 Senior Management Person in the School, i.e., the School Principal, and 1 teacher be interviewed

TOTAL: At least 15 interviews

As the boundaries between formal and non-formal education differ across countries (see SP1), and it may even be a continuum from one to the other, there was scope for a country to choose an institution from the less extreme formal sector as one of their non-formal examples. This was agreed to on a case by case basis with the comparative research coordinator, once the country made the case in sufficient detail that there is little in the non-formal sector in their country relevant to traditionally underrepresented groups and their suggested case from the less extreme formal sector is particularly relevant to promoting social inclusion.

The timeframe for the interviews for the national reports was between April and September 2009. All national reports were completed in 2010 (see appendix 1 for full list of the national reports, appendix 2 for the interview process for the national reports, appendix 3 for templates for the national reports and appendix 4 on the framework for interpretation of the qualitative research from the national reports for this comparative report).

5.4.1 Interviews conducted

Table 2. Interviews conducted

Austria	Number of Institutions	Numbers of Interviews
Formal 3 rd Level	2	4
Formal 2 nd Level	1	2
Non-Formal	2	4
Prisons	1	2
Government Officials		3
	6	15
Belgium/Flanders	Number of Institutions	Numbers of Interviews
Formal 3 rd Level	3	6
Formal 2 nd Level	-	-
Non-Formal	2	5
Prisons	1	2
Government Officials		2
	6	15
Bulgaria	Number of Institutions	Numbers of Interviews
Formal 3 rd Level	3	6
Formal 2 nd Level	1	2
Non-Formal	1	2
Prisons	2	4
Government Officials		2
	7	16
England	Number of Institutions	Numbers of Interviews
Formal 3 rd Level	3	8
Formal 2 nd Level	-	-
Non-Formal	2	4
Prisons	2	4
Government Officials		3
	7	19
Estonia	Number of Institutions	Numbers of Interviews
Formal 3 rd Level	3	5
Formal 2 nd Level	4	4
Non-Formal	4	4

Prisons	1	2
Government Officials		3
	12	17

Hungary	Number of Institutions	Numbers of Interviews
Formal 3 rd Level	2	5
Formal 2 nd Level	1	2
Non-Formal	2	4
Prisons	1	2
Government Officials		2
	6	15

Ireland	Number of Institutions	Numbers of Interviews
Formal 3 rd Level	2	5
Formal 2 nd Level	1	2
Non-Formal	2	4
Prisons	1	2
Government Officials		2
	6	15

Lithuania	Number of Institutions	Numbers of Interviews
Formal 3 rd Level	2	5
Formal 2 nd Level	1	2
Non-Formal	2	4
Prisons	1	2
Government Officials		2
	6	15

Norway	Number of Institutions	Numbers of Interviews
Formal 3 rd Level	2	4
Formal 2 nd Level	2	4
Non-Formal	2	5
Prisons	1	2
Government Officials		1
	7	16

Russia	Number of Institutions	Numbers of Interviews
Formal 3 rd Level	2	4
Formal 2 nd Level	2	4
Non-Formal*	2	4
Prisons	1	2
Government Officials		2
	7	16

*One of these was described as ‘mixed-type’ as it offers both formal and non-formal. It is classified here as non-formal

Scotland	Number of Institutions	Numbers of Interviews
Formal 3 rd Level	3	11
Formal 2 nd Level	-	-
Non-Formal	2	5
Prisons	1	2
Government Officials		2
	6	20

Slovenia	Number of Institutions	Numbers of Interviews
Formal 3 rd Level	3	6
Formal 2 nd Level	1	2
Non-Formal	2	4
Prisons	1	2
Government Officials		3
	7	17

Total	83	196
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5.5 Limitations to the research

Given that the interviews with institutional and governmental officials involve self-report methods, a concern arises regarding social desirability factors (Crowne & Marlowe 1960) in their responses. In other words, officials representing an institution may tell the interviewer what they think he/she wants to hear. An official response might be different from an unofficial response regarding particular issues. To at least partly compensate for potential social desirability responses, every effort was made in the national reports which inform this comparative report, to include relevant available background information on the specific institution, as well as on the particular sector of education the institution is engaged in. A further counterbalance was that two individuals were interviewed from the same institution, typically at different levels within the institution. This was envisaged as helping to give a more rounded picture of institutional policy and practice, and the gaps between the two, than if only one interview were relied upon. Interviewers were also encouraged to engage in follow-up questions if they found responses to be evasive or lacking in clarity.

This research is qualitative in focus, to complement the quantitative study on learners’ experiences of education across ISCED levels in subproject 3 of LLL2010. Given the qualitative aspect of this research subproject, caution must be taken in generalising the responses from the interviewed institutional representatives to other institutions in the same country and beyond. Nevertheless, interviewees were asked to document their perceptions as to the typicality of their institution regarding availability and promotion of access for marginalised groups. A further feature of this qualitative research is that it is documenting at times perceptions as much as facts. Yet this is not a clear cut dichotomy as perceptions of leading institutional officials can affect the factual reality of practices within an institution, while factual accounts are invested with theory-

laden assumptions (Popper 1957; Feyerabend 1988; Kuhn 1962; Eiser 1995). Another limitation to representativeness of the interviews and institutions is that some national reports were confined to institutions from specific regions of a country only, e.g., Belgium-Flanders, Russia-St. Petersburg.

As the interviews were semi-structured in scope, organised under key thematic headings, it was not expected that every outlined question would necessarily be asked in exactly the same order across each country and institution. Furthermore, different institutional pressures meant that it could not be guaranteed that every institutional representative would be able to donate an exactly equivalent amount of time to the interview question responses. These contextual differences in interview responses across the consortium are quite apart from other issues such as translation of responses of interviewees into English.

Motivational features of individual learners and their perspectives on educational institutions were examined in an earlier subproject of LLL2010, SP3. Thus the focus for present purposes is on the educational institutions and government policy more than on accounts of individual motivation. The institutional focus of this study, including analysis of national and regional level strategic policies in this area does not directly involve the voice of the learner. While the current study is only indirectly learner-centred, the framing of the questions for the varying educational institutions was informed by the earlier subproject on learners' motivations. It is to be hoped that a future focus on institutional and national level reform will include more qualitative research on the perspectives of the learner regarding given institutions. A partial remedy to give recognition to the need for more participation of the voice of the learner not simply in responses to questions but as regards formulating the questions asked was through a pilot project for the research, engaged in by three of the consortium teams, namely, the Belgian, Russian and Irish teams. This piloting of questions with focus groups of learners from traditionally marginalised social groups led to a range of issues and themes which were incorporated into the template for questions asked by the wider group (see emancipatory research methodology).

Another significant restriction to the scope of this research is that although lifelong and lifewide learning ranges as 'a seamless continuum 'from cradle to grave'' (EU Commission 2000), this research does not interrogate access issues in a detailed way in relation to early childhood education and primary level education. This is not to underestimate the importance of these areas for combating social exclusion (see e.g. Heckman 1999, Donnelly 2007). Moreover, the Commission communication, *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* (2001) observes that:

In addition to the emphasis it places on learning from pre-school to postretirement, lifelong learning should encompass the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

The scope of the current research does embrace both non-formal and formal learning, in contrast to the other subprojects of LLL2010 which operate solely within the domain of formal learning. However, none of the subprojects, including this one, include informal learning within its scope. A particular focus for current purposes, in contrast

with SP3, is on the *content* of the courses to engage adult learners²⁶. This recognition of the importance of educational content in relation to lifelong learning is for the purpose of foregrounding issues of personal fulfillment, active citizenship, social cohesion and literacy, dimensions which at times are neglected by a more vocational focus to lifelong learning (Holford et al.,2008). It is imperative to state also that all of these goals can be mutually complementary, so that for example, soft skills in relation to personal growth, confidence building and fulfillment can also transfer to employment contexts, including for learners who have been marginalised from the system in the past. Holding in consideration the importance of course content imports a recognition that for traditionally marginalised groups of potential students, the content of any given course may be key to their motivation and engagement. Lifelong learning needs to resist an agenda of simply ‘processing’ learners into a matrix of technocratic course content (Downes 1993). A discourse on teaching methodologies, or on economic or sociological dimensions to lifelong learning may overlook the need to go beyond such functionalist perspectives – to ensure that a policy focus on the educational content of a course does not become obscured when seeking to engage those previously alienated from education.

²⁶ Such a focus is not to advocate a curriculum as content approach which would promote learning as mere information transmission (Kelly 1999; Hunting 2000; Downes 2003, through what Freire (1972) would term a banking model of education, as a ‘jug and mug’ approach to pedagogy and andragogy.

SECTION 6	SUMMARY
<p>The research questions for each domain, formal education, non-formal education, prison education and secondary schools, are related to a range of respective structural and process indicators, based on themes and issues emerging from the results of the 12 national reports. The results across the participating countries are intended to be illustrative of relevant issues and practices rather than being complete and exhaustive; these illustrative examples from the qualitative research interviews and national reports are neither intended to summarise nor describe the current situation in every participating country, nor to give a quantitative account of the frequency and prevalence of such practices across a given country. The indicators emerging from this analysis are structured at macro-exo and meso-micro systemic levels, though at times there is some overlap between the levels at which an indicator may operate. Every indicator is classified in relation to the research questions for each domain.</p>	

6.1.1 Formal education: Indicators at Macro-Exo levels

6.1.1 (i) A central driving committee at state level for lifelong learning and access for marginalised groups (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR) – including clear funding sources

A central driving committee for lifelong learning and access at national and regional levels gives expression to a systems theory concern with sustainability and sufficient intensity of impact for change to occur throughout system levels. A Commission staff working document (2009) highlights that country reports observe that policy responsibility for adult learning is fragmented in many countries, with multiple ministries having responsibility for different aspects. This was highlighted in particular for the following countries, Belgium, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway and Slovenia. Latvia was singled out as being particularly diffused, with nine ministries involved in the relevant strategies and action plans. This concern also applies *a fortiori* to a displacement of focus across different ministries with regard to access to education for traditionally marginalised groups.

The Slovenian national report observes that there is a central driving committee for lifelong learning:

A special unit for adult education – an adult education sector has been established within the ministry that is responsible for designing national policy and legislation in adult education and executing administrative tasks regarding adult education and its implementation. It is placed in the Directorate of secondary and postsecondary education and adult education. As it may be evident ministerial departments for primary education and secondary general education have no tasks related to adult education. It is the ministry of education and sport that is administering and coordinating lifelong learning (Ivančič, Mohorčič Špolar & Radovan 2010).

However, it would appear that a driving committee specifically for access to education for underrepresented groups is less evident in the context of Slovenia.

The English national report explicitly refers to a central committee at national level with responsibility for promotion of access to education:

Within HEFCE [Higher Education Funding Council for England] we have a number of strategic committees but we have one strategic committee which is the widening access and participation strategic advisory. And it's a committee which directly advises our board and is responsible for all of the kinds of issues that you've talked about in relation to learning and teaching. Essentially we really only fund accredited learning. Now that doesn't mean that people who sign up for a continuing education course and fail or, actually what it, if they don't submit for us, that's formally speaking we can't fund them, and that's been the difficulty (Engel, Holford & Mleczko 2010).

According to a senior official of the Committee for Labor and Employment, St. Petersburg, interviewed in the Russian national report, there is no central driving committee for lifelong learning, nor for access, in Russia:

Is there a Department that is responsible for lifelong learning? *No, there's no such department. But, yes, there's also a Department that deal with migrants.*

What about a Department that would be responsible for the sector of non-formal education? *Well, we only work with formal education.*

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?

Well, no, there no position in our committee that would be responsible for each of the categories you've listed.

Could you please tell me if there is 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 don't know. I'm not aware of such strategies that would be directly connected with the work of our department (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A key corollary of a central driving committee at governmental level must also be availability of indispensable statistical information – information which is absent for example in Russia:

Currently, there is no governmental policy aimed at collecting data on adult education and especially on education for representatives of social risk groups. Therefore, it appears quite hard to especially track the numbers of early school leavers, ethnic minorities or orphans involved into the system of education and their changes over the recent years (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Though there are not national or even major city level committees for access and lifelong learning in Russia, there is some evidence of driving committees at more local levels:

Despite the fact that there is no committee in the administration of St. Petersburg that would solely deal with social inclusion, access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, lifelong learning, literacy, the non-formal education sector, etc, there are special departments at some committees that are in charge of these mentioned aspects. Some of them, such as social inclusion and integration of traditionally underrepresented groups, are dealt with by the Committee for Social Policy. The issues of lifelong learning, access to education and professional orientation are dealt with by the Committee for Education and the Committee for Labor and Employment of the Population of St. Petersburg. The Committee for Education does not have a special department dealing with access to education of traditionally underrepresented categories (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

An advantage of a central driving committee is that it would proof national and regional level decisions with regard to their impact, perhaps even unintended impact, upon traditionally underrepresented groups. This would address gaps in practice and barriers to implementation such as those highlighted in the Russian national report:

The conducted research has shown that the governmental policy related to equal access to education for all categories of the population is far from being implemented. There are no special departments or at least positions in the city and regional administration that would deal directly with access to education or adult education. Each governmental unit (in our case the Committee for Education of St. Petersburg and the Committee for Labor and Unemployment of St. Petersburg) conducts some work in a way related to promoting and enhancing access to education; occasionally several units conduct joint projects aimed at lifelong learning or learners with disabilities, but these activities are not centralised and do not have a complex approach to the problem. In other words, instead of elaborating a set of common complex measures aimed at various disadvantageous categories in terms of enhancing their access to education, governmental units perform single irregular projects that are rarely effective and often embrace a small number of recipients. The fact that both interviewed government representatives dealing with vocational and adult education could not mention the state strategy of lifelong learning proposed by the government and were absolutely unaware of large state initiatives in the sphere of education allows to propose that most administrative units work separately and are unaware of activities of their counterparts from other departments, which prevents them from centralised and multidimensional approach to the problem of decreased access to education for socially disadvantageous groups (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

It emerges from interviews with government officials in the Austrian national report that there is a central committee at national level for lifelong learning but not for access and social inclusion issues in education:

Is there a central committee in your government department with specific responsibility for: Social inclusion, Access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, Lifelong learning, Literacy, The non-formal education sector ?

We only have a real panel assignment for lifelong learning. There is also a steering committee for the whole lifelong learning process which is based in our house. We are working closely with the Ministry of Science but there are many things where 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

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

It is envisaged by the Austrian Ministry official that the decentralisation of responsibilities in Austria would be a barrier to the establishment, scope and effectiveness of such a central driving committee:

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...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...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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Yet the need for a central driving committee is clearly evident in Austria, when the comments above of the Ministry official is considered together with the European Labour Force Survey 2003 findings that in Austria a university graduate is five times more likely to participate in adult learning than an adult with primary education.

The Hungarian national report reveals that there is a central driving committee at national level focusing on those experiencing disadvantage, allied with a national strategy for lifelong learning:

Within the Ministry [of Education and Culture] there is a Directorate of Equal Opportunities with responsibilities of programme planning for highly disadvantaged population. This functions according to The New Hungary Development Plan. This Directorate mainly deals with professional planning of Social Renewal Operational Programme, also deals with preparing laws and legal works, and manages the operational tasks of implementation of legislation. (Balogh, Józán, Szöllősi & Róbert 2010).

In 2005 the government adopted a life long learning strategy. This governmental decision laid down the guidelines of planning between 2007 and 2013 (Balogh et al., 2010).

Yet the need for a central driving committee at national level, specifically focused on lifelong learning is evident from the following difficulties experienced by the adult education sector in the Hungarian national report:

Adult education is still not as popular and accepted in Hungary as it should be, and all those involved in this market would need to develop in order to expand the model.

The legal environment of adult education is not at all suitable for the expansion of the model: Procedures are very bureaucratic, decisions are centralised and tax allowances that were much higher six-seven years ago have almost disappeared. Thus, the state could

- Make procedures more flexible, with fewer sanctions and more encouragement.
- Allow local governments, institutes and individuals to make decisions instead of the highly centralised decision process at present.
- Give more tax allowances and other types of financial support to individuals (Balogh et al., 2010).

The adult education market is highly segmented and has been stagnating for years. There is a need for a more dynamic market:

Hungarian adult education runs far below the necessary performance level, so it has a department which deals with the retraining of the unemployed, which is very complicated, and sorry for the term, operates as a highly corrupt system, which means that it's always the same people they retrain, so this department has a very serious dysfunction. On the other hand, there is a certain part of the Hungarian population, around 60-70%, of which we take the best 10%, but then nobody cares about the rest. ... so if you try to ask the 40-50 year-old population in a survey [on adult education], you will find unemployed people who have already enrolled on five vocational courses but still have no job, you will find engineers who learn something every five years, and then there is a large gap. Around 70% of the people who acquired a vocational secondary school degree or whatever some time ago, would be able to study, but have not gained a university degree, because they could not get into university twenty-five years ago, and now, you can ask, their informal studies have not been more than learning fishing from their neighbor or whatever, and have not had a learning experience that has influenced their labour market position (Balogh et al., 2010).

Universities and colleges still don't see adult education as an important element of their portfolio, but instead almost always prioritise master and doctoral programmes. (Balogh et al., 2010).

It is of concern that in the Irish context, while the Government White Paper (2000) recommended the establishment of a national body to promote lifelong learning, this central driving committee has yet to be consolidated (Maunsell et al., 2008; (Dooley, Downes, Maunsell & McLoughlin 2010). This is less a matter of financing than of strategic neglect of the area of lifelong learning. However, a national office for equity and access to education has been set up in the Irish context, which does serve as a central driving body for access to education, if not lifelong learning more generally.

Financial barriers to such central driving committees at national level for access and lifelong learning are adverted to in the Lithuanian and Estonian national reports. In the words of one Lithuanian official interviewee:

As there is a crisis now, I don't think that we should create new structures; we should coordinate the existing ones better. We don't need one more structure that would help to implement a life long learning strategy that you mentioned. What we need is that each level according to its competence would concretise its activities in this range (Taljunaite, Labauskas, Terepaite-Butviliene, & Blazevidiene 2010).

An Estonian official interviewee uses finance as a rationale to advocate a laissez-faire approach in this area of access, socio-economic disadvantage and lifelong learning:

What problems have occurred in creating relevant structural units? Is the ministry planning to create any structural units responsible for the above-mentioned areas (Social

inclusion, access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, lifelong learning, functional literacy, non-formal education? *If we wished to create such structural units we should change the present division of work. Greater centralisation means more officials. We cannot afford that at the moment so the answer is no – the creation of such structural units is not on the agenda right now. Educational institutions, in particular institutions of higher education should be able to solve these problems themselves – this is what autonomy means. Speaking about long term development – maybe one day there will be some structural changes as well* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

It is of concern that according to this view, there is to be little state role for stimulating access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

Nevertheless, there is an explicit strategy for lifelong learning in Estonia:

On 25 September 2009 the Government of Republic approved the final report on the implementation of the lifelong learning strategy for 2005-2008 and adopted the development plan for adult education for 2009-2013. The development plan is built on and continues to pursue the aims of the lifelong learning strategy for 2005-2008. The objectives of the development plan are:

- To ensure better access for adults to both formal and non-formal education in order to improve the knowledge of people and the level of education of the population and to increase the percentage of people aged 25-64 participating in lifelong learning to 13.5% by 2013.
- To decrease the proportion of adults with only general education (general upper secondary education, lower secondary education or a lower level of education) and without specialised professional or vocational education among people aged 25-64 from 34.6% (in 2008) to 32%.
- To create the preconditions for obtaining education or qualification of the next level through high-quality education and training (p. 17-18) (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The development plan has five goals and significantly includes a commitment to the following goal (three) towards personal development and active citizenship.

Goal 3. Enabling non-formal study for adults in order to increase their competitiveness and to develop their creativity, talent, initiative and social responsibility.

An additional concern in the context of Estonia is the following interviewee response on the lack of an access strategy and not only a structural gap at national level for access issues:

Is there a national and/or government strategy for: access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups? We have some problems in this area. At the level of higher education we are participating in the project Eurostudent 4; we are currently mapping the situation of the students. Our hidden agenda, our aim is to gather as much information as possible so that when the economic situation improves and we can start talking about serious support and loan system based on actual needs, we will know what it will mean for Estonia. Which structures will be used is not known yet because we know that universities are not interested in managing a system which is based on needs. We are aware of the problem and are trying to find a solution although it can not be done until after few years. This is an issue for the future (Tamm & Saar 2010).

While this official gives acknowledgment that access for socio-economically disadvantaged groups is an ‘issue for the future’, another restriction at a strategic and structural level in Estonia emerges from the Government Departmental location of its lifelong learning section. With lifelong learning being a mere subset of vocational education the structure of the Ministry for Education and Research in Estonia is set up to exclude the other key goals of lifelong learning in a European context, namely, social inclusion/cohesion, active citizenship and personal fulfillment:

*We have a special division – the Adult Education Division. This division forms a part of the Vocational Education Department. Other departments are also involved in lifelong learning. For example VÕTA (acknowledgement of **earlier** studies and work experience), qualification frameworks, changing the principles of state-commissioned education so that the funds that are meant for formal education acquired within the adult education system can be used for in-service training (Tamm & Saar 2010).*

Adult non-formal education is the responsibility of the adult education department. Non-formal education of young people is the responsibility of the youth department.

The Estonian national report highlights another strategic gap, at least according to the following interviewee, who is a Head teacher with Russian as the main language of instruction:

The educational system should accept that adult secondary schools form a part of the educational system and are a step from where to continue studies.

This should be stressed more... . I have participated in numerous meetings but never has the role of evening studies been stressed. (...) It is not stressed that completion of an adult secondary school gives students access to higher education. People should be more aware of that and it should be promoted (Tamm & Saar 2010).

This is an example of a perceived gap at national strategic level that needs to be addressed in relation to access to education. That this gap exists at national policy level in Estonia is further evident from the Ministry of Education and Research official’s words:

The mainstream understanding is that if a person is hard working enough he/she will manage without any help...There is even no discussion in the society. We don’t talk about it; we do not have comprehensive policies. (Tamm & Saar 2010).

It is evident from the national reports that much work needs to be done in ensuring a systemic strategic approach is in place in relation to both access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups and for lifelong learning in its varying aspects. In other words, many states that have strategies in these areas lack structures to ensure the implementation of such strategies. Without these central driving committees, there is a real danger that such strategies will only remain on paper. The further benefit of such committees to implement and review progress in this area is that they can provide reforms to existing strategies, while also developing European good practice in this area.

- 6.1.1 (ii) Clarification of the criteria to ascertain socio-economic disadvantage given the observed tendency, especially in Central and Eastern European countries, for targeting to occur for more easily identifiable target groups like those with a disability or from an ethnic minority –**

**in contrast with groups experiencing socio-economic disadvantage
(STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)**

The Lithuanian national report illustrates that socioeconomic disadvantage is not a criterion for targeted access to university.

The college does not provide any public information on student social profiles. A few years ago there was a priority to farmers' children given in order to help them to enter those agricultural study programmes. But later it cleared out that we cannot distinguish any group. The entrance only depends on achievements at secondary school

The question about different groups seemed unexpected to the [State College] management, as she could not answer it promptly: *Everybody talks about formal education...life-long learning... then I don't get it... Why should we distinguish any groups? If a student has a certain 'amount' of knowledge, then s/he can enter [higher education] easily* (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

It is evident from the Lithuanian national report that disability is a clear category for analysis in relation to access, in contrast to the lack of analysis regarding access and socioeconomic disadvantage:

The data presented in the diagrams below demonstrates that the number of students with disabilities was increasing at colleges by 19.3% and universities by 6.6% and decreasing at vocational schools by 7.4% percent. On the one hand, such change is structural and desirable and may indicate that the universities and colleges become more accessible to students with disabilities, (despite that this is happening at a very slow pace). On the other hand, the available data is insufficient to explain neither why this change is happening nor why there are 4 or 6 times more students with disabilities at vocational schools. However it can be discussed that such differing proportion may indicate that students with disabilities experience difficulties of integration and do not enter colleges and universities because of disability (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

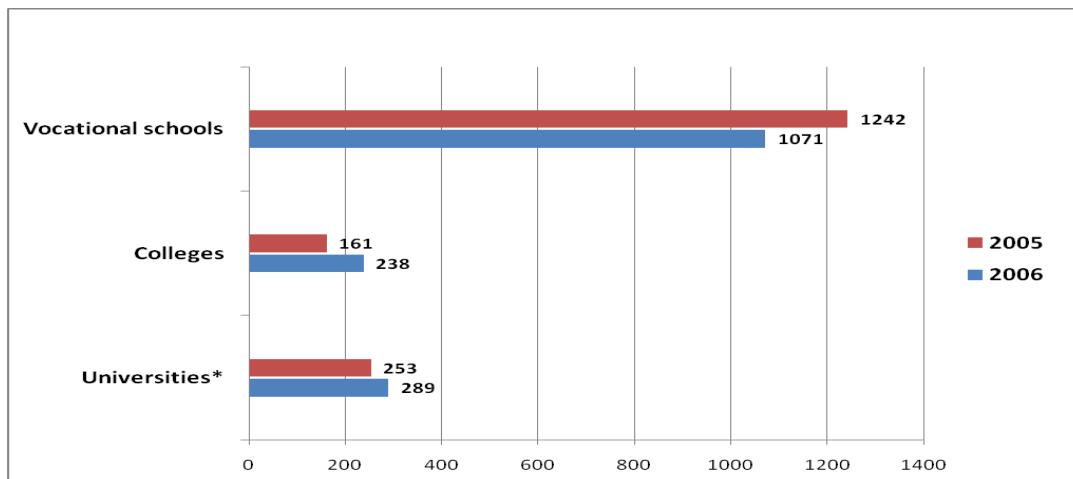


Figure 1. The number of students with disabilities at universities, colleges and vocational schools (2005 – 2006) (in Taljunaite et al., 2010)

With regard to a strategy or plan for enabling access to the education for traditionally underrepresented groups...The teacher expressed her point of view in a very laconic way: *There are no strategies ... I am afraid there's nothing we can be happy about in this area... [apart from for disability]* (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

A State university representative in Lithuania does however recognise a socio-economic dimension to access in this statement:

...from those social groups where families are big and income is low. And for those studying ones we have to give social scholarships. Then less money is left for those with good study results. That's the main feature that we have more students from needy families. And the main parameter to prove it is funds for social scholarships. Now I cannot say the numbers and faculties. But there are many of them...(Taljunaite et al., 2010).

It would appear that at least some university institutions in Lithuania have developed a strategic focus on access for distinct target groups even if this is not a universal systemic feature of the sector in Lithuania. This summary from the Lithuanian national report illustrates the clear target groups for access strategies from the perspective of the university management:

Table 8. Advantages and challenges for university having a diverse student population (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

Advantages	Challenges
<u>The persons with a disability</u> – humanity of other students is encouraged; communication among students is improved	<u>The persons with a disability</u> – for some groups specialised literature/ books for studies is needed; external conditions (e.g. buses, elevators) for access are not sufficient
<u>Migrant students</u> – additional income from immigrants to university; communication with local students;	<u>Migrant students</u> – if they emigrate, the conditions to give exams in a distant way have to be established; asking to continue studies although do not come back to certify their wish to study next year;
Increasing number of <u>male students</u> –the number of studying men and women (and number of working pedagogical work afterwards, hopefully) is getting more balanced;	<u>Students from needy families</u> – more funds have to be dedicated to social scholarships to support those students; material situation of students influence they behaviours and interrelations (e.g. the is disbalance and lack of communication between wealthy and needy students), also, the academic field suffers;
	<u>Students with their own families</u> – more funds have to be dedicated to social scholarships to support those students; children room/ mini kindergarten is

	needed at university;
	<u>Students who are orphans</u> – support has to be ensured (social scholarship, students' hostel for free, onetime benefits);
	<u>Prisoners</u> – questions of material for studies should be solved; security is not ensured in lecturers' work contracts;

According to responses in the Estonian national report, socio-economic disadvantage is not a distinct criterion for targeting access to education:

Could you please name the target groups whose access to tertiary education should be simplified in the first place? *There is no obvious answer. We do not have a clear picture about which target groups are underrepresented. Maybe the non-Estonian population? Actually, they have a proportional share of state commissioned (free of charge) study places. I believe that in the future we will be talking more about the success of students from country schools in competing for free of charge study places* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A Ministry for Social Affairs official in Estonia lists the following target groups, once again illustrating the lack of distinct criteria for socio-economic disadvantage:

We have 8 risk groups. One person can belong to several risk groups:

- *Persons released from a penal institution, disabled people, people who do not speak Estonian.*
- *People aged 55+ years;*
- *Young people aged 16 to 24 years;*
- *People who do not speak Estonian and need a language course;*
- *Caregivers;*
- *Long-term unemployed;*
- *Disabled people;*
- *Persons released from a penal institution* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A private university interviewee in the Estonian national report identifies this issue as being problematic as to how to identify disadvantaged groups:

The institution does not have any quotas for students from disadvantaged groups; neither has it been defined which people belong to disadvantaged groups (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Estonian national report offers the following typology of target groups, which would offer a step forward in developing policy in the area of access and socio-economic disadvantage:

Persons who have dropped out of formal education

In Estonia approximately 15,000 students discontinue formal education each year,

Marginal groups (Prisoners) and *Risk groups*:

- Persons with low educational levels and low income (young people who have dropped out of education at lower levels)
- Persons with poor knowledge of Estonian

- Orphans and children deprived of parental care (according to the Ministry of Social Affairs 1 420 children lived in children's homes and in foster care as at 15 May 2008; as at 31 December 2007, 455 children were in foster care.
- Persons with special needs
- The unemployed

During the economic boom (in 2006) the annual average number of unemployed persons was 18,228; at the end of 2009 and beginning of 2010 the number of registered unemployed was over 95 000 representing approximately 14.6% of people aged 15 to 64 years (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Slovenian national report observes that target groups for access to education supports do not exist on the basis of socio-economic disadvantage:

In Slovenia, institutions usually have not set up any specific targets for the inclusion of different risk groups. The only risk group identified in Slovenia with regards to quotas are students from other countries. The ministry defines these quotas. They vary from 1-2 %. Other groups are not defined (Ivančič et al., 2010).

It is also notable from the Russian national report that beyond unemployment and being in prison, social marginalisation and socio-economic disadvantage is not a general feature of policy making for access to education:

It must also be noted that both committees mostly concentrate on very few underrepresented categories such as unemployed people, prisoners and people with disabilities (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Interestingly enough, but when asked about reserved places for representatives of risk groups both informants would mostly talk about people with disabilities and prisoners. It seems like they are the only categories among risk groups that are taken into consideration in the educational discourse (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

It is of concern that current planning in relation to access to education in Russia appears from interviews with State officials to be focused solely on disability rather than also on other underrepresented groups:

The informants didn't clearly express their thoughts about priority issues to improve access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation. They both say their Committees are planning to increase number of programmes aimed at people with disabilities, but did not give any details of those plans. Besides this category of underrepresented groups, no other categories were mentioned when speaking about future plans of increasing access to education. The informants said their works is quite satisfactory and they do not really have any specific plans concerning underrepresented categories (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

However, elsewhere the Russian national report authors describe a socio-economic disadvantage criterion as follows:

Traditionally, the 'socially unprotected groups of population' (the official term used in Russia for socially disadvantaged groups) include senior citizens, persons with disabilities, persons with low income, families with 3 and more underage children, families consisting of one parent (official custodian) taking care of a person with disability, former military people, etc., (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Significantly, in contrast with Estonia and Slovenia, and to some extent Lithuania and Russia, Hungary does identify target groups based on a recognition of the needs of those with low income:

Other disadvantaged groups are defined by law, such as orphans, those who were in state care as children, people with three or more children or simply those who come from a low-income family. The number of disadvantaged students in the full-time programmes altogether is 783, thus one quarter of the entire 3200 full-time student population (Balogh et al., 2010).

However, despite this legal definition based on low income, there is a lack of data in Hungary for this group regarding access to education and social background itself:

No official database is available concerning social background, but – according to the interviewees’ estimates – more than ten percent of the [adult secondary school] students are Roma, and quite some of the students live in poor living conditions (Balogh et al., 2010).

Moreover, in Hungary, the interviewed Education and Culture Ministry official recognises that there is not a transparent set of criteria for establishing socio-economic disadvantage but rather this identification is somewhat ‘vague’ apart from identification by ethnicity:

The underprivileged situation is a rather vague concept because underprivileged statuses can change in different periods. Currently such people are the ones who need special education, the underprivileged ones, the young Roma, the persons without any qualification, so the ones who fell from the educational system (Balogh et al., 2010).

It appears that the problem is not so much from a lack of legal definition for socio-economic disadvantage in Hungary, but rather its application in practice beyond ethnicity criteria, in an often rapidly changing environment.

However, a focus on socio-economic disadvantage based solely on low income as distinct from low income plus education level, education level of parents, accommodation type, plus possibly area of residence would make this target group one that is less dynamically changing. It would allow for a focus on socio-economic disadvantage through the lens of relatively enduring features of a person’s life, compared simply with income level alone.

It would seem that much of the impetus for conceptualisation of socio-economic disadvantage in Hungary has come from EU initiatives. A Hungarian Ministry for Affairs and Labour official outlines that most of the key strategies in the area of social inclusion have been based on EU funding:

There are a lot of strategies in relation to social inclusion: strategy for integration of Roma, women and men social equality strategy, and strategy for the elderly. Each strategy displays a variety of training in several relations, on the one hand, professional trainings, on the other hand trainings for the target group itself.

And are these programmes are mainly realised by EU funds? *Yes, they are (Balogh et al., 2010).*

Against this backdrop, there is both an onus and opportunity at EU level to lead the development of criteria based on socio-economic disadvantage for target groups for access to lifelong learning, including higher education.

A Bulgarian university interviewee conceives of socio-economic criteria for supports as being a matter for the individual educational institution to verify rather than as a systemic dimension requiring a national level for regulation:

There are no specific discounts in the semester fee based on the financial status of students. It should be said that socially disadvantaged students have preferences in obtaining student housing, as well as a quota for social scholarships. Social scholarships are given for low family income. This is stipulated in the Students Council Regulation. On my observation however, part of the students are frequently against such scholarships as documents certifying social needs are sometimes misused. Often a certain social status is claimed, which the university has neither the capacity nor the right to verify (Boyadjieva, Milenkova, Gornev, Petkova & Nenkov 2010).

The Bulgarian national report highlights the following categories as target groups:

The main admission requirement is the entry-level exam. After passing the exam, students from some vulnerable groups pay tuition fees at a reduced price, as stipulated in the Higher Education Act, Articles 68 and 70: people with 70% disability, war veterans with disabilities, orphans, single mothers with three or more children are accepted on easier terms, and social grants are given to socially disadvantaged students, who also receive preferential treatment in terms of accommodation at the student dormitories (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

A non-formal education provider in the Belgian national report identifies the following target groups in need:

The most important one for the organisation is: unskilled adults and adults with low levels of prior education. This target group mainly consists of two subgroups, migrants and foreigners and the poor and needy.

These are both very heterogeneous subgroups (groups of migrants and foreigners also include asylum seekers from refugee centres...) and they do not constitute mutually exclusive categories. A distinctive characteristic of both subgroups is that they experience a lot of barriers to learning. This is a key criterion in the organisation's strategy in attracting new groups of participants (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Elsewhere in the Belgian national report, it is highlighted that:

The following disadvantaged groups are fully exempt from course fees: Persons who take on a course in 'general education' (second chance education); persons who qualify for a subsistence income; asylum-seekers and certain other categories of non-nationals; people who have signed a naturalisation contract or people who have obtained a naturalisation certificate; detainees residing in Belgian penitentiaries; job-seekers in receipt of a job-seeker's allowance or unemployment benefits who register for a pathway-to-work programme recognised by VDAB (Flemish Public Employment and Vocational Training Service); unemployed, compulsory registered job-seekers who are not yet entitled to a job-seeker's allowance and people in part-time or full-time compulsory education (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The Norwegian national report recognises that positive discrimination exists in relation to access to university based on ethnicity and for people with a disability, though none in relation to poverty as such:

Judging from the interviews, it seemed like the university maintained a special emphasis on students with disabilities and students with a background from other countries (this being first or second generation Norwegians or exchange students), although many of the available services are universal ... A factor that underlines that these two groups are receiving special attention, is that both groups have their own section within the university, whose task is to take care of their interests and rights (Stensen & Ure 2010).

The English national report highlights social class as being of key concern regarding access targeting:

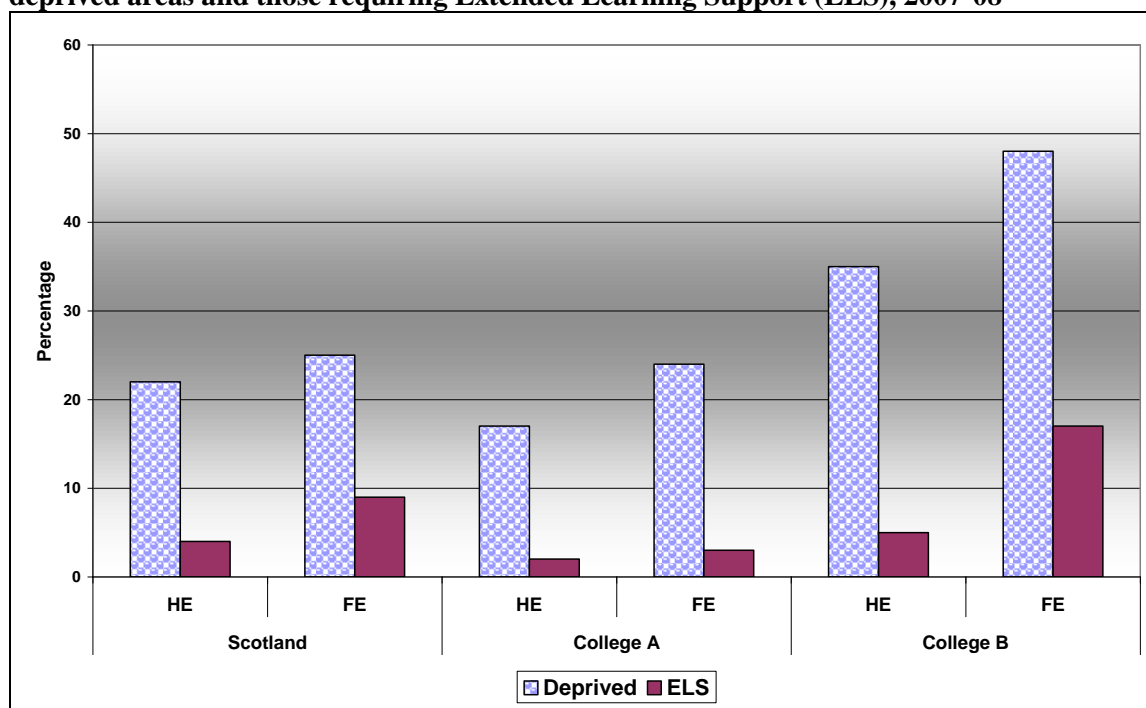
Social class issues have dominated in recent widening participation debates, perhaps because evidence shows that ‘women are more likely to participate in higher education than males’ and that this remains true ‘even after allowing for the higher achievement of girls in secondary school’ (ESRC, 2008b), and that, with one very small exception, and allowing for prior educational achievement, ethnic minority students are more likely to go to university than students from a ‘white British’ background (ESRC, 2008b) (Engel et al., 2010).

Socio-economic criteria are also key in Scotland:

The widening participation of under-represented groups include data on those from state schools and colleges, from low socio-economic class (NS-SEC classes 4-7) and low participation neighbourhoods (Weedon, Riddell, Purves & Ahlgren, 2010).

An area based approach to indicate socio-economic disadvantage has been employed in Scotland in the recent past, as is evident from the following diagram from the Scottish national report:

Figure 2. A comparison between College A and B in intake of students from the most deprived areas and those requiring Extended Learning Support (ELS), 2007-08



Source: SFC, Staff and Student Performance Indicators 2007-08 (Weedon et al., 2010).

There may be regions where an area based approach is an important one to identify risk groups, such as North Eastern Estonia which has extreme disparities in relative poverty and wealth compared with other parts of Estonia (Mikecz 2008). It is notable that an area based approach is not adopted in Estonia when identifying risk groups. It is similarly significant in Estonia that ethnicity is not considered a factor for strategic priority for access, despite the potential need for many Russian-speakers in North Eastern Estonia, Ida-Virumaa.

However, an area based approach may not be a suitable general method of indicating socio-economic disadvantage in Central and Eastern European states in particular – or in states with less obvious disparities in socio-economic status between its citizens. An area based approach is in one way an index of an already highly stratified society in socio-economic terms; it is not an optimal model for a future vision of a society in relation to access and social inclusion, as it is predicated on the very assumption of extreme differences in relative wealth and deprivation. Thus, other socio-economic dimensions for access need to be crystallised for a transparent social policy. It is notable that even in Scotland there is now a recent tendency to move away from an area based approach to identifying socio-economic disadvantage:

It should be noted that the low participation neighbourhood statistic is no longer collected from Scottish universities due to the unreliability of post code data (Weedon et al., 2010).

Another barrier to transparency and a strategic approach to access is the reluctance of some countries to distinguish students on the grounds of ethnicity – sometimes data collection based on ethnicity differences is even prohibited by law. The Bulgarian national report highlights that ethnicity is basically perceived as a confidential private matter of the individual:

[In the university] no information is officially collected on the ethnic background of individuals... This is considered personal information of confidential character. It is assumed that all ethnic communities have Bulgarian citizenship, the separate groups having their own ethnic, religious and cultural identity or family preferences, which do not fall within the priorities of the state (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Morrison (1993) has noted that ‘the habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture’ continuing that ‘To notice it is to recognise an already discredited difference. To enforce its invisibility through silence is to allow the black body a shadowless participation in the dominant cultural body’ (pp.9-11). With regard to access to education for ethnic minority groups, this ‘liberal’ silence requires further debate and analysis, including at an EU level; the perspectives of the ethnic minority groups themselves are a key reference point in moving this debate forward.

A Commission staff working document (2009) comments on a range of national reports:

Many national reports describe priority disadvantaged groups who receive specific support to acquire key competences: e.g. learners with special educational needs, those at a socio-economic disadvantage, those with literacy needs (including migrants) and those at risk of dropping out. As a result of the financial crisis, the unemployed increasingly feature as a target group (p.101)

Yet this assumes that socio-economic disadvantage is a meaningful category in the cultural context of countries. It would seem from a range of interviews with institutional leaders that beyond a focus on income level this is not necessarily the case. Those living in poverty and those who have left school early and experience barriers to education together with poverty, are frequently omitted as an identifiable target group for priority with regard to national or institutional policy in relation to access to education – in a wide number of countries. From the interviews across many of the national reports for this comparative report, it would seem that there is a particular difficulty in distinguishing such a target group for access to education and providing data on this group in at least a number of Central and Eastern European countries. This finding is perhaps also an indirect implication of a recent Commission staff working document (2009) which notes that, ‘several countries specify the social dimension to widening access to higher education in their policies and strategies including targets to increase participation of students from lower socioeconomic groups, and to broaden overall access to higher education’ (p.130)

Of the countries named as targeting lower socioeconomic groups, namely, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania and Portugal, only two (the Czech Republic and Lithuania) are from Central and Eastern European countries.

Clancy & Goastellec’s (2007) cross-national analysis highlights that there is significant national specificity in respect of the social categories which are used to define social diversity. They offer the examples of geographical origin in Indonesia, ethno-racial dimensions in the US, and socio-professional and socio-economic grouping in France and Ireland to indicate this national specificity, while concluding, ‘the evolution of admission norms to higher education reveals how the legitimated categories used to read social diversity are being diversified’ (Clancy & Goastellec 2007, p.140).

It is of concern however, that much of the comparative data they cite on parental socio-economic and educational background criteria for selection of students into higher education in a European context is predominantly based on Western rather than Central and Eastern European contexts. Thus for example, the EUROSTUDENT (2005) report on the social and economic conditions of student life in Europe includes eleven countries but only one of these is from Central and Eastern Europe, namely, Latvia. Moreover, Latvia was one of two countries together with Italy which could not provide the relevant background socio-economic data, as Clancy & Goastellec (2007) observe. Similarly, Clancy & Goastellec’s (2007) own table on college participation by family income or parental social class or education level (p.150), based on available comparative data, does not include any Central or Eastern European country out of the seven countries examined. The OECD selected indicators of participation in higher education (gross enrolment rates, net enrolment, enrolment intensity, percentage aged 25-34 and 35-44 with higher education, index of participation in higher education) across 27 countries is also examined by Clancy & Goastellec (2007). Here there are four Central and Eastern European countries included, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia. While the

recent admissions of Slovenia²⁷ and Estonia to the OECD will help in remedying this imbalance, the question still arises as to criteria and pathways for recognition of legitimate socio-economic categories for inclusion as target groups for access to higher education across Central and Eastern European countries.

As it stands, a common feature of interviews across institutions and national policy officials in Estonia, Bulgaria, Russia and Slovenia is that there exist neither criteria for access to higher education based on poverty, low parental education or socio-economic background, nor a particular awareness of or willingness to seek such criteria. In Hungary and Lithuania, there is some focus on low income though this criterion appears relatively underdeveloped conceptually and also with regard to data collection for such a target group for access. Part of this may be due to a legacy of communist times where quotas were imposed in unpopular ways. Yet it is not simply due to this, as other identifiable groups are given quotas and positive discrimination in relation to access. Moreover, it cannot simply be explained on the basis that currently there are not significant social class differences in many Central and Eastern European countries. Mikecz (2008) has, for example, highlighted that the highest relative inequalities across the whole EU exist in both Latvia and Estonia.

It is perhaps more explicable on the basis that in the recent past such significant social class differences did not exist after the fall of communism. Both Downes (2003) and Allaste (2005) have highlighted that less cultural distance exists between university students in postcommunist countries and those experiencing social marginalisation. It would seem that the socio-cultural correlates of social class differences have yet to harden and form in many Central and Eastern European countries, so that for example, social class and accent, residential location etc are less firmly entwined than in many Western European countries (see also van Houtte & Stevens 2010 on socio-economic status criteria for minorities in Belgium). However, given the stark income inequalities in at least some Central and Eastern European countries, it would seem that social class and socio-economic status dimensions may be changing quickly in already rapidly changing societies.

Against this backdrop, Clancy & Goastellec's (2007) acknowledgement of a 'growing appreciation of the complexity of social identities' (p.142)²⁸ and call for a 'Higher Education Participation Index' (p.151) to facilitate cross-country comparison applies *a fortiori* to the context of Central and Eastern European countries and requires the development of common criteria for evaluation of socio-economic disadvantage as a

²⁷ In May 2007, OECD countries agreed to invite Chile, Estonia, Israel, Russia and Slovenia to open discussions for membership of the Organisation. The approval of so-called "road maps" marked the start of accession talks with Chile, Estonia, Israel, Russia and Slovenia. Slovenia became a member on 21 July 2010 and on 10 May 2010, the OECD invited Estonia and Israel to become members of the OECD. Each country's membership will become official once necessary formalities, including parliamentary approval, have been completed.

²⁸ A complexity recognized for a longer period in postmodern thought, for example, Lather's (1994) view of social categories as 'provisional constructions', Sayer's (1997) critique of categories being treated as essences. For other earlier critiques of a categorizing mode of construction, see Tribe (1988) on the limitations of 'categorical definitions', Feyerabend (1988), Rosch (1978) and Tajfel (1978) on simplifications in categorization, and Heidegger (1927) on categories to be contrasted with a more primordial relational mode of what he termed, *existentialia*. However, even if categories are simplifications and not to be construed as essences, they do give rise to real world effects and their constructed social meanings have real world consequences, sometimes neglected in postmodern discourses.

target group for developing access programmes to higher education. A challenge is to do so without the negative ‘deficit’ labelling associated with describing individuals and areas as ‘disadvantaged’ (Spring 2007; Downes & Gilligan 2007). Part of a discussion on this issue also needs to embrace the wider issue of how to prevent the hardening of cultural barriers associated with relative inequality into socio-cultural dimensions of social class such as accent, residential location etc. It is far from inevitable that such socio-cultural dimensions to relative inequality have to emerge; preventing large levels of social inequality is one pivotal factor in avoiding such social class related fissures to develop in society. From the perspective of access to education for groups experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, there is some urgency in promoting regional dialogue across Central and Eastern European authorities and for educational institutions to agree on transparent criteria for socio-economic disadvantage, beyond low income alone, in order to facilitate a more strategic approach to access to education for this group.

6.1.1 (iii) The need for a formal obligation on institutions from the State to improve access and for incentives for third level institutions such as differentiated funding from the State based on implementation of access goals (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

The Russian national report recognises the importance of formal obligations from the State on education institutions to improve access and supports for learning for those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. It highlights the absence of a legislative framework for access in the Russian context:

The existing legislation doesn’t assume any particular norms and regulations for primary, secondary, vocational and higher education schools aimed at socially disadvantaged categories. There are no reserved places nor special quotas for representatives of underrepresented categories; no outreach strategies aimed at social inclusion of these people into the system of education (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The Russian national report points to the need for a coherent set of obligations, strategies and structures at national level to drive reform in order to promote access to lifelong learning for socio-economically disadvantaged groups:

enhancing access to education for socially disadvantageous groups is a complex problem containing social, cultural and personal aspects. It again shows that the question of improving access to education has to be addressed from different perspectives and on different levels.

Such approach presumes:

- Better communication and cooperation between government departments dealing with the issues of education, social policy and employment
- Creating a governmental strategy aimed solely at improvement of access to education for socially underrepresented groups, which will have
 - set of determined priorities;
 - concrete plan and timeline of implementation;
 - Each department responsible for conducting its own activities aimed at achievement of the common goal.
- Improved communication between the government departments and the educational institutions

- Elaborated strategy of educational institutions aimed at learners from socially disadvantageous categories
- Better communication and well-established dialogue between educational institutions and current and potential learners (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits, 2010).

A notable theme emerging from the Norwegian national report is that of incentives such as differentiated funding from State for third level institutions based on implementation of access goals:

On the question of what approaches to take with regards to inclusion of marginalised groups, [the interviewee] argued that differentiated funding of students should be applied: *I believe that we should be more creative and constructive and perhaps say that not all students should be financed in the same manner. If a student possesses certain characteristics, the institution should be eligible for higher economic funding* (Stensen & Ure 2010).

More concretely, he asserted that students who were admitted on the background of appreciation of prior learning experiences perhaps required more follow-up than other students, and as a result, the institution in question should be entitled to receive more funds (Stensen & Ure 2010).

A Hungarian Education and Culture Ministry official recognises the need for a clear funding source to give priority for access for disadvantaged groups:

And one of the most important things, which should be done, is to have a very clearly defined, separate fund established for curing this problem. The institution which tries to accomplish vocational training and development for underprivileged ones should benefit not only from supporting vocational education but let there also be a dedicated source, which is distributed by competition (Balogh et al., 2010).

Performance of education institutions in relation to access would be incentivised by the State through competition between universities or by encouraging cooperation between universities on this issue.

This point of State-funded financial incentives for educational institutions in relation to access is also addressed in the Slovenian national report:

Private adult education provider (formal and non-formal): According to information gained from our interviewees, students from vulnerable groups such as unemployed, immigrants and those with a disability do not participate in college programmes. Unemployed people are enrolled in secondary education where the expenses are covered from Active employment policy programme. The school does not organise any activities to bring in participants from these groups. Their target population is made by the adults who are able and willing to pay their study. *Do you know what the problem of those unemployed is? Who is going to pay for their study? Certainly this may be an interesting group but we are given nothing, we are financed exclusively from fees of our students and quite often this is a problem – we postpone payments... but unemployed... here?* (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Elsewhere the Slovenian national report acknowledges the following viewpoints of interviewees:

When asking about possible state measures to increase participation from underrepresented groups, both interviewees suggested that the state should perhaps introduce some financial incentives. However respondent 2 was not sure that it would really help though it may be important. What would help is to guarantee a job after finished education (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The Scottish national report highlights this key role of incentivisation for universities to open their doors to a more diverse student population:

In addition to teaching and research funding, the funding council provides higher education institutions (HEIs) with a Widening Access and Retention Premium (WARP). This funding was introduced to help higher education institutions to improve the retention rate of students from deprived backgrounds. The amount provided to an HEI is based on the number of students from deprived backgrounds; there is a considerable variation between elite and post-92 students in terms of intake of this group of students. The median deprivation percentile in 2007-08 ranged from 23 to 31 in the four old universities; and from 35 to 58 in the post-92 institutions (SFC Circular, SFC 04/2010). Institutions dating back to 1960s fell in between these two positions. The funding council is currently proposing to withdraw funding from those institutions which receive only a low level of premium funding. This would impact on three of the old institutions and one of the 1960s institutions (Weedon et al., 2010).

In spite of government initiatives to encourage widening participation, the university's main mission remains focused on world class research and knowledge creation. This according to staff means that it has to attract highly qualified students. Its student population reflects this as it is made up largely of advantaged young students from less deprived backgrounds. Although the university has put measures in place to attract students from more deprived backgrounds it has failed to meet its target on widening participation to socially disadvantaged students. Its funding has not been affected by its failure in meeting this target. This is in contrast to the colleges who are closely tied to specific social inclusion targets and outcomes and funding is withdrawn and reallocated to another institution if targets are not met (Weedon et al., 2010).

From this Scottish example, it emerges that incentives must be linked to real consequences.

It is evident from the following account of the Ministry official from Education and Research Ministry in Estonia that there are no developed incentives for universities for access for underrepresented groups, nor specific targets:

In Estonia the main underrepresented group are the Russian-speaking population. I think that we should also talk about gender, region, and social economic status. We are trying to bring to the fore the issue of underrepresented groups. Take, for example, the language issue. We have taken it into account in higher education. Then there is the regional aspect. As regards the access of adults to higher education it has not been recognised as a problem yet (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Significantly, recent reforms regarding university funding in Russia which have moved to a *per capita* fund, based simply on number of students, serves as a barrier against provision of additional funds to those universities which open their doors to students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups:

The Russian system of education is now in the process of transformation, [the] main idea

is to form a budget of each education institution based on the number of students and not to have the same budget for all education institutions at the same ISCED level. The provision of *per capita* budget was implemented in 2006 and is supposed to be over in the end of 2009...incentives for institutions to include and attract disadvantaged groups into studying are not financially supported by the state, i.e., institutions do not receive any extra payments for integrating representatives of the socially disadvantaged groups into the educational process because they aren't encouraged to do so (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

This system level change of the basis for funding universities in Russia discriminates by impacting against those institutions which perform better in relation to provision of access to traditionally marginalised groups. This change is of serious concern.

A rationale that opening access to university for traditionally disadvantaged groups requires more institutional resources and therefore additional State funding is given in the Belgian national report:

[The interviewee] explains why so few colleges for higher education and universities have a policy on working with vulnerable groups, the interviewed senior manager states. Working with those groups means a teacher has a different position in the class. It will also involve a higher level of interactivity, because those groups pose different questions, dare to criticise the teacher, need more support, have specific demands about when preparing and taking exams, etc., (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The theme raised here of students who are less conformist and 'dare to criticise the teacher' is arguably an important contribution to the culture of learning in an institution. Course material requires critique and not a mere absorption and transmission of information model (see also Glasser 1969; von Glaserfeld 1995).

An implication of the following interviewee quoted in the Belgian national report is that access to lifelong learning cannot simply be left to market forces:

Devoting a great deal of attention to some disadvantaged groups is, put in financial terms, not a very interesting option for an adult education institution. Slow-learning at-risk groups and disadvantaged groups play no visible role in society and often bring along some problems, such as lack of motivation, money problems and other personal issues. Above all, the fact that they are not used to take classes makes them harder to work with and requires the application of a different didactic approach (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

It is important also to note that this assumption that those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage may be less able academically treats such a group in undifferentiated fashion and fails to recognise exceptional and excellent academic potential among some experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

It is evident that in Austria there exists little or no financial incentive for an institution to broaden its student population to include traditionally underrepresented 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 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. The interviewee from

management level confirms the lack of interest in widening the access accordingly: *In my judgment, I don't see such incentives* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

This promotion of incentives clearly invites a role for funding from EU and national levels. The implementation of such incentives also needs to be predicated on the appropriate structures and strategies being in place at national level.

6.1.1 (iv) State-led incentives to different faculties and departments within third level institutions to increase access: A faculty and department level focus to increase access (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

There is little evidence in the national reports of a distinctive faculty or departmental level of strategic focus on access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups. It is an area ripe for further policy development.

Though it does not currently exist in Austria, the interviewed Education Ministry official in the Austrian national report is open to development of a coherent access strategy for teachers from traditionally marginalised groups and ethnic minorities:

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* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

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 interest 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... 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 places.... We just have to improve the attraction of teacher training for these groups, that's what I see as a problem....* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010)

I think we have to really address the communities pro-actively. Such as, for example, the Jewish community has 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

An Austrian official from the Ministry of Science commented on this issue through emphasising the need for a proactive role from national level to influence performance agreements with universities:

There are chances regarding ethnic minorities, I am speaking now about contents of another Ministry, because the discussion in Austria is progressing and it would be necessary and appropriate to have a certain inclusion. 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...(Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

However, owing to political basic conditions there are limits to motivating institutions like universities...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...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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Much depends here on what is construed as the ‘core business’ of universities. It would seem that a certain amount of institutional resistance from universities in Austria is expected to a strategic approach to access generally and specifically targeting faculty and departmental levels. Part of this could be overcome through differentiated funding from the State at a departmental and faculty level (in the performance agreements across universities and through a national development plan) to incentivise those departments and faculties which develop proactive access strategies and practices. Höllinger’s (2010) words in general are apposite for this structural reform:

The clear structuring of decision-making powers regarding the measures employed to achieve goals that is laid down in the performance agreement and in the goal agreements makes it necessary to monitor continuously the achievement or non-achievement of goals and requires indication of where goals must be adapted to respond to new or previously unknown circumstances (p.29).

According to a Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture senior official:

Research shows that within higher education institutions teacher training faculties are at a low level. Margins are rather narrow to stimulate the underprivileged ones to emerge in teacher training. However, they could better deal with disadvantaged students. I think it would be necessary to prepare the future teachers for the new situation in which homogeneous classes no longer exist. Such programmes are being planned and there are universities, where such courses have already been started - for example at ELTE the Multicultural Pedagogy Course or Intercultural Educational Course, which can be attended by the future teachers.

Long term programmes for Roma children to become a teacher, do not exist. This would be good to have similar programmes, but stronger, clearer and more opened intentions would be necessary from the government side (Balogh et al., 2010).

This issue is explored in further detail in interviews in the Hungarian national report:

[There is a] programme called ‘Útravaló’, which helps the underprivileged ones getting into higher educational institutions. The essence of the programme is to support students to attend faculties they want. The government cannot influence institutions for example to admit 10 Roma on Faculty of Law so that they run legal aid service for Roma after their graduation. This could be done by knowing in advance that Roma students will achieve at least 100 points and for this reason the threshold can be 100. There are no scholarships for let’s say to educate more Roma economists. The existence of special scholarships would help the system a lot. Independently from education areas the idea to

have more educated Roma is a common effort but we cannot influence people on what to become: lawyer, economist, poet or translator (Balogh et al., 2010).

The English national report gives an account of institutional and programme area self-assessment which includes an access related dimension:

One of the unique features of the college is the well developed self assessment process. The college has an annual self assessment process and report, which drives development for the following year. *It starts off at a low level, everybody writes a course review, so if you manage a programme area, then that feeds up into the SSC [specific subject category] review and then that feeds up into the, eventually it ends up in a college self assessment report with all of the data at the back (Senior).* Moreover, *as part of the self assessment process will be to flag up any under achieving groups (Senior).* In the internal self assessment report that is completed at the end of every academic year, staff completes an analysis of statistics, including both admission and retention of students. As stated by a senior manager, *one of the things we look at is we look at the ethnicity and profile within our centres. We split it all into subject specific categories (Engel et al., 2010).*

There is enormous scope for development of departmental and faculty level selfassessment processes in relation to promotion of access, as part of a wider institutional selfassessment process in this area across Europe and beyond.

Höllinger (2010) contrasts traditional and performance based allocation mechanisms in higher education, noting in an international context that as a rule financing systems are mixed systems. Finland is cited as an example of a higher education system where a performance based budget is an independent budget item that is not contained in the basic budget (p.10). There is a need to establish a fund (nationally and at EU level) where university faculties could compete based on their performance in relation to access - and participation - of specific target groups. In providing this fund at faculty and not simply university level, faculties would be encouraged to engage in a substantial outreach dimension to engage with target groups, including fostering more diverse pathways for admission to the faculty and more preparatory courses prior to admission. Incentives here could also be given for cooperation across universities for access, outreach and community engagement.

It would appear that a departmental and faculty level focus on access to education promotion is radically underdeveloped across Europe. It is further evident that the EU Commission is an obvious starting point for providing funding to incentivise progress in this departmental and faculty level for access to education in higher education. The Commission Communication (2005) extracts a focus on differentiation in quality and excellence, stating:

This requires some concentration of funding, not just on centres and networks that are already excellent (in a particular type/area of research, teaching/training or community service) – but also on those who have the potential to become excellent and to challenge established leaders (p. 5).

Implicit in this vision, especially regarding community engagement and potential, is that aspects within a third level institution may excel in the area of good practice in fostering access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups; it need not necessarily be at

the level of the whole institution.

This Commission Communication (2005) continues with this theme of targeting resources at subsections within a university institution:

Additional funding should primarily provide incentives and means to those universities (they exist in every system) and to those groups/individuals (they exist in each university) that are willing and able to innovate, reform and deliver high quality in teaching, research and services. This requires more competition-based funding in research and more output-related funding in education (p. 8).

Yet the implications of such logic need to be made more transparent with regard to the issue of incentives and means regarding access for disadvantaged groups. In other words, this Commission position invites extension of its logic to that of access strategy and implementation, not simply at a university level but also for ‘groups/individuals’ within a university, in other words, specific university departments, faculties or sections and centres of excellence within departments. Financial incentives at faculty/department level to promote access to education for disadvantaged groups would follow from such a logic. This strategic implementation approach coalesces with the emphasis in the student centred research of Downes & Maunsell (2007) on the need for access strategies linked with specific university faculties which are particularly relevant to the needs of the local community in a traditionally working class area of Dublin, Ireland – faculties and departments such as law, psychology, social work, youth work, medicine, education, social policy, community development, health promotion etc.

Based on a social contract framework that shifts the domain of the social contract away from an ancient mythical prehistory (invoked by Rousseau and others²⁹), to a current ongoing and futural societal agreement, Rawls (1971) principle of open position³⁰ provides another important rationale for such a strategy concentrating on specific departments and professions.

the principle of open position...expresses the conviction that if some places were not open on a basis fair to all, those kept out would be right in feeling unjustly treated even though they benefited from the greater efforts of those who were allowed to hold them (p.84).

6.1.1 (v) An access strategy for the so-called ‘elite’ universities (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

²⁹ And beyond a simply empirical social contract criticized, for example, by Durkheim (1893/1984).

³⁰ This key principle of open position does not necessarily require commitment to Rawls (1971) overall social contract framework in his classic work, *A Theory of Justice*. For example, his assumption of a veil of ignorance in the formation of the social contract implies an abstract, impersonal other which is open to critique from the perspective of relational conceptions of morality and justice, such as those of Gilligan (1982), Benhabib (1988), Teo & Febraro (2003), Teo (2008), Gilligan (2007), moreover Jarvis (2008) emphasizes the relevance for lifelong learning of the relational conception of the other in the work of Levinas (1991 [1969]), as requiring engagement with the ‘face’ of the other, thus challenging a Rawlsian veil. Other avenues for critique of Rawls (1971) include his liberal emphasis on equality of opportunity, while neglecting an outcomes focus (Zappone 2002).

From the perspective of the Scottish national report, a bifurcation between so-called ‘elite’ universities and other third level institutions emerges as a danger in relation to access to education for marginalised groups:

What might be some of the future challenges for the policymakers? These include: ensuring that access to higher education is not achieved through the development of a two-tier system. It is clear that widening participation is still of importance but also that the university sector is being encouraged to diversify....Unless there is a change in the differential values attached to degrees from different types of institutions this is likely to maintain current educational inequalities in society and the labour market (Weedon et al., 2010).

This characterisation of a university as being an ‘elite’ one is part of the terminology of the Scottish national report:

The university, an elite institution, is located in a large Scottish city (Weedon et al., 2010).

A Scottish Funding Council interviewee explicitly states that other third level institutions are more committed to access to education for traditionally marginalised groups:

Widening access in the college sector³¹, if you look at their intake from the most deprived areas it is proportionally high in comparison with the population of those areas. So on the whole, 2 stars³² to the college sector, not translating into higher education, and there are weaknesses in that articulation from college to university. ... it can sound patronising, but I think it's a really good route into universities for [non-traditional students] (Weedon et al., 2010).

³¹ This refers to Scotland's 43 colleges.

³² This is praise but also recognition that they could go further.

This interviewee therefore felt that it was important further to develop the articulation between colleges and higher education and that some higher education institutions were making progress. However, he was also of the view that ‘elite’ institutions were unlikely to change their current focus on research and academic excellence:

The funding council is charged with widening participation, and we have our ‘Learning for all’ initiative and are supportive of the widening access forums and the articulation hubs and all this sort of thing. So actually it falls on us significantly and our new corporate plan, like our previous one, has a focus on attempts at widening participation. But if one is brutally honest we haven’t done very well so far, in times of rising student numbers, we got rising numbers from non traditional backgrounds, but not rising at a faster rate than the whole shebang... and I suspect that we will really struggle this time round. We haven’t cracked it, they haven’t cracked it in England, it’s really difficult (Weedon et al., 2010).

Whilst there was reference to pressure from the funding council on widening participation in elite institutions, it was clear from the interview with this senior manager of the funding council that the funding council sees admission policy as the remit of the institution:

We would take the view formally that admissions policy is a matter for individual institutions (Weedon et al., 2010).

There is a tendency of this interviewee to speak with resignation about the possibility of so-called ‘elite’ universities opening their doors to allow access for students from diverse backgrounds:

Our new corporate plan does talk absolutely openly about diversity of mission of Universities, so we are moving away from this concept of all Universities are the same... they never have been the same, they have different missions, so I do think that we do have opportunities to build greater senses of having a single post-school curriculum within regions, we are talking in terms of that so that if you want to study in Lanarkshire you know that there is an articulation route going through Cumbernauld college, maybe to Caledonian University, University West of Scotland, the former Bell Campus. This provides you, without having to move far from home, [with] a pretty comprehensive route to a degree level qualification. I think we need to do more of that, and that would be a good thing. What I don’t think we will do, and let’s be honest about this, is crack articulation into the research intensive institutions. It’s worth continuing to bang at that and to keep them up to the mark, but we are not going to see transformational change in the next five years (Weedon et al., 2010).

The Scottish national report overtly raises this concern regarding access and ‘elite’ universities:

This quote highlights the tensions in Scotland (and the rest of the UK) between developing internationally acknowledged research and the widening access agenda. There has been public debate around the development of a ‘two tier’ system of research intensive old/elite³³ and new (post-92) universities which have a stronger focus on teaching. Differential funding allocations may lead to the development a two tier system.

³³ Note the term ‘elite’ university is often used to refer to the old universities and those that are part of the Russell group (this is a UK wide group). Russell group universities all have a medical school. They are research intensive institutions.

In the elite universities there is resistance to the widening access agenda and the proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds has actually fallen (Weedon et al., 2010).

It reiterates this concern when discussing another interviewee response, from a university:

The university had a high number of applicants, around 10 per place which meant that it was a highly competitive and selective, rather than recruiting, institution. This can lead to tensions between the focus on academic excellence and meeting widening participation targets. *I suppose [the university] has different challenges and therefore they've met them differently and the major challenge being that [the university] isn't a recruiting university as such, it's a selective university so for them to make widening participation a central point to their admissions, it's trickier than somewhere like..., [a local university] ... they don't have a situation where they have to select students (University Administrator) (Weedon et al., 2010).*

The Scottish national report also raises concerns regarding more recent funding incentives that may undermine access goals:

Colleges are seen as key to widening participation and new universities as providing a route to degree qualifications for non-traditional students. However, recent funding measures which favour elite universities may undermine further developments of such routes into higher education (Weedon et al., 2010).

This bifurcation between a university sector and other third level institutions in relation to access is also notable in Austria:

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Resistance to access to education for diverse and traditionally marginalised groups clearly emerges from the following example from the Hungarian national report:

Almost all students already have a college or university degree when entering the adult education of this university, and most of them also have a stable job. This institute targets the elite with the highest quality programmes, as detailed by the Head of Development in the Centre for Learning Innovation and Adult Learning: *... so the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, okay, not as much as Yale, is an elite university. In our institute, acceptance is determined by professional quality and not by social considerations (Balogh et al., 2010).*

In total it has 23,000 students. Part of a challenge to this institutional resistance to access to education for diverse and traditionally underrepresented groups would involve the need to question narrow and reductionist conceptions of 'professional quality':

The [university management] interviewee does not think that they should change their portfolio in order to attract less qualified people (the 70% of the society mentioned above, that has never participated in adult education) (Balogh et al., 2010).

A key issue here is for recognition that the quality of the learner is to be assessed not simply upon entry but empirically, based on the individual learner's performance while

attending courses in the ‘elite’ university. Experiences of other countries, such as Ireland, is that access students can perform as well or even better than students entering university through traditional pathways. According to a Trinity College Dublin evaluation of the performance of its access students:

The majority of graduates entered Trinity College through the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR). The academic achievement levels of TAP graduates mirrored those attained by the graduate population of Trinity College, with a II.1 class of degree the most frequently awarded (TAP, 2009 p. 4).

Poverty and socio-economic disadvantage is not a commentary on an individual learner’s potential and quality, but rather on the external environmental barriers that have served to constrain such potential.

As the words of this Estonian Education Ministry official highlights, the issue of access to elite universities requires focus on the earlier stage of elitist selection processes for schools at post-primary and even, as in Estonia, primary level:

People believe that if you have finished a so-called elite school (one of the best schools in Tallinn or Tartu that accept 7 year olds to year one on the basis of entrance tests) then you have the right to a state funded study place, because you are better than others. Nobody seems to realise that the advantages of an elite school graduate may be the result of his/her better starting position compared with a graduate from a secondary school in the countryside or a small town. Our society does not recognise that social fairness is a problem. People do not want to see it (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Koucky et al. (2010) emphasise the role of shorter, vocationally oriented, non-university tertiary institutions in making access to education in Europe move from an elite to a mass phase since the 1960s. They list the development of what were the polytechnics in Britain and Finland, the *Fachhochschulen* in Germany and Austria, the *Institutes Universitaires de Technologie* and *Sections des Techniciens Supérieurs* in France, Higher Professional Schools in the Czech Republic, and Flemish *Hogescholen*, *inter alia*. Healy & Slowey (2006) provide a rationale for the emergence of the key role of non-university higher education institutions in providing access to education to traditionally underrepresented groups:

In Ireland, as many other countries, expansion of participation in higher education in general and for non-traditional learners, in particular, has been through the rapid growth of higher education provision in institutions other than universities...from the point of view of learners such institutions tend to be more geographically dispersed and hence located in familiar and convenient localities. In addition they tend to have expertise in offering support to ‘new to learning’ students...From the point of view of the State...the *per capita* student cost differentials between the different sectors make investment in colleges, institutions of technology and the like relatively more attractive than in universities (p.372).

The Scottish national report cites figures to illustrate the contrasting levels of participation of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds in further education colleges compared with universities:

Those from the most deprived backgrounds are still considerably more likely to study at a further education college than at university. Table 2 shows that in 2006-07 over half of

the students studying HE level courses in universities came from the two least deprived quintiles, whilst only just over one third of those studying HE level at a college came from these two quintiles. By contrast 22% of those studying HE level at college came from the most deprived quintile with only 11% of those studying at the same level at university came from this quintile (Weedon et al., 2010).

Table 9: Scottish domiciled students (headcount) in colleges and universities by level of study and deprivation quintile, 2008-09

Deprivation quintile	Colleges				Universities	
	HE level		FE level		HE level	
Least deprived quintile	7,482	18%	48,874	15%	54,964	30%
2 nd quintile	7,987	19%	59,299	19%	44,646	24%
Middle quintile	8,101	19%	64,536	21%	36,336	20%
4 th quintile	9,252	22%	66,017	21%	28,477	15%
Most deprived quintile	9,484	22%	76,764	24%	20,752	11%
Total	44,306	100%	313,490	100%	185,175	100%
Not known	283		1,491		4,916	

Source: Scottish Funding Council, 2010 (Weedon et al., 2010).

Koucky et al. (2010) make the provocative point that:

Some experts believe that expansion of tertiary education is only a way of diverting new candidates from elite institutions by offering them second-rate institutions (p.12).

Without needing to advocate such a view, while also being sceptical of attributions of generic motivation to institutions and states as if they are a unitary whole rather than constituted of individuals with frequently divergent opinions and motivations, the issue of access to so-called elite universities for traditionally marginalised groups does need to be tackled at a European level.

Schütze (1987) observed the impetus in North America for the majority of university institutions to be built on the idea of a university as a service agency for the whole community. Lunt (2008) observes that in the UK context the total increase in participation rates at higher education masks a considerable variation by social class, with a perceived trade-off between excellence and equity. Schütze & Slowey (2002) cite their research from 10 countries (Austria, Australia, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden, UK and US) on the reluctance of the more elite universities to open up access for nontraditional students, while emphasising that in some countries it was ‘largely state policy which was seeking to intervene to encourage – or even push – universities to open their doors to new types of students’ (p.316). This conclusion of the key role of the State in setting an agenda for access to higher education has implications also for Central and Eastern European countries which were not part of Schütze & Slowey’s (2002) study. It is also notable that in the context of Poland, Heyns and Bialecki (1993) observed at an earlier date that ‘the elite universities, however, have remained highly selective in Poland with relatively stable enrollments and with little variation over time’ (p.307).

As observed in the Faure report (1972), Ruillen (1970) develops a concept of blocked societies and blocked educational systems which preserve the privilege of an elite. The established elite offers a convenient and formally equitable method of recruiting its successors across generations, through educating those from its own social class while picking out a selected few from the less favoured social classes. According to Ruillen, this method offers a number of advantages for the ruling social classes: it gives society a safety-valve, it makes sure of fresh blood for the elite, while giving them a good conscience through the provision of formally equal opportunities. Blocked educational institutions are also thereby somewhat reminiscent of the static society in Plato's *Republic*, where political and thus educational power resides with the class of guardians, in contrast to those of the common people or the soldiers – with the proviso of Plato that in exceptional cases a promising student may be promoted from the other social groups into the guardian class.

6.1.1 (vi) Developing an accessibility index to challenge the perceived tension between a university desire to be in world top 100 and access issues (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

The Norwegian national report raises the issue of a perceived tension between a university desire to be in world top 100 on international rankings and access issues:

The university seems to be highly concerned about performing well when it is being measured. This is especially clear when it comes to attempts to climb on international rankings. Then the goals and the strategy for reaching these goals are in many instances designed for remaining well ranked. Consequently, other important areas may be overlooked or given low priority, because they do not make a difference with regard to what the university is being measured against. A previous statement from one informant seemed to affirm such an assumption, as she believed that the social environment of the university should become a part of the Ministry's assessment of the university prior to the annual budgetary allocation (Stensen & Ure 2010).

This tension is described even more directly by senior university management interviewees in the English national report:

the biggest thing that has destroyed all this is the Research Assessment Exercise, which has now become a disaster in Britain; you can't get anybody to do any lifelong learning, any full-time staff because the entire promotion prospects depend upon getting research grants and publishing (Engel et al., 2010).

A representative from a different university in England raised the same point:

The university perceives the current pressure of evaluation, such as the Research Assessment Exercise, limited to highlighting the *fantastic successes* Stonegrave has had with more non-traditional students. *There is a need to be judged in some slightly different way...we're all universities, we're all equally good, but we're good in different ways and in different things* (Engel et al., 2010).

The following account in the Scottish national report explicates one university's attempts to pursue both goals of 'world leading' academic excellence and of diversity of student intake:

The university's overall mission was the creation and dissemination of knowledge. It

marketed itself as a world-leading centre of academic excellence and sought to attract students on the basis of academic excellence. Widening participation measures developed since the publication of the Dearing and Garrick reports have led to the institution developing a number of measures to increase the diversity of its student population. It now sought to attract a *wide range of applicants from different social, cultural and educational backgrounds, including those who come from schools or colleges where relatively few students progress to university, and those who will be the first generation in their families to become university student*. This commitment was potentially in tension with its stress on academic excellence and the admissions office interviewee explained that there were many challenges involved in widening participation. The admission office had developed a set of criteria for admission in consultation with departments across the university. In 2004 a centralised admissions system was set up which meant that issues in relation to increased diversity and equality could be looked at across the institution rather than only within the departments. The institution had an Academic Services Section which is responsible for quality, academic administration, academic committees, academic regulations and change projects (Weedon et al., 2010).

On the approach of this university, while diverse intake could require additional supports for students, diversity could also contribute to improved quality of the learning process for students.

Diversity of social classes and ethnicity clearly offers the potential for an improved learning and discursive experience of students in areas of the humanities and social sciences in particular, where cultural dimensions are major aspects of knowledge development. In other words, domains such as law, psychology, history, geography, sociology, politics, education, literature and business can significantly benefit from interrogation through a learning involvement with diverse voices rather than through largely homogenous dominant cultural participation. At least in many such domains in the humanities and social sciences, quality and access can be not only reconciled but can be argued to require each other. This is a clear consequence of a Vygotskian framework for intellectual development which prioritises socio-cultural interaction as pivotal to learning³⁴. Moreover, Reay et al. (2007) interrogate ‘the ability to move in and out of spaces marked as ‘other’ (p.1047) as a feature of cultural capital. While Gibbons (2002) argues that the global economy requires individuals who can interact with people of other races and nationalities openly and respectfully, this position could lead to the danger of universities simply seeking out international students who would pay higher fees and take university places of those citizens from the host country experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. An advocacy of the need for ‘otherness’ as a feature of a university’s cultural capital (at least in the humanities and social sciences) would require the safeguarding of ‘otherness’ in relation to social class in its allocation of university places. This ‘otherness’ also requires more than simply assimilation into a homogenous university culture but rather to provide for diversity of subcultures at university level.

Against this backdrop, a university institutional culture needs to be evaluated with regard to its fostering of capacities in its students for relations with diverse ‘others’. This invites the need for an accessibility index as an indicator of university quality internationally, at least for the humanities and social sciences. In other words,

³⁴ This logic can go beyond a Vygotskian framework to engage with a level of challenge to cultural assumptions and cultural conformity – a challenge that may not be possible within a Vygotskian framework (Downes 2009a).

international university rankings need to include an access and diversity ranking not simply to promote access issues but also as an indicator of the quality of the learning environment for students. In doing so, it is to be recognised that this requires a significant broadening of the criteria for international rankings of universities, as currently the focus of such rankings is narrowly on areas such as maths, science, medicine and engineering, with other major dimensions of university work such as quality of teaching excluded from such rankings.

A report by Usher and Cervanen (2005) exploring global higher education rankings has sought to develop indicators in order to provide the 'first systematic and rigorous exploration of the affordability and accessibility of higher education within an international comparative context'. It develops a composite affordability ranking for 16 countries, though none are from Central and Eastern Europe ³⁵. Usher and Cervanen (2005) state at the outset that their set of indicators of affordability and accessibility are simply a first step towards a 'more nuanced and accurate exploration of indicators' to inform comparative analysis in this area.

The six indicators of affordability constructed by Usher and Cervanen (2005) are as follows: Education costs as a percentage of ability to pay, Total costs as a percentage of ability to pay, Net costs as a percentage of ability to pay, Net cost after tax expenditure as a percentage of ability to pay, Out-of-pocket costs as a percentage of ability to pay, Out-of-pocket costs after tax expenditures as a percentage of ability to pay. These indicators are granted different weightings of importance. Usher and Cervanen (2005) recognise the complexity within terms such as ability to pay and explore pathways for cross-cultural comparison.

The four indicators of accessibility constructed by Usher and Cervanen (2005) are as follows: Participation rates, Attainment rates, Gender parity index, and what they call the Educational Equity Index (EEI). As with affordability indicators, the accessibility indicators are granted different weightings. This affordability and accessibility index focuses on data at the national level rather than offering direct examination of universities at the institutional level.

These indexes offer a promising basis for moving further to an institutional and not simply a national focus on accessibility and affordability indexes. There is a need to develop an integration of a university's performance regarding accessibility and affordability with its research performance etc, so that all these dimensions can be part of a composite score in international rankings of universities, especially in relation to the humanities and social sciences.

The need for broader criteria for university rankings has been recognised at EU Commission level. The Commission has launched an initiative "for the design and testing of a new multi-dimensional university ranking system with global outreach" that is also independent from public authorities and universities. According to the 3rd Annual Symposium on University Rankings and Quality Assurance in Europe, held in June 2011

³⁵ The countries ranked for affordability (as distinct from accessibility) of higher education are as follows, in a sequence where the first on the list is the most affordable and the last the least affordable based on their composite indicators: Sweden, Finland, The Netherlands, Belgium (Flemish Community), Ireland, Belgium (French Community), Austria, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, Australia, United States, Britain, New Zealand, Japan. This order of ranking, being prior to the economic crisis, may now have changed. Finland and the Netherlands emerge as the two countries consistently scoring highest when both accessibility and affordability are combined.

in Brussels, by the Centre for Parliamentary Studies, its aim is the design and testing of a new multi dimensional university ranking system, one with a more global outreach. The symposium organisers hope that with its emergence on the EU higher education agenda, a new comprehensive ranking system will facilitate not only greater transparency and accountability of universities but also help policymakers to develop longer term strategies as part of the broader HE modernisation agenda for Europe. They cite, Maros Sefcovic, European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, February 2010 that 'A 'Multi-dimensional', approach to the mapping of universities would create a better balance between research indicators and quality of education indicators when it comes to the ranking of universities'. While this need for broader multidimensional criteria for university ranking is recognised at Commission level, it is extremely important to emphasise that accessibility be a dimension included for evaluation within these broader criteria.

In the context of Canada and the US, Schütze (2011) observes the need to provide incentives to universities to recognise what he calls 'regional engagement and service as a university mission'. In doing so, this recognition would serve as a counterweight to university preoccupation with research rankings. Schütze (2011) cites the US example of the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification of Community Engagement as an example of indicators to analyse and recognise university engagement with the community. These indicators operate under 4 basic headings, namely, institutional identity and culture, institutional commitment, curricular engagement, and outreach and partnerships. These offer an important step forward also in a European context. However, it is notable that despite the 50 indicators developed under these four categories for community engagement in the Carnegie Foundation's Classification, none of these directly addresses the issues of either accessibility or affordability. This is a significant omission. The framework of structural, process and outcome indicators for access to education being developed for current purposes in this research project may inform international perspectives on accessibility beyond a European context.

6.1.1 (vii) Pathways for strategic communication across government departments (PROCESS INDICATOR)

Developing links between different parts of the system and subsystems in a two-way flow has been observed to be a key feature of an organic system. Many issues pertaining to lifelong learning, access, social inclusion, literacy and non-formal education enter domains that go beyond simply one government department. A two-way flow of communication between each relevant subsystem is thereby required. The question arises as to how to maximise communication across different government departments in any given country, in order to facilitate policy development and implementation in these areas, driven from national level.

The Slovenian national report highlights a cross-departmental government focus, at least in relation to lifelong learning:

An inter-ministerial group called Strategic council for lifelong learning was established at the education ministry in 2009 (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Similarly, according to a senior government official interviewed in the Lithuanian national report, there is a strong dimension of cross-departmental strategic planning and dialogue:

There is constant cooperation, and this cooperation is being coordinated by the Government because it is a plan of the Government's means and in this plan, ministries, several ministries are responsible for that plan. And usually it happens that there are working groups from those institutions, then the plan is combined and it goes to the Government (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

According to the Estonian national report, there is increasing recognition of the need for a cross-departmental focus on many of these themes, though a current lack of coordination exists:

The Labour Market Board is so bureaucratic – we had to prepare a file of 25 pages to train one person. You cannot provide training in the evening, the course must end at 5 p.m., the day can not be longer than 8 hours, and participants can not attend courses at weekends... A long list of requirements. However, it seems that things are going to change; ministry officials have declared that. The Ministry of Social Affairs could learn from the Ministry of Education and Research how things should be done ... (Tamm & Saar 2010).

This example from Estonia illustrates the potential benefits of changes in practice due to cross-departmental communication. A Ministry for Social Affairs official in Estonia comments as follows:

It is difficult to assess whether there is cooperation or not. Now when the resources are limited there is a little more cooperation. It seems to me that we are starting to coordinate the use of funds between different ministries to ensure that they rather complement than duplicate each other. There is still some duplication and sometimes target groups are divided between ministries too strictly, e.g. you will be responsible for this and you for that (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Scottish national report points to different priorities across government departments that impact upon lifelong learning and social inclusion:

Tensions between different government departments in relation to the development of lifelong learning provision. In terms of these two individuals, one sees human capital development as the most important, whereas the other emphasises a much wider definition of lifelong learning which encompasses all aspects of learning. As the funding council has a budget for colleges and universities of around £1.7 billion its influence is likely to have an impact. Learning Connections is not responsible for funding learning provision in the two areas for which it is responsible: community learning and development and adult literacy and numeracy. Money is allocated mainly through local authorities (Weedon et al., 2010).

It is thus important that strategic coordination does not merely mean subordination or assimilation of the perspective of one department to another. Nevertheless, dialogue is important both to ascertain common goals, as well as different goals, across departments on these issues.

From the Austrian national report, it is evident that apart from lifelong learning, there is neither strategic priority nor cooperation across government departments to facilitate strategic priority for issues such as access and social inclusion:

Are there structures for dialogue and a common strategy on any of these areas [social inclusion, access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, lifelong learning, literacy, the non-formal education sector], 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... 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 a more pro-active feedback environment* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

The Austrian official from the Ministry for Science accepted that there is little cross-departmental strategic cooperation in the areas of access and social inclusion in Austria:

Are there structures for dialogue and a common strategy on any of these areas [social inclusion, access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, lifelong learning, literacy, the non-formal education sector] 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 lifelong learning. There are individual activities, such as joint leaflets or events but I wouldn't call that a development of strategies... 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... 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Somewhat in contrast, in the Russian national report, there is the suggestion that cross-departmental strategies operate at least in the city of St. Petersburg:

Overall, it has to be mentioned that joint projects are quite common for both committees and for other committees within the government of the city (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The Russian national report also highlights how fragmentation across government departments leads to a lack of joined up thinking in policy making:

When asked about other socially underrepresented groups such as migrants and their children with low command of Russian, orphans, former prisoners, young single mothers, children from dysfunctional families, etc., the informants suggested that we should address the departments dealing primarily with social policy. This department, however, deals with financial and material support for the mentioned categories but not their education. Therefore, due to poor communication and cooperation between different government departments many aspects and even categories of population remain neglected (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

An example of where coordinated communication pathways could anticipate difficulties and prevent further barriers to access arising is with regard to the change in Russia for a unified State examination. The Russian national report observes the impact of these changes for access to traditionally underrepresented groups:

Unified State Examination as an obstacle both for educational institutions for people with a disability and their students

- A. The introduction of the Unified State Examination (a set of multiple choice tests that all senior pupils of all Russian schools have to pass) is also seen as a new challenge. The

results of USE have to be acknowledged by the institutions of vocational and higher education whereas earlier each of them had offered its own set of oral and written entry exams. This is made to decrease entry inequalities and provide common start positions for all potential learners. Therefore, instead of simplifying the educational system and making it more transparent, USE makes it more difficult for institutions aimed at underrepresented groups to enrol students who haven't taken or passed it.

- B. Also, for many people with a disability the introduction of USE is a significant factor limiting their access to educational resources. The point is that according to the law, people with a disability of certain categories have the right to enter any higher education institution provided they take all entrance exams. At that, the grades they get are not relevant – it is the pure fact of going through examinations that is important. Until recently that was the rule that would allow many people with disabilities to participate in various formal educational programmes. However, the implementation of the Unified State Examination has complicated the situation because the exam is obligatory for all applicants including those with disabilities. In reality such exams are impossible to take for many categories of people with a disability: e.g. people with visual impairments (it's not transferred into Braille system) or those with hearing impairments (all test instructions are presented in oral form). Besides, specialised schools for people with a disability do not prepare the pupils for taking Unified State Examination as distinct from common schools. Finally, any exam may appear to be a serious stress for people with disabilities. The Unified State Examination represent a set of structured and time-limited tests and is extremely difficult for people with disabilities due to the stressful situations it provokes. The interviewees also find it ridiculous that the results of USE are valid for 1-1.5 years only (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Coordinated structures for communication would ensure that the impact of a policy does not disproportionately affect particular groups. In other words, it would ensure a joined-up policy strategy of poverty proofing and equality proofing (Gilligan 2002) or decisions across areas. Significant scope for reform to cross-departmental government structures is required, across many countries, in order to give expression to a coherent access and social inclusion strategy to meet the needs of socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

6.1.1 (viii) Representation of target groups, including ethnic minorities in the decision making processes at national level regarding access to education (PROCESS INDICATOR)

It is pivotal that a discourse on access and targets centrally involves those being 'targeted' so that they are subjects and not mere objects of social policy. This is occurring to some extent, for example, in Lithuania, according to this response from an Education Ministry official:

Are representatives from risk groups involved in a) creation and b) implementation of strategies and programmes? They are surely involved in implementation; there are working groups containing representatives from adults' associations. They are involved in creation, too – adults' association creates a strategy. For instance, [representatives] of ethnic minorities give proposals for ethnic minorities [strategy], [representatives] of people with disabilities give them for their integration [strategy]. When there is a common document being arranged, for instance, for examinations' adaptation – [there were] representatives of the people with disabilities (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

In contrast, the Russian national report reveals a lack of such involvement from those groups being targeted, according to the response of a senior official of the Committee for Labor and Employment, St. Petersburg,

Let's go back to the risk target groups. Are their representatives involved in these committees? *No, not really* (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

This lack of stakeholder involvement in Russia is evident from the following response of a senior government official:

The informant from the Committee for Labor told us that representatives of risk groups were not involved in either designing or implementing outreach approaches to reach those who are excluded from education. In fact, this question caused surprise and even some misunderstanding because such idea seemed to her weird and unnecessary. *I don't really see how this can be possible. People who design outreach strategies are the employers of the Committee, those who work here officially. I don't think we will be inviting other people to increase our outreach work just because they belong to the category we want to reach* (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A barrier to access to education noted in the Hungarian national report is the previous experience of lifelong learning of those in previous decades:

At present, participants in adult education belong to a generation that had bad experience with these kinds of programmes, as they were forced to participate in them after the rapid and overwhelming changes of the 1990s' political and economic transformation (Balogh et al., 2010).

Yet one way to help overcome such bad experiences of previous programmes among a cohort of learners is to involve them in the decision-making processes regarding access to education and concerning the content and quality of such educational courses. This occurs in at least limited form in Hungary,

Are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in these committees? *I cannot give an exact answer to this question. I suppose, during the consultation period, these action plans will be harmonised through discussions with the affected national representative organisations. Probably there is a civilian circle as well, but I cannot define the way and mode of their existence. Concerning special political issues, the ministry have to consult with representative bodies as provided by law. Such issues are for example: creating new laws and new projects* (Balogh et al., 2010).

The important point was made by an interviewee in the Hungarian national report, that while consultation is obliged by law this tends to become a formal process rather than being one of substantial voice for diverse groups:

In many other cases strong civilian organisations based on unwritten laws intervene in discussions. There is a consultation period before decisions are made, when interest groups, professional circles, and civilian groups can express their views. According to Hungarian law the consultation is considered to be compulsory. The law defines the ways and modes of discussions, but in my opinion this is not a real partnership. I think, partnership is, when the partner organisations are involved right from the beginning of the process of planning (Balogh et al., 2010).

Tokenistic consultation leads to a loss of trust, as is highlighted in the Hungarian national report:

The level of trust is rather low in many areas. A basic precondition of trust is transparent planning and cooperation and less ad hoc conciliation. The committees or organisations do not feel that they have a say in most of the issues. Do you mean problems with trust between committees, or trust between the committees and the affected groups? This is a mutual thing. For example, many groups do not believe that their opinions will be built in the project; however long term cooperation must be based on mutual trust. Participants do not feel that it is worth taking part actively because feedback is not provided to them in the majority of cases. Though transparency is a very important precondition, it is not a characteristic feature of law-making process. As a short sum, I can say that the second condition of trust is not given either (Balogh et al., 2010).

The English national report reveals that there is not direct representation for target groups. Their voices are mediated by representatives:

Regarding whether WAPSAC (Widening Access and Participation Strategic Advisory Committee) has any representation from target groups, from at risk groups, Not formally. What it has is practitioners working in the field predominantly, so people who are responsible for this area of policy within institutions, Pro Vice Chancellors with responsibility for, and heads of widening participation would typically be the dominant membership. It also has NUS membership to represent the student voice, but we haven't explicitly, other than in the sense that we are always concerned to make sure that our committees are representative because of our widening equality agenda, but we do not have the learner voice formally represented on that committee, except in one area where we do have some work with disabled groups, where we have an advisory body, and a separate advisory ... (Engel et al., 2010).

we then would consult with bodies that represent those learners rather than explicitly putting them on a strategic [committee] ... (Engel et al., 2010).

This raises the danger of consultation that may be mere lip-service. The following interview response from the English national report evades the key issue as to how to provide substantive rather than merely tokenistic involvement of target groups:

*So you would have consultation exercises with the at risk groups?
Yes, or representatives of, yes, we would certainly want to involve those groups, yes (Engel et al., 2010).*

It is important however to emphasise that consultation may mean a range of different things. Arnstein (1969) sets out a range of useful distinctions here in her 'ladder' of citizen participation'. Referring to informing, consultation and placation, Arnstein (1969) categorises these as degrees of tokenism. She describes informing as an important step, but one which often takes the form of a one-way flow of information. Consultation is also an important step, but is not enough if it is not combined with other forms of participation. Placation is moving towards partnership, but it is still tokenistic as it usually takes the form of appointing a few handpicked individuals to a committee. For Arnstein (1969), other steps in ascending order offer degrees of citizen power. These are partnership, delegated power and citizen control. They account for the redistribution of

power and decision-making authority in a particular programme or strategy. Citizen control occurs where local communities are in full charge of policy and managerial aspects of a programme. A challenge is to translate this need for socially excluded citizens' power beyond local contexts and programmes to meaningful, substantial participation in national decision-making.

The Irish national report offers examples of university consultation and partnership with members of the Irish Travelling community:

In relation to ethnic minorities, University A targets Irish Travellers, acknowledging that they face particular challenges throughout their education. The Access Service includes members of the Irish Travelling Community in all of its initiatives. They work with local Area Partnerships, communities, Irish Traveller support groups, youth agencies and schools and with the parents and students of the Travelling community to overcome some of the barriers they encounter as they progress through the education system. They run a scholarship programme for Traveller students making the transition to the senior cycle of secondary school (Dooley et al., 2010).

From this account it is unclear the extent to which the Travelling community are actively involved in the design of such cooperative initiatives rather than being simply recipients of it:

The University works closely with members of the Travelling Community. The Senior Access Official set out that, *the ways of informing the Traveller Community. They have been quite successful. We're continuing to work closely with them. The difficulty is to increase engagement for students at a very basic level, from primary to secondary...We have Award Ceremonies...we work with a few schools where there are a high percentage of students from Travelling communities.* The Official talks about how long this engagement has been taking place, *I think it's been about 5 years now...We have a number of conferences for parents, for students. They've been very well attended* (Dooley et al., 2010).

It is notable that this strategic connection with Travellers operates against the backdrop of a wider university commitment to community and civic engagement:

The Senior Access official explains, *I think how we look at access in...[University A] it has also been very positive. It's always been part of our strategic plan for the university.* The Community Engagement strategy is the social component of the university strategy. The Civic Engagement strategy sets out that the university is part of a wider community and it both contributes to and draws on the strengths of this community (Dooley et al., 2010).

This Irish example gives practical effect to the European Commission dimension of active citizenship for lifelong learning.

The Estonian national report raised the issue of representation and consultation with members of the Russian-speaking population in Estonia:

How is the Russian-speaking population involved in the development of the policies? *The Students' Union has Russian-speaking members representing the Russian-speaking population. For example in the discussions concerning the social dimensions the union was represented by a Russian lady (who is fluent in Estonian). The division between two language groups is not that big in this area* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

What about the problems of adults? Do they reach the ministry level? Adults are not involved in the activity of the students' union because they are working. *That is true; their problems often do not reach us. That has to be admitted. Whether their problems reach the officials of the ministry or not depends on how much is the university's administration aware of their problems and needs. Employers are more easily involved. We do not know what the problems of people over 40 years old who work full-time and study half-time are* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Again channels of communication and representation are recognised as being in need of substantial improvement and system level development. The following response from an Estonian official raises the question as to whether central government wishes to hear voices of those 'on the ground' who may offer dissent and conflict with their perspectives, and thereby be labeled 'destructive':

Much depends on how active, exuberant and competent local people are. We are interested in partners who can contribute to the process. If a destructive person is appointed we will not be happy but we have to work with that person too (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Austrian Education Ministry official cites a type of floodgates argument for limited representation:

In the steering group of lifelong learning 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

However, commitment to key principles of voice and representation cannot be simply marginalised due to administrative convenience in policy decision making processes. These examples highlight a certain level of institutional resistance to representation of and consultation with members of target groups for access to education in a decision making process.

6.1.1 (ix) A system of reserved places or equivalent approach to increase participation of underrepresented groups at third level (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

The Scottish national report gives expression to the practice of allocating university places to mature students on a different basis to university entry compared to younger students:

Admission policies: Mature students could gain entry without the required entry level qualifications normally expected of school leavers. All students were invited to attend an interview. Students aged 21 and over are classified as mature students (Weedon et al., 2010).

This is also a practice observed in the Irish national report for mature students, which significantly goes further through developing an allocation system of reserved places based on criteria of socio-economic disadvantage:

In 2009, the Higher Education Access Route, HEAR was nationalised. HEAR facilitates school leavers experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage to apply for reserved places in HEIs. The seven universities and the seven Colleges of Education extended the scheme from 305 to all 730 secondary schools in Ireland. The new HEAR scheme broadens access opportunities to third level education for school leavers from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds across the country, recognising that educational disadvantage affects a cross section of all communities and is not confined to clearly identifiable areas or regions. The scheme targets those students who have the ability to succeed in higher education but for a variety of social and economic reasons may not otherwise get the opportunity to attend third level (Dooley et al., 2010).

The Irish national report continues:

A Senior Access Official spoke on access and the development of HEAR, the last 10 years have been magnificent in some respects, there has been an absolute proliferation in terms of the school, community outreach links, huge opportunities for collaboration amongst the HEIs on joint initiatives, aimed at increasing the numbers of non-traditional students. I think one of the great successes has been the Higher Education Access Route, HEAR, and that's on the cusp of going National next year [2010] (Dooley et al., 2010).

A clear pattern of institutional resistance to quotas based on socio-economic disadvantage or ethnicity is evident across a number of national reports, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. For example, in Bulgaria, a University Vice-Rector stated:

Ethnic quotas are definitely not an appropriate or fair method for admission in the higher education school. In actual fact the university is not a social welfare institution. It is true that education together with its selective function has an integrating one as well, but integration should be based on the fundamental relation: abilities-work-achievements-desire for proving oneself in the community and society. The other option would mean suppression of the desire for more knowledge and more skills achieved through education (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Elsewhere in Bulgaria a consistent pattern emerges of a lack of reserved places and a lack of willingness to even consider such a practice:

The college does not assign quotas for students from certain social or ethnic groups. Before, during socialism, there were quotas for certain ethnic minority groups, like students from Turkish or Roma origin. Otherwise, people with disabilities pay tuition fees at a reduced price, as stipulated by the rules and regulation of the College (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

The college does not specifically aim to accept a concrete percentage of students from disadvantaged groups. This situation is similar to the ones of other institutions of higher education (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

This resistance to positive discrimination through reserved places at university for socio-economically disadvantaged groups is based on legislation in Bulgaria:

SWU has no practices of providing quotas for disadvantaged groups. This policy is in compliance with the Higher Education Act, whose Regulation the University is obliged to adhere to (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

No, we shouldn't do that! It is NOT lawful!! (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

The Lithuanian national report also refers to legal barriers to quotas:

The practice of reserving places or the imposition of quotas for specific target groups does not exist. All adults must have equal access to education according to equal opportunities and anti-discrimination laws (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

However, it is notable that positive discrimination in education based on socio-economic need does occur in Bulgaria:

SWU grants social scholarships and those approved have the right to preferences in obtaining student housing (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Thus, it would seem that the objection is not to the principle of positive discrimination in education based on socio-economic need, but rather its specific application through a quota system. It is the operationalisation in practice of the reserved places that is deemed problematic.

It is evident from the Slovenian national report that there is no system of reserved places and it is based, as with Bulgaria and Lithuania, on a formalist assumption of equality that does not recognise indirect discrimination, in other words, discriminatory effects and impact:

There are no additional criteria for non-traditional students. All students regardless of their characteristics have the same possibilities to enrol in programme. *All citizens are equal* (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The Institution does not and cannot have any schemes for reserved places for traditionally disadvantaged groups. In Slovenia, this is managed at a national level. At the moment, only quotas for foreign students are in action. There is no law against having quotas but it is customary to adhere to what the relevant ministry is saying concerning reserved places. The faculty could have its own policy concerning the issue (Ivančič et al., 2010).

There neither is a system of reserved places for disadvantaged groups in Hungary:

The ministry and the government do not have tools to influence one's preferences when entering the higher education. It would be possible to do this in two ways (but in the teacher training a strong counter-selection and an over qualification would appear): either with lower scores on entrance exams, (of course the institutions are against this idea) or by raising the norms of higher education. But this version is not supported by the institutions either (Balogh et al., 2010).

Similarly, the Lithuanian national report observes that:

Traditionally disadvantaged groups are not somehow distinguished when discussing the admission policies...

...For socially disadvantaged groups the admission policies are the same as it is provided by the state. There are no special screening criteria because we just have an admission policy and university has to follow it... (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

A lack of reserved places in Lithuania is a pervasive theme in its national report:

Admission to all public and almost all private colleges and universities in Lithuania is centralised and is organised by the Association of Lithuanian Higher Education

Institutions. The rules of admission vary for each institution, but the success of a candidate depends mostly on the academic achievements at secondary school which are mathematically calculated according to the college or university requirements for a certain study programme. For art and music study programmes some colleges and universities organise entrance exams (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The rules for admission are decided by the school itself, but the most important criterion is academic achievements at secondary school. To students from those at risk social groups there are no priorities or privileges...For the persons with a disability or orphaned people (of whom both parents are dead) there is priority given if they collect the same number of points as someone else (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

Traditionally disadvantaged groups are not somehow distinguished when discussing the admission policies. This shows that there is still some room in promoting the increased access. Any schemes provided for reserved places for traditionally disadvantaged groups at university are discussed neither by teaching, nor by managing respondent (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

In Estonia, different institutions appear to follow different approaches with the principle of positive discrimination for access for certain groups recognised in places:

There are no admission quotas for different groups [to the university]: *We do not take into account candidates background or nationality; we only look for talent (Tamm & Saar 2010).*

However, some reserved places exist in Estonia at national level, according to the response of this governmental interviewee to the following question

About half of the 4th level and more than a quarter of the 5th level educational institutions in Estonia reserve some study places for disadvantaged students. What is the government's role in this? *As I said our universities are autonomous. The government has reserved study places for teachers and some places for people from disadvantaged backgrounds (Tamm & Saar 2010).*

According to a university representative in Estonia, some categories for positive discrimination in relation to access do exist, though not one based on socio-economic disadvantage:

Not much can be done to support the disadvantaged groups: the selection board can admit up to five students who have a disability or were raised in an orphanage or lived in a shelter; they have to pay only the registration fee. If the number of such candidates is bigger five people are selected who are admitted (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Estonian national report also highlights the following categories for positive discrimination regarding reserved places:

In higher education reserving places for certain groups is not very widely used – only very few free of charge study places are reserved for people with special needs and athletes (Tamm & Saar 2010).

While reserved places are a feature of Russian higher education, there is no specific category of reserved places based directly on socioeconomic disadvantage:

According to the provision #50 of Ministry of Education, the following categories of population are enrolled into higher education organisations out of competition in case of successful examination pass:

- Orphans and children without parental custody.
- Children and adults with disabilities of 1 and 2nd disability groups who do not have medical contraindications towards studying in higher education institutions.
- Citizens up to 20 y.o. with only one parent, who has a disability of the 1st group, upon condition that the average income of the family doesn't exceed the minimum living wage determined in each particular region of RF.
- Citizens retired from the military services and enrolling into education institutions based on recommendations of military unit leaders; former combatants, and military men who have acquired a disability at military service (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

There is a need for a change of institutional mindset in many university institutions to become more open to access issues and to be more informed about what it would entail, as these examples from the Russian and Austrian national reports illustrate:

When they were asked to define the main reason preventing underrepresented categories from receiving education, they said: *Well, nothing. You go and get it* (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

(Access) Services? How would you define that? (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

This change in institutional mindset is claimed to have occurred in an Irish university education over recent years, largely due to the positive performance of students who entered the university through reserved access places, albeit with certain minimum entry requirements (Dooley et al., 2010).

The Bulgarian national report offers some grounds of support for reserved places from the following interviewee:

The most effective way for improving the access of students from disadvantage groups to higher education is by setting up a special quota for them (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

An interviewee for the Estonian national report also indicated a willingness to discuss system change to promote access:

The government should support and the school should also support talented students who are in a bad economic situation. We will discuss that. So far we have not set such rules. The system may change. The OECD report also indicated that the support system is elitist, those who need help are not supported (Tamm & Saar 2010).

It is evident from the Austrian national report that institution resistance to reserved places could be overcome through performance [...] led at national level, as illustrated by the response of the following government official:

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions 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... 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Another interviewee in the Bulgarian report offers the following perspective on a key dimension for access as a different means of obtaining the same aim as reserved places:

The most just way for improving the access of students from disadvantage groups to higher education is through organising preparatory admission courses for them (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

It is evident that a historical suspicion of a quota system lingers from Soviet Union times in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe. A related issue is a concern as to whether reserved places would provide an access process and procedure which is transparent. This issue is raised by the following example from the Russian national report:

One more serious problem mentioned in the course of the pilot study is the dominant role of profitable connections/protection (or to use the term of the field – ‘*blat*’) in many educational institutions. As one of the informants says: *there was only one place. And there were two candidates: Myself and the dean's nephew. To put it differently, there were no places a priori* (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Corruption concerns and motivational issues for the learner are particular objections to reserved places in a Russian context:

Such quotas decrease the motivation of potential learners rather than attract them to studies. Another counter-argument is that under the conditions of lacking transparency in students' enrollment people who don't really have the right to exemptions use fake documents to get them, whereas real target groups remain out of touch (Veits & Khokhlova 2011, personal communication)

Szelényi & Aschaffenburg's (1993) overview of the quota system in Hungary in their review of educational inequality from postwar Hungary until the early 1990s referred to the phenomenon of ‘outright bribes’ and ‘informal networking’ (p.295) in securing

college places for the 'social elite'. They also observe 'evidence that some parents may even have secured admission for their children by misrepresenting their class position on school application forms' (Szelényi & Aschaffenburg 1993, p.295), while rejecting the argument that quotas designed to reverse longstanding inequalities are 'doomed to failure'.

There is a need to recognise that a system of reserved places can even improve quality as more diverse perspectives become offered and – most importantly - that a system of reserved places for socio-economically disadvantaged groups can still require high and differentiated standards of minimum requirements for entry for such target groups. This would provide a key difference from quotas in the Soviet Union. Of further relevance on this issue is that international law not only does not preclude positive discrimination and quotas but at times actively supports principles of positive discrimination.

An argument that entering university through a quota system may be stigmatising for the individual can be countered by recognising that such a pathway for entry is voluntary and it is still open to the individual to enter through the mainstream admission pathway. Further, in countries where alternative pathways for entry exist, such as Ireland, it is an option for the incoming student to keep private the means by which he or she entered the university. Moreover, with a critical mass of students entering university through diverse admission pathways, such stigma would be radically lessened. An argument against quotas based on stigmatisation is even less convincing where other supports based on need, including socio-economic need, such as campus accommodation, scholarships etc., are provided. While these other supports could also be construed as stigmatising, the choice to accept them is left to the individual.

Given the negative historical experience of quota systems in many Central and Eastern European countries, it is clear that imposition of a system of reserved places to improve access for socio-economically disadvantaged groups would be counterproductive. Imposition of such a system would also be in tension with EU principles of proportionality and subsidiarity. Nevertheless, there are a number of ways forward in relation to this key issue for access. One way forward here is for incentivised schemes of reserved places for institutions to offer, rather than necessarily mandatory schemes. In such an incentivised scheme for providing reserved places for socio-economically disadvantaged groups, a concern with quality would be addressed through provision of a range of minimum standards for entry. Such minimum standards, while different from a mainstream admission pathway, would nevertheless allow for relatively stringent criteria for access combined with an opportunity for third level institutions to assess the performance of such nontraditional students who enter university through this broadened pathway.

Another option would be to provide an incentive for a university to reach a specific target of students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and leave it open to the institution to devise different pathways than reserved places to meet this target. In other words, a system of reserved places is a means to an end of increasing access and the same goal could be met through other means and pathways; as was suggested by an interviewee in the Bulgarian national report, increased investment in preparatory admission classes for nontraditional students, including those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, could be another effective pathway to increase access.

6.1.1 (x) A regional strategy for access (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

The Slovenian national report indicates that the need for a regional strategic dimension and practice is recognised but not yet implemented:

Regional adult education programmes are also foreseen but none has been adopted so far. By and large a majority of communes have not yet prepared an adult education strategy and do not have any money intended for adult education although they are founders of people's universities which are supposed to develop into community education centres (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The role of municipalities in Slovenia is key to the success of a regional strategy for access to lifelong learning:

It would help if the municipality had a plan or indications on where it sees the People's University in the future, but unfortunately it still does not know how to use the expertise and knowledge the institution possesses. Considering future challenges it would be good for the institution if the four founding municipalities had considered investing in tourism. There are ample possibilities to develop it, and ask the People's University to develop programmes and educate the population in this respect. But, *we alone are not enough, we are also too weak a player in this field to change things in the locality – this would have to be well linked, networked* (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Though formal regional structures do not exist in Hungary, there have been attempts to implement a regional approach to lifelong learning:

There are not formal regional levels. In the Hungarian administrative system, however there are several efforts to make decisions regionally (i.e., establishing regional training committees). The aim of creating such committees is to allocate and distribute funds to larger regions than counties, concerning the characteristics and needs of that particular region (Balogh et al., 2010).

According to the Hungarian national report, decentralisation to regional and local levels involve a complex series of negotiations and power relations:

The regional level exists as a political level where local and central political intentions confront. Individual political intentions cannot occur on regional level, as they do not exist. Practically, regional politicians are not elected; therefore regional circumstances (power, chance, concern...) cannot determine how funds are allocated. Regional interest is made up of two components. On the one hand, local groups try to transport their needs upwards; on the other hand, the government tries to exercise an influence downwards to regional level. So the regional level is a vacuum at the moment. The funds, therefore, are not allocated on regional levels, but on county and local levels. Only negotiations are made on a regional level (Balogh et al., 2010).

It is evident from the English national report that a strong regional focus exists for lifelong learning:

We also do things regionally in a number of different ways. We have kind of generic connections to regions. We have what we call regional consultants, we have institutional teams which cover regions of the country, and they have a responsibility for taking forward the general regional agenda (Engel et al., 2010).

Interestingly, it is perceived that the main scope for access dimensions is at a subregional level rather than a regional level:

We fund Aimhigher which is a joint initiative between us and the Government, and that is organised in I think it's now 42 areas of the country. Doesn't actually have a regional structure but it has a subregional structure. So typically it's at kind of county level, that sort of level, or big cities, there's Birmingham and Manchester have big ones of their own. So that's that level. And we have a team called Action on Access which again we fund, which is a team of people drawn from the sector, and also have, who provide support and advice to Aimhigher, to institutions, and they typically work at a regional level as well. So there are regional structures which we support to coordinate that activity across the sector (Engel et al., 2010).

In contrast, the interview with the Head of a Continuing Training Department of a vocational school in the Estonian national report is explicit that there is an absence of regional strategy for lifelong learning and access:

There is no regional strategy concerning adult education. The local authorities, enterprises and schools should be involved more. The school cooperates with different partners, including general educational institutions (Tamm & Saar 2010).

However, elsewhere in the Estonian national report, a government official interviewee emphasises the role of regional colleges for engaging students from the Russian-speaking population in Estonia:

Please describe the measures taken by the government to support adult education outside larger towns: This is done by allocating student places funded from the state budget to regional colleges which are either university colleges situated elsewhere than the main university or other educational institutions (Tamm & Saar 2010).

How is this decided? In some previous interviews people said that few state funded student places are allocated for the educational institutions where the language of instruction is Russian. What is the situation with institutions of higher education where the language of instruction is Russian? State funded student places are allocated to those institutions also. There is the Virumaa College of Tallinn University of Technology, then Narva College of Tartu University. We also support the Russian-language IT college in Tallinn although to a somewhat lesser extent. We have funded some student places there. The Government of Estonia is not that hostile towards Russians as some people might like to believe (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Moreover, the Estonian national report states that:

In addition to the colleges, that are located in different regions, wide learning opportunities are provided by vocational schools all over the country (Tamm & Saar 2010).

An Austrian government official interviewee emphasised a strong regional focus on lifelong learning:

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 [in the Education Ministry]. 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 areas...The big master plan is missing, again owing to competencies (strong competencies of the federal provinces.) The Federal Ministry can only intervene by stimulating (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

However, a system level focus on links between national, regional and local subsystems indicates that there is a disjunction between these levels in Austria, especially for issues such as strategic development of access and social inclusion. An Austrian Ministry of Science official gave the following response to the question, 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 and the non-formal education sector?

For these five mentioned areas we don't have any real strategic structures on a departmental level...This is so owing to the universities' and universities of applied sciences' autonomy and the reason that a different Ministry is responsible for lifelong learning (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Nevertheless, institutional autonomy need not bring this disjunction between national, regional and local levels for State funded educational institutions. A coherent strategy (for access to lifelong learning) between levels could incorporate a space for institutional autonomy within it.

The recent changes in Russia to implement *per capita* funding for education is viewed as having a negative impact on regional education institutions:

For regional education the new provision [of per capita funding] also has a major negative effect: most provincial schools are small and the number of pupils there constantly decreases. Therefore, after the implementation of per capita financing, their budget sharply decreases as well. This leads to closing small schools and creating large regional or district educational centres, to which pupils of small schools get transferred (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

It is important to emphasise that a regional strategic level needs to be informed by guiding principles and strategies at national level rather than left in an *ad hoc* manner to each region without any national input. This seems to be a danger of for example, the Russian approach in relation to access, at least based on the interview of a senior official from the Committee for Education of the administration of St. Petersburg:

How can a strategic systemic approach at national level be developed to drive and implement policy to better promote access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups – including at levels of prison education, non-formal education and high school? *Well, as for the national strategy, it has been elaborated by the Ministry of Education and the Russian Labor organisation (the organisation dealing with the matters of the population employment). According to this strategy, every region was supposed to elaborate its own programmes for support and help to the population. As far as I know, all 83 regions of the country have elaborated such programmes. I might be mistaken, but*

in the end of March it was announced that 78 of the country regions were in the process of elaborating its own programmes (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Both informants expressed unawareness when were asked of a national/government strategy and especially upcoming plans concerning better promotion of access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups – including at levels of prison education, non-formal education and high school. They said they can only be responsible for the current programmes their departments are running and cannot really talk about the plans of the government they are not informed about. Nonetheless, the representative of the Committee for Education explained that the current national strategy regarding education is very region specific (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A major theme pervading the Russian national report is that of neglect of the regions regarding access to lifelong learning:

Uneven distribution of educational resources across the country is to a large extent conditioned by poorly developed infrastructure at the periphery. Educational institutions are mainly concentrated in Moscow, St. Petersburg and big regional centres whereas the infrastructure in the rest of the vast territory of the country is rather undeveloped. The informants argue that the quality of educational services offered by provincial and metropolitan institutions differs drastically. The range of available formal and informal educational programmes, courses and subjects at the periphery is also limited. As one of the informants puts it, *the first obstacle is that in the provinces you cannot obtain your education reasoning only from your personal wishes and choices. You necessarily have to direct your attention to the programmes they can offer. It is much easier in St. Petersburg: you have the whole spectrum of professions and disciplines. You are welcome to choose what you wish.* The informants also evaluate the professional qualifications of provincial teaching staff as rather low. The students in such regions have worse accesses to literature and new information technologies. The abovementioned problem is especially topical for a number of ethnic minorities living at the territory of the Russian Federation. Paradoxically, the representatives of some small ethnic groups have the only opportunity to professionally learn their native language and investigate their local culture – namely to do that in the metropolises: Moscow and St. Petersburg. As our informant puts it, *this institute in Petersburg is practically the only place where teachers of local languages are educated. Then we come back home and we teach our children* (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

This finding of a neglect of a regional focus in Russia is reinforced by the following account from the Russian national report:

Both informants found it difficult to say whether the government provides any support for individuals with specific responsibility for developing adult education services at a local or regional level. At least, none of the Committees, where interviews were conducted, reported any such experience (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A regional strategic focus in relation to access and lifelong learning cannot, however, be divorced from consideration of broader issues of relative social inequalities between regions. Field et al's (2007) OECD report emphasises that within countries regional autonomy in spending may cause disparities in the level of provision, unless it is balanced by mechanisms to redistribute resources to poorer regions. This social inclusion issue across regions is applicable for example, to Spain and Poland, with their high variations in regional income and wealth (p.119).

Recognising and overcoming transport problems is a key dimension to facilitating access to education in Norway. As noted in the Norwegian national report, 17 percent of adults that participate in educational offers from lower secondary school to tertiary education state that transport barriers hinder their participation (Stensen & Ure 2010). Transport was also observed as being a key barrier to access in the Hungarian national report:

The infrastructure of the region is poor and it is often difficult and time consuming for the students to travel to the local education centres for consultations. For some of them, this is a critical barrier (Balogh et al., 2010).

This issue of transport was also adverted to in the Estonian national report, combined with a view that physical proximity of an education institution can bring a psychological proximity as well for at least some students:

To some extent, higher education has become more accessible due to colleges opened in regions. An opportunity to study close to one's home decreases transport and accommodation costs. Local colleges are also perceived as more student friendly (Tamm & Saar 2010).

It is evident that anticipating and overcoming transport problems requires a regional strategy for access.

6.1.1 (xi) A grant system for traditionally underrepresented groups (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR) that provides a satisfactory income and which includes free third level fees for such traditionally excluded groups (PROCESS INDICATOR)

Financial barriers for socio-economically disadvantaged groups to access education need to be overcome. It is a necessary condition to facilitate access though not a sufficient condition. This needs to occur through a grant system for traditionally underrepresented groups that provides a satisfactory income and which includes free third level fees for such traditionally excluded groups. The Irish national report observes that there is a system of both grants and exemption for fees for those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

The principal sources of financial support available to students in Ireland are maintenance grants, the 'top-up' grant, the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA), the Student Assistance Fund, and the Millennium Partnership Fund. The maintenance grant scheme provides finance for students in full-time Post-Leaving Certificate Courses, and full-time higher education undergraduate and postgraduate university courses (Dooley et al., 2010).

However, the amount of the grant is perceived as being clearly inadequate (Dooley et al., 2010).

According to the Belgian (Flanders) national report, the following disadvantaged groups are fully exempt from course fees when participating at a centre for adult education in the formal education sector:

- persons who take on a course in 'general education' (second chance education);
- persons who qualify for a subsistence income;

- asylum-seekers and certain other categories of non-nationals;
- people who have signed a naturalisation contract or people who have obtained a naturalisation certificate;
- detainees residing in Belgian penitentiaries;
- job-seekers in receipt of a job-seeker's allowance or unemployment benefits who register for a pathway-to-work programme recognised by VDAB (Flemish Public Employment and Vocational Training Service);
- unemployed, compulsory registered job-seekers who are not yet entitled to a job seeker's allowance;
- People in part-time or full-time compulsory education. Courses at a centre for basic education are free for everyone (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

A criticism in the Austrian national report is of the scope and amount of such grant funding:

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.

We don't have a sophisticated scholarship system. Scholarships exist, but when compared globally or internationally, it is not developed well (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

This funding provision for socio-economically disadvantaged groups appears more developed in Hungary:

Regular and extra financial supports are funded from state resources and are given to socially disadvantaged students. On top of this, there are other possibilities as well, such as local government and foundation scholarships (Balogh et al., 2010).

However, there does appear to be an issue in Hungary regarding fees for education for those living in poverty:

Despite the fact that this is an elite [State] institute, students sometimes make a petition to ask for a reduction of their tuition fee. As this is quite rare, there is no special committee for these kinds of requests, and the decision is made by the head of the institute. The answer is usually positive and students can either receive a reduction or be allowed the possibility of paying by installments (Balogh et al., 2010).

The assumption expressed in this Hungarian national report extract, namely, that elite high academic performance equates with being wealthy, is an assumption which requires challenge.

Overcoming financial barriers to higher education was also raised in the Bulgarian national report:

I think that the most effective way for expanding the access of disadvantaged groups to higher education is by reducing tuition fees and providing special scholarships for the representatives of such groups. I believe this is also the fairest way to do it (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

A pertinent point made here is the need to waive fees for those attending preparatory courses for university in Bulgaria:

One way for expanding access to disadvantaged groups is for these courses to be free for them, i.e. if the state covers the expenses for the preparatory courses (Boyadjieva et al., 2010)

The Estonian national report also recognises the need for a grant system to promote access to education for those living in poverty:

Another great incentive would be a study support system [in secondary school for adults] similar to that used in vocational and higher educational institutions – student grants for those who do well at school. Taking into account that many adult learners come from deprived families or have small children of their own, low paid work or no work at all a grant would be a very important incentive to continue their studies (Tamm & Saar 2010).

6.1.1(xii) A coherent support strategy for access to third level education for orphans and young people in care (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

Based largely on developmental psychologist Bowlby's (1968, 1973, 1980) significant work on attachment theory for the World Health Organisation, orphanages have been phased out in many countries due to recognition of the need of children for attachment to a specific sustained caregiver rather than to a series of members of staff in an orphanage. Subsequent to Bowlby's work, other research in developmental psychology has emphasised the pivotal role of one significant other for promoting mental health (Levitt 1991; Antonucci 1990). Thus, orphanages have been largely replaced for adoption and foster care in Western Europe. However, orphanages still remain in a number of countries in Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia. Against this backdrop, the question arises as to how to better support orphans and those in care, in order to facilitate their access to lifelong learning, including university education.

The situation in Estonia reveals a lack of systematic and strategic support for orphans in relation to access to lifelong learning and university education, with a rather *ad hoc* approach being employed on this issue:

Some students come from children's homes. They receive support from local authorities. Children's homes also take interest in their progress (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A different school in the Estonian national report illustrates a largely informal relation and strategy of supports for orphans:

Problematic students often come from children's homes. We cooperate with children's homes, keep in touch (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Strategic direction is clearly needed at national level for this target group for access, including through dialogue with the young people themselves about how the Estonian State can better support their education and provide them with emotional support during their time of accessing education, where needed.

The Estonian national report provides the following figures for orphans:

Orphans and children deprived of parental care (according to the Ministry of Social Affairs 1,420 children lived in children's homes and in foster care as at 15th May 2008; as at 31st December 2007, 455 children were in foster care (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The need for strategic direction for access to education for orphans, including provision of necessary supports, appears to be particularly acute in Russia. The Russian national report gives the following account:

The number of orphans in Russia remains on a very high level and most institutions for children left without parental custody are full. Orphans under 18 years live in orphanages or board school and receive regular primary and secondary education. The level of education in those schools is normally lower than in regular schools; therefore, orphans have quite unfavorable conditions when entering vocational and higher professional education institutions because their qualification is often lower than that of their counterparts. Many of them, however, aren't eager to continue their education. Unfortunately, the statistics on educational and career paths of young people leaving orphanages is unavailable (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Specific supports for orphans described in the Russian national report are as follows:

According to the law 'On Education' from 2000, orphans and children without parental custody are accepted to the formal vocational and higher professional education institutions without competition. In other words, they can pass all exams with the lowest pass grade and be accepted. The age limit for this law has been changed from 18 y.o. to 23 y.o. Orphans and children without parental custody are provided with free education and full provision during all time of their studies (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

All orphan students, along with the academic scholarship, also receive monthly social scholarship. Today, their academic scholarship is 400 rubles and the social scholarship is 600 rubles. Therefore, an orphan student can rely on a 1000-ruble scholarship each month. Besides, the state gives more money to the school in order to provide orphan students with better lunches, stationary and hygienic products (tooth paste, soap, etc.,) (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The Russian national report provides the following figures for orphans:

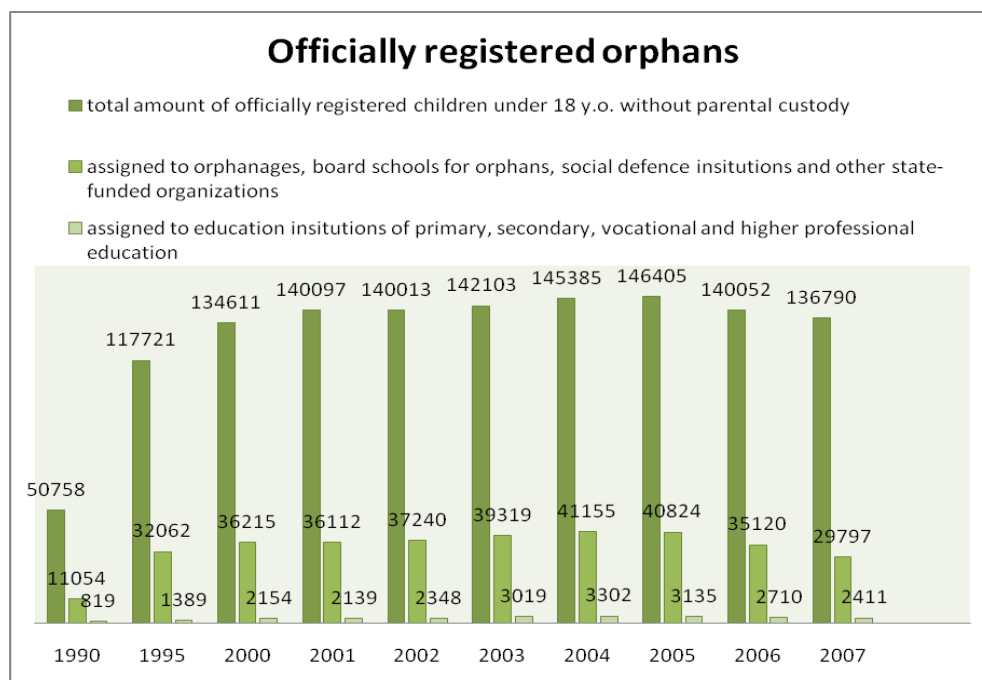


Figure 3. Official statistics on children without parental custody over the period 1990-2007 (in Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

In the Lithuanian national report, it is evident that supports for orphans are not sustained and may occur in an *ad hoc* manner:

As there is The Vilnius SOS Children's Village in the neighborhood in Ozo Street where there are 70 orphaned or abandoned children living, the school management and school teachers organised students' voluntary work there. However, this was only for two years and now according to the management only some individual students are involved, but no organised efforts are taken (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The Lithuanian national report also highlights a missed opportunity for interaction and supports between a teacher training institution and an orphanage:

Two meters away from the Teacher Training Faculty there is a Centre of Orphaned and Abandoned Children. Our faculty prepares social workers...but there's no contact with them (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

This is further indicative of a lack of strategic approach for orphans and children in care to access education.

This group may be particularly vulnerable in the context of the current recession. This is an implication of the following words in the Bulgarian national report:

The financial crisis will undoubtedly create serious difficulties for the various aspects of university education, as well as for certain social groups. These difficulties will be many times stronger for the representatives of disadvantaged groups because their resources for coping with the crisis are much less as compared to the other groups (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Some financial support for this orphans is provided in Russia such as free education:

According to the law 'On Education' from 2000, orphans and children without parental custody are accepted to the formal vocational and higher professional education institutions without competition. In other words, they can pass all exams with the lowest pass grade and be accepted. The age limit for this law has been changed from 18 y.o. to 23 y.o. Orphans and children without parental custody are provided with free education and full provision during all time of their studies (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

However, there are a range of barriers and problems for this group, according to the Russian national report:

The measures aimed at increasing the access to education for another socially disadvantaged category – orphans - also proved to be malfunctioning. According to the law, orphans are accepted to the formal vocational and higher professional education institutions without competition with the lowest pass grade. The institution provides such learners with free education and full provision (including accommodation) during all time of their studies. First of all, many institutions try to avoid such help to their learners in order to get rid of extra expenses. The second major problem is that qualification of orphans received in orphanages and board schools is so low that they are unable to pass entry exams even with the minimal result. Therefore, the only option for them is very low-rated education institutions with non-demanded specialisations and no competition due to low interest to them on the part of both learners and employers. The number of orphans entering such institutions is still very low. Therefore, it appears that orphans, who often require much more adaptation and social inclusion than their counterparts a priori, have no opportunities to obtain higher education despite the privilege conditions provided by the law (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Social and emotional supports, academic supports and broader career advice is clearly needed to be made available to orphans in the context of Russia, Estonia and Lithuania, as well as Hungary and Bulgaria, where orphans were also referred to in their national reports. Financial support for fees and accommodation is an important provision but it requires much more than this to ensure access to education for this particularly vulnerable group.

6.1.1 (xiii) Performance indicators and targets of institutions to increase accountability as part of institutional mainstreaming of access issues (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

Targets and indicators provide a key feature of an organic system, namely, they provide a feedback process on system level interventions. The Slovenian national report highlights the dearth of indicators and targets in relation to access for traditionally underrepresented groups:

In Slovenia, institutions usually have not set up any specific targets for the inclusion of different risk groups. The only risk group identified in Slovenia with regards to quotas are students from other countries. The ministry defines these quotas. They vary from 1-2 %. Other groups are not defined (Ivančič et al., 2010).

It is evident from the Austrian national report that there are not only no targets in relation to access but that there is strong resistance at an institutional level to developing policies on access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups:

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* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Against the backdrop of such attitudinal responses at an institutional level, the Austrian national report recognises that:

Austria has a lower number of graduates from tertiary education than comparable countries in Europe (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

In similar vein, targets for access are not a feature of the Bulgarian system, as illustrated in indirect fashion from the following interview response highlighted in the Bulgarian national report:

SWU does not have policies and programmes specially directed to the groups at risk: representatives of minorities, people on social welfare, single parents, early school leavers, parentless children and former prisoners. There are no preparatory classes available for disadvantaged groups; preparatory courses for applicant students are organised, open for all who wish to attend; there are course fees (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

In contrast, the Scottish national report provides a rare example of educational institutions being required to engage with and meet targets and performance indicators regarding access to education for underrepresented groups:

The Performance Indicators for colleges include: student retention and outcome; number of staff with teaching qualification; student satisfaction (as measured by a survey); and a range of financial indicators. The colleges are also required to provide data on the number of students from deprived areas and these are used to allocate additional funding to colleges to support these students (Weedon et al., 2010).

The college stressed that it was committed to admissions procedures which ensured maximum access and had targets in the corporate plan to increase the number of students that come from socially and economically deprived groups:

We measure what our college profile looks like and we can look at the postcode data and see what percentage come from these areas. I have said I want to see a year on year increase but there are also various European projects that are specifically about reaching these hard to reach groups (Vice Principal, College A) (Weedon et al., 2010).

It is a logical expansion of a strategic approach to develop such benchmarks and targets at an institutional level stimulated through national (and transnational) initiatives.

Targets are also adverted to in the Belgian (Flanders) national report:

The interviewee concludes that it is therefore important that the attention for specific disadvantaged groups is embedded in the mission and vision of the organisation:
Open School used to have a written strategic plan regarding specific targets and benchmarks in attracting specific disadvantaged or underrepresented groups. Today, this

plan needs an update (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The English national report recognises targets in at least some contexts of higher education, though it seems not all contexts:

One of its [university] targets is to meet government benchmarks for inclusivity amongst state school pupils and lower socio economic groups, which it feels that it is successful in doing (Engel et al., 2010).

From the Director's point of view, although there are not specific targets for at risk groups, the university has *processes for monitoring the demographics of students*, but no specific targets (Engel et al., 2010).

Targets require adequate data for review of the institution's meeting of those targets. Information gaps in relation to the Roma in Hungary appear to militate against targets and indicators for progress in relation to the access of this group to lifelong learning:

Roma students are mostly enrolled on teacher further education courses, where the total number of students reaches 1500 annually. These teachers usually work in kindergardens or elementary schools and are quite successful in their own environment: they have a stable job and generally a good position as these courses are usually for leaders. It is impossible to estimate the number of Roma students in the institute, both because there are no records made of students' ethnic origins, and also because most of them do not even come to Budapest, as they study at the local consultation centres all over Hungary. They are completely integrated in the study groups and do not receive any special kind of support (Balogh et al., 2010).

Decentralised education sites appear to require particular strategic attention in order to collate such information on ethnicity which would be needed for targets.

A university interviewee in Estonia made the following point:
A couple of weeks ago the university's lifelong learning principles were adopted. These principles include the policy of supporting underrepresented target groups (Tamm & Saar 2010).

According to Tamm (August 2010, personal communication), there is "*probably not*" any evidence that targets were set in this process for inclusion of underrepresented groups, nor of any association of lifelong learning with the goals of social inclusion or active citizenship. Tamm (August 2010, personal communication) further comments:

As the number of pupils who graduate the secondary school or gymnasium is decreasing the universities are forced to give attention to underrepresented groups as adult. This is rather the logic of the market.

It is evident from the following account of the Estonian Education Ministry official that EU funds may need to be better promoted by universities as to their availability for students and also that in the absence of specific targets there may be little incentive for the institution to promote access:

What are the most important issues for your department? What should your department do to make access to education easier for those groups who are most at risk of being left outside the educational system? *What we have done and continue to do is improving the*

access of the Russians to education. They have an opportunity to have an extra year for language learning (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Is this extra year free of charge for those students who are accepted to government funded study places? What about those who pay for their studies? *All institutions get money from the Structural Funds for Estonian language courses (Tamm & Saar 2010).*

Do they use this opportunity? Do they know about it? *It is a new thing; it was introduced only last year if I remember correctly. Support can be applied for through the Integration Foundation. We had a wide discussion. Private universities that have few government funded study places can apply for money through the Integration Foundation (Tamm & Saar 2010).*

What about public universities? It was said that those who pay for their studies must also pay for the extra year of learning Estonian? *Universities have not been very interested so far. They can get money from the Structural Funds. A lot depends on how active a university is (Tamm & Saar 2010).*

An implication of the above interview extract is that the State needs to take a greater role in providing incentives and monitoring their implementation in relation to access for underrepresented groups.

As Field et al's (2007, p.127) OECD report notes, target setting tends to be criticised on the grounds that it distorts practice away from broad but desirable objectives towards more limited measurable goals. Yet this is a criticism applicable to targets set exclusively in terms of outcome indicators rather than also wider process and structural indicators which allow for a more dynamic approach to analysis and evaluation. Process indicators, for example, document institutions' and nations' effort towards achieving particular goals. Spillane et al's (2006) words in the context of school institutions may also be extended to the context of third level institutions:

Almost three decades of scholarship on schools from an institutional perspective suggests, among other things, that schools 'decouple' formal structure (i.e., administration and management) from core activities (i.e., teaching and learning) (p.56).

Process indicators and targets are one way to bridge this gap between formal structures and perceived core activities. Indicators and targets for progress at institutional level in relation to access would concentrate the work of the educational institution such as a university on systemic implementation of access initiatives in their formal structure, core activities, strategies and policies. These targets and indicators would be placed in the university's performance agreements with government departments. An approach reliant on targets and accountability of a university's performance in relation to access would ensure that access related issues become central to the education institution's work and not be merely peripheral.

This need for implementation of institutional mainstreaming is described in the Norwegian national report as a 'roadmap' concept:

Mainstreaming, defined as the systematic integration of the priorities and needs of unprivileged groups in all policies and general measures of Oslo University College (OUC), from the planning stage through to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Once this integration achieved, diversity becomes a 'normal phenomenon' in the

university college, which deliberately strives to be multicultural and international (Stensen & Ure 2010).

This Norwegian example, in effect adopts a systemic focus to institutional issues of access. It offers a clear way forward for other educational institutions across different countries to ensure not only the centrality of focus in relation to access but also that a framework of accountability and evaluation occurs in a systematic fashion for access and diversity related issues. Access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups requires institutional mainstreaming.

The Irish national report also provides an account of mainstreaming of access issues throughout the different levels of the university, so that it is viewed as a core dimension of the university's work:

The Senior Management Official believes in integration. It's the involvement of the right people and as many people as possible. It's taking it to the top committees...it's not separate, and I think that's really important that it's not separate. It's not a separate activity at all. I think the university council and board are all aware of the importance of the access initiative...They have to look at it as part of the structure...It's a very integrated approach (Dooley et al., 2010).

It is important that any targeting strategy does not impose unwanted labels on students from traditionally underrepresented groups, nor that they are marked with a deficit identity within an institution (Spring 2007; Downes & Gilligan 2007). This fear with regard to targeting of groups is aptly expressed by the following interviewee in the management of a Russian third level institution, as quoted in the Russian national report:

There are also no specific conditions organised for the representatives of traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds (basically orphans) or measures undertaken in order to facilitate the adaptation of such students to the student community or educational process. That's how the deputy director comments on this issue: We don't separate these students in any way. Neither do we mark them out. We don't want them to become a kind of 'rara avis'. In other words, they are educated just like the others. The entry demands for them are the same as for the rest of the students, right? The only exception is a number of additional documents and the authorisation from the medical board. If the medical board admits them to this profession, why should we treat them differently? Why should there be any exceptions? The state takes care of them anyway: these groups of students get social scholarships. Thus, it is the state that takes care of them, but we don't want to treat them differently, they don't need any special approach... That is how we fully adapt them to future life. If we overprotect them or isolate them, then they will suffer in the future, outside the school. People will simply harass them. No, they get usual treatment and education, and it serves them well [Third Level Institution] (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A different concern in relation to targets was raised in the English national report:

Being able to actually teach people in the way they need to be taught. And I don't think national targets help! I don't think they help at all, particularly when you're talking about very, very hard to reach communities, they don't want a qualification, they will want one but that will be down the line. So the Skills for Life targets, for example, you're no longer able to do that very important work because you've got to be working up to a level 2 qualification. So I think flexibility within funding, and Skills for Life for me is a classic example. You used to be able to go out and work with communities, now you're so

worried about getting a certain amount of people through at different levels, that I think it diminishes the work that was there. So I'm not saying no national targets, but flexibility within that target (Inclusion manager) (Engel et al., 2010).

This amounts not so much to an argument against targets but more for a wider dimension of targets and indicators that can be brought about through structural and process indicators, including at institutional level.

It is the Scottish national report which again offers most detail on an approach to targets and indicators:

Within the widening participation measures there were a number of specific target groups – these are driven by the performance indicators developed by the funding council in collaboration with the UK wide university sector. There are a number of benchmarks for groups considered under-represented in higher education and institutions are expected to work towards these benchmarks. Data is therefore gathered nationally by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). There are three sets of data: those that focus on first generation students which gathers data on those from state school background as well as socio-economic status and post-code of the applicant; a second set of data is gathered in relation to disabled students; and a third focuses on ethnic minority groups. The Widening Participation officer explained that widening participation measures included a number of different groups: *Within that you will find all kinds of people, you mentioned earlier on people who maybe have learning difficulties, those who are disabled in some way, ethnic minorities, they will be found in there as will everybody else, so it's a melting pot* (Weedon et al., 2010).

The Scottish national report provides the following figures to provide accountability in relation to university performance on access issues:

The university had had some success in increasing the proportion of first degree undergraduate students from state schools but the increase had been small. In 2004-05 67% came from state schools and this increased to 70% in 2007-08. However, this is short of its benchmark of 81% in 2007-08. In addition, this increase of students from state school did not impact on its intake of those from lower social class which fell to around 17%. This was short of the benchmark of 21% and the intake of those from low participation neighbourhoods fell to 8% whilst the benchmark was 11%. This would suggest that the university, in spite of a range of measures, had not been particularly successful in widening participation for those from low socio-economic backgrounds. The institution had exceeded its benchmark in terms of disabled students as 3.7% of its undergraduate population were in receipt of DSA and the benchmark was 3.2%. Interestingly the institution did not include disabled students within the remit of the widening participation measures. Perhaps it was also worth noting that more than half of the disabled student population are dyslexic students and they did not necessarily come from low socio-economic backgrounds (Weedon et al., 2010).

This account from the Scottish national report in relation to outcome indicators as targets highlights the difficulty of interpreting why these targets were not met. To adequately do so, there is a need to focus on process dimensions, in other words to adopt a wider framework of analysis on not only outcome indicators, but also on structural and process indicators which can serve as benchmarks and targets for system level change. Allied with this, is the need for ongoing qualitative feedback from students and representatives from the target groups who did not become students to ascertain what kinds of barriers to

their access to education are being experienced. In doing so, the wider issue of institutional culture and peer and cohort effects among students and target groups of underrepresented students need interrogation.

The conception of school 'climate' is gaining increasing currency in examining alienation from the school system at primary and post-primary level. The lived experiences of students in relation to the university climate and institutional culture may be that they are treated and implicitly assumed to be the 'other'. It is this background horizon of otherness that can only be overcome by a combination of a critical mass of students 'like us' from underrepresented groups and also by cultural and meaningful spaces for such students to feel a sense of assumed connection and belongingness to a university culture which thereby becomes not alien.

The issue of targets relies on the corresponding political will to have consequences flowing from these targets. This may not always be the case, as in the example of this Scottish university:

Although the [university] interviewees expressed continuing support for widening participation measures there was a sense that the current economic climate is likely to impact on funding for such measures. There seems to be little pressure on the institution to achieve its benchmarks, especially in relation to students from low socio-economic backgrounds and recent funding council measures are unlikely to change this (Weedon et al., 2010).

The elite university supports widening participation in principle, but continues to draw the vast majority of its students from the most advantaged backgrounds. Targets from the Scottish Funding Council on widening access objectives have not been met and no penalties have been incurred. The squeeze on public sector funding following the recession means that resources are likely to be withdrawn from widening access programmes and the university will need to recruit wealthier students, including those from overseas who pay much higher fees (Weedon et al., 2010).

It is this key question as to consequences for education institutions of not reaching targets that goes to the core of incentivisation of such institutions to promote access for traditionally underrepresented groups. It also raises the need for wider systemic indicators of institutional effort and not simply to focus on outcomes in relation to access performance. In doing so, a systems theory approach goes beyond narrow unidirectional causal explanations to recognise that interventions are part of complex causes in a complex system.

6.1.2 Formal education: Indicators at Micro-Meso levels

6.1.2 (i) Education institutional strategies for access for socio-economically disadvantaged groups (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

The English national report highlights how particular third level educational institutions place access central to their institutional ethos, strategies and structures:

In the college governance, there is a standards and diversity committee, and that's like board of governors' level, I attend that, where that really does monitor everything we're doing (Inclusion manager). The purpose of the standards and diversity committee is to

make sure that those whole access, widening participation, equalities issues were being acted to (Inclusion manager). The dedication to issues of widening participation and access is shown through the college's range of activities. As stated by a senior management representative, we try and go out into the communities, we go out into schools...part of the aims to be inclusive is the college's objective to respond to the needs of its local community: *we do go out and work in communities where the need is, and it is almost always successful. If you go out and work with people and I think that would be a major part of our tactic, if people aren't coming in, go out and work with them* (Inclusion manager). This fits in with the overarching ethos of the college, as perceived by a senior manager at the college, which is to be as learner-centred and community-centred as possible. The Inclusion and Diversity manager stated the importance of *being needs led, being genuinely inclusive* (Engel et al., 2010).

A similar strategic, structural focus for access to education is evident from this example of a tertiary institution in the Scottish national report:

The College's strategic plan 2007-2010... stated that the college had no desire to become a larger college and wished to continue to maximise funding to prioritise students from the most deprived backgrounds and contribute to social cohesion throughout the city. According to the Assistant Principal, College B had a responsibility *to provide innovative and inclusive education for learners* (Weedon et al., 2010).

This strategic plan also highlighted the role that the college played in the community and emphasised its key aims of inclusion and widening access:

We will continue to ensure access to provision via community-based learning to some of (the city's) poorest communities....it is crucial that we maintain and build on our commitment to be an inclusive and outward looking institution that welcomes and supports learners from all communities (Weedon et al., 2010).

The Bulgarian national report highlights the explicit expression of access priority goals in the mission statement of a Bulgarian university:

Through its Mission, Shumen University strives to provide a quality education, to introduce innovative educational methods and practices to improve the access of disadvantaged groups to education, and to maintain contacts with local communities (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

The Irish national report highlights a consistent feature of Irish universities, namely, the availability of a distinct role and service in the institutions for promotion of access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups:

The Senior Access Official explained, *on the access side, I look after students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and my remit is to encourage students from those backgrounds into third level education*. The access service's schools programme works in partnership with school and college staff, local communities, undergraduates, and young people attending primary and secondary schools to change attitudes to education in the community and ensure the students stay within the school system and continue onto third level (Dooley et al., 2010).

It is important to emphasise that this access office operates against the backdrop of institutional structures and strategies to promote access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups and other underrepresented groups:

The Senior Access Official explained that the...*Access Programme has a steering committee and high level management from the college, as well as...student and staff representation...We are also part of...[the college] strategic plan and as well as that there is an Access plan that is being written and developed, we're part of all of those conversations.* The Senior Management Official clarified that [University B] just completed its Access Plan, which does, of course look at access and all the access issues...*We're looking now at the implementation of it...We're very mindful, that of course every college is required to have a plan following the National Access Strategy but...its implementation is contingent on funds being available outside of the University, where the University has no control.* The Senior Management Official explained that *[the access service] isn't on its own...it's a very integral part of the University, it's linked, the...[access] staff report to me they know that I will bring the issues through to council* (Dooley et al., 2010).

This Belgian educational institution provider of both formal and non-formal education provides another illustration of adopting a strategic approach to access:

The choice of paying extra attention to the target group of unskilled adults and adults with low levels of prior education was made in the organisation's strategic plan 2006-2009. This was in fact a consequence of the context analysis the organisation made in 2005. Because there is a large amount of training opportunities for adults in Brussels – formal and non-formal – the organisation tried to identify specific groups of non-participants in lifelong learning. The context analysis showed that there was no need for more mainstream non-formal adult education activities for middle class groups, but a specific need for programmes for people with considerable educational arrears. Especially because the barriers to learning for unschooled and low-educated adults in a metropolis like Brussels are many and complex (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

However, in contrast, this Belgian university has the following mission statement:

University College Ghent strives to excel in education, research, service provision and practice of the arts. Through the expertise of its staff and graduates and the valorisation of its research, University College Ghent is making a valuable contribution to a critical, creative and open society (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Significantly, there is no explicit goal here of the university's role in relation to promotion of access, social inclusion and cultural diversity.

Consideration of an example from Hungary also reveals the need for greater clarity in relation to access to education at an institutional mission statement level. This is with regard to an institution which,

Including full-time and part-time programmes – has more than 9000 students and more than 600 teachers. In the last fifty years more than 300 000 teachers were trained in the school. Based on the mission statement and on the interviews, the objectives of the college [Eszterházy Károly College] are as follows:

- To continue the long tradition of teacher training: to preserve traditions and modernise the college at the same time. This school has been one of the main teacher training centres of the country for fifty years.
- To increase the choice of specialisations. At present the college has four faculties (Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Teacher Training and Knowledge Technology,

- Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Faculty of Natural Sciences) and offers more than seventy specialisations
- To open to Europe as much as possible, eg. by offering joint degrees (programmes in cooperation with other European third level institutes)
 - To preserve autonomy: although many Hungarian colleges and universities were fused due to practical and financial reasons, Eszterházy Károly College is still independent and would like to preserve its autonomy.
 - Life Long Learning: The Mission Statement says: ‘We offer the possibility of Life Long Learning with our distance education, adult education, vocational and teacher training course’ (Balogh et al., 2010).

It is notable here from this Hungarian third level institution that there is no fundamental commitment to access to education for underrepresented groups in its basic mission. However, the Hungarian national report suggests that there is some strategy for access in this third level regional centre of education:

Eger is in the eastern, less economically developed part of Hungary, which means that students often come from a less well-off background. Even if they are not disadvantaged, they frequently struggle with financial problems and have to be supported by the school. As the lack of students’ financial resources is a well-known fact, handling this problem is part of the strategy of the institute (Balogh et al., 2010).

A Slovenian interviewee implies that national influence would prompt a strategic approach to access but in the absence of such national direction the institution adopts neither strategy nor structure in this area:

There is also no formal committee to promote and implement an agenda for increased access in the college and they are also not systematically monitoring the number of marginalised students. *We would tackle this if the number or pressure were, let’s say, bigger* (Ivančič et al., 2010).

According to the Lithuanian national report, there is a need for external review of strategies and structures of educational institutions in relation to access. This implies direction from a national level for such reviews:

It may be presumed that a sceptical attitude to institutional strategies may be a reason why there is no clear structure and systemic approach while promoting the access of adults to the education system. It is acknowledged that institutional strategies work only through study programmes which are more or less based on those strategies. Moreover, even though internal evaluation is being constantly conducted, there is no external review process. A problem of developing a systemic approach could be solved if ‘paper’ strategies and implemented programmes would be more interrelated. Also, the system of external review should be better elaborated. The current situation states that promotion and implementation of agenda for increased access is considered rather additional work than the main work for some employees at university (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

Finance appears to be one barrier, at least in Lithuania, to an institutional set of strategies and structures to implement access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups:

According to management representative’s comments [in a State university] there are not sufficient finances for specialised committees working on increased access (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

However, a key issue is one of strategic priority and appropriate implementation structures if access to education were a sufficient priority at national and institutional level. Much seems to depend on the individual will of people in power in educational institutions in Lithuania, according to its national report:

Social Inclusion/Access/Lifelong Learning Committee at institution level [of the private third level institution] does not exist. This kind of support is based on personal will and initiative (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The college is typical of most state-owned higher education organisations in terms of the promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups. Speaking about the efforts of the college that the students were not eliminated the management strongly disagrees that students drop out from the education system because of their social background: *Students are eliminated not because they are from a particular social group. It is because of their academic achievements only* (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

This response from a third level institutional official reveals little understanding of the concept of indirect discrimination or of structural barriers that impact disproportionately on specific groups regarding access to education. The Lithuanian national report reiterates that there is a low level of systemic institutional priority for access to education for underrepresented groups across the higher education sector in the country:

The current situation states that promotion and implementation of agenda for increased access is considered rather additional work than the main work for some employees at colleges. Most additional work for increased access is ‘put’ on teachers’ and students’ ‘shoulders’: they act as informal mentors and consultants etc. Such practice can be regarded positively, however; a systemic approach to a better promotion of access should be developed instead of relying only in the personal will and general institutional climate (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

A similar picture to Lithuania emerges in Austria where there is little evidence of educational strategy or structure to guide or drive access to education for marginalised groups:

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 a inseparable entity, research-guided teaching in combination with application-oreintated research are seen as making the institution highly attractive *for the sharpest minds*. At this level of self-description and presentation lifelong learning or access are not mentioned as relevant topics (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Neither of the interviewees could tell about any institutional support services [in this university] in order to facilitate access for socially disadvantaged groups (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

The Austrian national report continues with the following interviewee response to the question, ‘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, lifelong learning 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. 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 lifelong learning (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

A common thread emerges from the above example of this Austrian university: There is an absence of strategic policy level commitment at institutional level to access and social inclusion. This is given expression through the lack of structures such as key committees to promote these issues within the university. Against this backdrop it is unsurprising that there are no institutional supports at the university to facilitate access and social inclusion. This is not a case of lipservice being paid to access issues, there is not even lipservice being paid. Neither institutional discourse nor practice promotes access in any way for socio-economically disadvantaged groups in their examples.

Of further concern is that both interviewees from senior management in the university are of the view that this university is typical in Austria with regard to access issues:

In your opinion, with regard to promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups, is your organisation a) typical of most formal educational organisations, 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* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Also the interviewee from operational level considers the organisation 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

However, there is at least some openness to reform in this area from an interviewee in a university of applied sciences in Austria:

The respondent from the operational level admitted not to know anything about the existence of a committee responsible for social inclusion / lifelong learning / 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:

Directly regarding a committee (in charge of social inclusion) I don't know anything right now. 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Similar grounds for hope in the context of Austria is the recognition of 'diversity management' in one university's strategic plan:

Within the university's strategic plan for 2009, the issues of social inclusion, outreach and access for traditionally underrepresented groups are only touched upon the heading

of ‘Diversity Management’³⁶. 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 internalisation and mobility programmes. 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 victimisation should be put in place (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Another Austrian interviewee points to a potential role for such access issues to be manifested at a strategic and structural level through performance agreements between the university and the Education ministry:

There is no strategy of plan for promoting increased access as far as the interviewed person from management level knows...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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

However, it is notable that an Austrian Ministry of Science official indicated the relatively low priority given to social inclusion and access at both national level and also by Austrian university institutions:

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? 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? The Ministry of Science includes issues like social inclusion, access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups and non-formal education as part of lifelong learning. 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 lifelong learning 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)...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 lifelong learning and partly also within the framework of European Qualification Frame or also NQF. More is hard to achieve at the moment (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Workload and financial obstacles are perceived as further barriers to the development and implementation of an access strategy in Austria, according to the Ministry official:

³⁶ The Austrian national report explains that: ‘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 a 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 marginalised social groups’.

Reasons for the lack of acceptance from side of the community can also be 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...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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

The Ministry official presents a picture of momentum being required from international and national sources to raise awareness of access issues at institutional level in Austria:

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

If educational institutions receive international and national funding, there is a clear need for this to be employed as leverage with institutions to open their doors to a wider access strategy and agenda, including through dedicated strategic committees to monitor progress with regard to implementation of access to education and supports for such students' ongoing participation in education.

Interviewees in the Bulgarian national report offer the following aspects as key elements of a potential university institutional strategy for access:

...offering trainings that are directed at the concrete community, for instance assistant-teachers in Roma schools. Some NGOs support such activities; I know that the Open Society Institute gives scholarships to Roma students. There should be opportunities for students from socially disadvantaged groups in terms of financial support and grants (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Preparatory classes for students from disadvantaged groups are also not held, but the universities can be stimulated to develop such a practice by ensuring state scholarships for these students (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

This theme of university supports from the state to provide preparatory classes for socio-economically disadvantaged groups pervades the Bulgarian national report:

The state could encourage the institutions of higher education to improve the access of students from disadvantaged groups by organising career centre information days at the

universities with a special focus emphasis on recruiting minority students and by conducting free preparatory courses (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

The university does not organise preparatory classes for disadvantaged groups. This is a good idea, but for this purpose universities should be funded by the state or donor organisations by a competition, quota or other indicator. This is not possible for now. The universities themselves have no sufficient funds for this activity. And there is no guarantee that if they conduct such activity they can reap its fruit. There is no way to commit people to being students at only one institution (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

The Russian national report reveals a lack of centralised national direction in relation to access strategies and structures:

Organisations working with socially underrepresented groups...have to create their own strategies and norms and fit them into existing standard federal rules (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The connection and communication between the government departments and education institutions is necessary for successful solution of the problems of adult learning, education of socially disadvantageous categories and their access to education (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A number of problems are referred to in the Estonian national report which in effect display the need for a strategic leadership at national level on these issues. One such issue emerges from the interview with a university Vice-Rector:

Underrepresented groups do not get discounts and financial support to buy textbooks, etc. This is the problem that needs to be solved (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The university is also thinking about how to attract people who rarely go to courses or did this many years ago.

We organised a round table to discuss which programmes should be offered to the people who usually do not participate – the Russian-speaking population, disadvantaged groups, and senior citizens (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Three quarters of the providers of higher education do not make any concessions to the underrepresented groups (e.g. fee, etc). What can the ministry do to help? *We are planning to establish a support system based on needs. I cannot say that the universities are too interested in this system (Tamm & Saar 2010).*

There is a need to move beyond a focus on ‘tolerance’ to one of celebration of institutional cultural and subcultural diversity. The Bulgarian national report observes initial efforts at institutional cultural change:

Being a University of tolerance, we have taken several initiatives to improve the access to our university. These include: accepting students from disadvantaged groups who have not made the list of admitted candidates, improving the access to the university buildings (building ramps and, restrooms for people with disabilities, etc., (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Institutional strategies must also take on board the issue of change to the institutional culture itself of the university.

Jarvis (2007, 2008) develops a concept of ‘disjuncture’ in the learning context which is of relevance also for representation of and access to education themes in relation to marginalised groups. A disjunctural experience involves a challenge to the taken for granted life-world of the individual involving a ‘situation when our biography and the meaning that we give to our experience of a social situation are not in harmony’ (Jarvis 2007, p.3). Jarvis (2007) envisages disjuncture as a continuum (p.139), where at the extreme it leads to alienation and anomie in the learner. While Jarvis (2007) emphasises that some disjuncture is necessary for new learning, and the existential-phenomenological tradition of Heidegger (1927) would conceive of a sense of uncanniness or not-at-homeness at an inevitable part of the *Angst* of experience, the concern is to minimise such experience of extreme disjuncture between the individual and the organisational culture of the third level institution. A key path to do so is not only through organisational supports but through a critical mass of students from similar backgrounds of marginalisation to contribute to the creation of new organisational cultures and subcultures. Williams et al., (1993) describe the formation of institutional culture, where culture is the commonly held and relatively stable beliefs, attitudes and values that exist within organisation. They define an attitude as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner to a given object or idea.

Resonant with Bourdieu’s conceptions of cultural capital, Jarvis’ (2007) emphasis on disjuncture as where ‘our biographical repertoire is not longer sufficient to cope automatically with our situation’ (p.11) is particularly pertinent for those experiencing marginalisation and a biographical repertoire where perhaps no one from their family has been to university before. This potentially alienating force of the institutional culture of the university needs to be addressed in an access strategy seeking to engage with those traditionally underrepresented at third level education.

An Austrian university interviewee invokes a conception of ‘strange’-ness which is somewhat resonant with Jarvis’s (2007) ‘disjuncture’:

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 university in the first place and they need support for this. That is the challenge (Rammel & Gottwald 2010)

Developing Jarvis’ concept of disjuncture would add to the above view of this university senior management official in an Austrian university that it is not simply about assimilation into the institutional culture – the university institutional culture itself must also change.

A 2006 communication from the Commission, cited in the Council Resolution of November 2007 on modernising universities emphasised ‘the importance of increasing

lifelong learning opportunities, widening higher education access to non-traditional and adult learners and developing the lifelong learning dimension of universities’.

Furthermore, it made explicit:

The need for universities to have sufficient autonomy, better governance and accountability in their structures to face new societal needs and to enable them to increase and diversify their sources of public and private funding in order to reduce the funding gap with the European Union’s main competitors

In reconciling this balance between the need for giving increased force to the imperative of widening access to education for marginalised groups on the one hand, and university autonomy on the other hand, the discourse tends to focus on *incentives* for institutions to improve access. A Commission staff working document (2009) gives an account of various plans and incentives to encourage higher education institutions to open up to lifelong learners based on evidence from countries set out in national reports that informed this Commission document. Part of this incentivisation process clearly needs to address the systemic gaps across educational institutions in a wide range of countries in relation to a clearly articulated commitment to access to education for marginalised groups in their mission statements, strategic plans and institutional structures to implement and review such plans.

6.1.2(ii) Development of outreach institutional strategies that go beyond mere information based models (PROCESS INDICATOR)

The European Commission (2006) gives emphasis to an information based approach to reaching those traditionally excluded and alienated from the educational system:

More information about the advantages of attending higher education is essential, notably for people who do not attempt to enter higher education because they are unaware or unconvinced of the opportunities it affords (Lee and Miller, 2005; Studley, 2003; Botello and Costa Pinto, 2001) (p. 26).

This point is not without validity as, for example, according to the National Adult Learning Survey (Scotland) (Ormston et al., 2007) learners are more likely to have received information about learning than those with low/no qualifications. A Commission staff working document (2009) reiterates this preoccupation with an informational focus and conceptualises this issue in terms of efficiency and its lack:

One of the biggest barriers to adults wishing to develop their key competences is information gaps and lack of efficient communication to reach those who are most at risk of social exclusion (in particular low qualified people) and being unemployed (p.81).

However, the limitations of such information based approaches need to be more fully recognised with regard to the target group of those experiencing socio-economic marginalisation.

The weaknesses of informational type approaches have already been recognised in psychology internationally with regard to drug prevention strategies (Morgan 2001). Information about different drugs by public authorities tends to have the unintended effect of promoting these drugs rather than promoting avoidance of substance use. It is

the construction of an abstract audience in informational approaches which is increasingly challenged in psychology. Moreover, Habermas (1987) traces the construction of the autonomous subject, the abstract individual, to the emergence of modernity³⁷.

Contextual relational dimensions to communication in reaching those from marginalised groups is a dimension that needs much more understanding in outreach strategies for access. This contextual and often interpersonal relational dimension challenges the relevance and efficacy of informational approaches that abstract from the individual to whom communication is being made. This is evident for example from the following Norwegian example:

Asked whether parents with immigrant background were not reached, our informant replied, No, it was too difficult, because it had to be a person from the local environment which could, who knew different places and who was engaged, quite simply (Stensen & Ure 2010).

My informant had an immigrant background and her experiences and knowledge was crucial for how they decided to recruit participants to the project. She knew where to reach them and how to move forward (Stensen & Ure 2010).

Similarly, the Belgian national report highlights the severe limitations to an informational approach to an abstract other:

The Sociale School Heverlee Centrum voor Volwassenenonderwijs vzw (SSH-CVO) also uses printed press (programme brochure, local newspaper, flyers, adverts, documents, etc.) and online tools (such as a website) to increase the access to their educational provision. Although this type of advertisement reaches the most people, a recent evaluation research by the SSH-CVO has shown the effects of this strategy are rather minimal (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

This Belgian national report continues with a related point from an interviewee:

Poor people have the feeling they belong to a different class, a different culture. They have a different way of handling written and printed information. It is hard to acculturate those people into a culture of learning that we are used to. They have a different language, they learn in different ways, etc. I would call it 'survival learning' – learning the things one needs in order to survive well (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

It cannot be assumed that institutions are even willing or aware of the need to develop an outreach dimension targeting underrepresented groups. This seems to be especially the case from the following Austrian and Bulgarian examples:

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 organising orientation events, implementing information facilities and in participating at education fairs... The interviewee from operational level again claimed

³⁷ In European thought, Heidegger's (1927) conception of *Dasein*, Derrida's (1981) attempts to resituate subjectivity and Levinas' (1991 [1969]) conception of the 'face' of the other are all attempts to challenge the assumed primacy of an abstract self-contained subject underpinning construction of an impersonal other.

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* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

...[there is a need for] 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Disadvantaged groups obtain comprehensive information about policies of admission. There are no special strategies for reaching these groups. The university establishes contacts with them aiming to expand their access to higher education through conducting advertising campaigns but I don't think there is a particular policy towards them (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

The college does not organise admission campaigns specifically targeted at improving the access of students from disadvantaged groups (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

This lack of awareness or willingness on the part of the third level institution to seek out students from traditionally underrepresented groups is a clear barrier to access and development of an appropriate outreach strategy.

The limitations to traditional information approaches in reaching marginalised groups also needs to recognise the issue of literacy assumptions in an informational approach:

According to the interviewed officer, the biggest challenge for adult education centres is making advertising for the area of literacy...to access illiterate people in a better way as *the folder cannot be read by somebody who cannot read* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Some of the interviewees' accounts across different countries recognise the limitations of informational approaches reliant on a logic of abstraction that is not tailored to the needs and experiences of the traditionally marginalised groups. Thus, for example, in the Belgian national report:

A lot of the promotion to open access for adults at risk is done through word-of-mouth-advertisement. According to both interviewees this is by far the most effective form of widening access. The organisation tries to cultivate this type of advertisement through different strategies:

- Community leaders and key figures in a community can take on the role of 'key influencers'. The SSH-CVO tries to give them incentives to do so;
- Participants and former participants are just as important in the process of widening access. They tell others about their learning experiences or someone in their community will hear about the courses, etc. Both strategies take limited budget but have unlimited potential (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Many groups [in non-formal education] are reached through word of mouth ... participants recommend the institute to friends or relatives. Furthermore cultural or religious communities as well as migrant associations are contacted by the organisation in order to bring information to people, who are difficult to reach. However, there is no proof whether this practice works well or not (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

This abstraction of the audience for communication of information in traditional information reliant approaches to promotion of education needs further critique. The very notion of an abstract impersonal other is a distinct historical social construct emanating from ancient Rome. As Hegel (1830-31) noted, ‘these two elements, which constitute Rome - political universality on the one hand, and the abstract freedom of the individual on the other - appear in the first instance, in the form of subjectivity’ (p.279). In Hegel’s (1830-31) words, the abstract Roman state and political constitution, ‘on the other side creates a personality [of citizenship] in opposition to that universality - the inherent freedom of the *abstract* ego, which must be distinguished from individual idiosyncrasy’ (p.279)³⁸. The Roman abstract subject (abstract other) as indifferent to individuality, contrasts with the ancient Greek emphasis on individuality.

The notion of an abstract other or abstract audience has been criticised by Gilligan’s (1982; 1990) research in developmental psychology³⁹. While discussing Gilligan’s (1982) challenge to abstraction of the logic of justice in moral reasoning, Benhabib (1987) states:

In assuming the standpoint [‘of the generalised other’], we abstract from the individuality and concrete identity of the other. We assume that...what constitutes his or her moral dignity is not what differentiates us from each other, but rather what we...have in common (p.87).

In the tradition of narrative, cultural psychology (Bruner 1992; Bruner & Amsterdam 2000), there is a need to move beyond processing of information to construction of meaning and relationships for these target groups in relation to educational institutions. The approach needs to be interpersonal, relational, contextual and pragmatic (see also Downes 2004a). It must engage with the narratives and meaning world of the individuals being reached out to. In the context of initial assessment of adult learners with low literacy levels, a review of international literature emphasised the importance of interpersonal, nonthreatening dimensions to an engagement process with the learner (Carrigan and Downes (2009).

Outreach needs to be distinguished not only from information based approaches but also from a particular variant of an informational approach, namely, a top-down PR type approach employed in a Russian example:

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. And I don’t really see how this can be possible. People who design outreach strategies are the employers of the Committee, those who work here officially. I don’t think we will be inviting other people to increase our outreach work just because they belong to the category we want to reach. We prefer to work with professional PR*

³⁸ Hegel (1830-31) continues with regard to Rome: ‘For Personality constitutes the fundamental condition of legal Right: it appears chiefly in the category of Property, but it is indifferent to the concrete characteristics of the living spirit with whom individuality is concerned’. (p.279)

³⁹ Similarly in social psychology and in postmodern psychology, Gergen’s (1994b) emphasis on clarifying the communicative goals of argument is also to some degree a contextualising of the abstract audience:

‘Is argument being carried out so as to sharpen and elaborate opposing positions, yield victory to one side or another, locate areas of compromise, entertain, develop public support, or for other purposes ?...by articulating the relational goals, interlocutors may wish to open alternatives to traditional practices of contentiousness’ (p.63).

specialists who know how to attract people to our programmes. Besides, we cannot say people aren't addressing us. Our Committee has a large advertising campaign which provides that we're known in the city and people come to us if they want to be helped (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The Committee for Labor has a structured outreach strategy – they put up posters about their events (vacancy fairs, open door days, employment centres) in the city and also widely use audio commercials on subway. Normally, they use very direct and straightforward slogans that are aimed at many categories of population – young people in the beginning of their career paths, students, unemployed people and people with disabilities (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

It is not mere information gaps that are lacking, but rather gaps in strategies and modes of communicating.

It is evident that Belgium (Flanders) has realised the importance of going beyond mere information approaches in outreach to facilitate access to education for marginalised groups, perhaps more than many other countries based on the national reports:

Another important outreach strategy is working together intensely with so-called community leaders (a person who plays a key role in organising or running activities for the community and who is well known and respected in that locality). As the community leaders are already engaged in processes of community building, they have the power and the role to enhance the participation of others in the community. That is why finding those key persons is an essential task of the organisational staff (tutors and educational experts). Citizenne does not simply use the community leaders as a means to attract new target groups. The organisation also trains and coaches them to be organisers and tutors themselves (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

With regard to local community networks, it is stated:

The support of community leaders into the organisational network is in line with the institutions networking strategy in general. With a view on community development, networking within and between groups (ethnic groups, social groups, neighbourhoods, etc.) is a vital point to open and promote access, emphasise both interviewees. On the matter of networking, one interviewee says, *Networking is a matter of personal contacts and being alert for contacts that might be interesting. A network is more than a social structure of individuals contacting each other. It is about having a helicopter view (...) There is also a personal dimension and an engagement of people to do more than just 'keep in touch'. It is a matter of using people's competencies* (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The Belgian national report continues:

Especially for disadvantaged groups the use of personal invitations and word-of-mouth-advertising is very important. *Simply sending or mailing flyers and brochures to potential participants may be counterproductive. It is better to hand it to them... For some groups, like immigrants, calling them by phone or texting a message by mobile phone (not more than one or a few hours before the activity takes place) is one of the most effective communication strategies* (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

An important example from the Scottish national report of outreach as networking with NGOs and representatives of traditionally marginalised groups is as follows:

Apart from provision for marginalised learners... Community and Learning Development (CLD) 1 had targeted specific groups in the community through a particular programme: *Yes, we have an organisation in [the local authority] which is essentially the body which works with ethnic minorities and Travellers and so on, and we have a very close working relationship with them to try to develop a whole range of programmes for young people and for adults. Some of that is things like English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), but some of it is about helping them to retain and develop their own culture, while at the same time supporting their – I am not going to say integration, because that is not the word I want to use, but do you know what I mean? - supporting their settlement into the communities here. So, for example, we are doing work with Travellers and that is pretty challenging in different ways, and we are doing some work with the Muslim community. And we do work in [the local authority] – there is quite a big Chinese community in [the local authority], and they are very much tied into our adult learners' programmes (CLD 1 manager) (Weedon et al., 2010).*

This interviewee also noted that they worked in partnerships with other agencies to target particular groups but that there was a need to balance targeting specific groups and making provision available for all (*CLD 2 manager adult education*) (Weedon et al., 2010).

While much of this networking is in the context of non-formal education outreach, at least some of it is potentially transferable to third level formal education, whereby universities could form close links with NGOs representing marginalised groups.

The Irish national report highlights examples of university outreach both to schools and community groups:

The Senior Access Manager explained that, *there's a very strong outreach element and it was the initial element of the Access Programmes. The Senior Management Official commented, I think a lot of their outreach work is far more important than access programmes...and it's how it's done too, that it's done sensitively and it's taking on the views of the community (Dooley et al., 2010).*

The Senior Access Manager explained that, *the model is essentially based on very strong school based linkages and links with community groups, partnerships, through developing outreach activities that take place in-house in...[University B] and also take place locally (Dooley et al., 2010).*

This interpersonal dimension to outreach, combined with a focus on partnership with other social organisations and agencies, is also a feature of the outreach strategy of a non-formal education institution in Hungary:

The management cooperates with other social organisations (family-supporting organisations, drug-ambulances, social foundations, etc), employment agencies, the patrons and the police to reach the young people in need and to inform them about the programme. There are brochures at the offices of these organisations, and also the officers give information the youths about the programme. Sometimes the mentors go into these offices to give opportunity for the youths through personal meeting and talking to decide about joining the programme (Balogh et al., 2010).

Recently, it is typical, that the participants inform their friends or relatives about the programme, and bring them to one of the leisure time activities or auctions. Many of these visitors take a fancy to participate in the whole programme (Balogh et al., 2010).

This promotion through word of mouth is also key according to a non-formal education interviewee in Estonia and a school representative in Russia:

The participants help to expand the range of target groups: *Each participant is promoting the courses. They talk to their friends and more people learn about us* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

There are also different ways of how students get to know about the [Secondary] School [for adults]. As far as adults are concerned, this is jungle telegraph that helps the best. Sometimes a student enters the School and then insists on his/her spouse to join the classes as well. Another channel of information about the School is the District Employment Centre that provides the citizens with information about various opportunities to complete their education if necessary (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Broader third level outreach strategies illustrated in the Scottish national report, also include sustained engagement with schools with students at risk of early school leaving, as well as taster third level courses for secondary students:

College A also worked with local schools specifically targeting groups of school pupils who were likely to become part of the MCMC group, *we are reaching out to them in 3rd year at a point when they might fall out of the system* (Executive Director, College A). These children were identified by school guidance staff as those who maybe don't want to stay at school but were still within compulsory school age. The college was also committed to targeting people who had recently become unemployed and needed to retrain (Weedon et al., 2010).

Another initiative to engage with potentially disadvantaged learners was the schools' activity programmes. These allowed young learners who are at risk of not engaging with learning or entering the labour market (the MCMC group) to come in to the college for a few days and do a programme of activities that included a variety of different subjects in order to give them an insight into college life. This was designed to give them an idea of the variety that was on offer and it was hoped it would make them think about what they were going to do in the following year. In addition to this, there were community groups and community-based adult learning courses where the college staff would go out into the community and deliver courses in order to try and get people back into education. Near the end of these courses all of the student will come into the college because they were seen as college students. These courses were considered very successful in bringing in disadvantaged groups of learners who were more comfortable in a community setting: *We do a lot of ESF classes that target people who are less likely to come into education and in my department the community classes are the way forward I think in terms of getting people into education* (Department Head, College B) (Weedon et al., 2010).

Proactive outreach to disadvantaged groups is also highlighted in the Bulgarian national report:

The College establishes contacts with disadvantaged groups in order to improve their access to higher education by...organising visits to different schools and discussions with students (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

A school based outreach approach is also evident in Estonia and Austria, though with little evidence of a focus on more disadvantaged groups:

The representatives of the university also visit schools to introduce learning opportunities (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Next to general open days, school visits are very frequent in the observed institution [university of applied sciences] 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 programmes and emphasis (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Cooperation agreements between universities and schools operate in Estonia:

[The University] organises courses, summer schools and workshops for upper secondary students: *We have signed cooperation agreements with 17 schools. Faculties and institutes introduce learning opportunities. Our students also take part in these events. For example one institute brought hundreds of young people to our labs. They were shown the equipment, rock samples... They had an opportunity to ask questions* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Such cooperation agreements are also a feature of the Hungarian system, to facilitate an opening into third level for schools with high numbers of students without a tradition of third level education:

Basically, it is these three institutes, we made a cooperative agreement with them, so this is not a simple relationship, but it is based on a continuous cooperation, and the advantage that our students have is that they are prioritised in these schools [over other applicants] (Balogh et al., 2010).

Unfortunately – according to the principal's opinion -- universities and colleges rather admit students from ordinary secondary schools in general, as adult students are not really part of their target groups. Still, there are some institutes such as those mentioned above that target adults and make efforts to attract adult students to their programmes. In the three institutes mentioned above, students from the school receive an advantage in the entrance exams in the case of equal scores, they get priority over other candidates (Balogh et al., 2010).

There is a need to extend such cooperation agreements and visits to schools and areas with traditionally high levels of underrepresentation at university. There is no evidence in the Estonian and Austrian national reports, in contrast to the Hungarian national report, that the university outreach to schools encompasses a socio-economic disadvantage dimension. The comment in relation to such groups in the Estonian report indicates a passive outreach approach:

No admission limits have been set forth for adults and disadvantaged groups. All applicants are welcome (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A further concern with such school outreach approach in Estonia is that the reliance on students and graduates to spread the word through the schools they have attended merely perpetuates the systemic exclusion of those students with low social capital from schools where there have not been many attending university:

We disseminate information in counties. We used to do this more often but now people already know us. Our students and graduates also spread the word (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Representatives of faculties also go to schools to introduce their faculty: *The schools are not always interested – their schedules are very tight and it is difficult to find time. Our students who go to their former schools are good ambassadors* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

In other words, inequality of access to university will be perpetuated by a ‘former student’s approach’ to word of mouth promotion for schools, areas and communities without a tradition of attending university.

The Scottish national report provides the important example of community based outreach strategies which provide taster programmes in community settings that may be less threatening and also more convenient for those who have had negative experiences of the school system:

College A’s distribution strategy had opened up campuses in local communities targeting areas where the population come from a less advantaged socio-economic background.

The college provided taster programmes in the community in order to engage with the community and get the public to make the first steps and come through the barrier in their local community rather than going straight into a main college campus (Weedon et al., 2010).

Classes were located in a wide range of locations through the local authority for example, in schools, in the local colleges, libraries, community centres and miners’ clubs. The aim was to get the provision into the communities (Weedon et al., 2010).

This community outreach approach fosters trust and cultural relevance, and invites significant expansion in the future if the European Commission supports it within a framework of developing community learning centres at local level across Europe (Downes 2011).

Other outreach approaches based on making the educational institution culturally relevant, socially meaningful and engaged with marginalised groups’ narratives, include the following examples from Slovenia and Belgium:

Peoples’ universities were among the first which embraced the idea of Lifelong Learning Week and formed in the very first years of the festival the majority of organisations participating in the event (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Open School has a tradition in reaching out to other non-profit organisations, associations and communities (e.g. organising courses in community centres). According to the interviewees, it is important – in any outreach project – to make sure that the theme and content of courses are linked to what the target group is really interested in: health, food, budgeting and money, etc. Another key aspect is the use of the key biographic moments and lived experiences of the participants in the learning process (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Festivals are an innovative outreach strategy going well beyond mere informational approaches that can foster that sense of assumed connection between an educational institution and a target group that has traditionally been detached from such institution.

An Austrian attempt to broaden its outreach strategy appears to have been less successful:

According to an internal [university] 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

A Lithuanian example recognises the limitations of mere informational approaches but also shares the concerns with the Austrian example about an ‘open door’ type fair:

Open door days are organised but their problem is that they are not so popular anymore. The information is spread through other different channels. We have many agreements with other schools, and they don’t need to go here as it if was some guided tour... (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

There may be a range of reasons for this lack of success in reaching the aimed for groups. The strength of the Slovenian festival approach is that it requires the target group to be actively involved in the design of the project and not simply be a passive consumer of it, as in the Austrian and Lithuanian examples. Constructivist principles of active learning are well recognised in lifelong learning but also need to be applied to outreach strategies. The Austrian and Lithuanian examples offer little indication that the students were involved in the organisation and design at the fair. They were not active participants but rather constructed as observers.

In contrast, a private university in Estonia takes a proactive constructivist approach centrally involving the young people in the outreach events:

Every year we have a special conference for secondary school pupils ‘Ideas of young people from North-Eastern Estonia’ introducing various business ideas and social events. (...) We are supported by the town government – they even provide money for the event. Young people have many wonderful ideas, especially concerning social problems because everybody faces those problems. They have fantastic ideas and suggestions. Our students also attend those events...The selection board includes representatives of enterprises, the authors of best ideas get a prize (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The interpersonal relational dimension to outreach, together with a networking approach with schools, are key features of the following outreach example from a Russian third level institution which also, like Austria and Lithuania, perceives the limitations of open doors days (where the students are passive observers):

The head of the department of occupational selection and professional testing also says that they have tried to organise open door days for individual visitors twice a year, but this initiative proved itself inadequate. Instead, arrangements with general schools, institutions of non-formal education and employment centres are made so that whole groups come to the Centre for excursions: *Well, we have tried to announce a special day for that but it comes to nothing because only two, maximally three people would come then. That’s why we prefer working directly [with educational institutions]. When the Centre is opened during the academic year we organise excursions. Once a small group is made we take them around. And the groups that come for testing also usually watch a film about the Centre and are taken to an excursion around the Centre. The parents, guardians or relatives as well as the potential enrollees can participate there. Those who want to learn in the Centre have the possibility to talk to those who already study here, with the parents, with the teachers – whomever they would like to. And of course during vacancy fairs and other events organised in the Centre the visitors always have the possibility to walk around the Centre (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).*

An interpersonal outreach dimension also includes visiting the homes of those who may be alienated from the system, as in this Irish example from a community education organisation:

She explains that as board members, we encourage them and it's word of mouth, and a little bit of push here and a knock at the door there and say come out...even if you don't want to do it, come up and have a cup of tea when we're all sitting down and a chat (Dooley et al., 2010).

The Director stresses the importance of word of mouth, in terms of outreach, word of mouth is really important...you cannot beat the personal touch, if I want to increase the number of people...stand in the corridor and actually talk to people (Dooley et al., 2010).

A key systems level feature that appears lacking in current outreach strategies for marginalised groups at third level is feedback from the target groups with regard to the strengths and weaknesses of the institutions outreach strategy. Thus, for example, the Slovenian national report observes:

Students give no specific feedback on outreach strategies, availability of relevant information to underrepresented risk groups, access supports and entry process. Institution collects a more general form of feedback that is more focused on courses, and more general study and students matters (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Somewhat in contrast, the proactive outreach dimension observed in the Scottish national report also includes feedback through exploration of the experiences of the nontraditional students:

- There were a range of widening participation initiatives in the university and these were organised into five groups:
- Student recruitment and admissions (SRA) outreach activity. The main focus of this initiative was to work in partnership with state schools and colleges to improve progression of pupils from these backgrounds to the university
- Partnership projects which included working with schools that do not traditionally send many of its pupils to higher education and the Scottish Widening Access Programme (SWAP). This provides a route to higher education for mature learners
- Work with adult learners. Initiatives in this area have included development of part-time courses for adults returning to education. Study skills provision had also been developed aimed at this particular group of learners
- Other activities such as specific programmes for supporting non-traditional students' transitions into the university
- Widening participation funded projects within the institution and its departments. The institution had funded a number of projects to look at the experiences of non-traditional students in the institution, especially in relation to transitions and destinations (Weedon et al., 2010).

It is significant that this feedback and exploration of access students' own experiences encompasses not only their general institutional experience but also their experience within the department they are studying in at third level. Nevertheless, it is important to note that these activities have still had very limited impact on the institution's ability to change the composition of its student population – it still has a very small number of non-

traditional students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Weedon et al., 2010). Other barriers need to be overcome.

An obvious key barrier to any outreach strategy is raised in the Slovenian national report, namely, that any sophisticated outreach strategy is still reliant on the need for the course to be affordable. Financial barriers mediate against the success of reaching traditionally hard to reach groups:

We have also tried a painting workshop just within the Lifelong Learning Week and the first visit was free of charge. The participation was good. When at the end of the day we asked whether they were prepared to participate, they were, very much and gladly. When we sent out the invitations and also presented how it would look concerning the fee, participation was no more. Here the matter finishes (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The financial barrier is not only on the side of the learner. Ebner (2011) observes that a financial commitment is needed on the side of the university to engage in more personalised forms of outreach to those experiencing marginalisation.

A community outreach approach is strengthened if the educational opportunities are available for marginalised groups in their local areas:

According to the interviewees, it is critical to ensure various learning opportunities as close as possible to the adults. Both interviewees accentuate that one can not expect all participants to come into a classroom. The educational activities should be 'home delivered'. Therefore the organisation makes efforts in providing education within the communities, decentralised all over Brussels (in mosques, sports clubs, pubs, etc.) (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

This feature of diverse, decentralised locations for both providing and promoting education for traditionally underrepresented groups is a potentially exciting innovation ripe for further expansion elsewhere. It is also of importance for marginalised communities which may be divided due to intra and intercommunity tensions, as well as crime, where there may be no neutral location in the area for different groups and individuals to access. This has been observed in an Irish context where community services, such as a sports hall, were only accessed by individuals from particular streets of an area, and not by others. This was due to its physical location in a place that was not perceived as either 'neutral' or 'belonging' to people from parts of the area (Downes & Maunsell 2007). A focus on physical space must be combined with one on relational space at a community level to overcome or at least take cognisance of diametric splits within local communities (Downes 2009).

It is important from a systems theory perspective to emphasise that outreach approaches be sustained rather than once-off events. There may be a need for ongoing support and encouragement to overcome entrenched cultural barriers to accessing higher education. This is an implication of a point highlighted in the Scottish national report:

Although student support was available, the onus was on the student to seek support and guidance and this may be more problematic for students who are less familiar with studying at university and who lack social networks of support (Weedon et al., 2010).

Psychological barriers of lack of confidence, fear of failure and even fear of success (Horner 1972; Ivers & Downes 2011) will only be overcome through sustained systemic outreach supports and institutional supports.

A European Commission staff working document (2009) emphasises that:

Increasing aspiration and tackling cultural barriers are key to attracting and retaining lifelong learners, particularly those from non-traditional or disadvantaged groups. However, country reports provide little insight into non-financial support mechanisms pursued to engage with non-traditional learners, although some countries do make reference to the need to include advice, mentoring and help for students to adjust to new environments and increase retention rates (p.133).

This highlights the need for a wider vision of outreach and of development of institutional cultures and supports – as well as for examples of strategic approaches to overcoming cultural barriers. Some examples of this have emerged from this current cross-national research.

It is evident that there is a need in some countries for more institutional awareness and willingness to engage in outreach to traditionally marginalised groups. For those with such willingness, there is increasing recognition of the severe limitations of generic information based approaches for an ‘abstract other’ to engaging with this target group of non-traditional students. These limitations are not only due to literacy concerns with reading such information. This has led to increased awareness of the importance of fostering strategies by way of mouth in the local communities, and to engage with local community organisations and schools.

Institutions in some countries which have gone beyond information reliant approaches designed for an ‘abstract other’ to interpersonal approaches have adopted a former students promotion approach which may lead to indirect discrimination against those schools, areas and communities where there are few former students who have attended university. Similarly, cooperation agreements between schools and universities need to take place with schools with high proportions of students experiencing social exclusion and with low traditions of obtaining third level education. There is increasing recognition of the limitations of open doors days in reaching marginalised groups, though examples of festivals where such groups are active in organising community events linked with educational institutions offer a way forward for outreach through their features of cultural relevance and constructivist active learning approaches to outreach.

Outreach strategies will only work if other barriers such as finance and lack of proximity to the educational institution are overcome. Decentralised community based locations for learning, such as community lifelong learning centres provide examples of progressive outreach strategies for reaching marginalised communities and individuals. These appear prevalent especially in Belgium (Flanders) and Scotland, and to some extent Ireland, and require sustained systemic support by the European Commission for expansion of community lifelong learning centres across Europe. Opportunities also exist for universities to formally link with community based NGOs and projects to maximise their outreach potential. Another innovative development requiring expansion is a further decentralisation of location for provision and promotion of education to other communal spaces such as cafes, pubs, theatres, churches, mosques, sports clubs, libraries etc.

Many university outreach strategies are characterised not only by a lack of active participation by the target groups in the design of such strategies but also by a lack of feedback from these groups in relation to the success or otherwise of such outreach strategies. The experiences of non-traditional learners must be documented and engaged with for strategic reform of university outreach strategies. These experiences and feedback must be examined at both a departmental and wider institutional level for outreach strategies in relation to access. Psychological barriers to accessing outreach services and supports must be anticipated for some students and require sustained systemic supports rather than once-off promotional interventions to help overcome such barriers.

6.1.2 (iii) Availability of school and university institutions free of charge during summertime and evenings for community groups from marginalised areas (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

The Slovenian national report provides an example where an educational institution makes its rooms available free of charge for community groups:

Institution's building is available for evening and summer events for many associations. Especially in the summer time, they can use it in the evenings for their meetings, lectures etc. Yes, they also use it. Various societies use lecture rooms, above all as a place for their meetings (Ivančič et al., 2010).

This availability is particularly during the evening and summertime:

Institution is open regarding availability for evening and summer events for the local community and/or target groups. There is no problem to give other profit or non-profit organisations rooms, when they are free. They do that free of charge⁴⁰ they do not demand any money for that. They also let several student organisations (AISSEC, sports clubs etc.) to use their offices free of charge. It is quite possible they do this because their new premises were built, not only with funds from the state, but mainly with donations and funds from various companies (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The Irish national report provides another example of this:

*In relation to the extent that the university institution's building is available for evening and summer events for the access service and the local community the Senior Access Manager explained that, *we're able to avail of all the facilities on campus and to share those with our affiliate groups. There are also schemes for some local schools and centres...to utilise some of the facilities here...Things aren't kind of as open and readily available and for use as you would like, there are lots of constraints. Firstly many of the buildings are overused and overstretched here anyway (Dooley et al., 2010).**

Setting this in context, the Senior Access Manager continued:

in some ways they're hard pressed to even accommodate the immediate needs of the college community, so I recognise that that is an issue, allowing for it to be an absolutely open campus to the public but I think there is a genuine effort through the establishment of a community liaison officer who links in with many of the community groups in the direct area around...[University B] and represents their views and opinions and issues and brings them back into the internal audience on campus (Dooley et al., 2010).

A different Irish university similarly gives recognition to this dimension of community engagement through provision of campus rooms for local community groups:

When questioned around the extent to which University A buildings are available for evening and summer events for the local community, the Senior Access Official explains that there are, *no difficulties there, we organise booking the rooms and all of that kind of thing. We try and if we have something we have it...[on campus], we may start off having an event off campus. The community feel at home, being able to access the university. Through the outreach Programmes...that has helped to consolidate that and encourage people into...[the university]as well* (Dooley et al., 2010).

An example of schools opening their building also emerges in the Irish national report:

When Kileely Community Project, KCP, was established it changed the function of the school; on a practical level the school building was open morning, noon and night, but the school itself changed since it became host to a diverse learning community (Dooley et al., 2010).

The Education Ministry official in Austria is enthusiastic about developing this issue in relation to schools opening up their premises:

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...People working as school caretakers, for example, say: 'this is not in my contract'. ..(Rammel & Gottwald 2010).*

A range of common systemic hurdles needs to be overcome, such as having a caretaker and insurance:

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

The argument for the availability of the school site is not simply an economic or efficiency one. It is also a community development one, where the school is a part of and 'focal point' (Irish Statutory Committee on Educational Disadvantage 2005; Downes et al., 2006) for the local community. It is an argument for access to education, as opening the doors of the school to different social groups and ages can help break down cultural barriers to education at a community level. Opening the school doors to the community can foster enhanced trust and provide potentially positive experiences of an education and school environment for parents and adults who have been previously alienated from the school system.

The Austrian national report offers further example of this progressive practice:

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 organising 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 utilisation should be given the whole year long* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010)

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 organised, where the inclusion of the community is focused (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

This availability may be facilitated by the relatively strong local municipality structure in Austria.

The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research official views the issue of making the school premises available for adult classes as solely a matter for the local governments, as though national government has no role:

This depends on local governments as they are they own the schools (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Estonian national report continues on this issue:

What about the connection of formal education with non-formal education. Vocational schools are doing well, they are offering various courses. In secondary schools the situation is not so good. What is holding them back from opening their doors to evening courses? *I do not know. I think it depends on their willingness to do that.*

And what does their willingness depend on? *I do not know. Both vocational schools and universities are willing to offer evening and weekend courses. Probably local governments, the owners of secondary schools, are not considering it important enough to put some pressure on schools* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Lithuanian national report refers to an *ad hoc* practice of making the State university building available during the summer to community groups. It recognises that development is needed on this issue in a more systemic fashion:

Regarding the practical use of [State] university building, it is being used in summer though the process could be even better elaborated. According to interviews it is obvious that there is no systematic use of the building. Some small groups coming for language courses are using the building in summer (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

Social communication institute, social pedagogues, they have different projects, web-sites, and even a homestead where they organise a summer camp for teenagers. It's because they will have to do this work every day afterwards. When working as social pedagogues at school they must be able to find those kids, to penetrate their problems. Here they have this in practice. These are study programmes where they work with teenagers (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

In Bulgaria, this issue is constructed in terms of institutional autonomy and availability of university premises to community groups is only if it is paid for:

The College establishes contacts with disadvantaged groups in order to improve their access to higher education by: ...organising visits to different schools and discussions with students. [...] The college's buildings may be rented to members of the local community for different social events (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

There is no ban or any limiting mode for the use of university premises by the community or certain social groups for holding evening or summer events, the main requirement being not to breach the University autonomy act (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

This requirement of payment appears to occur even for State funded universities in Bulgaria.

A number of other practical obstacles to lifelong learning taking place in a school building after school hours emerge from the Hungarian national report:

The most important problem arising from sharing the buildings is the shortage of classrooms and offices. The adults' school needs more rooms for special activities such as arts, but the number of rooms is barely enough for the ordinary courses. Another disadvantage of the common propriety is the issue of responsibility in case of damages, it is difficult to decide who is to blame and who should repair them. Furthermore, as the principal users of the buildings are the other two schools, classrooms and corridors are decorated according to their needs thus, adults learn in an environment which was developed by and for schoolchildren. Last, but not least, in the primary school furniture is made for small children, and, being too small for adults, are unhealthy for the students (Balogh et al., 2010).

The following example from Estonia illustrates a potential benefit and synergy which can take place where the school site is being shared with adults in the evening:

Formerly, such schools were called 'evening schools' because courses were offered on evenings; now they are called 'adult secondary schools'. For most of its 60 years of existence the school had its own building. 10 years ago the town government decided to give the building to an Estonian secondary school for the use of its primary pupils. Since then the two schools have shared the building...If an institution of higher education comes to introduce itself to the students of the daytime secondary school, the class teachers of the adult secondary school try to attend in order to inform their own students (Tamm & Saar 2010).

However, obviously in this specific example the ideal would be to include the adults directly in the higher education outreach strategy.

The benefits of making State funded educational institutions, whether schools or universities, available in the evenings and summers for lifelong learning courses, both formal and informal is both from an economic efficiency and a community development perspective. While there is evidence of this practice taking place in an *ad hoc* manner across a number of educational institutions and countries, there is little evidence currently of national level leadership to progress this issue. The EU Commission Staff Working Paper on early school leaving (2010) recognises that some schools 'seek to maintain the motivation of all people to engage in learning by offering various activities, opening up

schools to local community' (p. 23). It is clear that further EU level leadership on this issue is needed.

The obstacles to such a practice appear to be the need for a caretaker on the premises and insurance issues, as well as in at least some institutions a conception of territoriality. Some attitudinal resistance in educational institutions towards opening access to the school or university building is manifested through an argument for institutional autonomy. A way to overcome such an argument is to recognise firstly, that these institutions usually receive state funding, and many are in state ownership. Secondly, incentives could be provided to institutions to facilitate such opening of access, including through performance agreements between Education Ministries, on the one hand, and universities and schools, on the other hand.

It is imperative also to emphasise that school based adult education may not be suitable for many adults with unhappy experiences of school themselves (Maunsell 2011). They may perceive adult education as being merely more school and its physical location as intimidating and demotivating.

6.1.2 (iv) Communication with spokespersons, opinion makers and community leaders in socio-economically marginalised or ethnic minority communities (PROCESS INDICATOR)

An emerging dimension to good practice in relation to access is university communication, as well as other educational institutions' communication, with spokespersons, opinion makers and community leaders in socio-economically marginalised or ethnic minority communities. The Norwegian national report observes from one educational institution that:

The communities are approached by building on existing networks and associations as well as making use of spokespersons and opinion makers within the communities. Students with a corresponding ethnic background are engaged as role models, communicating in their familiar language at meetings with the target groups (Stensen & Ure 2010).

This is a strong feature of practice highlighted also in the Belgian (Flanders) national report, with reference to the non-formal education sector:

Another important outreach strategy is working together intensely with so-called community leaders (a person who plays a key role in organising or running activities for the community and who is well known and respected in that locality). As the community leaders are already engaged in processes of community building, they have the power and the role to enhance the participation of others in the community. That is why finding those key persons is an essential task of the organisational staff (tutors and educational experts). Citizenne does not simply use the community leaders as a means to attract new target groups. The organisation also trains and coaches them to be organisers and tutors themselves. By doing so, the organisation offers them challenges and perspectives in their role as community leader and gives them the responsibility to design educational programmes for their community. Some of them make a long-term commitment (at a high level) to the organisation; others chose only to make short-term commitments (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The Belgian national report continues on this theme:

It should not go unnoticed that some volunteers and community leaders are also rewarded (according to the Belgian law on volunteering). They receive 25 euro for occasional activities and 110 euro for other activities, according to the amount of responsibility they take. This is an extra motivational element which has a particularly great impact on the participation of some specific target groups (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The absence of and need for such consultation with community leaders is evident in the Estonian national report in relation to local leaders from the Russian-speaking community:

Although students at secondary and vocational schools in which the language of instruction is Russian are required to sit a state exam in Estonian their knowledge of Estonian is not sufficient to study at university in Estonian. Russians are also less informed about learning opportunities. The heads of Russian schools lack adequate information about:

- which public universities offer courses in Russian together with additional language course to help students learn Estonian;
- the fact that universities offer Estonian courses for a certain period before the start of studies or in parallel of them.
- Russian secondary students are also interested in preparatory courses provided in Russian (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The importance of the need for dialogue between such community leaders and the educational institution is highlighted from the following example in the Hungarian national report concerning an institution and students from the Roma minority:

Two initiatives were taken to involve disadvantaged groups in the [adult secondary school] education, but both of them failed. A cooperation agreement with the Roma minority would have given Roma students the opportunity to be offered a scholarship for studying at the school. However, the programme could not be implemented because the Roma minority did not accept the person responsible for issuing the scholarships (Balogh et al., 2010).

Tett et al's (2001) discussion of collaboration between schools and community agencies in tackling social exclusion contrasts collaboration with simply 'contracting out' interventions and describes collaboration in terms of to 'develop, manage, deliver, fund and evaluate' activities. Tett et al's (2001) distinction between consultation as 'contracting out' and as collaboration is also important in this context of access to education. Moreover, it is important to envisage such consultation with community leaders as also reaching into collaborative relations with organisations they may belong to.

6.1.2(v) Formal links between universities and NGOs representing marginalised groups (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

A logical expansion of a systems theory approach emphasising the need for bridges between subsystems and to foster transition between subsystems is the need for formal links between universities and NGOs representing marginalised groups. This

opportunity is only touched upon in some national reports. The Norwegian national report raises this linkage in the context of people with disabilities and their representative NGOs:

The informant said that recruitment had increased for groups with reading and writing disorders, and added that she believed that this was a result of the university's increased effort for helping these students. Further on, she said that the university stayed in touch with many of the organisations for persons with disabilities, like the Association for Dyslexics, the Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted, and the Association for deaf and people with hearing disorders (Stensen & Ure 2010).

In contrast, the Bulgarian national report observes that 'no interaction is evident between the NGO sector and the formal education system' (Boyadjieva et al., 2010). However, a Bulgarian institutional interviewee recognises the need for such interaction:

There should be more aggressive policy, targeted towards these groups i.e. they should organise on purpose. To help disadvantaged people to overcome the barrier of integrating with the other students, this is the greatest responsibility of the NGOs. In other words to reduce the stress these people experience being disadvantaged. The organisation of courses can help overcome this psychological problem. Why not have courses for plumbers for the minority groups? (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Another example of the potential of such external links for universities to embrace is provided in the English national report:

The university has also worked to help communities embrace technology, so one example of the work that [we] did was to link steel communities, former steel communities, where people, adults, men usually, have been made redundant because of the decline in manufacturing and steel, and actually got them together on a project to learn them how to use technology and then get them to produce materials about their working life in the steel industry and get them to talk to other communities. This has sparked the development of online communities and sparked an interest in some historical aspects of the region, of industrial archaeology, where they never would have been engaged with that (Engel et al., 2010).

Though this is currently an underdeveloped strategy across institutions and countries, there is enormous potential for facilitating improved opportunities for access to education if formal links were established between universities and NGOs representing marginalised groups. These links could help break down cultural and psychological barriers, as well as inform members of these groups of the opportunities for a cohort of these groups to learn together in an educational institution. Such links would also offer the benefit of a support structure already being in place for the individual students through the NGO, as well as furnishing opportunities for dialogue between the NGO and the education institution on the learning needs and wider needs of the individual learner. Formal links would also offer the chance for the NGO to participate with the university in strategic policy design to meet the access and participation needs of their joint target group (see also Mulkerrins 2007 on the challenges of altering educational institutional policy to give expression to community voices). The NGO would also be in a good position to provide feedback to the university on the success or otherwise of implementation of access and participation strategies in practice.

6.1.2. (vi) Representation of target groups through members of such groups being employed in the educational institution (PROCESS INDICATOR)

A number of national reports provide examples of representation of target groups through members of such groups being employed in the educational institution. It is apparent that this important feature of a diverse institutional culture is currently a goal in only a small number of the countries participating in this research. It is an area ripe for further development at a policy and strategy level.

Examples of this recognition of the need for a diverse institutional culture in the institutional staff include this example from the Belgian national report:

How do you attract target groups? By making sure they recognise themselves in the organisation. The organisation should reflect the target groups or should at least have a representation of the underrepresented risk groups. For instance, by having two migrant employees we are able to attract ethnic groups that would otherwise be very difficult to attract (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The Belgian national report continues:

It is also important to have migrant teachers in the team of teachers. This way minority groups will see themselves reflected in the staff and the institution as a whole (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

This theme is also echoed in relation to ethnic diversity of staff in this example from the English national report:

A priority for the college, according to the Inclusion and Diversity Manager is to expand the ethnic diversity of the staff and governors of the college. She stated, *we're still in the middle of a drive to improve the ethnic diversity within governors, we were very white based. I think you will see within the college, we really do reflect the city and county (Engel et al., 2010).*

The Scottish national report also provides examples to instantiate this issue:

The main monitoring of staff diversity was with regards to ethnic origin. We did not have access to individual college data; however, for the period of 2008-09 the majority, 94% of staff were categorised as of White origin, data was unknown for 4% and only just over 2% came from a non-white ethnic group. In Scotland overall the non-white ethnic minority is just over 3% (Weedon et al., 2010).

Elsewhere in the Scottish national report, the institutional staff focus broadens beyond simply that of ethnicity:

The institution [a university] monitors staff characteristics according to gender, age, ethnic group and disability. It had a low proportion of disabled staff, the proportion from ethnic minorities was higher than the proportion of ethnic minority groups in the Scottish population. Generally men were more likely to be found in the highest pay positions (Weedon et al., 2010).

Ethnicity, age and gender of institutional staff are dimensions of institutional culture acknowledged in the following example from the Estonian national report:

Both students and the staff include people of different ages, gender and nationality. Lectures are delivered in Estonian and in Russian as well as in English (Tamm & Saar 2010).

At one point we were worried that we could not find new Russian teachers to replace those who had retired but now there is a new generation of young Russians who are fluent in three languages – Russian, Estonian and English (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Significantly, socio-economic disadvantage is a dimension of the institutional staff focus in this illustration from the Hungarian national report:

Quite some employees of the institute come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Their support is an institutional duty and is the responsibility of the Department of Human Resources. Disadvantaged employees may receive financial support and studios or dormitory rooms for a temporary period if they apply for them (Balogh et al., 2010).

These examples contrast with the following response in the Slovenian national report:

None of the target groups are employed in institution. They do not meet with many advantages or challenges of a diverse student population, because the student population is not very diverse. In principle they agree that diversity stimulates tolerance and development of multicultural competencies (Ivančič et al., 2010).

It is evident that educational institutions across different countries need to give more attention to this feature of their institutional cultures. Access to education for diverse student groups requires a supportive environment where these groups find themselves mirrored in the wider institutional culture. Staff recruitment dimensions need to examine ways to provide diversity in those employed by the institution, with a focus not simply on age, gender and ethnicity, but also on social class, socio-economic disadvantage, as well as employing people with disabilities.

6.1.2 (vii) Challenge to institutional staff attitudes (PROCESS INDICATOR)

A strongly related issue to the diversity or otherwise of education institutional staff, is the theme of the importance of institutional staff attitudes to the access students' experience of the university environment. As the Bulgarian national report highlights:

The main challenge of having students from different social backgrounds is related to the need for acquiring intercultural competence of the lecturers themselves (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

A later example of this will also be seen to be evident regarding accounts of some prison officers' resistant attitudes to prisoners' learning. This can be interpreted as not being simply specific to prison contexts but as an illustration of the need for institutional awareness of developing processes for systematically working with its staff on supportive attitudes to diversity, as a dimension of an institutional mainstreaming strategy for access.

This institutional mainstreaming of access appears to have taken place in the Irish context. The Irish national report provides the example of a Senior Management Official in the University stating, *we also recognise that there is no resistance in...[University B] now to access students at any level*. Elsewhere this interviewee states:

In relation to access there is, *very strong embedding and involvement, I don't think there is an academic staff member in...[University B] that doesn't know about access and that's really very strong, I think that's a very good achievement. That's not to say that they all agree with it. Every discussion we have a school [department] level, we have at faculty level, it's very much part of our fabric* (Dooley et al., 2010).

For the Access Plan for the university, the official stated that, *everything that we have in our plan, a lot of it is not about resourcing it...it's about cultural change, it's about mindset* (Dooley et al., 2010).

The Access Official talked about the process of changing attitudes to access in the University:

There have been points of resistance along the way as will be [the case]...with any change process in institutions people's level of understanding of why people might not reach their full potential...they may think that closely relates to IQ or lack of ability rather than their...socio-cultural background. I think that for the most part... [University B] the perception towards non-traditional students would be positive and has been very supportive. Where there have been arguments against them we've heard a few of them and they tended to be several years ago and really the actual progress of the students through the college and their success has alleviated a lot of the concern...People's prejudices have been mitigated by their actual experience of the students...A lot of the obstacles have been overcome (Dooley et al., 2010).

This attitudinal change has its structural counterpoint in the university, namely, a mainstreaming of access issues throughout the different levels of the university.

The issue of staff attitudes being at times negative and even discriminatory towards different ethnic groups emerges from the following detailed account in the Hungarian national report. The first institutional interviewee expresses a positive institutional attitude:

Concerning the outreach to disadvantaged groups, the two interviewees' opinions were remarkably different. According to the vice-college rector for education: *there are regions nearby, where there are quite some schools which have a lot of Roma students, and an effort is made, especially in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Knowledge Technology in case of Roma students, so we try to attract and recruit them, because it would be very important, please don't misunderstand me, that children are more open for instructions, the education for work and for learning from teachers of the same background, especially if he/ she is an example of having lived under the same circumstances but now he/ she is here, he/ she teaches and enjoys it* (Balogh et al., 2010).

Although the institute cannot recruit Roma students one by one, they deliberately organise road-shows in schools where there are a lot of Roma, and *especially in areas where the number of Roma students are very high, they [Roma students] ask us a lot of questions* (Balogh et al., 2010).

The second interviewee represents the issue in terms of deficits of the Roma community rather than focusing on a range of supports that could be put in place to maximise their success at third level:

On the other hand, the student centre leader has a completely different opinion on the issue: *... my problem is that everybody is concerned about this, it's not this that we should be concerned about, that the disadvantaged are taken to third level education, this is not*

a solution. The solution would be to raise the disadvantaged situation, and this cannot be raised by taking the children of disadvantaged families to third level education, where they start their studies with a remarkable handicap and not because of financial problems, but mostly because – I don't think this would be a preconception – because of a lower quality of general education and they come from such a background that they simply can't compete with the others. They face a lot of failures and it's only a waste of money that is spent on this. ... They don't have a chance, they usually don't have a library at home that could help them, parents are not socialised to appreciate and support that the child attends a third level institute even at the age of 20-22, instead of working and giving the money to the family (Balogh et al., 2010).

One Hungarian interviewee emphasises the importance of a positive staff institutional culture:

According to the vice-college rector for education, employees in the institute try to do everything for Roma students: *...they [Roma students] feel a mentality in the institute that they are not afraid to go and seek for help (Balogh et al., 2010).*

This contrasts with the second interviewee:

On the other hand, the leader of the student centre who coordinates student offices and services says that: *... those who create tension, they belong to one ethnic group that can easily be recognised⁴¹, they are strongly underrepresented in the third level education. They are not accepted and I think that it's completely their fault (Balogh et al., 2010).*

The Hungarian national report comments on the attitude of the second interviewee:

This makes one think that an open and tolerant mentality as described by the vice-college rector is only part of the characteristics of the institute, and Roma students might have serious difficulties in getting support (especially because the second interviewee is one of the main coordinators of student services) (Balogh et al., 2010).

Savage (2003) argues that 'the unacknowledged normality of the middle-class need to be carefully unpicked and exposed' (p.536). An institutional culture tends to contain unstated assumptions and patterns of interaction and behaviour which may filter out those from marginalised backgrounds. This hidden and sometime overt institutional culture may be termed the institution's 'social imaginary' to adapt Taylor (2007), its 'mental atmosphere' to adapt Russell (1946), its 'horizon' of meaning to adapt Heidegger (1927). It is this background atmosphere or horizon which needs to be opened so that there is a plurality of background horizons for meaning to be produced.

A practical example of a pathway towards a positive staff institutional culture for access students is provided in the English national report. This involves common meals between staff and students at an English third level formal education institution:

The college staff considers promotion of social networks as one of their strengths. *The refectory really is at the heart of the college, so you can't come into reception without seeing it and bumping into people, and I just think that creates a whole kind of tolerance and acceptance and let's all live together really, like in society and as we should (Engel et al., 2010).*

⁴¹ He refers to the Roma (Balogh et al., 2010).

The eating environment challenges a static hierarchical systemic institutional culture and is an interesting example of promoting an inclusive ‘organic’ institutional culture between staff and students that could be replicated elsewhere.

6.1.2 (viii) A targeting of young immigrants and young members of a target group: Cohort effect as a positive potential (PROCESS INDICATOR)

The following innovative example from the Norwegian national report focuses on the benefits of a cohort effect regarding promotion of access to education, with a specific targeting based on youth and ethnicity. This targeting of young immigrants and young members of a target group treats a cohort effect as a positive potential for maximising access to education:

Immigrants’ perception of higher education should be changed. Hence, the solution has been to target specific nationalities, namely young immigrants, their parents and even the community they form part of. The latter point is illustrated by differences between immigrant communities in their propensity to start up higher education studies. In this regard, our informant reports that ethnic communities that are unified, such as Indians, Tamils and Vietnamese, more easily develop a culture emphasising the value of educational skills, while such attitudes are less easily nurtured in, e.g., the more fragmented Somalian community (Stensen & Ure 2010).

In contrast, an example of a cohort effect among young people which has negative consequences is provided in the Russian national report:

As far as teenage criminals are concerned, 47% has never worked or studies and more than 70% do not have the education appropriate to their age (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

It is important to recognise that a cohort effect is rarely neutral or non-existent (Erikson 1968). Rather, it is better conceived as a vital potential to be built upon and channelled in constructive supportive directions.

A focus on cohort effects in relation to access would also give priority to social dimensions to engagement with the educational institution. This is highlighted in the English national report:

Another priority need is to expand the extent to which students have the opportunity to meet and interact with other students in the university. Although there are opportunities to join the student union and other social activities, interview participants highlighted the need for more creative approaches to community-building among students, particularly the part-time, mature students at the university (Engel et al., 2010).

Peer support and mentoring for students from traditionally underrepresented cohorts is a large-scale feature of the following Irish university:

In University A, the Senior Access Official states, *every student in...[University A] on an access programme gets involved in shadowing and given that we have between 450 to 500 we request it. We don’t demand it, we don’t have to. They all get involved and that’s it. It happens twice, on 2 separate days and basically it’s very, very successful. The students that come into the service, meet with them first, they describe what’s expected of them. We provide an evaluation at the end as well* (Dooley et al., 2010).

The potential importance of a cohort effect for traditionally marginalised groups implies a broadening beyond an exclusively individualist focus for access to education strategies. Adoption of a relational as part of a cohort effect, gives expression to a paradigm of lifelong learning that goes beyond the individual. This broader paradigm is recognised by the Delors report (1996) where one of the four pillars of learning involves learning to live together, to develop an understanding of interdependence. Similarly, longstanding adult education traditions such as the humanism of Lindemann (1926/1989) and the community development focus of Freire (1972) recognise this need to develop an engagement with lifelong learning at a cohort, group or community level. The cohesiveness of the peer group has been emphasised in developmental psychology particularly for young people (Erikson 1968), as it has also been in criminology (e.g., Sutherland 1939). This potential cohesiveness of groups of young people, whether by ethnicity, social class or region, needs to be built upon as a positive potential to maximise their engagement in lifelong learning, whether at formal or non-formal community levels.

6.1.2. (ix) An access strategy of third level institutions which engages with primary and secondary students experiencing socio-economic disadvantage (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

Aspirations to complete secondary school and go on to third level are frequently formed already at primary school level (Downes 2004; 2004a). It is important that individuals without a family tradition of third level education and communities with low levels of participation in higher education are targeted at an early stage to foster aspirations to attend third level education. Morgan & Slowey (2009) emphasise the need for a comprehensive approach to access to education, including to higher education, that addresses inequalities at post-primary, primary and preschool levels.

The Scottish national report provides one of the rare examples of a strategic approach to access to education which engages with younger learners, including those at primary school level:

The college was heavily engaged with local schools with many children from 3rd and 4th year of secondary schools (15 to 16 years of age) coming in through the ‘skills for work’ programme. Children as young as primary 5 (aged 9) were brought into the college as they were seen as a ‘*long-term investment for the college*’ (Vice Principal, College A). Members of staff had a big involvement with schools: *We teach in schools, we run special projects for primary school kids so the kids in school are aware of us from a young age, they are aware of the college and what it does and when it comes time for them to leave school, college is seen as an opportunity for them* (Executive Director, College A) (Weedon et al., 2010).

Another example of this strategic approach to access for primary school students targeting schools with traditionally low representation of students in higher education is provided in the Irish national report:

The Senior Access Official went on to describe some of the outreach activities of the University A access service, *the primary school programme and the secondary school programme, they run...in around 90 schools between the two at this stage. We run a variety of programmes at different levels in different schools. At primary school levels in*

particular, the primary schools would be very vocal, this will work for us but this won't. We run different programmes in different schools...we don't run all of the programmes in all of the schools. A lot of the programmes are around having fun. We do have a programme which concentrates on transition from primary into secondary school. Things like visiting campus, organising tours of campus, organising events on campus, would be run both by access and student recruitment.... (Dooley et al., 2010).

A comprehensive access strategy which tackles deeply ingrained cultural barriers to participation in third level education, and education generally, requires engagement with cohorts of learners in primary school classes. With the exceptions of Scotland and Ireland, this important strategic feature of an access strategy for socio-economically disadvantaged groups, including for some ethnic minority groups, appears to be completely absent from the practices of participating European countries. There is no evidence that it is taking place or planned to take place, based on the national reports for this comparative study.

6.1.2 (x) Preparatory admission courses (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

In Estonia, one of the adult education school interviewees has highlighted that Russian speakers from that school have a strong interest in receiving preparatory admission classes for higher education:

Preparatory courses for access to higher education would be useful in particular for students whose mother tongue is Russian. There is interest in such courses but neither students nor teachers are aware of such courses (*Tamm & Saar 2010*).

Taking into account the background and modest financial means of the students they need preparatory courses that are provided free of charge or lower fee depending on their economic situation ...In order to attract more adults to general education and higher education changes are needed not only at the level of schools but in society as a whole (*Tamm & Saar 2010*).

The Estonian national report observes a tradition of preparatory classes in a university, though classes requiring payment:

The University has offered preparatory courses for more than 50 years. The courses are offered by the Open University. The courses are offered for a fee and focus on subjects of state examinations: physics, maths, chemistry, mother tongue (essay writing) (*Tamm & Saar 2010*).

A key issue also raised in the Bulgarian report is the need for State funding for such preparatory classes:

The University does not organise preparatory classes for disadvantaged groups. This is a good idea, but for this purpose universities should be funded by the state or donor organisations by a competition, quota or other indicator. This is not possible for now. The universities themselves have no sufficient funds for this activity. And there is no guarantee that if they conduct such activity they can reap its fruit. There is no way to commit people to being students at only one institution (*Boyadjieva et al., 2010*).

The English national report observes a discrepancy between the level of the educational institution and its willingness to organise preparatory classes, as well as highlighting the benefits of shorter preparatory courses:

94% of ISCED 4 level institutions organise preparatory programmes to facilitate increased access for traditional underrepresented groups, though only 27% of ISCED 5 level institutions do so. The college senior representative stated, *we're looking at some short courses... we're trying to develop a curriculum really this year to look at perhaps shorter courses that run more frequently through the year the September start is a bit of a put off. We've always had multi entry and some programmes are what we would call roll on, roll off which are kind of again harder to manage but we do have some of those in the college. But I think now we're looking at a shorter 6 week programme for people* (Engel et al., 2010).

In the English context, these preparatory courses are explicitly recognised as having an access dimension for non-traditional students:

A senior representative stated, *the university does run some foundation courses with FE colleges particularly in the science area. Here in the Institute of Lifelong Learning, we do run a number of preparing to study type courses, a lot of our institute courses are open to people with no traditional academic qualifications, so they are designed for people to come on to them when they haven't actually had an academic qualifications backgrounds* (Engel et al., 2010).

A different university is described in the English national report in relation to summertime preparatory courses for university, across a wide range of subjects:

The University offers Summer University short-courses. These courses are designed and aimed towards individuals who return to study after a break from education. The aim is to boost confidence and develop the necessary skills for future courses at Stonegrave University. Each of the Summer University courses carries recognised Stonegrave University credits and a University Certificate of Continuing Education is awarded after 20 Summer credits and these credits towards other University qualifications. A wide range of courses are available, including Business, Employment and Learning Skills, Mathematics, Languages, English, Art, Computing, Education, History, Media, Performing Arts, Science, Social Sciences, among others. Summer University *is looked at as a big widening participation initiative* (Lecturer). The Summer University courses *are great for employed people because they tend to be short snap courses over a couple of days, which a lot of employers can see their way to letting them come to that* (Lecturer). These courses are also of interest to non-traditional adult learners, as the courses offer *quick short sharp skills that they can pick up and maybe build on to something else, because they carry credits, but they're all free* (Lecturer). These courses are targeted toward individuals who *have qualifications that are 20 years old and then they'll look at a discipline that they haven't studied before and take a taster, a 20 or 30 credit taster through Summer University* (Senior). She went on to state that *it's a bit of a talent spotting exercise and actually the confidence that a couple of summer courses gives people allows them to go on to part and full-time HE courses* (Engel et al., 2010).

An innovative dimension to preparatory courses explicated in the English national report is a 'passport' type of approach:

Stonegrave offers a Passport Scheme to young students who are at school or college and considering higher education. It aims to help students make a successful transition to

higher education. *It's support for first generation university families where in addition to their own school or college, they have access to the university and evenings at the university, they can make up one-to-one advice and guidance interviews with our staff here at the university* (Senior). The university also offers an Adult Passport Scheme to target potential students, who require assistance in making the transition to higher education. The Adult Passport programme allows adults to sample from university life, aiming to support and encourage successful transition into higher education (Engel et al., 2010).

The Hungarian national report makes explicit another rationale for preparatory courses, namely, that they can help overcome difficulties with literacy that may be quite common:

These preparatory courses do not appear in the curriculum, because they cannot, but we were facing a remarkable drop-out rate, and so we have to do it. The management has just decided to insert them [preparatory courses] in the specializations with the highest drop-out rates (Balogh et al., 2010).

As many students have literacy and writing difficulties and type-writing deficiencies, catch-up courses are now organised both centrally and by the students themselves (Balogh et al., 2010).

The following example of university development of preparatory admission courses in the Irish context emphasises the key role of parental involvement in such courses, in order to help overcome cultural barriers towards higher education:

We involve parents in every way that we possibly can at a pre-entry level. Once the students come into the university after the access summer school where the students are given an award and the parents are all there, the schools love it, the students love it and the parents love it. We would have a big event called the Achievement Award. Fill out the...hall twice per year. Target programmes for ethnic minorities (Dooley et al., 2010).

A different example of preparatory courses observed in the Irish national report accentuates the importance of such pre-entry courses:

It is compulsory for incoming Access students to attend this Summer School. The aim is to prepare students socially and academically for undergraduate life. It familiarises them with the campus and staff particularly those in the Access Service. Students are divided broadly into groups according to their subject area i.e. Humanities, Science, Computers & Engineering and Business. They work on projects, which they present to the whole group. 2nd or 3rd year students from the same programmes lead the groups. There is drama, sports, study skills and social events throughout the week (Dooley et al., 2010).

A university senior management interviewee in the Bulgarian report raises objections to preparatory classes which single out individuals or groups:

The university does not organise preparatory classes for representatives of disadvantaged groups: *I do not agree that there should be preparatory classes for ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups in general. This would contribute for their separation instead of their integration* (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

This tension could be resolved by making such classes optional rather than mandatory. However, the issue of being stigmatised and labeled as 'disadvantaged' has been raised as a concern in the Irish context (Spring 2007; Downes & Gilligan 2007).

The Austrian national report provides an example of transition courses for a university of applied sciences:

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 enrol every degree course that they want within the offers of the concerned University of Applied Sciences (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

However, the wider university sector does not seem to have developed such preparatory courses in the Austrian context:

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Similarly, the Slovenian national report reveals a dearth of preparatory courses for university:

They don't have any preparatory or foundation courses. They only have differential exams for those students that are not fulfilling the enrolment requirements or those coming from other institutions of higher university education where the programme was somewhat different (Ivančič et al., 2010).

6.1.2 (xi) Study workshops to provide academic support (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

Whereas preparatory courses are a necessary condition for a comprehensive access strategy, there is a need to focus also on participation and ongoing academic supports for non-traditional students attending university. It is evident that academic supports for students are not provided in the interviewed universities in Bulgaria:

There is no practice at the University of organising assistance classes for students failing to cope with the study process. *I think that as compared with the assistance classes a more sensible approach will be the tutoring system, but regretfully it is not used* (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

In contrast, a centre for such academic support is available at the following college for higher education institution in Belgium:

Like many other colleges for higher education, Hogent has a centre for study advice and coaching and a centre for students. The first one offers advice on the students' learning path (certificates, credits, exams, validation of prior learning, fulltime or part-time studying, etc.) and offers support during the learning process (tutoring, coaching, individual course units, etc.) (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Such centres are also a feature of educational institutions interviewed in the English national report, with the term 'learning zone' being employed and with a flexibility that allows for a drop-in service:

At the college, there is a *Learning Zone* which is open generally office hours, 9 till 4 so you can drop in, but also you could have specific learners, additional learning support. If

it's more than I think it's 50% of the group that need it then they have it within the class, the whole group have it, but generally you can have it on a one to one basis. Or the Learning Zone is where you can just drop in, so if you think oh I'm struggling with my assignment, there are people in there who staff it and can support you. And I think that's a really good service that's offered. In addition, there are significant peer supports that come from the student body, they get quite an extensive training package. We've had peer mentors and peer supports, they're usually people who have struggled themselves, who have then wanted to give something back really (Engel et al., 2010).

The English national report also highlights that workshops for academic support may also be targeted to meet the learning needs of those with specific learning difficulties:

You've got dyslexia workshops, staff development, again wide, so our learning support is massively strong (Engel et al., 2010).

The important issue is raised in the English national report of students actually being aware of such academic support services and ensuring pathways are in place so that these available services are used by those in need of them:

Often the student support services are geared more toward traditional undergraduate students, whereas the students engaged in the Foundation Degree Programme are *isolated from some services* (Lecturer). Although he feels that recruiting and widening access is positive, more support and attention to the retention side of widening access is needed. The lecturer stated, *Right from the beginning, we've been successful in recruiting the kind of people that you're talking about. But they are, they really are on the edge of support services. So fine recruiting them, trying to give them all of the things that they need, but then we need immense support* (Engel et al., 2010).

The Irish national report similarly provides examples of such university academic supports:

The Senior Access Official spoke about supports in the university: *there's lots of them, there's tons of them...A whole host of academic workshops throughout the year, Moodle, Podcasts'. As regards, emotional support services in the university, there are tons...they have counselling services. There is a drop-in centre for students with any kind of a query. They need some kind of academic support or that they need some kind of social support [during] emotional crises* (Dooley et al., 2010).

There is an evident need for such supports to be a systemic feature of third level institutions. As Morgan (2011) has observed, there has been a shift in universities' thinking internationally compared with previous decades, so that whereas once they would have boasted of high failure rates, the emphasis now is on retaining students in the system through appropriate supports.

6.1.2 (xii) Modular courses (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

More flexible modular course provision to meet the needs of the learner is an increasing feature of lifelong learning across participating countries. Examples of modular course structure are as follows from the Slovenian and Belgian (Flanders) national reports respectively:

Nowadays all educational programmes delivered to young people are organised for adults as well. In addition to delivering whole programmes, they have been in the process of creating conditions for delivering modular courses (Ivančič et al., 2010).

All courses are structured in a modular way. All formal adult education offered by recognised centres for adult education will become fully modularised by 2012 (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The Belgian national report highlights benefits of this modular structure:

The modular system is flexible and 'a la carte'. You can attend the modules you are interested in, as many as you want (...) you can even enrol for just one course if you want to do so. (...) It is an interesting structure that attracts participants from all over Flanders (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The fact that there is no real linear structure but a modular one enables every adult learner to learn at his own speed and level. This makes a preparatory programme, a transition programme, a remedial class or extra support for students in (the transition between) different educational levels unnecessary (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

However, Vandenbroucke (2011, personal communication) adds the following important cautionary note, that “*a lot of Belgian institutions are not convinced modular courses are the right option for the future (most policy makers however are convinced)*”.

It is important to highlight that modularised courses may not be a panacea but rather one option that could be suited to some types of learners. Rodeiro & Nadas (2009) review international research on the advantages and disadvantages of modularisation and highlight some concerns with modularisation in relation to fragmentation of learning, quality of learning (e.g., in a medical context, Tan 1992), overassessment, disruption of provision of a ‘coherent and developmental course’ (p.7). They also highlight the potential extra resource requirements on tutors’ time in modular courses, and that ‘short-term targets often dominate over longer-term goals’. These are not arguments against any forms of modularisation *per se*, but rather a concern to ensure coherence and quality, as well as sensitivity to the contextual needs of diverse learners.

A modular system occurs in only limited fashion in Lithuania:

The credit or module based system for [secondary] students does not exist in the school. Except that students at distance education classes can choose only some modules to study (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The Austrian national report provides the example of benefits of modular courses in meeting the needs of shift workers:

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* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Themes raised in the Norwegian national report regarding modularisation was the need for short courses and summer courses:

[the] Government official highlighted the relation between universities and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration: *I believe that we should develop modules that enable persons to study for a month or two, receive points for completing these modules and then return to the working life. The authorities are able to force institutions to develop such modules. I do not understand why everyone should commence their studies in August or January* (Stensen & Ure 2010).

The Norwegian government official proposed that universities be to the forefront in developing such modular courses:

You would prefer a more flexible system? *Yes, it is the society that is paying the universities, so in my mind the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration could have signed contracts with educational institutions and say that we want this number of slots at the following points, and then the institutions would receive money for the participants* (Stensen & Ure 2010).

6.1.2 (xiii) More imaginative pathways for feedback than written surveys (PROCESS INDICATOR)

Systemic opportunity for student feedback is provided in this Bulgarian education institution:

Students' opinion on the curriculum, especially on the courses taught and the lecturers is reported by an internal unit engaged in monitoring the quality of teaching (Centre for Quality). Students evaluate the courses taught by their usefulness, relation to practice, accessibility etc. and the relevant lecturers by their qualities, ability to present the course content, methodology used etc. through completing survey forms which are later summarised in order to make public their evaluation of faculty and courses (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

It is given institutional validity through the coordinating role of a Centre for quality.

The following example for opportunities for learner feedback in the Scottish national report provides a wide ranging systemic approach to feedback beyond just one pathway:

Learner engagement was fostered in a number of ways:

- Each course has a course representative who presents the views of fellow students to the college. Training and support for this role is provided by the Student Association and Student Participation in Quality Scotland (SPARQS)
- There is a Learner Forum for each of the five college centres/institutes. These forums meet twice a year and points raised are either dealt with at the forum or passed on
- The overall College Learner Forum. The College Learner Forum includes two course representatives from each centre/institute
- Office bearers of the Student Association sit on several of the college's major policy-making committees including the Learning and Teaching Committee, the Diversity Committee and the College Academic Board (Weedon et al., 2010).

It is notable that while many national reports referred to learner feedback, there is a paucity of examples across national reports of feedback from traditionally underrepresented groups attending education institutions, regarding their experiences in

accessing education through the specific educational institution. This is illustrated by the following example from the Lithuanian national report:

The only feedback collected is annual student surveys on satisfaction of studies. The information gathered concerns the study quality and teachers performance evaluation, however no information regarding underrepresented groups is collected. It is worth to mention that teacher regards these surveys very sceptically: *I don't know the purpose of these surveys. There are no guarantees that the students will tell you the truth* (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

This reinforces the point highlighted earlier about the lack of feedback sought by institutions regarding an institutional outreach strategy; this lack of feedback from people from the target groups themselves appears to be a general system level gap in access strategies and practices across countries and educational institutions.

A somewhat wider focus on systemic feedback is evident from the following example in relation to prison education in the English national report:

There are both formal and informal methods of feedback and evaluation at the prison. The prison is Ofsted inspected, which is a regular formal evaluation. Part of the formal evaluation is to ensure that tutors are using methods of actively involving the learner in lessons, as well as inspect various other aspects of the provision of education. In addition, there are regular *teaching and learning observations* done by managers in each area (Senior manager). There are also spot checks *whereby I might walk around and just see what people are doing* (Senior manager). There are both internal and external evaluations of education at the prison. The tutor stated, *we do lesson observations and annual reviews, supervisions and they are moderated by the college, we have a schedule for the lesson observations and then we send them to college who moderate what we've done and so it's monitored both internally and externally* (Engel et al., 2010).

A systems theory perspective on feedback would prioritise the importance of diverse avenues for feedback across an educational system (e.g., Downes 2009) rather than simply reducing feedback to written course evaluations.

The following university example from the Irish national report is one of the few illustrations of systemic feedback from the target groups themselves:

The evaluation and feedback is built into all the coordinators' roles, but there's also a separate full time programme of evaluation coordinators, it would be very detailed and really at this stage it's trying to track what's happening in the schools, in terms of who's there...the demographic profiles, what kind of subjects are they taking, what are they achieving within those subjects, what are the areas that are kind of fluctuating, what are consistently low, what are consistently high, who's coming to us who's going to other colleges. Obviously, how the students are getting on when they're in there. And then you know...did you enjoy it, did you not? but we'd also be...trying to look at who's coming on the different activities and programmes and how we are targeting them and are we targeting the right people for the right activities, and are they working for the people we're taking on then, and what's happening to them after they come on activities, do they come on more activities...and to track...attitudinal change and people's progress from even our second level schools to other institutions and what happens when they go to other institutions...we have a fairly comprehensive system for gathering data and looking at it and seeing what we can do with it (Dooley et al., 2010).

It is notable that this monitoring of progress of students from traditionally underrepresented groups also extends to their labour market experience upon graduation:

And also tracking people at the other end when they go out into the labour force, and seeing what their experience of the labour market has been and how it has been affected by being a student who came in through a...[access] route and how they have negotiated employment (Dooley et al., 2010).

A pervasive theme in this comparative report has been the need to target groups and different institutional system levels (regarding structures, policies, strategies and practices) to promote access to education. In doing so, this very categorising of people into ‘target groups’ is somewhat reductionist and is a categorisation that leads to their objectivification (see also Sayer 1997, Tajfel 1978). There is a need to conceptualise their systemic roles in wider terms where they are not merely passive recipients of targeted activities but also active subjective agents constructing meaning and being involved in the design of varying interventions (see also Downes & Downes 2007 on inorganic systems as ones with a subject-object inversion leading to reification). This subjective dimension and focus has been given expression through a number of pathways beyond recognition of the need for feedback from access students and feedback from recipients of outreach strategies. This subjective dimension⁴² has already been highlighted through acknowledgement of the need for representation of target groups through members of such groups being employed in the educational institution, together with the need for communication with spokespersons, opinion makers and role models in marginalised or ethnic minority communities.

6.2 Non-formal education: Indicators at Macro-Exo levels

Table 10. In what ways can the non-formal education sector be promoted?

The need for a national and regional strategy for non-formal education –to relate but not reduce non-formal education to the formal system	Structural Indicator
The need for agreed, nonreductionist, accountability processes in the non-formal sector: Due to less accountability provided by non-formal educational institutions in a climate of increasing need for accountability	Structural Indicator
Funded strategies to develop local community lifelong learning centres	Structural Indicator
Staff continuity and development in non-formal education	Structural Indicator, Process Indicator
Non-formal as a path to formal education	Structural Indicator, Process

⁴² A postmodern focus (Lyotard 1984; Kvale 1992; Gergen et al., 1996 ; Simons & Billig 1994) would presumably go further than this framework of a subject-object dualism to examine prior background systems of relations

	Indicator
The arts as a key bridge into societal and systemic participation <i>via</i> non-formal education	Structural Indicator
Content of courses as meeting the systemic goals of active citizenship and personal fulfilment	Structural Indicator
Pathways to overcome process difficulties regarding recognition of prior learning	Process Indicator
Non-formal education as a key bridge to ethnic minorities, immigrants and those experiencing social exclusion	Process Indicator

Table 11. How can the non-formal education sector be facilitated in being a key systemic bridge for access to the formal education sector?

The need for a national and regional strategy for non-formal education –to relate but not reduce non-formal education to the formal system	Structural Indicator
The need for agreed, nonreductionist, accountability processes in the non-formal sector: Due to less accountability provided by non-formal educational institutions in a climate of increasing need for accountability	Structural Indicator
Content of courses as meeting the systemic goals of active citizenship and personal fulfilment	Structural Indicator, Process Indicator
Pathways to overcome process difficulties regarding recognition of prior learning	Structural Indicator
Non-formal as a path to formal education	Process Indicator
Non-formal education as a key bridge to ethnic minorities, immigrants and those experiencing social exclusion	Process Indicator

Table 12 Which are the main obstacles to establish a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience for opening access of adults to the education system?

Pathways to overcome process difficulties regarding recognition of prior learning	Process Indicator
Non-formal as a path to formal education	Process Indicator
A strategy to develop community leaders	Structural Indicator
The arts as a key bridge into societal and systemic participation <i>via</i> non-formal education	Structural Indicator

6.2 (i) The need for a national and regional strategy for non-formal education –to relate but not reduce non-formal education to the formal system (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

It is apparent that there is a severe lack of strategic direction at national level in many countries regarding non-formal education. The Hungarian national report provides the following account:

The interviewees [from a non-formal education institution in Hungary] have no information about the national or the regional strategy in Hungary to develop the non-formal education sector. According to the manager, stable and continuous financial support would be necessary for the non-formal sector too. The mentor emphasises that more connection and cooperation would be important between the formal and non-formal sector, and also between the different non-formal organisations, because only these cooperations could provide solutions for the complex problems of the disadvantaged groups (Balogh et al., 2010).

In Hungary, the non-formal education sector is under the remit of the Ministry of Affairs and Labour :

Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations? *This Ministry* (Balogh et al., 2010).

However, the senior government official notes at another part of the interview in the Hungarian national report that '*This Ministry mainly supports formal trainings*' (Balogh et al., 2010).

A policy vacuum at a strategic level in relation to non-formal education is evident from the Bulgarian national report:

According to the respondent, there is no strategy for development of the non-formal sector at national or regional level. This personal opinion of the respondent may be counted as an expert opinion, because she has long years of practical experience in the non-governmental sector with different kinds and types of NGOs – charitable and tourist organisations. In the respondent's view, the main priority of a future strategy should be partnership relations between various stakeholders and a serious emphasis on practical training in a real-life environment of trainees (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Similarly, in Russia, strategic direction for non-formal education is singularly defined by its absence:

The interviewees are not aware of any comprehensive national or regional strategy in Russia to develop the non-formal education sector. All the initiatives in the field of non-formal education are developed by the Centre either independently or with the assistance of foreign partners. They consider non-formal educational offers for disadvantaged groups as very promising since they are more short-term and practically oriented. However, they admit that the majority of people in Russia still have more trust in formal educational institutions and programmes (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The Russian national report concludes:

In Russia, non-formal education is most often financed by the private sectors. The percentage of educational programmes of non-formal educational sector is very

insignificant. Moreover, there's no department that would be responsible specifically for funding the non-formal sector of education. The representative of the Committee couldn't say which department is in charge of non-formal organisations, if there's any at all. During the interview, it was noted that all informants have quite a vague idea of what non-formal education is. Both of them asked the interviewer for a definition of non-formal education and were given the definition used in the frames of SP5 of LLL2010. The fact that both informants who deal directly with educational programmes, would refer to non-formal education as to private and paid education, shows that they are not quite clear with the term because the system of non-formal education is not quite well structured by itself (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A further problem in relation to lack of strategic direction for non-formal education in the Russian context is a lack of information on this sector at national level:

Unfortunately, there are no official statistics on non-formal education, so we cannot provide any information on the number of non-formal education institutions in Russia and their students (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

This response from the Austrian Education Ministry official illustrates the low priority given to non-formal education in Austria:

Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations? Responsibility probably nobody (laughing), and everybody is doing a little...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... This is probably owing to the strong focus on formal vocational training and the strong orientation towards job profiles in Austria... (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Some scope for strategic development of non-formal education is envisaged in the Austrian national report through developments at European level:

The European Qualification Frame is expected to bring forward the current situation. We hardly have anything yet as regards the section about non-formal learning and informal learning (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Across a range of these national reports it emerges that non-formal education is frequently merely a bungalow annex to the citadel of formal education.

Somewhat in contrast, the Scottish national report points to a strategic focus on non-formal education:

At the non-formal level of educational provision social inclusion has also been addressed through the development of local authority community learning and development. Here the emphasis is on building community capacity and to engage with those that the formal education system may not have adequately provided for (Wallace, 2008) (Weedon et al., 2010)

There are a range of other policies and strategies which focus more specifically on particular areas – the main areas are:

- Community Learning and Development
- Adult literacy and numeracy
- More Choices More Chances – provision for 16-19 year olds who are not in education, employment or training
- Widening access to further and higher education

Implementation of the initiatives linked to these policies and strategies are spread across learning providers in both the formal and non-formal setting (Weedon et al., 2010).

In similar vein, the Irish Government White Paper on Lifelong Learning sets out a strategic vision which encompasses non-formal education:

The national strategy to develop the non-formal education sector in Ireland was set out in the ‘White Paper, Learning for Life’, published in 2000 by the Department of Education and Science. This document includes aspects of further and third-level education, continuing education and training, community education, and other systematic deliberate learning by adults, both formal and informal (2000:12). This gave a new recognition to community education in Ireland by setting out that ‘community education, particularly in the form of community-based women’s groups has been one of the most dynamic and distinctive elements of the adult education sector in recent years. Its self-directed, learner-centred character and its capacity to reach marginalised women in disadvantaged communities are particularly noteworthy’ (DES, 2000: 16) (Dooley et al., 2010).

Underpinning the overall framework of lifelong learning are six areas of priority in the Irish White Paper on Lifelong Learning (2000):

- Consciousness Raising: to realise full potential; self-discovery; personal and collective development
- Citizenship: to grow in self-confidence, social awareness and social responsibility and to take a proactive role in shaping the overall direction at societal and community decision-making
- Cohesion: to enhance social capital and empower those particularly disadvantaged
- Competitiveness: the role in providing a skilled workforce
- Cultural Development: the role of adult education in enriching the cultural fabric of society
- Community Development: the role of adult education in the development of community with a collective sense of purpose.

In the words of Maunsell et al., (2008), ‘Rather than being merely a tag on to the economic rationale for lifelong learning, the White Paper prioritises the issue of social cohesion through personal, community and cultural development’ (p.1).

The non-formal education sector is also particularly well-developed in Belgium (Flanders). The Belgian (Flanders) national report provides the following account:

At this moment 128 socio-cultural organisations are offered government funding by the Flemish Community (FOV, 2008). These non-profit organisations all mainly rely on those state subsidies. The government policy has caused a strong professionalisation of the field of socio-cultural education since the 1970s (De Meyer, 2006). Still, most of the

organisations in socio-cultural adult work are independent from government. This is especially the case for the associations, which are considered to be an important part of the civil society – separate of state structures and commercial institutions (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Over the last six months of the year 2005 more than 2,200 non-formal educational programmes were offered by over 200 different organisations (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

However,

“While these courses are large in scale, they are only those offered in Brussels. Thus, caution must be taken in relation to assumptions that non-formal education is well-developed in other parts of Belgium” Vandenbroucke (2011, personal communication).

According to the Belgian (Flanders) national report, there are four types of socio-cultural organisations:

Associations (*Verenigingen*): associations are networks of local divisions, departments or groups ran by volunteers (along the lines of informal social networks)...These include cultural, leisure, educational and community-based activities.

Training-plus-centres (*Vormingplus-centra*). Since 2003 thirteen regional folkhighschools are being recognised and subsidised by the Flemish public authorities...They organise a wide range of activities themselves: courses, workshops, lectures, excursions, expositions, etc.

Specialised training institutions (*Landelijke vormingsinstellingen*)...Unlike the Training-plus-centres, they are specialised in one or several specific target groups (adults with a disability, union members, etc.) or themes (arts education, social service, personality and relationships, nature and environment, etc.). They organise their activities all throughout Flanders and Brussels. They do not work for a specific region.

Movements (*Bewegingen*). Like the specialised training institutions, the movements are specialised in one or a few specific themes. In order to support social change, the movements organise activities to inform and sensitise people and try to involve them in social action. The term ‘movements’ refers to the so-called ‘social movements’ and ‘new social movements’ as a kind of group action with a specific social or political agenda (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

This extensive development of the non-formal education sector is combined with targeted approach towards socio-economically disadvantaged groups, according to interviewees in the Belgian national report. Most activities in socio-cultural adult work are free of charge, which helps them to attract socio-economically disadvantaged groups (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

While non-formal adult education institutions do make some significant efforts to attract socio-economically at risk groups, this is somewhat in contrast with the official centres for adult education which are classified as being in the formal education sector:

According to the senior manager, there are *few state initiatives* targeted towards the official centres for adult education to improve the access of underrepresented groups. She claims the first concern of the Flemish government is the quantity of participation rather than reaching out to those coming from a disadvantaged background such as a deprived

or marginalised socio-economic background (due to family circumstances, ethnic status, and so on). As a consequence, the subsidising authorities do not use points of reference or benchmarks when it comes to reaching new target groups (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Against this backdrop, it is surprising that there is a lack of information with regard to non-formal education participation of those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage:

Little is known about the participation and participants in socio-cultural adult work. Hence, there is no detailed information on the participation of educationally deprived groups in socio-cultural education (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

It is evident that where a well developed non-formal sector exists, such as in Belgium (Flanders), this may be correlated with a well developed social inclusion and access strategy in this sector, but this correlation cannot necessarily be assumed. Moreover, even if there is such a correlation this does not seem to imply a similar strategy for the formal education sector, as evinced by the official centres for adult education in Belgium (Flanders).

The Bulgarian national report does highlight a tendency towards a focus on socio-economic disadvantage, at least to some degree, in aspects of non-formal education:

One of the largest networks of NGOs, which provide educational services in Bulgaria, is the Federation for science communication. The main office of the Federation is situated in Sofia. It has about 25 regional offices which are placed in big administrative towns or in towns in *industrial regions with high unemployment* (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

although at the level of its overall strategy the Federation does not identify itself as targeted at concrete socially disadvantaged groups it in fact provides education and training mainly for unemployed people. By participating in European projects together with other NGOs the Federation sometimes trains social groups such as prisoners but this activity is not integrated in its mission and strategy (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Limitations from the perspective of socio-economic disadvantage are that the federation does not provide literacy courses and that its approach to overcoming poverty and social exclusion through non-formal education is rather *ad hoc*:

Policy for supporting socially disadvantaged groups is listed in our statute but we do not do this in a systematic fashion. This is done mainly in cases when it coincides with the aims of a concrete project or when we can advise people to attend certain course (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

There is not a strong bridge between the non-formal education sector in Estonia and disadvantaged groups as is evident from this interviewee from the non-formal sector:

It is more difficult to attract people who do not cope with life so well, for example those with a low income. Those who are disadvantaged do not come to us and we cannot find them either. This is a major problem. (...) Those people often lack motivation. However, there are some who have heard about the courses. Some are school drop-outs... (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The pervasive absence of a strategic approach to access to non-formal education in Hungary for traditionally disadvantaged groups also impacts upon retention of students once they return to education:

Absence is a big problem, since students do not have enough time because of their job or family life, or simply because their employers do not want them to attend courses regularly. Leaving school early is similarly a problematic issue – approximately 40-50% of students leave the institute in the first semester, either because they do not even start their studies or because they are frightened of the difficulties (high requirements, lack of time, etc.). On the other hand, the majority of those who pass the final exam in the first semester will finish the school and get a diploma. Counting on a high rate of early school leaving, the institute launches the classes with 40-50 students in the first semester – in some months, headcount in the classes drops down and this way students can start the second semester in classes with a normal size of 20-25. Thus, the institute can admit all applications and does not have to merge classes. Early school leavers often restart their studies – according to the present order, students can restart courses at the point where they dropped out, and – even if they left several years before -- do not have to restart them from the very beginning (Balogh et al., 2010).

This extract from a Hungarian secondary school for adults illustrates the need for not only a strategic approach to student access and retention but also sufficient resources in order to provide a range of supports – academic, emotional, financial and social - to students once they come back into the education system. In the absence of these supports, a high number of students simply end up leaving the system. System level change is clearly required here. This change would also need to include teacher professional development, especially in relation to constructivist teaching methods and increased self-evaluation processes at an institutional level. It is to be noted that some financial support is provided by the Hungarian institution:

Those having difficulties with paying the tuition fee can apply for it to be reduced or waived, independent of academic results. Certain disadvantaged groups pay reduced fees without application:

- students from families where income *per capita* is lower than 57 thousand Forint per month (around 200 euros) pay a 50% reduced fee
- students with three or more children do not pay any tuition fee
- Ill students pay a reduced fee.

The decision on reduction was previously the responsibility of the principal, but recently he can only make suggestions, and it is the notary who makes the final decision (Balogh et al., 2010).

Non-formal education appears to receive strong commitment in practice in Lithuania. The Lithuanian national report highlights its legislative basis:

Non-formal adult education is regulated by the Law on Non-formal Adult Education (1998, May 30, No.VIII-822) commits the providers of non-formal adult education and their social partners ‘to provide assistance in implementing the inborn right of a person to lifelong development of his/her personality’ (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

This provides scope for lifelong learning goals as personal fulfillment and not simply in vocational terms. The Lithuanian national report explicates the main objectives of non-formal adult education:

- To encourage people to satisfy their self-education needs and to satisfy their cultural interests;
- To develop people’s competences and creativity;
- To help people to become active members of democratic society;

- To enable to acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills for people's professional activities, and to establish the conditions for developing qualifications (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

There is both data available on participation in non-formal education and evidence of high rates of participation in non-formal education in Lithuania:

Data of Lithuanian Statistics Department shows that in 2006 about 500 000 people aged 25–64 participated in some form of non-formal education. Non-formal education services are provided by about 3000 state-owned or private institutions, including those whose main area of activities is not education (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

However, the Lithuanian national report highlights the need for fresh strategic direction at national level in relation to non-formal education:

Lithuania has Education Strategy, but non-formal education is not emphasised. Only the references to the existing Law on Non-Formal Education are given. In expert opinion the latter is: [...] *is quite outdated, it was adopted in 1998. [...]* (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

It similarly uncovers the need for regional strategic direction in relation to non-formal education, which is currently lacking in Lithuania:

Each region⁴³ of Lithuania has its own Development Plan, however, non-formal education is not mentioned in these plans: *First of all we should separate this area from formal education system, and promote educational activities which introduced the essence of non-formal education to the general public, and the benefits of it, including regional authorities, employers, educational institutions, consulting and non-governmental organisations etc* (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The Lithuanian national report explicitly recognises the role European policy can offer in providing strategic direction for the non-formal education sector (Taljunaite et al., 2010). It is notable that the weaknesses highlighted in the Lithuanian national report relate to strategic and structural reform to give better expression to non-formal education:

[...]there is no non-formal education system strategy, there is no funding and quality assurance system, no monitoring mechanisms as well as no recognition of competences of non-formal learning (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

There is a lack of inter-institutional cooperation and there is a need to introduce a common system of monitoring formal and non-formal education quality (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The lack of a driving force at national level, whether for strategy or funding, was recognised in the Lithuanian national report:

In response to the question which state institution is responsible for financing organisations of non-formal education, a Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science official gave the following answer: *The Ministry of Education...The Ministry of Education and Science, not directly, not for financing.....that's a good question..... You know – how to say – as the non-formal education is not financed from MES, so it is municipalities, municipalities, non-formal education belongs to municipalities* (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

⁴³ Lithuania is divided into regions (counties). Each county is divided into municipalities. There are 10 regions (counties) and 60 municipalities.

In Estonia the main organisation to deal with the development of non-formal education is the Non-formal Education Association:

A number of unique education centres have emerged and they are doing wonderful job. They have to fight for their survival. It is not easy to get funding for their courses. They have to work hard and compete with open universities. This opinion is based on the experience of other institutions (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Significantly, the Estonian lifelong learning strategy does encompass at least some conception of non-formal education:

Recently a strategy for lifelong learning was adopted in Estonia. A part of the strategy concerned non-formal education (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Development Plan for Estonian Adult Education 2009-2013 includes a chapter dedicated to non-formal and informal education (p. 22). However, there are no regional networks of non-formal education providers, neither is there a relevant strategy in place, according to a nonformal education organisation interviewee:

It would be useful. Currently everybody acts on their own. The need for training should be investigated in connection with the Rural Development Plan (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A comprehensive strategy would have a great impact on non-formal education (Tamm & Saar 2010).

According to an Estonian university interviewee, there is much room for a more proactive role at national level for the Education Ministry in relation to non-formal education:

Non-formal education is developed by universities themselves based on their own visions or feedback received from employers. *The Ministry of Education and Research should take on the coordination of the provision of non-formal education* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A barrier to such a role is finance according to the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research which makes the following comment on investment in the non-formal education sector in Estonia:

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? *Unfortunately the simple answer is we practically do not have any budgetary means to fund education outside the state commissioned education except some mobility grants. The investments have also been miniscule so far* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

However, the Estonian national report also observes that:

Since 2007 free training is provided by vocational schools and non-formal education centres with ESF support. The majority of courses are work related continuous training courses, the aim of which is to increase the competitiveness of participants in the labour market (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A policy vacuum and lack of national strategic direction and priority to non-formal education leads not only to its lack of development. It also leads to its potential colonisation by the formal education sector. This phenomenon of colonisation of the non-formal education sector by the formal education sector is an implication of the following account from the English national report:

With the emphasis on accreditation and credit frameworks growing apace in recent years, much provision which was formerly non-formal has either disappeared or become part of the formal system. Thus, for example, for most of the twentieth century most 'pre-1992' universities offered a range of 'extra-mural' classes for adults, chiefly in the humanities. Although Oxford and Cambridge still make some offering of this kind, almost all other universities confine their programmes to credit-bearing courses, typically forming part of studies leading to a degree (Jones et al., 2010) (Engel et al., 2010).

Such colonisation is also an issue emerging from the Slovenian national report:

We take very good care to offer only those programmes which are not offered by schools in our area. As soon as it happens that the school is offering a programme we absolutely have no chance to carry the same programme out because we can't be competitive concerning the price knowing the school has all the material costs covered, has a building ... We might have been more flexible and quicker in non-formal learning but since schools are facing lower enrolments they have become very flexible, they offer classes from flower arranging to cookery, really everything (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The following attempt to resist such colonisation is highlighted in the Austrian national report:

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 solution (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Similarly, a Belgian national report interviewee refers to the need for a reciprocal two-way process between the non-formal and formal education providers, in order to avoid a situation where the non-formal is merely instrumental to and colonised by the formal:

Building bridges for learners to the formal education system, should not be one-way traffic, the interviewees indicate. Non-formal educational institutions should facilitate outreach events from formal educational institutions (e.g. organised visits for learners), but this should also be the case the other way around. Adults participating in formal adult education do not always have information on or access to the non-formal educational sector. It is important that institutions promote that link too (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

A major development at EU level is the ETU 2020 commitment and the recognition that the EU Council (2009/C 119/02) agrees that:

1. In the period up to 2020, the primary goal of European cooperation should be to support the further development of education and training systems in the Member States which are aimed at ensuring:
 - (a) The personal, social and professional fulfillment of all citizens;
 - (b) Sustainable economic prosperity and employability, whilst promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue.

The question arises as to the extent to which this lifelong learning approach encompassing active citizenship, personal fulfillment and social cohesion is given manifestation in the structures and strategies of member states, with respect to formal and

non-formal education. It is evident that much is needed to be done to translate this EU Council commitment into policy and practice across member states, both in relation to their national strategies and priorities, as well as their structures for implementation of such priorities regarding non-formal education.

Finance is frequently raised as a major barrier to a progressive strategy at national level for non-formal education. The precarious situation of non-formal education institutions is emphasised by interviewees in the Estonian national report:

There is no support system for non-profit associations. It is difficult to survive. We can pay the teachers and the training manager but we cannot pay for managing the organisation. We are in a very difficult situation if we cannot get support from local governments. We work without any pay. The Estonian Non-formal Education Association has dealt with these problems. Some day maybe the government will support us too.... In other countries centres like ours get support from the government. When the economic situation improves the local governments will support us more (Tamm & Saar 2010).

It is clear the EU has been a major source of funding for development of the non-formal education sector in Estonia:

In 2007 and 2008 three programmes were prepared for the development of adult education and training; the programmes which are financed from the ESF are the following:

Vocational training of adults in vocational educational institutions and development actions (approved in February 2009);

Adult education in non-formal educational centres (approved in June 2008);

Popularisation of adult education (approved in June 2008) (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Within the programmes, at least 73 000 people are expected to participate in courses provided by vocational educational institutions and non-formal education centres (folk universities). Participation is free and courses are available in all counties (Tamm & Saar 2010).

An appeal for strategic evaluation and intervention at EU level for non-formal education is made by the following interviewee in the Hungarian national report:

Furthermore, according to the manager a special monitoring system would be useful from the part of the European Union. Meetings and discussion-possibilities for the representatives of the non-formal organisation were provided by a monitoring system earlier, but there is no opportunity to bring on special problems recently, thus every organisation are having to face professional and financial problems alone (Balogh et al., 2010).

The Scottish national report locates funding for non-formal education as being channelled through local authorities both independently and by national government:

Local authorities are responsible for funding the maintained non-formal education sector – Community Learning and Development (CLD). The councils receive a block grant from the Government as well as funding through Council Tax (a tax levied on all property owners in their community) within their own authority (Weedon et al., 2010).

The clear need for a more strategic relation between the non-formal and formal education sector arises in the Slovenian national report:

Since validation and recognition of non-formal and informal education in formal education is not yet implemented in practice non-formal education, no matter how far it is formalised and standardised, does not count towards formal education (Šlander & Hvala Kamenšek 2007). From this point of view non-formal programmes may represent an important way for improving and upgrading knowledge and skills and obtaining new competences but they do not deliver higher social status. However, this may represent a competitive advantage when competing in the labour market (Ivančič et al., 2010).

This systemic level focus on transition and connection between the non-formal and formal education sector, without colonisation of the non-formal, requires interrogation of the distinctive features of the non-formal education sector which need to be retained in any such connection and interaction. The Belgian national report sets out the following distinctive features of non-formal education from the perspective of participants:

According to the interviewees, what adults look for in non-formal adult education institutions is somewhat different and in some cases exactly the opposite of what they experienced in a traditional schooling context or a classroom environment. Both interviewees tend to look upon this as a strength of non-formal adult education rather than as a weakness. It seems therefore important not to formalise the activities any further and offer more courses and classes, but to focus on the real-life effects and benefits of the work (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Vandenbroucke (2011, personal communication) highlights that, *“In terms of institutions the differences between formal and non-formal are: the hierarchy in the system, certificates or not, subsidised by the ministry of education”*.

The flexibility of the non-formal education sector is a prevalent theme in the Belgian and Hungarian national reports:

Clearly, non-formal adult education can take place in various societal domains: culture, work, welfare, social work, etc. In all these domains, non-formal education can have various meanings. There is not really a fixed structure in non-formal adult education. It occurs in different locations and using a wide range of media, products and processes (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The non-formal adult education sector is rather diffuse...It is not a matter of trying to be another educational institution but being one that is also concerned with education in the broadest sense of the word, including culture, leisure, social change, etc. (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

According to the manager the biggest opportunity for the programme and the non-formal education sector lies in their professional flexibility. These organisations have the possibility to specialise themselves for the required developmental areas (Balogh et al., 2010).

Yet it is clear that this flexibility is a double-edged sword, as it may contribute to a loss of identity also for the non-formal sector.

The Russian national report observes the rapid growth of the non-formal education sector:

Speaking of the status of non-formal education, the informants admit that it has remarkably grown over the last five years (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A strong feature of the identity of non-formal education in Scotland and Ireland (Bane 2007; Higgins 2007; Waters 2007) is its commitment to active citizenship through community development:

The term 'adult education' has in the past been used mainly for learning provided in the community through what is now termed 'Community Learning and Development' (Wallace 2008). The non-formal provision is mainly non-accredited (Weedon et al., 2010).

The Irish national report cites the perspective of one of its national organisations:

Strengths of non-formal education are the extensive personal outreach to and development of contact with those in the community who might benefit from participation, and who may be quite alienated from education for a variety of reasons; non-threatening approaches are used to build trust often over a considerable period before the learner may decide to first come into a group and the fact that learners are encouraged back no matter how often they may leave a programme or miss sessions (AONTAS, 2004:23) (Dooley et al., 2010).

According to the Estonian national report, a practical approach and more open learning environment are what differentiate non-formal education from formal education in their country:

It seems that adult learners are better motivated and more aware of what they want. They can relate the skills and knowledge to those acquired earlier. The atmosphere is more relaxed. They do not have to prove themselves. When I went back to school as an adult I discovered that my attitude was completely different. It is inspiring to know that you can learn and are not rejected. Life changes and we change with it and we can keep pace with those changes. This is what I like about non-formal learning (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Accounts of increasing partnership and interrelation between non-formal education and formal education providers are highlighted in the Scottish and Belgian (Flanders) national reports:

A further development that is evidenced is that boundaries between institutions, possibly with the exception of the elite university are becoming more blurred. Colleges deliver higher education courses and have links with universities for students to move on to higher level study after completing the initial part of a degree at college. Colleges also have links to non-formal organisations, through being in partnerships with their local CLD and also through delivering courses jointly with CLD. In some cases CLD courses are delivered in colleges by CLD staff. Prison education straddles the non-formal – formal divide as there are opportunities for literacies learning as well as certificated courses ... from the college (Weedon et al., 2010).

Whilst the terms 'formal' and 'non-formal' are used, it should be noted that the boundaries between the two are blurred. Formal institutions do offer a small range of courses that are not accredited, non-formal ones offer a small number of accredited courses, colleges and, to a lesser extent universities, work in partnerships with non-formal organisations and education in prison spans both formal and non-formal provision (Weedon et al., 2010).

The interviewed senior manager comes to the conclusion that there is a strong cross-fertilisation between formal and non-formal adult education in Flanders and Brussels. This is also the case for Citizenne. In a lot of projects institutions for formal education

(offering mainly classroom activities) and institutions for non-formal education (offering mainly out-of-school activities supporting basic skills, etc.) work together. Bridging non-formal and formal adult education however, should not imply that non-formal education should always lead to access to formal education (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Citizenne is no 'supplier' or 'deliverer' of underrepresented or high-risk groups to the formal educational sector, although some of those formal educational institutions look at it that way (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

As in any partnership, there is a degree of tension needed in order to retain identity.

According to the Russian national report there is tension but little partnership between non-formal and formal education institutions:

Non-formal education exists parallel to the system of formal education. The system of formal education in Russia is rather closed and monopolistic. There are no mechanisms of recognition of prior non-formal learning or a bridge between the formal and non-formal education. This is a major obstacle on the way of development of the adult education in Russia. The problem is largely complicated with the fact that the system of formal education is extremely rigid and reluctant to establish any kind of connections with the system of non-formal education and letting it get installed into the educational ladder. Formal education representatives see the system of non-formal education as a competitor at the education services market. Therefore, to them any cooperation seems unacceptable and senseless (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A clear disjunction between the non-formal and formal systems is also manifested in the following interviewees' perspectives in Estonian national report:

It is difficult to assess whether and how the [non-formal education] courses are linked to formal adult education (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Hard to say... we do not stay in touch with former participants... (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Estonian example illustrates a disjunction at least at the level of communication between non-formal and formal education settings. However, cooperation with institutions offering formal adult education does occur with regard to engagement of their staff (psychologist, IT teacher, etc.), according to the Estonian national report:

I have worked with school teachers for a long time. At first they are very matter of fact: 'We do not have time for games; let's do it and we are finished...'. But the more they work with us the more relaxed they become. Life goes on and teachers have to learn to involve participants more. Sometimes they doubt whether this is possible. Teachers have been acting within boundaries for a very long time but these boundaries are starting to crumble (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The convergence of attitudes and teaching methods encourages further cooperation between formal educational schools and informal education providers and will hopefully help to change the attitude of teachers towards informal education and encourage them to use more diverse teaching methods (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Again with this convergence of teaching styles and approaches may come a loss of identity for the non-formal sector.

What emerges from this review of national reports is that there is a need for a much more accentuated strategic focus at national and regional levels on promotion of non-formal education generally and specifically for targeting socio-economically disadvantaged groups for participation in non-formal education. A corollary of such a

strategic commitment is provision of distinct funding strands for non-formal education, in conjunction with European structural funds. A recurrent theme in the national reports is the danger of colonisation of non-formal education sector by the formal sector, with a strong degree of mistrust between both sectors. It is apparent that different criteria for quality, distinctive to the non-formal sector, need to be developed.

The twin concerns of the need for processes of validation of the work in the non-formal sector on the one hand, and the danger of ‘colonisation’ of the non-formal education sector by the formal education sector, were explicitly recognised in some national reports and at the LLL2010 Consortium meeting in Bulgaria, Sofia (June 2010). Against this backdrop, there is a need for any validation process to be different from that of the formal education sector, to give expression to the difference of the non-formal sector in a range of ways. The flexibility and relationality of the non-formal sector must not be lost through reducing it to the Procrustean bed of the formal education sector. An important step in reconciling these concerns is to identify a range of different criteria for validation of courses in the non-formal sector, criteria which would help maintain a difference from the formal sector.

One obvious starting point for the development of such agreed criteria is the European Quality Mark framework developed as part of the RECALL project (see appendix for the kinds of questions asked here as part of their quality process). The EQM process is a transparent assessment process where the learning provider gets the opportunity to review its own processes by using a set of indicators that are based on standards commonly agreed by eight organisations from eight European countries. It is important to emphasise that there may be more than one kind of quality focus depending on the different kinds of goals for projects within the non-formal education sector. Furthermore, and most importantly, direct social inclusion goals for reaching some of the most marginalised groups in the non-formal sector would need to be expressly factored into any quality review criteria or indicators for the non-formal sector. It is evident that further EU wide consultation is required on this across the non-formal sector representatives of each country.

A related issue emerging from this cross-national review of the non-formal education sector, together with the formal educational sector, is that there is an obvious need for systematic integration of four core lifelong learning goals – social inclusion/cohesion, active citizenship, employment, personal fulfillment - pervading European Commission and Council documents, into nation states policies, structures and practices for lifelong learning. It is abundantly clear that current policies, strategies, structures, practices and funding for lifelong learning, whether in the formal or non-formal education sectors, do not yet amount to a systematic inclusion of these key dimensions across the various domains engaged in lifelong learning and access – though some countries have clearly made much more progress in doing this than others.

6.2 (ii) Pathways to overcome process difficulties regarding recognition of prior learning (PROCESS INDICATOR)

Though the issue of recognition of prior learning is being examined here under the heading of non-formal education, it is a dimension that necessarily involves interaction between formal and non-formal education systems. Thus, examples of interviewee perspectives are provided here from both non-formal and formal education

sectors. While some European countries have well developed systems of recognition of prior learning, such as France⁴⁴, Norway and Portugal (Field et al., 2007, p.75), many of the countries surveyed for current research purposes in a European context revealed difficulties regarding recognition of prior learning. This theme emerged for example, in the Slovenian national report:

They are much more reserved with recognising non-formal knowledge, because no standardised certificates are available: *we cannot approve some certificate that we don't know. We don't know how it was achieved* (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Non-formal education is very difficult to recognise. Because we don't have the basis. In the written order of recognition we have to say where recognition comes from. ... We have tried something but only in National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and it moves very slowly. It is a tough nut to crack (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Recognition of work-based learning is given some scope in Slovenia:

As our interviewees stress on, regarding knowledge and skills gained non-formally, some exceptions can be made based on work experiences: *Occasionally we also recognise non-formal knowledge or skills. If someone for instance has a lot of experience on a subject (e.g. computer skills), his teacher will give him tests to prove it, and eventually he can skip exams, lectures or compulsory practical work* (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The Slovenian national report continues:

Both interviewees agree that the main obstacle to recognise prior non-formal learning is transparency and standardisation of acquired knowledge and skills. In their opinion to improve non-formal certification, certain national directives or at least inter-institutional agreement should be made about giving proper certificate about knowledge and skill gained at some non-formal course. At the moment, they are having discussions in the community of post-secondary schools about possibilities of recognising non-formal knowledge, and developing tools to do that (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The concern was also raised by what would be lost through a formalising of a system of recognition of prior learning:

In Slovenia recognition of prior learning is not developed. Both respondents said it was very difficult. *This should be an ongoing process now in upper secondary education, but very, very difficult. Nevertheless then this non-formality is lost, isn't it? Then all these endeavours for the final paper ... all the same at the end there will be enumeration – what have you learnt, out of this how much in the formal system this ... it gets lost somehow.* As seen from the text above the institution is dealing only with items which are supported by papers – measurable although the recognition of prior learning and NVQs could be a driver and a tool also for recognition of non-formal education and learning it is not perceived as such yet (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Obstacles to recognition of prior learning highlighted in the Bulgarian national report referred to the issue of the varying levels of quality across institutions:

The main obstacle to the establishment of a mechanism for recognition of prior non-formal education and professional experience is the discrepancy of criteria at the

⁴⁴ For example, OECD 2007 report notes that in France in 2005, 21,379 people sought recognition of prior experience and 88% of them were successful (p. 75).

institutional level: *...people attend different courses at different places, but the quality of the trainings is not always good* (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

This issue of quality of educational institutions, particularly in the private sector, is also a central concern in Estonia. A Ministry of Education and Research official in Estonia raises the concern that weak, frequently private, educational institutions make it difficult to ascertain quality in relation to recognition of prior learning:

One thing that we do not yet have in Estonia is the recognition of earlier studies and work experience in admitting students (it is done in several Nordic countries). In Estonia earlier studies can be used (for obtaining credit points) only after being admitted. It is not permitted to use earlier studies in admission. I am one person who is against it. The reason is that our higher education network is very weak. Weak educational institutions are obviously interested in attracting more students and may therefore give up quality standards (Tamm & Saar 2010).

An attempt is being made to address this issue of regulation of institutional quality in Estonia:

This year we will introduce the so-called transfer marking in higher education. This means that all acting institutions of higher education are subjected to quality control. Those that pass the control will have the right to award diplomas/degrees recognised by the state and they will have that right either for a specified term or without a term. *This way we can separate the wheat from the chaff and then it is time to talk about giving more rights and setting more lenient formal acquirements in admitting students. You must look at the bigger picture* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A different narrative regarding quality concerns is expressed by a university interviewee in the Austrian national report – quality is construed in terms of scientificity or its absence:

The main obstacle to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience is, according to the interviewee from [university] 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 scientificity and of scientific performances. Informal Learning, which is brought in from different areas of experiences, is not necessarily recognised as sufficiently scientific...* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Significantly, there is a clear lack of criteria and institutional pathways for recognition of prior learning in Bulgaria:

There are no institutionalised mechanisms for recognising of previous non-formal learning (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

The proposed solution for this problem is the creation of procedures and institutional mechanisms for recognising prior learning. *There's a lack of procedure, lack of established ways in which this can happen, there are no procedures, no rules, there is nothing in this direction* (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

In the context of Lithuania, a major barrier to recognition of prior learning is the absence of a legal framework for such recognition (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

It does appear that a willingness to engage with recognition of prior learning exists at the level of the educational institution, according the responses of interviewees in the Lithuanian national report:

It is five years already that we plan to prepare guidelines for the college on how to recognise non-formal learning. We would be able to do this very quickly, but there's no legal framework that would allow to do it (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The teacher suggested institutionalising the process of prior learning recognition: *We should establish a centre in the college or to make this the function of the career centre (Taljunaite et al., 2010).*

Institutional mechanisms to recognise prior learning presuppose a background of legislation and national guidelines that do not yet exist in Lithuania.

According to an Education and Culture Ministry official in Hungary, obstacles to recognition of prior learning are more at the institutional than national level, though costs are also an obstacle at national level:

An independent examination centre would have been a general solution, but general solutions can be diluted much more easily, on the other hand they are much costlier. One of the factors to overcome obstacles is to find solutions for solving of part problems in this sector more specifically. The other possibility is to make the formal institution system more interested somehow which is currently interested in not to realise this (Balogh et al., 2010).

Costs issues were also mentioned in the Austrian national report as an institutional obstacle to recognition of prior learning:

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Other interviewees in the Hungarian national report emphasise contextual and even personality related dimensions to the operationalisation of recognition of prior learning:

Recognition of prior learning is not centralised and depends strongly on the professor of the course: some teachers are very open to this (like the interviewee who is the head of the department) (Balogh et al., 2010).

In a different Hungarian third level institution recognition of prior learning is gaining force:

Previously acquired knowledge is recognised in the credit system, both in case of prior learning and work experience. Credit transfer is very popular in the first case (knowledge acquired in another school), but is rare in the latter one. As recognition of work experience is a new possibility (was introduced a year ago), students usually do not know about it (Balogh et al., 2010).

An important issue raised here is the need to communicate opportunities to the students themselves in relation to recognition of prior learning. In a fast changing environment in this area, particularly in a Central and Eastern European context, consequences of reforms to provide opportunities for recognition of prior learning require an outreach strategy and an appropriate communication strategy to reach those who could potentially benefit from such recognition of prior learning.

There is a need not simply for criteria for recognition of prior learning but also for an identifiable and accessible section in the institution to offer guidance to potential students on this issue. This occurs in Belgium (Flanders):

Like many other colleges for higher education, Hogent has a centre for study advice and coaching and a centre for students. The first one offers advice on the students' learning path (certificates, credits, exams, validation of prior learning, fulltime or part-time studying, etc.) and offers support during the learning process (tutoring, coaching, individual course units, etc.) (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The Estonian national report highlights the difficulties at the level of the relations between the non-formal and formal education institutions themselves:

Unfortunately cooperation between formal and non-formal educational institutions has been limited. In particular this applies to recognitions of previous studies and work experience (VÕTA): *Unfortunately knowledge acquired in informal education is not recognised by formal education. I think that the VÕTA concept is not working... Efforts have been made but it does not seem to function properly. Non-formal education is seen as a hobby club – it is not taken very seriously ...* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

An interviewee in Estonia suggests that employers may be more willing to recognise prior learning than formal educational institutions:

All participants receive a certificate specifying the hours and content of their studies. *The certificate specifies the school, Number of education licence, course, topics, duration, financing. I do not know if anyone has used our certificate and if it has been of any help. It seems that it may help to find a job but otherwise ...* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

However, a different non-formal educational institution in Estonia reveals a pattern of transparent criteria for recognition from the non-formal education side but this time with some engagement by the formal education sector:

All participants receive a certificate specifying the content and duration of training. Employers and educational institutions take the completion of such courses into account. There is no precise information about which educational institutions recognise non-formal education and which don't. *I have heard that the University of Life Sciences recognises our certificates and students do not have to take the same course again. Institutions of professional higher education also recognise our certificates* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

In the Estonian context, it is important to emphasise that many non-formal education courses are run by formal educational institutions. According to the Estonian interviewee from a university which offers non-formal education as well:

Prior learning, including non-formal education, is taken into account in formal education. Students can choose a summer course among non-formal courses and their participation is recognised as main or elective subjects depending on how much they are related to their study programme. The same applies to participation in courses offered by vocational educational institutions or by informal education providers.

Relations between non-formal and formal education institutions may also be competitive ones. As the Estonian national report states:

The university competes with other higher educational institutions but this is not considered to be a problem.

Some other universities offer similar courses. I don't perceive any competition. Some of them offer very good courses. If the topics of courses coincide with the specifics of the university then I don't see any problems... (Tamm & Saar 2010).

There is no suggestion given here that formal educational institutions will resist recognition of prior learning from non-formal education institutions due to a dimension of competition between them. However, given local and institutional contextual variance on this issue, not only in Estonia, it is clear that national regulation is required to ensure that formal educational institutions which also operate in the running of non-formal education courses cannot use this as leverage against other competitors in the non-formal education sector. The need to address this issue arises *a fortiori* in the context of the current economic recession.

The Estonian national report addresses the related issue of potential financial exploitation of recognition of prior learning by the formal education sector:

Does it mean that everything depends on the teaching staff of a particular educational institution? Some people have said that one obstacle is competition, the fact that universities want money for credit points awarded? What is the ministry's opinion?

This is definitely one of the aspects that hinder the implementation of the changes. We have no quick and perfect solution to the problems related to implementing VÕTA. In the end it is the university who is responsible for the quality of the diplomas/degrees it awards. Nobody is going to relieve the universities from this responsibility. That's why the rules must be such as to enable the university to award diplomas/degrees (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A different obstacle highlighted in the Scottish context is that of time delay for recognition of prior learning:

A different view on the value of accreditation of prior learning and prior experiential learning was expressed by the manager from the voluntary organisation, she saw it as problematic because of it taking longer than doing a course (Weedon et al., 2010).

Other concerns highlighted in the Scottish national report relating to lack of appreciation of prior learning on behalf of the formal educational institution, and an *ad hoc* approach to recognition, resonate with other national reports' experiences:

This focus on human capital was criticised by the Learning Connections interviewee who generally viewed both the earlier lifelong learning strategy and the skills strategy critically. The key issue for him was the lack of appreciation of learning outside the formal setting and the overall focus on employability: However, it doesn't for me acknowledge learning in life outside a learning institution and I think that is a massive gap (Weedon et al., 2010).

College A recognised alternative qualifications and life experience, this was assessed on an individual basis (Weedon et al., 2010).

Institutional resistance was also, for example, a pervasive theme in the Austrian national report:

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...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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

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...especially as regards access to tertiary education greater reservation can be noted compared to other issues (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).*

What is construed as elitism from one perspective is interpreted by others as a concern with quality of the non-formal or private educational sector. National frameworks to address quality concerns in the non-formal and private educational sectors in particular would create the necessary background context to remove a 'concern with quality' argument from institutions resisting recognition of prior learning. Such institutions in the formal sector would thereby be left with no 'excuse' for their 'psychological reaction' (Rammel & Gottwald 2010) to resist a recognition of prior learning agenda to increase access and diversity of its student population.

From the perspective of a non-formal education interviewee in Austria: *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 an adequate control, a good basis of trust can be created (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).*

Some developments have been observed in Austria for recognition of prior learning, due to a European level influence in this area, as well as greater openness from universities of applied sciences:

The interviewee from operational level has positive experiences with using the 'Europass', a kind of standardised 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 (Rammel & Gottwald).

Generally, universities of applied sciences are found to be better adapted in recognising prior learning than universities. At a different part of the interview, the [non-formal education] 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

However, despite these 'international level' influences, the Austrian system stands out as being particularly underdeveloped in relation to recognition of prior learning:

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 built 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* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Another country which requires serious reforms to facilitate recognition of prior learning is Russia. As the Russian national report highlights:

The mechanism of recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience by the formal sector does not exist in Russia as such. The system of formal education recognises only prior formal educational experience. At least, in order to enrol into any educational institution one should present a certificate or a diploma demonstrating completion of a previous step of the educational ladder. However, it can be a diploma of both state and private institution. What is important for the recognition is that a diploma or certificate should be of a state standard, i.e., given by a licensed and certified educational institution (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Clear pathways for reform in this area are highlighted in the Russian national report:

Government interviews show that in order to start the process of creating mechanisms for recognition of prior learning and experience by formal education institutions there should be undertaken a range of measures on the part of the governmental policy that would include the following:

- Understanding the concept and the peculiarities of the formal education by the officials involved into the sphere of adult and lifelong learning
- Establishing standards for formal education, according to which non-formal education institutions and their programmes could be regularly assessed
- Encouraging cooperation between the formal and non-formal education systems (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The Russian national report concludes:

The education services market is mostly determined by the formal education institutions, whose education and diplomas are more popular among potential learners and employers. However, the formal education system has a range of disadvantages such as conservativeness, rigidity to innovations, lack of financing, obsolete methodologies and the staff that has not been retrained for a long time by now. Non-formal education is more innovative, flexible, and adaptive to the needs of learners and labor market but is often unable to provide graduates with a state standard diploma and qualified education. Therefore, the dialogue between the two systems is necessary for enhancement of educational opportunities of the Russian population. The establishment of the bridge between them should be encouraged by the government with corresponding legislative basis (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Some of the obstacles referred to for other countries seem to have been overcome in the context of Belgium (Flanders):

During the intake procedure (a new participant entering a programme for the first time) Open School explicitly takes into account the non-formal learning experiences and the work experiences of the participant, not just the certificates and diplomas. *We always screen and assess the competencies and knowledge people have. This is done by means of a test and an intake interview. Our centre is free in organising these the way it wants* (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

However, even in Belgium there is a need for development in this area according to the following suggestions emerging from its national report:

According to the interviewees, there are a few elements hindering the establishment of a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning from the point of view of non-formal educational institutions:

- The recognition of prior learning should not mean that all participants should (be able to) obtain a specific certificate or diploma for each non-formal educational activity they attend. The mechanism of the recognition of prior learning could however exert pressure on non-formal educational institutions to start ‘formalising’ their activities and courses (by means of planning the learning process in advance, assessment, handing out certificates, etc.). Still, argues one of the interviewees, *we must realise that one can never grasp in a certificate the real learning efforts and outcomes of socio-cultural work for adults.*
- Secondly, recognising the effects of prior learning is easy and possible when we are talking about classes and traditional courses for adults followed by some kind of assessment. This is not the case when the educational context is less planned and structured and the objectives are being negotiated with the learners and there is an opportunity to set and share learning goals during the activity.
- Thirdly, the recognition of prior learning needs to be done more planned and transparent in the sector of socio-cultural work (and the non-formal educational sector as a whole) than it is done now (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

A number of these observed obstacles operate at the macro and exo-systemic level. These include absence of a legal framework and national guidelines, the need for regulatory frameworks for quality of non-formal and private educational sectors to address frequently expressed quality concerns, the need to regulate competition between formal institutions and non-formal sector regarding non-formal education courses and to regulate potential financial incentives of formal sector to resist recognition of prior learning. Obstacles to recognition of prior learning highlighted at the micro-meso level include: institutional attitudinal resistance, lack of communication to students of opportunities for recognition of prior learning, costs of processing recognition of prior learning and delays in doing so, lack of criteria and institutional pathways for recognition of prior learning. A further concern that is pertinent to different systemic levels is that the distinctive features of non-formal education will be lost by a formalisation and regulation process for recognition of prior learning.

These obstacles to the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning need to be placed against the backdrop of the recommendation adopted by the European

Parliament and the Council, following extensive consultations between Member States and various stakeholders at European level, to establish a European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning in April 2008. Its main objectives, namely, to facilitate mobility and lifelong learning includes the key corollary of facilitating the validation of non-formal and informal learning. This amounts to an amplification of the Commission's Action Plan on Adult Learning, 'It's always a good time to learn'(2007), reinforced by the Conclusions of the Council in May 2008, which prioritised the need to speed up the process of assessing and recognising non-formal and informal learning for disadvantaged groups. Yet it is more than evident from the above cited institutions across a wide range of countries, as well as across other national reports that inform this comparative report, that this vision has not, or at best minimally, permeated through to the institutional level. This evidently needs systematic addressing to challenge hostile and sceptical mindsets at institutional level, as well as to engage with genuine concerns from institutional leaders in relation to implications of systematic recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning.

It cannot be presumed that the need to overcome this system level caesura between European policy and national institutional level practice will be met through the dissemination of the European Guidelines on the validation of informal and non-formal learning, published by Cedefop in July 2009, subsequent to the majority of the interviews for this report. Information alone is not enough⁴⁵; this is especially evident given the degree of resistance to such validation expressed by institutional leaders across diverse countries and institutional contexts, particularly in the formal education sector. This system level problem applies *a fortiori*, given the frequent lack of strategic vision articulated at national level, as well as at institutional level – across most countries examined in this report - regarding coherent development of the non-formal education sector.

An important related point emphasised by Slowey (1988) is that recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning needs to extend to the teaching methods of those in third level institutions, so that they can build upon this prior experience of adults in the learning situation. While Rubenson & Slowey (1988) observed little evidence of academics adapting their teaching methodologies to meet the needs of mature students, in the context of Sweden some time ago, it is strongly arguable that this issue also needs to be confronted in a range of participating countries where recognition of non-formal and informal learning is still only at an early stage. A further issue which arises in relation to extreme discrepancies in quality across non-formal and also private educational institutions. This is also hindering institutional willingness to engage in recognition of prior learning, and may be a particular issue in at least some Central and Eastern European countries in particular, and including Austria and Russia.

6.2 (iii) The need for agreed, nonreductionist, accountability processes in the non-formal sector: Due to less accountability provided by non-formal educational institutions in a climate of increasing need for accountability (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

⁴⁵ This is already implicitly acknowledged by the peer learning activities, referred to in the Commission staff working document (2009, p.22), which have been organized since 2007 in Portugal, Slovenia and Germany with regard to the validation of non-formal and informal learning for VET teachers and trainers.

Beyond the issue of recognition of prior learning, the Norwegian national report raises an important issue regarding both the need for accountability in the non-formal education sector and the difficulty in providing such accountability:

recent development within the educational sector and perhaps the society in general, implying that institutions and organisations become more and more accountable for their output, e.g. how many students pass their exams on schedule, how many degrees (or ECTS points) they are able to produce each year (Stensen & Ure 2010).

It is evident that any such accountability for non-formal education must be distinguished from that of the formal education sector:

The point made by our informant is that it is hard, if not impossible, to hold study associations accountable for many of their activities in the same way as other institutions and organisations, e.g. universities. Despite this, the political climate is more or less demanding this from them and the situation is frustrating for the study associations. Our informant pointed out that higher esteem among public authorities and people in general was one of the main challenges for Folkeuniversitetet in the coming years (Stensen & Ure 2010).

Accountability is also a concern in relation to non-formal education in Bulgaria:

From formal education perspective: *It is very important to set standards for the validation of the transition non-formal education, as conversely there is a risk of decreasing the quality of higher education* (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Accountability is a theme emphasised also by an Austrian official not only for recognition of prior learning but for the non-formal education sector generally:

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* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

When asked how these difficulties can be overcome, the Austrian official gave the following response:

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

The theme of a distinctive approach to accountability was also highlighted for the non-formal education sector by an interviewee in the Scottish national report:

He concluded by stressing the potential role of the voluntary sector but stressed that there

should be less power vested in formal institutions [to evaluate it] but without losing the accountability provided by the formal sector: .. so I do think there is potential for the voluntary third sector, independent sector, however you wish to describe [them] because they are all different, to grow and deliver lifelong learning much more effectively. I would take much more of it away from the power of the institutions, but I might leave the accountability with the institution, because I think it could be good at that, if they understood what's going on better (Learning Connections interviewee) (Weedon et al., 2010).

As the Scottish national report observes, accountability is not simply to be reducible to a measurable outcomes focus:

This interviewee felt that CLDs had to be more active in promoting its influence but that one of its problems was that the government focused on measurable outcomes which were not relevant to CLD learners: *The importance of CLD has to be more explicit in its influence ... we need to spread that message about the kind of learning opportunities that we provide and create and the outcomes that that can deliver, because people are obsessed with - they are not obsessed with outcomes: if they were obsessed with outcomes I would not have a problem, but they are obsessed with outcome measures. You know, say, for example, I take this from Curriculum for Excellence: 'We want to create more confident individuals and more responsible citizens.' That's absolutely wonderful ... And then they will say, 'And the measure of that is whether they get more Standard Grades or not.' To me, that is a madness, there is a disconnection (CLD 1 manager) (Weedon et al., 2010).*

The issue raised in this Scottish interview with regard to the limitations of outcome measures is an important one. There are a range of concerns with a purely outcomes driven agenda, especially in contexts of the area of socio-economic disadvantage. These are highlighted by Downes (2007):

There is a temptation to select those with more stable background conditions in order to improve the chances of causal impact of the intervention. In other words, those who are most at risk, those with multiple disadvantages, are most likely to be filtered out of an evaluation according to...outcomes criteria. Those most at risk are likely to be subjected to a range of interacting background conditions which may hinder and neutralise the effect of the potentially causal dimension for change that the intervention seeks to provide (see also Rook 1984, 1992 on depressed people being more likely to drive away potential social supports). Thus, gains according to...outcomes may be largely a function of the selection/filtering process of potential participants in the intervention where the most marginalised become further excluded. To reiterate, [an] outcomes [preoccupation] bring[s] the danger that the most disadvantaged...may become filtered out of focus as it is these groups which may be most resistant to measurable gains – and programmes reliant on outcomes gains for funding may begin to eschew intervening with those where change may be most slow though they may need the support most (p 61).

It is important to emphasise that a search for accountability in the non-formal sector needs to eschew the narrowing which may occur in any kind of 'testing' type focus, which often occurs in the formal education sector – and which may disproportionately impact on those experiencing social and economic marginalisation. Field et al's (2007) OECD report highlights the dangers of 'teaching to the tests' (p.129). Moreover, Booher-Jennings (2005) and Gillborn & Youdell (2000) highlight the filtering process involved in 'educational triage' in US and UK contexts respectively, where

preoccupation with test scores tended to result in a diversion of resources away from those viewed as least likely to pass and towards those on the threshold of passing the test.

The Russian thinker Alexander Herzen's critique of instrumentalism in the 19th century asks, if the purpose of youth is old age? Similarly, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child envisages childhood as a dimension of life in its own right and not simply in instrumental terms as a preparation for adulthood. Jarvis (2008, p.75) offers a critique of instrumental rationality as leading to uniformity in education. There is a need to recognise that instrumentalism requires some challenge also in the context of access to education, for whatever age group. Motivation for learning concerning those from traditionally marginalised groups goes beyond simply instrumental learning to include the social and personal developmental features of such learning (see also Slowey 1988). The danger especially arises for non-formal education that a drive for measurable outcomes will lead to an instrumentalism that will endanger a more relational, interpersonal approach, sensitive to individual differences and centred on the needs of the learner.

Especially in the non-formal education sector, there is a need to start from where the learner is at - and an outcomes' focus as a dimension of accountability tends to impose an agenda on the learner that is not necessarily shared with and owned by the learner. Moreover, the learner's pace may not fit within the limits of the outcome timeframe. Commitment to generic outcomes may be in tension with the disparate starting points of the range of individuals involved in the particular non-formal education classes (Downes 2007). Kelly (1999) criticises educational models predominantly based on education as transmission of knowledge and curriculum as content (see also Hunting 2000, p.245, and Downes 2003a for a critique of curriculum as content in the context of Estonia and Latvia). Accountability in the non-formal education sector must not be reduced to a subject centred version of accountability that undermines a learner centred vision. These concerns with a reductionism in attempts to instil greater transparency into the non-formal education system echo those noted earlier by the LLL2010 research consortium at the Sofia meeting, June 2010, with a potential colonising of the non-formal education sector by the formal education sector.

6.2 (iv) Non-formal education as a key bridge to ethnic minorities, immigrants and those experiencing social exclusion (PROCESS INDICATOR)

The Estonian national report highlights the following areas where non-formal education topics can be targeted to ethnic minority groups:

Russians are either referred to us by their employers or find the information elsewhere. They are more interested in courses on welding. Welding is an area where there are traditionally more Russians. Motoring is less popular. There are Russians in formal education learning the profession of a car mechanic but very few participate in continuing training (Tamm & Saar 2010).

However, these subjects could also be provided by formal education providers. As has been noted in subproject 1 of LLL2010 the dividing line between formal and non-formal education varies across countries.

The need for an educational focus on ethnic diversity emerges from the Lithuanian national report:

The student population at colleges and universities in Lithuania is not diverse. The xenophobia and ethnic intolerance rates are still high, despite the fact that in some 10 years the situation was much worse. Lithuania struggles to become an open and diverse society, but in education this is slowed down by a small number of study programmes offered in English or other foreign languages (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

Non-formal education is a bridge to civil society, what Berger & Neuhaus (1977) describe as a mediating structure. It can serve as a nonthreatening mode of participation of different groups in society. Some fear and ethnic tensions are referred to explicitly in the Russian national report:

Many representatives of disadvantaged groups (ethnic minorities, people with a disability) mention *the lack of social integration and toleration as well as current social conflicts in the Russian society* as important barriers in their educational career. The informant from the ethnic minority refers to the threat she feels from the neo-Nazi youth gangs that are now acting in big Russian cities and complains about everyday racism of the city-dwellers (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits, 2010, italics in original).

This is not to argue for non-formal education as the sole dimension to ethnic integration but it is one rich with potential for development. Slowey's (1987) characterisation of distinctive features of non-formal education is also pertinent in this context. She observes that non-formal education tends to offer frequently dense geographical networks, curricula and attendance options suited to learners' needs, lower psychological barriers for those experiencing educational disadvantage and faculties consisting mainly of practitioners.

The Austrian national report emphasises the distinctive role of non-formal education in meeting the needs of the individual learner, a key issue for basic education and beyond:

According to the [non-formal education] interviewee, the basic education offered 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 heterogenous 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* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

This appears to be a real need in Austria:

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 industrialised country's population is illiterate. This would mean that there could be up to 300,000 illiterate persons in Austria. Experts in the field

of illiteracy estimate that Austria has a much higher number: 600,000 (Markowitsch, Benda-Kahri & Hefler 2006, p. 11) (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

In recent years there is a growing recognition of a role for the Austrian state in basic education of adults:

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*): a system was developed, where counselling before and supervision during the courses was integrated, also drop out management played an important role. The area of second chance education is considered as strategically very important and worth to be (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

A sharp contrast between a non-formal education approach and formal education is drawn by an interviewee in the Austrian national report:

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: *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 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* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Significantly, goals of social inclusion are centrally built into the objectives of the following non-formal education organisations in Austria:

The *Volkshochschule* [non-formal education] ...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. Economic and social processes need to be harmonised. It is a central goal to contribute to social cohesion* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

The stated objective of the [non-formal education] organisation 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* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

Another feature of non-formal education observed in the Austrian national report is short, mini-courses to engage groups without a tradition of engaging 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

A barrier to a social inclusion focus and strategic role for non-formal education in relation to ethnic groups who may have low participation in education, is that in some countries the non-formal education is largely a private sector phenomenon:

...The adult education is a market-based sector. According to my knowledge, in other European countries, adult education sector is not privatised as much as in Hungary (Balogh et al., 2010).

This important point regarding privatisation of the non-formal education sector raises the issue of the need for strategic State investment in non-formal education in Hungary. This is also a prevalent theme in the Lithuanian national report where the need for a social inclusion focus to be given expression through the non-formal education sector is highlighted:

However, the promotion activities [of the non-formal education institution] are not targeted at social exclusion groups. The proposals might be addressed to organisations which bring together such people but social responsibility is not stressed in these proposals. Social exclusion groups are sometimes involved in international and local projects, but the marketing strategy usually aims at business and company trainings. The models of good practice of working with risk groups do not exist (Taljunaite et al.,2010).

The Estonian national report envisages a movement away from a laissez-faire approach to engaging those on the margins through non-formal education to one where the State plays a more proactive role:

Adult education is less developed than in other countries. I was in Ireland and their opinion was that offering courses for the unemployed is better than leaving them alone and letting them to alienate from work. If a person completed a course and did not find a job he can enrol on another course and is paid for it. He has something to do, a purpose. Here we leave the unemployed alone and then complain that they have lost motivation (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The respondents however admitted that things have started to change. While in the past non-formal education was paid for by participants or employers then now: *The government is supporting participants in adult non-formal education – both employers and participants. This is much needed (Tamm & Saar 2010).*

In the context of Estonia, Tamm (August 2010, personal communication) gives the following overview of the inclusion of Russian speakers, while noting that it is not a distinct focus within the Estonian National development plan for adult education for 2009-2013:

“The Russian Speakers are a target group if they have alienated from learning and need help in order to create interest in learning or in order to continue their studies. [they are] Not [targeted] separately in this [Lifelong Learning Strategy] document. [A] Foundation and Strategies for Russian speakers is mentioned in documents The Integration and Migration Foundation Our People (MISA). The foundation carries out the activities of the integration plan with the aim of ensuring that the people who live in Estonia share the same values and form an active part of civic society, and that national minorities have the chance to preserve their languages and cultures. The foundation is

guided by development plans in the fulfillment of its objectives as set out in its articles of association. The activities of the Foundation have been based on the Estonian Integration Plan 2008-2010 (DP 2008-2013) since 2008”.

Non-formal education can potentially play a key role in educational and cultural integration between Russian speakers and ethnic Estonians, going beyond the previously narrower focus predominantly on language integration (Downes 2003; Amnesty International 2006) of the earlier integration document:

Similarly to the NP 2000-2007, the goals of Development Plan 2008-2013 have been divided in three:

- Educational and cultural integration
- Social and economic integration
- Legal and political integration

The basis for the foundation’s activities between 2000 and 2007 was the national programme ‘Integration in Estonian society 2000–2007’ (NP 2000–2007). The foundation was responsible for the sub-programmes of the NP along with the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior. DP 2008-2013 has been prepared and the role given to the foundation therein is that of the actual performer of activities and it also includes a forecast of the cost of activities, the financier and performance indicators. For this purpose, the units of the Foundation and ministries developed the measures of the Operational Programme of the DP 2008-2010; and the Foundation also increased its knowledge about the requirements and/or possibilities of integration and successful solutions and included associated groups in the process of preparing DP 2008-2013. The Foundation initiates and supports projects/activities that promote integration in Estonian society and coordinates the efficient use of different resources in this area (2006).

The flexibility provided for in the non-formal sector offers a potential to reach groups at the margins of society. This has been a feature of the earlier Latvian integration programme which offered a strong focus on festivals and the arts to bring Russian speakers and ethnic Latvians together in civil society (Downes 2003).

6.2 (v) Funded strategies to develop local community lifelong learning centres (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

Community lifelong learning centres give effect to a systems theory focus not only in relation to transition for the individual but also regarding a promotion of growth rather than emphasis on deficits and through a focus on the strengths of the local community. The Lisbon European Council conclusions (paragraph 26) propose turning schools and training centres into multi-purpose local learning centres, all linked to the Internet and accessible to people of all ages. This is a major challenge for all Member States. The OECD (2007, p.75) highlight that Finland has over 260 adult education centres, which have evolved from adult vocational training to offer wider learning opportunities for the entire adult population. They also illustrate the key role of municipal authorities in Sweden and Spain (as well as Spanish regional governments) in providing adult education centres. The bridge between these centres and the formal educational system is illustrated by the research of Nicaise et al., (2005) which observes that at least 28% of all young people admitted into tertiary education in Sweden had passed through

municipal adult education or liberal adult education. Thus, community learning centres offer a potentially key pathway and bridge in providing outreach to marginalised communities and also connection over time between the non-formal and formal system. The EU Commission Staff Working Document on early school leaving (2010) observes that:

The importance of non-formal and also non-academic education for reducing ESL is uncontested; after-school activities need to find the right balance between supporting homework and bringing learning into spaces such as sports and community centres (p. 28).

Community based lifelong learning centres bring education into the centre of a local area, as is highlighted in the Scottish national report:

The location of classes were '*where they are needed*', a range of different premises were used and crèches were sometimes provided though the interviewees also noted that there was more nursery provision now through the education system. *We run these where it meets the needs of local people. So it could be in a church hall. It could be in a community centre. Anywhere that suits the needs* (Weedon et al., 2010).

The Scottish national report also emphasises that learners experiencing socio-economic disadvantage may be much more at ease taking classes in such community based environments:

Another initiative to engage with potentially disadvantaged learners was the schools' activity programmes. These allowed young learners who are at risk of not engaging with learning or entering the labour market to come in to the college for a few days and do a programme of activities that included a variety of different subjects in order to give them an insight into college life. This was designed to give them an idea of the variety that was on offer and it was hoped it would make them think about what they were going to do in the following year. In addition to this, there were community groups and community-based adult learning courses where the college staff would go out into the community and deliver courses in order to try and get people back into education. Near the end of these courses all of the student will come into the college because they were seen as college students. These courses were considered very successful in bringing in disadvantaged groups of learners who were more comfortable in a community setting:

We do a lot of European Social Fund classes that target people who are less likely to come into education and in my department the community classes are the way forward I think in terms of getting people into education (Department Head, College B) (Weedon et al., 2010).

There is a clear impetus for such community lifelong learning centres also in Estonia:

For several years the town has planned to establish an adult education centre offering formal adult education and also non-formal education, i.e. courses that support entry to and coping in the labour market. Cooperation with an enterprise has also been considered. This would increase the opportunities to acquire practical skills and the number of general education learners as combined knowledge and skills would increase the competitiveness of people and help them to gain a better position in the labour market (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The centre would also support more students from disadvantaged groups. The adult training centre should have a dormitory for those students whose situation is so bad that they are rejected by their own family (...) those who are younger than 17 or 18 years

could live in the dormitory. It would be easier to teach and direct them. They should be paid a small grant if necessary. Negotiations have started with the local authorities but lack of resources is an obstacle yet to be overcome (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Estonian example here illustrates local desire at community level to establish such community learning centres. Yet finance is the key obstacle. There is evidently a need for a distinct funding strand to be developed at EU level, in conjunction with commitments from national states, a strand purely focusing on establishing such community based local learning centres.

The Bulgarian national report also provides evidence for the key role of community based learning centres, for personal fulfillment and active citizenship objectives, including for formal education:

The Community centres (*chitalishta*) play a crucial role in relation to the personal and citizenship perspectives on LLL. Being unique traditional self-managed units in Bulgaria, they function as ‘training fields’ for acquiring skills for managing collective activities. In the smaller towns they are the only organisations that provide access to libraries, internet and other types of information. Given their multitude (there are 3,450 *chitalishta* listed in the register of the Ministry of Culture), location and institutional sustainability, they may be regarded as a unique national resource for the implementation of various educational initiatives, including LLL. Some community centres (*chitalishta*) conduct qualification courses for adults following curricula with internationally recognised certificates. In recent years, the modern information and communication technologies have been introduced and utilised in the community centres (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

These Bulgarian examples resonate with Connolly’s (2009) suggestion that community education builds the ‘community capital’, which is a combination of cultural and social capital, the intellectual, educational, social relationships, collective resources for the entire community to build up and foster a community spirit and activism. This builds up communities in sustainable ways by linking education theory with practice, local issues with the global issues and the personal with social advocacy.

The Irish national report emphasises the important role of *An Cosán* which is the largest independent community-based education centre in Ireland:

In relation to groups currently in the student population women from the local area attend classes. They run programmes specifically for young women in the area who are lone parents and early school leavers. *An Cosán* caters for ethnic minorities who need to improve their English language skills, confidence or parenting skills. Parents, particularly fathers and their children come to some classes together. They cater for children in the local community in the early childhood education centre. They provide courses for men in the local area who are looking to up-skill or become computer literate - they run courses on Saturday mornings to cater for this hard to reach target group. They target community workers and leaders in the local community in order to support them and provide them with a qualification in the area. They cater for older people in the local area and provide support and advice for grandparents who help to rear their grandchildren. *The model that we have in An Cosán, which is that very holistic approach, supports people from whatever point they enter, particularly to build in their self-confidence both within their personal life but also as being lifelong learners* (Dooley et al., 2010).

This community centre adopts both a lifelong and life-wide focus.

The strategic themes of personal fulfillment and active citizenship pervade this community based approach, with a combination also of formal and non-formal education courses:

The CEO explains, *our personal development programme has been extraordinary, probably one of the most successful classes run here... impacts on their own personal confidence, sense of self, the ability to find their voice, the ability to want more for themselves* (Dooley et al., 2010).

The Manager explains that it has been a *fantastic success and achievement...it is a Degree in Leadership and Community Development and is specifically developed for individuals from the community, who are either working in a paid or voluntary capacity in a leadership role and it is about developing their capacity for leadership within their community and also encouraging reflective practice. In the course they look at the knowledge and skills that they already have and that they need to develop ...all of the assignments are practical based, looking at what is going on in their community, matching ...policies to practice that they see in their community* (Dooley et al., 2010).

Significantly, there is a clear focus on progression for learners:

There is the option of progression through levels of courses for participants. The starting point is courses on Personal Development, Communication Skills, Basic Literacy and Numeracy. Another series of courses reflect the needs of the local community for training in leadership e.g. training for community drug workers and community development. These courses have been developed at the behest of local community groups (Dooley et al., 2010).

One of this project's interviewees for the Irish national report advocated the need for stronger connections and cooperation between the non-formal and formal education sector, including with their own community based organisation:

The CEO talked about her experience of working with the formal education sector:

I've been very involved in this with three different formal educational institutes...the commitment to working with disadvantage is limited in the formal education sector...the commitment to working with our sector, I don't see that formalised, I don't see that supported...in order to get colleges...to work with us...you have to show them very clearly what's in it for them. It's a lot of work for the person who is working in the non-formal sector to support the student to put together a portfolio or identify pieces of work that will match learning outcomes for a particular programme or so... I think a lot of work needs to be done around that (Dooley et al., 2010).

It is evident that the community based location and proximity is an advantage in being able to engage with hard to reach groups who have tended to be alienated from the formal system:

In relation to reaching potential adult participants, the Manager...explains that when recruiting participants they: *go around the schools, talk to different women's groups...we used to have a mini bus, letting people know that we have a big registration day on...trying to make an event out of it...turning up a local community events, to let people know we're here and what we're doing...being part of a lot of networks of local community organisations.* In relation to steps to reach those who are most socio-economically disadvantaged, the CEO explained that, *our focus is to work with the most disadvantaged, now we always know that there's lots of hugely disadvantaged people*

we're not making contact with...in an area where...literacy is a huge issue, putting leaflets through doors is of limited value. She went on to explain that, word of mouth is probably the biggest way, somebody goes and talks about it and brings a friend and that the organisation is, supporting all our participants to be active recruiter (Dooley et al., 2010).

An interesting example of how the non-formal community education sector can make the environment less hierarchical and a more organic system is provided in this project, namely, that board members also attend the classes with the learners:

The Director explained, our community project members, the steering committee members, all go to the classes, so there's constant feedback between the classes because the community people who are the leaders, are members of the classes (Dooley et al., 2010).

The English national report outlines the following overview of non-formal education and community based learning associations:

Other than through the direct provision of training for its employees, the government's funding for non-formal education in England is limited to a range of relatively small, targeted, and generally transient programmes in areas such as community regeneration. A number of local authorities, further education colleges, 'third-sector' NGOs and private sector bodies bid for such funding, often in competition and/or collaboration with one another. Some of these are organisations with national coverage, such as the Workers' Educational Association; others restrict their work to a particular locality. One example is the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF): 'the principal funding mechanism deployed to drive forward the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR) at the local level' in England's 88 most deprived local authorities, aiming to 'improve services and narrow the gap between deprived areas and the rest'. During 2001-2006, £1.875bn was allocated to eligible LSPs, and a further £1.05bn was made available in 2006-2008 (Cowen et al., 2008, p. 13). An officially-sponsored evaluation of the programme found the NRF had 'achieved a range of positive achievements', but that its 'cumulative impact and effectiveness' had 'not been maximised' for a number of reasons, including:

- 'evidence use in the planning of programmes and interventions' had 'not been embedded', so that 'the level of sophistication in targeting NRF was often poor',
- interventions had been 'inadequately evaluated, or not at all, meaning there has been a limited understanding of what does and does not work',
- 'data on performance, outcomes and impacts' had 'not been collected in a robust fashion, resulting in an inconsistent understanding of progress, with the issue of impact a particular concern' (Cowen et al., 2008, p. 68). Whilst this is only one example, these are problems not untypical of such programmes (Engel et al., 2010).

This issue of evaluation of the benefits of community based programmes requires cognisance of the need for a wider focus on structural and process indicators and not simply on outcome indicators, as highlighted by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health (2005; 2006) (see also Mulkerrins 2007; Downes 2007, 2008).

The English national report provides the following example of a longstanding community education association:

The People's Educational Association, a registered charity, was founded in the early 20th century, to encourage the expansion of educational opportunities for the working class, to encourage universities in particular to provide educational opportunities for workers and

their families, and to provide a vehicle by which higher education could be offered to working people. Through most of the twentieth century it collaborated closely with universities in the provision of 'extra-mural' adult education for adults. It had strong links with the labour and trade union movements. And from early in the century, it established arrangements, which have continued in various forms to date, by which it received funds from the state to provide classes for adults (Engel et al., 2010).

The background organisational context is described as follows:

Peoples' Educational Association has a national compass, with a structure of local branches grouped for most of the twentieth century into districts which covered all areas of the UK. By and large, its courses have been provided in the premises of other educational (or non-educational) bodies: schools, colleges, local authority adult education institutes, community centres, village halls, and the like. The Association is now the largest 'Specialist Designated Institution' (SDI) in England with provision in every Learning and Skills Council (LSC) region. It comprises over 650 local branches. It aims to be a 'democratic, voluntary adult education movement, which is committed to widening participation and to enabling people to realise their full potential through learning' (Ofsted 2008, p. 4) (Engel et al., 2010).

According to the Slovenian national report, relations between local municipalities and community based education centres, such as the people's university in Slovenia, reveal an institutional resistance at municipality level to community based non-formal education:

Though the people's university would like to have a clearly defined role in the community by the municipality which is its founder, this is not the case. It seems that the community, or at least the mayor and his council, as was added off the record, do not really know what to do with it. Therefore they do not seek its help either in fostering community leaders or planning further educational development. *No, no, this is not there. They even don't think of this, even if we had frequently drawn attention to the matter, that if they needed anything we were there* (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Libraries are considered as a source of community based learning in Austria:

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* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

From the following account of a senior government official from the Hungarian Ministry of Affairs and Labour, it is evident that there are not community learning centres with a wider focus on lifelong learning than simply the vocational one found in the Hungarian regional employment centres:

In Hungary the issue of adult education exists at two levels at present: at the level of training institutions and at government level. There are nine regional training centres at the regional level. Among other tasks they are responsible for the training of disadvantaged groups, and in connection with this they have a very close, day-to-day cooperation with the Regional Employment Centres ...

But besides this, institutions responsible for the adult education exist neither on regional nor on county or municipal level. Namely, the adult education is essentially market-based. Regional governing level is missing from the adult education. So essentially

communication exists only between the local and government level? *Yes, that's right* (Balogh et al., 2010).

The Estonian national report highlights the diversity of the learner population engaging with non-formal education centres based in the local community:

Non-formal education centres provide versatile and quality training in increasing volumes. Training is available to everybody, including risk groups (people with special needs, people without qualification, non-Estonians, people who have passed middle age), and people living in rural areas. Compared to 2004, the share of people learning at government-supported non-formal training centres will increase by 30% by 2008. Free elementary computer and Internet training is provided (Tamm & Saar 2010).

According to Tamm (August 2010, personal communication), *“they are community based liberal adult education centres, non-formal educational organisations”*.

The Estonian national report also acknowledges the important point that community or local lifelong learning centres would be part of a wider regional strategy for lifelong learning and access to education:

The adult education development plan includes a section dedicated to regional strategies. *I read the development plan and regional strategies are in it. This is exactly the document that should deal with regional strategies. No separate strategy is necessary. I know that a measure was proposed focusing on opening competence centres in different regions. These include vocational educational institutions and professional higher education institutions; local training centres also play an important role – people will have access to education and training* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Irish national report provides an example of a community based project in the Limerick region:

According to the Director, in the community education sector, *the strength is the accessibility, the strengths are sometimes the lack of assessment, because then it's non-threatening* (Dooley et al., 2010).

In relation to advice for someone trying to establish non-formal education in a particular area for the first time, the Director explains that you need to *begin small and let it grow while being constantly sensitive to the changing environment and the changing circumstances in people's lives. A good strong committee, an interest in the people... it needs to be run locally, by local people who know the needs of the people, because you cannot have someone, with no disrespect to anyone, coming out of a university and coming in and telling a community what they need...local knowledge, local people running it, support from the statutory bodies, support if you're working out of a building like we are...most people are lucky enough now to have their own community halls* (Dooley et al., 2010).

An important point raised here is the greater credibility and trust with the community that the community education project would have compared with the university sector. The interviewees expand on these barriers to participation in the formal education system which community based education centres can help overcome:

The Participant/Board Member on why the formal education sector would not be an option for many people in the local community, *most of the people I know would have finished school at 6th class...[aged 12] education wasn't a big thing for people at all, not for girls anyway, so now people come because they feel, not that they've missed*

academically...I suppose the ongoing process of learning as well, which is why the project is such success really...they come because they want to learn how to cook or sew, or just to keep fit or just for the company sometimes (Dooley et al., 2010).

The Director explained the reason why institutions, particularly formal educational institutions have difficulty attracting certain groups, *I think sometimes institutions and the formal educational sector, we are too quick to judge why people aren't participating, we need to ask them...what is it that will make it more accessible for them (Dooley et al., 2010).*

This community education project Director explained how progression has also been established between personal fulfilment dimensions and movement into formal education and employment:

We had over a period of years, a programme called SPACE which involved young girls who are mothers who had dropped out of school, they came together to look at what their aspirations were and how they might fulfil them and they identified their learning needs. In relation to the success of this programme, the Director of KCP explained that the participants through this project moved into education and employment (Dooley et al., 2010).

However, a cautionary note is added that the accreditation dimension to formal education can serve as a major psychological barrier for many of those previously alienated from the education system:

The Participant/ Board Member, set out one of the difficulties with accredited courses, we are recognised ... accredited. A lot of the times if you introduce FETAC [accreditation] people don't want to know about it. It's bad memories from their own childhoods, from their own school days and so they're not inclined to want to go and do academic type of stuff (Dooley et al., 2010).

It is notable that this community education centre adopts the feature of a life-wide perspective:

In the words of the Director of KCP, the adults who come here want to be here, they don't have to be here...the kids that come to the after- school programme, they want to be here, they don't have to be here...that's a big difference between the formal education and the non-formal one (Dooley et al., 2010).

This life-wide education feature for families with little tradition of engaging in education beyond primary and early secondary is described as a ripple-effect benefiting not only the adults but also the children:

In the community education sector the Director believes that, when people get involved in education...they're usually highly motivated, because they have lost out themselves, and they bring all that learning and motivation back into their families...it has a huge ripple effect (Dooley et al., 2010).

With the current recession, it is an additional concern that children and young people with little family history of participation in higher education, will be disproportionately affected by a fatalism about the benefits of education:

The Director went on to explain that cutbacks in the area of education are, major... there are cutbacks within schools, that's major...a major worry I have is that children who are

not high achievers will say to themselves, sure there's no point in me working hard, there's 10,000 people unemployed locally (Dooley et al., 2010).

Community based lifelong learning centres, with a life-wide dimension, can serve a key role as a counterbalance to such fatalism, through instilling an interest and motivation in learning by means of personally, emotionally and culturally relevant course materials. It is evident that while there are a range of examples of local community-based lifelong learning centres as part of non-formal education across a number of participating countries, there is a clear need for a more strategic funded approach to develop such centres to be led at EU Commission level.

Less in evidence from the national reports, with the exception of Ireland, are examples of community based lifelong learning centres which engage with the vision of lifelong learning as being from the cradle to the grave, as is the EU Commission definition. In other words, a missed opportunity currently exists to engage with whole communities of non-traditional learners from an early age, and as parents. An example of such a life-wide, community based lifelong learning centre model to engage ethnic minorities and those traditionally underrepresented in higher education is available from Kosovo. The Balkan Sunflowers' four Community Learning Centres in Fushë Kosova, Gracanica, Plemetina and Shtime respectively support the development of over 600 children from Roma, Ashkanli and Egyptian communities. Their project work involves a school preparatory programme for ages 5-7 and a language club for ages 7-9. For adults, in 2009-2010, women's literacy programmes were initiated in two centres. A parenting life skills programme has also been developed, which is in addition to the regular meetings with parents and home visits. Each community receives at least 4 programmes during the year inviting parents to participate in parenting skills exchanges. These discussions employ audio visual materials around questions of children support: role models, discipline, supporting school attendance, nutrition, hygiene, care, attention and neglect, etc. Tutors and facilitators undergo a two-week training across all four Centres.

According to figures from Balkan Sunflowers NGO in Fushë Kosova, early school leaving rates over the two years of the Learning Centre operation decreased dramatically, from 120 in 2007-2008 to 14 in 2009-2010. Primary school enrollment has more than tripled in Gracanica since the Centre's opening in 2004 from 25 to 85 children. None of the children attending Gracanica Learning Centre dropped out of primary school in 2012⁴⁶, while only one child in Plemetina dropped out of school the previous year. 75% of all registered Roma children in Plemetina attend the Learning Centre, while girls' school attendance has increased and there are currently 58 girls in primary school (Downes 2011, forthcoming). EU Commission level commitment to the establishment of such community based lifelong and life-wide learning centres would resonate not only with an access to lifelong learning strategic priority but also with EU2020 targets to reduce early school leaving to 10% across the EU, and with targets in literacy and numeracy.

6.2.1 Non-formal Education: Indicators at Micro-Meso Levels

6.2.1 (i) A strategy to develop community leaders (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

⁴⁶ In 2010, seven Roma girls graduated from King Milutin primary school in Gracanica. In contrast, over the previous twenty-five years, not even seven girls in total have graduated.

A systems theory focus reveals the need to build on strengths for promotion of growth rather than simply seeking to overcome deficits. This strengths-based approach invites consideration of strategies to develop community leaders for groups traditionally marginalised from the educational system.

This issue of promoting community leaders in communities experiencing high levels of disadvantage is an area ripe for further development in the area of lifelong learning to foster access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups. It is a strong feature of the Irish national report (Dooley et al., 2010) with an example provided by the *An Cosán* Community project. The English national report also raises this theme:

I think a lot of the more community adult education needs to get into, or be stronger within the sort of cross-departmental localised agendas around health, older people, community safety, economic regeneration and green, [...] enhance and develop and enrich you know, radicalise to an extent those agendas (Engel et al., 2010).

The following Estonian example illustrates the difficulty of the lack of time for practical realistic expression of active citizenship in adult students, due to other commitments:

Active citizens: How to be a good citizen and an active member of society is taught in civic study classes; these topics are also discussed during class teacher hours. It is difficult to organise specific activities because it is hard to find time that suits everyone (Tamm & Saar 2010).

However, it is important to emphasise that active citizenship needs practical, action based expression to gain meaning in a cultural context and that this needs to be made available in diverse ways in practice to foster this key dimension to lifelong learning, recognised by the European Commission.

A Hungarian example of community leadership and active citizenship is as follow:

The college has a strong relationship with Eger and its students and teachers participate in many of the town's events as organisers. They run a blood-giving centre, collect clothes, books, toys, contribute to the organisation of the youth festival and to the maintenance of the local hospital, etc. Thus, there is a great emphasis on active citizenship in the institute (Balogh et al., 2010).

However, the following response from a Hungarian Ministry of Affairs and Labour official illustrates the limited conception of community leadership and lack of community leadership strategy in principle and in practice in Hungary:

Is there any national level strategy or support to provide for training/education of a) community leaders... in areas which experience most social deprivation and marginalisation? *I earlier mentioned the IT trainings organised for Roma minority self-government representatives. In addition, in the development programme for disadvantaged there is a section which ensures the effectiveness of the trainings related to office work improvement of Roma minority self-governments (for example: how to handle the computer, how to write applications, manager-training, etc...)* (Balogh et al., 2010).

Similarly, according to the Russian national report, it is evident that there is a clear lack of strategy at national and regional level to promote community development and leadership dimensions to lifelong learning:

Normally, school buildings aren't used as sites of adult education. At least, informants are unaware of such examples. They also said there was no 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 (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Strategic initiatives at European Commission level can provide an important system level support for development of community leaders in both nonformal and formal education sectors across Europe.

6.2.1 (ii) The arts as a key bridge into societal and systemic participation via non-formal education (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR, PROCESS INDICATOR)

It is evident from a number of national reports that the arts offer a key bridge into societal and systemic participation *via* non-formal education – and that they are a strong feature of non-formal education across many countries. The Lithuanian national report highlights the following example:

The school has arts, carpentry, drama and music classes. Some of these subjects are compulsory for all students (or they have to choose one of them, depending in what class they study). There are also extra-curricular classes in arts, drama and music. In distance learning classes the students can choose music, photography, arts or design classes. The school has one person employed not as a teacher but as event organiser, who in collaboration with teachers and students is responsible for all events at school. *Some students are responsible for the equipment, some are singing, others will be dancing. All school, all classes are involved into this production* (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

Theatre and drama are observed in the Slovenian national report as being a key local community interest given expression through non-formal education:

We noticed that here in our area hobby theatre is very much alive. Also, smaller villages have plays, but above all they lack knowledge how to promote themselves, and the matter stops, because this is not there. With a successful role in one of such plays... I think that brings many other things with it (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Collaborative engagement in festivals, arts and sports was a theme emerging also from the Russian national report in relation to non-formal education:

When one of the interviewees started narrating on the measures they undertake for making the School appealing for the students, it seemed like she was talking about a leisure centre rather than school. She gave an entire speech about various entertainment activities, performances, sport events, quizzes, contests, etc., (e.g. Contest of Humour where 2 teams compete: a team of teachers and a team of pupils) conducted at the School at least once a month most of them being devoted to major public holidays. It is impossible to get everyone to take part in such activities but the majority of students can

be embraced. Considerable load is put on the shoulders of the form-master: s/he engages most active students into organising events and celebrations during their free time when they are not busy with classes or homework (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

This strong presence of the arts in non-formal education is also evident in the Belgian (Flanders) national report:

The art and cultural heritage sector. Non-formal education in this sector is organised by arts institutions and individual artists, museums, music groups, theatres and music groups. They offer several cultural activities aiming at the general development of cultural competencies (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

It is further recognised in the Bulgarian national report that the arts are a major cross-cultural resource for engaging those who may previously have been on the margins of society:

An opportunity for social interaction and for promotion of mutual support among all students, as well as an example of a good practice, is the Annual Spring International Art Festival. Students from disadvantaged groups participate in it. The possibilities are limitless (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

However, they may be somewhat limited in availability in Bulgaria:

Courses related to art: theatre, creative writing, music, visual arts, are *not* provided by VTC (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

In the Scottish national report, a strategic approach to the arts in a particular city envisages it as one of five priority sections:

CLD 2 was situated in a large city and it was divided into five sections each serving a local community within the city. It provided learning and development within the following areas: adult learning; youth and children; support to voluntary organisations; literacy and numeracy and the arts (Weedon et al., 2010).

However, the fact that courses in non-formal education regarding the arts require a fee, according to the following Scottish national report example, is an obvious barrier to targeting people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage for participation in arts based non-formal education:

The Adult learning section had a wide range courses in different subject areas available during the day, evening and weekends in different locations throughout the city. This included arts and crafts, computers, languages, history, yoga and badminton. There was a fee for these courses but the level depends on an individual's economic circumstance. Most of these classes were non-certificate; however, there were a small number of accredited courses (Weedon et al., 2010).

Though there is provision to adjust the fee depending on economic circumstances, the need for an individual to reveal their lack of economic means prior to entry may itself be a deterrent to participation.

Against this backdrop of the key role of the arts in engaging with traditionally marginalised individuals and groups, it is of particular concern that a recent Commission staff working document (2009) concludes in relation to the Cultural Awareness and Expression dimension of the eight key competences for education across member states of the EU that:

Although part of the traditional subject curriculum in schools (art, music), this competence does not appear to be a significant strategic priority for most countries. The potential of culture to provide a methodology of work in other areas of the curriculum, and in personal and social development, could be better exploited (p.101).

It is apparent that the widespread engagement of non-formal education with the arts is responding to a range of needs across different communities and countries. Yet this broad participation in the arts in non-formal education appears to largely take place in a policy vacuum at EU and some national levels. A more strategic approach is needed not only for the arts and non-formal education – but also for a systemic connection and engagement with socio-economically disadvantaged individuals and communities through the arts in non-formal education.

6.2.1 (iii) Non-formal as a path to formal education (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

The key role of non-formal education in breaking down barriers to education and fear of failure in learners who have had previously alienating experiences from the formal education system emerges in the Norwegian national report:

With the words of the interviewee in the central office of FU: A Spanish class or cooking class could be one way of breaking the resistance towards learning... The point is that we offer persons to choose their own courses (Stensen & Ure 2010).

The non-formal education pathway may be a key mediating structure and pathway into subsequent formal education:

Our interviewees were eager to point out that learners may start out with non-formal courses but as they become more confident with learning environments separated from their daily life, they gradually build up courage to enrol in formal education. By offering formal and non-formal training, FU is able to cater for both needs, possibly in the same learning institution (Stensen & Ure 2010).

A point raised in the Slovenian national report is that the mere fact of participation in a course is a key issue, with the particular content of the course being a somewhat subsidiary consideration. When asked which programmes/courses/classes are particularly helpful in giving adults with low levels of prior education confidence to either continue in education or contribute to their local community the opinion was – every programme can do this:

I think that every programme gives one confidence, also when he participates in formal education. We notice that they participate more in other things as well. ... We thought that we had to proceed from what is already here, in the local area (Ivančič et al., 2010).

This example illustrates the key community development principle of starting where the learner is at and based on what are their current interests.

Personal fulfillment and development are clearly viewed not as a distinct goal as in the EU Commission documents but only as being instrumental to employment goals, according to this Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs official interviewed in the Estonian national report:

Coming back to non-formal education, are you planning to provide personal development courses for the unemployed or for the long-term unemployed? *Some people may need this kind of training. I wouldn't rule it out. It depends on what kind of problem the unemployed person has, what prevents him/her from getting a job* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Scottish national report provided this explicit example of an attempt to provide a strategic link between non-formal and formal education:

Another initiative to engage with potentially disadvantaged learners was the schools' activity programmes. These allowed young learners who are at risk of not engaging with learning or entering the labour market to come in to the college for a few days and do a programme of activities that included a variety of different subjects in order to give them an insight into college life. This was designed to give them an idea of the variety that was on offer and it was hoped it would make them think about what they were going to do in the following year. In addition to this, there were community groups and community-based adult learning courses where the college staff would go out into the community and deliver courses in order to try and get people back into education. Near the end of these courses all of the students will come into the college because they were seen as college students. These courses were considered very successful in bringing in disadvantaged groups of learners who were more comfortable in a community setting: *We do a lot of ESF classes that target people who are less likely to come into education and in my department the community classes are the way forward I think in terms of getting people into education* (Department Head, College B) (Weedon et al., 2010).

It is clear that part of a more strategic focus at national level across countries with regarding to bridges between non-formal and formal education would overcome typical system level problems of transition between both sectors. There is a significant amount of potential to develop these links in a much more strategically focused fashion across European countries. The Scottish report directly addresses the issue of transition from non-formal to formal education, thereby illustrating that there is much work needing to be done in developing and sustaining such key systemic links:

Transition:

- from colleges to certain universities was seen to work well but could be expanded;
- into elite universities was considered a challenge;
- from non-formal courses to formal courses was described as mainly 'ad hoc' and as requiring further work, especially in the development of longitudinal tracking;
- from prison education to education in the community was identified as problematic. (Weedon et al., 2010).

A systems theory framework for access to lifelong learning requires that such transition issues between subsystems be more firmly addressed by policymakers.

6.2.1 (iv) Content of courses as meeting the systemic goals of active citizenship and personal fulfillment (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR, PROCESS INDICATOR)

The strong popularity of personal fulfillment related courses in non-formal education is emphasised in the Belgian (Flanders) national report:

The educational supply concerning issues like personal growth, development and empowerment, relational issues, self management, self-assertion, self-awareness, etc. is the most popular, no matter what the specific target group of the activity is. This is also the case in the other folk high schools. This is illustrated by the figure below that offers an overview of the themes of all Training plus-centres deal with (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

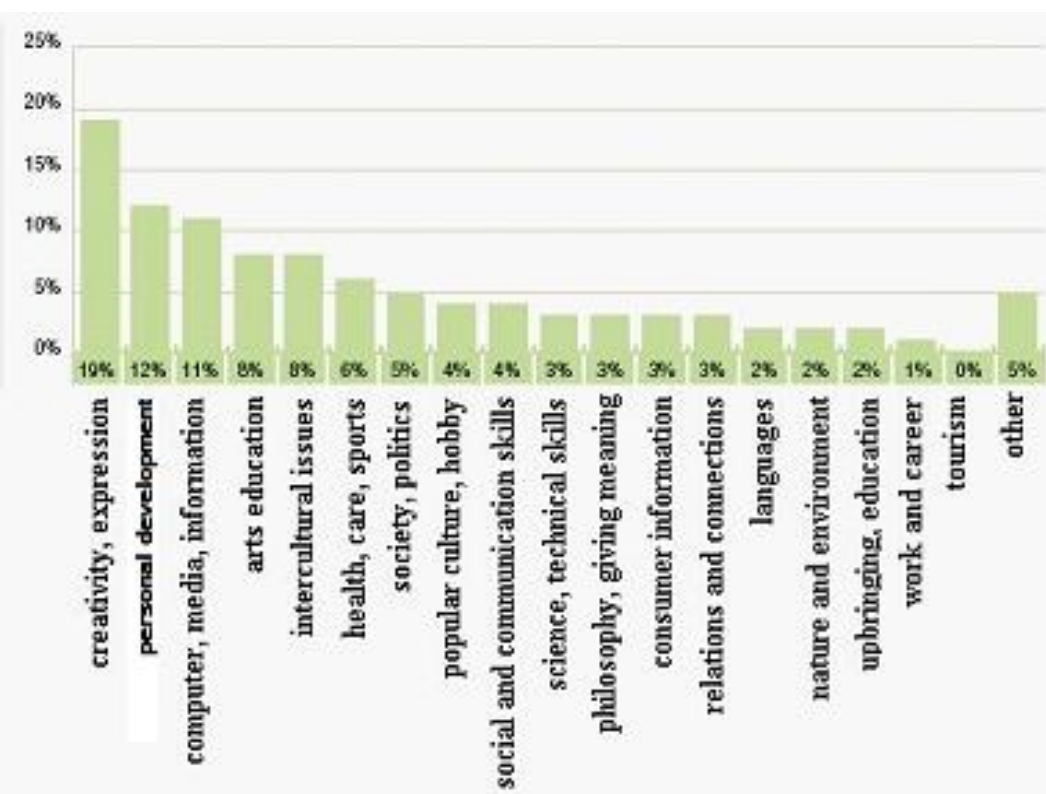


Figure 4. Courses offered by folk high schools for each theme (%) (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010)

Source: FOV 2008, p. 48 (Translation, Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010)

Cultural dimensions to personal development and active citizenship pervade the Belgian (Flanders) national report regarding non-formal education. The following example highlights an emphasis on cultural and social involvement in particular:

Citizenne, also known as Training-plus Centre Brussels (*Vormingplus Brussel*), is a non-profit folk high school situated in Brussels, the capital of Belgium. The organisation's mission is to make a valuable contribution to the social cohesion in the city of Brussels by providing socio-cultural activities. These activities are non-formal educational ones and include cultural, leisure, community-based objectives.

Some of the main objectives of *Citizenne* are working on the bridging between communities and groups of people living in the different Brussels districts; creating opportunities for cultural and social involvement for all the people living in

Brussels (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

As Vandenbroucke notes “Some of the other 12 Training-Plus Centres would provide a strong focus on personal growth, relational issues, self management, self-assertion, self awareness” (Personal communication, 2011).

A similarly strong emphasis on personal fulfillment and self-awareness courses also emerges from non-formal education examples highlighted in the Bulgarian national report:

With regard to personal development courses, VTC works on projects in partnership with other organisations. These are courses for developing skills related to stress situations and adaptation, more specifically: conflict resolution skills, self-knowledge programmes, parenthood skills, coping with loss of loved ones, coping with various forms of addiction. Included in the project frameworks are programmes for leadership skills, acquiring knowledge in the fields of psychology, sociology, philosophy (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

A more limited scope for personal fulfillment goals is evident in the Hungarian non-formal education examples:

Literature is taught in detail in separate courses, whereas there is no official music, dance or drama education. However, one of the teachers is involved in drama-pedagogy and gives informal classes to those who are interested and have time to attend the courses (Balogh et al., 2010).

Unfortunately there is not enough time for personal development besides the art courses. There is only one class per fortnight in the correspondence education where students talk freely about personal issues, whereas distance course students do not have any classes for these purposes (Balogh et al., 2010).

However, the following example from Hungary of a vocationally oriented non-formal education programme that incorporates a range of personal development and lifeskills approaches illustrates that a rigid dichotomy between vocational and personal fulfillment type courses need not be upheld in the non-formal education sector:

The main goal of the [non-formal education] programme is to help 16-35 years old unemployed people with disadvantage to find educational programme/ vocational training and/or job that best suits his/her abilities and interest, and applying personality-focused trainings to prepare them for these programmes and job (Balogh et al., 2010).

Small group trainings for participants (10-12 participants / group): Self-awareness trainings, communication trainings, life-skills trainings, arts and crafts trainings are provided for the participants. These 4-week-long trainings are organised both by internal and external specialists. The aim of these trainings is to help participants in adaptation (Balogh et al., 2010)

Manager: *These small-group trainings are important because these immature young people become adults in these peer-groups.*

The youths have also the possibility to participate in a 3-day-long off-site training every year. Usually unconventional artistic and leisure time activities are organised by the mentors (Balogh et al., 2010).

This focus on soft skills as part of both personal fulfillment and employment goals for lifelong learning illustrates the potential complementarity of both goals so that it is a somewhat false opposition between these goals. This interplay is also observed in the Lithuanian national report regarding non-formal education:

Such topics as self-knowledge, self-confidence building, social skills, adaptability to change and career planning are included in career guidance programmes. The aim of all occupational guidance programmes is to assist a person to choose education and / or

pursue their professional goals in order to integrate them into the labor market and teach them how to adapt to permanent life changes. Therefore, most of these topics are related to psychology (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The [non-formal education] organisation is planning to re-develop the courses that are the most popular and most needed: psychology and business management: [...] *conflict management, influencing, communication skills, career development and self-education* [...] (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

This interpenetration of personal fulfillment and employment skills is also implicit in the Estonian national report:

We have also had courses on art therapy and motivation development, including conflict management and coping techniques... The emphasis is on courses supporting personal development and coping in the labour market. These courses are rather popular (Tamm & Saar 2010).

However, others in the non-formal sector in Lithuania adopt a purely employment focused perspective:

Formal education provides general knowledge and non-formal education is more oriented to the future needs of the employee: [...] *the attractiveness can only be created by purposefulness, functionality of trainings* (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The picture which emerges from the non-formal education sector in Lithuania is one of much local competition for course participants:

The significant feature of non-formal education sector in Lithuania is rather fierce competition as the abundance of services exceeds market demand. The transition from traditional to more sophisticated services (i.e. from general to more specific needs tailored courses) is felt. However, there is a lack of inter-institutional cooperation and smaller private training companies are not likely to mediate the transition to formal education (Taljanite et al., 2010).

Despite an argument for the interrelatedness of personal development, awareness, communication and employment goals, in Hungary, non-formal education is viewed very much through the lens of vocational education due to the structural placing of non-formal education within the Ministry of Affairs and Labour:

Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations? *In the Ministry of Affairs and Labour the vocational education and adult education department. This also deals with the secretarial tasks of the vocational funds within the workforce market* (Balogh et al., 2010).

This response from a senior official in the Hungarian Ministry of Affairs and Labour illustrates the complete subservience of any personal fulfillment goals of non-formal education to that of education for employment:

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)? *For this we have the programme called The Way to Work, in which they are being involved. I do not want to deny that they are forced to be involved. They either participate in a learning programme or in a public work*

programme, but if they do not do so, more aid will not be disbursed to them. Their only income is the aid at the moment. So this is a kind of compulsion. (Balogh et al., 2010).

The wide scope of the non-formal education sector in a range of countries is simply not evident at the level of national strategy or practice in Hungary which does not give expression to the European Commission recognition of the importance of education for personal fulfillment and for active citizenship. This potential of the non-formal sector is clearly underutilised in Hungary:

The Ministry of Affairs and Labour official in Hungary recognises the need for a reconceptualisation of methods to promote access, particularly regarding non-formal education: 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?

My short answer is that besides money, the lack of appropriate methods is the main. There are problems on the level of education institutions and also on teachers' and antagonists' level. And on the level of programme planners too, because I think we have not been able to find the way how we can really involve them in the process of trainings. There are, however, positive movements towards the right direction to solve their problems by a more complex approach (Balogh et al., 2010).

As dimensions of both personal fulfillment and active citizenship, personal meaning and cultural relevance are emphasised as being key to non-formal education in the Belgian (Flanders) national report:

One of the main and essential starting points of the activities organised by Citizenne is: making sure the educational activity is life-centred. Both interviewees emphasise that activities should be related to real life events and topics that affect people every day. Such real-world situations and matters of everyday life are: the community or neighborhood, the children's school, (un)employment, traffic, etc. ... as a result, the activities deal with issues that are meaningful, known and relevant to the participants. For migrants it is for instance important that they can talk about their country or place of origin or other issues that they care about related to their own situation (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

An Austrian official's responses to the following questions illustrate the low and almost nonexistent strategic priority given to personal development and community development as part of active citizenship in lifelong learning in Austria:

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* (Rammell & Gottwald 2010).

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* (Rammel & Gottwald 2010)

However there may be some scope for development of these neglected areas in non-formal education in Austria according to the following responses:

...There are some singing classes organised in. 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

From the Scottish national report it would appear that active citizenship is somewhat more developed than personal fulfillment in the non-formal sector, though both seem to be in danger of being subsumed into a pervasive employment focus:

There were three main strands of work undertaken by the [non-formal voluntary] organisation: community learning, workplace learning and literacies. Community learning encompasses a range of courses including heritage and cultural studies, building capacity, Scottish literature, communication, family learning and women and citizenship ... a number of courses in this area had focused specifically on helping young people who had not achieved at school to access training to help them into employment. Literacies courses included workplace literacy and numeracy. There had been a decrease in the Community Arts, Community Training, Liberal Studies and Social and Political Studies but a significant increase was noted in Return to Study and Workplace education programmes. The courses were described by the senior manager as being mainly focused on the individual learner rather than on community development (Weedon et al., 2010).

The sense of a narrowing within the non-formal education sector in Scotland is reiterated elsewhere in the Scottish report:

General education being sacrificed for a narrow skills development agenda or general education becoming the preserve of a minority. Some critics view the new Curriculum for Excellence as dumbing down the curriculum and reducing access to an academic curriculum to a smaller number of pupils (Weedon et al., 2010).

The English national report provides a range of accounts of both active citizenship as community involvement and personal fulfillment courses in the non-formal education sector:

In this region our work breaks down 20 to 25% second chance, 10 to 15% cultural studies and [...] then the bulk of it is community involvement. And the community involvement will mainly be health improvement and personal development which is a big area for, a big thing for this region. ICT and performing arts and media ... (Interview, Regional Director) (Engel et al., 2010).

Approximately 40% of the learners last year were new to learning. Most of the provision is nonaccredited and includes creative writing, art in the ancient world, calligraphy, life drawing, stained glass and painting for beginners. Humanities [...] In 2006/07, 14,061

learners attended 1,131 courses in this sector subject area. Half of the provision takes place in the [three] regions. [...] Courses include local and family history, geography, philosophy, theology and archaeology. Almost 75% of the provision takes place in the week during the daytime, with a small number of programmes at the weekend. 70 % of the learners are women and 90% are aged over 55 (Engel et al., 2010).

Courses include short and introductory programmes in health and personal development, ICT, crafts, confidence building, interpreting skills, family history and courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They take place in community venues, such as church halls, community centres, schools and the [Association]’s own learning centres (Engel et al., 2010).

From the perspective on a non-formal education interviewee in Estonia, there is a clear gender difference in course topics:

Men are interested in training that is more related to the practical side of life. Another successful event was a course on project preparation and management. Many participants were men. We just need to find a topic that would interest men. There were participants from other municipalities; they got information from our website and from other sources. People have started to look for training, in particular for courses that are free of charge. We have a photography course and men are interested in it. They want something related to technology and real life (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Such practical lifeskills, more than active citizenship and personal fulfillment, are features of non-formal education in the Estonian national report:

practical work – students see the results, they see that they can do something. The school can provide help and direction. Building, cooking and woodwork are the favourites. At first boys were reluctant to learn to cook. I told them that a real man must be able to make at least pancakes... And they liked it.

The students also have to learn to cope – the skills of life. We try to teach them different skills. At first some are not able to manage their money – they spend it in a couple of days and then do not have anything to travel home for a weekend. (...) They have no experience (Tamm & Saar 2010).

There are some examples of personal fulfillment type courses in the Estonian national report, though this term tends to be interpreted rather broadly and thus beyond intrapersonal and even interpersonal development:

The school also teaches family studies – important topics are discussed, such as how to take care of children.

10-12 hours per week are dedicated to personal development: art, handicraft, music, etc. Younger students tire quickly. Handicraft classes are in the afternoon, sometimes they finish at five o’clock. There are breaks of course. Sometimes girls finish their work in their rooms and then show the teacher (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Courses on personal development are especially popular in summer. It is more difficult to find participants in professional courses. Course on personal development (psychology, art, tennis, languages) are also offered as e-courses (Tamm & Saar 2010).

There may be a need to take care in translation of the goals of personal fulfillment at European level to clearly distinguish intrapsychic awareness and interpersonal expression and broader self-esteem, from hobbies such as tennis, or other domains such as language learning.

It is evident that while some countries demonstrate strong non-formal education sectors with a particular engagement with personal fulfillment dimensions to lifelong learning, the active citizenship dimension to non-formal education appears much less to the fore in general, though with exceptions such as Belgium (Flanders). On the other hand, other countries such as Austria, Hungary and increasingly Scotland, tend to display a more narrowly vocational focus in the domain of non-formal education. Examples also exist in a number of countries of non-formal education courses where personal development is somewhat integrated with vocational employment goals. This may offer promise for the future though there is a danger that personal fulfillment would merely become subordinated to employment goals, and integration of both goals would simply become assimilation of personal development to employment.

6.2.1(v) Staff continuity and development in non-formal education (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR, PROCESS INDICATOR)

The difficulty of long-term budgeting in the non-formal education sector impacts upon staff contracts and continuity, as highlighted in direct fashion by the following interviewee in the Slovenian national report:

All teachers are of course on the contracts ... Nobody on long-term employment? ... Nobody! I don't dare do this. I dare not take chances. Because the tender is in autumn... For the programme where the calculation shows that the costs will not be met, we don't deliver it, it is crossed out. ...And then we sign contracts (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The Slovenian national report conveys the insecurity of employment in the non-formal education sector, with consequent impact upon morale and strategic development:

The Respondent 2 has expressed her fear of losing her job though she is employed by a long-term contract (indefinite time) but because of changed conditions her field of work is ever changing which gives rise to insecurity and fright. Under such conditions it is also difficult to find staff though they are annually collaborating with 120-150 teachers. (Ivančič et al., 2010).

In contrast, the Belgian national report points to an example of tutors on long-term contracts in non-formal education:

Training-plus Centres usually have a small staff. All tutors and organisers of the educational programmes (nine in total) have regular longterm contracts. These are not fixed term employment contracts. The rates of pay are, according to the interviewed senior manager, rather high compared to other non-formal educational institutions. Though they are not high compared to the wages within the formal educational sector. The working conditions in the non-formal educational sector are being described by the senior manager as heavy (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

An interviewee from a formal educational context of vocational education for adults in Estonia eloquently describes the benefits of at least some staff continuity in their school:

More experienced teachers are mentors to young teachers. We are trying to keep good teachers whose experience is priceless. As they say: if you have only young employees it

is a comedy, if you have only old people it is a tragedy... Young and old together make a symphony (Tamm & Saar 2010).

These benefits would also apply to the non-formal education sector, even if continuity in this sector is frequently more difficult to attain.

Whole school approaches for teaching staff at adult education schools and community lifelong learning centres are an important dimension of professional development which is contingent upon staff continuity in the non-formal education sector. This feature of a whole school approach is observed in Estonia:

Teachers also work in think tanks to discuss issues related to the school – what needs to be changed, what kind of events should be organised, etc. The school's development plan was also prepared in cooperation with teachers (Tamm & Saar 2010).

It is important for the non-formal education sector in general which may be characterised by staff on short-term contracts and with high staff turnover, to build a strategic approach to learning and shared methodologies of teaching, wherever possible⁴⁷

The Norwegian national report emphasises the following context of particular need for continuity in non-formal education:

importance for staff continuity is especially strong for immigrants and language learning: *When the teacher is sick, they have to cope with new teachers. Within a short time span they may have three substitute teachers. I recognise the participants place from when I attended the Norwegian courses, I got used to how the teacher spoke, but suddenly there is a new teacher with a new dialect and then it all stops. And after two days an additional substitute teacher arrives and he does not know the progression we have been following. In the end it all becomes very frustrating* (Stensen & Ure 2010).

Beyond language teaching, the need for staff continuity and professional development is particularly acute when they are working with vulnerable groups requiring sustained, ongoing interaction and support in order to build trust and motivation to participate in education.

6.3 Prison Education: Indicators at Macro-Exo Levels

Table 13 How developed are current practices and future plans for providing adult prisoners with access to education in prison?

A national strategy for education in prison	Structural Indicator
Opportunities for distance education and web-based learning in prison	Structural Indicator
Individual education plans for prisoners	Structural Indicator
Sufficient space in prison for education	Structural Indicator
Initial assessment approaches for prisoners	Structural Indicator
Prisoner exchange based on educational reasons	Structural Indicator

⁴⁷ See also Downes (2006) in the Irish context, on a strategic approach, including staff continuity, in the related non-formal education sector of community afterschool clubs and extracurricular activities in schools.

An education strategy for high security prisons	Structural Indicator
Strategies to recognise that it is often hardest to motivate student prisoners in basic education	Process Indicator
Overcoming practical problems to allow the prisoner to study in prison and at third level	Process Indicator
Content of courses in prison to engage interest and motivation of the learner	Process Indicator
Establishment and implementation of a principle of normality in prisons	Structural Indicator, Process Indicator
Peer effects on motivation to learn in prison	Process Indicator

Table 14 What changes are planned?

A national strategy for education in prison	Structural Indicator
Professional development support and resource materials for teachers in prisons	Structural Indicator, Process Indicator
Sufficient space in prison for education	Structural Indicator
Individual education plans for prisoners	Structural Indicator
Individual plans for prisoners for their release	Structural Indicator
Opportunities for distance education and web-based learning in prison	Structural Indicator
Content of courses in prison to engage interest and motivation of the learner	Process Indicator
Establishment and implementation of a principle of normality in prisons	Structural Indicator, Process Indicator
An education strategy for high security prisons	Structural Indicator, Process Indicator
Overcoming practical problems to allow the prisoner to study in prison and at third level	Process Indicator

Table 15 How can prison education be promoted through system level change in prisons?

A national strategy for education in prison	Structural Indicator
Quality of prison library infrastructure and support for prisoner use of libraries	Structural Indicator
Initial assessment approaches for prisoners	Structural Indicator
Individual education plans for prisoners	Structural Indicator
Prisoner exchange based on educational reasons	Structural Indicator
Establishment and implementation of a principle of normality in prisons	Structural Indicator, Process Indicator
Professional development support and	Structural Indicator, Process Indicator

resource materials for teachers in prisons	
Content of courses in prison to engage interest and motivation of the learner	Process Indicator
Strategies to recognise that it is often hardest to motivate student prisoners in basic education	Process Indicator
Overcoming practical problems to allow the prisoner to study in prison and at third level	Process Indicator
Overcoming resistance from prison officers in some countries to prisoner learning	Process Indicator
Peer effects on motivation to learn in prison	Process Indicator

Table 16. Are the literacy needs of marginalised adult groups in prison being satisfactorily met?

Initial assessment approaches for prisoners	Structural Indicator
Individual education plans for prisoners	Structural Indicator
Individual plans for prisoners for their release	Structural Indicator
Sufficient space in prison for education	Structural Indicator
Professional development support and resource materials for teachers in prisons	Structural Indicator, Process Indicator
Content of courses in prison to engage interest and motivation of the learner	Process Indicator

6.3 (i) A national strategy for education in prison (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

A comprehensive lifelong learning strategy at national level must not only embrace access to lifelong learning for socio-economically disadvantaged groups in general, but also the significant group of those in prison, many of whom experience social marginalisation. It is evident from a number of national reports that prison education is outside the Pale of strategic focus and intervention at national level in some countries. For example, the Slovenian national report recognises that:

There are no special national policy papers on adult education in prisons while there are separate (national) strategies defining goals and measures related to specific target groups, e.g. Roma (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Despite the Council of Europe rules on prison education originating from 1990, as discussed earlier, it is only in recent years according to the Belgian (Flanders) national report that a focus has occurred at national level on prison education:

Up to a few years ago, policy makers in Belgium paid little attention to adult education in prison. The national policy documents from before the turn of the millennium were focused on issues like labour in prison, release on parole, etc. In case norms did regulate aspects of the regime in prison (including education) they did not do so in a directive

way. Sometimes adult education was referred to in official letters from ministers or their administration or in the rules and regulations made by the prisons themselves (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

One of the most important policy documents on access to adult education in prisons in the Flemish Community of Belgium is, at this moment, the ‘Strategic Plan on social help and services to inmates’ (*Het strategisch plan hulp- en dienstverlening aan gedetineerden*) (2000). Its main objective is to improve close cooperation between different services funded by the Flemish Government in order to offer detainees quality social aid, education, vocational training, sports and leisure activities. At this moment, the plan has been implemented in eight prisons. In the near future this will be the case in all Flemish prisons. The plan has been evaluated for the first time in 2008 (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

This theme of recent reform in relation to access to lifelong learning in prison pervades the Belgian (Flanders) national report:

The operational plan of the Flemish Community is still being implemented. The plan is scarcely out of the egg. Which means, concerning education, each prison in Flanders is still setting its own goals (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The strategic plan is a Flemish plan. A few years ago, in January 2005, the federal government passed a law concerning the legal position of detainees (*De basiswet betreffende het gevangeniswezen en de rechtspositie van de gedetineerden*). This law is considered to be a ‘milestone’ in the way sentences are executed in Belgian prisons (Tournel 2009). It administers the European Prison Rules and regulates important basic principles like the right to health care of the same quality as in the free community, the right to – under some conditions – being transferred to another prison, and so on... It also states expressly that undergoing a prison sentence must also be a pathway to rehabilitation and reintegration in society. Of course, for this, education and training are important elements (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

It is not unfair to say that before the year 2000 there was no intense support for education in Belgian prisons. For the federal government it was a side issue (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The Belgian national report cites national commentators on tensions between national and regional levels in relation to implementation of prison education:

The determination of law and policy being shared by the federal government and the regional communities and their authorities, sometimes leads to problems (Snacken et al., 2004) (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

There is a lot of tension between those different policy making authorities and this is certainly reflected in the Belgian prison system. Because different authorities are responsible, actions and policy making sometimes misses coherence (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Recent reforms in relation to prison education also appear to be taking place in Lithuania. As a Lithuanian Education Ministry official states:

Government decision on convicts’ education development is being arranged right now. There is a concrete decision being arranged to expand opportunities for them, so that they could learn in prison (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

Significantly, there is some legislative basis for prison education in Lithuania, according to the Lithuanian national report source:

According to the interviewee, the time of participation of prisoners in the education is regulated by law and funding is provided with regard to the number of teaching hours. The law allows not more than one teaching (advice) hour per week on all subjects that a particular prisoner chooses to study (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

However, making prison education a funding priority appears to be a difficulty in Lithuania, thereby illustrating that it is not adopting a rights-based approach to education in prison:

Again, the participation in the prison workshops is very clearly defined in the plan of education, and is it ... in practice, I can say... it depends on how much financial resources we have to pay the teachers [...] Prisoners receive only a limited, very limited, number of teacher consultations... the funding is limited and inadequate.... (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

Prison education in Hungary ‘belongs to competence of Ministry of Affairs and Labour’ (Balogh et al., 2010). This would *prima facie* appear to narrow its scope. The Estonian national report locates funding and national policy, by way of contrast with Hungary, in its Education Ministry (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The official from the Ministry of Affairs and Labour outlines an overview of prison education in Hungary:

The detainees can carry out general evening schools at primary level, and labour market trainings are also being provided for prisoners. The EU-funded *One Step Forward* programme also contained trainings that were carried out in prisons (Balogh et al., 2010).

The national strategy for social crime prevention is being developed now, and the National Committee on Crime Prevention also exists, in which Social and Education Ministry representatives, civilian organisations and local authority representatives are present. There is a government regulation, which annually determines what kind of specific measures should be taken and what improvements should be implemented in this area (Balogh et al., 2010).

It is apparent that EU funds have been a key driving policy source of reform in Hungarian prisons in relation to access to education. There is also an important focus on lifelong learning in juvenile justice projects in Hungary:

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order has a tendering programme, which focuses on the training of youth, and they also have a high priority project, which aims the development of the methodology in the field of crime prevention (Balogh et al., 2010).

EU funds are also adverted to in the Lithuanian national report:

It can be assumed that due to the lack of funding, the quality of teaching is low. However, despite this, the interviewee considers that one of the main advantages of prison education is that teaching of prisoners is free of charge (as it is funded by the State or the European Union funds): *They can get free training in various areas, be it computer literacy courses, which are free of charge... People outside prison must usually pay for such trainings...* (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

However, a corollary of an adequate national strategy is that sufficient funding is allocated for implementation of that strategy, so that it is not solely existing on paper:

Both [Hungarian prison institution] interviewees assume that the number of educational programmes and funding sources have declined in the last two years. Senior manager: There has not been significant development on this field in the last years. The education can't be successful without available funding sources. I think, we fulfil the elemental education, but I don't think that the overall education would be a great success in this prison. We have worked out a lot of useful programmes, there are clubs and trainings, but I miss a structured and expedient system. We can work out personal developmental plan for every prisoner involved, but there are not available educational programmes for realisation. Thus, we can't provide adequate programmes for the prisoners; we just try to insert them into the existing educational programmes and we try to motivate them (Balogh et al., 2010).

A concern emerging from the Austrian report is that in contrast to the impetus for recent reforms to prison education, for example, in Belgium, Hungary and Lithuania, there appears to be little appetite for further engagement with prison education at a national level in Austria. For example, the Education Ministry official in Austria gave the following response:

Are there specific plans to improve access to education for adults in prisons in your country? Please specify. *No.*

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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).*

This situation in Austria contrasts also with that of Denmark. The Discussion Document for the Conference *Pathways to Inclusion* observes, 'Most prison schools in Denmark have been granted the status of 'local adult education centres'' (DG, EAC 2010, p. 40).

The scale of importance of a coherent education strategy for prisoners can be illustrated by the numbers imprisoned, for example, in Russia.



Figure 5 .Statistics on imprisoned citizens in Russia over the period of 2002-2009⁴⁸. Numbers are given in thousand persons (in Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010)

⁴⁸ According to the data of the Federal Penitentiary Service of the Russian Federation.

Such large sections of the population of a country cannot be excluded from access to lifelong learning. The Russian national report operates a dimension of social control to its prison education approach:

Secondary schools in prisons (grades 5th-11th) are a part of the formal state secondary education. Obtaining secondary education is compulsory for all prisoners under 30 with an incomplete secondary education degree. Schools in prisons are owned and financed by the state. Each prison school is affiliated with an evening school in the city and former prisoners who haven't completed secondary education in prison are able to proceed their education in an evening school. The diploma given by the school in prison is of state standard and recognised by all education institutions in Russian federation. The diploma doesn't indicate that the education was obtained in prison (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A strategic approach to prison education is evident in the Bulgarian national report:

An organised process of general and vocational training of prisoners is carried out in the Bulgarian prisons. Most of the prisoners are illiterate, with low educational level and lack of professional qualification. Schools in prison are opened and closed by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) upon the proposal of the Ministry of Justice (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

The Bulgarian national report provides systematic evidence not only of availability of prison education but also successful graduation by prisoner students from education courses across a range of prisons:

At the present moment there are six schools that operate in the Bulgarian prisons:

Evening vocational school at the prison for women and girls in Sliven.

The school offers education to students from 1st to 12th grades, and students from grades 5 to receive also vocational training in clothes production. During the last five years the average annual number of students attending the school was 80-90. During the academic 2006-2007. 112 students attended the school and 56 have successfully graduated.

Evening vocational school at the prison for repeat offenders in Lovetch.

The school offers education to students from grades 1 to 12, and students from grades 5 to receive also vocational training in mechanical engineering and construction. Over the past five years the average annual number of students was between 90 and 100. During the academic 2006-2007 year 100 students attended the school and 53 successfully graduated from it. The percentage of prisoners attending the Lovetch prison school is higher than that in other prisons.

The evening vocational training school at the prison for first time offenders in Stara Zagora.

The school offers education to students from grades 1 to 12, and after they complete fifth grade the students receive also vocational training in construction, mechanical engineering and furniture production. Over the past five years the average annual number of the students was between 300 and 330. During the academic 2006-2007 year 271 students attended the school and 199 have successfully graduated from it.

Secondary school with professional qualification profile at the prison for repeat offenders in Vratsa.

The school offers education to students from grades 1 to 12, and after they complete fifth grade students receive also vocational training in furniture production. Over the past five years the average annual number of the students was between 110 and

130. During the academic 2006-2007 year 109 students attended the school and 76 have successfully graduated from it.

Middle school with vocational training at the prison in Sofia (Kazichene prison dormitory). The school offers education to students from grades 1 to 8, and after they complete fifth grade the students receive also vocational training in metallurgy. Over the past five years, the average annual number of the students was between 60 and 70. During the academic 2006- 2007 year 63 students attended the school and 36 have successfully graduated from it.

Secondary comprehensive school 'St. St. Cyril and Methodius' at the reformatory school for juvenile delinquents in Boychinovtsi. The school offers education to students from grades 1 to 12. Over the past five years the average annual number of the students was between 80 and 100. During the academic 2006- 2007 year 83 students attended the school and 40 have successfully graduated from it (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

These Bulgarian examples foreground the real benefits of prison education in practice once a country commits at national level to prison education.

It is notable that more than one interviewee working in an Irish prison highlights a distinct lack of political will and dearth of interest in prison education at national level:

The tutor asserts, to be honest with you, I think the primary obstacle is that the prison service doesn't really value education. They just think, oh, it's a good activity, keeps them quiet, takes them off the landing but really at the end of the day it's not going to be any good to them, so unless they really buy into it they're not going to put money into it. He went on to say. Everything has come down to now, does it reduce recidivism...education, of course it does, but the problem is, how do you measure that... particularly something like adult education, where there mightn't be certificates....it's difficult to summarise it and to sell it...It's difficult to quantify its effectiveness (Dooley et al., 2010).

The Senior Official in the Prison explained that there are political obstacles to improving education for prisoners, well my experience, I can only tell you what my experience is...I have never met any Minister or opposition person that was interested in the welfare of the prisoner, absolutely none, they have far and only interest in exploiting any weaknesses in the system like giving out about the high recidivist rate or the lack of this or that or the victims or sentencing or whatever it would be (Dooley et al., 2010).

This latter interviewee suggests that neither international pressure nor economic arguments for the benefits of lifelong learning in prison would shift the system level inertia and disinterest in relation to education in Irish prisons:

The interviewer enquired that, if the Irish government were seen to be violating a range of international rights across a whole range of UN conventions and Council of Europe resolutions, would the Senior Manager think they would act? Generally speaking, no, that's honest now. The difficulty of a lot of these things is, it's a one day wonder, not even a nine day wonder...You get a big headline somewhere...and the next day it's gone, by a week's time it's dead in the water again and it won't surface for two or three years, nobody follows it up and then you get a new minister, a new regime and it goes back on the agenda again. When asked if the economic argument would have an impact on increasing participation of prisoners in education, the Senior Manager stated, No it's never, ever a factor...I would argue with anybody that you could put up all the evidence in the world to say, for instance that if you had occupied prisoners in ...[the prison] all the time and they were all occupied doing something that in itself would reduce the

dependency on drugs and behaviour. You might as well be talking to the wind, there's no recognition given for that at all (Dooley et al., 2010).

Despite the pessimism in relation to national level interest in prison education, this interviewee does acknowledge system level progress in the related area of prison health care in an Irish context:

What I would be saying or conceding or acknowledging would be that over the last five, six, seven years in particular of all the areas that we have made the most progress would be in health care...Far more progress in health care than in any other area from recruitment of nurse managers, complex managers, recruitment of more doctors and more doctor hours. Psychiatric services would be greater resourced now... the recruitment of addiction counsellors, the recruitment of additional nurses, all that sort of stuff. Now the tendering out of pharmacy services to a pharmacy service that is brought in to distribute the drugs, methadone and all drugs. We would have made quite significant progress in relation to, our policy of treating people who need hospital treatment and specialised treatment in the community and it has worked very well (Dooley et al., 2010).

This gives some grounds for hope for the future regarding system level reform in relation to prioritisation of lifelong learning in Irish prisons.

The English national report provides an example of a national strategy for prison education:

In 2005 the Government published a Green Paper titled *Reducing ReOffending through Skills and Employment* where the national strategy was outlined: “Key proposals [of this strategy] include a stronger focus on jobs, with more relevant skills training, led by employer needs; a new ‘employability contract’ for offenders, with incentives for participation; and a ‘campus’ model for learning to ensure continuity of education from prisons into the community” (HM Government, 2005:5) (Engel et al., 2010).

Goals of prison education are defined as to:

- develop a learning and skills service as an integral part of the offender management process, to provide offenders with skills for life and improves their employability,
- use sentences to improve employment opportunities – i.e., arrange Freshstart interviews and job searches, and set Education, Training and Employment Activity Requirements as part of the new sentencing framework,
- develop strategies nationally, regionally and locally for engaging employers in providing jobs for ex-offenders,
- put employability and employment at the heart of supervision in the community for every unemployed offender (Engel et al., 2010).

While a national strategic approach to access to lifelong learning in prison is to be welcomed in this English example, it nevertheless remains a concern regarding the subordination to the goal of employment of other legitimate goals of lifelong learning - such as active citizenship, social cohesion and personal fulfillment. An EU Commission conception of access to lifelong learning operates with a broader lens and includes all citizens, and therefore encompasses prisoners and prison education within its ambit of relevance.

6.3 (ii) Opportunities for distance education and web-based learning in prison (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

According to the Russian national report, distance education is a feature of some Russian prisons:

Some prisons provide higher correspondent and distant education for prisoners willing to obtain higher education degree. In the Russian Penitentiary system there are 8 institutions of higher education that has 7 branches through the country, including the Academy of Law, 74 educational centres, and an institute for advanced training. In recent years, this tendency has become quite widespread and adopted by a number of prisons at all territory of the Russian Federation. It can be partially explained with the fact that the government has started to promote the policy of transforming penitentiary institutions into centres of social rehabilitation. Therefore, the system of flexible educational training for prisoners is being elaborated and maintained, including distant and correspondent modes of learning (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

An example of an extensive distance education network is described in the Russian national report, with availability also to prisoners who can pay to participate in such distance education:

Modern Humanitarian Academy (MHA) is a private licensed and accredited educational institution providing distant education of all levels, starting from primary and secondary professional education to higher professional education (BA, MA, specialist degree) and postgraduate programmes. The Academy is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the biggest educational network embracing 14% of the planet. The Academy students number 13% of all Russian students today (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Education at MHA is paid but the prisoners pay a reduced fee, which can be decreased to 70% of the standard price. The educational programmes can be paid either by the families of prisoners or by prisoners themselves (in that case tuition fee is extracted from the prisoners' salaries). Since MHA is not a state educational institution, the state doesn't provide any financial support for prisoners in terms of scholarships, student loans, fee reeducation or free education (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The Russian national report highlights that this distance education approach in prison has received European awards:

All study materials of MHA (on-line-lectures, computer programmes, study films, consultations, tests) are multimedia based and translated to the servers of educational centres in prisons through satellite channels from the Moscow server. Necessary equipment is provided by MHA...MHA made it possible for prisoners to defence their final theses distantly, in the mode of video conference, which remarkably facilitated obtaining diplomas for students. For this initiative MHA was awarded by the Federal Penitentiary Service and was acknowledged by the European Prison Education Association. The European Prison Education Association is an organisation made up of prison educators, administrators, governors, researchers and other professionals whose interests lie in promoting and developing education and related activities in prisons throughout Europe in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of Europe. EPEA is recognised by the Council of Europe as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). It is committed to working with prison administrations in Europe to further its aims, but is totally free-standing and independent (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The Russian national report however adds a cautionary note about the pervasiveness of distance education across prisons in Russia:

However, the listed examples embrace a very small amount of prisoners in Russia so far. Most prisons are still either poorly or entirely not equipped for supporting distant education (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The Scottish national report also provides an illustration of distance learning in prisons:

... most of the prison learning centres have a session on the timetable for distance learning students, where they can come along and access a pc, there is a member of staff there if... and if they can't help them with the subject, perhaps some of the technicalities or often they will give them support with essay writing and things like that. They also have, not the OU distance learning, but the college distance learning, they would have telephone tutorial support, that happens sort of reasonably regularly (Prison education college manager) (Weedon et al., 2010).

Youth prisons are described in the Hungarian national report as receiving distance education, though with a recognition that high turnover limits the opportunities for learning:

Another disadvantaged group supported by the [digital] institute is prisoners: Education in a youth-prison was launched immediately after the foundation of the school, with the contribution of *Földes Ferenc* Secondary School teachers who went to the prison to give lessons. This cooperation between the institute and the prison has been successful since the beginning, even if providing education to prisoners is quite difficult. Young prisoners might spend only a short time in the same prison and thus class headcount often falls down from 15 at the beginning to 2 at the end of the year, which then causes financial problems. Prisoners' motivation and performance varies from rather poor to very high: some of them are almost illiterate, but others continue their studies in the institute even after their release, and continue to enter third level education (Balogh et al., 2010).

The Estonian national report observes that security reasons are the biggest obstacle to distance learning and web-based learning in prison:

Computers and the Internet are not permitted for security reasons. Materials and assignments are sent by mail (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Prisoners cannot participate in distance learning because they do not have access to computers outside the prison's computer class and are not allowed to use the Internet (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Distance learning opportunities are still not offered. Prisoners should be able to attend distance courses but how to organise this? (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Security concerns were also raised regarding the internet in prison, in the Hungarian national report:

There are computer facilities, but there is no Internet access for the prisoners, thus they can't participate in distance educational programmes. Because safety regulations, there is no plan to implement it in the future, because Internet provides uncontrollable external relationships for the prisoners. (Earlier it had been used for distance education, but one of the prisoners installed spy-programme on the computer of the prison) (Balogh et al., 2010).

According to interviewees in the Lithuanian national report there is recognition that there is a need for change to a system which prevents use of the internet for educational purposes:

The [prison management] interviewees think that the procedures should be changed. One of the possible solutions would be allowing to use the internet for educational purposes in this prison *perhaps it could be some way that the prisoners would be able to access filtered Internet ,which could provide educational material ... Yes, at least to filtered Internet and the material for reading ...* (Taljunaite et al.,2010).

An account is given in the Belgian national report of recent purchasing of computers for a prison for basic education purposes:

We have 18 new computers in the computer room. Ten of them were bought with financial support from the Flemish government to offer prison-based adult basic education. The other eight computers were sponsored by an Internet company in order to help bridging the digital gap in society in general and in prisons in particular (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

However, computer facilities in prison described in the Belgian national report also refer to the excision of internet access from such facilities:

The prison has one fully equipped computer room for IT-courses. That room is equipped with new computers (without Internet access) and offers the opportunity to test the detainees' IT skills and digital literacy (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The Irish national report also highlights security concerns with access to the internet:

The main obstacle to distance education is security in the prison, the tutor expresses views on this issue, *I personally think there shouldn't be any obstacles because...it's a literacy...digitally literacy...it's essential...I think it's just a psychological thing in the Irish Prison Service's head...It's up and running in other countries, there's no reason for it...yes, because...security overrides everything but personally I don't think it should* (Dooley et al., 2010).

When asked about the obstacles to distance education, the Senior Manager explained that there are *huge difficulties in Ireland, in Irish prisons and I am sure in other prisons, huge difficulties have surfaced. Up to very short time ago prisoners had access to computers and some had access in their own cells for learning purposes, Open University, that sort of stuff. The recent trends as you saw coming in the gate where there is a huge emphasis put upon, to a degree, almost an obsession, put on security has meant that a lot of technology the prisoners had, including computers, have been withdrawn. The Senior Manager elaborates on this, you can push security, you can justify withdrawing everything, including fresh air almost on the basis of security. So in terms of technology to facilitate distance learning by and large that's not on anymore. We do have some facilities in classrooms now under supervision and we do have facilities in the library, under supervision where they can access, but in their cells, very, very limited* (Dooley et al., 2010).

Another barrier adverted to in the Irish national report is finance:

In relation to plans to implement distance education in the future, the tutor explained that they were *involved in a few European Projects, Pipeline project...Norway pioneered it, put a lot of pressure on the Irish Prison Service to follow and see what happened, with the recession and it's way down the line again* (Dooley et al., 2010).

It appears that security reasons are a pervasive barrier to distance education and web-based learning in at least a number of European countries. While reasons for

preventing prisoners from communicating with the world outside prison are obvious, it must be technologically possible to devise programmes to allow for limited external communication and access to key aspects of the web for prisoners' distance education. This technological development needs to be instantiated as a matter of priority across prisons in the EU – what is being presented as a technological problem is *de facto* more a lack of political will to devise the appropriate technology for this limited external communication. The European Commission has a role to play here in encouraging tenders to develop appropriate technology to facilitate lifelong learning in prison through distance education and web-based learning.

Hawley (2010) observes that there are a wide range of European Commission funded projects which have taken place related to this issue. She also highlights the need to resolve this issue of security concerns as a barrier to education in prison:

[...] e-learning and distance learning can be problematic in prisons, where access to the internet may be restricted or closely monitored. A number of EU-funded projects have thus sought to identify new and practical ways to exploit the use of ICT in prison education, within the boundaries required by penal policies...the problem of ICT equipment in prison education is strongly related to prison security routines. ICT is a tool for communication and information in most areas of society today, including the criminal arena. On the other hand, most educational programmes today have come to require more or less full-time use of a computer both as a tool for information access and as a means for communication with the teacher. Without access to a computer and the Internet students are more or less denied access to the arena where education takes place. This means that for some courses, especially at university or college, independent study in prison is no longer realistic option. Thus, there is a need to solve the conflict between security and full access to education (pp. 25-26).

Resolution of this conflict needs Commission leadership not only with regard to cross-national sharing of good practice and innovative approaches on this theme. It requires an evaluative framework of indicators to ensure that good practice in implementing access to technology in prison for educational purposes can not only be shared but required of member states, so that supposed technological difficulties in providing restricted access are not simply used as a veil to hide behind implementation of the right to access to education in prison.

6.3 (iii) Quality of prison library infrastructure and support for prisoner use of libraries (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

The Norwegian national report highlights the extensive potential use of libraries by prisoners:

Prisoners have the same rights as every other citizen and libraries is by no means an exception. Statistics show that prisoners use the libraries much more than the average citizen. By comparing prisoners with adults outside the prisons, the former lends 20 times as many books and media from the libraries as the latter. There are two libraries within the prison where we conducted interviews. The libraries count three employees. All other prisons in Norway have one or no libraries so in this regard the prison is in a favourable position. In 2003, there were 8630 books in one of the libraries and the prisoners in that unit borrowed, in average, 40 books that same year. In the other library there were 11907

books available and 83 was the annual average number of books borrowed by the prisoners (ABM-utvikling 2003:41) (Stensen & Ure 2010).

This opportunity for prisoners is a corollary of the principle of normality for prisoners in the Norwegian system.

According to the Russian national report, an extensive library is a feature of the following prison:

The penal colony has quite a big library, according to the school principal. She says collecting books for the library was quite a long and difficult process. Many books were brought by the teachers of the school and by the prisoners themselves. Also, some books were donated mostly by elderly people, who would be calling the colony and suggesting bringing books. Now, the library owns both textbooks and fiction literature (Russian and foreign). Besides, numerous handouts for different school subjects (literature, Russian languages, Physics, Chemistry, etc) made by teachers of the school are available in the library for all prisoners. The handouts include short theoretical explanations and practical tests (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

However, Veits & Khokhlova (2011, personal communication) state that:

“It has to be mentioned that this example is by no means representative. There are indeed libraries attached to every prison, but whether they are good is unknown”.

The Estonian national report also emphasises a broad provision of books in prison:

The prison has its own library consisting of more than 10,000 books. Each prisoner can order 5 books in a fortnight. Prisoners working in the library complete the orders and deliver books. Currently the work of the library is being reorganised. A new computer programme is adopted for keeping account of orders (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The contrast between the Estonian prison and the Lithuanian one is stark on this issue of library materials in prison:

Lukiskes Prison has a library, but the books are very old. Textbooks and teaching material are provided by those who provide training (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

It appears that prison library provision is somewhat neglected in Belgium (Flanders), according to this example from its national report:

There is also a small library in the prison, although both interviewees agree it is not a very good one. At this moment the prison staff is making an effort to improve the library (more books, etc.) (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Another problem highlighted in the Irish national report is opportunities for prisoners to access the library materials:

The tutor explained this situation in more detail, *access to the library is very limited recently, because it's way down on the pecking order, so it all determines on whether officers are available, so if...there's a limited number of officers available, the library tends to be the very first place to be hit. So unfortunately the library while it's there and theoretically it should be open all day everyday, there isn't really great access to it (Dooley et al., 2010).*

Availability of library resources in prison is a basic indicator of a country's commitment to lifelong learning in prison. There appears to be extreme variation in

prison library quality across European countries. More research is needed to further interrogate the extent of variability of prison library provision across different prisons in the same country. Further scope for interlibrary loans between prisons would be an obvious development if a systemic approach to library provision were adopted at a national level in each country. The issue of how to better promote reading in prison and use by prisoners of library facilities needs to be part of a prison wide education strategy, rather than a treatment of education in prison as being something contracted out to external tutors and not part of the core work of prison authorities. A mainstreaming of education in prison institutional culture commences not only with the individual prisoner's desire to learn but also with a coherent strategy and structure in prison management to commit to lifelong learning and implement prison practices and library resources to facilitate lifelong learning.

6.3 (iv) Overcoming resistance from prison officers in some countries to prisoner learning (PROCESS INDICATOR)

A notable issue of prison officer resistance to prisoner learning is raised in the Norwegian national report:

The informant argued that when the prisoners educated themselves, they became too knowledgeable for the prison system, i.e. they became better educated than the prison officers, Culturally speaking, they become far more knowledgeable than the prison officers. One does not even need higher education to become a prison officer. So they become more knowledgeable than the prison officer, perhaps they are at the outset, but they become even more knowledgeable than the prison officer (Stensen & Ure 2010).

A historico-cultural change in prison institutional culture in Belgium (Flanders) is observed in their national report:

Today, the prison guards and officers are usually very cooperative when it comes to organising educational activities. This was not always the case. In the beginning, some warders saw it as a burden or an unnecessary work load. Some of them even discouraged the prisoners to enrol. They said to prisoners: you do not need an education. The mentality has changed strongly over the last 15 years. Prisoners and staff members today realise the huge importance of prison education. It is important for the detainee and for his individual future, but also for society. To put it simply: broadening the mind of the prisoner reduces the chances of recidivists (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

This account resonates with the research of Lin (2000) on the implementation of rehabilitation programmes in prisons which indicated how each prison's unique history influenced the ways in which its programmes were understood by staff and inmates. Lin emphasised how implementation failure was correlated with a basic misunderstanding between policy makers and implementing agents.

In contrast to Norway, in the Hungarian context, the government official from the Ministry of Affairs and Labour perceives prison officers as being supportive of prison education:

In my opinion prison officers are pleased to see these labour-market trainings running, and that the staffs of Employment Centres and training centres deal with the prisoner. In

the crime prevention strategy, priority is given to the training of prisoners and the preventive trainings for disadvantaged people (Balogh et al., 2010).

Estonia provides an interesting example of an approach to preventing prison officer resistance to prisoners' learning through involving them centrally in the delivery of some of the key programmes:

Prisoners also participate in a social programme intended to develop their social skills. The programme includes 9 topics: family relations, anger management, replacement of aggressiveness, fighting addiction and other issues of coping with life. At the end of the programme prisoners receive a certificate. Programme leaders are the prison officers (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A professional development dimension and incentive for prison officers in other countries than Estonia could include their involvement in the development and/or delivery of the courses. This would both serve as a preventative measure against prison officer resistance to prisoner learning and help foster good relations between both groups. It would also help mainstream the role of education in the prison institutional culture.

This Estonian example resonates strongly with the *Discussion Document for the Pathways to Inclusion conference* (DG, EAC 2010) which similarly envisaged active engagement of prison officers in course delivery:

How can we raise the level of commitment of prison governors and prison officers to supporting education in prisons? Involving prison officers in joint delivery of courses e.g. pre-release courses, soft skill courses, gym instruction etc., (p. 47).

For this to become more widespread, an incentivisation and accountability process is required at both European and national levels for prison officers and prison authorities to participate.

6.3 (v) An education strategy for high security prisons (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR, PROCESS INDICATOR)

A coherent strategic approach to lifelong learning in prison at national and prison institutional level must also encompass high security prisons. A significant and notable contrast between policy for high security prisons in relation to lifelong learning is evident between the Lithuanian, Irish and Bulgarian national reports on the one hand, and the English national report on the other hand. The Lithuanian national report provides the example of how high security prison is a barrier to lifelong learning:

In theory, life-long learning and rehabilitation goals are provisioned in Lukiskes Prison strategic action plan for 2008-2010, but the possibilities and conditions for prisoners' education are restricted by other regulations, i.e., the highest level of prison security restricts education possibilities (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

Despite a progressive approach to prison education in other kinds of prisons in Bulgaria, there is a similar barrier to education, as in Lithuania, for those in high security prisons:

Those who have life sentences cannot participate in the educational process, as well as those who are under strict confinement until their status is changed (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Yet the English national report provides the following account of a high security prison with a proportion of prisoners with long or lifetime sentences:

The education provided helps to break down the sentence for the individual, *education helps to keep people focused, so you might have somebody who has got a very long sentence who might be able to work on their education in small bites, so instead of saying I'm going to do a minimum of 14 years, they could be looking at completing a literacy courses now and they might aim to do a GCSE [Graduate Certificate of Secondary Education] and then possible an OU [Open University] course, it helps to break down the sentence into more manageable chunks and so it gives somebody some sort of hope really* (Senior manager) (Engel et al., 2010).

It is the very longevity of the prison sentence in the English high security prison that is interpreted as being a particular opportunity to engage in lifelong learning. Across national reports, there would appear to be a general policy vacuum at national level in relation to lifelong learning for high security prisons in particular. The English prison example provided here offers a progressive way forward for engagement of high security prisoners with lifelong learning.

This English approach is clearly in contrast with the security dominated approach in the following Irish prison example:

The tutor on obstacles to implementation and expansion of education in prison stated, *so much segregation...almost 100 guys on 23 hour lock up, which means they're only let out of their cell for 1 hour a day...for exercise, because legally they have to do that ...all to do with the gangland stuff that happening, so it's for their own protection, or for somebody else's protection. They can't come to school. In the last year or two... this is a new problem. They can't get up to school cause they can't mix so we do go down to where they are...very limited...what we're doing is kind of skeletal and it's just a presence really... no real learning going on as such.* Protection prisoners are locked up for 23 hours each day (Dooley et al., 2010).

6.3.1 Prison education: Indicators at Micro-Meso levels

6.3.1 (i) Overcoming practical problems to allow the prisoner to study in prison and at third level (PROCESS INDICATOR)

A range of practical difficulties manifest themselves in the implementation of prison education, according to different national reports. Most of these systemic obstacles could be overcome with a commitment to the strategic importance of lifelong learning in prison, at EU, national and prison institutional levels.

The Norwegian national report raises the issue of not simply early release of prisoners affecting learning opportunities but also prison transfer of prisoners:

Even though the teachers at the public school go out of their way to help the students complete a degree at tertiary level, the lack of predictability concerning the prisoner's situation complicates this (Stensen & Ure 2010).

One concrete example is a teacher who made an appointment with a university college to discuss a prisoner's educational trajectory. The prisoner in question, the teacher and a prison officer attended the meeting. The problem with the educational programme the prisoner had enrolled in was that it contained group assignments and obligatory classes. They managed to settle a deal where he could do the group assignments individually and not attend the obligatory classes. However, later in the educational trajectory he was

transferred to another prison and at that time a vital part of the study implied visiting companies in order to see their solutions to problems that were relevant for the study. At this point the teacher had expected that the prisoner would get admission for joining the visits at the companies. But since he had been transferred to another prison, the rules were different, and he could not complete his education. Our informant said *It is always the prison that owns the prisoner* (Stensen & Ure 2010).

This obstacle can clearly be overcome through an integrated education opportunities approach across prisons, at least for prisons that are located reasonably near to each other. The Belgian national report also raises the issue of prisoner release time for those in pre-trial custody:

It also needs to be noted that, as many prisoners are in pre-trial custody, many among them do not know when they will be released. This, of course, has some impact on their willingness to start an educational process (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

A less intractable barrier here which exists in Belgium is the questionable policy disincentive to learning which involves a loss of income for prisoners who choose to use their time for education rather than work in prison:

Nearly all educational opportunities within the prison walls are free of charge. This however, does not mean there is no financial cost involved. For instance, prisoners that normally spend their time at a workplace, lose a part of their income when they opt for study instead of work. This loss of income is obviously a barrier to adult education for some prisoners. That is also the reason why many prisoners take courses on top of their jobs in prison (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Many other countries do not require prisoners to lose income when participating in education and this simple policy reversal in the Belgian prison context would help remove this particular barrier to lifelong learning in prison. It is notable that this practice in the Belgian prison is *prima facie* in violation of the European Prison Rules, '*Education shall have no less a status than work within the prison regime and prisoners shall not be disadvantaged financially or otherwise by taking part in education*'⁴⁹.

A financial barrier is also evident to accessing higher education in prison in Estonia, as is evident from the Estonian national report:

Prisoners, like all other learners, receive general and vocational education free of charge; higher education is provided for a fee (Tamm & Saar 2010).

This policy will inevitably serve as a disincentive to prisoner participation in higher education. In contrast, the Irish national report observes that:

All educational courses offered in prison are free of charge and participation in education is voluntary. Third level prison students are funded by the Irish Prison Service (Dooley et al., 2010).

However, despite a formal situation in Irish prisons that education receives the same pay as work, it appears that in practice there is both a perception among prisoners and a reality in the prison, that work can provide more pay as it is for longer hours than education:

⁴⁹ Council of Europe, Recommendation Rec (2006)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the European Prison Rules.

The tutor described a practice, which discourages prisoners from engaging in education stating, *in fact there are issues that some prisoners if they work or do other things, they get paid extra and to do education you don't get paid extra...a thing we're annoyed about that there isn't comparable remuneration for attending school as there is for trades or some of the other things.* (Dooley et al., 2010).

The Senior Manager's response when asked to clarify that there's no financial loss to a prisoner from studying rather than working was, *the only thing we have here is that in a few production facilities like the kitchen, the bakery, a few areas like that they get an extra ten euro a week but then they work 12 or 14 hours a day like in the kitchen and they are up from 7 o'clock in the morning and they work till 8 o'clock at night but in terms of, ninety nine percent, ninety five percent of the prisoners here who work in the workshops, cleaning work or the trades or go to school are classified exactly the same. They get the same rewards and the same opportunities. They go to school full-time or even part-time* (Dooley et al., 2010).

An obvious barrier to prison education in Lithuania is the lack of time given for the classes:

They learn in prison mostly independently as only a few hours a week of individual consultations from teachers or lecturers, who come to the prisoners in their cell is available. The exceptions are computer classes and art therapy classes which take place in a specially adapted room (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The obstacle of time and the need to combine both work and study is sought to be overcome in the Russian prison example, in the following way:

As far as combination of work and studies is concerned, the school suggests its students shift mode which would help them both work and study during the day. Currently, there are three shifts: from 8.00 to 12.00, from 13.00 to 16.00 and from 16.00 to 19.00. Pupils can choose any shift they want depending on their work hours. If pupils are loaded with work and cannot go to school everyday, they can come 2-3 days a week. In this case, teachers consult them about the classes they've missed, *if they can't come to school everyday, they can use those handouts; they are very helpful. They can use them in order to keep up with other students in class and be informed about what's happening in class. Those schemes we suggest for self-studying are extremely easy* (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

This illustrates the importance of prison institutional flexibility to accommodate the learning needs of prisoners.

A division of labour between education providers and prison authorities can lead to a lack of both strategic integration and concrete cooperation for the development of prison education. In the words of the Scottish national report:

There is also a lack of coordination between the three different educational providers: prison staff, college staff and literacy and numeracy tutor which, in the view of the prison inspectors, could have a detrimental effect on provision (Weedon et al., 2010).

In contrast to Scotland, in the Estonian prison example it is perceived that there is strong cooperation across staff:

The school cooperates with prison staff – education coordinators and social officers – to discuss organisation of studies, any problems with learners, etc., (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Rather than simply focusing on obstacles to prison education, the Estonian example illustrates important incentives to engaging in learning:

An additional incentive is an opportunity to live in a separate section of prison where learners have a little more freedom – extra time outside cells. Learning as activity and established daily routine are also great motivators. *The school is a piece of open society. Relations are different. Topics are different. You are not a prisoner, you are a student* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Prison doors being locked so that prisoners could not access education classes at particular times was previously highlighted as a barrier to lifelong learning in prison in an Irish prison context (Oates 2007; Maunsell et al., 2008). The Irish Inspector of Prisons reports that:

I observed on numerous occasions that prisoners scheduled to attend classes did not reach the school on time and were in some instances over an hour late for class (2009a, p.15) (Dooley et al., 2010).

Attitudinal barriers are perceived in the Hungarian national report, specifically with regard to universities and engagement of prisoners in lifelong learning:

Manager: *Diminishing prejudice would be very important. People have no realistic knowledge about this group. Furthermore, as I see, universities are very rigid...Our clients need individual schedule, because they are older than the other students and come from a special milieu* (Balogh et al., 2010).

Attitudinal barriers were also highlighted at different levels in the Scottish national report. These include attitudes of prison authorities:

She also felt that education was not fully valued within the prison service, for example when it came to judging whether prisoners should be moved on or considered for parole. *We don't feel that education is rated highly enough in the pecking order for prisoners, particularly when it comes to moving on and parole board The emphasis is put on prison programmes, now your prison programmes are things like your anger management, your drug addiction programmes, and alcohol, and to be fair I am not [against that] ... cause alcohol etc, anger, is the root of a lot of the issues and the problems, but there are other things that contribute to the development of the individual in prison, and education can be a very powerful part of that, and there is definitely not as much [emphasis on that] ...* (Prison education college manager) (Weedon et al., 2010).

The Scottish national report also highlights attitudinal barriers among the general public, and more specifically the media, to lifelong learning approaches in prison:

Prison culture created a problem in that education could sometimes be seen as a soft option for prisoners and that they were indulged. The media, she felt, were quick to act on stories which presented prison education as an indulgence, *[The prison] did a project with Historic Scotland, and it was a fantastic project where people came in and they did Scots history. They did Mary Queen of Scots and all this kind of stuff, and they also brought in outfits so that the women were able to... and they thoroughly enjoyed it and so much came out of that. They wrote lots of things and all the rest of it, and the Daily Record got hold of the story and absolutely trashed it about the women dressing up and dancing and singing. So that is a very real factor because it does impact on the decisions that are made* (Prison education college manager) (Weedon et al., 2010).

The practical problem of finding teaching staff is an issue in some countries,

including this prison example in Russia:

Most of our teachers are older than 62. Where else can they go? They would like to leave, but there's nowhere to go. The fact that they took all those benefits from the teachers is so wrong (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Third problem is the availability of places for all willing to study – the total amount of the prisoners is 1900 persons and both the vocational school and the secondary school can contain only 250 students a year each, which means that all prisoners who would like to enrol into the school hardly have the opportunity to do so (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The only effect of the recession so far has been the cutdown of benefits for the teachers. However, they say, they are expecting more financial cutdowns that will affect both their salaries and other aspects (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

This practical issue is related largely to salary rates for teaching in prison.

Whereas most countries conceive of prison education more broadly than in purely vocational terms, the narrower vision of lifelong learning in prison in England and Scotland as being more particularly vocational, may lead to problems of prioritisation of education against the backdrop of the current recession. This is highlighted by interviewees in the English national report:

The Senior manager and the manager of the education department believe that the prison sector will be affected by the recession in a number of ways. During a recession, it is also reported to be more difficult to successfully integrate former prisoners into the job market, which may have an impact on the number of re-offenders (Daddow, 2009) (Engel et al., 2010).

With the recession, she stated, *it takes some of the priority away from education as a means of rehabilitating people when they leave* (Engel et al., 2010).

However, EU Commission frameworks of lifelong learning prioritise wider goals than purely employment and prison education needs to be developed and implemented through cognisance of these wider goals.

Perhaps the most widespread problem of implementation of education in prison is the perennial one of prisoners discontinuing their education upon release. As the Belgian national report states:

One of our aims is to make sure adults keep on learning outside the prison walls. But we must not fool ourselves: this is usually not the case. That is also the reason why prisons with a lot of juveniles and pre-trial detainees have difficulties in offering educational activities (...) adults could be leaving the prison long before a successful completion of the educational process. And for that same reason, these prisoners are less interested (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Comments on this issue from the Russian national report are also pertinent:

Both informants say that one of the problems of education in prison is the turnover of prisoners. They may get some knowledge and a certified diploma at the colony but there's no guarantee they will proceed with their studies outside the prison for various reasons (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Hawley (2010) highlights a report on Nordic Prisons by Eikeland et al. (2009) which notes that, 'it is paradoxical that prisoners considered a short sentence as an impediment to getting started with studies, particularly for prisoners whose lack of education or interrupted education have paved the way into a life of crime' (p 201).

A proposal adverted to in the Norwegian national report offers a way forward in surmounting this particular barrier to prisoner motivation and actual practice of lifelong learning in prison:

One informant said that in the future he believed that: *Modulated courses are the offers of education one should go in for in the future. Two-thirds of the inmates serve sentences that are less than four months, given this one should arrange for short courses that provides course certificates one may use on later occasions* (Stensen & Ure 2010).

This is consistent with the behavioural psychology insight that feedback for progress must be direct and not displaced into the long-term. Shorter, more focused intensive courses may operate better in serving the needs of those in the prison population who may become due for release.

6.3.1 (ii) Strategies to recognise that it is often hardest to motivate student prisoners in basic education (PROCESS INDICATOR)

The Matthew Effect, namely, that those with most capacity will respond best to interventions, is well recognised in psychology (Merton 1968) and literacy education (Nicaise 2010; Ivers et al., 2010; Grene & McPhillips 2011). A consistent finding across national reports was that it is hardest to motivate prisoners as students in basic education. Thus, the Norwegian national report states:

Students in basic education were apparently harder to motivate as their experience with the school system had been severely negative: ... *the job is very much about rendering learning as harmless, rendering harmless those things that concern the school. We work in small groups and adapt for every single one* (Stensen & Ure 2010).

Similarly, accounts from the Russian national report explicate this difficulty:

However, as the principal says, *the motivation of the students in 5th – 9th grades is lower than those of students in 10th and 11th grades. Therefore, the number of high school classes (10th and 11th) is also bigger as well as the number of students in them. This year, there's one 5th, one 6th, one 7th, and two 8th grades in the school. There are three 9th and 10th classes and two 11th classes this year. Next year, there will be three 11th classes. This demonstrates that the motivation of prisoners to get a secondary school certificate and continue their education – either in prison or after their release – is growing* (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

All 10th grades are full. I must say, that prisoners are more willing to go to 10th and 11th grades. They have a very strong and reasoned motivation. They understand that they need it in order to be able to live in the society well. They understand that they need education (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Various national reports offer insight into motivational approaches and practices to engage those in basic education and those with heightened levels of marginalisation from the societal and educational system. A wider curriculum and broader approach is

employed in this Russian prison example, in order to engage those with low education levels:

However, as the principal of the secondary school notes, most often, the motivation of the just imprisoned pupils is quite low. They only go to school because they have to, but their capability to study, especially if their educational background is quite low. Nevertheless, the school tries to increase their motivation by many ways such as individual approach and organisation of extracurricular activities. The school regularly involves students in organisation of celebrations of public and school holidays by letting them decorate the school, write the script of the event, organise performances, make costumes, etc. All celebrations get videotaped and stored in the library, where access to them is open for everyone. Some of the celebrations organised at the colony by adult learners were even in the news on the TV. Their last initiative was organisation of *Hamlet* performance (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Each student has a personal file, where all the information about him is being collected. Among other things, the file also contains all the information about the educational background of each prisoner. The average level of most prisoners is incomplete/complete secondary school degree. However, even though some of them have completed secondary school grades, they do have problems with reading, writing, spelling and clear expression of their ideas (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Motivational practices in prison which are explored in the Belgian national report include the following:

Both interviewees indicate that adults who are just being imprisoned are usually not immediately ready to take a course. The long-term prisoners usually need some time of what the prison governor calls '*penitentiary rest and silence*' ... After this period, prisoners are more easily motivated to study again. This is usually halfway through their sentence (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

A powerful tool for learner motivation is the happening during which the diplomas and certificates are handed out. The education coordinator...states this public moment usually boosts the students' self esteem and *gives them the feeling they have achieved something* (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Public narratives and ceremony have been highlighted in a psychology of narrative practice as being key to identity change (White & Epston 1990; Hegarty 2007). This key feature of public ceremony referred to in the Belgian national report in relation to prison education deserves a much wider application as a motivational process for prison learners, not only in basic education but throughout the lifelong learning process in prison.

A key dimension to motivation also recognised in the Belgian national report is that individual study may require support and supervision to overcome demotivating effects of isolation:

Apart from the classes, the prison also offers supervised individual study opportunities. The *Oudenaarde* penitentiary offers this to give detainees the opportunity to gather information, books, etc. The supervised individual study can take up to a maximum of three hours a week, for four months (16 weeks). For the prisoners who take general subjects, a supervised individual study is offered during one to two hours a week... (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

We experience that for most of the students individual study is much harder than just attending a course. They have little experience in individual study (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

This also highlights the need for individual education plans for prisoners, especially in basic education, as part of a motivational process.

The Estonian national report confirms that lifelong learning in the provided prison example is available also in the Russian language:

The school has 1360 students (including those in prison)...The language of instruction is Estonian. Prisoners are also offered education in Russian (Tamm & Saar 2010).

This is an important motivational dimension, not only because of the high proportion of Russian speakers in Estonian prisons, but also due to the levels of social marginalisation of many Russian speakers, especially from the North-Eastern region of Estonia (Kalikova 2000; Downes 2003; Mikecz 2008).

One of the Hungarian prison institution interviewees offers a key insight into low motivation of a number of prisoners, namely, that emotional support issues can contribute to overcoming apathy:

One of the most significant setback factors of the educational programmes is the apathy of the prisoners. According to the senior manager more training regarding prevention and therapy, and an effective mentoring network would be necessary in the prisons, but there are no appropriate funding sources for these expansions currently (Balogh et al., 2010).

This emotional support focus, combined with a strong interpersonal approach, is needed to help engage prisoners with high levels of apathy and fatalism (see also Kalichman et al., 2000; Downes 2003, on fatalism).

A focus on the arts to engage prisoners, especially those with low levels of motivation offers another avenue for their involvement. The arts currently are somewhat peripheral in prisons and need to become more central. In the words of a discussion document for the DG, EAC, *Pathways to Inclusion* Conference (2010):

A high proportion of the EU projects under discussion at this conference relate to the arts. They generally validate the principles referred to above, and the perception long held in many places that creative activities can greatly help imprisoned people and life generally within prisons. However, it is notable that in some prison systems the arts or creative activities play only a marginal role (compared, for example, to vocational education). Elsewhere, they may have a significant place within regimes but they are still confined to evenings or weekends, and not generally regarded as part of the main prison day (Conference Paper 5, p. 10).

An example of a role for the arts in prison education has already been observed from the Russian national report. The Estonian national report also explores this theme:

Prisoners are taught by the same programme as students of ordinary schools. They learn 24 hour per week on average. Russian [speaking] prisoners and school leavers learn 25 hours per week. The choice of subjects is somewhat different – there are more art classes and classes related to personal development.

They have three hours of Estonian per week, civic and social studies, music, art, including history of art. They do not have physical education and handicraft. There is a graduation ceremony and everything else normal students have...(Tamm & Saar 2010).

Benefits of the arts in engaging those who may be most difficult to reach include that there is less fear of failure as there tends not to be a convergent, 'right' answer in the arts, more embodied types of learning can be pursued, which tends to motivate male students more (Byrne 2007), and more culture relevant materials are taught (Downes 2010c).

6.3.1 (iii) Establishment and implementation of a principle of normality in prisons (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR, PROCESS INDICATOR)

An important principle is established in Norwegian prisons according to its national report, this is the principle of normality:

Prisoners in Norway maintain the same rights to education as citizens outside the prison. This is called the principle of normality. As a consequence, the municipality has established a division for public adult education within the prison. The division is therefore autonomous with regard to the prison system. This autonomy is among many things reflected in the way the employees dress (which is casual clothes and not prison officer uniforms), the way they interact with the prisoners and their responsibility with regard to security. The school issues certificates from basic to upper secondary school and arranges exams in the prison. Exams at tertiary education level are also carried out within the public school and sent to the higher educational institution in question (Stensen & Ure 2010).

A related issue is that in Norway a rights-based approach to education exists, including for prisoners. The national report observes however that there are barriers to implementation of this right to education in a prison context:

Despite the fact that prisoners have the same rights to education as every other Norwegian citizen, one of our informants said that for the time being the school only had space for 85 students. The reason for this was lack of economic resources, but our informant said that they were applying for more money so that they could make way for 100 new students. We do not know why they lack the economic resources to offer education to all 392 prisoners, but as the quotation from the Norwegian Correctional Services above demonstrates, it is 'in principle' that the prisoners have the same rights, and perhaps not always in reality (Stensen & Ure 2010).

The Estonian national report provides an account of what appear *de facto* to be an application of a comparable principle of normality to the particular prison, though without the rights based dimension offered to citizens in Norway:

Prisoners learn according to the same programmes as the pupils of mainstream schools. Education is provided by regional adult upper secondary schools and vocational schools. Ex-prisoners can continue their education after release from prison. Higher education is provided for a fee. The forms of higher education are limited – prisoners can study only as external students (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Teaching methods are those used in adult education. Prisoners sit state examinations equally to students in ordinary schools. This is real learning not a pastime activity. It provides an opportunity to continue education after release (Tamm & Saar 2010).

It is important that any key principle of normality would recognise that positive discrimination is also a possibility given the frequently disadvantaged backgrounds of the prison population. So, for example, in the Estonian national report it is stated:

Sometimes the learning conditions are even better than in ordinary schools: *They had a course on English taught by native speakers from US and United Kingdom. Ordinary people pay a lot of money for such courses. The prisoners also participate in a social programme – they were offered a series of lectures on various subjects. Ordinary people must pay considerable amounts in order to attend such lectures. They have extremely good learning opportunities* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The English national report illustrates an attempt to balance the recognition that on the one hand, prisoners tend to have distinct needs and have experienced high levels of social marginalisation and on the other hand, require a principle of normality:

Offenders are considered one of the most vulnerable groups in terms of social exclusion. Living with the prison stigma has always been a serious challenge for both: the ex-offender and his/her family, and for the local community. Therefore, preparation to the process of social inclusion and the transformation of the offenders into the citizens has recently become a centre of attention of the Prison Service in general and the penal institutions in particular (Engel et al., 2010).

There is a strong correlation between offending, poor literacy, language and numeracy skills, and low achievement and truancy at school. Many offenders have very poor experience of education and no experience of stable employment (Engel et al., 2010).

The prison education should not be regarded however as an isolated intervention. It needs to be viewed in a context of the prisoners' life normalisation and as a crucial element of a broad and long-term strategy (Engel et al., 2010).

A Senior manager in a different prison stated,

The atmosphere for education, for us certainly is, it's a friendly atmosphere and it's a nonthreatening place, there's very few incidents in education. The general philosophy of the teaching staff and tutors is what happened yesterday happened yesterday and today's a new day (Engel et al., 2010).

A life normalisation principle is not different from a recognition of distinct needs and vulnerabilities in much of the prison population; it requires and implies the need for positive discrimination in the area of prison education.

The benefits of such a systemic change informed by a basic principle of normality (and EU funds to provide supports) appears evident from the Estonian national report:

Five years ago it seemed that prison education was stuck in a stagnant state. Now things are changing constantly – learning culture, etc. The system has improved significantly. The changes have had a great impact on both the quality of education and the learning environment (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The changes in the learning environment, teachers' attitudes and teaching methods have had a noticeable impact on the prisoners' attitudes to learning. *The first year was a breaking point – we came with new ideas and practices; we were enthusiastic and that was catching. The prison psychologist said at the graduation ceremony: 'The people who sit here are not convicts; they are students.'* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The words of this Estonian national report interviewee are somewhat apt in this context:

Learning also changes the prisoners' behaviour (Tamm & Saar 2010).

This applies not as a deterministic and universal rule. However, learning is a key condition for such behavioural change among many prisoners.

The need for supports regarding psycho-social and emotional problems prisoners is another dimension to a positive discrimination principle to operate within a broader principle of normalisation. As the Norwegian report highlights:

The prison has a section for sick prisoners and a health section, and one informant added that: *Many of the inmates have mental problems, and many become mentally ill from serving their sentence* (Stensen & Ure 2010).

In the Irish context, Seymour and Costello (2005) have also highlighted the extreme number of people in Irish prisons with backgrounds of psychiatric disorders and homelessness. This wider issue of mental health supports for prisoners also needs to be addressed.

Severe scepticism is evident from the following Irish prison management interviewee regarding any kind of prison mission statement, whether committing to a principle of normality or otherwise:

When questioned about the prison mission statement and whether it refers to lifelong learning or rehabilitation goals, the Senior Manager stated, *well now it doesn't mention lifelong learning at all* and went on to give his views on it: *the vision statement for the prison service is something like it would help people to prepare people for their release to live law abiding life styles, but I wouldn't pay any attention to vision statements [or strategic plans] because they are rubbish, in terms of meaningfulness. They don't mean nothing. Our numbers here in the last six months just simply highlight the lunacy and the cosmetic foundation and the shallowness of that mission statement. I suppose I would argue very strongly that unless you show basic human respect for the individual first by providing civil and humane facilities like toilets, beds, clothing, food, very basic stuff. Unless you do that first there is no use pretending to the prisoner who was lying on the floor for the last month that we have your welfare at heart when he knows physically that I am fucking in bits down here. So I would argue that the Irish prison service vision statement is just a cosmetic exercise in having a vision or a statement or whatever* (Dooley et al., 2010).

According to this view of a Senior Manager in a major Irish prison, mission or vision statements are mere simulacra. They are analogous with the skill of the painter Zeuxis in Athens to paint grapes so realistically that birds came to peck at them, but with no substantial reality behind them. This call for going beyond what the UN Rapporteur for the Right to Health calls 'window dressing' (paragraph 67, 2005) highlights the need for systems of accountability to ensure that commitments are carried out and are not simply on paper.

6.3.1 (iv) Individual education plans for prisoners (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

According to this Scottish national report example, once a learner in prison started on a course an individual learning plan is produced:

They have a learning plan which is drawn up when they first enrol. Contractually there is a review of that plan every six months, providing they are still there. In addition to that, as a college, we are actually introducing a three monthly progress report, that the member of staff teaching that individual will do on things like motivation, attendance, progression, achievement and things like that ... The learning plans will vary quite

dramatically with the prisoner. Often the prisoner actually doesn't know what he is coming in to do. We will advise and sometimes actually for the poorer ones attending for two months... two months is... an achievement (Prison education college manager) (Weedon et al., 2010).

An individual education plan for a prisoner is also adopted in Hungary, according to this account from the Hungarian national report:

There is not any procedure for identifying specific learning difficulties, however individual developmental educational programmes are provided by mentors for every participant (Balogh et al., 2010).

However, it is not clear the extent to which this is a pervasive feature of the Hungarian prison system. It is important to emphasise that an individual education plan needs to be a democratic process operating against a backdrop of good relations between the prisoner and the tutor:

learner, opinion sharing with the participant, shared learning goals built upon the participant's life experiences. The most important principles are as follows: Manager: *Personality-focused attitude is the most important. Our educational method is built upon the client's personality, knowledge and learning tempo. At the beginning we offer them methods, and they choose the best liked one. The partnership is a base feature: we learn a lot from the clients, because they have widespread life-experience, thus we respect them.* Mentor: *There is a special teacher-pupil relationship between us, because individual methods are applied for each person: I compile different worksheets for them, I apply different methods when I hear the lesson, and while one of them need only half year for a curriculum, the other one need 1 year for it* (Balogh et al., 2010).

A perceived barrier to implementation of individual education plans for prisoners that is noted in the Hungarian national report is the lack of accurate information on a prisoner's previous educational background:

There is no correct information available on the educational levels of the prisoners in most cases, because the prisoners have no grade card (they have lost it or they have never got it). Often the prisoners give false information concerning their educational level, because they are not motivated in participating in educational programmes provided by the prison. The organisers of the education try to get the grade cards or some information from the families of the prisoners, from the educational institutions the prisoners attended earlier, or from the state archives, but it often falls flat (because the concerned school doesn't exist anymore or it takes long time to get the required information from the state archives). *According to the interviewees the vast majority of the prisoners are low- or unqualified and unskilled early school leavers, and they have traditionally disadvantaged background* (Balogh et al., 2010).

It is evident that an individual education plan is not yet a systemic feature of the prison system in Belgium (Flanders), though this prison management interviewee is strongly of the opinion of the need for such a plan:

My dream is an individual 'detention plan' for every detainee in Flanders. In this plan the detainee, the prison governor, the Flemish Community and the court of law specify what the prisoner will do during his time of sentence. This plan includes adult education. If all prisoners have such a plan, a more coherent provision of educational opportunities spread over all prisons will follow logically (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

A collaborative approach does however exist across the prison in Belgium, when engaging with the individual prisoner's educational needs; this is a key prerequisite for a process of developing an individual education plan:

Adult education in the *Oudenaarde* penitentiary is supported in many ways. The education coordinator, the prison governor and prison staff, the psycho-social aid team, etc. all work together to help the detainees in their educational process (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

A collaborative process across those working in the prison also occurs in this Estonian prison:

Risk assessment is carried out by a committee consisting of a social worker, psychologist and the prison's security officer. Taking into account the background of the prisoner and the results of the interview it is decided whether it is necessary to acquire/continue education, learn a vocation, learn Estonian, etc., (Tamm & Saar 2010).

It would seem to be only a small further step for the implementation of an individual education plan, in dialogue with the learner, given this collaborative process regarding the educational needs of the prisoner is already in place in this Estonian example.

The choice of education or course depends on the results of risk assessment carried out for each prisoner since 2007. *A development plan is prepared for each prisoner based on the results of individual risk assessment: the behaviour of the person before his imprisonment, potential risks during imprisonment and after release; how and where to manage risks (...)* If low educational level is a risk factor the person must be persuaded to study. If there is the risk that the person would not find a job because he doesn't speak Estonian then we offer language courses. So that they could cope better after being released (Tamm & Saar 2010).

It is important to emphasise that the learner in prison needs to be actively involved in the design of the plan and to take ownership over the plans' goals. Any individual plan which renders the prisoner passive in this planning process – through a plan which is prepared for the individual and not in conjunction with him or her – is highly unlikely to succeed. The very logic of an individual education plan approach in educational psychology is that it is based on a constructivist approach where the individual is an active learner.

A different concern emerging from the Lithuanian national report is the dearth of opportunity for access to higher education in prison which would be a substantive systemic weakness, even if an individual education plan approach were adopted:

Speaking about the higher education in prison, according to the interviewees there are practically no opportunities (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

A key rationale underpinning an individual education plan is that it is based on the educational needs of the individual learner in prison. This rationale presupposes potential access to educational opportunities to meet these learning needs. This would need to include higher education and thus requires systemic reform in the context of prisons in Lithuania. In contrast, such higher education opportunities are available in Estonia:

If the prisoner has not finished his education they can continue in prison at the relevant level. Some volunteer. Anyone who wishes can continue his education (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The issue emerging from the Bulgarian national report is that while individual educational plans are well recognised for working with individuals experiencing social exclusion, there is little evidence that this approach has been developed for working also in prison education:

When working with marginalised groups the organisation has a strictly individual personal approach, for people of such groups are highly sensitive and should be approached with care (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Mostly personal contact is used and work is on an individual basis:

...there is more to be desired on this point, but yes, using various contacts, informal, different sorts... according to the situation. Each one of them must be reached, an individual approach is needed, a careful approach, they are a rather particular group of people (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Application of individual education plans to the prison context is a logical corollary of commitment to a principle of normality in prisons, as applied to lifelong learning in prison.

6.3.1 (v) Individual plans for prisoners for their release (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

Anticipating the extreme difficulties of transition post-prison is a classic implication of a systems theory framework. This issue is raised in the Estonian national report:

The life of ex-convicts changes a lot after they are released. Many struggle to find a job and a place to live (Tamm & Saar 2010).

They admit that they have so much to do that learning becomes poor second. Many are emotionally broken. They find themselves in a totally different situation; sometimes it is difficult to adapt to a new life, in particular for those who served a long sentence. They have learned to cope in prison but cannot cope outside. Some prisoners acquire lower secondary education and continue in a vocational school (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Estonian national report emphasises the need to overcome recidivism with lifelong learning as part of such strategy:

Estonia is discussing alleviating punishments, shortening prison terms and for some offences replacing imprisonment with community service. According to the Ministry of Justice 40% of offenders commit a new crime during the first year after release. This concerns in particular those prisoners who served the full sentence (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Another education institution in the Estonian national report observes that some students are ex-convicts:

This year two young men came from our prison school. They are finishing year 12. Two ex-convicts came from the Viru Prison. People who are released on parole are required to continue or finish their education. They often contact us before they are released and enquire about learning opportunities. They are highly motivated and their performance is good. There is nothing else to do in prison (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The Lithuanian national report highlights a problem in the dimension of supervision post-release:

... when we ask the students why resocialisation programmes are not completely effective, the problem is that the supervisors perform two functions: the penal and educational function. This is not good, if the person performs two opposite functions, it is obvious that the educational function can never then be positive. Therefore, the prisoners usually look down on supervisors (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

A specific organisation focuses on post-release support for prisoners in Hungary:

The Change Lanes Foundation is dedicated to the assistance of prisoners, released offenders and those with a criminal record in their reintegration in the society and the labour market, as well as increasing their chances of life. In our programme and projects, we primarily deal with young people between 16 and 35 years of age. The core of our activity lies in continuous (after)care and the operation of a civil helping system. According to our belief and experiences, building of secure human/helping/civil relationships in the penal institution, gaining of confidence, the establishment of continuous emotional security and the assistance of an accepting community are vital issues in the reduction of the crisis of release and in the prevention of re-offence (Balogh et al., 2010).

The Scottish national report highlights the key roles of link centres post-release:

According to a recent annual report (HMIP, 2008) all prisons now have Link Centres which provide a link to the community for prisoners who have just been released. These centres act to help with housing, health care, benefit and job-seeking arrangements. However, there was no mention of education and learning. This was commented upon by the manager of prison education who expressed real concerns about progression and transition opportunities for prisoners: *This is one of the biggest problems because there has been a lot of good work over the years done in the prison, but as soon as they leave the prison walls then there is not really the same level of support (Prison education college manager) (Weedon et al., 2010).*

According to the Hungarian national report there are links between prison and universities for prisoners post-release:

Sometimes they assist in preparation for the university entrance examination, too. The manager explained that it is hard to organise such an examination, because it requires a lot of paperwork both from the part of the university and the prison. Moreover, as the exam takes place at an external institute, the prisoners should be transported there, and have to take exam under police supervision. *Most of the universities do not undertake providing consultancy in the prison and educational programme for prisoners.* However also the ex-prisoners need more flexible programmes from the part of the university (Balogh et al., 2010).

An Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs official notes the centrality of EU funding for prisoners post-release:

There is a 16-hour training for prisoners who are about to be released; the money comes from the EU Social Fund. They are taught how to look for a job and they also receive 3 hours of counselling. When they are released they should know where and how to look for a job; which opportunities the Estonian labour market offers. The prisons do not offer such training so we decided to do it and offer group counselling (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A Senior Official of the Committee for Labor and Employment, St. Petersburg highlights a strategic focus on future employment for those in prison:

We regularly conduct vacancy fairs for different categories of the population...for current prisoners. 451 persons participated in the fair. They were brought in special buses from the prisons of St. Petersburg. Employers offer them a number of vacancies and they have a chance to choose something and get an idea of what is going on at the labor market. Therefore, this is the professional orientation part of our work. We help such people to choose vacancies for the future (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

While there is an array of progressive practice to engage prisoners with lifelong learning post-release across a number of participating countries, there is enormous scope for further strategic policy making and sharing of practice in this area across countries. Much of the good practice for prisoner education and support post-release appears *ad hoc* and with little widespread dissemination even in the same country. There is a need for post-release provision to be part of a prisoner's individual education plan, though this also requires sufficient support services to facilitate commitment to this plan.

6.3.1 (vi) Initial assessment approaches for prisoners (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

It is important to recognise that any approach to initial assessment of prisoners in relation to their literacy skills upon entry to prison must be part of a wider relational strategy to engage prisoners in education. This dialogical approach rather than a social control approach to referral and initial assessment is highlighted in the Scottish national report:

From the outset there's a first night in custody. And there are peer support workers who are prisoners who have been trained. And they go and speak to the guys, see they are settled in. They go with referral forms and they can refer to a lot of different things. They can just make them aware of what's available. Help for various things, bereavement. They can just say 'these are available do you want any referrals'. And I get a lot of referrals from them. Because if there's anything comes up, if there's a form to be filled out and maybe one prisoner will say to the other 'I've difficulty with this' they could then say 'you could have a chat with K, you could, you know, it's confidential, it's one to one'. When men are convicted there's a week induction at the prison. And that week gives all the agencies, housing, Job centre plus, various employment, the Samaritans that runs within the prison, somebody from [the] College goes in and they talk about again what services are available... [the] College also do an assessment (Prison education literacy tutor) (Weedon et al.,2010).

It is notable that prison staff in this Scottish example receive training in raising awareness about literacy needs in a sensitive fashion:

If the issue of reading or writing comes up, they will say 'do you want a chat with K, it's just a, you don't have to sign up for anything, do you want a chat'. And quite a few of the staff in the prison have taken part in Clan training, awareness raising training (Prison education literacy tutor) (Weedon et al., 2010).

A concern is raised by interviewees in the Scottish national report regarding imposition of initial assessments on incoming prisoners:

The main concern of the literacy tutor was that prisoners were not targeted by prison

officers as requiring literacy tuition and told that they had to do it. She felt this was likely to be counterproductive. One final source of referrals she identified was other prisoners – word of mouth (Weedon et al., 2010).

This emphasis on dialogue, invitation and explanation rather than an imposed test appears to occur in practice in this Scottish example:

According to the review of offender learning, (Scottish Government, 2009c) all sentenced offenders should undergo a Core Screen which is carried out by a prison officer. This screening session was intended to identify immediate needs to ensure referral to the relevant provider. *Every prisoner who is admitted and goes through induction should be introduced to somebody from education at induction, and at that point they are also invited to do the diagnosis* (Weedon et al., 2010).

There is a real concern about the process of engaging prisoners in initial assessment tests for literacy:

She noted that there was some disquiet about doing a diagnostic test at that stage; however, that was the only opportunity for them to engage directly with incoming offenders (Weedon et al., 2010).

The need for such an initial assessment process regarding literacy, given the background educational profile of prisoners, is a strong theme in the Scottish national report:

A report for the Prison Reform Trust suggested that around 20-30% of the prison population have learning difficulties or disabilities (Talbot, 2008). According to one of the prison interviewees there was a *concentration of people in prison with the same sort of needs*. There were a range of mechanisms for identifying those that may benefit from participation in learning which started on entry and continued after a prisoner had been convicted. During this period other agencies were also involved. College staff could offer assessment of learning needs and, if a prisoner was considered in need of literacy tuition, he was referred to the literacy tutor (Weedon et al., 2010)

A prison manager similarly emphasised the high amount of early school leavers in prison in Scotland:

She supported this view by giving an account of a typical prisoner: *I would suggest that the average prisoner will come to us having stopped schooling round about first or second year [aged 12-13]. Will perhaps either not have worked or worked in very casual jobs with a raft of sort of social issues between them. But in terms of their education, I don't know how many times I have filled in learning plans, left school first year, second year, that is so, so common* (Prison education college manager) (Weedon et al., 2010)

The Russian national report also highlights the need for an initial assessment of educational levels:

The principal explains that even though most students bring their certificates or grade report cards to prison, the school still finds it necessary to conduct entry tests in order to define the level of education of every prisoner involved in the system of education at the colony. First, some prisoners do not have any documents that could prove they have completed any grades so far. Secondly, if there is more than one class of one level, it's better to divide students based on their actual knowledge but not only their certificates, considering many of them were received a while ago. In that case, a stronger student can study together and weaker ones can reiterate material they have missed or forgotten (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The Irish national report highlights a reluctance to engage in compulsory initial assessment:

Literacy is a strong element of the prison education service curriculum since the early 1980s. In relation to identifying prisoners with literacy problems, the tutor firstly explained that they *don't have initial assessment, until they come to the school* because they are *against... blanket testing...I think it goes against the ethos of adult education... but when they do present themselves, there is* (Dooley et al., 2010).

A wider process of formal induction is sought by the Prison Senior Manager, though highlighting that it is currently not in place in any systemic fashion in Irish prisons:

In relation to initial assessment of prisoners, the Senior Manager explained that ... *in any of the prisons in Ireland at the moment there is no such thing as any type of formal structured induction at all so prisoners come in the gate and they could be here for one month or twenty months or forty months and they are interviewed alright when they come in and they, in relation to a sort of induction interview but there's no such thing as people going through a sort of a process of induction where their health, their education, their interests are monitored* (Dooley et al., 2010).

The example of Lithuania illustrates a number of obstacles to initial assessment of prisoners, including sheer numbers of prisoners (though this is decreasing somewhat), overcrowded prisons and public attitudes towards prisoners. Yet as noted here literacy is a real problem among prisoners in Lithuania and needs to be addressed as part of a holistic strategy:

...the increase in number of illiterate and unmotivated prisoners...successful social integration is difficult to achieve because of negative public attitudes towards prisoners and prison system (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

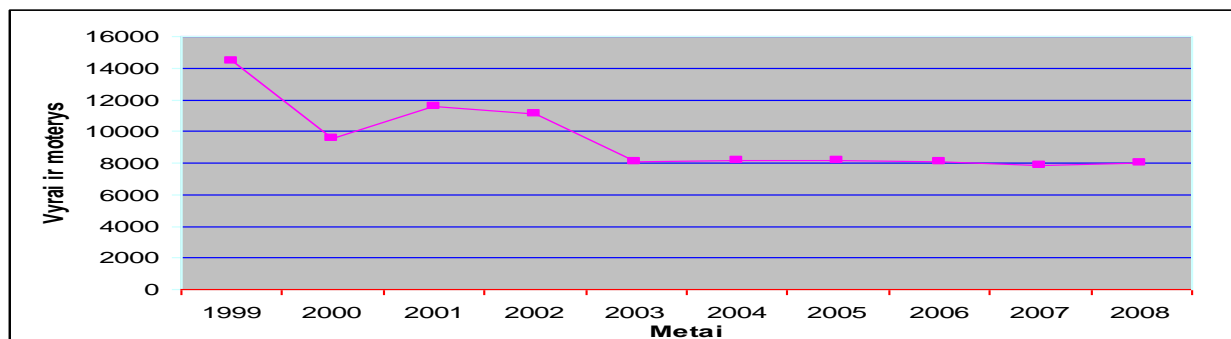


Figure 6. Number of prisoners at the end of the year (In Taljunaite et al., 2010)

However, while lack of motivation is an important factor, this needs to be set against the backdrop of prison overcrowding and prior alienation from the education system for many with low levels of literacy:

Some doubts about the lack of motivation to learn were expressed and according to the interviewee the prisoners' motivation (both internal and external) is even more important than the training facilities: *There is such a wide variety of programmes, but the prisoners are not motivated to participate in the programmes and they participate only in case if they do not have anything else to do ...* (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The motivational difficulties in reaching many in need of basic literacy education has already been noted across different countries, and is exacerbated in a prison context. Another possible factor contributing to lack of motivation and alienation is the high level of male rape in prison in Lithuania (Downes 2003) (see also Irish Senate and Parliament Report on Early School Leaving 2010 on rape as a factor associated with some teenagers' experience of early school leaving).

The importance of interpersonal dialogue with a professional the prisoner can trust is emphasised by one interviewee as a path to engage prisoners alienated from education:

If there is a social worker or if there is a psychologist who is very bright, and has the ability to excite something in the prisoner... it is clear that the motivation to change will increase. But when those opportunities to change are numerous, the social workers are few, and we really lack them. It is difficult to implement (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

This perspective is consistent with research internationally in psychology emphasising the importance of just one significant other in changing the self-image of those at risk of alienation from the system – just one person who the individual can trust can serve as a buttress against fatalism (Levitt 1991; Antonucci 1990; Rutter 1985; Downes 2003).

Initial assessment needs to be part of a wider strategy for interpersonal dialogue to engage the potential learner in prison. This is clearly absent from the Lithuanian example:

There are no strategies or processes that would encourage prisoners to enrol into the education. No one here promotes learning actively, we just keep asking them throughout the whole academic year: 'when was the last time you studied something' or 'how long and where did you study' or 'would you like to start doing something instead of wasting your time?' It is not a secret that not everybody has a job, only a few have a job. .. (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

Mentoring programmes cannot be implemented effectively, because *Lukiškės* prison is of the highest level of security, so the prisoners can only communicate with their room mates. Therefore, it is very difficult to assess the real benefits of prisoners' education programmes (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

It is important that any system of initial assessment be carried out in a climate of dialogue, invitation and explanation rather than one of social control which would be counterproductive for those with low levels of basic education. Carrigan & Downes's (2009) international review of initial assessment instruments and research on their use pertained to the context of adult learners with low literacy skills. This has direct application to the prison context. The following issues were highlighted in this report:

Any process of devising and employing appropriate tools for learning needs to include scope for the learner to construct meaning rather than simply process decontextualised information. The language being used needs to be meaningful to the life and culture of the learner and the process requires one where the learner is in control of and has scope for choice within the features of the needs and skills identification process. Adult education is traditionally committed to principles of active learning and these also need to be applied to the learner's active learning regarding their own learning needs. These issues rule out the use of multiple choice testing in any form of this needs and skills identification process (p. 63).

Sticht (1999) advocates avoiding using a standardised test with learners when they first begin a programme due to the fact that adult learners may be nervous and frightened and therefore their abilities may be underestimated. There is a widely held view in the international literature that norm referenced assessment in general has negative educational and social effects (Ecclestone 2005). In recent years there has been a move away from norm referencing towards the use of external measures and criteria. Examination of a learner's needs according to criterion based approaches and in relation to their previous learning offer a more practical direction for providing them with supports (Carrigan & Downes 2009).

Carrigan & Downes (2009) review concludes with a recommendation of four dimensions for initial assessment of adult learners regarding basic literacy skills, based on international and Irish research:

Table 17. Four dimensions to a high quality Initial Needs and Skills Check

1.	An initial semi-structured interview involving self-assessment.
2.	A piece of writing on a theme of relevance and interest chosen by the learner to be examined according to simple and transparent standardised criteria
3.	A short tool with a menu of options for examining literacy with thematic content which can be chosen by the learner from a range of possibilities and which have been proofed for cultural sensitivity and social class bias
4.	Development of an individual education plan in dialogue with the learner, where the learner retains ownership over all of the needs and skills check information and is assured from the outset that the results are not being used in an exclusionary way.

These dimensions have direct application to a holistic initial assessment process for prisoners' educational needs (Carrigan & Downes 2009, p. 69).

6.3.1(vii) Sufficient space in prison for education (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

A pervasive theme in national reports is prison overcrowding as a barrier to education. This is especially emphasised in the Irish national report, where overcrowding has in effect severely limited availability of space and motivation for education (Dooley et al., 2010). The Belgian (Flanders) national report recognises this problem but also illustrates how it has been partly overcome in a particular prison:

Due to the overcrowding problem, the prison staff in a lot of prisons is overworked, and opportunities to provide services beyond the basic detention is often seriously compromised (Criste 2004) (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Due to the early 20th century infrastructure and the overcrowding, there is not much place...to organise education and create a classroom environment...still, over the years, several (smaller) classrooms and one (bigger) polyvalent room were built and renovated in the prison building. Because of the success of the Education Project...an extra classroom was built in the chapel last year (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The Hungarian national report emphasises not only prison overcrowding, despite recent improvements, but also observes that prison classes are in a separate space of the prison:

Senior manager: *The number of the prisoners has decreased from 18000 to 14900 in our country in the last few years, and new prisons have been established, but the prisons are still overcrowded* (Balogh et al., 2010).

The prison classes take place in the separate site of the building. The library and the office of the organisers are in this site too. There are about 10,000 books in the library (mainly old books ...). The librarian is a prisoner, too. The formal education programmes take place in the 3 class-rooms (calm environment, benches for 30-35 persons, board, projector). The non-formal education programmes take place mainly in the library (personal trainings and small group trainings), and sometimes in the class-rooms (Balogh et al., 2010).

An innovative approach to educational delivery is highlighted for more than one prison in the English national report. This approach is of using the prison wings themselves as sites for education and not simply to have a separate education section. This may help in relation not only to working within limitations of space in prison but also may have a range of positive knock-on consequences regarding the pervasiveness of education in the prison institutional culture:

The wing-based delivery of education ... has been successful in expanding access to educational opportunities. Wing-based education intends to allow for greater flexibility in providing adult education in prison. Wing-based education allows for the provision of education to extend beyond the physical structure of the education department into the residential units at the prison in order to better integrate education into the organisation of the prison...The senior management representative explained, *education was always something that went on in that building over there or in those rooms, by delivering on the wings, people see it now as part and parcel of every day activity* (Engel et al., 2010).

According to the prison management, wing-based delivery of education:

engages more prisoners because they feel...more comfortable in their own surroundings that they're moving across [and] it also raises the profile of learning and skills with the officers on the wings because they're involved in making sure men attend...certainly in Ofsted reports, that's been looked on very favorably (Engel et al., 2010).

This issue is further explored in the English national report:

The wing-based delivery of education in and of itself has a number of perceived strengths and weaknesses. Among the strengths is the flexibility it allows individuals in terms of their access to education. It has been successful in allowing vulnerable prisoners access to education. The wing-based education *is flexible and adaptable...most of our tutors on the wing will teach literacy and numeracy and drug awareness and alcohol awareness up to level 2* (Manager of the education department). It has also promoted education within the prison and officers on each of the wings, and increased engagement of prisoners, due to prisoners' likelihood to feel comfortable. The manager of the education department stated, *the acceptance of the lads that education is part and parcel of life is facilitated by wing education*. Another perceived strength ... which is linked with wing-based delivery, is the prisoner peer mentoring scheme, a one-to-one mentoring service. To be a peer mentor, *you've got to be at least working towards a level two qualification or at a level two qualification, apply for it. You've got to pass a security thing to say that you're*

eligible to work with other men (Manager of education department). This has been successful in providing men support networks within their residential wing...each wing of the prison has its own courses, allowing for education to be better integrated into the life of the prison and all prisoners have greater access to educational opportunities. One of the wings is specifically for vulnerable prisoners, who have the same access to education as other prisoners through the education department directly on their wing.... There are a number of weaknesses. Although *wing-based education facilitates access, it's not always the best environment because there will be other people there doing other things...there's limited space on a wing because when the wings were originally built, they were built as accommodation wings, so there's limited space for resources* (Manager of the education department). However, the staff feel that the strengths of increasing access to education that wing-based delivery allows far outweighs the weaknesses related to lack of space and resources (Engel et al., 2010).

It is important to emphasise that wing based delivery is not replacing a separate educational site in prison but is complementary to it. The Hungarian national report recognises the central importance of a separate educational site:

According to the organiser this prison has an advantage over the other prisons by having a separate site for culture and classrooms. However, according to the senior manager more rooms would be necessary for providing sufficient educational programmes (Balogh et al., 2010).

Yet a wing-based delivery approach in the English prisons is a both/and model with a separate additional educational site in the prison.

A different prison in England also adopts an additional wing based approach to education with specific benefits for peer mentoring of prisoners with low literacy:

A specific mentoring scheme to assist people *who do not want to attend education with their reading* (Senior manager)... *one teacher is responsible for prisoner mentors and they go through a structured reading scheme on the wings...it has to be done every day for 20 minutes to half an hour, so somebody is supposed to sit down with their mentee every day and just go through a section of the book each day* (Senior manager). This form of peer mentoring is *done on a more formal basis, mentors are identified on all of the wings or within classes and they then will be given mentees who they will help with reading...[the] scheme has provided incredibly successful in getting people started to read. And it only works if it's done on a regular basis which is why the mentors are so important because if they are on the same wing, in an evening, they can do half an hour [of reading]* (Tutor). This has been highly successful in engaging individuals who are reluctant to engage in literacy or other education classes and in getting individuals to work together: *it encourages people who possibly don't want to [engage]. We get a lot of people who have literacy problems, who don't want to really expose themselves in a classroom situation, so we have people who really have the serious problems who don't really want to attend, so we have to think of other ways of actually improving their literacy while they're here* (Senior manager). In addition, the prison staff report that informal peer mentoring often occurs inside and outside the classroom (Tutor) (Engel et al., 2010).

It is evident that this approach offers much potential for replication and amplification elsewhere. It deserves investigation at a systemic level nationally and at EU level to explore the feasibility of implementing such wing based education across a wide range of prisons. A related avenue here, which is ripe for development, is for integration of the

arts into the wings of the prison, as part of an educational focus, to bring the arts away from the periphery and to ensure that its motivational opportunities are activated for learners in prison.

The Irish national report does acknowledge however some difficulties to such prison wing based learning, namely, security related issues:

When asked if there are practices of peer mentoring in education in prison, the tutor said , yes, the Toe by Toe...literacy programme...some guys are trained up to do teaching with some of the other guys...The idea is that it would happen down in the landing and in the cell...very small scale. Sometimes officers not very happy to have two prisoners in the cell together, suspicious of their motives, doesn't happen in the school, as it's our attempt to bring education down the landing...it's big in the UK as well, up and running in the UK for a long time (Dooley et al., 2010).

An Irish Report on an Inspection of Mountjoy Prison by the Inspector of Prisons Judge Reilly (2009) expands on this security point:

The gangs in the prison must be kept apart to prevent violence and this causes great logistical difficulties for management (2009, p.12).

However, this is not an insurmountable barrier to prison wing learning, but rather a *caveat* as to its implementation due to interpersonal and intergroup factors in a given prison.

Whereas Downes (2003) highlighted a range of concerns with prison conditions in Estonia, especially for Russian-speaking prisoners, the Estonian national report argues that there has been significant improvement in facilities, space and also attitudes and ethos regarding prisons in Estonia:

The new prison which is under construction will have a separate educational centre. This gives the prison an opportunity to offer more hobby activities. Currently extracurricular activities are organised by prison officers. Schools (both general educational institutions and vocational educational institutions) should cooperate more with prison workers in this field. Compared with four years ago, the prison system has evolved significantly: attitudes have changed towards learning, organisation of learning, cooperation of prison officers and teachers (Tamm & Saar 2010).

EU funds clearly seem to have been an engine for reform of prisons, including prison education, in Estonia:

The prison has classrooms. First we got some start-up money from EU to furnish classrooms – desks, teaching materials. Everything is nice and clean. Nothing has been vandalised (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The theme of not only adequate space but good living conditions in prison is prioritised by interviewees in the Russian national report:

The head of the colony...does so much in order to make this colony comfortable and clean, so that the prisoners would live in favorable conditions but not in barracks as they used to, those conditions were simply inhuman. Everyone wants to live in good conditions and be surrounded by nice things. And he or she becomes better because of it. Thus, the interviewees explain, good living conditions allow prisoners to concentrate on their studies and work. Then, as the principal of the [prison] school notes, the school at the colony is one of the best prison school in the city – it has been winning the award of the best school in a prison institution among all prisons of St. Petersburg and Leningradkaya

Oblast' for several years by now. It regularly wins other city contests involving prison education among prison institutions as well (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

In contrast, Irish prison conditions, at least in the prison examined for the Irish national report are undoubtedly detrimental to an atmosphere of learning in prison.

6.3.1 (viii) Content of courses in prison to engage interest and motivation of the learner (PROCESS INDICATOR)

The Belgian (Flanders) national report illustrates a strong commitment to a broad educational focus in the prison case study provided:

Most of the educational opportunities are open to all prisoners. This is certainly so for all types of non-formal educational activities such as music, language, IT, yoga, etc., (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Several types of training courses are on offer within the *Oudenaarde* prison walls: diploma-oriented courses, non-formal educational activities and general cultural activities. Over 15 years ago, the prison management made the choice to invest in adult education (Bosmans 2007) (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

It is not a case of this broader educational approach excluding a formal education focus but rather of them being mutually complementary, as motivational, cognitive and communicative benefits from educational participation can spill over between both formal and non-formal education domains:

Since 1994 the *Oudenaarde* penitentiary has a tradition in certificate-oriented education ...To be eligible for this type of formal adult education, candidates must speak Dutch and be motivated. Furthermore it is important the educational process can be completed at the latest by the end of the prisoner's time in prison (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Personal development and self-awareness is a notable feature of a Prison education provision highlighted in the Estonian national report:

Prisoners also participate in a social programme intended to develop their social skills ... family relations, anger management, replacement of aggressiveness, fighting addiction and other issues of coping with life. At the end of the programme prisoners receive a certificate. Programme leaders are the prison officers (Tamm & Saar 2010).

All prisoners can participate in hobby activities. The prison has a specialist whose responsibility is to organise hobby activities. The prison has sports facilities; prisoners can attend classes of music and art: prisoners publish the prison newsletter. Some prisoners record books for the Estonian Blind Union and other prisoners like to attend the recording sessions (Tamm & Saar 2010).

This resonates with the European Commission's goal of personal fulfillment as a central dimension of lifelong learning. It also appears as a feature of a prison highlighted in the Russian national report⁵⁰:

The curriculum of secondary schools in prisons is the same as that of a regular secondary school with few small exceptions, i.e. absence of sport classes. Usually, prison school staff also organise and conduct a range of extracurricular activities for students such as

⁵⁰ In one particular Russian prison, 64% of prisoners study in 5-9th grades and 29% – in 10-11th grades. 7% of them obtain primary school education (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

drama theaters, choirs, public holidays' celebrations, etc., (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Somewhat in contrast, in Scotland, it appears that the framework for emotional support and personal development is conceptualised through a health rather than educational lens:

In addition to educational provision there were also a range of prison programmes such as drugs education and anger management but these were provided through health or social work (Weedon et al., 2010).

The Lithuanian national report provides an example of programmes operating through a justice type lens focusing on rehabilitation:

According to the Prisons Department under the Ministry of Justice data, 2008, *Lukiskes* Prison carried out 15 social rehabilitation programmes for convicts (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

Echoing the approach evident in at least one Estonian prison, examples of prison education in the English national report highlighted a key educational role for personal development:

Dads Away course is only a two week course but it is a course that keeps them in contact with their family, and they produce a CD which is edited, background noises put on it, voices are changed, so that they can send a CD home to their kids and read a story to them every night, that kind of thing (Engel et al., 2010).

A different prison in England emphasises emotional support:

Individuals with drug or alcohol abuse issues: Targeted through Social and Life Skills programmes and specific classes dealing with alcohol and drug abuse. The psychology department offers a number of different courses, including flexible and short-term rehabilitation for drug abuse. Prisoners are targeted for this following an individual assessment with a professional. There is also a course that deals with alcohol and anger issues (Senior manager) (Engel et al., 2010).

A broad educational vision for prisons is evident in the Hungarian national report:

This prison provides both formal and non-formal educational programmes for the prisoners. The non-formal programmes are performed mainly during the afternoon. Since the prisoners attending the elementary educational programme at grades 1-5 do not work, these programmes run in the morning (Balogh et al., 2010).

The non-formal programmes are organised mainly by external foundations (by tendering operations), by holy orders or by the Red Cross. Both interviewees emphasised, that these non-formal programmes are popular among the prisoners, because they can acquire practical skills. All of these programmes focus on personal development of the prisoners (Balogh et al., 2010).

The Hungarian national report emphasises the popularity of non-formal education in prison:

Non-formal educational programmes are relatively popular, because these short-term trainings are more practical and interactive than the formal programmes. In case of the non-formal programmes the organiser gathers together the concerned prisoners, and after

the first occasion the prisoners decide whether they want to participate in the programme in the future or not (Balogh et al., 2010).

The Hungarian system combines a broader educational vision with one focused on vocational education. Periodic short-term programmes in prison in Hungary adopt a largely vocational focus and include:

Small group trainings for young prisoners and youthful offenders: communication trainings, life-skills trainings, labour-market trainings, and crime prevention with the involvement of ex-offenders. The aim of these trainings is to help the participants in adaptation... (Balogh et al., 2010).

Humanistic non-hierarchical teaching relations combined with a commitment to active learning is a feature emerging from a prison examined in the Russian national report:

As it was clear from the interview, the teachers [in prisons] do use some constructivist methods like differentiated approach and active involvement of learner both in class and into extra curricular activities. Besides, the relations between some students and the teachers are quite close and personal. During the interview with the principal of the school, students and teachers would stop by and their communication was quite friendly and informal (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Active learning is also a feature of prison education in these Lithuanian and Irish examples:

The teachers of *Lukiškės* prison use constructive techniques: active learning, critical thinking methods and debates. All prisons in Lithuania, as well as *Lukiskės* prison have a training centre or training classes, so that all prisoners have the opportunity to learn the basic and secondary education programmes (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

According to the tutor, education in the prison is *student centred... based on their perceived needs...we would ask them 'what do you want to learn?' ... Student centred rather than curriculum centred*. *Where they're at, where they're coming from, what they want. The prison tutors use adult education principles, which are learner led... democratic classroom participation...very much into making them active citizens* (Dooley et al., 2010).

In contrast to many other countries, the focus of education in prisons in the Scottish examples appears to be more narrowly and exclusively vocational:

Prison policy in relation to education strongly emphasised the development of skills for work or further education as evidenced in the Scottish Prison Service policy on *Learning Skills and Employability* (Weedon et al., 2010).

The Scottish national report observes that:

Educational provision was split into three parts:

- activities and work-based programmes leading to Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) delivered by prison staff;
- college provision which provided around 30,000 prisoner learning hours in the last year leading mainly to Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) accredited units;
- CLD funded literacy and numeracy tuition (Weedon et al., 2010).

Significantly a senior staff interviewee in the Scottish prison expressed the hope that the

educational focus would broaden in future:

When asked about the future the college manager of prison education expressed a desire for more informal learning opportunities: *lots of new things that we have tried in terms of the arts work and things like that can be frowned upon because of the measurements and the restrictions, it's difficult* (Weedon et al., 2010).

The Russian national report raises the concern that a narrowly vocational focus for prison education is resulting in educational content (and methods) being outdated:

Since vocational schools in prisons belong to the unified system of vocational schools in Russia, they are now facing the same problems as most vocational schools such as obsolescence of the curriculum, teaching methods, set of offered programmes, lack of well-trained and professional teachers and irrelevance of the system in general. In the Soviet Union, most penitentiary institutions also functioned as manufacture complexes and prison vocational schools were aimed at training prisoners for working at that manufacturing. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the manufactures closed due to economic reasons but the vocational schools would continue to train prisoners for the same professions because of momentum. In order to introduce new and relevant educational programmes into the system of the vocational schools countrywide and especially in prisons, there was needed much funding, which was unavailable for vocational schools in the 90s. However, in 2000s new professions such as 'boiler house operator', 'metal turner', 'welder' were introduced into the curricular of prison vocational schools that appear to be in demand at the labor market, according to informants. However, the amount of professions related to, for example, computer science that are indeed demanded and up-to-date is extremely small, especially in provincial prisons, due to lack of necessary equipment and teaching staff (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Some prisoners manage to acquire several professions at the vocational school while being in prison. All of the diplomas they get are standard diplomas and are recognised by all educational organisations of the Russian Federation. The vocational school at the colony suggests prisoner to acquire the following professions: boiler house operator, metal turner, miller, welder. Prisoners are free to choose any profession they like (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

What could be termed the snowball effect (Kellaghan et al., 1995) of engagement in learning transferring to other dimensions of learning is highlighted in the following prison in England:

The prison provides *enrichment activities, we have music projects, we have theatre projects, anything where we find that they are very successful in getting the men engaged and then you know they want to do something else* (Tutor) (Engel et al., 2010).

There used to be more artistic and musical expression courses on offer. Prison staff stated that *there has been a big reduction in the support for those programmes since there was some bad publicity last year...after that, we had a list of inappropriate activities so we have got to be very careful to justify everything in terms of the educational experience now* (Senior manager). There are two art, drama or music projects a year, *but we'll try to relate them to the wider key skills, so we'll do some accreditation on wider key skills through those projects* (Senior manager) (Engel et al., 2010).

The snowball effect applies to other courses to:

With the individuals serving lifetime sentences, *the flexible learning unit comes into its own because that is where they can sample a lot of different unitised [courses], sociology, psychology, law, you name it. They can do it and it gives them a taster, so a lot of them move on, they really become very engaged and they are the ones who would eventually end up doing Open University (Tutor) (Engel et al., 2010).*

These examples illustrate the potential for actualisation of progressive education in prison across a range of countries. It is however unclear the extent to which these examples are fully representative of practice across each prison in a given country and across other European countries. There is a clear need for more guidance and leadership at an EU Commission level to support consistent implementation in prisons of a lifelong learning agenda which includes active citizenship and personal fulfillment, as well as social cohesion and employment goals.

6.3.1 (ix) Professional development support and resource materials for teachers in prisons (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR, PROCESS INDICATOR)

It is notable that there is little evidence of professional development and support for teachers working in prisons across the national reports. One exception to this general trend is the Russian national report, where a significant enthusiasm was found among teachers in prison for extra professional development opportunities and resources:

Most teachers said they would like to use some professional sources and materials that are particularly aimed at work with prisoners. They asked whether the [research] outcome... somehow presupposed any recommendations for teachers working in prisons with adult learners who have gaps and education and whose motivation is quite low. One of the teachers said she would really love to use some colleagues' experience in work with her students because many of them are depressed, closed, passive and sometimes aggressive and she doesn't always know how to encourage them to study. The interviews and small talks with the teachers showed they would really like to improve their work but they don't now how since they use quite old ways of teaching and no teacher-training courses are available for them. They are ordinary secondary school teachers who have never had any tutoring related to teaching in prison. They elaborated their ways of working with prisoners solely based on their own experience. *Well, I first came here 8 years ago. I didn't understand anything. Well, I knew it was compensatory education and I was working with these kids the same way I would work with any kids in any city school. In two years I would learn something, in three years, I would learn even more about working in prison. And now we actually make our own textbooks... this knowledge, it only comes with time (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).*

This feature of the teachers developing their own specifically tailored resource materials for working with prisoners is an innovative example to be built upon elsewhere.

The career development of those teaching staff in prisons needs to be addressed in national prison strategies for lifelong learning, as is highlighted in the following extract from the Russian national report:

Among obstacles that prevent development of prison education, the informants list lack of human resources. For teachers, work in prison is not very rewarding; attracting good and qualified teachers to prisons is quite difficult since they are not offered any benefits for working in more difficult conditions than ordinary school teachers (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Veits & Khokhlova (2011, personal communication) add that: *Even though a proclaimed governmental policy with regard to prison education is aimed at transformation of prisons into rehabilitation centres, in practice little is done in order to attract qualified staff into prisons. On the contrary, the new reforms brought to removal any bonuses for teachers working in prisons.*

They suggest that *those who teach there do that because they cannot find any better teaching positions either due to their age or qualification.* If this is the case, it is thus imperative to develop more proactive incentives for teaching in prison.

It is notable that a principle of whole school collaboration is extended in an important fashion in Estonia to teachers working in prison:

Teachers are instructed before starting working in prison. The school has organised meetings and exchanges of practices and experience. Teachers from different prisons are in contact with each other; they attend seminars and information days organised by different ministries. *Each institution is different. We can learn from each other. We have visited Viru, Tartu and Murru prisons. The Ministry of Justice is planning a seminar for teachers. The Ministry of Education and Research organised an information day. We have also attended international conferences* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

More training is needed for teachers. Currently they learn in the course of work (Tamm & Saar 2010).

This key movement away from an individualist focus approach of the isolated teacher or tutor in prison to a collaborative approach is particularly important in a prison education context which may bring its own specific requirements. Development of good practice in the prison education sector requires such collaboration across tutors, as in the Estonian example.

6.3.1 (x) Peer effects on motivation to learn in prison (PROCESS INDICATOR)

The Belgian national report gives a notable emphasis to the impact of peer effects on motivation to learn in prison:

If some 'informal leaders' among the prisoners agree it is cool to take a course, more prisoners will be motivated to do so. If not, many prisoners won't be firm enough in their belief to oppose to that (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

Students often find a mentor among the other detainees or become a mentor to others (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The mediating effect of peers on motivation to learn takes place currently in an informal fashion in the Belgian prison, rather than being treated as a positive potential to be further harnessed in a strategic way:

The prison staff however does not recruit mentors in an active way. *In the past, prisoners that had succeeded in their formal education were asked to facilitate and support the learning process of other prisoners that just started a course. It was their job to motivate and tutor those other prisoners. The system of mentorship has been put to a stop recently, because there are more classes now and the teachers themselves stand out more as mentors than ever before* (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

A rationale for the disproportionate impact of peers on other prisoners' behaviour is offered:

People being imprisoned for a long time often lose nearly all the friends and social contacts they had when they were free (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

The role of peer interaction in stimulating motivation to access and participate in lifelong learning is developed in a more structured way in a Scottish prison, as described in the Scottish national report:

We have peer tutors in the prisons who are great at trying... they are a bit of an untapped resource, the danger with using the peer tutors is that its not coordinated. There's a good example again in [another prison] where there is a team of peer tutors who are coordinated by a member of staff, and she trains them to be peer tutors and some of them have actually done [an] award as well [however, she has now retired]. And they will work with prisoners who may not want to come to education for a variety of reasons, but also with prisoners who do, who are in education. They will work with ESOL prisoners also but the reason that works is a member of staff coordinates it, and keeps it on track and monitors the progress... (Prison education college manager) (Weedon et al.,2010)

From the Scottish experience, continuity is an issue in developing such peer mentoring:

There had been some attempts at peer mentoring but it has been difficult to establish an effective network in the prison that forms part of the case study. The example from one of the other prisons indicated that it depended on staff continuity which may be problematic in a setting where commercial contracts over a relatively short period of time are used (Weedon et al., 2010).

Another barrier to peer mentoring in prison, namely, macho cultural attitudes of prisoners, is identified in the Hungarian national report:

The young prisoners after fulfillment of a 40-hour-long theoretical and 20-hour-long practical training provide peer social support for the others in the prison...The manager worked out this programme from an English model. Manager: *It is hard to establish such a model in Hungary. Hard to explain this idea to the staff of the prisons, furthermore macho-attitude is typical for the prisoners (they keep from the manifestation of their feelings) (Balogh et al., 2010).*

A significant resource for peer mentoring highlighted in the Hungarian national report is that of former prisoners:

Peer work in prison can involve ex-prisoners to maximise impact...The small group trainings are very popular, because these programmes focus on the special problems of the prisoners and provide practical knowledges. It is particularly incentive for the participants if the trainer is an ex-offender... because he is an authentic ideal person for them. Furthermore, released offenders participated earlier in the programmes of this organisation often provide crime-prevention talking for young persons living in their environment. These civil initiatives are independent from the foundation (Balogh et al., 2010).

This may help overcome some of the macho cultural attitudes. Though it is now in financial difficulty in Hungary, it offers a promising example for further exploration elsewhere:

There was a peer-mentoring programme for the ...prisoners (with participation of about 20 persons) in the last few years. They came back into the prison to motivate and help the prisoners in learning or working, and they gave advice about starting civil life after leaving the prison (Balogh et al., 2010).

It is important to emphasise that there is a growing recognition of the importance of peer mentoring in education generally, especially in contexts of students at risk of early school leaving (Murphy 2007). This resonates with the influence of Vygotskian social interaction frameworks in developmental and educational psychology. Moreover, Ivers (2008) highlights the importance of one friend in school in motivating students to complete post-primary education in contexts of socio-economic disadvantage. In other words, peer support can counter fatalism (Ivers, McLoughlin & Downes 2010), namely, the feeling that nothing can be done. Kohn's (1969) sociological focus on conformity among lower socio-economic groups gives expression to a sense of pessimism that change can be for the better. A peer mentoring approach challenges not only a sense of fatalism but also a resulting conformity that may resist change and therefore avoid engagement with a lifelong learning process which assumes the need for change.

A peer mentoring focus amounts to a recognition of the need for a broader focus beyond simply an individualistic one to develop a strategic vision for cohorts of individuals from similar backgrounds. This post-individualistic focus has a long tradition in adult education (Lindemann 1926/1989) and community development (Freire 1972; Waters 2007). Adult education concerns itself with 'situations not (academic) subjects' as Lindemann (1926/1989) puts it, and peer mentoring engages the learner in prison in a situational dialogue.

6.3.1 (xi) Prisoner exchange based on educational reasons (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

A systemic focus implies the need to examine scope for improving communication and connections between prisons in a given country. This cross-prison institutional interaction is important in order to facilitate prisoner exchange based on educational reasons. Such an exchange takes place in the following example from the Belgian (Flanders) national report:

First of all, if the inmate that wants to enrol for a course is imprisoned in some other prison, there has to be an agreement between that prison and the *Oudenaarde* penitentiary to exchange prisoners. Secondly, the candidate must write a letter with his motivation for wanting to take the course. This letter is screened by the education coordinator. By means of this screening procedure, the prison verifies if no other motives play a role in the request for transfer. Besides that, data is gathered on what might be described as the educational history of the prisoner and his mother tongue. Finally, if the prisoner is given access to the Education Project in the *Oudenaarde* penal institution he enters into a study agreement (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

An example from Hungary is not so much one of prisoners changing prisons but rather of prisoners changing environment to engage with the outside world through exam contexts:

The second school leaving exams are taken at an external educational institution (*Belvárosi Tanoda Alapítvány Gimnázium és Szakközépiskola* - Downtown School Foundation Secondary School and Technical College). The prisoners are transported into that external institution by the staff of the prison, and they take part in the exam wearing prisoner's clothing and under police supervision. However the manager emphasises: *According to our experience the exam at an external institution is a very important step of the re-socialisation. These young people got into a special subculture of the prison. The rules of this world differ from the conventions of the normal society, and usually*

these people sink into this world. However when they get to a civil institution, they meet peer-groups, and they communicate with civil young people and teachers (Balogh et al., 2010).

Across the national reports there is little evidence of a system level practice of prisoner exchange for educational reasons. If lifelong learning is mainstreamed into the prison management strategic goals and into prison institutional culture then this practice of prisoner exchange for educational reasons, already occurring in Belgium, could have much wider application.

6.4 Post-primary Education: Indicators at Macro-Exo Levels

Table 18. What systemic supports are required to prevent alienation of students from the education system?

Alternatives to suspension	Structural Indicator
Emotional support services and bullying prevention strategies at school	Structural Indicator, Process Indicator
Multidisciplinary teams, whether community or school based including outreach strategies for non-attending students at school	Structural Indicator
Minimising stratification at post-primary level as a barrier to equality in education	Structural Indicator
Strategies to encourage active citizenship in the students, including student councils	Structural Indicator
Increased formative assessment approaches and not simply summative assessment approaches at secondary school	Structural Indicator
Conflict resolution skills for teachers and positive school climate strategies to prevent alienation of students from the education system	Process Indicator
Promotion of extracurricular activities	Process Indicator

Table 19. What systemic supports are required to promote active citizenship for students from the education system?

Strategies to encourage active citizenship in the students, including student councils	Structural Indicator
Conflict resolution skills for teachers and positive school climate strategies to prevent alienation of students from the education system	Process Indicator
Emotional support services and bullying prevention strategies at school	Structural Indicator, Process Indicator

Table 20. What system level changes are required to promote adult education on the school site, including distance education?

Opportunities for distance education for secondary school	Structural Indicators
Availability of institution free of charge during summertime and evenings for community groups from marginalised areas	Structural Indicator
Multidisciplinary teams, whether community or school based including outreach strategies for non-attending students at school	Structural Indicator

6.4 (i) Alternatives to suspension (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

Evidence from Lithuania and Ireland in particular highlights the serious scale of the problem of suspension and expulsion from secondary schools. The Lithuanian national report provides the following example:

According to management and the teacher interviewed approximately 10 percent of students are expelled from school in each year. The reasons are usually behaviour problems, bullying, harassment, and aggressiveness i.e. non-academic reasons prevail. The teacher mentioned that there were no expelled students for not attending classes. The statistics, according to the management can be collected, but this will not solve the problem (Taljunaite ., 2010).

This figure seems to be in addition to their estimates of those who ‘drop out’ from school which also reaches approximately 10%. The Irish post-primary figure of 5% for suspension, applied to the total population of 332,407 students equates to well over 16,000 students suspended from post-primary schools in 2005/6 (ERC/NEWB 2010).

The English national report also touches upon this issue:

In one study (Rennison et al., 2005), for example, found that young people in the NEET [Not in Education, Employment or Training] group were over three times more likely previously to have been excluded from school than young people overall (Engel et al., 2010).

According to the Slovenian national report, a process of reform is underway, where nonattendance at school is no longer punished through suspension or expulsion:

Pupils who have problems with time are assigned the status of a »commuter«. Besides they do not distinguish any more excused and non excused absence from school but registered and unregistered absence. The right to judge about excused and not excused absence is left to parents. Parents report to the school the reason of absence and the school just keeps evidence. As a result the number of pupils expelled from school because of not excused absence from classes decreased considerably. None was expelled in this school year... *In fact we try with the non-punishment policy, as it used to happen in the past that a pupil was punished with unexcused hours of absence but he was not the key person who contributed to that, but all others including the parents who had forgotten to provide written excuse to the class teacher. And it happened that a potentially good electrician, mechanic etc. was suspended/expelled from the school and that was not good* (Ivančič et al., 2010).

This is an important step forward in the Slovenian context. Significantly, the Slovenian national report interviewee highlights the need for a change in mentality of teachers regarding this issue of suspension:

According to her a teacher who has thought in his own way for 20, 30 years ... will have serious difficulties to change his/her way... the time will require its time. [...] I expect a lot from this modernisation... (Ivančič et al., 2010).

This points to the need for more professional development for teachers in relation to classroom management and conflict resolution strategies, a theme emphasised in a later section of this comparative report.

A multidisciplinary team plays a key role in devising alternative strategies to suspension in this example from a Russian school:

The school does not practice expulsion or suspension of students. Instead, the psychological support service team regularly conducts preventive meetings and conversations with students who have discipline or study problems. Each school has a Preventive Council aimed at dealing with 'problem' students and the evening school #5 is no exception. The school police inspector is in charge of young students and deals with their discipline problems. The psychologist and social teacher conduct conversations and meetings with adult students in case their discipline or studying practices are improper. Use of preventive measures as an alternative to expulsion shows that the school staff aims to keep as many students at risk of early leaving at school as possible, which proves how much they are indeed interested in students and care for them (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A secondary school principal interviewed in the Irish national report describes an alternative to suspension for students with behaviour/discipline problems:

We have a Behaviour Support classroom, with two teachers who are trained in behaviour and we actually teach the kids good behaviour... In that room as well as doing their ordinary subjects they learn what good behaviour means... it's something that isn't taught in school, we expect kids to appear in school knowing...and they've come from a background where they haven't had much support, they have never seen their father and their mother could be on drugs or alcohol ... so there'd be very little discipline at home. So you have to start and teach them discipline.

The school guidance counsellor continues:

They are sent to the Behaviour Support Unit, where there's more intensive tuition and intensive development of skills...to focus themselves back in the classroom where they can...prepare better and...they don't act out in the same extent in a negative manner (Dooley et al., 2010).

The guidance counsellor explained how it is decided if students should attend the Behaviour Support Unit:

It's not up to the students in question, it's up to the teachers, and those that are in need and it's a consultative process between the year head, the form teacher, the class teachers and the two teachers that are involved in the Behaviour Support Unit...There would be meetings about students.. that are in difficulties or are going down the wrong road and they would be taken out...sometimes they are only taken out for one class, right, sometimes they are taken out for all the classes, right, so that would be the most

appropriate alternative to suspension that I know anyway... It's very, very successful... so far anyway and I can't see why it can't continue to be (Dooley et al., 2010).

This in-school support in the Irish context nevertheless requires withdrawal of the student from the classroom, at least for a period of time. It is important to emphasise that students are not mere conglomerations of behaviours and their experiential and emotional worlds need engagement with in supportive fashion (Downes 2010c; Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education 2010).

Emotional support strategies as part of alternatives to suspension and expulsion are a corollary of the following account of an adult secondary school from the Estonian national report which recognises a link between behavioural problems and family stresses:

About 60-70% of students come from dysfunctional families. Another risk group comprises those who have broken the law – some have been in prison, some were expelled from school for committing an offence. This cannot be done officially but schools can create circumstances where unwanted students feel that they have to leave... and they do. (...) I and our staff have to create an atmosphere where those people feel that they are not rejected but also know that bad behaviour is not accepted either. We hope that they will change. Some do, some unfortunately don't.

The school accepts everyone who wishes to study: *I accept everybody, also those who were expelled from other schools* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A concern arising here is that even if formal suspension is not permitted in schools, that other social processes may take place to *de facto* exclude the individual from the school system. This issue of family difficulties points to the need for adequate emotional supports in the school system both for the individual and to mediate between the school and the individual, a theme explored further at the micro-meso level in a later subsection of this comparative report.

6.4 (ii) Minimising stratification at post-primary level as a barrier to equality in education (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

Early stratification of students in secondary schools along academic lines is observed as a structural feature of the Austrian education system:

The early segregation of the school system can be viewed as relevant for the high social selectivity of the Austrian education system...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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

According to the Austrian national report, there are some moves towards reform of such stratification:

Within the current government there are moves towards reducing tracking at secondary I level, but these developments are still not implemented thoroughly and the political dispute lying behind has not come to a termination for good. Still, already in 2007

Austrian social partners⁵¹ have issued a paper where they argue for a comprehensive school system for secondary I level (Chance Bildung 2007) in order to do away with early tracking (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

An Estonian Education Ministry official highlights the extremely early stage of elitist selection processes for schools at post-primary and even, as in Estonia, primary level:

People believe that if you have finished a so-called elite school (one of the best schools in Tallinn or Tartu that accept 7 year olds to year one on the basis of entrance tests) then you have the right to a state funded study place, because you are better than others. Nobody seems to realise that the advantages of an elite school graduate may be the result of his/her better starting position compared with a graduate from a secondary school in the countryside or a small town. Our society does not recognise that social fairness is a problem. People do not want to see it (Tamm & Saar 2010).

A Hungarian Education and Culture Ministry raises a similar theme:

The reduction of the selection and the segregation is also important. There are legal endeavours and programmes against segregation. I think this process has to be carried out consistently. Such programmes are as follows: transformation of the schooling districts, the obligatory reception of the underprivileged ones, maximising the proportion of the underprivileged ones in the classes, the integration norm (those that can motivate the institutions to continue the integration pedagogic programme) (Balogh et al., 2010).

In Britain and Ireland, such stratification occurs at secondary school level especially based on economic lines of private schools contrasting with state schools. For example, the English national report states:

Key *foci* of political debate have been around the proportion of university entrants from state (as opposed to private or 'public') schools, and the proportion of such students gaining entry to 'elite' universities. (The latter being variously interpreted: for instance, as Oxford and Cambridge, or as twenty or so the 'research-intensive' 'Russell Group', or slightly more widely as 'pre1992' universities – post1992 universities being those formed as a result of powers introduced in that year which roughly doubled the number of institutions recognised as 'universities') (Engel et al., 2010).

A recent study concluded: Broadly, the reason why poorer students do not access high education to the same extent as their more advantaged counterparts is not because of choices being made at age 18, but because disadvantaged students do so poorly in secondary school. Poorer children tend to attend lower achieving secondary schools. ...[D]ifferent types of students are accessing schools of different quality, and this is likely to be part of any explanation of the lower academic achievement of poorer children. ... The gap in higher education participation between richer and poorer students is largely explained by the weak academic achievement of poor children in secondary school. ... [W]idening participation in higher education requires intervention well before the point of entry into higher education to increase the attainment of children from poorer backgrounds at earlier ages (ESRC, 2008b) (Engel et al., 2010).

⁵¹ The following social partners have issued this paper: chamber of labour, chamber of commerce, chamber of agriculture and the federation of Austrian trade unions (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).

The Russian national report portrays a situation which is somewhat similar to Britain and Ireland regarding socio-economic stratification manifested through the secondary school system:

The system of education has become very much commercialised...which made it quite difficult for socially disadvantaged groups to participate in it, especially at higher education levels. For example, even though secondary education is free, almost each school has a range of paid services or compulsory exactions of different kind (additional subjects, school building repair, new desks for classes, presents for teachers, etc). The more upscale the school is the more money parents have to pay each month for various school needs. The distribution of children between schools is an obvious marker of social segregation. Therefore, people from socially disadvantaged background are unable to afford placing their children to better schools where their personal talents would be developed accordingly and where they would get better education thus providing themselves better education prospects. In other words, graduates of different schools that officially have the same educational status have unequal chances when entering the institutions of higher educations. Correspondingly, the graduates of prestigious higher schools have better chances at the labor market (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Commercialisation of schools is combined in Russia with a distinct social stratification:

As one of the informants puts it, well, the schools can be clearly divided into elite schools that provide pupils with good education and backward schools. It is just the matter of the educational level. Well, for example... I'll cite the situation in Ulan-Ude as an example. There is school number 3, or rather gymnasium number 3. People would call it 'the school for the nobles'. It is located in the city centre, and the representatives of the party used to go there in the soviet times. It was established during the soviet regime as a school with advanced English course. And the representatives of local intelligentsia along with the children of local authorities belonged there. The bad schools are located in industrial districts, around the factories. Well, and in school number three you enjoy perfect English training, high level of history teaching. Nearly 90% of the graduates leave to other cities to continue their education. And, say, in my class only two people obtained higher education later on. Three classmates got into prison; one of them committed murder. And 90% of the graduates are currently working at the plant where they produce locomotives and carriages. And that is where their parents also used to work. That's how it's reproduced (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

In other words, graduates of different schools that officially have the same educational status have unequal chances when entering the institutions of higher educations. Correspondingly, the graduates of prestigious higher schools have better chances at the labor market (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The OECD (2007) have rightly raised concerns regarding the effects of early tracking on equity and quality. They cite examples of benefits of postponing tracking, as was done in Poland (from 14 to 15) and Finland (from age 11 to 16) (Pekkarinen et al., 2006). Drawing on international research such as that of Hanushek & Wössmann (2005) which compared school outcomes at primary school with those at age 15 and concluded that variation in performance tends to increase across levels of schooling when a country employs early tracking, a Communication of the European Commission argues that tracking should be postponed to upper secondary level (Council of the European Union 2006; Commission of the European Communities 2006). Yet this is clearly a message that has not been absorbed in a number of countries in the current research study. For

example, selection based on academic and/or economic factors are pervasive features of secondary school systems in Estonia, Austria, Russia, Britain and Ireland. This requires systemic challenge in future. Moreover, such selection provides an even bigger barrier when it occurs at primary level, as in for example, Estonia, based on academic reasons.

There is a growing consensus at European level about the need to substantially modify customary patterns of streaming. For example, as Koucky et al., (2010) emphasise, the EUA Trends 2010 Report expressly comments that:

Early streaming of students, based on their academic ability, seems to considerably reduce mobility across generations...If the primary and secondary school systems are highly selective, and do not have the proper remedial and support systems in place then it is almost impossible, in spite of free access, for non-traditional groups to reach the level of formal qualifications needed (Sursock & Smidt 2010, p.71).

A related issue emerges in the national reports regarding systemic recognition of limitations to grade retention strategies. Reform to grade retention approaches is observed in the context of Slovenia:

Repeaters of a class who have the right to perform some tasks from successive class, those who have to repeat only certain topics (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Loosening disciplinary measures and implementing non-punishment policies considerably lowered the number of pupils who left schooling before finishing it. New policy of progressing to the next class is another reason for that. It is less strict and provides quite a few options how to compensate for deficiencies without repeating the class. This policy is arising from the 2006 law on Vocational and Professional Education. According to the article 53 of the mentioned law, the principal may decide that the pupil is progressing to the next class. In this case he/she defines the conditions the pupil has to fulfil in order to do this. – Statutory basis (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The following example of a school which provides alternative strategies to grade retention is described in the Estonian national report:

Single subject study is intended to those who have not finished the course (failed the exam, had a conflict with the teacher, etc.). They can complete the course in two months and continue with their classmates at the next level (Tamm & Saar 2010).

We give them an opportunity. Our students usually come from other schools. For example best schools expel those who have poor results although they are not required to do that. In our schools they complete the programme and can continue at the next level. Some return to their old schools. We have an experience with a certain school from which pupils come to our school to complete the programme in one or two subjects – to get a positive result. Most of such students continue in our school, some go to other schools (Tamm & Saar 2010).

This method “saves” about 70 pupils every year. If they didn’t have this opportunity they would have to repeat the year and some would probably drop out. If they have a motivation to continue they can study at two levels at the same time (Tamm & Saar 2010).

It is of concern that, as highlighted by Field et al.,(2007, p.90) for the OECD on the basis of an OECD, PISA database (2003) that in some countries such as France,

Luxembourg and Spain than more than 20% of students have to repeat a grade in either primary or secondary education. Field et al., (2007) highlight the limitations of such a strategy and argue for alternatives to this approach: they conclude that ‘although year repetition is often popular with teachers, there is little evidence that children gain benefit from it’ (p.106). Similarly, an EU Commission staff working document (2008) highlights the frequency of repeating a year in Germany and Belgium, where between 20% and 50% of pupils repeat at some time during compulsory education; this document observes that according to research from the French High Council for Education (2007) pupils of lower socio-economic status are required to repeat a year significantly more frequently. A plethora of international studies highlight the detrimental effects of grade retention adjustment (Hauser 1999; Jackson 1975; Holmes & Matthews 1984; Fowell & Lawton 1992; Smith & Shepard 1987; McGill-Frantzen & Allington 1993; Jimerson et al.,1999; Jimerson 1999; Ferguson, Jimerson & Dalton 2001). There is a need for translation of the implications of this research into national practices across a number of countries’ secondary education systems.

6.4.1 Post-primary Education: Indicators at Micro-Meso Levels

6.4.1 (i) Availability of emotional support services for students (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR) and bullying prevention strategies at school (PROCESS INDICATOR)

The Slovenian national report provides a notable example of systemic emotional support for students in schools:

The school has established a school counselling service which is funded by the Ministry of Education and Sport and regulated by the law on Organisation and Financing of Education, article 66, item 3 (Official Gazette, 98/2005, 07.11.2005). This is typical for the Slovenian education system. Following are main tasks:

- vocational guidance and counselling before enrolment in school, at the time of enrolment and before enrolment in tertiary education,
- analysing enrolment and following progress of pupils,
- dealing with pupils of foreigners and organising Slovene language courses for these pupils,
- various prevention activities related to drug abuse, aggressive behaviour; workshops on questions regarding sexuality,
- workshops on independent learning and learning how to learn,
- counselling on personal and social development,
- Dealing with social issues of pupils and with other problems related to learning, discipline etc.(Ivančič et al., 2010).

An explicit link is drawn in the Slovenian national report between emotional counselling services and its role in prevention of early school leaving:

A counselling service is established at school that deals with problems that may lead to early leaving of the education system but there is a belief that the class teacher is the one who is first responsible for dealing with such problems. He/she is the one creating the class climate, recognising early signs of individual problems and being able to react before their full escalation. The school thus heavily invests in class teachers. *I believe*

class teacher is a key person contributing to class climate... also other teachers are important but the centre is emotionally stable class teacher who takes care for good climate which significantly contributes to integration of individual pupils in the class environment (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The counselling supports are perceived as complementary to the key role of the class teacher as a provider of social and emotional support to help prevent early school leaving:

You see that he needs help, he needs a hand..., a talk...however... If there were any one to talk to. ... A single teacher may retain a pupil in school and this often happens (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Yet significantly the Slovenian examples recognise that some emotional problems are sufficiently complex that there is a need to go beyond the role of the class teacher. It is important to distinguish a teacher's role in mental health promotion and stress prevention for students from that of therapy which requires professional supports (Downes 2003b). In other words, it is important to introduce another layer of referrals, such as to counsellors either within the school or externally:

Institution does not have any particular guidance related to emotional or behavioural problems. Most often, their staff in student services office detects those kind of problems and advice students to whom they should turn to, most of the time to an adviser within their institution, sometimes to external experts (Ivančič et al., 2010).

On this issue of referrals from school, it is important to acknowledge that the emotional support needs of more withdrawn students tend to be missed by teachers compared with students displaying externalising problems such as aggression (Doll 1996; Downes 2004). The Belgian national report also points to this key role of the educational institution in provision of referrals to services to meet some students' complex emotional needs:

In case of other problems, such as psycho-social problems, issues concerning poverty, etc. the tutors and programme coordinators actively refer to other organisations and services (Vermeersch & Vandenbroucke 2010).

This interviewee's quote in Estonia illustrates both the need of some students for emotional support and that this can be quite a slow process:

The school is making an effort to include those who have problems but these attempts have not been very successful. *It is difficult to deal with them... it is difficult even to talk to them. They are... they are not open. They are withdrawn and often have communication problems. (...) The psychologist is trying to help such children (Tamm & Saar 2010).*

It is evident also that a family support dimension may be necessary rather than simply focusing on the individual student:

The school also tries to work with parents but it is difficult because students often come from problematic families. *It happens that a student gets a grant and his mother takes the money ... What can a child do if his mother takes the money he gets from us? And spends it on booze. How can a child learn if his mother is in prison? What can we do? We talk; we offer them a place in the dormitory. They can study and live here. But they need love and attention of their parents (Tamm & Saar 2010).*

These are social problems that cannot be solved by the school alone. The school cannot concentrate on parents *This is the state's responsibility. Unfortunately these problems have a huge impact on children and their future...* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

As this Estonian example illustrates, a key role here is for the State to include a family support dimension in an early school leaving prevention strategy.

The Estonian national report also reveals both the need for emotional supports for those living in poverty and experiencing personal problems, as well as the availability of such supports across secondary schools:

Some young learners (who have dropped out of their former school) come from problematic or disadvantaged families or have lost contact with their families and therefore lack elementary life skills, such as managing one's money, etc. They also need support to cope with personal problems – someone to talk to. Such support can be provided by teachers. All schools teach family studies but these are not enough. Such students need extra support and an opportunity to turn to somebody – the school head, a teacher, a psychologist, etc. – outside classes. Such conversations improve students' communication skills and the skill of solving problems. They acquire positive behavioural models from a positive example. An opportunity to live in dormitory increases the sense of security (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Many students need individual support and tutoring. *Sometimes they simply want to talk to somebody they trust, to pour out their heart. The teacher of family studies is in great demand also outside the curriculum: Sometimes the students come and ask: 'Has she come yet? I need to talk to her.' Even those who have no classes on that particular day come to school to talk to her* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The school on its turn has tried to compensate for the family studies teacher's extra work (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Estonian larger schools, including adult secondary schools have a psychologist on their payroll. We also have counselling centres in counties offering the services of a psychologist and a career councillor (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The need for provision of emotional supports is reiterated in the Norwegian national report:

11 percent of the same group in SP3 stated that family related problems were a problem for participating in educational activity. We asked our informant how he thought public policy in this area could contribute to offering guidance services that go beyond the subjects taught at the institutions. Our informant responded:

Many students have mentally related problems and students have a high suicide rate. For many, being a student is a lonely affair. It goes without saying that the healthcare services must be equipped with a professional staff (Stensen & Ure 2010).

Emotional support services in education as a dimension of the need for prevention of risk of suicide, particularly in contexts of high stress associated with poverty and social exclusion, has also been highlighted in an Irish context for those at risk of early school leaving (Downes & Maunsell 2007). Lack of availability of such emotional support services are a clear strategic gap in Irish secondary school provision (Dooley et al., 2010; Downes 2008).

A number of other national reports manifest a distinct lack of provision of emotional support for students, a problem which is accentuated for students at risk of

early school leaving. Thus, for example, the Bulgarian and Hungarian national reports state:

The College does not have a specialised unit that provides emotional support to the students. There is a Career Development Centre at SWU, which also renders its services to students from the Technical College (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

SWU has no institutionalised forms of providing emotional support to students (e.g. a specialised unit, psychologists) (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

there is no dedicated emotional support service in the adult education [in the Hungarian university]. On the other hand, many special training programmes and courses are organised on conflict management and on other psychological skills as part of the curriculum in some specialisations (Balogh et al., 2010).

Emotional difficulties are treated in an informal way: coordinators in the local secondary schools and educational centres try to encourage students to continue their studies and they often discuss the students' private problems with them. There are some typical difficulties linked to special disadvantaged groups: *There is a very serious problem in the case of Roma women: if they start studying, their husbands may not tolerate it and unfortunately I have students who have got divorced or who were beaten because of this, and they suffered from different atrocities and in these cases I feel so helpless, I don't see how I could help them besides listening to them and discussing with them, and I try to give them some advice, something from my own experience* (Balogh et al., 2010).

While career guidance is more developed in Bulgaria than emotional counselling, it is important to firmly distinguish these two kinds of supports:

The Centre for Career Development (best practice) at SWU is an institutionalised form of support to students with regard to their professional development and choice of career (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

Similarly, in the Lithuanian national report there is little evidence of emotional counselling support at secondary school level, while there is even a view resisting such supports beyond those provided by the class teacher:

The teacher's and management's views on the availability of a counsellor for students with emotional problems, including bereavement issues diverge. While (as mentioned earlier) the management thinks that counsellor-teacher-psychologist should be a three-in-one option, the tutor thinks that a counsellor or psychologist would be needed:

Teachers have to study psychology and be themselves psychologists. It is a nonsense when after the conflict in the classroom the teacher 'sends' the student (the spoilage of their work) to be consulted by psychologist or someone else, be it a counsellor. The teachers have to learn how to deal with students' problems (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

No we do not have a psychologist at school. I think s/he is needed. Then it would be easier for us to understand why students behave the way they behave (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

It is apparent that gaps in emotional support provision are a systemic feature of the educational system in Lithuania, including third level provision:

There are no emotional support services or staff responsible for this area [in the private college]. Students receive emotional support, according to the management, from the

teachers and staff members and their fellow colleagues. This is based on personal relationships (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

...There is no emotional, psychological support for students [in the State university]. It would be wanted to help solving personal not study-related problems... It would be good to have such kind of support at university. This issue should be considered. (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The Lithuanian national report goes on to highlight the need for emotional supports due to official statistics (in Table 21) on students with clinical level emotional, behavioural and social disorders:

Table 21 Students integrated into general schools

Students integrated into general schools				
Beginning of the academic year				
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Emotional behaviour and social disorders	886	1237	877	899

(In Taljunaite et al., 2010)

It is important however to emphasise that it is not simply those with clinical levels of emotional disorders who are particularly vulnerable to early school leaving and in need for system level emotional supports (see also Downes 2010c).

A strong feature of emotional support provision is evident at third level in the Scottish and English national reports:

for non study related matters students could make an appointment to discuss any of the following with guidance member of staff:

- Personal problems
- Social and family problems
- Health and welfare
- Financial matter
- Career advice
- Accommodation
- Return to learning
- Outside agencies

(Weedon et al., 2010).

College prepares a *diversity report* yearly which shows if any ethnic group is performing less well, which provides information about particular needs for action. The study's participants when asked about the present challenges referred to the college climate says that *there's much more now for people with emotional and behavioural difficulties which probably when I first came it was mostly learning difficulty and disability* (Engel et al, 2010).

This Russian educational system example illustrates an important commitment to emotional support provision:

First it's necessary to pay attention not to... the gaps in the knowledge but to prove that he CAN do something – and since he can, then he's a personality. This work is conducted by the Support Service: they organise art-therapy and psychological trainings

aimed at the realisation of the creativity potential, development of personal responsibility and to some extent to the promotion of active citizenship position.

Art-therapy classes presume organising drama performances: interested students take part in the production of drama performances based on the scripts written by the head of this studio. The performances are devoted to the 'issues topical for students' (e.g. drug addiction, game addiction, suicide). During the production of the performances the participants and the head of the studio also discuss these topics; discussions are continued inside classes after the first show (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A focus on substance abuse related issues is a key dimension to prevention of early school leaving (Downes 2003; Burkhart 2003, EMCDDA 2003). Yet it is given little emphasis across the different examples from schools across the national reports. One exception is the Russian national report which observes the following important approach:

Some students in the School have experience of drug-taking: either once or twice or on a regular basis. In order to help those pupils and prevent them from developing a further addition, the School (and mostly the Support Service) cooperates with a number of organisations such as Crisis Centre, Children's Psychiatry, Institute of Psychology and Social Work. This is a two-way cooperation: the School persuades parents to address to the Crisis Centre and Children's Psychiatry in cases of necessity, and specialists from these organisations come to the School for consultations and discussions. Students consuming drugs and alcohol are considered to be in need of professional help at School (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The main goal of the psychological support service is to provide favorable conditions for all students, build up trustworthy relationships between them and the school and provide psychological help for those students who lack it in their families (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

They often come here with their spirit broken. They are offended at the world and intimidated, so it's very important for us to help them form a strong, stable and harmonious personality, who is fully aware of his/her desires and ambitions. We want to bring up a person who understands that s/he is not alone in the world and that there will be many problems on his/her life path so we teach them to be ready for those problems and be able to overcome them (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A different secondary school in Russia, a vocational school, however does not offer any emotional support service as such:

There are 15 orphan students studying at the school at the moment. However, the school does not have its own Support Service for the students that would provide psychological help and consultations. Special measures aimed at the adaptation of students who belong to traditionally disadvantaged groups to the educational process and the student community are also not undertaken (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

O'Connell & Sheikh (2009) explored non-academic (non-cognitive) factors in early school leaving and found strong correlations with smoking and with lack of daily school preparation for early school leaving in a sample of over 25,000 8th grade US students from over 1,000 schools. There is a need for supports to challenge fatalism which is a risk factor for drug use and other self-harming behaviour, including a fatalism associated with early school leaving (Kalichman et al., 2000; Downes 2003; Ivers et al., 2010).

The need for interventions and emotional supports emerge from the Estonian national report specifically regarding bullying prevention strategies at school.

The average age of students is between 20 and 22 years. Students become younger and younger each year. 10 years ago there were more working people. Most students come from ordinary secondary schools because they had problems with learning or discipline.

The majority of those who have dropped out of or left their previous school are lower secondary students. They had conflicts with teachers or other problems and could not continue in their old school.

Lower secondary students are younger than 17 years old. They are referred to us by the Department of Education; we cannot admit such students without the Department's approval. They could not cope in their old school. (...) Some schools (in particular those that have a social worker) refer their problematic students to us. The main problem is bullying. This year we have two such students and they are doing well. Our students are older and bullies cannot dominate (Tamm & Saar 2010).

In the EU Commission public consultation 'Schools for the 21st century', tackling bullying, violence and intolerance in schools was an emerging theme (see also Commission staff working document 2008). Moreover, van der Wal, de Wit & Hirasing's (2003) large-scale research on 4,811 children aged 9 to 13 in schools in Amsterdam, observed that depression and suicidal ideation are common outcomes of being bullied in both boys and girls. It is a significant step forward that the Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on early school leaving (2011) observes the need for 'developing anti-violence and antibullying approaches' (p. 12).

There is a clear need for emotional support services emerging in Austria. This is the response of an Austrian Education Ministry official to this issue:

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...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 (Rammel & Gottwald, 2010).

These examples of engagement with emotions of students, at least at the level of support services available at the institutional level, offer what Glasser (1969) would call the 'emotional bridge to relevance' in education – in meeting students real needs based on their lived experience. In doing so, they challenge a traditional bias in Western culture of compartmentalising reason and emotion in Cartesian fashion. It is a resistance to inclusion of emotions within the education system that can be traced back even to antiquity, not only through Stoicism generally but also specifically Plato's *Republic* where in Bertrand Russell's (1946) words, 'the advantage sought [by the State] is, of course, to minimise private possessive emotions, and so remove obstacles to the domination of public spirit' (p.129).

Factoring out emotions from the equation of relevance in the educational system is no longer sustainable or justifiable, whether for secondary education, lifelong learning in general or for access to education concerning specific targeted, traditionally marginalised and unrepresented groups and individuals. Adopting Marcuse's (1964) somewhat limited distinction between 'high' culture and 'mass' culture, it is arguable that giving a central role to emotions in education imports 'mass' culture into the traditional domain of supposedly 'high' culture in the education system. Emotions of love, grief, sadness, anger and joy are experienced by all. Emotions are a great democratiser across social groups (Downes & Downes 2007) and are tethered to a democratic institutional culture in education. For institutions to engage meaningfully with the experience of marginalised individuals and groups, their emotions must be given a systemic institutional space for potential expression. It is of concern therefore that of the sixteen cross-curricular themes examined in 27 European countries by Maes et al. (2001) at secondary school level (and cited in a Commission staff working document 2008, p.16), none of these engaged explicitly with emotional and personal awareness. This important institutional space for engaging with emotions has only been partly opened through Key Competences Framework at EU level which includes social and civic competences⁵², and cultural awareness and expression. It needs to be expanded further beyond curriculum related issues to other dimensions of institutional culture.

Freudenberg & Ruglis (2007) strongly advocate the importance of interpreting early school leaving as a health related issue:

Although evidence shows that education is an important determinant of health and that changes in school policy can improve educational outcomes, public health professionals have seldom made improving school completion rates a health priority... With a few important exceptions, health providers have not developed lasting partnerships with schools, nor have researchers provided the evidence needed to improve or replicate health programmes that can reduce school dropout rates (p. 3).

Simply reframing school dropout as a health issue has the potential to bring new players into the effort — parents, health institutions, young people, civil rights groups — and to encourage public officials to think of the dropout problem as central to community health and as a long-term solution beneficial to population health (p. 4).

They cite a range of international studies finding that education helps people to acquire social support, strengthen social networks, and mitigate social stressors (Cutler 2006; Ross & Wu 1995; Ross & Mirowsky 1989). For a cause to have an effect it needs supporting conditions (Mill 1872); change to these conditions can negate the cause (Downes 2006; 2007). Emotional supports are protective conditions to undermine risk factors for early school leaving. Emotional support services need to operate not only at the level of the individual student, but also at a systemic level of both the teacher's interaction with students and also at a family support level (Downes 2004; 2010b).

⁵² According to the Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning: Social and Civic Competence describes the personal, interpersonal and intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in diverse societies; Cultural Awareness and Expression includes appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including those of music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts.

It is notable that the Commission Staff Working Document on early school leaving (2010) explicitly recognises that early school leaving ‘can be part of a situation of serious social, academic and/or emotional distress’ (p. 36). Significantly, this is reiterated in the Commission Proposal for a Council Recommendation (2011) on early school leaving:

Targeted individual support integrates social, financial, educational and psychological support for young people in difficulties. It is especially important for young people in situations of serious social or emotional distress which hinders them from continuing education or training (2011, p.13).

The next logical step is for the European Commission to invest Structural Funds in this issue as a matter of priority as a key part of an ET2020 strategy to reduce early school leaving across European States.

6.4.1 (ii) Conflict resolution skills for teachers and positive school climate strategies to prevent alienation of students from the education system (PROCESS INDICATOR)

The Slovenian national report succinctly identifies a key relation between lifelong learning and retaining students in school:

A corollary of a commitment to lifelong learning is a strategy to prevent alienation of students from the school system (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The Lithuanian national report offers conclusions which paint a stark picture about current practice and the need for progress in development of school climate:

At the moment there is no unique strategy for solving this problem [of early school leaving]. The model of how to encourage school leavers to come back to school does not exist:

- The system of monitoring early school leavers does not exist;
- There is no data on how many school students do not attend schools and which proportion of them do not have a school leaving certificate;
- There are no alternative schools for early school leavers and drop-outs;
- Negative teachers’ attitude towards students who do not attend school regularly;
- Teachers lack of psychological and counselling skills when communication with those students;
- The psychological support is unavailable. It is difficult to get this support, the quality and efficiency of support is insufficient (Taljunaite., 2010).

These gaps in the Lithuanian support system at school to help prevent early school leaving are of particular concern especially given the increasing recognition of alienation from school as an institutional and relational process where students feel ‘eased out’ (Smyth & Hattam 2004, p.165) from school (see also Fingleton 2003; Downes et al., 2006; Downes & Maunsell 2007; Hodgson 2007).

An interviewee for the Slovenian national report offers the following perspectives on engaging students:

Preventing alienation of students from the education system *I would say that this is about complementing/continuation – since we do this in the way that the pupil gets shifted for certain period of time, perhaps a year, to irregular education and as soon as*

possible he/she returns back to regular schooling...and often it works... According to her such solution does not work when wrong choice of education programme is the reason for early school leaving. From her words it may be understood that no general rule exists, what works for some pupils does not necessary work for others. One pupil significantly differs from the other and it is not unusual that the one who was unsuccessful in regular education doesn't necessarily continue being unsuccessful in irregular education... Between lines she is suggesting that the existing enrolment system causes a lot of problems in cases where it is about entirely wrong vocational guidance of the pupil, when pupil does not find any strong pillars, goals in the programme it does not work and she/he disappears in a way (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The importance of professional development for teachers regarding conflict resolution skills is emphasised in the Slovenian national report:

Permanent investment in competences of teachers for coping with new requirements posed in front of schools in constantly changing economic and social circumstances is strongly stressed in various policy documents. Especially when it comes to adult education some evaluation studies (Evalvacija izvedbenega kurikula – Evaluation of the execution curriculum) suggest that teachers lack adequate competences to successfully deal with concrete circumstances. In Slovenia teachers are formally entitled to 5 days yearly for in-service training. The system of promotion of teachers is also closely connected with investment in training. However, it appears from the information collected by our interviews that in-service training is primarily meant for the improvement of professional competences while more soft skills needed for conflict solving, participative learning and the like appear to be more related to individual personality. *Personal attitude of each individual is of key importance here. Some people are naturally so equipped as to be more able to cope with this and those who have greater difficulties. However we know that knowledge is very important (Ivančič et al., 2010).*

This exists against the backdrop of a strong commitment to inservice education generally in Slovenia:

Results obtained in the SP 3 subproject about the share of teachers participating in in-service training. We have found out that about 94% of adult education staff participates in some kind of training (Ivančič et al., 2010).

A Slovenian interviewee highlights the importance of school site based professional development:

In her opinion not just in-service training but social learning and experiential learning in concrete environment and knowledge sharing within the school and outside in various working groups significantly contributes to the development of skills needed for successful resolution of problems as well as to learn new approaches to teaching and learning. *Yes, we do organise in-service training and it's never enough of these skills. But individual readiness to learn all the time, to supplement this knowledge, this is what should be the leading principle for the individual and this can not be provided by organised learning ... I believe that non-formal learning, internal sharing of knowledge and information, this is very important and this seems very good to me (Ivančič et al., 2010).*

This school site based focus for professional development has also been emphasised in an Irish context for maths education (Dooley & Corcoran 2007), while the need for

professional development of teacher conflict resolution skills at secondary level has been observed in a range of Irish reports and studies (Downes 2004; Barnardos 2006; Darmody et al., 2007; Downes & Maunsell 2007; Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education Report 2010).

The Estonian national report points to the prevalence of such courses, supported by European funds:

Teachers are offered training on various topics: education, problems of young people (e.g. prevention of drug problems), how to cope with children with behavioural problems. Some courses last for several weeks and are provided in the school by specialists from Tallinn University. Some courses are provided by our own teachers. Teachers have also participated in courses provided by the Ministry of Education and Research, the National Examinations and Qualifications Centre, professional associations. For three years the school participated in an EU project 'School for training'. All teachers participated (Tamm & Saar 2010).

In view of the big number of pupils who drop out of general educational schools we are offering courses for teachers on teaching pupils with special needs. We are also developing a new programme concerning conflict management and coping in a situation of crisis. This course was triggered by increasing school violence, school shootings in other countries. The course is developed in cooperation with the police and social services. We hope to complete the work by next autumn. The Ministry of Education and Research has also made suggestions for teacher training courses and has funded such courses (Tamm & Saar 2010).

This is very welcome and needs wider expansion. The danger is that those teachers who need these courses most may be most reluctant to participate, especially as there is no specific requirement or incentive provided to do so. Another school interviewee recognises this need in the Estonian context:

What about courses on conflict management and problem solving? *That would be good. I support this idea. Especially if it is more practical, not just a lecture. I am very positive about that!*⁵³ (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Tamm (2010) also confirms that professional development is available on an equal basis for Russian speaking schools in Estonia:

General principle[s] and regulations [for] continuous training of teachers...It's the same for Russian and Estonian speaking schools. Schools make decisions on training based on their own needs. Some schools focus on subject-related continuous training (math, chemistry,..... In this sample (cases) may be more typical for Russian speaking schools); others offer also more general courses, including courses tailored to the specific needs of the staff (courses on teamwork, active teaching methods, etc.).

A key issue regarding conflict resolution skills, school climate and professional development is raised in the Estonian context with regard to school principals'

⁵³ The [school] development plan does not mention such training for teachers. Tamm (August 2010, personal communication) notes that the: "*Description of Trainings for teachers is provided in the development plans of some schools). The choice of the courses was made by school manager/school management*".

professional development in this area. Tamm (2010) highlights a number of problems at the level of principal's awareness of professional development, referring to a:

Lack of knowledge among principals about training opportunities and its benefits and that School heads need specific training and information on courses on managing risk groups; they also need an opportunity to share relevant experiences (Tamm 2010).

Given the influence of school principals on school culture, this is an area deserving of much attention.

School climate effects on early school leaving are highlighted in the Russian national report:

The interviews showed that each group of students (teenagers and adults) was attracted to the School by different factors. For example, the main reason for teenagers to come to the School and keep studying was the positive attitude of the teachers to them. The survey conducted at the School demonstrated that teenage students had experienced lack of attention in their former schools, where teachers had shown very little interest in students overall.

Why did children leave a usual school? If you take a questionnaire of the surveys that have been conducted, what was bad? The answer is: Teachers are wicked – they don't need us (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A different secondary school in Russia revealed different attitudes and practices:

The in-service trainings of all teachers including class supervisors are carried out regularly by the vice principal for extracurricular work. Those trainings are aimed at personal development of students, psychological support of students as well as constructivist teaching methods. The informants state that the amount of the inservice trainings provided at the school are quite enough and fully meet the needs of both the teachers and the students. Based on the information about their psychological support for students and extracurricular activities aimed at personal development, one may say that the amount of the trainings is quite sufficient. Besides, both informants say they are always eager to learn more and exchange experience with their colleagues from other city schools (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

School climate issues and teaching style also emerge as impacting upon student motivation in secondary school in Lithuania:

The secondary education system in Lithuania according to the management lacks the integrity of humanistic and pedagogical ideas.

The attitudes towards students have to change and then they will feel better at schools. [...] at the moment students are selected under the criteria 'good' and 'bad' and those who get the 'bad' label do not want to stay at such school – they leave it (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

There is some scepticism in the Lithuanian context about teacher professional development, as articulated by the following extract:

TPDC [Teacher Professional Development Centre] is one of the main institutions implementing modernisation of education and training, improvement of the quality of education and socio-pedagogical study conditions, and harmonisation of educational system, focusing on the needs and abilities/disabilities of children and preferences of educators, creating conditions for continuous teacher training and adult life long learning, promoting intellectual freedom and democratic relations

However the [secondary] school management does not agree:

I think it is a waste of money. It is a huge political fiction. I think now [having in mind economic recession] there's a chance to get rid of this institution. I don't understand why a teacher who knows about teaching methods is not able to teach himself/herself. If there's something new in his/her area, s/he has to learn it quickly. The internet possibilities are unlimited. Speaking about this centre – it's more money making than real knowledge. There are a lot of courses where teachers come the first and the last day. On Monday they come to this centre to register and pay for the courses, and on Friday they come and get the certificate. The course fee is usually paid (or is later reimbursed) by the school. There's no test, no final examination. Just for being on the list of participants one gets a certificate. Teachers need a certificate, the centre needs money and it is a vicious circle – wasting money. Hundreds of people are paid by the centre and they say that salaries of teachers are low – teachers should get that money, not this centre (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The management goes on speaking about the culture of learning: *The culture of learning exists. How can it be that a teacher does not know how to learn? But how to promote the culture of learning when lobbies decide that without a certificate teachers cannot be assessed and promoted. This is a self-programmemeing situation: a teacher has to increase their qualification, and get this certificate as a proof. If teachers did not need the certificate, they would never go to this centre. It is a 90 percent fiction (Taljunaite et al., 2010).*

According to teacher, paper qualifications are no longer needed: *...well paper certificate is more or less needed, but the truth is that teachers want to learn something new. Maybe this centre is useful for less experienced teachers, but the supply of courses [in general] is very high, sometimes you do not know what you will get if you choose this or that course (Taljunaite et al., 2010).*

These concerns raise the need to monitor quality of teacher professional development courses, to emphasise site based professional development more, and to focus on key priority needs of the school system, such as conflict resolution skills of teachers, as well as other declared needs of teachers.

A range of research highlights that authoritarian teaching alienates students and heightens risk of early school leaving (Downes 2004; Downes et al., 2006; Downes & Maunsell 2007). More broadly, Jankélévitch (1950) argues that after every period of dogmatism historically comes a period of irony; dogmatism triggers its own opposite and conjures up its own opponent. Lefebvre (1995) argues that this requires modification to recognise that irony can spring up at the same time as dogmatism in a mutually reinforcing cycle. Transferred to schooling, the dogmatism of authoritarian teaching feeds the opposition of ironic detachment in students from school – a detachment over time, what Hodgson (2007) calls 'winnowing', as a process of heightened alienation, ultimately leading to early school leaving.

In the EU Commission public consultation 'Schools for the 21st century', classroom management strategies were raised as an issue needing to be better addressed by teacher initial education (see also Commission staff working document 2008). The TALIS study (OECD 2009) observes an extremely wide variation in teacher participation in continuing professional development across countries. Non-attendance is attributed to obstacles such as lack of suitable programmes and clashes with work schedules. However, the study identified beneficial effects associated with participation in

continuing professional development, including increased use of more varied and versatile teaching methods, cooperation with colleagues and greater job satisfaction. Moreover, teacher consultation across participating TALIS countries raised the following priorities:

The aspect of their work for which teachers most frequently say they require professional development is 'Teaching special learning needs students', followed by 'ICT teaching skills' and 'Student discipline and behaviour' (p.48). Student discipline issues is raised by 21% of teacher responses (OECD 2009, p.61).

It is notable also that professional development of teachers regarding student discipline and special needs students are both, in particular, central to early school leaving prevention. The OECD (2009) recognises that:

Classroom discipline, aggregated to the school level, is a core element of instructional quality. In PISA, it is positively related to the school's mean student achievement in many participating countries (Klieme and Rakoczy, 2003). Also, it has been shown that – unlike other features of classroom instruction – there is a high level of agreement about this indicator among teachers, students and observers (Clausen, 2002) (p. 91).

Key results observed in TALIS (OECD 2009) include that:

One teacher in four in most countries loses at least 30% of the lesson time, and some lose more than half, in disruptions and administrative tasks – and this is closely associated with classroom disciplinary climate, which varies more among individual teachers than among schools (p. 122).

In November 2007, the Council adopted Conclusions which constitute a commitment to improving the quality of teacher education. This theme is reiterated in the Commission staff working document (2009). However, the professional development focus gives little emphasis to the key issues of specifically developing teachers' conflict resolution skills, and their cultural diversity awareness training, including for different social classes. Rather in the TALIS review (OECD 2009) it is construed as being largely in terms of student discipline and behaviour though it does invite focus on the interactional process between teacher and student in its recommendations for increased support for teachers' classroom management techniques:

Several studies have shown that the classroom disciplinary climate affects student learning and achievement. TALIS supports this view by showing that disciplinary issues in the classroom limit the amount of students' learning opportunities. The classroom climate is also associated with individual teachers' job satisfaction. Thus a positive learning environment is not only important for students, as is often emphasised, but also for teachers. Across all participating countries it therefore seems advisable to work on enhancing teachers' classroom management techniques. The results suggest that in most schools at least some teachers need extra support, through interventions that consider teachers' individual characteristics and competences and the features of individual classes (OECD 2009, p.122-123).

This wider vision for professional development that simply classroom or behavioural management is given expression through the OECD's (2009) recognition that school climate of positive relation is also a key dimension:

In addition to the environment at the classroom level, *school climate* is used as an indicator for the school environment. Here, school climate is defined as the quality of

social relations between students and teachers (including the quality of support teachers give to students), which is known to have a direct influence on motivational factors, such as student commitment to school, learning motivation and student satisfaction, and perhaps a more indirect influence on student achievement (see Cohen, 2006, for a review of related research) (OECD 2009: 91).

The EU Commission Staff Working Paper on early school leaving (2010) echoes this theme of the need for development of teachers' relational and diversity approaches:

School-wide strategies focus on improving the overall school climate and making schools places where young people feel comfortable, respected and responsible... While these schools usually rely on a handful of dedicated and committed teachers who choose to stay despite the difficulties, it is essential that teacher education prepares future teachers to deal with diversity in the classroom, with pupils from disadvantaged social backgrounds and with difficult teaching situations. It is also essential to improve school climate and working conditions - especially in disadvantaged areas - in order to have a more stable teaching force (p. 23).

The Commission Proposal for a Council Recommendation in relation to early school leaving further highlighted this issue of teacher professional development:

Supporting and empowering teachers in their work with pupils at risk is a pre-requisite to successful measures at school level. Targeted teacher training helps them to deal with diversity in the classroom, to support pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and to solve difficult teaching situations (p. 12).

Thus, there is a clear emerging European and international consensus – not only that teachers need more support regarding conflict resolution skills, classroom management techniques and assistance in fostering a positive classroom and school climate – but that these are key factors in both student performance and prevention of early school leaving.

The concern raised above by the Lithuanian interviewee regarding not only the quality of professional development but also of nominal attendance at such sessions is of particular relevance to this area of conflict resolution skills, classroom management skills and ethnic and social class diversity training; it is precisely those teachers who may be most resistant to such professional development who need it most. It is important to emphasise that it is not a matter of shifting blame from student to teacher; it is about going beyond a blame type of focus (Downes 2007; Young et al., 2007). Moreover, Hyland (2002) emphasises 'that the focus of change should be on school as a whole and not just on individual teachers, however challenging this might be' (p.90-91).

6.4.1 (iii) Promotion of extracurricular activities (PROCESS INDICATOR)

A rationale to give strategic priority to investment in extracurricular activities for students at risk of early school leaving emerges from a range of international research. Advantages of State after school programmes are more apparent in contexts of socio-economic disadvantage (Posner & Vandell 1994; Hennessy & Donnelly 2005) as low income students can access the extracurricular activities commonly available to middle class children. Out-of-school services also play a significant role in helping vulnerable children and young people stay in formal education by equipping them with the necessary skills to remain at school (Bissell 2002; Lee 2001; Brown et al., 2002; Davidson & Barry 2003; Luehmann & Markowitz 2007). Participation in even one extracurricular school

activity is associated with a reduction in rates of early school leaving, particularly for high-risk youth (Mahoney & Cairns 1997). Mahoney (2000) defines participation as one or more years of involvement in the extracurricular activity and states:

The participant is attracted to the activity and is likely competent in that area or may even excel. Unlike preventive interventions that attempt to correct academic or social deficits by remedial work, extracurricular activities may foster a positive connection between the individual and school based on the student's interests and motivations. The specific activity pursued may be less important than the act of participation itself (p.503).

Morgan (1998) cites a US study by Beacham (1980), which found that over 60% of early school leavers were not involved in any extracurricular activities during their high school years – a level which is significantly higher than any estimates of the overall number not participating in such activities.

The role of extracurricular activities in potentially providing social and emotional support for those at risk of early school leaving is observed in the Slovenian national report:

To those at risk to become early school leavers, and thus sometime need more emotional approach, and these extracurricular activities are often spaces that bring pupils closer to each other than formal meetings or discussions (Ivančič et al., 2010).

However, the Slovenian national report also highlights not only a lack of strategic approach to connect extracurricular activities with those at risk of early school leaving, but also a restricted view the opportunities for engagement and lifelong learning that such activities can offer:

She admitted that no extracurricular activities are organised specifically for the pupils who are at risk of early school leaving (Ivančič et al., 2010).

Curious enough the school sees voluntary activities primarily as a disciplinary measure as an alternative to punishment and not as an extracurricular activity providing opportunities for developing cooperation with local surrounding, the sense of social responsibility, intergenerational solidarity and competences for active citizenship (Ivančič et al., 2010).

It is notable also from the Russian national report that while there is a strong emphasis on extracurricular activities in a number of educational institutions, there is not a strategic recognition of financial barriers to such participation for those experiencing socio-economic extra-curricular activity is field trips. The history teacher arranges field trips to the historical places within the city and its surroundings. Students are informed about each field trip in advance so that they could save money for it (since they are only partly financed by the School) and rearrange their working schedules if applicable... there are extra-curricular activities aimed at the students' creative potential realisation. For example, there is a regular evening session called *Literature café*, where students recite their own poetry as well as well known literary piece (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

This broad emphasis on extracurricular activities is also present in another Russian school, with again a strong focus on the arts:

Extracurricular activities make up a large part of the [secondary] school life. The school has its own theater studio and a film club. The teachers of the school often organise sport, science (interschool conferences) and cultural events (going to museums, theaters, music

halls, walking city tours, open lectures, etc.) and encourage all students, especially those at risk of early school leaving, to take part in them. Students actively participate in city painting contests and have managed to win several awards. The school staff sees the role of extracurricular activities as the possibility to expand horizons of their students and find areas where they could apply their knowledge and creative talents (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The Estonian national report offers examples of extracurricular activities involving both arts and sports:

A group of students organised a drama club. They wrote a play and performed it. Secretarial course is offered as an elective course and only those who are interested attend. The school has signed an agreement with the Estonian Qualifications Authority (Kutsekoda) that students who have completed the secretarial course can take the qualification exam and receive the relevant qualification. Many students use this opportunity. This gives them an advantage in the labour market (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The school has good sports facilities. Last year basketball was very popular among students. Lower secondary students have art classes. At first they are somewhat reluctant but then they get interested. The art teachers organise exhibitions of students' works (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Against this backdrop of an emphasis on arts and sports as extracurricular activities in these Russian and Estonian examples, McNeal's (1995) attempt to specify whether certain types of extracurricular activities were more influential than others in preventing early school leaving is pertinent, albeit located in the context of the US. From a database of over 20,000 high-school students, it was found that participation in activities such as sports and fine arts significantly reduced the risk of dropping out, whereas participation in academic or vocational clubs seemed to have less effect. The beneficial effects of sport and fine arts remained even when important factors like race, socio-economic status, gender and ability were controlled. McNeal's (1995) study would suggest that if these are focused on activities such as fine arts and sports, rather than being predominantly academic, they would be more likely to contribute as a protective factor against early school leaving.

In a different school for adults with a more vocational emphasis in Estonia, there is not only a strong emphasis on extracurricular activities, but also a recognition of their key role in prevention of early school leaving:

Students are also offered various extracurricular activities; special activities are offered to those who are at risk of dropping out. They can do sports, participate in hobby clubs, in events organised by the student self-government, in driving courses for adults, etc. *It is called the 'late shift' (Tamm & Saar 2010).*

There is evidently strong availability of extracurricular activities in the Lithuanian secondary school profiled, again like Russia and Estonia, with a focus on arts and sport:

There are quite a lot of extracurricular activities available for students. Most of them are free of charge and concentrate on the areas of sports, drama and painting. There are some attempts made to involve those at risk of early school leaving in sports activities. There is a football team at school specially made of 'tough' students. There is a body-building activity that is particularly suited for those at risk. However, according to the views

expressed by the management the interest in these activities can last for a very short time (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

It is notable also that some targeting takes place to engage those at risk of early school leaving. However, further issues arise from this account. It must be noted that extracurricular activities need to incorporate a constructivist dimension, where the student actively engages in the design and planning as well as carrying out of the activities. This dimension would help engage the students' interests for a longer period of time; it is important that they are not merely passive consumers of programmes but an active learning dimension is included which gives them responsibility. This constructivist dimension was also noted as being missing in the context of the Lithuanian school in their accounts of individual education plans. The following interviewee from the Russian national report implies that such a constructivist approach is part of this project's design:

We are in the mode of search ourselves and we involve our students in the same mode. Some of our students, even the adult ones, who have to work in order to support their families, don't know about all the possibilities our unique city can offer them. Our goal in this respect is to open up those opportunities for them and help them realise their potential and plans through all those activities (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

For those who disengage from extracurricular activities and are also at risk of early school leaving, other issues may need to be addressed beyond the scope of extracurricular activities. It may be the case that extracurricular activities may only meet some needs of those at risk of early school leaving and that they cannot be a substitute for more intensive emotional therapeutic supports to engage with students more deep rooted problems (Downes 2006; Ivers et al., 2010). Another key point emerging from Mahoney's (2000) empirical research which arguably goes beyond its US context is that for youth experiencing poverty, 'the simultaneous participation of their peer social network in school [extracurricular] activities was critical' (p.512) to the associated reduction in early school leaving and criminal arrest. Brice Heath & McLaughlin's (1993) conclusion from examination of sixty different youth organisations involving approximately 24,000 youths in the US context concludes that the need to establish organisations outside the educational institution context is also a vital one:

Currently, those youth leaders and organisations judged most effective by young people do not define themselves with reference to schools. Most exist with relatively little recognition from or similarity to schools; most of the young who come to these organisations, in fact, regard school as a place that has rejected and labelled them by what they are not rather than what they are (p.4).

Community based extracurricular activities may engage a cohort of students at risk of early school leaving who may not wish to engage with school based extracurricular activities (Ivers et al., 2010), viewing the latter as simply 'more school'.

6.4.1 (iv) Multidisciplinary teams, whether community or school based (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

A solution focused approach needs to be adopted for the related issues, already

highlighted, of: alternatives to suspension, the need for emotional supports for children and young people, together with family level supports, as well as working onsite to provide system level supports for teachers regarding conflict resolution skills. Such a solution focused vision would prioritise the need for establishment of multidisciplinary teams which would engage with a range of schools. It is notable that the Russian national report is the sole one which provides evidence for the existence of such teams working in schools:

A team called 'Support Service' operates at the School. The members of the team are the educational psychologist, the school doctor, the school nurse, the person responsible for the pupils' nutrition, and the person responsible for art-therapy. There should also be the health care teacher but this position is not included into the list of members of the School staff. This team works in coordination with all other structures of the school (and can consult teachers on the psychological matters), and deals with children and their parents. The main target group of the Support Service is the pupils who miss classes and those with certain health problems (mainly alcohol and/or drug consumption). The responsibilities of the Support Service also cover the arrangement of all kinds of school events and activities: sport events, discussions, medical examinations; the psychologist and the social teacher carry out intervention programmes (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Field et al's (2007, p.97) OECD study illustrates the Finnish approach of adopting a multidisciplinary team as part of a continuum of interventions in schools. These include professionals from outside the school, such as a psychologist and social worker, together with the school's counsellor, the special needs teacher and classroom teacher. However, a major issue of the need for confidentiality has been highlighted in a range of student centred research in Ireland, with relevance for the needs of potential early school leavers in the context of multidisciplinary teams (Downes 2004; Downes et al., 2006; Downes & Maunsell 2007). It is of concern as to whether the privacy needs of students are respected in a multidisciplinary team that directly includes class teachers and special needs teachers. This issue of trust and confidentiality is particularly relevant for students whose families and even communities have experienced much alienation from the school system in the past.

Another example of a multidisciplinary team, which is community based and working across a range of schools is evident in the Irish context (Downes 2004; O'Reilly 2008; Downes 2010c). This *Familiscope* multidisciplinary team has been particularly successful in developing an outreach strategy to engage with children and families with backgrounds of addiction and nonattendance at school (Downes 2010c). Significant gains in pupils' school attendance have been observed due to the intervention. The multidisciplinary team, funded originally through EU URBAN funding, comprises of outreach care workers, counsellors for emotional support and speech and language therapists working onsite in schools with both teachers and pupils, as well as with parents. The focus of such a multidisciplinary team is on prevention of early school leaving, provision of social and emotional support to children, young people and their families, availability of instrumental support to families, as well as promotion of a positive school climate across schools, anti-bullying approaches, and involving professional development of teachers. The approach is child-centred, while working at a system level with families and teachers. The community based aspect of the team is with

a view for gaining more trust with families who have traditionally been alienated from the school system.

It is evident from a survey of the range of national reports that there is a current strategic gap for such preventative and early intervention approaches and a dearth of practical examples of such multidisciplinary teams working as part of an early school leaving prevention focus. It is a strategic issue that is ripe for development through support at European level, especially given EU Council level commitment to targets of reducing early school leaving to 10% on average across Europe by 2020.

6.4.1 (v) Strategies to encourage active citizenship in the students, including student councils (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR, PROCESS INDICATOR)

One impetus for student councils in schools derives from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 which emphasises the need for children and young people to be consulted in matters pertaining to their own welfare, consonant with their own level of maturity. This has been given a statutory foundation in the Irish context where student councils are a mandatory feature of secondary school environments. They have also been extended to primary school student councils (Collins 2005; Sharkey 2007; Downes & Maunsell 2007). This international legal framework complements somewhat the European Commission focus on lifelong learning as involving a central dimension of active citizenship.

Some of the national reports provide accounts of such active citizenship. For example, the Slovenian national report juxtaposes two examples of such student councils with one being perceived as successful, the other being vulnerable to a prevalent critique that these councils are merely tokenistic:

Pupils have the opportunity to participate in managing the school. Respondent 1 described the pupils' community as a strong one that delegates representatives in the school parliament. Pupils can also delegate their representatives to the school council; they have a say in procedures of adoption of formal acts prepared by the school and in evaluation of work of the school principle. She also claimed that their opinion was usually discussed and taken into consideration. However respondent 2 was sceptical about that pupils are prepared enough to use these official paths. Her observation is that they are not interested. *This is official form, but this official form..., they do not use much this form. We tell them that they have ways and if they would just realise and know how to use those ways... ..* To the question whether pupils need a help from teachers in this respect her answer was: *Yeah, certainly, but they are not interested... they just grumble in their benches but to act in organised way this they do not do on their own but with some help from our side they may* (Ivančič et al., 2010).

The following example from the Estonian national report offers a positive picture of such student councils:

The school has active student self-government; each group is represented by two students. They elect the president and two vice presidents. The self-government's work is done in sections: studies, dormitories, sports, culture, etc. Each section presents their ideas and makes suggestions in their area. Then it is decided what to do and how – be it helping those who are falling behind, rewarding the best, keeping order at events,

organising competitions and functions or something else. Anything to make the life of students interesting (Tamm & Saar 2010).

However, elsewhere in the Estonian context, time is perceived as a barrier for adults to contribute as active citizens in education:

Most adult students work at daytime and attend school on evenings. Therefore it is not easy to find time to take part in community events. The school has tried to introduce the community, its history and culture by organising short study trips.

We have many places of cultural and historic importance (....) You can see a lot during a two hour trip and the students are in awe when they see the ancient landmarks of culture. The time of a trip has to be agreed and coordinated beforehand and since most students work it is not easy to find suitable time. The school does not have student self-government – on the one hand, it is not required by law, and on the other hand, students do not have time for that (Tamm & Saar 2010).

In contrast with the previous example of adult education in Estonia, the following vocational school does allow for many practical paths to give expression to active citizenship.

The members of the student council come from all faculties; all nationalities are represented. Half of the members of the student council are Russians. They are active and are fluent in Estonian (Tamm & Saar 2010).

Resistance to active citizenship is described in the following example from the Lithuanian national report:

Speaking about 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) it is possible to conclude that such activities are not very frequent and not actively encouraged. The main reason why such activities as charity and fund raising are not present is that the students themselves come from lower social backgrounds and according to the management would be not ethical (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The Lithuanian national report offers this description of an informal approach to active citizenship which operates more at an individual than at a collective level in the educational institution:

The attention to students' contribution to their local community is given, however is not formalised or institutionalised. All ways of contribution to local community are on voluntary basis. The school council or management is authorised to make decisions on important ways of involvement into local community. The school council consists of five parents, five students and five teachers. According to the management, the students' opinion is most important, *We pay attention to school's contribution to local community, but this attention is not formalised. Although the school council is important in decision making, in reality it is much simpler. Students come to me with their proposals. It can be an event, a meeting, or sometimes they propose their decision on school's proposals. We regard every initiative positively and usually approve students' plans (Taljunaite et al., 2010).*

Nevertheless, in Lithuania, there is also some evidence of active citizenship as contributing to the local community:

The only way of promoting active citizenship is cleaning up the surroundings of the school and urban area. This activity is organised with the local community each year in spring. In spring 2009 it was coordinated together with Darom 2009 public initiative (with more than 10,000 volunteers) to clean up Vilnius and other surroundings in Lithuania from waste (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

A picture emerges in Lithuania of such active citizenship being less a bottom up, community and student led initiative but rather more a top down approach:

There are some differences in management and teacher's opinion (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The initiative was always from the management, class supervisors and teachers were the ones who implemented these activities with students. [...] yes the initiative is mostly from the management (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

This is only individual activity. At school, as far as I know, this does not exist. I only know that some individual students are involved in these activities, but it is not schools influence (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The involvement of students into active citizenship fostering activities also depends on personal initiative. The management mentioned one teacher who was a member of scout organisation. He was very active and a lot of students were involved into scout activities. The scouts were present at school for 12 years. However, when the teacher left his job the activities with scout organisation also stopped (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

It appears that community development and active citizenship in these Lithuanian examples are rather *ad hoc* and are not expressions of a strategic approach to such issues, whether at national, regional, local or institutional levels.

Active citizenship is treated also somewhat skeptically in the Russian national report:

It is a controversial point whether the school takes measures to bring up a truly active citizen or these actions are just done ostentatiously in order to fulfill the recommendations of the city administration. The interviewees disagree here. On the one hand, the school takes part in a number of activities aimed at helping some marginal social groups as well as soldiers in the Russian Army. Students gather money for napkins, bring toys and sweets for orphans; send parcels to the Russian Army – despite their own financial problems they are ready to help (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

It is noted that these activities are compulsory for all district schools:

Charity... charity fundraising takes place from time to time in our school but this is charity made by order from above, to be frank, i.e. schools are forced to do this – I mean obligatory district activities like 'A Parcel to a Soldier' – but this is just for show (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The Russian national report highlights a dimension of social control to such apparent active citizenship and locates them against the backdrop of military patriotic traditions from the Soviet Union:

In fact, the School does not encourage students to take part in any volunteer activities. Active citizenship sense is also expected to be fostered through military-patriotic

upbringing programmes that resemble the traditions of the USSR. The School cooperates with veterans of the Sky Troops who conduct additional physical training classes to prepare students for the yearly game *Zarnitsa* and organise military shows.

The School Council operates in order to bring up responsibility in students: every class elects 2 representatives who form this Council. Its main task is to help the vice principal to plan social life of the School and organise various School events. Each member of the Council is responsible for some sector of School life. Thus, each class has several students elected to deal with each sector and to provide the cooperation with the form-master who monitors the entire process (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

A similar picture emerges in a different secondary school in Russia:

The school takes up a range of measures for fostering active citizenship of its students. Those measures are, however, quite passive in terms of help and contributing to the local community on the part of the students. The school staff organises various extracurricular events concerned with civil public holidays such as the Day of Blockade, Day of Victory, etc. On those civil holidays, students accompanied by class supervisors visit the historical sites and monuments. Last year students and teachers made a multimedia presentation for the Day of Unity which was based on the idea of multiethnic and multicultural aspects of Russia. This project became the best one in the Nevskiy district where the school is located. Besides, the school film club arranges film screenings dedicated to various important events in the Russian history. The school is an active participant of the city secondary school programme 'Prevention of criminality through personal development'. All those actions, however, are aimed solely at students and not their integration into the communities they come from. The school doesn't organise and encourage any volunteering events for students that would involve charity fundraising, visiting the elderly, helping orphans, ethnic minorities, people living in poverty etc., (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

It is evident that to give expression to genuine active citizenship there needs to be strategic initiatives at local community levels across generations and in schools which are not governed by social control factors but rather from empowerment perspectives and giving voice to individuals and communities about their declared interests and needs, both at an individual and collective level. This active learning dimension, with local ownership over the goals of the learning and the communal initiatives, is thoroughly resonant with traditional goals of adult education.

6.4.1 (vi) Increased formative assessment approaches and not simply summative assessment approaches at secondary school (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

A heavy overreliance on summative assessment approaches at secondary school emerges from the Lithuanian and Russian national reports in particular. In the words of the Lithuanian national report:

The school management thinks that the assessment system is not appropriate. According to them it is based more on the quantitative criteria, but not on the qualitative.

The management presents an example: *We have even three (1,2 and 3) marks who mean 'fail'. This is absurd. Why is this confusion needed? [...] our secondary schools are dominated by soviet understanding: the students' diligence is more usually assessed than the competences. The girls are more diligent than boys: girls always done homework*

always take notes and we can say that the system of assessment is more favorable to girls. Imagine a situation: a student who always done homework but is quite mediocre will get better marks than the one who is gifted, but almost never does homework. Then this mediocre student will easily enter university, and this gifted one will not (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

We can come to the conclusion from these statements that assessment in the secondary schools does not mean improvement of competences of the students. It is based on formal, quantitative criteria (Taljunaite et al., 2010).

The Russian national report provides the following account of their secondary school exam system and offers a critique of its propensity to adopt multiple choice type questions:

According to the Federal Law # 17-Φ3 from February 9, 2007 ‘On Implementing Alterations into the Law ‘On Education’ of Russian Federation and the federal Law ‘On Graduate and Postgraduate Professional Education’, starting from 2007, the Unified State Examination (USE) has been implemented into the system of education and is obligatory for all pupils completing 9th and 11th grades of secondary schools. USE is a final exam for secondary school programmes as well as entry exam for the institutions of vocational and higher professional education. It is conducted in centralised mode in all regions of Russia simultaneously. Starting from 2009, USE is the only form of final and entry exams. USE is conducted for evaluating qualification in Russian language, Mathematics, Foreign languages (English, German, French, and Spanish), Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, Literature, History, Social Science, and Computer Science (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

The main idea for introducing USE into the Russian qualification assessment system is to make the entire evaluation procedure more transparent, corruption free and equal for all learners. Besides, USE is mostly based on multiple choice question tests, which is aimed at increasing objectivity of evaluation process (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

Generally, the entire implementation of the Unified State Examination, which is based on multiple choice questions, was received negatively by most educators and public figures. Now, when there have been several years since the exam was introduced, it becomes more and more evident that it only complicates the assessment system and the educational process instead of making the first more transparent and the second more effective. It appears that instead of learning, pupils are just simply trained to pass the USE multiple choice questions. It has also been found out that many questions of the tests are phrased incorrectly and therefore might have several right answers. Therefore, we tend to think that multiple choice tests cannot always serve as an effective assessment tool (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).

While the need for transparent assessment criteria to guard against corruption of the grading process is a real and extremely important issue, the limitations of multiple choice testing are well recognised. For example, the concerns of Wolf et al.(2000) with real-life relevance of the literacy skills, allied to Brooks et al’s (2005) emphasis on developing skills that transfer beyond immediate contexts of use (unlike multiple choice testing) are centrally recognised in educational and cognitive psychology generally, as the problem of ecological validity (e.g., Neisser 1967, 1976; Bronfenbrenner 1979; Gibson 1979). A key concern is to draw writing from meaningful, including culturally meaningful contexts, of relevance and interest to the individual learner (see also Glasser 1969; Bruner and Amsterdam 2000). Multiple choice tests can be presumed not to achieve this level of

capacity for construction of meaning (Carrigan & Downes 2009). Moreover, in arguing on behalf of the OECD for increased use of formative assessment in education, Field et al.(2007) outline key elements of such an approach. These include: a classroom culture encouraging interaction, establishment of learning goals and tracking of individual student progress toward those goals; active involvement of students in the learning process, feedback on student performance and adaptation of instruction to meet identified needs (p.85).

6.4.1 (vii) Opportunities for distance education for secondary school (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)

Distance education for secondary school does not appear to be a strategic priority in Bulgaria, as interviewees observe that it is not yet offered in the Bulgarian examples, whether at secondary school level or third level institutions:

Even though it is considered important, the College does not yet offer distant education (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

There is not yet distance learning at the university, though work is ongoing in this area (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).

This situation contrasts most notably with the availability of distance education in Hungary and Estonia. The Hungarian national report highlights a particularly interesting model of school distance education:

Distance education was launched at the school in 2003. The model is based on a special method developed by a group of experts working for a foundation of a Hungarian University (Széchenyi István University in Gödöllő) and for three secondary schools (Tatabánya, Pécs, Szolnok) (Balogh et al., 2010).

The point of the method is that students receive a different handbook for each subject, which is an important tool for the autonomous assimilation of the traditional secondary-school textbook. At the beginning it suggests a learning schedule, somewhat similar to a teacher's traditional work schedule, that indicates when to start a certain chapter in the textbook and how much time to spend on it. The booklet contains different types of exercises, all based on the textbook: some of them are worked out at the end of the booklet, facilitating self-checking, others, having no solution in the book, should be sent to the teacher via e-mail for marking and evaluation (Balogh et al., 2010).

The Hungarian report continues:

As researchers say that learning from books is easier than using the computer, these helping materials are sold in the form of printed books (the price for all handbooks for one year is around 50 euros). Handbooks are continuously being further developed, based on students', teachers' and external experts' opinions. So far, the development has cost 14-15 million Forint (around 55 thousand Euro) and – as the school has not received any financial support for it – a part of the work has been done without remuneration. It is possible to use them in other institutes, but they can only be published with the permission of the school (Balogh et al., 2010).

This model has been expanded at a regional level in Hungary:

Great efforts have been made to spread the model throughout the region, e.g., teachers from the institute give lectures on andragogy to their colleagues from other schools and

invite them to participate in the development of the handbooks. Within the framework of a cooperation agreement on distance education among five local governments, the institute has the opportunity to further develop the model: teachers share their experience with their colleagues in vocational schools so that the latter ones can write distance education handbooks for vocational school students (Balogh et al., 2010).

It offers a mixed model:

The programme is not a traditional distance education course, as it also offers ordinary secondary-school classes. Lessons are held on Saturdays, from 8AM to 8PM. The eleven lessons, covering all subjects, are traditional classes and not consultations (as in most distance education programmes). They are not compulsory, students can choose among them according to their needs (Balogh et al., 2010).

Besides Saturday classes, personal consultation is offered every Thursday and Friday from 4h30 to 8 PM, where problematic points of the subject material can be discussed in detail. Altogether, including ordinary classes and personal consultations, students can have a maximum of fifteen hours of personal communication with tutors, which is two-fifths of the number of lessons in an ordinary secondary-school. As this programme is a distance education course, participants maintain daily contact with the tutors via internet and thus receive continuous feedback on their progress, even without a personal relationship (Balogh et al., 2010).

Students' results from this model appear to be positive:

Some of our students work abroad, they don't even come home, because they work abroad, but they can send in the exercises and ask questions via internet, so this is a method that seems to be effective. We can already say this, because the first group of distance learning students finished their studies last year, and they had very good results (Balogh et al., 2010).

The Estonian national report also highlights a key role for distance education:

Distance learners have classes twice a week (14 hours in total). *Each year we open one group that comes to school three days a week so that students could attend classes after work but we still have to start at 4 p.m.* (Tamm & Saar 2010).

People with children and those who live further away, in other towns or in the country, prefer distance learning (Tamm & Saar 2010).

We have some 'unconventional distance learners' who are working abroad, in Norway or in Sweden. They come back to Estonia for a month or two and during that time they participate in classes; they are provided with learning materials and tasks which they have to acquire and complete by the next time they come home. This form of study can be called 'real' distance learning; such opportunity is offered only exceptionally and not to those who work and live in Estonia because there is concern that such form of learning may have a negative effect on learning results (Tamm & Saar 2010).

An important cautionary note is added here for school-related distance education, namely, that the students must be highly motivated and self-directing:

The school has created an internet platform (BIKO). Teachers publish learning materials on the Internet and students can complete tests and assignments (Tamm & Saar 2010).

The school is planning to use the possibilities offered by the e-school even more. *We are planning to do this. The e-school enables students to study without losing work days. It is important in the current economic situation.* However, using the e-school requires from students high motivation and self-discipline (Tamm & Saar 2010).

This issue of motivation, confidence, self-efficacy of the learner participating in distance education for secondary schooling suggests that such a mode of learning cannot be assumed to be suitable for those experiencing difficulties with literacy, fear of failure and other psychological barriers to education. Nevertheless, it clearly does meet the needs of some cohorts of learners for secondary school.

SECTION 7 - 8 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION 7	SUMMARY
	<p>This review of twelve European countries' educational institutions, strategies, policies and practice in relation to access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups highlights the need for a more rigorous monitoring and review of countries' approaches to promotion of access to lifelong learning. A framework of structural and process indicators has been argued to be a key dimension to such a monitoring and evaluation process. Without such a framework for transparency in relation to policy, structures and practice at European, national, regional and institutional levels, it is difficult to apprehend how the wide range of systemic obstacles to access manifested across these European countries in this report will be overcome. It is essential that structural, process and outcome indicators for access to education are indelibly intertwined with a comparable system of indicators, and a review and monitoring process for indicators, in relation to prevention of early school leaving at a European level. A range of frequent system level blockages and difficulties are discussed as emerging from the national reports. A systems level focus also highlights opportunities for promotion of organic systems of relation for access to education for marginalised groups in Europe.</p>

7.1 Summary of Key Findings Regarding Structural and Process Indicators for Access to Education for Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups

The benefits of European Commission level structural, process and outcome indicators for access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups

The benefits of European Commission level structural, process and outcome indicators, as benchmarks of progress of Nation States in relation of access of marginalised groups to lifelong learning, include as follows:

- the indicators can offer transparent criteria for establishing a State's progress in this area over time;
- they offer a framework for ongoing review and dialogue both within a State and across States;

- they allow for what is called in another educational context, ipsative assessment; the comparison point for progress is the State's previous performance in relation to these indicators;
- clear targets for progress can be established based on the indicators;
- the indicators can distinguish State effort in improving access from actual outcomes; they can offer an incentive for governments to invest in the area of access to lifelong learning;
- the indicators provide a systemic level focus for change rather than reducing change to one simplistic magic bullet cause;
- the indicators can bring greater unity to an area recognised as fragmented at national levels;
- the indicators provide recognition of diverse starting points of some countries relative to others.

7.1.1 The Interviews for the national reports

The interviews for the 12 national reports involved senior management from: formal education organisations, including universities in each participating country; prison institutions; non-formal education organisations and postprimary schools. For each national report, detailed interviews were also conducted with senior government department officials with responsibility for State policy in relation to education and related areas of access to education and groups experiencing social marginalisation.

The timeframe for the interviews for the national reports was between April and September 2009. All national reports were completed in 2010. Participating countries for this research are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, England, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Russia, Scotland and Slovenia.

7.1.2 Key Emerging Indicators at Macro-Exo System Levels for Formal Education

Key emerging indicators at macro-exo system levels for formal education include the need for:

- A central driving committee at state level for lifelong learning and access for marginalised groups including clear funding sources;
- Clarification of the criteria to ascertain socio-economic disadvantage given the observed tendency, especially in Central and Eastern European countries, for targeting for access strategies and supports to occur for more easily identifiable target groups like those with a disability or from an ethnic minority – in contrast with groups experiencing socio-economic disadvantage;
- The need for a formal obligation on institutions from State to improve access and for incentives for third level institutions such as differentiated funding from State based on implementation of access goals;
- State-led incentives to different faculties and departments within third level institutions to increase access: A faculty and department level focus to increase access;
- Specific targets for the inclusion of different risk groups;

- An access strategy for the so-called 'elite' universities;
- Developing an accessibility index to challenge the perceived tension between a university desire to be in world top 100 and access issues;
- Pathways for strategic communication across government departments;
- Representation of target groups, including ethnic minorities in the decision making processes at national level regarding access to education;
- A system of reserved places or equivalent approach to increase participation of underrepresented groups at third level;
- A regional strategy for access;
- A grant system for traditionally underrepresented groups that provides a satisfactory income and which includes free third level fees for such traditionally excluded groups;
- A coherent support strategy for access to third level education for orphans and young people in care;
- Performance indicators and targets of institutions to increase accountability as part of institutional mainstreaming of access issues.

7.1.3 Key Emerging Indicators at Micro-Meso System Levels for Formal Education

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- Key emerging indicators at micro-meso system levels for formal education include the need for:
 - Education institutional strategies for access for socio-economically disadvantaged groups;
 - Development of outreach institutional strategies that go beyond mere information based models;
 - Availability of institution free of charge during summertime and evenings for community groups from marginalised areas;
 - Formal links between organisation and NGOs representing marginalised groups;
 - An access strategy of third level institutions which engages with primary and secondary students experiencing socio-economic disadvantage;
 - Preparatory admission courses;
 - Study workshops to provide academic support;
 - Communication with spokespersons, opinion makers and community leaders in socio-economically marginalised or ethnic minority communities;
 - Representation of target groups through members of such groups being employed in the educational institution;
 - A targeting of young immigrants and young members of a target group: cohort effect as a positive potential;
 - More imaginative pathways for feedback than written surveys;
 - Modular courses;
 - Challenge to institutional staff attitudes;

7.1.4 Key Emerging Indicators at Macro-Exo System Levels for Non-formal Education

Key emerging indicators at macro-exo system levels for non-formal education include the need for:

- A national and regional strategy for non-formal education –to relate but not reduce non-formal education to the formal system;
- Pathways to overcome process difficulties regarding recognition of prior learning;
- Non-formal education as a bridge to ethnic minorities, immigrants and those experiencing social exclusion;
- Funded strategies to develop local community lifelong learning centres.

7.1.5 Key Emerging Indicators at Micro-Meso System Levels for Non-formal Education

Key emerging indicators at micro-meso system levels for non-formal education include the need for:

- A strategy to develop community leaders;
- The arts as a key bridge into societal and systemic participation *via* non-formal education;
- Non-formal as a path to formal education;
- Content of courses as meeting the systemic goals of active citizenship and personal fulfillment;
- Whole school approaches for teaching staff at adult education schools and community lifelong learning centres.

7.1.6 Key Emerging Indicators at Macro-Exo System Levels for Prison Education

Key emerging indicators at macro-exo system levels for prison education include the need for:

- A national strategy for education in prison;
- Opportunities for distance education in prison and web-based learning;
- Staff continuity and development in non-formal and prison education;
- Quality of prison library infrastructure and support for prisoner use of libraries;
- An education strategy for high security prisons.
- Initial assessment approaches for prisoners

7.1.7 Key Emerging Indicators at Micro-Meso Levels for Prison Education

Key emerging indicators at micro-meso levels for prison education include the need for:

- Overcoming practical problems to allow the prisoner to study in prison and at third level;
- Strategies to recognise that it is often hardest to motivate student prisoners in basic education;

- Overcoming resistance from prison officers in some countries to prisoner learning;
- Establishment and implementation of a principle of normality in prisons;
- Individual plans for prisoners for their release;
- Sufficient space in prison for education;
- Content of courses in prison to engage interest and motivation of the learner;
- Professional development support and resource materials for teachers in prisons;
- Individual education plans for prisoners;
- Peer effects on motivation to learn in prison;
- Prisoner exchange based on educational reasons;

7.1.8 Key Emerging Indicators at Macro-Exo System Levels for Post-primary Education

Key emerging indicators at macro-exo system levels for post-primary education include the need for:

- Alternatives to suspension
- Minimising stratification at post-primary level as a barrier to equality in education

7.1.9 Key Emerging Indicators at Micro-Meso System Levels for Post-primary Education

Key emerging indicators at micro-meso system levels for post-primary education include the need for:

- Emotional support services and bullying prevention strategies at school;
- Promotion of extracurricular activities;
- Multidisciplinary teams, whether community or school based;
- Strategies to encourage active citizenship in the students, including student councils;
- Increased formative assessment approaches and not simply summative assessment approaches at secondary school;

It is recommended that the EU Commission consider leading a process for the development of agreed structural, process and outcome indicators for access to lifelong learning – for formal and non-formal education, including prison education. These proposed European level indicators would also require a review process to examine their implementation and development across European countries.

This review of twelve European countries' educational institutions, strategies, policies and practice in relation to access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups highlights the need for a more rigorous monitoring and review of countries' approaches to promotion of access to lifelong learning. A framework of structural and process indicators has been argued to be a key dimension to such a monitoring and evaluation process. Without such a framework for transparency in relation to policy, structures and practice at national, regional and institutional levels, it is difficult to apprehend how the wide range of systemic obstacles to access manifested across these European countries in this report will be overcome. While it is

acknowledged that such indicators are not a sufficient condition to open doors for access to lifelong learning for socio-economically disadvantaged groups in Europe, nevertheless such a framework of indicators is a necessary condition for this opening to come to pass.

There is a further need to recognise that the function of a range of access indicators are *compensatory* – and that prevention is better than cure (through compensatory approaches in relation to access). In other words, a prevention focus would direct attention and intervention to a) relative poverty differences, b) relative difference in school performance across different socio-economic groups, c) degree of spatial segregation in a country along social class based lines. All of these are pivotal background factors affecting access to education for traditionally marginalised groups. For this reason, it is essential to keep these outcome indicators - a), b) and c) - firmly monitored in interpreting a state's progress towards access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups and individuals.

It is evident that the indicators are not to be weighted exactly equally, that some aspects are absolutely crucial to have in place, whereas others complement these foundational ones. A weakness in the systems theory framework is that it does not indicate through its focus on different levels which levels, or dimensions of levels, might be most essential. While recognising that there is a need to go beyond a simple relativism of indicators, it is recommended that each member state would commit to their key priorities in relation to the indicators to be implemented as a matter of urgency in the short term. This would be influenced also by which key indicators are already in place in their system of indicators. Rutter's (1985) work in developmental psychology emphasises the role of interaction effects between protective factors, as well as between risk factors. The synergistic interaction effects in promoting access to education need further examination in the lived experiences of the students accessing education

Lewin (2007)⁵⁴ offers some cautionary notes in relation to targets and indicators in the context of access to education mainly in the contexts of Africa and Asia which also require acknowledgment in a European context. These include the dangers that: governments' choosing between indicators for prioritising may be somewhat arbitrary; paradoxically, incentives may penalise the successful and reward 'the laggards' (p.595) so that 'if the price of success is the withdrawal of subsidy and additional support to achieve the target, it may be more attractive to fall short' (p.595); there may be trade-offs between targets and interest groups may be threatened by resource allocation implications of specific targets; target setting needs to be more joined up in relation to different system characteristics, including for example, primary and secondary education, and third level education. The need for a systems level focus to promote dialogue at and between all the different relevant levels of an educational system in relation to indicators and targets is a clear implication of Lewin's (2007) point regarding the 'problematic' relationships between target setters and target getters:

Too frequently they are different groups of actors with different pathways of accountability to different masters. Targets set by others without ownership by those in a position to act are unlikely to deliver benefits and target may lack credibility and commitment. If target setters have not had experience of target getting they may set unrealistic targets (p.596)

⁵⁴ In his Presidential Address to the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE) annual meeting, 'Diversity and Inclusion', Queen's University, Belfast, 8-10 September 2006

In other words, a constructivist approach to learning, where the learner is involved in choosing learning goals related to his/her own experience, is not simply to be confined to the classroom or lecture hall but is a national, regional, local, community⁵⁵ and institution wide learning process in relation to targets and indicators. The point raised in the Slovenian national report that, '*A corollary of a commitment to lifelong learning is a strategy to prevent alienation of students from the school system*' (Ivančič et al., 2010), highlights the systemic interrelation between both access to lifelong learning and prevention of early school leaving. Thus, it is essential that structural, process and outcome indicators for access to education are indelibly intertwined with a comparable system of indicators and a review and monitoring process for indicators in relation to prevention of early school leaving at a European level.

A differentiated approach to the proposed structural, process and outcome indicators would also need to recognise the need for more dialogue with countries from Southern Europe to establish other indicators for access – it was noted at the outset that a limitation of the current research is that no Southern European countries were included. Sultana (2001) develops an argument for a Mediterranean regional space which would require a specific contextual focus beyond presumably what has emerged as indicators in the current research. Sultana (2001) makes the following cogent argument that:

Practically all the states bordering on the basin share a common political history of domination and economic peripheralisation. All the states of the Mediterranean – with the exception of France and Turkey – have only recently emerged from decades – and in some cases, centuries – of either colonial domination, or dictatorial rule...The tardy establishment of democratic government in Portugal (1974), Spain (1975) and Greece (1974) means that in these countries as well, memories of totalitarian regimes are still fresh, as are those of Albania (1990), Croatia (1990), Slovenia (1991), Macedonia (1991) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992). (p.21)

However, much of this political and economic history is also resonant with countries from Central and Eastern Europe which have been centrally included in this current research.

Another issue raised by Rajamani (2006) with relevance by analogy to development of structural, process and outcome indicators of access to education for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups is whether a differentiated approach would occur for 'central' features (p.93) of such indicators. This raises the question as to whether States and the European Commission could agree to certain central indicators that all would aspire to progress on collectively, whereas other ones would be more for the direct priority of each country based on their current situation. The advantages of this is it would bring increased focus to system level reform; the counterargument against it is that it invites relegation of the other indicators to being peripheral with the consequent danger of a tradeoff between indicators (already noted by Lewin 2007), where some would be relegated somewhat for the development of others. It would seem that the counterargument has such force that the indicators need to be adopted without an EU

⁵⁵ It is worth highlighting that Freirean models of community development, so influential in the theory and practice of much adult education, both historically and currently, is in many ways similarly interpretable as constructivist learning principles applied not only in the classroom situation but also at a community level.

level prioritising of core indicators over what would inevitably then be perceived as other more peripheral ones; a systems level focus would eschew such an attempt at ‘magic bullet’ indicators without giving recognition to the need for a holistic, systemic strategic approach to increasing access to education for traditionally marginalised groups.

A Commission staff working document (2009) states:

Countries are currently at very different levels of development regarding participation in adult learning as well as policies on the quality, financing and the development of the sector. However, what characterises the sector across the whole Europe is not only its diversity but also the lack of participation especially among those who most need it (low qualified, drop outs, disadvantaged, etc.) (p.79)

It is imperative that this changes. Adoption of a framework of structural, process and outcome indicators for access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups in European society can offer a window of accountability for policy makers and institutions. It can provide a step forward beyond mere words to action at various levels. It can move beyond discourse and sophistry in seeking to ensure that access to education is, to adapt Thrasymachus’s words in Plato, not merely the will of the stronger.

7.2 Other Findings of Relevance from a Systems Theory Perspective

A systems theory level focus on access to education interrogates disconnections and discontinuities across different dimensions of a purportedly common system and society. This comparative report examining such systems across 12 European countries regarding access to education has identified a range of systemic features where there are disconnections or assumptions of separation between key system elements – and which require system level intervention to challenge such assumptions of separation which are detrimental to implementation of a strategic focus on access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

7.2.1 Systemic Assumed Separation: Strategies and Structures

One frequent system level feature of assumed separation which emerges from this cross-country analysis is concerning the disjunction between strategies and structures. There is an evident need to ensure that strategies do not lack structures to a) implement and b) review such strategies. Such structures often are required to be established in order to ensure c) communication with and d) representation of the target groups for which such strategies are designed. A paradigm shift is ongoing to facilitate a systemic recognition that these groups are not simply objects of social and educational policy but are also active subjects in the design and implementation of such policy.

This system level caesura between strategies and structures evidently occurs across a range of countries regarding national level structures for organisation and implementation of access and lifelong learning. There is a noticeable chasm between apparent commitments at European Council and Commission strategic level to promotion of and support for non-formal education, for example, and the glaring absence of such national level structures for non-formal education in countries such as Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary (and Russia). Another such systemic split or assumed separation occurs between a European Council commitment to promotion of active citizenship and personal

fulfilment dimensions to lifelong learning and a systemic diffusion of responsibility in many countries as to who, where and how this strategic commitment is to be given flesh.

Similarly, representation of target groups in national and regional level systemic structures is often at a rudimentary or tokenistic level, if it occurs at all. There is a clear sense that national and even regional centres of government wish to retain a sense of power and distance from such groups – a hierarchical systemic relation is typically in operation that is a feature of an inorganic system of relations.

7.2.2 Systemic Assumed Separation: Parts of an Institution Operate in Parallel Due to Historically Different Goals of these Parts

An educational institution, including schools, cannot be assumed to be a unitary space. Rather it can be analysed as a series of microspaces with different subcultures, histories and expectations of diverse individuals. This comparative analysis highlights such a systemic feature of assumed separation between diverse systemic parts of the *same* institution. One example of this is where commitment to an access strategy for traditionally underrepresented groups in a university institution is perceived by a number of staff and institutional sections as being peripheral to the ‘core’ institutional concern with learning. In other words, institutional mainstreaming of an access to education agenda has not occurred in such a university – where access issues are treated as a peripheral feature of the university, as has been frequently highlighted, such as in the national reports of Hungary, Lithuania and Austria.

The prison institutional context offers a prime example of such subsystems operating in parallel, in assumed separation due to historical considerations. Thus, many national reports observe that the educational dimension and the tutors are not only separate from the general prison management section but that there is minimal scope for communication, never mind representation, between educational providers in prison and the prison ‘authorities’. An exception to this pattern appears to be at least some prisons in Estonia where good communication is reported between education providers and prison management. This general division of labour within the prison institutional context serves to render education as peripheral to the strategic priorities of the prison management. A systemic restructuring to connect the educational and the prison management dimensions is a necessary (though not a sufficient) condition to give effect to the strategic priority of lifelong learning in prison.

At a different level within the prison institutional system a notable challenge has taken place to parallel subsystems and structures through the provision of education, not only in a separate site within the prison, but also in the prison wing itself. This feature of more than one prison in England, highlighted in the English national report, provides a model of a system that goes beyond what Heidegger (1927) terms, ‘side-by-sideness’ (Downes 2009).

A further example of the need to reconstruct subsystemic relations within an institution to challenge the historically divergent functions of such subsystemic habits and inertia includes the provision, by secondary (and primary) schools, of opportunities for adult education classes in the school building in the evening, at weekends and during the summer. It is to be recognised that school based sites of community lifelong learning are but one possible location and are not necessarily suitable for everyone, especially those with a history of alienation from the school system (Maunsell 2011). Nevertheless, the opening of the school institution for lifelong learning in the community offers

advantages not only in relation to equity and equality of access to education but also for efficiency in use of resources at local community level. This practice appears to occur in some countries such as Slovenia, Ireland and Austria, according to the national reports, though with some reluctance to do so exhibited in the Bulgarian and Lithuanian national reports.

At a national systemic level, an example is provided by the Austrian national report of a government department with a distinctive historical focus which now encompasses a strategic area that is largely in an assumed separation from this historical focus. The strategic area of non-formal education in Austria is located under the Ministry for Labour rather than a Ministry for Education or for the Arts. This disjunction of ambition between non-formal education and the Ministry priorities is evinced in the Austrian national report interview with the Ministry Senior Official. It is unsurprising that such a split in strategic priorities would take place, given the systemic relation both operate within.

A quite different example of such a system level bifurcation occurs at postprimary level where the historically narrower goal of teaching students through a subject centred curriculum is in an assumed separation from the need for a relational pedagogical approach. International research, including the TALIS study (OECD 2009), highlights the need for professional development for teacher classroom management skills. This chimes with the current comparative research which observes the need for teachers to engage in conflict resolution skills and to embrace wider, more holistic goals to education, including affective dimensions of the student's experience.

7.2.3 Systemic Assumed Connection: A Transitions Focus

A paradigmatic feature of a systems theory approach is acknowledgement of the need to interrogate transitions across systems; transitions are conceptualised as providing both barriers and opportunities for the learner. This issue also emerges from a systemic focus on access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups in this report.

A pervasive theme across many national reports (e.g., Norway, Belgium, Scotland, Hungary, Ireland and Estonia) is the need to go beyond limited models of transmission of information as a strategy to reach traditionally marginalised groups. Such information tends to travel poorly in its transition to the contexts of those experiencing a range of barriers to the education system. The limitations of an informational approach have been stringently criticised in this report. Information cannot replace an outreach strategy that encompasses a realisation of the transitional barriers between individuals and cohorts with low levels of education, on the one hand, and the educational institution, on the other hand. A transition focus anticipates an alienation from and a fear of the educational system and proactively seeks to build systemic links to overcome such assumptions of separation.

A related feature of a transitions focus to give expression to a systems theory framework is also highlighted in a number of national reports. This dimension of a transitional focus is identification of the key role of community based lifelong learning centres in engaging with the social, emotional and educational needs of individuals and groups who may have been originally alienated from education. These are exemplified in the Bulgarian, Irish, Scottish, English, Estonian national reports, as well from examples in Kosovo and Finland. The community based location operates as a 'mediating structure'

(Berger & Neuhaus 1977), as a site of transition between the individual, community and the 'system'.

The difficulties for prisoners' transition to society after release from prison is well-recognised and emerges strongly also from national reports. A less identified transitional need, though identified in places in some national reports (e.g., Scotland, Hungary), is that of an individual education plan for a prisoner upon entry to prison. One example of where transition is treated as a positive potentiality, rather than simply as a problem to be overcome, is the practice of allowing prisoners to move prisons based on their educational needs, as is highlighted exclusively in the Belgian national report. This highly progressive practice is a systemic dimension that is only possible in a system that is dynamic rather than an inorganic system that is static and inert.

A different transitional focus to challenge static hierarchy also emerges from a systemic recognition of a two-way flow between non-formal education courses and formal education, rather than merely seeing the former as being instrumental to and colonised by the latter. While issues of transparency and quality may need to be more firmly addressed in many non-formal education sectors in order to give effect to such a dynamic transitional flow between formal and non-formal education, it is important to distinguish such a dynamic transition from a more static transition, as assimilation of the non-formal to the formal education system.

7.2.4 Mirror Image Inversion as a Systemic Structural Relation

While the metaphor of a 'glass ceiling' is often used to characterise barriers to access, this image of a mirror can also be amplified to offer a structural dimension to systemic oppositions in education. A key feature of mirror image symmetry is that one side is an inversion of the other (Levi-Strauss 1973; Downes 2003). A noticeable feature of the relation between formal and non-formal education systems across different national reports is that such a mirror image relation exists. These inversions include staff continuity in formal education compared with lack of continuity in the non-formal education system. Similarly, professional development opportunities for staff occurs much more in the formal sector and is largely nonexistent in the non-formal education sector. Other diametric polarities include the presence/absence of a curriculum, presence/absence of exams, presence/absence of a career structure and opportunities for promotion, monitoring/lack of scrutiny of quality of the courses.

The movement towards recognition of prior learning represents a challenge to such a diametric mirror image relation between formal and non-formal education. A challenge for the non-formal sector, in particular, is to reconstruct the relation to the formal education sector through adopting dimensions of formal education (e.g., monitoring of quality, professional development and career structure), without becoming colonised by and reduced to the formal education sector.

Another systemic danger of a mirror image relation of inversion is that between so-called 'elite' universities and other higher education universities and colleges, where the elite universities seek to remove themselves from concern with issues of accessibility and affordability, and diversity. This is particularly emphasised in the English and Scottish national reports. Such a diametric division between research intensive universities and more community oriented universities leads to a reinforcement of societal divisions, particularly with regard to access to positions of power in society. It gives expression to traditions such as the 'town and gown' role of universities feeding the

cultural and political elites in the US (Schuetze 2011). The development of a university accessibility index, as a dimension of quality, at European level, would offer one step towards challenging such diametric mirror image systemic divisions.

A different mirror image inversion, which requires challenge at a systemic level, is that of a perceived normality-otherness opposition within a university institutional culture. Such a normality-otherness opposition - where the normality institutionalised tends to be a middleclass normality - is increasingly being recognised as untenable and in need of challenge in a university institutional culture committed to mainstreaming access issues and to promoting increased access and participation of traditionally underrepresented groups.

The notion of a society diametrically split into different social groups in a mirror image relation to each other invites a focus not only on relative inequality. It also invites a chronosystemic focus on historical changes to exacerbate such inequality. Influential economist Galbraith's (1992) *The Culture of Contentment* offers a salutary warning that social unrest tends to take place not so much when people are unhappy with their own situation, but when they see their children having less hope of progress and a worse quality of life than they themselves have had.

This point serves as an important backdrop to analysis of the potential impact of the recession⁵⁶ on access to education for the rising generation in particular. It also invites implicit modification of Rawls' (1972) conception of the need to give individuals a 'minimum stake' in society, as part of a modern day social contract. This minimum stake is to ensure societal stability and assent to a social contract in modern society. The relational dimension invoked by Galbraith invites the implication that a quasiRawlsian minimum stake in society is not simply an objective standard of living in society; it also can be extended to include a subjective and relational dimension as a minimum stake, to influence acceptance of the legitimacy of a societal contract. The relational minimum stake is mediated through the reference point of what the individual has experienced before and what they expect of their children's future, for example, regarding access to educational opportunities.

⁵⁶ See Appendix for some interviewee accounts in national reports on the impact of the recession/economic crisis in Europe on access to lifelong learning

SECTION 8

Key Recommendations for the European Commission: Developing EU Commission Structure, Process and Outcome Indicators for Access to Education for Marginalised Groups

Based on this qualitative research across 12 European countries in relation to access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups – research consisting of 192 interviews in total with senior management of education institutions and government officials – the following are key recommendations for the European Commission on this issue:

- To establish a framework of structural, process and outcome indicators to assess progress in relation to access to education for traditionally disadvantaged groups and for prevention of early school leaving;
- To engage in dialogue with all member states about establishing a central driving committee at government level to promote access to education where no such committee exists; this driving committee would have a cross-departmental remit in each country and would also help stimulate regional level strategies in this area;
- To establish a regular review process for states in relation to the implementation of and progress made in relation to the structural, process and outcome indicators;
- To lead a process of establishing transparent criteria to assess socio-economic disadvantage, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, with a view to clarifying target groups experiencing such disadvantage to enable strategies to increase their access to education;
- To establish a framework to inform national and regional strategies for non-formal education, in States where no such strategies exist;
- To establish a framework based on structural, process and outcome indicators, to inform national strategies for prison education, also including high security prisons, in States where no such strategies exist;
- To further develop a funding framework for community based learning centres across States that would include outreach and non-formal education to engage with unemployed people, early school leavers, ethnic minorities experiencing social marginalisation, people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage;
- To foster European level discussion and agreement about the necessary technological dimensions to be developed to ensure the establishment of distance education in prisons; this technological development would meet the security concerns of the prison regarding prisoner communication with the external world and access to restricted internet sites;
- To further develop a funding framework to provide incentives to universities to increase access to traditionally marginalised groups, including a focus on differentiated funding based on performance in relation to access, and also a faculty/department specific focus on incentives and access;

- To further develop a funding framework for arts education to engage with unemployed people, early school leavers, ethnic minorities experiencing social marginalisation, people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and prisoners;
- To lead the development of an accessibility index internationally, building further on existing indices, to monitor the performance of universities internationally; this index would include a focus on the performance of so-called 'elite' universities in relation to access for marginalised groups.
- To encourage universities to open their facilities free of charge to community groups in the evening and summer, to liaise more closely with NGOs representing ethnic minorities and traditionally marginalised communities, to engage in preparatory admission courses for underrepresented groups, to give representation to access issues in university strategies, policies, structures and practices;
- To facilitate the development of different distinctive indicators of quality for non-formal education, consonant with the often different goals of non-formal education; building on existing initial indicators; this would both recognise the need for more connection between the non-formal and formal education sectors while also protecting the non-formal sector from 'colonisation' by the formal education sector;
- To engage with national governments regarding the issue of providing sufficient space (and time) in all prisons to allow for lifelong learning in prisons, to ensure that access to lifelong learning is a core prison feature and not simply peripheral to prison authorities' concerns;
- To develop a funding framework for emotional support, alternative structures to suspension from school, for the establishment of multidisciplinary teams to provide emotional support and with an outreach dimension to engage with students at risk of early school leaving and their families experiencing social marginalisation;
- To lead an EU level initiative on prevention of school suspension and expulsion and developing alternatives to suspension and expulsion from school;
- To further lead dialogue on the development of transparent criteria for recognition of prior learning in relation to access to the formal higher education system in order to tackle the obstacles to recognition of prior learning currently experienced in a number of States.
- To engage with national governments to clarify how the distinct though related lifelong learning goals of social inclusion/cohesion, active citizenship, employment and personal fulfillment are to be given systemic expression strategically through structures at national and regional level.

SECTION 9 MODELS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Eight models of good practice concerning access to education for marginalised groups: Criteria for selection

It is important to enter a number of *caveats* regarding the identification of European models of good practice in the area of access to education specifically, and to models of good practice more generally. Firstly, as has been recognised by Burkhart et al. (2003) in the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) report on models of good practice for drug use prevention, including those fostering social inclusion and preventing early school leaving – there is a dearth of evaluated models of good practice across Europe. Not only is evaluation a limited priority across a wide number of European countries, but even where evaluation takes place it is not necessarily a rigorous or systematic exercise. Similarly, few of the models being identified here as being of good practice in relation to access to education for traditionally disadvantaged groups have been subjected to rigorous independent evaluation.

A second limitation here is that any assumption of transferability of models of good practice tends to excise the individual, interpersonal dimension to the practice. Yet very often it is the individual, interpersonal, relational dimension that is key to the success of a given practice. Sultana (2008) refers to ‘the people dimension of the implementation challenge’ (p.5) in the context of educational reform. A further caveat to identification of models of good practice is that it is frequently difficult to ascertain which are the key dimensions to a model’s success, and which are less important. It is not necessarily every feature of a model that needs to be transferred, though the task of identifying necessary and sufficient conditions for success of a practice is a complex one. In other words, even where successful outcomes are identified from a model there is rarely a direct one to one correspondence in a complex system and model between the outcome and the prior causal and supporting conditions (see also Downes 2007). It must be further recognised that for a model to be transferable it is essential that local ownership of the process is taken by the key stakeholders. Transferability requires a combination of ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approaches. This is well-recognised in the area of community development and also recently regarding adoption of school institutions of government driven initiatives at school level (Doherty 2009).

Each national report was requested to furnish examples of good practice models from their country, based on an agreed template. The criteria employed in this comparative report for selection of priority models of good practice concerning access to education for marginalised groups from the ones described in the national reports are as follows: (a) central relevance to the research domain, (b) success in outreach to and engagement with marginalised groups, including ethnic minorities (c) innovative examples, (d) active involvement of the target group in the practice and/or design, including some evidence of sustained engagement with hard to reach groups, (e) giving concrete expression to key lifelong learning goals of personal development or active citizenship, as well as social inclusion, (f) engaging with key basic skills such as literacy, (g) potential for transferability, (h) diversity of country contexts, including CEE countries, (i) opportunities for progression, (j) evidence of independent evaluation and positive outcomes - and pertaining to the different domains of formal tertiary education, non-formal education, prison education and secondary school. It is not being claimed that

each selected model fulfilled all or even most of these criteria, nor that these models are those of best practice, but rather that they are important foundations of good practice upon which further innovation can build to promote access for underrepresented groups.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

1. *Citizenne* Belgium

Features of the institution/information on the interviewees

- Type of education: non-formal adult education
- Type of institution: folk high school/Training-plus Centre (Vormingpluscentrum)
- Name of the institution: *Citizenne* – Vormingplus Brussel
- Interviewee 1: Senior manager
- Interviewee 2: Adult learning practitioner

Citizenne, also known as Training-plus Centre Brussels (*Vormingplus Brussel*), is a non-profit folk high school situated in Brussels, the capital of Belgium. The organisation's mission is to make a valuable contribution to the social cohesion in the city of Brussels by providing socio-cultural activities. These activities are non-formal educational ones and include cultural, leisure, community-based objectives.

Some of the main objectives of Citizenne

- Working on the bridging between communities and groups of people living in the different Brussels districts;
- creating opportunities for cultural and social involvement for all the people living in Brussels;
- enhancing social integration in and through the civil society.

In doing so, the organisation takes into account some of the specific characteristics of Brussels. Some examples are:

- there is a strong social polarisation in the city. This is reflected in, for instance, high unemployment among young migrants;
- Brussels is a city known for its cultural diversity: people with a lot of different nationalities and cultures all live together. Adults with Dutch as their mother tongue are actually a minority in Brussels.
- There are a lot of organisations offering non-formal adult education in Brussels.

There is also a wide range of high-quality training opportunities for the Dutch-speaking population of Brussels. Over the last six months of the year 2005 more than 2,200 non-formal educational programmes were offered by over 200 different organisations. Because of these characteristics, the organisation focuses on some specific target groups and target issues.

First of all, the organisation tailors her services to the needs of specific groups under-participating in the field of adult education in Brussels, such as low educated adults (especially those having left compulsory education without a qualification). Planning intercultural programmes is also essential for the organisation. One can not presuppose that in a city like Brussels and its metropolitan area people and groups of people find each other spontaneously in the mosaic of cultures and communities.

Therefore, *Citizenne* explicitly wants to connect different cultures and communities in the city with each other.

The organisation has been focusing on three types of issues over the last five years:

- *City and community development and urban characteristics*

Working on issues that urban communities and neighbourhoods are facing today (e.g. growing inequity, growing unemployment, economic recession, ethnic and socio-economic polarisation, etc.) by means of community building and urban development.

- *Intercultural dialogue in a multicultural society*

The ethnic diversity among its residents is a characteristic of any major city. Guiding and supporting intercultural processes (debates, discussions, exchange of ideas, etc.) between different cultural communities and ethnic groups so that they can meet in a friendly atmosphere

- *Empowerment*

Helping people and groups that experience social discrimination to regain and increase their social strength, using methods like consciousness-raising and social action. These focuses arose from the region analysis and the SWOT-analysis the organisation applied when making a strategic plan. By doing so, the organisation is able to clearly analyse the needs of the people living and working in Brussels.

Funding sources of the organisation

A major subsidy is granted by the Flemish ministry of Culture. In the year 2006, *Citizenne* received 476, 993.06 Euro. The organisation also receives financial aid of the government of the Brussels-Capital region (Department of Culture, Youth and Sports). Although the organisation derives some income from its registration fees (usually very small contributions), donation, etc., most of the incomes are related to the state subsidy. The strategic plan, incorporating the mission and vision of the organisation and its strategic decisions on what to do, constitutes an important means in obtaining these financial resources. The organisation makes a strategic plan every four to five years. In general, compared to most formal educational institutions, *Citizenne* has quite limited resources.

Reduced fees

Not all activities are free of charges, although many are. Because of the organisation's funding it is impossible to offer all activities for free. One of the institution's main principles related to the tuition fee is: the price should not be a barrier to participation.

The enrollment fees are differentiated:

- Illegal immigrants and refugees, who have no income, pay no tuition;
- Adults with a substitute income enjoy a reduced tuition;

- Students and elderly people are eligible for remission of tuition fees;
 - All other adults pay a full tuition which is maximum 15 euro per day.
- The organisation does not ask for any identity papers to check this – which is merely a matter of avoiding paperwork.

Course content and tutor teaching methods

All the educational activities deal with one or more of the three major issues mentioned. The educational supply concerning issues like personal growth, development and empowerment, relational issues, self management, self-assertion, self-awareness, etc., is the most popular, no matter what the specific target group of the activity is. This is also the case in the other folk high schools.

Staff conditions

Training-plus centres usually have a small staff. All tutors and organisers of the educational programmes (nine in total) have regular long-term contracts. These are not fixed term employment contracts. The rates of pay are, according to the interviewed Senior manager, rather high compared to other non-formal educational institutions, though they are not high compared to the wages within the formal educational sector. The working conditions in the non-formal educational sector are being described by the Senior manager as heavy. Because the organisation accommodates itself to the preferences of the adult learners, a lot of activities take place during weekends and outside ordinary working hours. This demands a vast amount of energy of the employees. Because it is important to use the experiences and background of the participants within the courses and activities, the tutors and organisers must also be very flexible from an educational point of view. Besides all that, in order to widen access to the educational programmes for specific target groups, it is important to have a culturally diverse staff.

Target groups

The choice of paying extra attention to the target group of unskilled adults and adults with low levels of prior education was made in the organisation's strategic plan 2006-2009. This was in fact a consequence of the context analysis the organisation made in 2005. Because there is a large amount of training opportunities for adults in Brussels – formal and non-formal – the organisation tried to identify specific groups of non-participants in lifelong learning. The context analysis showed that there was no need for more mainstream non-formal adult education activities for middle class groups, but a specific need for programmes for people with considerable educational arrears. The interviewed Senior manager comes to the conclusion that there is a strong cross-fertilisation between formal and non-formal adult education in Flanders and Brussels. This is also the case for *Citizenne*. In a lot of projects institutions for formal education (offering mainly classroom activities) and institutions for nonformal education (offering mainly out-of-school activities supporting basic skills, etc.) work together. Bridging non-formal and formal adult education however, should not imply that non-formal education should always lead to access to formal education. Building bridges for learners to the formal education system, should not be one-way traffic, the interviewees indicate. Non-formal educational institutions should facilitate outreach events from formal educational institutions (e.g. organised visits for learners), but this should also be the case the other way around. Adults participating in formal adult

education do not always have information on or access to the non-formal educational sector. It is important that institutions promote that link too.

Outreach to marginalised groups

- Within communities

According to the interviewees, it is critical to ensure various learning opportunities as close as possible to the adults. Both interviewees accentuate that one can not expect all participants to come into a classroom. The educational activities should be ‘home delivered’. Therefore the organisation makes efforts in providing education within the communities, decentralised all over Brussels (in mosques, sports clubs, pubs, etc.).

- Community leaders

Another important outreach strategy is working together intensely with so-called community leaders (a person who plays a key role in organising or running activities for the community and who is well known and respected in that locality). As the community leaders are already engaged in processes of community building, they have the power and the role to enhance the participation of others in the community. That is why finding those key persons is an essential task of the organisational staff (tutors and educational experts).

Citizenne does not simply use the community leaders as a means to attract new target groups. The organisation also trains and coaches them to be organisers and tutors themselves. By doing so, the organisation offers them challenges and perspectives in their role as community leader and gives them the responsibility to design educational programmes for their community. Some of them make a long-term commitment (at a high level) to the organisation; others chose only to make short-term commitments.

It should not go unnoticed that some volunteers and community leaders are also rewarded (according to the Belgian law on volunteering). They receive 25 euro for occasional activities and 110 euro for other activities, according to the amount of responsibility they take. This is an extra motivational element which has a particularly great impact on the participation of some specific target groups.

- Community networks

The support of community leaders into the organisational network is in line with the institutions networking strategy in general. With a view on community development, networking within and between groups (ethnic groups, social groups, neighbourhoods, etc.) is a vital point to open and promote access, emphasise both interviewees.

2. An Cosán Ireland

Objectives of the practice

An Cosán is the largest independent community-based education centre in Ireland. The organisation's Mission Statement '*is to contribute to the development of a culture of learning and leadership through educational and enterprise solutions for the particular challenges that face us*'. The organisation offers community based education, childcare and enterprise and is divided into three sections:

- The Shanty Education and Training Centre, which provides Adult Community Education,
- Rainbow House, the Early Childhood Education and Care facility,
- Fledglings, the Social Enterprise Centre.

The Shanty Education Programme is aimed at adults and offers participants the opportunity to take the first step back into education in a supportive environment. Rainbow House is a purpose built space providing early childhood education and care for children in the local community, where they encourage each child to develop to their full potential at their own pace. They use the Highscope programme, a complete educational system for children based on active participatory learning from infancy through the preschool years. Fledglings Childcare runs crèches for children in the local area and deals with the commercial aspect of setting up a crèche. There are two crèches in operation at present and they will open another one before the end of 2009. Local people, many of whom received their qualifications in Fledglings Training, work in the crèches. They cater for children between two and a half and five years of age and charge a minimal fee of €5 per week.

Target groups

The Manager of the Shanty stated that *An Cosán* caters for *the whole community*. *An Cosán* caters for everyone living in the local, traditionally socio-economically disadvantaged, area but the courses that are held in the centre target certain groups:

- Women: 'Women and Health' and 'Self-Defence for Women'
- Ethnic minorities: 'ESOL-English for Speakers of other Languages' and 'Basic English'
- Young women who are lone parents and early school leavers: 'Young Women's Education Programme' and 'Young women from Ethnic Minorities Education Programme'
- Grandparents with a lot of involvement in rearing their grandchildren: 'Living and Wellness'
- Older people: The Shanty U3A, the University of the 3rd Age
- Community workers and leaders in the local area: various certificate, diploma and degree programmes; Certificate in Counselling Skills; Diploma in Community

Drug Work and Degree in Community Development all offered at HETAC (Higher Education and Training Awards Council) level 7 (ISCED level 7).

The Manager of the Shanty stated that *An Cosán caters for the whole community*. The CEO explained that *We started out as a women's organisation...for the first ten years...that's what we were...as we became more confident and more developed...we began to see the need for men and [addressing] their educational disadvantage, we looked to do something about that...ran a men's education programme, which was important at the time...into a new phase where it's integration rather than specific men's educational programmes. There is research which indicates that basic education is better undertaken as gender specific...there's a lot for us to learn about that.*

The Manager of the Shanty explained, *we have a 'Young Women from Ethnic Minorities' education programme because we found that there are very specific challenges...some would have come here as unaccompanied minors, a number of them are staying down in the hostel...very isolated, often very difficult to contact...a significant learning curve for us in terms of working with that particular group...others had experienced similar difficulties too. They discovered that 'the young women from Ethnic Minorities, that particular target group had a whole other sub set of barriers...or challenges that had to be overcome.*

Funding sources (including non-standard funding sources)

State funding provided to *An Cosán* is between a million and a half and two million euro annually. The CEO explained that, *in the last financial year we would have been funded by eleven State funding lines. It's important to be aware of that, because that is one of the ... [unusual] things about the way the sector is funded.* The Department of Education and Skills, through the Vocational Educational Committee (VEC), provides most of the mainstream funding for *An Cosán*. Various Irish Government Departments and bodies give funding to *An Cosán*. The Government provided a major capital grant for *An Cosán* to build its community based education centre in 1999. Non-standard funding sources and philanthropic support, which *An Cosán* has had throughout the years, include the State funded Tallaght Drugs Task Force. Private sources include, among others, the Vodafone Ireland Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies. The CEO explained that they have been given this support *at different times...probably for quite specific purposes. An Cosán* is a registered Charity and the development team runs a number of large fundraising events annually.

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

An Cosán is a development of The Shanty Educational Project Ltd, which was established in 1986 to provide 'second chance' community-based education to women in the local area. In the 1980s the country was experiencing a recession, and, as one of the founders explained, *only the privileged classes had places in third-level colleges [and] second-chance education was almost non-existent.* The organisation was founded by Dr. Ann Louise Gilligan and Dr. Katherine Zappone who began running courses in their own home. The CEO explained that our founders *had an idea but brought together twelve women from the local community and together [they began the organisation].* This

established *the deep roots of our partnership in community development... [Community Development] has been influential in the way in which we work, in the design of our programmes, in the development of our programmes.* They began running courses daily for approximately fifty women a week. A three strand educational curriculum provided adults with opportunities to move from basic to intermediate education, and then onto training programmes for work and /or diploma courses in preparation for third level.

In September 1999, the organisation re-located to a brand-new multi-purpose community facility, which was giving the name *An Cosán*, which means 'Path'. The three aspects of *An Cosán* - the Shanty, Rainbow House and Fledglings Centre were now housed in the one building. The CEO explained that the organisation is *ten years here this year (2009), the first year we started off here we ran seventeen courses, this year... there's about 40 courses and there would be about ten in Fledgling.*

When recruiting participants they *go around the schools, talk to different women's groups... we used to have a mini bus, letting people know that we have a big registration day on . . . trying to make an event out of it...turning up a local community events, to let people know we're here and what we're doing...being part of a lot of networks [of local community organisations]... word of mouth is probably the biggest way; somebody goes to talk about it and brings a friend...supporting all our participants to be active recruiters.* A recent development in *An Cosán* is a degree programme called Leadership in Community Development, which began in September 2008. The CEO stated, *having what I think is a first for a community development organisation...we developed a degree entirely ourselves...that's quite unique and I think it's the first undergraduate degree with the word leadership in its title.* The CEO explained that the Degree in Leadership in Community Development was *created and developed for mature students because the amount of burnout...that people experience as they try to exercise leadership in their community.*

Number of participants/service users annually

Over 600 people attend adult education and training in *An Cosán* annually. *An Cosán* currently offers education and training to over 400 adults per week. In June 2008, 450 students had attended classes in The Shanty. Between 150 and 200 participants attend training courses in Fledglings Training annually. In addition, 150 children per week receive early childhood education and out-of-school education each year. There are 25 participants in the biggest classes and the smallest classes would have 8 or 9 students.

Location

An Cosán provides a service to an area of Dublin that is severely disadvantaged as a result of poverty and high levels of unemployment; this is a community living with high levels of poverty. It has a population of roughly 22,000 people, living mainly in rented housing in large, local authority estates. The area has a high immigrant population. The unemployment rate of principle earners is around 67%, and 40% of family units are headed by lone parents. There is a lack of amenities in the local area and poor public transport makes it difficult to access amenities elsewhere. There is limited access to childcare in the local area and anti-social behaviour is prevalent as many young people are pressured to join gangs and take drugs. An intergenerational cycle of educational disadvantage exists. The level of educational attainment is generally low, with 27% of the

population having no formal education or only primary level education and over 34% of the population leaving school under the age of 16.

Perceived strengths and weaknesses

The Manager of the Shanty explained that when they carry out evaluations they learned that before commencing courses participants *were a bit nervous or unsure, but the fact that it was happening here made it feel safe for them to give it a try, so... they would credit the fact that it was held here influenced their decision to take a chance on the course.*

A strength of the organisation is the wide variety of courses and people that it caters for. There is the option of progression through levels of courses for participants. The starting point is courses on Personal Development and Communication Skills, Basic Literacy and Numeracy. The CEO explained, *our personal development programme has been extraordinary, probably one of the most successful classes run here... impacts on their own personal confidence, sense of self, the ability to find their voice, the ability to want more for themselves.* A second series of courses reflect the needs of the local community for training in leadership e.g. training for community drug workers and community development. These courses have been developed at the behest of local community groups. The third series of courses are most important as they allow people to access further education. These courses include those run under the Young Women's Programmes. Some of their past students have gone on to third level colleges and universities, gaining certificates, diplomas and degrees. The CEO explained *we would always encourage students...to consider where they might go next, either within the organisation or beyond...there is a variety... of progression routes... up to the degree, and a lot of supports...put in place to support students make that progress.* In a personal communication (2011), the Manager of the Shanty stated, *"The majority of the students who access the service stay more than one year"*. The fourth series of courses have, as their immediate goal, retraining or formalising skills for employment; a state of the art computer centre allows courses to up-skill long term unemployed people.

An Cosán supports participants 'to plot out a career path' and to access the programmes that they need to achieve this; the CEO explained why. *As early school leavers there's a whole gap in your development... people need to know and to look at why they're facing the challenges of doing basic literacy when they are 35, 45...the basic classes are where our social analysis must be deeply rooted and begin.*

They link in with issues in the local community in many of their courses. In fact, the Manager of the Shanty explained that *the Diploma in Community Drugs Work, works in partnership with UCD and the local drugs task force to deliver that and that is accredited at HETAC Level 7.* *An Cosán* also have their own degree programme (Degree in Leadership and Community Development) that started in September 2008, *we run that in partnership with...Carlow Institute of Technology.* The Manager explained that it has been a *fantastic success and achievement...it is specifically developed for individuals from the community, who are either working in a paid or voluntary capacity in a leadership role and it is about developing their capacity for leadership within their community and also encouraging reflective practice.* The course is held for one full day a week over 3 years, which will result in the award of a HETAC Level 7 Bachelor of Arts Ordinary degree. The Manager of the Shanty explains that *we will develop a fourth year to make it an Honours degree.*

Weaknesses of the organisation at present include not having enough places to meet demand and not having an Access Officer or an Outreach Officer. The lack of links to third level colleges in the local area is another weakness although they have tried to link in with them.

The Manager also explained one the weaknesses of professional development in the non formal education sector in Ireland, *one of the issues is...if you look at literacy, the Department of Education supported NALA...to develop accredited training programmes for tutors...it is funded, it is an excellent programme...it is free to tutors who are working for the VEC. But it is not free or accessible in any way for tutors who are working in community education who are not directly employed by the VEC...they cannot access that training development opportunity ...I think it is unfair, it is inequitable...valuable tutors, who are doing valuable work in community education organisations are not given the opportunity to access those professional development programmes and I think it is wrong.*

Priority needs for expansion of the model/service

- There is a need for an Access Officer and an Outreach Officer. The CEO would like to focus again on a major Outreach Programme...a dream would be to have resources to have an Outreach Worker. The CEO explained that *our focus is to work with the most disadvantaged, now we always know that there's lots of hugely disadvantaged people we're not making contact with...in an area where...literacy is a huge issue, putting leaflets through doors is of limited value.*
- More links with local 3rd level formal institutions and other 3rd level institutions around the country are needed. The CEO explained that *it is hard to get third level engagement'. The CEO talked about her experience of working with the formal education sector, I've been very involved in this with three different formal educational institutes...the commitment to working with disadvantage is limited in the formal education sector...the commitment to working with our sector, I don't see that formalised, I don't see that supported...in order to get colleges... to work with us...you have to show them very clearly what's in it for them...the universities have bought into the private sector context of it being a business...they're there with making money rather than supporting education...*

Methods of feedback, evaluation

An Cosán uses informal feedback alongside formal methods of feedback and evaluation. Informal feedback is continuous, and takes place after each class. The CEO discussed this type of feedback saying, *I would never finish a class without a go around for any comments about the day and if you create a space you'll get people... saying to some extent what they think.* A more formal method of feedback is a *participants' forum* where each class elected a class representative and we meet with them about three times a year to get feedback from them. The Manager of the Shanty explained that feedback and evaluation are *done on an interim or end of year or end of class.*

Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model

The CEO believes that the non-formal education sector *will be hit hard...[by the recession and] we will find our funding cut.* The CEO discussed the *failure of the State to*

do cost benefit analysis and explained that they will develop tools to evaluate the impact of our work, to be able to present the State with cost benefit analysis...the Community education sector...ensure that we do not simply be service providers, providing services that the State has failed to provide, but that we ensure that service provision is one where there's also advocacy, voice given...social analysis...and real key commitment to social change...there's a huge danger that we might just become service providers.

3. Project Learning For Young Adults Slovenia

Objectives of the practice

The basic aim of the programme is to support young people to acquire such experiences, knowledge and skills that would enable them to continue education or advance the career they have chosen. It is also essential for them to develop the competences needed generally in education and gain positive learning experience. The Project Learning for Young Adults (PLYA) wants to help them in defining and articulating their career and life aspirations. Through learning, they develop their ability for critical, flexible and problem-oriented thinking.

The Project Learning for Young Adults has been established to encourage young people to take creative and active part in society. The programme wants to motivate participants to re-enter the process of formal (regular) education and/or teach them how to become more competitive in the labour market and thus increase their employability. By project oriented learning the programme creates reflection upon majority of everyday social contexts in which young people are invited to experience and learn from several different social discourses, became more familiar with many different professions and occupations and get ideas about what, who, where, how is doing and how to approach to become part of those social networks. These experiences at the same time enable them to enlarge and channel their interests, discover and develop their talents that otherwise might have stayed undiscovered and consequently unrealised.

Main objectives of PLYA are to:

- prevent harmful consequences of social isolation of young people,
- reintegrate them into the cultural environment of peer groups,
- reduce social problems in the environment,
- change the environment's negative response to them,
- facilitate establishing mutual links and self-help among young people,
- develop motivational mechanisms for returning to school,
- help them to improve some of their everyday habits,
- learn about learning.

Target group

The PLYA programme is publicly verified non-formal educational programme targeted to unemployed young people between 15 and 25 who discontinued their schooling. Poor education and the absence of appropriate work experience push them into the category of those unemployed who have severe difficulties in finding the job. Their social status is determined by being poorly educated, and unemployed.

At the beginning when they enter the PLYA they usually have fairly distorted perception of work and employment, very low motivation for education and poorly planned professional career as a consequence of an inappropriate choice of secondary education at the end of primary school. Thus, a lot of youth cannot enrol in their favourite school programme and are less motivated for learning in other programmes.

PLYA students meet many other problems in their life, e.g. they do not have any supportive adult person and it was found out that failure in school in most of PLYA students is a complexity of several disadvantages in which students need help to be overcome.

Unemployment and other negative consequences of failure in school lead them into social isolation, which in turn brings out the lack of opportunities for creative and satisfying communication in society. Social isolation sometimes leads to marginalisation of youth and reflects in drug abuse, criminal and/or self-destructive behaviour.

Background of the model

The Project Learning for Young Adults began in the nineties (1992/93) when the number of young unemployed people increased considerably due to economical and social changes in Slovenia. In that time it became obvious that almost thirty percents of each school generation dropout from school or do not continue their education. Originally, the programme was carried out experimentally as the Centre for Young Adults. First group of youth started with learning in October 1995. After two years of practical experiences that has been permanently monitored and evaluated the programme was partially supplemented and titled as The Project Learning for Young Adults. Its implementation began in the spring of 1998. In 1999 it was adopted by Ministry of Education and Sport.

In the following three years the network of organisations that carried out the PLYA grew bigger. There are eight PLYA organisations in eight Slovenian towns: Ljubljana, Slovenj Gradec, Celje, Murska Sobota, Radovljica, Ajdovščina, Maribor, and Koper. In 2005 four new organisations are intended to start and in 2006 two or four more in the regions where PLYA still does not exist.

Funding sources

The Project Learning for Young Adults is funded:

- two thirds by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport,
- one third is supposed to be provided by local communities in which the programme is carried out, yet this is not regulated by the law.

Perceived strengths and weaknesses

The basic finding of the evaluation study is that the programme Project Learning for Young Adults has long-term positive effects of social integration. The reasons for positive effects can be found in the goals, contents and methods of the educational programme and in the training of mentors who carry out the programme. Among weaknesses there are:

- The last third that should be funded by the local community is rarely realised. This in particular causes the lack of finances for realisation of the whole programme, e.g. production project work is rarely realised.
- The knowledge student gain in the programme is not accredited in other education institutions or in the market which can be an obstacle for some students to join the programme at the very beginning.
- In some regions there is still lack of support by other agencies (e.g. Labour market agencies, schools) authorised to direct youth into the programme.

4. *Tandrusti* Project England

Objectives of the practice

Tandrusti, meaning health and well-being in the main Asian languages, is a leading edge initiative that has used a community education approach to explore and promote the benefits of physical activity and health amongst members of black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. This is achieved through the provision of free, local and structured bespoke exercise programmes in an adult education context making use of community venues and a limited amount of gym equipment that is stored and transported to various localities (*Tandrusti* Research Report 2009, p.2). In addition, culturally competent and relevant health information and advice is offered to all project beneficiaries. Consequently, the project has attracted local, regional, national and international interest. *Tandrusti* courses include community gym, postural stability instruction (falls prevention), physical activity and medical conditions, anatomy & physiology, diet, nutrition and healthy lifestyles. The *Tandrusti* research project has demonstrated that taking a culturally competent community education approach to physical activity can be a successful way of promoting healthy lifestyles among health deprived BME communities. And yet the research findings suggest there is still much work to do, for example:

- Whilst health messages are crucial, effective communication of them requires ongoing consultation with minority ethnic community groups,
- Barriers to the adoption of healthy lifestyles are significant; tackling them requires a multiagency approach in the delivery of health education programmes,
- Community involvement such as volunteering demonstrates the capacity of BME communities to take ownership of health improvement initiatives,
- The enthusiasm of people to take part in voluntary activity is an important lesson to build on and embed within local communities. To achieve this longer term funding is required to support sustainable outcomes (*Tandrusti* Executive Summary 2009, p.9).

The regional director referred to the ‘*Tandrusti*’ project:

...set up to address the health needs and experiences of minority ethnic communities in [a town several wards or which are among the most deprived 10% in England]. Scientific research had shown these groups were at a much greater risk from diseases such as coronary heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and stroke. Lifestyle factors contribute greatly to these diseases and addressing those in this particular group of learners is not always easy due to language or cultural barriers. A fundamental role of the project is therefore making sure that the health information and advice given to minority ethnic communities is culturally sensitive and relevant to them.

Target groups

Black and ethnic minority (BEM) and South Asian communities are the focus of this project. South Asians are considered as a group more susceptible to developing CHD (coronary heart disease) than other groups. Structural inequalities that persist in the British society, existing in the form of inaccessible health services, poor health education, and lack of facilities and time to exercise are seen as the main factors of the higher

proportion of the CHD within the South Asian population resided in England (*Tandrusti* Research Report 200, p.5).

Funding sources

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) funded *Tandrusti* action research project and was set up – via the Connecting Communities Plus Programme (*Tandrusti* Executive Summary 2009). The project has run successfully for five years following funding from the National Lottery, Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the People's Educational Association.

History of the model

The *Tandrusti* Project grew out of work with older Asian adults undertaken by the People's Educational Association, Age Concern and Social Services in 1999. Once exercise classes were established in a number of areas it was clear there was a need for a high level of support for the participants and a demand for more classes than there was funding to support. This, coupled with the well documented health inequalities amongst ethnic minority communities, formulated the rationale for the project. After gaining the trust and respect of the communities the project has been working with it has been able to challenge cultural stereotypes by recruiting mixed religious groups and mixed gender sessions (*Tandrusti: A Health Education Project Meets Health Agendas*).

Location

All programmes are delivered at local culturally competent venues.

Perceived strengths and weaknesses

Tandrusti has adapted policies and procedures to be sensitive, appropriate and effective for its target client group (*Tandrusti: A Health Education Project Meets Health Agendas*). All programmes are tailored to address the cultural, religious and socio-economic barriers that limit opportunities available to members of minority ethnic communities to participate in physical activity, so:

- Beneficiaries and partners from all main minority ethnic/cultural backgrounds residing in the area are involved in project activities.
- Culturally competent information sessions, open days, publicity and materials to promote activities and events are used.
- A high priority is given to selecting, appointing, supporting skilled tutor group.
- A high priority is given to matching local and national core policies.
- Physical activity and medical conditions courses that address health conditions that have a higher prevalence amongst members of BME communities are delivered.
- There is a robust working relationship with local PCT -*Tandrusti* is seen as 'a meaningful vehicle for the delivery and development of health improvement programmes for members of BME communities'.
- For the first two years weekly meetings with all learners by the project manager were conducted. Student need formed the basis of curriculum development. Once trust had been established, the project has not encountered problems recruiting learners and volunteers.
- Project innovation - *Tandrusti* is the only project of its kind marrying 'education and health'.

- Robust initial assessment, very effective Health and Safety protocols and procedures as well as efficient recording of learning and health progression has made *Tandrusti* 'a very effective project, [with] good practice of assessing literacy and language skills and recording progress' (Adult Learning Inspectorate 2005).
- Challenging learning activities with excellent progression routes to cope with improved physical capability amongst groups. This includes running, gym and anatomy and physiology courses for the over 60s.
- Active participation of learners who have been involved in an ongoing consultative process to develop and evaluate programmes.

Whilst many people reported that they were attracted to *Tandrusti* as a physical activity programme they greatly valued the emotional and social support gained from sharing experiences with others. In short attending programmes helped improve their mental health and well being. The level of participants' health awareness was affected by their literacy skills; those who were literate in a language were able to access health information a lot better than those who were not. Older participants (over the age of 65) were less active in building their health knowledge and health promotion material was less effective in reaching them (*Tandrusti* Executive Summary 2009, p.5).

The project has been organised by health professionals nationally as a 'best practice model in tackling inequalities around physical activity and health' (Barbican Centre London, Cardiff City Hall).

Some strengths identified in the Annual Report (Ofsted 2008, p.8):

- Learners enjoy their courses and attendance is good,
- Programmes meet learners' aspirations and potential and national and local priorities,
- Learners are prepared well for further learning and/or employment,
- Relevant provision is located well for priority groups,
- Learner guidance and support is generally good or better,
- The curriculum is increasingly relevant to priority learner groups,
- Leadership and management are generally good,
- Self-assessment processes and development planning are improving,
- Learners make good progress in developing skills relevant to their everyday lives.

Some weaknesses identified in the Annual Report (Ofsted 2008, p.8):

- Evidence of progression is usually not based on reliable data,
- Insufficient progression options for learners,
- Unclear definitions of success and achievement on non-accredited courses,
- Insufficient use of assessment to plan learning,
- Poor monitoring of learners' progress on non-accredited courses,
- Insufficient formal consultation with employers to identify requirements,
- Too much reliance on motivation and knowledge of individual tutors and development workers for some provision,
- Targets for staff are insufficiently challenging,
- Some skills for life strategies not well established,
- Insufficiently robust quality assurance arrangements,
- Insufficient focus of observation on the teaching and learning to implement improvements.

As the General Secretary concludes:

...we're now talking about working with groups of people who wouldn't otherwise be there. In most cases that is usually in working in partnership with a third party, third agency that acts as the sort of proxy spokesperson for that group, now it could be a PCT [primary care trust], a health authority, it could be a local group of MIND or MENCAP if you're working with people with learning disabilities, it could be CRISIS or an organisation representing or working with homeless groups, whatever, like that. And it's ensuring that through that group, or through that agency you're developing something that's of mutual benefit to both sides, and usually has got sort of twin objectives. I mean there'll be an objective that the, if it's CRISIS there'll be an objective that we might be putting into that which could be leading to some sort of achievement or accreditation or something like that. [...] [T]he other organisation of course would be a trade union (General Secretary).

Methods of feedback and evaluation

To secure the proper feedback and evaluation of the programme the *Tandrusti* research project was developed. Through 180 questionnaires and 50 in-depth interviews the data on health journeys of the participants and non-participants in the area was collected. The success of the project is evidenced by health improvements recorded in over 90% of learners completing a programme (as measured by reduction in blood pressure, weight, waist circumference or Body Mass Index) (*Tandrusti* Executive Summary 2009, p.7).

SECONDARY (PRIMARY) SCHOOL

5. Assistant Teachers / Mediators Bulgaria

(Directorate Policy in Vocational and Continuous Education,
Ministry of Education and Science, Interview with SN, Expert)

Objectives of the practice

Acquiring of qualification by Roma young men and women which contributes for:

- improving attendance of school by Roma children,
- active participation of parents in the process of education and integration,
- Desegregation of education and participation in the education process of Roma children at Bulgarian schools.

According to the work profile of the assistant-teacher approved by MES in 2003, some of the new responsibilities include:

- support of teachers in the teaching to children and students for the achievement of the required level of mastery of Bulgarian language;
- support of communication between teachers and students;
- cooperation in the interaction with parents;
- participation in the educational process and extramural activities under the
- guidance of a teacher;
- assistance of teachers in the choice of appropriate methods, approaches and
- Materials for the teaching process.

Work profiles of assistant-teachers of non-governmental have a different focus. They are usually called mediators or school coordinators/advisers; the focus is on the social rather than pedagogical functions. The training of assistant-teachers includes theoretical preparation, practice at schools and joint training with teachers. It is a priority of NGOs with the participation of RIO at MES. MES supports the preparation of assistant teachers, a position which is connected with the Strategy of MES for the educational integration of ethnic minorities.

Target groups

Roma young men and women with completed secondary education. The selection is done by regional inspectorates of education, municipal experts, principals of schools

and non-governmental organisations. Assistant teachers depend on whether there are Roma children (and their number) at the respective Bulgarian school or class because according to Bulgarian legislation it is a question of parents' decision whether a child will be registered at a school. Parents decide if the child will attend a Roma school or will be included in programmes for attending a Bulgarian school. In addition, assistant-teachers are not present at every school and every region. In other words, the presence of the assistant-teacher is not a compulsory element of the school environment of Bulgarian schools. At the same time, MES has a Strategy for educational integration of children of ethnic minorities (2005-2015) which highlights the need and sustains the introduction of assistant teachers in the regions where there are Roma children.

Funding sources

The salaries of assistant teachers are provided by:

- non-governmental organisations which work on projects on desegregation;
- Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students of Ethnic Minorities at the MES which finances projects for schools and municipalities. The Centre was established with the purpose of executing the National Strategy for educational integration of children of ethnic minorities;
- Municipalities.

History of the model

The beginning was laid by a project of non-governmental organisations for 'desegregation of Roma schools'. The goal was to have students from Roma quarters to be transported to the central parts of towns where they would study together with children of ethnic Bulgarians, Turks, etc. The project began in the town of Vidin in the 2000-2001 school year and later was continued in 6 other towns – Montana, Pleven, Sliven, Haskovo, Stara Zagora and Sofia. The idea of the initiative and its financing came from the Programme of Roma participation of Open Society Institute in Budapest. In parallel, a desegregation project is realised in Samokov and Kjustendil financed by SEGA Foundation and the British Council. The objective of the projects for desegregation is the creation of ground for intercultural education in which students of different ethnic groups study at common schools and teachers helped by assistant-teachers (representing the same ethnic group of the children) contributing to the integration of minority children and respect for their ethno-cultural differences. The essence of the project (directed at overcoming of educational deficits of Roma people) embraces the need for stirring up the Roma community as an active subject – parents, assistant-teachers and children. The next step in the establishment of the assistant-teacher is the Strategy for educational integration of children and students of ethnic minorities (2005-2015) whose priorities are the full-fledged integration of Roma children and students by desegregation of kindergartens and schools in the separated Roma quarters and the creation of conditions for equal access to quality education outside them. For the purpose of implementing these measures, there is a five-year National Action Plan (June 2005) which foresees concrete actions, division of responsibilities, evaluation of the necessary finances and expected outcomes. As a result of the measures undertaken for the execution of the first priority of the Strategy in the 2005-2006 school year, the following results have been achieved:

- 106 assistant-teachers support educational integration of Roma children at general education schools;
- 150 assistant-teachers have passed training courses at higher schools.

The Strategy has no budget financing. In order to support its implementation, a Centre of educational integration of children and students of ethnic minorities at MES which finances projects for schools and municipalities.

Number of participants

About 30-40 per year.

Location

At present, assistant-teachers work in most regions in which there are Roma schools.

Perceived organisational strengths and weaknesses

The preparation and work of assistant-teachers contributes to:

- the building of broad cooperation between institutions and organisations at local level engaged with the issue;
- the formation of teams of teachers and assistant-teachers;
- the formation of social skills for work with Roma families;
- the application of modern interactive methods.

The appointment of assistant-teachers creates new opportunities for education and employment. It facilitates the formation of interest in education in young Roma people. Education is a prerequisite for studies in the programme 'Primary school pedagogy with Roma language' (VTU). In the process of integration of Roma children in concrete schools, there are various problems which affect the interrelationships Roma – Bulgarians, teachers – Roma children, Roma parents – teachers. In many cases, Roma assistant-teachers cannot solve them on their own.

Priority needs for expansion of the model

In Bulgaria, there are 330 schools in which 50% and more of the children are Roma. Because of that, it is necessary:

- investments on the part of the state;
- extensive work with Roma parents;
- continuing the process of desegregation of education at Roma schools and integrating Roma children in Bulgarian schools.

Methods of feedback, evaluation

Comparison of the learning achievement of Roma children at integrated and segregated schools is done in two detailed publications from the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC). The first one, *The First Steps*, is from 2002 representing the 'first steps' in this direction. On the basis of interviews with leaders of the project, representatives of regional inspectorates of education, parents of children included in the project, principals of schools, Bulgarian parents of children of host schools, Roma activists, Romas working in the administration, the activities, problems, obstacles, advantages and practices are analysed. A special place is reserved for the criteria for success (Kanev 2002, p.119). The number of participants and number of children

remaining in the educational ghetto, success of children, outreach of schools in the town or municipality, effective support of Roma children at the host schools, attracting Roma parents to the process of desegregation, provision of extramural activities, provision of support of local authorities and financial effectiveness.

The other publication dates from 2005, *Non-governmental projects for desegregation of Roma education in Bulgaria*. In it, the BHC presents the project and its effectiveness. It is shown by defining learning success of students included in the desegregation projects in the six towns and the ones who remained at segregated schools

6. Digital Secondary School Hungary

Table 22. Digital Secondary School

Name	Digital Secondary School
Type	Secondary school
Location	Miskolc
Foundation	2003
Ownership	Public and private
Number of students	449
Number of employees	100 (most of them part-time)
Activity	Secondary school for disadvantaged adults, preparing for high school diploma
Interviewee 1	Educational director
Interviewee 2	Literature teacher

Objectives of the practice

The Digital Secondary School's main objective is to prepare disadvantaged adults for the high school diploma by the means of distance education. Life Long Learning is the principal aim of many students: quite some of them want to continue their studies in post-secondary vocational education or in third level academic programmes. Distance education – based on the internet and in several training centres in different small towns of the county (Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén) – enables students to study in a flexible work schedule without organising long distances and without having their own computers, and thus gives them the opportunity to acquire a high school diploma even if they come from rather disadvantageous backgrounds.

History/ background of the model

Based on social research there was an initiative at the beginning of the year 2000 to found a secondary school programme that would enable disadvantaged adults to acquire a high school diploma and thus give them the chance to continue their studies at the third level. The ideological leader of the project is a well-known Hungarian sociologist, who – in cooperation with his colleagues – specified the details of the programme and elaborated a world novelty.

The Digital Secondary School was founded in 2003 in the country's least developed region. It has the highest unemployment rates in Hungary, along with deeply rooted social problems, including tensions between Roma and non-Roma inhabitants. The project is an attempt to decrease the social tension and facilitate the economic development of the area. It was in 2007 that the first school-leaver class passed the final examinations, and the programme's hopes bound to it. The project has been a great success since it began, and is being further developed based on student feedback and on the requirements defined by frequently changing legal rules.

Target group

The principal target group of the programme are disadvantaged adults who come from the North-Eastern part of Hungary. Originally the project was aimed at Roma adults with political ambitions, but after some years it was opened to other candidates, who – coming from poor regions – are almost always disadvantaged as well. According to the educational director's estimations, the current proportion of Roma students in the school is around 50% (there is no official administration on ethnical origin).

Funding sources

The school is financed by a consortium, made up of three institutes:

- Földes Ferenc Secondary School: the institute is located in the same city as the Digital Secondary School (Miskolc) and is one of the ten best high schools in Hungary. It is responsible for financing the courses and the tutors' wages. Besides financing the Digital Secondary School, it is also responsible for professional issues: many of its teachers give lessons in the Digital Secondary School and participate in the development of the special curriculum.
- The University of Miskolc: provides professional and methodological help regarding distance education.
- Innocenter Innovation Centre: founded in 2002, its main purpose is the development of innovation activity in the Northern region of Hungary. It finances Digital Secondary School from its own resources and from special support.

Funding has fluctuated since the foundation of the school. Since it is a unique institute, different to all other schools in Hungary, it was difficult to put it in one of the already existing institute categories, which made funding quite difficult. First it was as correspondence education, and thus received only 20% of the normative support, which was far from enough to cover costs. Later, an agreement was achieved with the Ministry of Education and Culture on creating a separate educational category for Digital Secondary School – education could be classified as evening courses and thus the institute received 50% (instead of 20%) of the normative support of an ordinary secondary school. Recently, funding of all Hungarian secondary schools has changed, and now – instead of individual funding – it is based on groups of students. According to the Digital Secondary School's educational director, this decreases the quality of education in general, because group headcount is defined by law and schools are now encouraged to increase the number of students in the groups so as to cover their costs.

Funding difficulties seem to be the institute's most serious problem. The educational director came back to the issue several times during the interview, and underlines it again when asked if she had any additional remarks at the end of the conversation:

Perhaps I could underline, although I spoke several times about the lack of resources, that we won't be able to implement a truly effective and organisation adult education, unless its organisational and financial background is worked out. Perhaps, it is not the

field of education where sources should be decreased, because the media, written press and literature all tell us that a higher proportion of GDP spent on education results in faster and more organisation economic development, as seen in either Finland or in Japan.

Organisation of the education, including location

One of the most innovative features of the institute is the organisation of education. The programme comprises an online and an offline part, both of which take place in several different small settlements around the region. Generally, classes are held in the secondary school of the town, but in some cases they are hosted by elementary schools or local educational centres. Thus, education is organised in two different ways:

- Settlements where the programme is organised with the help of the local secondary schools: There is a coordinator in each settlement, who acts as a vice principal and is responsible for the organisation of the education and the administration. Classes are held by teachers of the local secondary school, who are in permanent contact with the coordinator. Student headcount per year is usually around 4 to 8, thus there are 15-30 students in total in each settlement. Students from the same year form a group of 4-8 people, and each group has a tutor, who is also a teacher in the local secondary school.
- Settlements where the programme is organised in elementary schools or local educational centres: Since there are no secondary school teachers in these institutes, the whole programme is run by the teachers of the Földes Ferenc Secondary School.

Online education is supported by computers provided in the settlements by the Digital Secondary School, so that students who do not have a computer at home can also participate in the programme:

We were able to provide computers at the beginning of the project with the help of the Department of Sociology of the Miskolc University eg. To minority governments, elementary schools, village centres, local governments, and here our students had the possibility to use them for twelve hours per week. These computers are still there, so if we have a student there, he / she can use these services. For example, we had a student in Cigánd, whose computer use problem was settled as follows: when the mayor finished his work, the student went to his office and sat in the mayor's chair, and could use the internet portal [of the Digital Secondary School] and study from there.

Originally the programme was implemented in twelve locations, and each student had the opportunity to use a computer for 23 hours per week. Locations are in continuous change according to demand, and some of them do not have students from all years. Today, the project functions in eight locations and students can use the computers for twelve hours per week.

Online education is based on the internet portal of the institute, where students can find the curriculum, communicate with teachers and receive evaluation of their work. Learning is facilitated with chat rooms and a video-conference system. As many students use the computers provided by the institute and placed in a certain location, there are teachers who help their work even in the online part of their studies. There is a teacher based in the computer room for a previously arranged period of twelve hours who can answer the students' questions. Usually the teacher's qualification corresponds to the

current module (eg. When students study math, the teacher in the room is usually a math teacher).

Each module has a module-developer, who is a teacher from the Földes Ferenc Secondary School. He/she is responsible for the development of the online curriculum, the elaboration of the methods of assessment and the evaluation of students' work. During the seven weeks of their modules, they fix time periods in the afternoon and evening when they are online in the chat room of their own subject where students can communicate with them. Means of communication vary from simple writing to the use of the recently implemented video-conference system.

Offline consultations are held on Saturdays in the local schools or education centres, and have two major objectives: at the beginning, teachers answer students' questions, and in the time remaining they give a summary of the learning material and clarify the most problematic points. A module consists of seven weeks with three consultations in total: it always begins on a Monday, and consultations are held on the first, fourth and seventh Saturday. The module is closed with an assessment on the seventh Saturday.

Unfortunately, due to financial causes, the model had to be changed in terms of the number of compulsory study hours. As the level of financial support is much higher if the number of study hours reaches 50% of that in an ordinary secondary school, students are now obliged to spend 480-550 hours studying.

Offline consultations are compulsory, which might be problematic as many students work on Saturday, and even if the absence is certified, it cannot exceed 20% of the total number of consultation hours. In the online learning process, it is the computer that counts the number of hours spent studying, which also limits students' freedom: previously they could print the learning material and read it wherever they wanted to, but now they have to be online on the portal, so that the computer can register their presence.

These limitations are difficult for those who were used to the previous system, but were necessary, because otherwise the institute could no longer be financed. Even so, this system gives more freedom to students than an ordinary evening course, as they can choose the periods when they want to be online.

Number of service users annually

According to the website of the school, total headcount was 449 in 2008-2009. The educational director gave estimations on the number of service users per year as follows:

It [the headcount] varies [from year to year], usually we have the highest headcount in the first year, but there is a higher dropout level. Those who have finished the first – thus, the ninth – year, have only a 10-15% dropout rate afterwards, and then we have the lowest dropout rate in the eleventh and twelfth years. Today the 12th year counts 63 students and the ninth, when we started it, counted perhaps 251, sorry, I can't recall the exact numbers, and now I think they are around 130 [in the ninth], and by the time we have checked everything, all the learning requirements, this will be end of August, there might well remain only 90-100 of them.

The total number of employees is around a hundred, but most of them are employed on a part-time basis. Around twenty or thirty of them are teachers of Földes Ferenc Secondary School, while others teach elsewhere and have a contract with Földes.

Curriculum and assessment

The curriculum covers the same learning material as that of an ordinary secondary school. Since the school prepares students for the high school final examination, the curriculum is defined by law and has been checked by the Ministry of Education and Culture several times. On the other hand, the learning material is presented on a different way, adapted to the students' needs.

It starts at the very basics, as many of the candidates had bad results in elementary school, and / or left formal education decades ago. The curriculum progresses then from basic knowledge to the requirements of the final exam, containing even the material for the advanced level high school diploma. Another characteristic of the curriculum is its colorful and entertaining presentation, facilitated also by digital technology (films, audio materials, immediate feedback, exercises that can be repeated several times, etc.). Teachers who develop learning materials try to find topics that the target group might be interested in, and do not insist on the same highly intellectual ones that are usually used in ordinary secondary schools.

The literature and linguistics teacher on the spelling module:

Literature examples for those who want to practice it [the spelling] are difficult, and are not what encourages them to do it. E.g., a novelty in this learning material is that spelling examples are made to be easily digestible and entertaining, eg. Jokes, sayings, funny kind of literature –not trash or slang – but the assimilation of simple literature. ... Or, exercises that are somehow linked to recent events, eg. In the year of the organised games, alphabetic ordering was practiced on the names of sportsmen and sportswomen.

Some modules are compulsory, others are not. For example, spelling modules are not compulsory, but recommended, as students have serious difficulties with spelling, and these kind of mistakes can be critical on the final exam. Another example of non-compulsory modules are final exam preparation modules that help to revise the learning material covered in the four years before the final exam. Exercises are either automatically checked by the computer or corrected by the teachers, depending on their nature – objective ones, such as spelling exercises are checked by the computer, whereas the more subjective ones such as writing exercises are corrected by teachers and returned with comments.

Students receive a basic artistic education covering art history, which is often linked to literature lessons. Personality development is a part of everyday life, but no course is dedicated officially to psychological issues.

Those who had previously started their secondary school studies but could not pass the final exam can take a preliminary examination, enabling them to enter in the second or third year. Thus, they don't have to restart their studies from the very beginning.

Assessment is based on modules, and students get both grades and detailed feedback on their work. An exam takes place at the end of each seven-week module, but if someone cannot take it at the arranged time, he / she can postpone it by two or four weeks, or even to the end of the semester. By the closure of the semester all exams have

to be passed – this is defined by law and is necessary for the receipt of the financial support given to the school by the state.

School climate and in-service / pre-service training for teachers

As this is a new model, there were a lot of in-service training sessions at the beginning of the project: teachers were trained by those who developed the learning material prior to each module. This is still necessary nowadays as well, but has become impossible because of the lack of financial resources.

A conference was also planned with several workshops on previous experiences, results and necessary reforms, and – although it had already been prepared in detail – it had to be cancelled due to financial difficulties.

The institute does not get the normative support for teacher training that ordinary secondary schools receive, thus informal communication between teachers is the only possibility remaining for in-service training.

According to the educational director, the school climate does not really depend on pre-service training but rather on the conditions that could allow the opportunity for teachers and students to practice their rights and duties (e.g. Teachers should have less administrative duties and more time for children).

Roma students

Roma students are highly represented and give approximately 50% of all participants. They were the initial target group of the institute, and quite some of those who have already passed their high school diploma act as political leaders or play an important role in community life.

Prisoners

Another disadvantaged group supported by the [digital] institute is prisoners: Education in a youth-prison was launched immediately after the foundation of the school, with the contribution of Földes Ferenc Secondary School teachers who went to the prison to give lessons. This cooperation between the institute and the prison has been since the beginning, even if providing education to prisoners is quite difficult. Young prisoners might spend only a short time in the same prison and thus class headcount often falls down from 15 at the beginning to 2 at the end of the year, which then causes financial problems. Prisoners' motivation and performance varies from rather poor to very high: some of them are almost illiterate, but others continue their studies in the institute even after their release, and continue to enter third level education.

Financial support

There is no tuition fee for students at the institute, because all students are regarded as disadvantaged (according to the law, in other schools tuition fee is compulsory in adult education). A special scholarship for all Roma participants was provided by public funds until 2007, but since then this automatic financial support has not been available. Information regarding each kind of scholarship is put on the school's website and students can individually apply for them.

Földes Ferenc Secondary School tries to support Digital Secondary School students in all possible ways, for example, this year it financed the final exam fees that adult students should have paid themselves.

Learning and literacy difficulties

As students finished their elementary school studies long ago (and probably not with the best results) they often have learning and literacy difficulties. Teachers elaborated several methods to handle them, and have other ideas that have not yet been implemented.

Firstly, there is a two-week long preparatory module at the very beginning of the studies with two seven-hour long consultations on the first two Saturdays which helps students with computer literacy. It covers internet communication, e-mailing, chat and forum usage, word processing and the usage of the institute portal.

Digital Secondary School teachers developed special catch-up modules in spelling, reading and mathematics that can be used throughout the four years. They consist of several modules, but unfortunately some of them are not entirely ready (eg. Spelling is planned to include five modules but only two are available for the moment).

The educational director has further ideas for handling learning difficulties:

Based on several years experience, I would find it very useful if we could start this [preparatory courses] a semester earlier, and we could say that we start student recruitment in September, call them in January and give preparatory courses from February to June, similar to the year zero in some high schools. This would be a catch-up and skill development period, when everybody could face his / her deficiencies and we would try to correct these deficits and then we could start the real secondary school education in September – this would be very useful.

Perceived strengths and weaknesses of the model used

Adult education in itself is a difficult project, but adapting it to disadvantaged students is even more challenging. Two main factors of this success are as follows:

- Well-trained and highly motivated teachers: the professors who developed learning materials and give daily classes to students come from one of the best high schools in the country, so participants receive a high quality education, even if the learning material is sometimes simplified when adapting it to special needs.
- Flexible work schedule: distance education and digital technology give students the possibility to choose when to study.

The model's main weaknesses result almost entirely from financial problems:

- The flexibility of studying had to be changed in September 2008 in order to receive a higher level of normative support from the state. Without this modification, the institute could not have been financed. Students now have to spend 480-550 hours a year on consultation lessons or on the portal, which is difficult for those who were used to a completely flexible work schedule. However, even so, it is more flexible than a traditional evening course, where the timing of lessons is strictly defined.

- Another weakness is the lack of mentoring, also due to financial problems. On the other hand, local coordinators often act as mentors and have a close personal relationship with students.
- Finally, the novelty of the model often makes life difficult: since the school does not fit in to any official category, there are continuous discussions on the frames of functioning with the ministry.

FORMAL TERTIARY EDUCATION

7. Bachelor Degree Programme Primary School Pedagogy And Roma Language – Veliko Turnovo University (VTU) Bulgaria

Directorate Policy in Vocational and Continuous Education,
Ministry of Education and Science, Interview with VD, Director)

Objectives of the practice

Integration of Roma people into the system of higher education:

In connection with the integration of unprivileged groups (ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups) in the higher education system and their preparation for primary and secondary school teachers, two universities may be pointed out: VTU and Thracian University. In 2003/2004 academic year VTU opened a programme in Primary school pedagogy and Roma language in which Roma students are admitted (p. 5-6).

The programme is new in the country. Graduates get a Bachelor's degree and pedagogical qualification. Graduates may practice teaching, educating, methodological and organisational -managerial activities at primary Roma schools; they may work as consultants at centres dealing with Roma children.

Target groups

Roma ethnic groups in the country holders of secondary school certificates.

Funding sources

Roma students are taught on scholarships from various NGOs. VTU does not grant scholarships and does not cancel fees for Roma students.

History/background of the model

The programme has existed since 2003/2004 academic year at VTU in professional area 'Pedagogy'. It is accredited with a 'very good' grade until 2013. It is established by a Roma professor who has studied at different universities. He has published in the area of Roma people and their organisations. At present, he is head of the programme.

Number of participants

30 young women and men are admitted annually. In 2008/2009, 30 Roma students were also admitted.

Location: Professional area 'Pedagogy' at VTU

Formation of total score:

- Doubled grade from competitive entrance examination
- Grade in Bulgarian language from school certificate
- Grade in history from school certificate the total score is formed as a sum of all abovementioned components.

Competitive entrance examinations:

- Bulgarian language and literature or History of Bulgaria
- Test of speaking-communicative skills (in Roma language)

Perceived strengths and weaknesses

The basic problems of the organisation of the programme are connected with the keeping of its stability and the attraction of Roma students because the educational level of Roma people is too low – only about 7% of Roma students have finished secondary education.

Priority needs for expansion of the model

The need for extension of the programme is determined by the fact of 330 schools in the country in which over 50% of the students are Roma.

Methods of feedback, evaluation

Number of registered students, number of graduates who began work (at respective schools).

PRISON EDUCATION

8. Buxtowne State Prison England

Background features of the prison

There are four categories of prisoners in England and Wales. Buxtowne Prison is a Category A men's prison, which is the highest security rating. The education system in the prison is provided (organised and managed) by a local city college. At the prison, there is a *separate wing for education [and] a training unit over in the work area as well* (Senior manager). The prison's education department has a staff of over 40 individuals, with roughly 10 individuals in the prison *who are involved in education and training as well* (Senior manager). A number of the staff members, including the Head of Learning and Skills are long-standing, with over 20 years of service at Buxtowne. As stated by a tutor, *our tutors I think are really experienced at motivating. But I suppose the only thing, the one thing that you can, you have to guard against is making sure that you treat them as adults and almost as, well equals really because they won't tolerate you, you know if, sometimes we have had people who have worked in schools and then suddenly come into an environment like this and they do find that difficult because you know you cannot talk down to them or be you know, not treat them as equals* (Tutor).

Category Type of prisoner

- Category A: A prisoner whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public, police or the security of the state
- Category B: Prisoners for whom the very highest conditions of security are not necessary but for whom escape must be made very difficult
- Category C: Prisoners who cannot be trusted in open conditions but who will not have the will or resource to make a determined escape attempt
- Category D: Those who can be reasonably trusted to serve their sentence in open conditions

Each staff member in education has a teaching qualification, and follows the rules of appointment of the local college. All education staff is encouraged to utilise student-centred approaches to learning: *at the beginning people will look at learning styles and see what style fits that learner* (Senior manager). The prison *encourages group teaching in the classroom* although it is difficult with *people starting a course almost every day of the week and so it is quite difficult to do group teaching but it is encouraged in every instance, because people working individually can lose their motivation unless they are encouraged to take part in other things as well* (senior manger). There is different technology used within the education department, including access to IT in the classrooms and interactive Whiteboards. Access to the Internet is prohibited. The education department *is situated on one of the wings in the main prison, so it's easy walking distance for all prisoners*, with a limited number of courses available on the wings (Senior manager). There is a library at the prison, which includes roughly 17,300 books (Senior manager). There is a wide range of books on offer, including *a wide range of fiction, quite a lot of men's interest, some reference books...we have a reasonable budget for the library* (Senior manager). The library includes *books in 33 other languages*

and non-book resources, such as *music CDs, spoken word CDs, CD ROMs, large print books* (Senior manager). From the perspective of the Senior manager, prisoners' access to the library is *reasonable under the circumstances because everybody has to be escorted everywhere here, so every wing gets at least one visit a week. People on education have a set time when they can go to the library, so everybody has the opportunity to go, they possible don't get as much time as they would like to spend there* (Senior manager).

Aims and objectives

The prison has a vision statement, although it is in the process of rewriting it with a new governor in place (Senior manager). The strategic plans for the prison do not *refer to lifelong learning but it will refer to reducing reoffending* (Senior manager). The goals behind the education service in the prison include *striving to improve the individual so that they become more employable, or sometimes that's not realistic but at least make them be a better members of society* (Tutor). The tutor went on to state, *I do think that anybody who attends education has certainly more of a chance of meeting those particular aims of rehabilitation than if they don't [engage]*. Therefore, the main aim is to provide education to as many individuals in prison as possible and to provide a range of different educational opportunities to meet the needs of male prisoners. With the provider of education being the local college, the staff look at the prison education *as a satellite of the main college, we mirror what they deliver and the lads here have the same opportunities as they would if they were outside and going to college, because all of our courses are accredited* (Tutor). The tutor further mentioned that for the education staff in the prison, *they're learners, they're not prisoners*.

One of the central objectives is to maximise the number of individual prisoners who are in at least part-time education. The prison aims to *put people on not more than half-time education because that maximises the number of people who can attend, because obviously if we can only take 350, we're only taking a quarter of the population. Some of the courses are full-time, the vocational training courses are all full-time because they're quite long courses, but other courses we try and just take people half-time so more people can attend* (Senior manager). Every individual will start with *an individual learning plan*, which includes information about their learning style, any learning difficulties and their aims and goals (Senior manager). The Senior manager gave the example of how they aim to match different educational opportunities to the needs and aspirations of the individual through an individual learning plan: *if somebody was going out in three years and wanted to be a bricklayer then we would look at trying to plan what that a person would do over the three year period. Somebody who wanted to do a bricklaying courses would need a certain level of literacy and numeracy, that might be something we would concentrate on first. And then if somebody did a bricklaying course it might be that they would move and do some IT if they were thinking of setting up their own business. So we try to look at progression*. Given that the prison is a high security, Category A prison, it balances educational opportunities against the security risks involved. Every individual *goes through an individual risk assessment, so they'll apply for something and then there'll be a risk assessment* (Senior manager). For education, *if there are certain crimes which might preclude somebody from actually*

taking part in an IT course...and there are some security levels where people are not allowed access to IT (Senior manager).

Prison staff highlighted the importance of literacy skills for health and safety concerns: *from a literacy point of view...if people want to go into a workshop, they need to be able to read a health and safety notice or they need to know about fire evacuation or they might need to be able to follow simple instructions* (Senior manager). The other major objective is rehabilitation in order to break the cycle of reoffending. For the prison, the objective is to rehabilitate individuals to successfully re-enter society and the labour market. In order to help individuals gain employment, the prison aims to help improve literacy and numeracy skills, as well as other skill and personal areas in prisoner's lives.

Target groups

There are a range of courses offered at the prison, including Skills for Life, Information Technology (IT), English language classes, literacy and numeracy courses, life skills and parenting. The majority of classes take place in the education department, a separate unit in the prison. There are a few wing-based courses on offer to prisoners, who either work full-time at the prison or are unable to attend. Courses are offered *either full time or part time...in any one day we will have about 25 and 30 classes running* (Senior manager).

Particular courses are targeted specifically to certain groups or individuals, such as:

- Individuals with low levels of literacy and numeracy: Targeted through Skills for Life programme.
- Illiteracy: Non-readers are targeted through Skills for Life course *for non-readers, then we have a progression route up to Skills for Life [level] 2 and then Key Skills* (Senior manager).
- Individuals with problems with their families/parenting skills for fathers: Targeted through Social and Life Skills programmes.
- Individuals with a history of domestic violence are targeted to enrol in healthy relationships programme.
- Sex offenders enrol in sex offender treatment programmes and thinking skills.
- Prisoners on life sentences: Targeted through progression courses and flexible learning class *where people can actually show progress in their subject areas* (Senior manager)
- English as an Additional Language individuals are targeted through two different ESOL classes.
- Individuals with drug or alcohol abuse issues: Targeted through Social and Life Skills programmes and specific classes dealing with alcohol and drug abuse. The psychology department offers a number of different courses, including flexible and short-term rehabilitation for drug abuse. Prisoners are targeted for this following an individual assessment with a professional. There is also a course *that deals with alcohol and anger issues* (Senior manager).
- Individuals who are difficult to engage in education: *If people aren't particularly interested in going to a class, then we provide outreach support in the workshop* (Senior manager).
- Young white British males, who are most reluctant to engage, are targeted through a Learn Direct workshop: *we are hoping because that will be in the work area that people will feel that that has more kudos and people who perhaps wouldn't attend a normal*

formal class situation would attend and work on their own on perhaps a distance learning programme (Senior manager).

The prison provides enrichment activities, we have music projects, we have theatre projects, anything where we, and we find that they are very successful in getting the men engaged and then you know they want to do something else (Tutor).

There are also courses specifically geared towards employment outside the prison. The Senior manager stated, we run quite a lot of IT courses because IT is related to employment outside...we do several [vocational training] courses in bricklaying, painting and decorating, plastering and industrial cleaning, so those are our employment-related courses. Individuals earn nationally recognised qualifications and the courses are linked with employment opportunities. Most courses offer qualifications. Apart from national qualifications, the prison offers equal pay for education as work, with bonuses for achieving accreditation (Senior manager).

At the prison, counselling is provided through the chaplaincy, but is fairly limited. Individuals seeking counselling are required to ask for this service, or in some cases, it is people who have probably come to the attention of the chaplains on their visits around the wings, or it might be people who are referred through [the] big listener group (Senior manager). It is a small service. The counsellors are trained by the Samaritans. The prison also runs a specific mentoring scheme to assist people who do not want to attend education with their reading (Senior manager). In this scheme, one teacher is responsible for prisoner mentors and they go through a structured reading scheme on the wings...it's a very structures reading scheme, and it has to be done every day for something like 20 minutes to half an hour, so somebody is supposed to sit down with their mentee every day and just go through a section of the book each day (Senior manger). This form of peer mentoring is done on a more formal basis, mentors are identified on all of the wings or within classes and they then will be given mentees who they will help with reading...[the] scheme has provided incredibly successful in getting people started to read. And it only works if it's done on a regular basis which is why the mentors are so important because if they are on the same wing, in an evening, they can do half an hour [of reading] (Tutor). This has been highly successful in engaging individuals who are reluctant to engage in literacy or other education classes and in getting individuals to work together: it encourages people who possibly don't want to [engage]. We get a lot of people who have literacy problems, who don't want to really expose themselves in a classroom situation, so we have people who really have the serious problems who don't really want to attend, so we have to think of other ways of actually improving their literacy while they're here (Senior manager). In addition, the prison staff report that informal peer mentoring often occurs inside and outside the classroom (Tutor).

Funding

The funding for the prison comes from the LSC now and the LSC have much more of a role in deciding who does what and when and who gets the funding and how the funding is going to be organised (Senior manager). This applies to the funding of education at the prison, as the LSC will provide the funding for education in all public sector prisons and any new private prisons that come on stream...every prison in England, every new prison will have education provided by the LSC (Senior manager). The Senior manager stated, when the LSC took over four years ago, they took over historical funding, so you will find that a prison like Buxtowne has a fairly low number of

hours compared with another big local prison, just because the funding changed several years ago and nobody ever looked to see whether it suited the needs of the prisoners. So you will find huge discrepancies in the amount of funding and the amount of education different prisons provide for no particular reason. In this case study, prison staff was unable to provide information regarding the percentage of the overall prison budget that goes to education or rehabilitation services. Although there are not opportunities to expand education, there is an opportunity to move funding around from August 2010 so it might be that the historical funding will change from them and they will look at what is needed in which establishment and move the funding around accordingly (Senior manager).

History and background of the model

The prison opened its doors in mid-19th century. Historically, the prison held both female and male prisoners. By the mid-20th century, it became in all male prison. In recent years, the prison has faced significant change. In the 1990s, the prison was reconstructed and the management of the prison was determined to be best put out to tender. During the past two tenders, the prison *actually won the bid* and the prison remained public (Senior manager). This means that although Buxtowne Prison is a state prison, it is market-tested. The prison goes *through the market-test procedure...and private companies are able to bid on us...whoever wins the bid actually gets to run the prison...there is an invitation to tender, people express interest, some people go through to the next round and everybody puts in a bid to try and better another company, but to use it at a more economical level* (Senior manager). As a state prison that is market-tested, there is a chance every few years *that they might move from public to private or the other way around* (Senior manager).

The impetus for establishing education in the prison *came from the chaplaincies, who were the first organisers of classes at the prison, due to the need to even just do something simple like read the Bible* (Senior manager). Education continued to be provided on an informal, unofficial basis with the first tutor organiser *starting roughly 40-50 years ago* (Senior manager). From the Senior manager's perspective, education *has progressed, it's much more structured. We're looking at prisoners' needs not just what they want to do, we're trying to look at what people actually should be doing. Classes used to be sort of more recreational and so there used to be all sorts of classes just based on what tutors felt like doing or what prisoners felt like doing. Whereas now we do a needs' analysis every year, we look at what's available in the outside world in terms of employment, we try and focus on things that prisoners need to do.*

The courses on offer and their focus have changed. For example, there used to be more artistic and musical expression courses on offer. Prison staff stated that *there has been a big reduction in the support for those programmes since there was some bad publicity last year...after that, we had a list of inappropriate activities so we have got to be very careful to justify everything in terms of the educational experience now* (Senior manager). There are two art, drama or music projects a year, *but we'll try to relate them to the wider key skills, so we'll do some accreditation on wider key skills through those projects* (Senior manager).

Number of participants

There are around 1200 prisoners in Buxtowne Prison. The age breakdown and the number of prisoners in each range is: five are under 21; two hundred and thirty-seven are 21 and over; three hundred and four are over 25; three hundred and eighty-eight are over 30; two hundred and forty-three are over 40 and forty-five are 60 and over. The majority are between the ages of 21 and 60, with a small proportion under 21 and over 60. At Buxtowne, 168 prisoners (or 13.8% of the total prison population) are foreign nationals. There are twenty-three individuals at the prison, *who we would consider totally non-English speaking...it varies according to the level of English that people speak...it's difficult to get a definite figure on how many people struggle with their English* (Senior manager). For English language needs and learning difficulties, the prison aims to target these issues when individuals first come into the prison. When individuals first enter prison, *they come on the induction wing and they will do a screening test at that stage* (Senior manager). The screening test is for literacy, numeracy, *it's to look for people whose English is not good and check for people with learning difficulties. And it's also so that we can actually look at what activity would suit that person while they're in the prison* (Senior manager).

As far as educational background of prisoners, the tutor stated, *we are finding that now more and more of the learners that we see in education are already at E3 level and level 1. So that you know previously and always there is the perception that there is a huge proportion of people who have poor literacy skills, well there is a proportion obviously but we have found whether it's because they have come through the system through you know Youth Offender Institution or even juvenile provision, that most of them have reached a reasonable level before they get here. Although difficult to accurately assess, the Senior manager believed that about 350 [prisoners] at any one time are in education and between about 1200 and 1500 a year are engaged in education. It is difficult to assess as people will stay from anything between a day and the whole year during that time. The minimum hours per week of classes that an individual can participate in are two and a half hours, and the maximum is 32 hours* (Senior manager). The prison staff discussed the different target groups who seem more difficult to engage. Without education and vocational training being wing-based, *some prisoners aren't able to access all the different opportunities, so on the vocational training wing, we have a lot of older prisoners and because the classes aren't based on the wing, they can't walk to the workshop; they will tend to go to class* (Senior manager). In addition, *it is people on longer sentences [who] would see the benefit of education more than those on short sentences* (Senior manager). With the individuals serving lifetime sentences, *the flexible learning unit comes into its own because that is where they can sample a lot of different unitised [courses], sociology, psychology, law, you name it. They can do it and it gives them a taster, so a lot of them move on, they really become very engaged and they are the ones who would eventually end up doing Open University* (Tutor).

The prison perceives foreign nationals to be *much keener* about engaging in education (Senior manager). Although it is difficult to place the proportion of foreign nationals in employment when they leave the prison, *they do attend classes more often and are regular attendees* (Senior manager). The tutor interviewed believed that *the ESOL students are very engaged* (Tutor). The prison faces a challenge in engaging its young, white British prison population: *one of our big things is to persuade white younger males to take part in the education programme* (Senior manager). They believe

that young white British males are more reluctant as they likely had *school experience [that] was more recent and they didn't have a good experience in school, they didn't go* (Senior manager). Comparing younger and older prisoners, *I think as people mature they suddenly realise the importance [of education], when people have children they decide that that's the time they want to actually learn. I think perhaps younger people are less confident and don't want to expose themselves in a groups situation* (Senior manager). One of the tutors at the prison believes the greatest proportion in education are between 25 and 35 years of age, *but we have people as old as 80 in the vocational training wing, so there's a wide variation* (Tutor).

Location

Buxtowne Prison is located in the North West England, in a city with a population of approximately 400,000. The area has experienced high rates of deprivation, as a result of chronic unemployment and poverty. The unemployment rate in both the city and the region is considerably higher than the national average (ONS 2007). The local authority is in the top ten most deprived in England according to the Economic Deprivation Index (2008) average rank for 1999-2005, and is among the local authorities most consistently placed in the top ten most deprived local authorities. Although the majority (roughly 80%) of the current residents are White (White British, White Irish, White Other), this has steadily decreased over the past decade with a growing proportion of ethnic minority residents. According to the 2001 census, the white population has decreased by approximately 10% over the past ten years, whereas the ethnic minority population has increased by around 45%. The level of educational attainment is generally low. There are significantly higher crime rates for the region compared to other regions in England. Anti-social behaviour is prevalent as many young people are pressured to join gangs and take drugs.

Perceived strengths and weaknesses

For a prison, such as Buxtowne, which serves as a high security prison with a proportion of prisoners with long or lifetime sentences, the education provided helps to break down the sentence for the individual and provides a focus, in term providing hope: *education helps to keep people focused, so you might have somebody who has got a very long sentence who might be able to work on their education in small bytes, so instead of saying I'm going to do a minimum of 14 years, they could be looking at completing a literacy courses now and they might aim to do a GCSE [Graduate Certificate of Secondary Education] and then possible an OU [Open University] course, it helps to break down the sentence into more manageable chunks and so it gives somebody some sort of hope really, some sort of focus on what they can actually do while they're in prison* (Senior manager). One of the strengths of education from the prison's point of view is that education *provides a lot of purposeful activity hours...somebody who is engaged and perhaps working on their own in the evening and sees some hope for the future is more likely to be better behaved* (Senior manager).

The prison aims to link its education with employment and provide individuals with a chance to develop short and long-term aspirations for their future education and employment, which the prison perceives as a major strength. The Senior manager stated that education *does help to get people jobs outside and it does help people to actually continue their education. We have a lot of people who have never worked but people*

might develop an interest while they're in here and possibly follow it up when they go out. The individual learning plans are designed in consultation with the prisoner to meet their learning needs and goals. The individual learning plan is set up as soon as somebody engages in education and that will be based on their screening results...we'll be looking at their long term learning goals and their short term learning goals (Senior manager). The prison is proud of the fact that people can come in here at possibly pre-entry and there is a progression right the way up to OU [higher education] (Tutor). According to an Ofsted inspection report, the prison has been successful in providing education and work for the majority of its prison population. The prison offers flexible learning courses whereby prisoners are supported with open learning courses...we'll have 15 people all working possibly on different courses or working by themselves. [For] people who run out of options, there will then be referred to a distance learning so we can buy in a correspondence courses or even go to the OU (Senior manager). Although prisoners don't have access to IT on the wings for learning purposes, somebody who was doing an OU course would have to either do the IT element in the classroom or in the library (Senior manager). One of the weaknesses here is the lack of the use of the Internet because a lot of courses now rely on the use of the internet, particularly OU courses, so I know that's something that the OU are addressing but everybody becomes more reliant on the Internet and prisoners do not have access to it here (Senior manager). As the tutor stated, our progression routes particularly within the flexible learning is very good practice...we've got a very good flexible learning department, they've all got their own laptops, if you walk in there you can hear a pin drop...and the flexible learning coordinator is in close liaison with her OU and distance learning coordinator who used to work for the OU and it gets fantastic results (Tutor).

Another perceived strength is a recent project, in which the education staff has introduced into all the workshops the wider key skills. This means that men who will not engage necessarily with education, don't want to know, they have a chance to gain accreditation because it is embedded in the workshop that they're working in, they do working with others, improving on learning and performance and problem-solving...we provide outreach for key skills, ordinary key skills and basic skills, but this wider key skills is done in blocks of three weeks, three sessions a week and the men have to do various activities related to their work, but show that they can work with others or they can problem solve. We have found that it means an awful lot to the men to get, some of them have never ever achieve anything and aren't willing to come to education, maybe their literacy skills are poor but you cannot force them to come if it's not part of their sentence plan. Whereas going into a workshop and doing the wider key skills gives them an opportunity to gain and from that you know sometimes it just takes off (Tutor). Aside from flexible learning and progression routes, the prison staff perceives their library system and the access provided to the library to be very positive. This is in part due to having a library officer appointed, who brings the prisoners from the wings, a dedicated library officer which makes all the difference that I think is good practice. In the past, when I used to work in the library, if there was a shortage of staff, the first thing that would be taken was the detail to take men to the library. And now all the wings get regular visits and also on education, every class gets half an hour a week. Each class is timetabled a particular slot and so I think the access certainly here is really good (Tutor).

The structure of the building is a perceived weakness of the prison in terms of presenting an obstacle to learning: *it's a very old prison and the rooms aren't purpose built, so we'll have small classrooms or classrooms that are strange shapes...in some ways there are some physical obstacles to learning* (Senior manager). The prison staff also perceived security and the current health and safety regulations as an obstacle. She stated, *health and safety is very big on everybody's agenda, isn't it? So obviously we want to make sure everybody's safe, but I suppose in a lot of cases, it can be very restrictive. In general, I would say that it doesn't really affect the education and training that we offer though* (Senior manager). Providing access to education for all prisoners and ensuring that individuals gain long-term benefits of education is difficult. Prison staff highlighted the disproportionate interest in educational opportunities among individuals, with the young, white British male prisoners the most difficult to engage, although they are currently attempting to provide different work-based opportunities as a 'hook' into education.

One of the biggest difficulties in providing long-term education plans for prisoners, as highlighted by the two staff members during their interviews is *the churn*, the process of repeat offenders and the revolving door for prisoners moving in and out of the prison service. This means that it is difficult for the staff to assess how many prisoners receive education annually. The Senior manager stated, *we have quite a high churn ratio here and we have people who sometimes don't attend education. Another challenge is that the prison, being a local prison, receives people at the beginning of their sentence normally and you don't know how long someone is going to stay, so you might think someone is going to stay for six months and they stay for six days or you might expect them to stay for a very short period and they stay for a long time. So you aren't working to any sort of particular end date* (Senior manager). Another challenge for the prison is ensuring on a daily basis that there is sufficient education staff to cover classes, given that this is a high security prison. The tutor stated, *the day to day difficulty for me is making sure that I have staff to cover the contract. We have almost 100% compliance but that's really difficult at times, simply because we are not like any other prison that we can, you know within three weeks get somebody cleared to work here, it can take up to six months to get clearance...so if a member of staff leaves for whatever reason it's not easy for us to replace them, so we are constantly using our pool or cover staff until we get more people.*

In addition, some of the weaknesses relate to the lack of structured, formal assessments for prisoners' individual needs. There is no structured assessment for prisoners for whom English is an Additional Language. The process is one in which prisoners self-identify their level of English and the prison finds it difficult to have an accurate account of which prisoners require ESOL training or help with literacy. Moreover, prisoners are *asked on reception if they have any learning difficulties and they get asked again as part of the induction...we're not actually able to screen everybody for learning difficulties, so we're having to go on what people tell us at the moment* (Senior manager). *In terms of personal support, there is some counseling available, I don't think it's too well developed, through the chaplaincy...with the chaplaincy, they have to ask for the support and they are assessed and then there is quite a long waiting list* (Senior manager).

Priority needs for expansion of the model

There are a number of priority needs for expansion of prison education. The Senior manager stated, *I would try and make education a core element of the whole regime...a lot of activities are numbers based, so it's very important for people to get the right number of people to a particular place and not always get the right person to the right place.* Providing firm options for progression in education is another priority need for the prison. With the different lengths of sentences, sometimes unknown to the prison staff, the prison believes it *needs to be smarter about how we can work with other prisons so that if somebody starts a course here we can actually, somebody can actually carry on or do something similar in another prison, that's something that we need to address really in different geographical areas* (Senior manager). Although it is not planned for the future, the prison staff reflected on the need to expand the formal mentor scheme in reading to offer qualifications for mentors.

Methods of feedback and evaluation

There are both formal and informal methods of feedback and evaluation at the prison. The prison is Ofsted inspected, which is a regular formal evaluation. Part of the formal evaluation is to ensure that tutors are using methods of actively involving the learner in lessons, as well as inspect various other aspects of the provision of education. In addition, there are regular *teaching and learning observations* done by managers in each area (Senior manager). There are also spot checks *whereby I might walk around and just see what people are doing* (Senior manager). There are both internal and external evaluations of education at the prison. The tutor stated, *we do lesson observations and annual reviews, supervisions and they are moderated by the college, we have a schedule for the lesson observations and then we send them to college who moderate what we've done and so it's monitored both internally and externally.*

Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model

Further, the number of individuals receiving sentences including prison time has rapidly increased throughout the past decade in England and Wales. In 2004, the prison system in England and Wales hit a record of roughly 75,000 individuals in prison (Morris, 2004). Scholars, such as Millie, Jacobson and Hough (2003) argue that the prison population in England and Wales has also risen so rapidly due to the increasingly punitive climate of harsher sentences and the likelihood of custodial sentences. Therefore, with harsher sentences and the likelihood of increased prison time, the numbers are likely to continue to grow.

The Senior manager and the manager of the education department believe that the prison sector will be affected by the recession in a number of ways. During a recession, it is also reported to be more difficult to successfully integrate former prisoners into the job market, which may have an impact on the number of re-offenders (Daddow 2009). The Senior manager at Buxtowne Prison believed that the recession will have a major impact on undermining education as a priority for the prison, given the difficulty in ex-prisoners being able to successfully integrate into the labour force. She stated, *one of the big aims of education particularly from the LSC point of view is to get people into employment and we were sort of reasonably successful with that up until about November of last year [2008]. Now a lot of people are being made redundant, then ex-offenders aren't really high on the list of people who are going to be taken on. Quite a lot of people went into the construction trade and obviously there aren't any jobs there, so in some ways we're*

training people so we're hoping the job market will pick up before they go out. With the recession, she stated, it takes some of the priority away from education as a means of rehabilitating people when they leave.

The recession will also likely to change the way in which the prisons in Britain are funded. As a state prison, which is market-tested, the tender process in terms of deciding who actually gets to run the prison every few years relates to *quality but a lot of it will, particularly in the present climate, it's to do with price* (Senior manager). This has the potential to shift the prison into the private sector and undermine the provision of education in the prison, when the focus is predominantly on cutting costs. The Senior manager stated that *because of the financial climate, there is going to be changes to funding situations, I mean lots of prisons, not particularly ours because we run on a service level agreement but a lot of prisons in the area are expected to make huge budget cuts and so that will not impact on the actual education service at the moment but it will impact on all the services which support education.*

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APPENDIX 1 National Reports for Subproject 5

Stephanie Rammel, Regina Gottwald

Social inclusion in formal and non-formal adult education. Findings from Austrian institutions and government representatives.

Danube University Krems
Austria

.....

Pepka Boyadjieva, Valentina Milenkova, Galin Gornev, Kristina Petkova,
Diana Nenkov

The role of Bulgarian educational institutions for promotion of access of adults to formal education

Institute of Sociology
Bulgaria

.....

Laura Engel, John Holford, Agata Mleczko

The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education

The University of Nottingham
England

.....

Auni Tamm, Ellu Saar

No Title

Tallinn University. Institute of International and Social Studies / Department of Social Stratification
Estonia

.....

Lode Vermeersch, Anneloes Vandenbroucke

The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Flanders

.....

Anikó Balogh, Anna Józan, Ágnes Szöllősi, Péter Róbert

The institutional aspects of adult education in Hungary

TÁRKI Social Research Centre
Hungary

.....

Catherine Dooley, Paul Downes, Catherine Maunsell, Valerie McLoughlin

Access to education for adults experiencing disadvantage in Ireland

Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College

Ireland

.....

Meilute Taljunaite; Liutauras Labanauskas; Jurate Terepaite-Butviliene; Loreta Blazeviciene

The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education
Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Social Research Institute
Lithuania

.....

Ole-Anders Stensen, Odd Bjørn Ure

Social inclusion in adult education is more than implementing mainstream public policy – a compilation of interviews in Norwegian adult education institutions.
Fafo, Institute for Labour and Social Research.
Norway

.....

Valdimir Kozlovskiy, Anisya Khokhlova, Maria Veits

The role of Russian educational institutions for promotion of access for adults To formal education
Department of Sociology
Saint Petersburg State University
Russia

.....

Elisabet Weedon, Sheila Riddell, Richard Purves, Linda Ahlgren

Social inclusion and adult participation in lifelong learning: Officials', managers' and teachers' perspectives
University of Edinburgh
Scotland

.....

Angela Ivančič, Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar, Marko Radovan

Access of adults to formal and non-formal education – policies and priorities
Slovenian Institute for adult education
Slovenia

APPENDIX 2

The interview process for the national reports

The wording and suggested sequence of the questions were outlined in advance, prepared by the comparative research coordinator and refined through dialogue with all the research institutions involved in the LLL2010 project. The interviews were semi-structured in scope, organised under key thematic headings for each type of educational institution and for the government officials. This provided flexibility for interviewers to add relevant follow-up questions or to omit factual questions already answered elsewhere. In some interviews not all questions were to be asked, because for some issues there was already an adequate answer available on the institution's website or in other publicly available documents. Thus the data used in this research project was not only collected during the interviews. When information was found in background documents, this did shorten the interview. Furthermore, there was still scope for the judgment of the interviewer as to which questions may be most important within a specific category or which may already have been answered by more elaborated previous answers. When two representatives from one institution were being interviewed, the answers from the first interview might also have influenced the emphasis within the second interview.

Not all of the interviewees could or would answer all of the questions asked. In the process of trying to ascertain gaps and lack of knowledge, it was important to assess all forms of non-response. The non-response (specific questions not being answered or answers such as 'no', 'none' and 'I don't know') was assessed at the organisational level (i.e. across the two or three interviews related to one organisation), rather than simply at the level of each interview individually, because it was recognised that institutional staff at different levels may have different levels of knowledge.

One of the advantages of in-depth interviews (structured as well as semi-structured and non-structured), compared to a lot of other techniques of collecting data in social sciences, lies in the ability to get back to questions that are not answered initially and the ability to immediately validate answers by use of follow-up questions. The follow-up questions were also used as a way to find out the reason for a particular answer.

Different interview schedules were made for each educational sector. All interview schedules contained a mixture of questions on (a) factual information, (b) factual information about plans/intentions, (c) perceptions of leading organisational figures. The interview guidelines also contained some country specific questions arising directly from the results of subproject 3 (SP3) of the LLL2010 project. This was the case for the interview schedules for the formal educational institutions and the interview questions for the government department officials. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Structured templates were provided, in dialogue with the national research teams, for a) a background profile of the sector of the institution, b) models of good practice to ensure sufficient information for their transferability to other contexts, c) the presentation of the national reports. (See appendix 7 for copies of the interview schedules for each educational sector and the government officials).

Across the interview templates, thematic headings for interview subsections were organised based on a systems theory level focus. These systems theory level dimensions included Links, Transition, Chronosystemic focus on time, Sustainable rather than short-

term interventions, Growth promotion, Feedback from life experience, Dynamic change rather than inorganic stasis.

APPENDIX 3 Templates for the national reports

The templates for the national reports are described below.

Structure of each individual interview presentation

Essential:

- 1) Background information on the specific institution in the interview. As there are two interviews for each institution this background information across both interviews can be presented as an integrated piece – rather than two background information pieces for the same institution.
- 2) Presentation of the rest of the individual interview responses under the headings of the categories provided to instantiate the research questions.
- 3) Models of Practice described in the interview according to the template for models of practice can be presented under the headings of the categories provided to instantiate the research questions or else separately.
- 4) Direct quotes provided as part of a detailed response to the questions asked under each category. Explicit statements of gaps in responses under a given category/question, including gaps distinguished by lack of response, lack of knowledge for response and refusal to respond etc
- 5) Presentation of the full interviews translated verbatim for the government department officials interviews

Word Length: Though depending somewhat on the richness of the interviewee responses in any given interview, it is expected that each interview would come to 7-10 pages single spaced, including relevant background information for the institution

Structure of national reports

Essential:

- 1) Background information on the *sector* in general: including all information gained from the template provided
- 2) Each individual interview presented according to the structure outlined above
- 3) Models of Good Practice recommended as transferable to the contexts of other countries

Ideally:

- 4) Commentary on the common themes and contrasts across the interviews
- 5) Analysis of the institutional interviews in light of the government officials interviews
- 6) Policy recommendations for the context of your country
- 7) Other commentary your team thinks is relevant

Template for background profile to inform interviews and national reports

Template:

A. Background data to profile target groups for access strategies:

- (i) those at risk of social exclusion,
- (ii) early school leavers,
- (iii) prisoners,
- (iv) ethnic minorities,
- (v) longterm unemployed
- (vi) orphans
- (vii) underrepresented social classes
- (viii) other

This is needed for background information at a national and individual institutional level

B. Funding sources for Formal and Non-Formal Education, and Prison Education

This is both needed for background information at a national and individual institutional level

C. Identify *all* features of the institution's a) mission statement, b) strategic plan (if any) which are relevant to:

- social inclusion
- access to the institution for traditionally underrepresented groups
- lifelong learning
- literacy
- outreach strategies

This is needed for background information at an institutional level

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

This is needed for background information at a national and individual institutional level

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

This is needed for background information at a national and individual institutional level

- Distinctive features of contexts for learning in your country that impact on access and social inclusion issues.

This is needed for background information at a national level

F. Brief introductory overview regarding the status and extent of:

- Prison education in your country
- Non-Formal education in your country

This is needed for background information at a national level

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

H. Template for details on a model of practice (whether good or less than ideal) requires the following at a minimum:

- objectives of the practice

- target groups
- funding sources (including non-standard funding sources)
- history/background of the model (when established, its developmental progress)
- number of participants/service users annually
- location
- perceived strengths and weaknesses
- 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
- perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model

This is needed for background information at an institutional level

J. Brief summary of major national policy documents on access to education

APPENDIX 4 A framework for interpretation of the qualitative research from the national reports for the comparative report

Theory ladenness in empirical observation is well recognised in philosophy of science (e.g. Duhem 1905; Kuhn 1970; Feyerabend 1988) and requires further critique in the practice of psychology (Gergen 1982; Eiser 1994; Teo 2008) and education. Freud, in 1915, already acknowledged that observations are theory-laden and further interpreted theoretically, while Gergen (1982) highlights the theoretical leap between any given hypothetical construct and its empirical operationalisation; the pathway back from the observed operationalisation to the hypothetical construct is by no means a self-evident one. There may be multiple, even infinite, possible hypothetical constructs consistent with any given operationalisation.

From a broad behaviouristic psychology tradition, Zuriff's (1985) conception of a 'continuum' of observation 'contaminated by theory' ranging from the 'purely inferential' towards the 'purely observational' (p.29) scarcely differs from the implicit assumptions of cognitive science. As Simon & Kaplan (1989) recognise, cognitive science's observations are contingent on different levels of description:

The amount of detail incorporated in an architecture⁵⁷ *depends on what questions it seeks to answer*, as well as how the system under study is actually structured (Simon & Kaplan, 1989, p.7) (my italics)

Some background frame or 'horizon of understanding' (Heidegger 1927) for an empirical observation is inevitable; it is the space for play of speculation in interpreting data⁵⁸. This scope for interpretation of empirical data is aptly described as 'the

⁵⁷ The basic design specifications of an information-processing system are termed its 'architecture' in classical cognitive science. The parts of the architecture purportedly represent the underlying physical structures in only an abstract way. One architecture for modeling the human brain might contain neurons as components. Another might try to characterise the brain even more aggregately with units such as short-term and long-term memory, sensory organs etc.

⁵⁸ Recognized already in Western thought in the Eighteenth Century by Hume's exposition of the limits of induction

hermeneutic surplus of interpretation' (Teo 2008, p.51). Philosopher of science Feyerabend (1988) states:

Scientific education...simplifies science by simplifying its participants: first, a domain of research is defined. The domain is separated from the rest of history...and given a 'logic' of its own. A thorough training in such a 'logic' then conditions those working in the domain; it makes their actions more uniform and it freezes large parts of the historical process as well. Stable 'facts' arise.... (p. 11).

This account highlights, not only the need for interpretation of data but also that a domain of relevance is inevitably constructed within which interpretation of observations and data takes place to select certain aspects as being more pertinent than others. This similarly occurs in the analysis of the 12 national reports for comparative purposes. It is not being claimed that the selection process to prioritise a range of issues for access to education is the only possible one to emerge from a review of these reports. However, it is being argued that the selection process engaged in for comparative purposes does identify domains of relevant issues, material, problems and solutions for promotion of access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups in Europe. A key initial criterion for identification of these domains was the research questions outlined under each of the sections, formal, non-formal, prison and secondary education. Some of the issues which emerged transferred across more than one research question under these sections. All of the identified issues pertained to at least one of these research questions.

Another related point with regard to identification of domains of relevance in science is that the accounts being provided for current purposes across the participating countries are intended to be illustrative of relevant issues and practices rather than being complete and exhaustive; these illustrative examples from the qualitative research interviews and national reports are neither intended to summarise or describe the current situation in every participating country nor to give a quantitative account of the frequency and prevalence of such practices across a given country. While Feyerabend (1988) highlights that even empirical research in the natural sciences involves a selection process, qualitative scientific research in the social sciences is *a fortiori* necessarily selective and based on key underlying principles

In Western jurisprudential thought, Tribe (1988) extols the virtues of going beyond a static categorical definitions type of reasoning and endorses the dimension of dynamic balancing of principles underlying categories and precedents in legal reasoning. Moreover, Lather's (1994) postmodern psychology treats categories generally as merely 'provisional constructions' (p.103-4). The key insights offered here are the need to go beyond interpretation of data statically through categories and rather to examine qualitative data dynamically through key underlying principles. It is these key underlying principles of interpretation of the 12 national reports which need to be brought to the fore. This is not a mechanical, formulaic process as the underlying principles operate in conjunction with each other, in what Tribe (1988) recognises in a different hermeneutic process of legal interpretation, as a dynamic balancing process.

Elsewhere this dynamic balancing of principles and perspectives is recognised as being the hermeneutic circle of interpretation (e.g., Heidegger 1927). In cognitive psychology, van Dijk & Kintsch (1983) describe such textual interpretation as being *both* a top-down 'macrostructure' process influenced by a prior theoretical framework and a

bottom-up 'microstructure' process based on the detail of the texts produced. It is a dynamic balanced interplay between both approaches. Scardamalia & Bereiter (1991) similarly discuss this interaction between abstract strategies and concrete context in their research on expertise in cognitive psychology:

What goes on at the most general level in expert functioning is an interaction between domain knowledge and immediate cases...domain knowledge is used to interpret or deal with the immediate case. In turn, the immediate case yields information that may be used to modify domain knowledge, sometimes in a major way. We call the process 'dialectical' because of this two-way influence. Note that the process may go through a number of cycles. One may do something with the immediate case that leads to reformulating the domain knowledge, which in turn results in a different idea about what to do with the immediate case and so forth (p.175).

Interpretation is a dialectical interplay that cannot be reduced simply to information processing. On this view, a mechanical categorisation is to be characterised as a non-expert approach. In the words of Scardamalia & Bereiter (1991), 'non-expert behaviour is characterised by an attenuated or unidirectional passage of information' (p.178).

This need to go beyond a mechanical filtering of routinised information leads to what Bruner (1992) perceives as a shift from information processing of categories to construction of meaning. Bruner & Amsterdam (2000) later apply such a hermeneutic approach of meaning construction to cognitive psychology and legal interpretation, through an emphasis on narrative and narrative psychology. The ambit of their qualitative research approach is to treat scientific explanation as narratives to be constructed based on balancing a range of underlying principles and meanings of texts. Adoption of such an approach in this comparative report invites the need to consider what are these underlying principles for current purposes.

A key principle for interpretation is that of a solution-focused one in relation to access to education. This principle requires a focus both on solutions and on how to overcome problems which are manifested at a systemic level in relation to access to education, whether these problems and solutions are at national, institutional or cross-national levels. Such a solution-focused approach underpins the varying research questions that informed the more specific structured interview schedules for the formal, non-formal, prison, secondary school and policy makers.

Further hermeneutic principles include the need to highlight key points of significant contrast between institutions or countries, combined with a solution-focused approach. To facilitate this, every national report team was invited to propose their priority issues for consideration as part of this comparative analysis. The teams presented their priority issues for analysis from each national perspective at a consortium meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria in June 2010, building on a prior discussion across teams of issues viewed as being of major importance for access, at a consortium meeting in Nottingham, England, in September 2009. A consistent focus was held throughout on provision of a critical analysis that would highlight the gaps in current practice and policy in each country in relation to promotion of access. This critical approach gives cognisance to Gergen's (1994a) words, 'In specifying *what is the case*, other accounts are suppressed' (p.xiv). It was recognised as being important to adopt a scrutiny on systemic gaps as part of both the national report accounts and the comparative report.

This approach was complemented by a recognition of gaps in the current international literature in relation to access to education, so that themes and issues emerging from the national reports which offered particularly innovative, distinctive insights into problems and solutions were also sought to be included in the domain of relevance of this research. The basic question on this point is, what do the national reports add to existing research. Thus, in presenting much of the comparative material an attempt is being made to integrate it with other international research on access to education.

The other hermeneutic framework adopted as a domain of relevance for comparing the national reports and identifying key systemic issues is that of the focus on systems theory dimensions highlighted earlier. These systems theory dimensions are as follows:

- 1) Sustained interventions, developing over time rather than once-off interventions
- 2) A focus on transition difficulties
- 3) Developing links between different parts of the system and subsystems in a two-way flow
- 4) Feedback built into systemic responses
- 5) Promotion of growth rather than focusing on deficits
- 6) An organic system is dynamic and changing rather than static and inert
- 7) A multileveled focus is needed to bring about system level change
- 8) There is a need to move beyond static hierarchical models
- 9) A holistic approach moves beyond narrow unidirectional causal models of cause-effect; it is solution-focused
- 10) A temporal dimension to system change includes focus on developed synergistic cohort effects

These systems theory dimensions provided a further reference point for interpretation, while being cognisant of the need not to force data into the Procrustean bed of a top-down theory, but rather to allow it to emerge more inductively from the national report accounts. As noted already in 3.5, these systems theory dimensions were variously built into the subsection organisation of the questions asked in the different interview schedules.

Before outlining the comparative findings in terms of structural and process indicators for access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups, it is important to observe that these indicators are being proposed as being central to a domain of relevance of access to education. However, this centrality of relevance does not mean that such indicators are to be interpreted as the solely relevant indicators, nor are they to be viewed as historically unchanging indicators. They emerge from qualitative research in a historical context of meaning and against that backdrop are far from being treated as ahistorical, abstract indicators.

The range of underlying principles identified for interpretation of the national reports informed the process of extracting key issues and themes for more elaborated discussion in terms of indicators. A subsequent level of analysis involved the translation of these issues and themes into indicators, whether structural or process indicators. It is again to be emphasised that this two-stage process of analysis is an interpretative rather than simply mechanistic process, following in the tradition of narrative psychology and construction of meaning (Bruner 1992; Bruner & Amsterdam 2000) in cognitive

psychology, rather than being simply an information processing type of psychological interpretation, reliant on applying static categories, in order to obtain the key indicators. It is also to be noted that the process of translating key issues and themes into indicators requires a sensitivity to language, to ensure that these indicators are sufficiently tightly drawn in order to be conceptually meaningful for comparison across different cultural contexts and lifelong learning systems. Further it is to be recognised that other possible avenues for interpretation at a comparative level are not so amenable to interpretation through a focus on structural, process and outcome indicators. One such avenue, namely, the impact of the recession/current economic crisis, was included in appendix 3, despite not being within a framework based on indicators.

It is to be observed that the major dimensions of interpretation for indicators are in relation to structural and process dimensions rather than outcome indicators which need to be employed much more frugally. As described earlier, identifying a dimension as a structural indicator is basically whether this dimension is amenable to meaningful description in a yes/no fashion as a stable element of a system. Therefore if an issue could be reduced to analysis of its consistent presence or absence in a system it is interpreted as a potential structural indicator. The process indicator, highlighting State or institutional effort is more a question of scale or degree. If a structural indicator level analyses the presence or absence of a policy or law, a process indicator is focused more on its implementation dimensions. Thus, for example, for prison education the indicator of *Establishment and implementation of a principle of normality in prisons* is characterised as structural with regard to the question of establishment and process concerning implementation. Similarly, in prison education, the indicator of *Professional development support and resource materials for teachers in prisons* is a structural indicator regarding the presence or absence of a systemic framework of support and regulations to make this provision possible in principle, and a process indicator dimension interrogates the degree of its actual implementation in practice. While this distinction of presence/absence versus degree of presence may invite some overlap in borderline cases, another example to instantiate this distinction from formal education is as follows: *A grant system for traditionally underrepresented groups (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR) that provides a satisfactory income (PROCESS INDICATOR) and which includes free third level fees for such traditionally excluded groups (STRUCTURAL INDICATOR)*. It is to be emphasised that process indicators would particularly interrogate issues of communication between groups. Examples of such indicators for formal education systemic issues are: *Development of outreach institutional strategies that go beyond mere information based models (PROCESS INDICATOR)*, *Communication with spokespersons, opinion makers and community leaders in socio-economically marginalised or ethnic minority communities (PROCESS INDICATOR)*. While there may additionally be a stable, presence/absence of communication dimension which could make these interpretable as also being structural indicators, the substantial meaningful issue is the quality of communication. Quality related issues are centrally to be interpreted as process indicators.

APPENDIX 5 Summary of findings in terms of Structural and Process Indicators: Based on all national reports from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, England, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Russia, Scotland and Slovenia.

Table 3. How could educational institutions develop a systemic approach to better promote the access of adults to the education system?

A central driving committee at state level for lifelong learning and access for marginalised groups – including clear funding sources	Structural Indicator
The need for a formal obligation on institutions from State to improve access and for incentives for third level institutions such as differentiated funding from State based on implementation of access goals	Structural Indicator
Education institutional strategies for access for socio-economically disadvantaged groups	Structural Indicator
Performance indicators and targets of institutions to increase accountability as part of institutional mainstreaming of access issues	Structural Indicator
A regional strategy for access	Structural Indicator
An access strategy for the so-called ‘elite’ universities	Structural Indicator
Developing an accessibility index to challenge the perceived tension between a university desire to be in world top 100 and access issues	Structural Indicator
State-led incentives to different faculties and departments within third level institutions to increase access: A faculty and department level focus to increase access	Structural Indicator
Formal links between universities and NGOs representing marginalised groups	Structural Indicator
An access strategy of third level institutions which engages with primary and secondary students experiencing socio-economic disadvantage	Structural Indicator
Clarification of the criteria to ascertain socio-economic disadvantage given the observed tendency, especially in Central and Eastern European countries, for targeting to occur for more easily identifiable target groups like those with a disability or from an ethnic minority – in contrast with groups experiencing socio-economic disadvantage	Structural Indicator
Coherent support strategy for access to third level education for orphans and young people in care	Structural Indicator

A grant system for traditionally underrepresented groups (a) that provides a satisfactory income and (b) which includes free third level fees for such traditionally excluded groups (c)	a) Structural Indicator b) Process Indicator c) Structural Indicator
Pathways for strategic communication across government departments	Process Indicator
Development of outreach institutional strategies that go beyond mere information based models	Process Indicator
Communication with spokespersons, opinion makers and community leaders in socio-economically marginalised or ethnic minority communities	Process Indicator
A targeting of young immigrants and young members of a target group: cohort effect as a positive potential	Process Indicator
Representation of target groups through members of such groups being employed in the educational institution	Process Indicator
Challenge to institutional staff attitudes	Process Indicator

Table 4. Are schools and universities ready to change their admission policies and become institutions of lifelong learning? Which changes are planned?

The need for a formal obligation on institutions from State to improve access and for incentives for third level institutions such as differentiated funding from State based on implementation of access goals	Structural Indicator
An access strategy for the so-called ‘elite’ universities	Structural Indicator
Developing an accessibility index to challenge the perceived tension between a university desire to be in world top 100 and access issues	Structural Indicator
State-led incentives to different faculties and departments within third level institutions to increase access: A faculty and department level focus to increase access	Structural Indicator
Clarification of the criteria to ascertain socio-economic disadvantage given the observed tendency, especially in Central and Eastern European countries, for targeting to occur for more easily identifiable target groups like those with a disability or from an ethnic minority – in	Structural Indicator

contrast with groups experiencing socio-economic disadvantage	
A system of reserved places or equivalent approach to increase participation of underrepresented groups at third level	Structural Indicator
A regional strategy for access	Structural Indicator
Performance indicators and targets of institutions to increase accountability as part of institutional mainstreaming of access issues	Structural Indicator
An access strategy of third level institutions which engages with primary and secondary students experiencing socio-economic disadvantage	Structural Indicator
Formal links between universities and NGOs representing marginalised groups	Structural Indicator
Preparatory admission courses	Structural Indicator
Study workshops to provide academic support	Structural Indicator
Availability of institution free of charge during summertime and evenings for community groups from marginalised areas	Structural Indicator
Communication with spokespersons, opinion makers and community leaders in socio-economically marginalised or ethnic minority communities	Process Indicator
A targeting of young immigrants and young members of a target group: cohort effect as a positive potential	Process Indicator
Development of outreach institutional strategies that go beyond mere information based models	Process Indicator
Representation of target groups through members of such groups being employed in the educational institution	Process Indicator
Challenge to institutional staff attitudes	Process Indicator

Table 5. What kinds of provision already exist that could offer examples of good practice (for example, distance learning, reserved places for educationally disadvantaged groups etc)?

Education institutional strategies for access for socio-economically disadvantaged groups	Structural Indicator
Availability of institution free of charge during summertime and evenings for community groups from marginalised areas	Structural Indicator
Preparatory admission courses	Structural Indicator
Formal links between universities and NGOs representing marginalised groups	Structural Indicator
Study workshops to provide academic support	Structural Indicator

Performance indicators and targets of institutions to increase accountability as part of institutional mainstreaming of access issues	Structural Indicator
A system of reserved places or equivalent approach to increase participation of underrepresented groups at third level	Structural Indicator
An access strategy of third level institutions which engages with primary and secondary students experiencing socio-economic disadvantage	Structural Indicator
Modular courses	Structural Indicator
Representation of target groups, including ethnic minorities in the decision making processes at national level regarding access to education	Process Indicator
Development of outreach institutional strategies that go beyond mere information based models	Process Indicator
Representation of target groups through members of such groups being employed in the educational institution	Process Indicator
A targeting of young immigrants and young members of a target group: cohort effect as a positive potential	Process Indicator
More imaginative pathways for feedback than written surveys	Process Indicator

Table 6. Are the literacy needs of marginalised adult groups being satisfactorily met?

Preparatory admission courses	Structural Indicator
Study workshops to provide academic support	Structural Indicator
Development of outreach institutional strategies that go beyond mere information based models	Process Indicator
More imaginative pathways for feedback than written surveys	Process Indicator
A targeting of young immigrants and young members of a target group: cohort effect as a positive potential	Process Indicator

Table 7 Which are the main obstacles to establish a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience for opening access of adults to the education system?

The need for a formal obligation on institutions from State to improve access and for incentives for third level institutions such as differentiated	Structural Indicator
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funding from State based on implementation of access goals	
Performance indicators and targets of institutions to increase accountability as part of institutional mainstreaming of access issues	Structural Indicator
An access strategy for the so-called 'elite' universities	Structural Indicator
State-led incentives to different faculties and departments within third level institutions to increase access: A faculty and department level focus to increase access	Structural Indicator

APPENDIX 6

Collection of examples from European Quality Mark (EQM)



The Collection of Examples keeps examples of responses received from providers during the trial phase of EQM. They show how questions can be answered and identify types of evidence which would prove how a provider works. This information should be used as a guide to help providers and assessors discuss and agree what an appropriate answer or type of evidence could be.

In the list below you will find links to real examples of supporting documents.

- 0.1.1.** Describe your core business and areas of learning
- 1.1.1.** How do you know which learners are learning what?
Where is that information?
- 1.1.2.** How do you record learner attendance? Where is that information?
- 1.1.3.** How can you show what learners are achieving?
Where is that information?
- 1.1.4.** How do you keep learner information confidential?
Do you have a statement to safeguard confidentiality in your organisation?
- 1.1.5.** What are the administration processes to finalise each course (when do you know that the administrative work with the course has ended)?

- 1.2.1. How do you make sure that the learning environment is appropriate?
- 1.2.2. What resources materials and activities do you provide to support the learners and their learning?
- 2.1.1. How do you identify and agree on what the learner wants/needs to learn, and where is that agreement?
- 2.2.1. Attach an example of the learning goals for one of your courses, stating "As a result of this learning, the learner will be able to..."
- 2.2.2. Once you have discussed and agreed on the learning goals with the group of learners, how do you make sure that the end goals for the course fit the learners' needs?
- 2.2.3. Attach a sample document of learning agreement between provider and the learner/ economic stakeholder (in the case of an external party financing the course)
- 2.2.4. How do you make sure that teachers meet learning goals agreed with learners/economic stakeholder. What support can you offer to teachers if needed?
- 2.3.1. Provide examples of how course content is based on identified needs.
- 2.3.2. How do you ensure that teachers use different teaching styles in order to meet learner needs?
- 2.4.1. How do you make sure that teachers are qualified and competent in the subject matter and skilled in appropriate teaching methods?
- 2.4.2. How do you make sure that teachers are up to date about learning and the learning area they are working within?
- 3.1.1. How do you know that the learners have met their learning goals? Provide an example.
- 3.1.2. How and when do you inform learners that their progress will be monitored and checked throughout the course?
- 3.1.3. How do you give feedback to learners in order to help them meet learning goals?
- 3.1.4. How do you give feedback to learners in order to help them meet learning goals?
- 4.1.1. How can learners provide constructive feedback to

teachers/ provider about the course?

- 4.1.2. How are staff involved in regular improvement of courses, delivery methods, resources and materials, learner achievement, feedback and learner support?
- 4.2.1. State the name(s) of person/ team responsible for the quality review process and add contact information.
- 4.2.2. How do you ensure the quality of your learning provision over time? Explain.
- 4.2.3. What do you use to quality assure your provision/ all provider activity - for example EQM, ISO 9E37, internally agreed questions/ guidelines/ criteria/ quality check list?
- 4.2.4. How do you record the quality review and how do you make sure you follow up any actions? E.g. an action plan with completion dates.
- 4.2.5. How are the staff trained in and involved in the quality review process?

APPENDIX 7

Commentary from a number of the national reports on the impact of the recession/economic crisis in Europe on access to lifelong learning

Austria	<p>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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).</p> <p>The [non-formal education] 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).</p>
Austria	<p>[A different non-formal education interviewee in Austria] 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).</p> <p>Another Austrian non-formal education interviewee: 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.</p> <p><i>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 recognised, 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</i> (Rammel & Gottwald 2010).</p>

Austria	<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>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:</p> <p><i>Now we rather focus on things like organisation, 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 (Rammel & Gottwald 2010)</i></p>
Bulgaria	<p>The present recession and financial crisis will affect negatively the policies and practices for access of disadvantaged groups to higher education (Boyadjieva et al., 2010).</p>
Scotland	<p>There are still a range of adult literacy and numeracy providers which are closely linked to Community Learning and Development and dependent to a large extent on local authority funding. The impact of the current economic climate is noted by the present Minister for Schools and Skills in his foreword to the last progress report: <i>'Difficult economic times mean that resources are tighter and that priorities might need to be reassessed'</i> (Scottish Government, 2009a: Foreword), although he also recognised the value of adult literacy and numeracy provision. This would suggest a shift away from measuring achievement in this area by softer indicators such as an increased confidence towards more organisation measures (Weedon et al., 2010).</p>
Scotland	<p>Ensuring that support for the most vulnerable communities and those most vulnerable within those communities are not affected disproportionately by current cuts. Removing the monitoring of adult literacy and numeracy provision and switching to a hard indicator to measure level of literacy rather than softer ones may make it more difficult to</p>

	<p>engage those that are hardest to reach. (Weedon et al., 2010).</p> <p>In the current economic climate funding to support vulnerable younger people may have a detrimental effect on older learners (Weedon et al., 2010).</p> <p>College B expected that the current economic climate would lead to an increase in redundancies, and that this would be reflected in the student population by an increase in older learners as many adults return to college to re-train (Weedon et al., 2010).</p>
Scotland	<p>The general opinion of the [university] interviewees was that there was likely to be a reduction in funding towards the widening participation agenda, irrespective of which party emerged as the winner in the next (2010) general election. In spite of this, the overall view of these interviewees was that the university was committed to widening participation which would be pursued regardless of further funding or pressure from the funding council. However, this would seem to be at odds with the views of other senior managers in the institution, interviewed for a different project, who voiced concerns about allowing students <i>who were not very good</i> into the institution and also that institutions should be allowed to <i>sort out their own priorities</i> (Riddell et al, 2007). The views of the interviewees were not supported by the statistics quoted above, indicating that the institution was failing to reach its benchmark in relation to admission of students from more deprived backgrounds (Weedon et al., 2010).</p>
Scotland	<p>It is likely that the squeeze on public sector spending which will follow the general election will have a seriously detrimental effect on community learning and development. Local authorities are also responsible for funding schools and are likely to prioritise these rather than community learning and development. The emphasis noted in the Government's economic recovery plan also stresses the need to support young people into their first employment and those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed (Weedon et al., 2010).</p>
Scotland	<p><i>A lot of my time over the last, what, three, four years has been spent on how to make savings. That's where, I'd have to say personally where a lot of our energy has gone. It hasn't gone into establishing a vision. It hasn't gone in to say addressing the current climate and how we best address that. The kinds of discussions we should have been having we haven't been having. And I think it's tragic. I really do. (CLD 2 Senior Manager)</i> (Weedon et al., 2010).</p>

Lithuania	<i>[...] in 5 years the organisation can be closed because of economic recession and low salaries as the most qualified employees can look for work somewhere else (Taljunaite et al., 2010).</i>
Lithuania	<i>Over the next 5 years, the organisation can expand and employees' salaries rise if the state provides more funding. However, it is likely that non-formal education in Lithuania in the coming 5 years will remain in stagnation if there is no system of recognition of competences acquired through non-formal learning and self-education built. The positive step would be the creation of attractive, flexible system which would allow to combine the recognition of competences acquired in non-formal way or through self-education (Taljunaite et al., 2010).</i>
Russia	<p>Obviously, the fact that all mentioned categories belong to social groups with quite low income and lack of financial resources is a significant obstacle on their way to education. As it has already been mentioned above, the sphere of education has become largely commercialised and even free services appear to be somewhat paid if supplied by elite or high-rated educational institutions. Most non-formal education programmes are also paid, which automatically decreases the number of their students among representatives of socially disadvantageous groups (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).</p> <p>Besides, many people with low income (i.e. extra money for advanced training) simply don't consider education a good financial investment because they don't see a direct connection between having a degree/specialisation/profession and getting a job, especially during the recession, which has severely affected the entire Russian society and especially families with lower income. It must be noted that such vision is quite legitimate since this connection is indeed rather vague – the Russian labor market is still based on personal relations – an employer is more likely to hire a person recommended by a friend or a business partner than an unknown applicant with a better resume. Therefore, many people rely more on their connections than professional experience and education when looking for a job (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).</p>
Russia	The recession has also touched upon the federal and municipal budgets. Even though informants from the formal institutions mentioned that the recession has not influenced them so far, the informants from the government pointed out to decrease of financing. The recession has also lead to postponement of implementation of numerous

	<p>projects aimed at improvement of the system of education. However, the projects aimed at advanced learning of unemployed or those on the verge of unemployment were launched. The informants describe them as quite successful but this is rather unproven information because no assessment of the project results has been conducted so far. Besides, there hasn't been provided any feedback on the part of the project participants (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).</p>
Russia	<p>As far as employers are concerned, the previously conducted research has shown that quite few of them are eager to invest into education of their employees; they are more willing to hire persons who are already qualified enough. This tendency has especially grown with the recession, which is largely characterised by human resources flow and expenses shortage, including salary lowering. Therefore, employers cannot afford investing into employees' education as much as they used to (Kozlovskiy, Khokhlova & Veits 2010).</p>
Hungary	<p>The recession influences school life at least two ways: It has an impact directly on the students who struggled with serious financial problems even before the recession...: <i>Students had serious problems already before the recession. It makes me very-very upset that we have students who had good results in secondary school and on the final exam, were accepted to third level institutes but dropped out because they didn't have the money to go to consultations.</i> The other way the recession influences school life is the decrease of funds: both the local government and Innocenter has had to cut back the support given to the school (Balogh et al., 2010).</p>
Hungary	<p>A Department of Education and Culture senior official in Hungary offers the following view: <i>I think the underprivileged groups basically are not affected so badly because we have separated about 4 billions HUF from the Market Labour Found targeting the organisation of the planned actions in a larger volume in order to avoid situations when the underprivileged may became even more disadvantageous as a result of incensement of the unemployment rate</i> (Balogh et al., 2010).</p>
Hungary	<p>Financial problems might occur in the institute on two levels: On the students' level: Financial problems have become more serious in the last one or two years, but – according to the vice-college rector for education – this process had started already before</p>

	<p>the recession:</p> <p><i>I definitely feel this in the last one or two years, it increased [the severity of financial problems]. Honestly, sometimes I almost feel sick because of some requests, because I don't know how they could be treated, because there are no more possibilities, no more financial means, because we do have a limit, and usually it is the poorest students whose requests we accept, and I don't know how this could be handled in a governmental level, and I don't think that possibilities increase in the recession (Balogh et al., 2010).</i></p> <p>On the institutional level: According to the student centrum leader the recession has not have a dramatic impact on the institute, since it had to use financial means in a rational way even in the previous years (Balogh et al., 2010).</p>
Hungary	<p>The interviewees have felt the negative impact of the recession on education system from the last year. Financial difficulties of the prison have become more serious (Balogh et al., 2010).</p> <p>Senior manager: <i>It is very hard to motivate prisoners for participating in educational programmes, when also the gratification of material needs presents difficulties. We had to limit the period of consumption of hot water and the TV must be switched off at 9 pm. It has occurred that the prisoners should have been put on short bread ration. If the prisoner's family from a distant town can't visit a prisoner, there is no possibility to transfer the prisoner to that town yet. These problems are heavier for the prisoners, than the difficulties of the education. Probably, the education will fall into the background because of these financial difficulties, but it won't be fall dead, because participation in education is a very important component in the prisoners' future-life. I think it will be hard work to hold it on the regular level (Balogh et al., 2010).</i></p>
Estonia	<p>The economic depression has not changed the number of learners [in Prison B]. However, it has had an impact on other factors – availability of teaching materials, etc.</p> <p><i>Less money is spent on pens and paper; tea during breaks was cancelled. The number of events has been reduced... Right now we are living off old resources (Tamm & Saar 2010).</i></p>
Estonia	<p><i>The current economic situation has made people more active [when attending non-formal education]. We could see this when we offered a course on</i></p>

	<p><i>project management. We find new ideas from feedback questionnaires – people suggest new topics, tell us what they would like to learn. (Tamm & Saar 2010).</i></p> <p>The economic depression has probably changed the way of thinking; people look for solutions and that will help the country to move on.</p> <p><i>People are more realistic. They understand that education is the key to success. Education is paramount. Education helps the country to move on (Tamm & Saar 2010).</i></p> <p>The situation is made worse by the current economic depression – representatives of higher educational institutions noted that an increasing number of students are struggling to pay the study fee (Tamm & Saar 2010).</p>
Estonia	<p>Upper secondary students drop out less often [than lower secondary] however, in the current economic situation the number of drop-outs has increased.</p> <p><i>Some people do not dare to ask their employer to allow them to leave early two-three times a week; they are afraid of losing their job and being replaced by someone who can work full time. Very few employers – mainly state agencies – support employees who are acquiring general education. Other companies are less supportive. For example chain stores where secondary education is a must. If people can agree with their colleagues and they have a work schedule that allows them to attend classes they can study. Employers make no allowances. Students say that they are not able to continue... Despite the fact that the law requires employers to give study leaves to their employees (Tamm & Saar 2010).</i></p>
Ireland	<p>The Participant/ Board Member is worried about the effects of cuts in community education during the recession and sets out, <i>if you start cutting back classes and things like that, you're really cutting back not just classes but hope...people need to have hope, hope that their situation or their lives will improve, and we're not even talking financially, we're talking about that their lives are improved...so if they're cut back...you're limiting the amount of learning that people can do... recession, why take away hope altogether, everybody's hope, because it's not about jobs for us here, it's about support and a place to come and meet and talk and learn. So if you start taking that</i></p>

	<p><i>away, what to you call that, that's not even a recession, that's a depression. I don't know what we would do if they start taking away that support'. She goes on to explain the value of the support KCP offers to participants, 'by coming to classes, sitting down with other people, sharing their worries and their cares, the classes provide that, not just as in an academic way but the support, otherwise you have communities falling apart.</i></p>
Ireland	<p>The Senior Access Official for University A, in relation to the effects of the recession, stated:</p> <p><i>I think there are going to be the problems that are out there in the communities that we work with...If the proper supports are not going to be put in place earlier, you would imagine there is no investment in the education system that it will make it very difficult for third level to provide the programmes that we are providing in primary schools and in secondary schools. I think that the recession is going to have a huge impact on promoting equity of access to third level education among those groups and I think we have our work cut out for us over the next 5 to 10 years, as long as this lasts, hopefully in the short term rather than the long term.</i></p>

APPENDIX 8

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

FORMAL EDUCATION: THIRD LEVEL INSTITUTIONS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES, STRUCTURES AND REVIEW PROCESSES

(Sys Th: Feedback, Multilevelled System Change)

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

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 ?

In your opinion, in what ways could the State provide further incentives for third level institutions to increase access for risk groups ?

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

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

Please describe representation, if any, of underrepresented risk groups on this committee

Please give details of targets for percentage of students from risk groups, processes for monitoring of these targets

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

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 ?

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

INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE

(Sys Th: Links, Beyond Hierarchy Models, Dynamic change rather than inorganic stasis, Sustainable rather than shortterm interventions)

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

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

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

OUTREACH

(Sys Th: Links, Transition, Dynamic change rather than inorganic stasis)

How does your institution build bridges to underrepresented communities to promote increased access ?

How do you think this will be developed further in future ?

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

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION TO PROMOTE SOCIAL NETWORK SUPPORTS

(Sys Th: Links, Transition, Growth Promotion)

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

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

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

TRANSITION PROGRAMMES

(Sys Th: Links, Transition)

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

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).

ADMISSION POLICIES

(Sys Th: Links, Beyond Hierarchy Models)

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).

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)

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

(Sys Th: Links, Beyond Hierarchy Models)

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 ?

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

SUPPORTS

(Sys Th: Sustainable rather than shortterm interventions)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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)

DISTANCE EDUCATION

(Sys Th: Links)

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

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

COURSE CONTENT

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

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 ?

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

BACKGROUND ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

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

Please briefly describe the history of your organisation.

When was it established, by whom ?

What are your organisation's a) stated objectives, b) funding sources ?, c) approximate annual budget

Have the numbers of your courses increased or declined in the past 5 years ?

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

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

COURSE CONTENT

(Sys Th: Growth promotion, Feedback from life experience)

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

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. ?

How does your organisation 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, lifeskills, coping with addiction

c) leadership skills, psychology, sociology, philosophy classes

d) other, please specify

How does your organisation contribute to community development, i.e.,

a) ownership of and representation by members of the local community,

b) fostering community leaders,

c) developing learning goals together with the learners

What courses are most popular ?

STAFF CONDITIONS

(Sys Th: Sustainable rather than shortterm interventions)

Are tutors on a) shortterm contracts, b) longterm contracts, c) no contracts ? Please explain reasons for this situation

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

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

TARGET GROUPS

(Sys Th: Links, Transition, Dynamic change rather than inorganic stasis)

Are there noticeable gender differences in those attending classes generally, or particular classes ?

How in your opinion could your organisation take more steps to reach and engage with the underrepresented gender ? What steps do you currently take ?

What groups attend your classes which the formal education sector might find more difficult to reach ?

How does organisation achieve this?

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

CONNECTIONS TO THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

(Sys Th: Links, Transition)

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

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

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

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

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

(Sys Th: Links)

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 ?

OUTREACH TO MARGINALISED GROUPS

(Sys Th: Links, Transition)

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 ?

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

Where exactly are your classes located ?

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

TUTOR TEACHING METHODS

(Sys Th: Growth promotion, Feedback from life experience, Beyond hierarchy models)

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

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,
- b) dialogue and opinion sharing during the classes,
- c) opportunity for shared learning goals,
- d) attempts to relate the class content to the learners' life experiences ?

How is feedback provided from participants on a given class ?

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

(Sys Th: Growth promotion, Chronosystemic focus on time)

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

In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges facing your organisation in the next 5 years ?

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

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 ?

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 organisation compared to going to formal educational institutions ?

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR THE NON-FORMAL SECTOR

(Sys Th: Growth promotion, Chronosystemic focus on time)

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 ?

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

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 ?

How could childcare support be developed for those attending classes ?

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

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

STRUCTURAL ISSUES

(Sys Th: Links, Sustainable rather than shortterm interventions)

Is there a central committee in your government department with specific responsibility for:

- a) social inclusion
- b) access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups
- c) lifelong learning
- d) literacy
- e) the non-formal education sector

If yes, are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in these committees ?

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 ?

What are the obstacles to establishing any of these committees in your government ministry ?

Is there a position of responsibility in your government department, specifically to develop and monitor implementation on these issues:

- a) social inclusion
- b) access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups
- c) lifelong learning
- d) literacy
- e) the non-formal education sector

In other words, if progress is not made in these areas who takes responsibility to drive things forward ?

Are there any specific structures for communication at a strategic level between regional, local and national level with regard to:

- a) social inclusion
- b) access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups
- c) lifelong learning
- d) literacy
- e) 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 ?

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 ?

STRATEGIC ISSUES

(Sys Th: Growth promotion, Chronosystemic focus on time)

Is there a national and/or government strategy for:

- a) social inclusion
- b) access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups
- c) lifelong learning
- d) literacy
- e) the non-formal education sector

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 ?

What percentage of your government department budget goes on adult education: a) formal education, b) non-formal education ?

Please comment on measures taken by national government to support adult learning outside the major cities in your country

NATIONAL POLICY: FORMAL SECTOR

(SysTh: Sustainable rather than shortterm interventions, Dynamic change rather than inorganic stasis)

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 ?

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive ?

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 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

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive ?

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to use of the school building after school hours for adult education courses ?

Are there particular gaps in employment and training for adults that you envisage developing in the near future ?

NATIONAL POLICY: NON-FORMAL SECTOR

(SysTh: Links, Transition, Sustainable rather than shortterm interventions, Dynamic change rather than inorganic stasis, Growth promotion, Feedback from life experience)

Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations ?

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 ?

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) ?

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) ?

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

(Sys Th: Links)

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 ?

What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State ?

FUTURE PLANS

(Sys Th: Growth promotion, Chronosystemic focus on time, Sustainable rather than shortterm interventions)

What, in your opinion, is your government department's priority issues to improve access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation ?

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 ?

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
- free childcare
- access officers in each third level institution
- outreach strategies for each community

Please list your priority target groups to improve access to third level education

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 ?

PRISON EDUCATION

(Sys Th: Growth promotion, Links, Transition, Dynamic change rather than inorganic stasis)

Are there specific plans to improve access to education for adults in prisons in your country ? Please specify.

What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to developing prison education ?

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

(Sys Th: Growth promotion, Links, Transition, Chronosystemic focus on time, Sustainable rather than shortterm interventions)

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 ?

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

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 ?

Have any efforts been made to get schools to be sites of adult education in the community ? Please describe

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 ?

Which government department funds the libraries in your country ?

Is distance education run from any libraries in your country ?

Please comment on ways to overcome the digital divide between different social groups
What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on lifelong learning in your country ?

PRISON INSTITUTION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

BACKGROUND FEATURES OF THE PRISON

How many prisoners are in the prison ?

What year did the prison open ?

Is it a high, medium, or low security level prison ?

In your opinion, with regard to promotion of access to education for prisoners, is your organisation a) typical of most prisons, b) more developed or c) less developed ? Please explain your answer.

EDUCATION CURRENTLY AVAILABLE IN PRISON

(Sys Th: Links, Transition, Growth Promotion, Feedback from life experience)

How many prisoners receive education in prison per annum ?

Is there a profile of which types of prisoner engage most in education ? (age, type of crime, long vs. medium term, gender etc)

Is there a library in the prison ? How many books does it have ?

What classes are available for prisoners ? Please list all classes on offer

Do prisoners have a free choice in which classes to participate ? Is there an obligation or compulsion to attend classes ? Please explain

How many hours per week of classes can a prisoner participate in ? Maximum/minimum

What incentives are there for prisoners to participate in adult education in prison ? Are there processes or strategies used to help motivate prisoners to engage in education ?

Are there any practices which might discourage prisoners from engaging in education, e.g., losing payments for work if attending classes ?

Are there any practices of peer mentoring in education in prison ?

Is there any options for accreditation of prisoners' learning in these classes ? If yes, please give details

What models of good practice are evident in the prison regarding adult education ? Please outline in detail

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

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 ?

Are any classes given formal accreditation. Please describe.

BACKGROUND TO PRISON EDUCATION

(Sys Th: Growth promotion, Chronosystemic focus on time, Sustainable rather than shortterm interventions)

Does the prison mission statement refer to a) lifelong learning, b) rehabilitation goals

Does the prison strategic plan refer to a) lifelong learning, b) rehabilitation goals

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 ?

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)

CONTINUITY OF EDUCATION

(Sys Th: Links, Transition, Feedback, Sustainable rather than shortterm interventions)

What structures or procedures are in place to allow for continuity of education for a prisoner after he/she leaves prison ?

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 ?

DISTANCE EDUCATION

(Sys Th: Links)

Are there any computer facilities for distance education modules ? Please describe. Are there any plans to implement this in the near future ?

What obstacles would you envisage to distance education in your prison ?

SUPPORT SERVICES IN PRISON

(Sys Th: Growth promotion)

Are there any procedures for identifying prisoners with literacy problems ? If yes, how does this initial assessment take place, please give details

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

Are there counsellors/therapists available for 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 ?)

What differences are you aware of between male and female prisoners and participation in adult education in prison ?

Are there problems of discipline with the prisoners attending classes ? Please describe

TUTORS IN PRISON

(Sys Th: Sustainable rather than shortterm interventions, Feedback from life experience)

Are prison tutors on shortterm, longterm contracts (or none at all) ?

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 ?

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

(Sys Th: Growth promotion, Chronosystemic focus on time, Dynamic change rather than inorganic stasis)

What opportunities in your opinion exist for expansion of adult education in the prison, and other prisons nationally ?

What obstacles do you perceive to implementation of education in prison ? How can these be overcome in your opinion ?

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

What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on adult education in prison ?

SECONDARY SCHOOL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

In your view how could high schools in your country develop to ensure that more students continue at school until they are 18 ?

Does your school mission statement or strategic plan refer to lifelong learning, either directly or indirectly ? Please explain

In your opinion, with regard to provision of supports for students at risk of early school leaving, is your organisation a) typical of most secondary school organisations, b) more developed or c) less developed ? Please explain your answer.

In your opinion, with regard to provision of adult education, including distance education facilities, on your school site, is your organisation a) typical of most secondary school organisations, b) more developed or c) less developed ? Please explain your answer.

SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS TO ENABLE THEM TO STAY ON AT SCHOOL

What supports are available for students in your school ?

Are there supports for students a) with learning difficulties/special needs, b) literacy difficulties ? Please describe

Is there a counsellor available for students with emotional problems, including bereavement issues ?

Is there a careers advice person available for students in your school ? Please describe what they do

Is the situation in your school regarding these above supports typical of other schools in your country, to your knowledge ?

Please describe any services that exist to support and monitor those students who are not attending school regularly

What supports and services are put in place by your school for students at risk of early school leaving ?

Are there individual education plans devised for any students, which would include learning goals and feedback, in dialogue with the student ? Please give details

What extracurricular activities are available for students in your school ?

Is there any extra attempt made to involve those at risk of early school leaving in these activities ? Please give details

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 ?

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.

ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

(Sys Th: Growth promotion)

Approximately what percentage of students a) receive suspensions, b) are expelled from your school in one year ?

What alternative strategies and services are used by your school for students with behaviour/discipline problems as alternatives to suspension and expulsion ?

A CURRICULUM TO ENGAGE AT RISK STUDENTS

(Sys Th: Growth promotion, Feedback from life experience)

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 ?

For vocational schools: Please give details of the main features of your curriculum. What works best in engaging students most at risk of early school leaving ?

Please describe any innovative approaches to assessment which your school uses

Approximately how many hours are given per week to students personal development needs ? For example, selfawareness classes, relationship and sexuality classes, parenting or lifeskills, conflict resolution skills.

Please describe any innovative models your school adopts in these areas

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

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AT SCHOOL

(Sys Th: Growth promotion, Feedback from life experience)

In what ways, if any, does your school give recognition to students' contribution to their local community ?

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) ?

Please describe any structures in your school for student representation (i.e. a student council etc)

ADULT EDUCATION ON THE SCHOOL SITE

(Sys Th: Transitions and links across the community)

What adult education classes take place in your school building ?

Are adult education classes available generally in schools in your region in the evening or at weekends ?

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 ?

What are the perceived advantages or disadvantages to your school in hosting adult education classes in the evening or at weekends ?

Does your school cooperate with local services or other schools in disseminating information about evening classes for adults ? If yes, please describe

Recognising the decline of educational monopolies over diplomas, is your school prepared to act to provide formal educational qualifications for adults ?

Are any classes for adults run on your school site currently given accreditation ?

Do you know of other schools in your country which provide formal educational qualifications for adults ? Please describe

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND THE SCHOOL SITE

(Sys Th: Links)

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 ?

Does your school allow for a credit or module based system for its students ?

LINKS BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THIRD LEVEL

(Sys Th: Links, Transition)

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

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)

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND INSERVICE/PRESERVICE TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

(Sys Th: Chronosystemic focus on time, Sustainable rather than shortterm interventions)

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 ?

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 ?

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 ?

