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STUDIES ON ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

International and Comparative Studies in Adult and Continuing Education

edited by
Regina Egetenmeyer, Vanna Boffo,
Stefanie Kröner

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INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN ADULT EDUCATION: AN INTRODUCTION

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1. Internationalisation in adult education practice and research

Internationalisation is a phenomenon that can be observed in both adult education practice and adult education research. In 1999, Knoll suggested that adult education practice in Germany seemed to be much more international than adult education research, but nowadays, the need for internationalisation in adult education seems to be acknowledged in both sectors. In adult education practice, international target groups have emerged, such as refugees taking integration classes or the increasingly international staff in companies and firms. Furthermore, it has become much more common for people in society to have an international or migration background, which leads to international target groups in adult education. Likewise, continuing education provision related to selling products (e.g. trainings for handling complex machines) provides international perspectives on lifelong learning. For adult education organisations, internationalisation (e.g. offering more integration classes) means a change in programme structure and in personnel development (Robak, 2018; Heinmann, Stoffels & Wachter, 2018). For instance, administrative processes for course registration have to be in a language that persons without knowledge of the native language can understand. In addition, intercultural contexts of teaching and learning have to be considered to enable successful learning processes. Thus, adult educators and administrative staff need intercultural awareness and an understand-

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Stefanie Kröner, Vanna Boffo, Regina Egetenmeyer, *International and Comparative Studies in Adult Education: An Introduction*, pp. 7-13, © 2020 Author(s), CC BY 4.0 International, DOI 10.36253/978-88-5518-155-6.01, in Regina Egetenmeyer, Vanna Boffo, Stefanie Kröner (edited by), *International and Comparative Studies in Adult and Continuing Education*, © 2020 Author(s), content CC BY 4.0 International, metadata CC0 1.0 Universal, published by Firenze University Press (www.fupress.com), ISSN 2704-5781 (online), ISBN 978-88-5518-155-6 (PDF), DOI 10.36253/978-88-5518-155-6

ing of different cultural teaching and learning contexts. The academic professionalisation (Egetenmeyer & Schüßler, 2012) of adult educators can contribute towards their intercultural awareness.

But the academic world of adult education now also acknowledges the need for internationalisation. This is not only evident in international study programmes, international visiting professorship programmes, and international students exchanges but also in the discourse of adult education itself. For a long time, international references in adult education seemed to be limited to the respective language contexts or to EU policy documents. However, the acknowledgement and referencing of discourses beyond researchers' own language frame and country community now seem to become more and more a reality. English publications make this easier, but of course, publishing in English does not mean that writers are able to transport the full philosophical and discursive backgrounds of adult education, which are tied to different languages. For understanding discourses in different languages and country contexts, it is helpful to make implicit and explicit comparisons to become aware of one's own understanding and non-understanding. The Winter Schools on International and Comparative Studies in Adult Education, which have been offered since 2014 by many international partners on Campus Würzburg, support such insights and comparisons. They created not only a field of study for students but also a community of comparative research in adult education with several publications (Egetenmeyer, 2016; Egetenmeyer, Schmidt-Lauff & Boffo, 2017; Egetenmeyer & Fedeli, 2017; Egetenmeyer & Mikulec, 2019).

2. *The Winter School* International and Comparative Studies for Students and Practitioners in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

Although an international community has emerged in recent years among students and researchers in adult education and lifelong learning, there is growing need and interest in a deeper linkage to international activities of adult education practice. The consortium developed the term "colleagues from the field of adult education" to also include colleagues working at adult education associations. The learning module is developed as a blended-learning module, which comprises a three-month online study phase followed by a two-week Winter School in Würzburg (Germany). In the first week, participants work either on international policy strategies towards lifelong learning or on theories for international adult education. Field visits to practice organisations in adult education and guest lectures by international stakeholders round off the programme and contribute towards a better understanding of adult education in different cultural and national contexts. In the second week,

participants work in groups on different sub-topics in adult education. Examples are national qualification frameworks, the professionalisation of adult educators, active citizenship, and employability. In those comparative groups, each topic is discussed from different perspectives: from different cultural and national contexts and from representatives of theory and practice. Each group on average consists of six to ten participants and one to three colleagues from adult education practice. After the programme, doctoral students have the possibility to work together with international experts and Winter School fellows on comparative papers. Colleagues from the field of adult education are invited to present their good practice in a paper. In a first step, the comparative papers papers from the doctoral follow a blind peer-review process, the papers from the practicioners followed an editor-review. In a second step, the publication was submitted to an external refereeing process under the responsibility of the Florence University Press Editorial board and the scientific committee of the serie *Studies on Adult Learning and Education*". The fact that the Winter School brings together students, teaching staff and colleagues from adult and continuing education practice at different stages of their academic and/or vocational career has the potential for all of them to understand different theoretical, practical, and political perspectives through mutual exchanges. Conducting joint research enables all participants to reflect on their own perspectives and to gain inspiration from different good practices.

3. The Winter School as part of the DAAD programme Higher Education Dialogue with Southern Europe

The publication in the series *Studies on Adult Learning and Education* at University Florence Press shows the extensive collaboration of the Winter Schools between universities in Southern Europe and Germany. The University of Florence has worked together with the University of Würzburg since the beginning of its international activities in adult education. This deep level of collaboration also applies to the University of Lisbon and the University of Padua.

The DAAD programme *Higher Education Dialogue with Southern Europe* seeks to strengthen contacts among universities and other higher education institutes in Germany and Southern Europe. Such networks are expected to contribute to the "intra-European socio-political dialogue" (DAAD, 2018) through academic exchange among those countries. This DAAD programme is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.

For the Winter School 2019, funding from this DAAD programme enabled the participation of 13 master's and doctoral students from the universities Florence and Padua (Italy) and Lisbon (Portugal), as well as

five professors from the University of Florence (Italy), Helmut Schmidt University/University of the Federal Armed Forces Hamburg (Germany), the University of Lisbon (Portugal), and the University of Padova (Italy). This publication is also supported by the DAAD programme *Higher Education Dialogue with Southern Europe* (Project number: 57448245).

The volume *International and Comparative Studies in Adult and Continuing Education* presents results from the 2019 Winter School. It provides insights into comparative adult education in Southern Europe and Germany but also into partnerships with other international universities. It comprises three thematic foci: (1) *Teaching internationalisation and comparative adult and continuing education*, (2) *Comparative papers on adult and continuing education,* and (3) *Projects and practices from adult and continuing education*.

4. Teaching internationalisation and comparative adult and continuing education

In the first part, four papers look at *Teaching internationalisation and comparative adult and continuing education* from different perspectives.

Regina Egetenmeyer introduces comparative adult and continuing education and presents a guide for doctoral students on how to do comparative research in adult education, introducing a step-by-step research process in comparative adult and continuing education. This paper also offers a discussion of important aspects of comparative research, such as categories, juxtaposition, and research question.

Vanna Boffo analyses storytelling and other skills for building employability in higher education. She understands storytelling as an asset for professional development and looks at professional stories, education, and employability.

Sabine Schmidt-Lauff and *Emmanuel Jean-Francois* discuss the facilitation of comparative group work in adult education. Comparative group work is analysed as a part of comparative education. Additionally, they present an outcome-based, a team-based, and a learner-centred approach to comparative group work. Finally, they suggest strategies for learner engagement.

Balazs Németh introduces his experiences from the comparative group work on developing active citizenship through adult learning and education. He discusses the role of adult learning and education in the development of active citizenship, the common understanding of active citizenship, and finally points out challenges and limitations of global citizenship.

5. Comparative papers on adult and continuing education

The second part of this volume comprises six different *Comparative papers on adult and continuing education*. Following the results on new pro-

fessionalism theories (Egetenmeyer, Breitschwerdt, & Lechner 2019), professionalism in adult and continuing education can be understood in a multi-level perspective. This includes the understanding of adult educators working in different fields facing various requirements that follow different acting logics.

Borut Mikulec, *Alex Howells*, *Dubravka Mihajlović*, *Punia Turiman*, *Nurun Najah Ellias,* and *Miriam Douglas* analyse national qualifications frameworks as a policy instrument for lifelong learning in Ghana, Malaysia, and Serbia. This also includes a discussion of the recognition of prior learning in those countries and support for lifelong learning as proclaimed objectives.

Jessica Kleinschmidt, *Claire Garner,* and *Jörg Schwarz* compare master's degree programmes in adult and lifelong education in Germany and the United States. The paper points out how adult and lifelong education programmes differ in their contents, structures, and aims. Furthermore, those are related to different concepts of professional roles.

Paula Guimaraes and *Marta Gontarska* discuss adult education policies and sustainable development in Poland and Portugal: a comparative analysis of policies and practices. They analyse civil society organisations and social movements that offer adult education to increase awareness of those policies and of sustainable development. The paper especially highlights the challenges in those implementation processes.

Shalini Singh and *Søren Ehlers* analyse employability as a global norm and compare transnational employability policies of OECD, ILO, World Bank Group, and UNESCO. The paper points out consequences of employability as a global norm that has an impact on stakeholders in lifelong learning.

Bolanle C. Simeon-Fayomi, *Valentina Guerrini,* and *Denise Tonelli* analyse teachers as agents of change and compare teacher training and the gender dimension in adult education in Italy and Nigeria. This paper outlines gender hierarchies and stereotypes and discusses how teachers can contribute towards the promotion of gender equality.

Tajudeen Akinsooto, *Concetta Tino,* and *Monica Fedeli* analyse critical reflection in the frame of transformative learning in higher education and compare the fostering of critical reflection of students in Italy and Nigeria. This process is considered on a micro and on a meso level.

6. Projects and practices from adult and continuing education

The third part of this volume comprises five *Projects and practices from adult and continuing education*. Colleagues from adult education practice affiliated with DVV International and the European Association for the Education of Adults contributed those insights in their best practices.

The good practice cases support the comparative groups in focusing on the practical relevance of their theoretical considerations, challenging students and teachers to keep different aspects of adult education practice in mind.

Geraldine Silva from Portugal looks at the way adult education offerings in the Portuguese Qualifica Centre Azambuja are advertised using Facebook as a social networking tool. The centre is one of the Qualifica Centres in Portugal, which are responsible for the dissemination of adult education pathways (e.g. via radio, leaflets, etc.).

Miriam Douglas presents the Community Education Program at West Liberty University, West Virginia, USA. The paper compares adult and higher education in West Virginia and in Germany.

Heribert Hinzen discusses local and global perspectives on adult education and lifelong learning in regard to the 100th anniversary of Volkshochschule and the 50th anniversary of DVV International. The paper discusses the historical events leading to the foundation of Volkshochschule and DVV International along with the development of adult education.

Thomas Lichtenberg discusses the Curriculum globALE by the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) and DVV International as a global tool for professionalising adult educators. The paper analyses Curriculum globALE as a five-module professionalisation tool that has been used in different national and cultural contexts.

Aleksandra Kozyra and *Silvia Tursi* present the Younger Staff Training at the European Association for the Education of Adults as a learning journey. The training contributes towards the professionalisation of adult educators in Europe and enables collaborations amongst the participants. The paper points out how staff and organisations benefit from the training.

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PART I

TEACHING INTERNATIONALISATION AND COMPARATIVE ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

COMPARATIVE ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION: A GUIDING ESSAY

Regina Egetenmeyer

Abstract: This paper provides a guide for developing a research design for comparative studies in adult and continuing education. To that end, a research methodology will be presented that was developed at the COMPALL and INTALL Winter Schools on Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. Central elements for systematic comparisons in adult and continuing education are (1) the object of comparison, (2) research fields for comparison, and (3) inductive comparative categories. These elements form the reference points for the development of a comparative research question in adult and continuing education. The comparative analysis proposes a three-step approach from juxtaposition to interpretation: step 1 – descriptive juxtaposition; step 2 – analytical juxtaposition; and step 3 – analytical interpretation.

1. Introduction

Since 2014, a consortium of international partners has organised the two-week Winter Schools on "Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning" in February at Campus Würzburg, Germany. Up to 100 participants join the event each year. A central element of the annual Winter School is that professors from the partner universities[1] participate together with their students (Egetenmeyer, Guimarães & Németh, 2017). They select and prepare students at their home universities from October till January each year.

Whereas the first week of the Winter School is dedicated to studying international policies in adult education and lifelong learning, the second week focuses on the comparison of selected issues in adult and continuing education. Over the years, a comparative research methodology was developed that can be used for comparing adult and continuing education. Although there is a broad discourse on comparative education focussing on schools, the methodological development of comparative adult and continuing education has been limited (Egetenmeyer, 2016b).

[1] See acknowledgements at the end of this paper.

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Since the 2015 Winter School, an edited volume has been published each year as follow-up to the Winter School. These volumes present the results of comparative studies in adult and continuing education (Egetenmeyer, 2016a; Egetenmeyer, Schmidt-Lauff, & Boffo, 2017; Egetenmeyer & Fedeli, 2017; Egetenmeyer & Mikulec, 2019). The present volume is the fifth issue in this series. Based on the previous volumes, as well as many reflections, discussions, and feedback between the consortium members, the methodology for comparative adult and continuing education was developed. This paper presents guidance for comparisons in adult education. Young researchers may use it as a step-by-step guide for developing their own comparative research design for studies in adult and continuing education.

For further studies of comparative adult education, readers are invited to also follow the online tutorials, which were developed in the COMPALL and INTALL projects.

Online Tutorials for Comparative Adult Education
COMPALL Online Tutorial:
<https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/winter-schools/online-tutorial/>
INTALL@Home Tutorial:
<https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/intall/intallhome/>

This paper is based on these tutorials and the abovementioned publications.

2. Comparison as a daily activity

To gain an understanding of comparative adult education, it makes sense to begin by thinking about the fact that comparisons are a daily activity. Everybody makes comparisons every day, whether explicitly or implicitly. We are aware of some comparisons – and unaware of others. People compare the weather from one day to the next, they compare articles of clothing according to their preferences, meals according to their taste, and products according to prices.

Let's look at two different geometrical figures. We can compare them by shape: we may have a triangle and a rectangle, for example. We can compare them by size: maybe they are small and big. We can compare them by colour: we may have a blue and a red figure. We can compare them by contour: we may have a thick line and a dotted

line. We can compare them by how the move: they may be rotating or swinging. This means that daily comparisons need two prerequisites: (1) They need at least two objectives to be compared. In our example, we looked at two different *figures*. (2) To compare them, we need *categories for comparison*. The categories we used were shape, size, colour, contour, and movement. Based on these prerequisites, we can observe the objects: how do they differ or resemble each other according to the defined categories?

3. Elements of systematic comparison in adult and continuing education

Whereas daily comparisons are frequently made implicitly, systematic research-based comparisons need a critical and detailed reflection of its elements. A precise definition of these elements is the prerequisite for high-quality academic comparisons in adult and continuing education. These elements are (1) the object of comparison, (2) the research field of comparison, and (3) the categories of comparison. These three elements are identified in relation to the research question to be pursued. The reciprocal development of the mentioned elements and the research question is the basis for developing the research design of a comparative study in adult and continuing education.

4. Object of comparison in adult and continuing education

The object of comparison has to be related (a) to the *academic discipline* of adult and continuing education on the one hand and (b) to the specific *practice situation* of the researched phenomena on the other.

The relation to the *academic discipline* refers to the relation of the research object to the knowledge and research results of academic discourse in adult and continuing education. For the development of the research design, it means gaining in-depth insights into the academic discourse about the phenomena. Researchers have to answer the following questions:

a) In which discipline the study will be integrated?
b) How can the researched phenomena be understood according to the logic of the discipline?
c) Which theoretical perspectives are used for understanding the research object?
d) Which interdisciplinary relations will be taken into account?

It is important to keep in mind that the academic discourse in adult and continuing for many decades developed within close language

boundaries. As consequence, missing links of theoretical and empirical research discourse in adult and continuing education can still be observed between different languages. Based on this fact, it is advisable to reflect critically on the academic discourses and language(s) the study will refer to.

Taking international-comparative research in adult and continuing education as a disciplinary reference point, the research logic can be understood as research about provision and effects in adult education and lifelong learning (Egetenmeyer, 2016a). Existing studies can be broken down into studies about politics and policies in adult education and lifelong learning, about the professional situation in adult education and lifelong learning, about providers and institutions in adult education and lifelong learning, about educational offers in adult education and lifelong learning, and about the learning and competencies of adults.

On the other hand, it is important to understand the specific *practice situation* and reality of the research objective. If adult education starts with the learning of adults, it is important to understand the situation of learning settings for adults. Adult learning may happen in informal learning settings, for instance when reading a book or discussing with friends. It may also happen in non-formal learning settings, for instance when adults attend a continuing education training offered by employers or when they go to an adult education centre to take a gym course. However, adults may also learn in formal learning settings working towards a formal certificate, for instance when pursuing a postgraduate university degree or a high school diploma through second chance education. Educational providers and institutions can support all of these learning activities. This support may be called education provision.

All adult learning activities, learning settings, and institutional frames are embedded in conditions involving more or less support. These supporting and non-supporting conditions include lifelong learning policies, laws, legal frameworks, or the availability of financial resources. Adult learning and adult education, as well as their (non)supporting conditions, are influenced by a framework. This framework includes the historical condition, which understands adult education as an important or non-important activity. The framework is influenced by the demographic situation. But international agreements of the EU, UNESCO, or OECD also have an impact on adult education activities. Likewise, the employment situation has an essential influence on adult learning and educational activities.

For the comparative research design, it is important to understand the research objective based on the theories and empirical results of the discipline and based on the practice situation and reality.

Example:
If a comparative study compares participation in adult education, it is important to study theories and empirical results about participation in adult education. Aside from the disciplinary foundation of the research objective, the practical situation of participation in adult education has to be studied as well. Who are the adults who are taking part? Where do they take part? What are the conditions and frames of adult learners (e.g. biography, employment situation) and of adult education providers (e.g. policies, history)?

5. Research fields of comparison in adult and continuing education

Comparative studies in adult and continuing education examine one research object in a minimum of two different research fields. The research field is the question of *where* the object is researched. The research design is quite different if participation in adult and continuing education is researched at continuing education providers in higher education or at continuing education providers offering courses for unemployed people.

Traditionally, research fields in comparative adult education had a country perspective:

«A study in comparative international adult education [...] must include one or more aspects of adult education in two or more countries or regions» (Charters & Hilton, 1989:3).

As a consequence, studied compared objectives between different countries.

In this approach, a research objective was understood as integrated into a certain community, which is integrated into a province, which is integrated into a certain country. In this sense, participation in adult and continuing education would be understood as influenced hierarchically by the community, the province, and the country (cf. figure 1).

Figure 1 – Country perspective in comparative adult and continuing education. [Source: author's own]

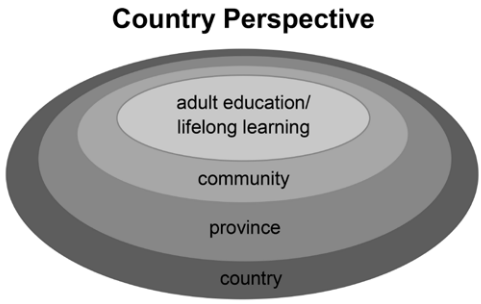
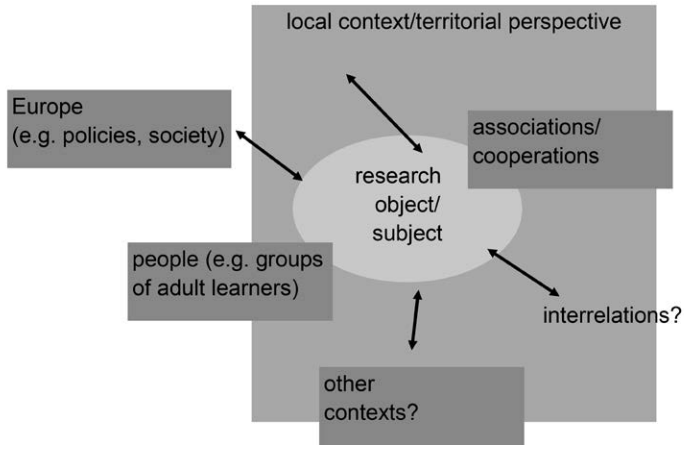


Figure 2 – Transnational perspective in comparative adult and continuing education. [Source: author's own]



Due to globalisation and internationalisation, however, it is more useful to understand research objects in adult and continuing education from a transnational perspective (Schriewer, 1993; Varghese, 2017). This means that research objects should be understood in the contexts in which they are embedded (cf. figure 2). Consequently, the research objective could be (more) influenced by a transnational context than by a local or country context. Transnational contexts exist beyond and alongside local and country influences.

When observing participation in adult and continuing education, the European strategies towards a European higher education area may be a more influential context than local regulations and policies. Transnational cooperation (e.g. working in an international project) or membership in international associations (e.g. the European Association for the Education of Adults) may create a stronger context than policies on the country level.

As consequence, the research fields in comparative adult education cannot be identified solely or mainly by selecting countries for comparison. Rather, the research fields have to be defined according to the research objective. They have to be reflected critically concerning their contexts. Understanding the contexts of the research fields means identifying supporting and non-supporting conditions and the framework, as outlined in the previous section on research objects in adult and continuing education.

If the transnational perspective is taken seriously, understanding the contexts of the research fields also means identifying common and different contexts of the different research fields.

Example:
A study compares adult education study programmes at the University of Florence and the University of Würzburg. The research fields would be the master's courses in education at the University of Florence and the master's courses in education at the University of Würzburg. Various contexts may be identified; for instance, higher education regulations in Italy and in Germany, as well as regional regulations in Bavaria. Concerning the framework of the research fields, the history of adult education studies in Italy and Germany as well as the different employment situation in the two countries have to be taken into account. Aside from these different contexts (conditions, frameworks), the situation in both research fields is influenced by the European higher education area.

6. Categories for comparison in adult and continuing education

Traditionally, categories for comparison in adult and continuing education have been understood as *tertium comparationis*, or the "third of comparison":

«A study in comparative international adult education [...] must include one or more aspects of adult education in two or more countries or regions» (Charters & Hilton, 1989:3).

In this famous quotation from Charters and Hilton, one or two aspects of adult education are mentioned. In that publication, the aspects or categories for comparison in adult and continuing education were understood as deductive categories. They were developed as external categories, outside the research fields, based on the assumption that they are applicable to all research fields. The deductive categories were researched in country reports (e.g. history, financing, participation, providers in adult education). Typically, this approach understood the comparative categories in a deductive way – that is, the comparative categories were understood as being outside of the research object and the research field.

However, taking the transnational perspective of the research fields into account, the categories of comparison in adult and continuing education cannot be identified as external categories. Moreover, it is necessary to develop the comparative categories in an inductive way. The identification of comparative categories is oriented towards the research object on the one hand and the compared research fields on the other hand. Categories should be identified in a way to enable rich comparisons: which inductive comparative categories can provide a rich comparative research result? Which inductive categories can provide the most valuable answer for the comparative research question?

Example:
A study compares adult and continuing education providers in New Delhi, India, and Lisbon, Portugal. The authors develop inductive categories that give a rich answer regarding the similarities and differences of providers in New Delhi and Lisbon. Maybe the funding bodies, target groups, and educational targets of the providers can serve as valuable comparative categories. If adult and continuing education providers in Estonia and Austria were compared, researchers might have to develop different inductive categories. Possibly, adult education associations or national policies would provide more valuable results for the comparison of providers in Estonia and Austria.

It is advisable to take critical account of the fact that comparative categories create certain lenses through which a research object is focussed. Different inductive categories may lead to different results. Strong attention is needed if adult learners or groups of adult learners are taken into account. If similarities and differences between people and/or groups are considered, we must be aware that comparative categories create a social reality. If people are compared by age, gender, or nationality, people are assigned to socially created boxes. For researchers, it is highly important therefore to reflect on the social realities and consequences their research may create by defining comparative categories.

7. Research question for comparison in adult and continuing education

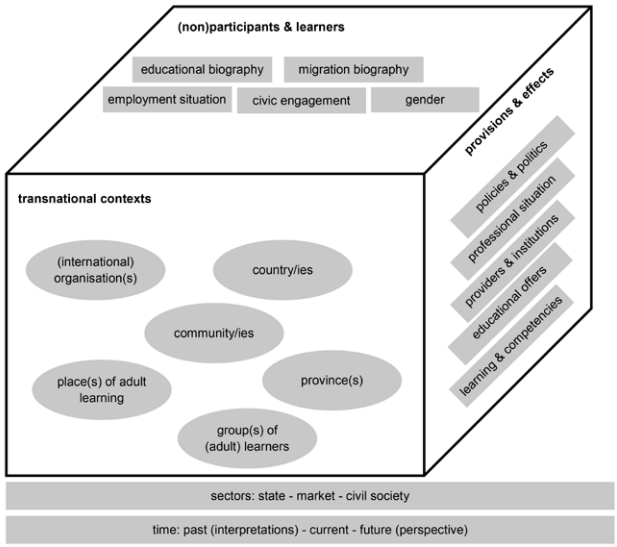
A research question in comparative adult and continuing education asks for the similarities and differences of a research object related to adult and continuing education in two or more research fields. Based on the theoretical, empirical, and practical understanding of the research object and the research fields including their contexts (shared and different conditions and frameworks), inductive comparative categories have to be developed. These inductive comparative categories are oriented towards the richness of the comparative questions. It is important to ensure there are similarities of the research object between the research fields to be able to compare similar objects in different research fields.

For identifying the research question, it may be helpful to use the cube for comparative adult and continuing education.

The research object can be identified from the disciplinary focus (provisions & effects in the cube) and the specific practical situation (participants & learners in the cube). The research fields can be identified from the research object's context conditions (transnational contexts in the cube).

Based on this identification, the research fields are defined and inductive comparative categories are developed, which may give a rich answer to the comparative research question. Those perspectives are summarised in the cube for comparative adult and continuing education (cf. figure 3).

Figure 3 – Cube for comparative adult and continuing education. [Source: Egetenmeyer, 2016a]



8. Data collection for comparison in adult and continuing education

The development of the research question, the research object, the research fields, and the inductive categories is followed by data collection. This essay does not provide detailed information on how to collect data for comparative research in adult and continuing education. It rather understands comparative research in adult and continuing education as an additional perspective that has to be taken into account in addition to the methodologies available for theoretical and empirical research in adult and continuing education.

This means the comparative methodology provides additional reflection on data gathering. In general, data collection for comparative adult education can be done by analysing academic discourse, documents (e.g. policy papers), qualitative primary and secondary data (e.g. interview data), and quantitative primary or secondary data (e.g. survey data).

9. From juxtaposition to interpretation

For data analysis, this paper proposes a three-step model, which starts at descriptive juxtaposition, moves on to analytical juxtaposition, and ends at analytical interpretation.

9.1 Step 1: Descriptive juxtaposition

As a first step, each research field is researched with the aim of gathering rich information for the inductive categories. It is advisable not to develop too many inductive categories at the same time; two or three inductive categories with several sub-categories should be sufficient. This will enable an in-depth study of the research object instead of producing research that only scratches at the surface.

During the process of the descriptive juxtaposition, the inductive categories are further developed and specified according to the richness of the comparison between the different research fields.

Based on the information gathering, a juxtaposition (side-by-side placing) of the inductive categories between the different research fields is performed.

The descriptive juxtaposition asks:
What is similar and what is different regarding the research object between the researched fields?

In a first step, similarities and differences may be identified simply in a descriptive way. It is important to ensure that this step produces enough similarities to prove that the study does not compare apples and oranges. Due to the enormous variety in adult and continuing education in different countries, identifying similarities is a key task. It ensures the development of a joint research community. It is easier to find similarities for abstract research objects (e.g. for learning of adults, policies in adult education) than for concrete research objects (e.g. learning of women with an Indonesian migration background). If similarities cannot be identified, it is advisable to develop the inductive categories in a more abstract way.

9.2 Step 2: Analytical juxtaposition

The descriptive juxtaposition is followed by analytical juxtaposition. Whereas descriptive juxtaposition only looks for similarities and differ-

ences between the research fields, analytical juxtaposition asks about the leading idea behind each research field. This is done by mirroring the research fields against each other. The goal of analytical juxtaposition is to understand the research object in each research field according to its inner logic and the background of its contexts (conditions, framework).

The analytical juxtaposition asks:
What is the leading idea and/or logic of the research object in each research field? How can this leading idea be understood compared to the research object in the other research field(s)?

9.3 Step 3: Analytical interpretation

Only the third step – the analytical interpretation of the similarities and differences – leads to a real comparison. In this third step, the reasons for the similarities and differences are identified and researched. Therefore, the researched contexts (conditions, framework) of each research field serve as the reference points for the interpretation. The result of the analytical interpretation is the formulation of assumptions regarding the reasons for similarities and differences. The formulation of these assumptions shows the depth of the comparison performed.

The analytical interpretation asks:
Why are the research objects in the researched fields similar and different? What are the reasons for the similarities and differences?

10. Role of the researcher

Even when following a joint methodology and procedure for comparative adult and continuing education, it is important to keep in mind that researchers and their respective background(s) strongly influence research designs in comparative adult and continuing education. Owing to the strong variety in adult and continuing education in the academic discourses of different languages and practical fields, the researcher's personal background has a strong impact on the research objects and research fields they identify. Their knowledge of and (theoretical) perspectives on a research object shape the lens through which the comparative study is per-

formed. Furthermore, local, personal, and language-related restrictions in access and to academic discourses and fields of practice shape comparisons in adult and continuing education. This position of the researchers needs critical reflection (Lange & Parreira do Amaral, 2018).

The research fields selected for comparison may also play different roles. If a German doctoral student compares adult education policies in Germany and Italy, their insight into the German research field may be deeper and broader. As a consequence, the Italian research field may take on the function of mirroring or contrasting of the German situation (Schriewer, 2000). As a consequence, the analytical interpretation and comparison may lead to a new and deeper understanding of the German case.

How do we ensure the validity of research in this very *flexible model* of comparative adult and continuing education? The validity of research results is based on the precision and reasoning of the inductive comparative categories (e.g. theoretical reasoning, appropriateness to empirical/practical situation). The data collection follows (empirical) research principles, and the comparison has to be understood as an additional methodological perspective. Regarding the depth of the analytical interpretation, a creating validity through communication is the advisable approach. This means exchanges and discussions with international researchers in the field. Furthermore, comparative research in adult and continuing education should be understood as a contribution to a research community. A comparison is (only) one contribution to understanding the research object in one specific way. The outcomes have to be interrelated with other studies in the field.

The goal of comparative research in adult and continuing education is not to reach a final understanding of a research object in a different field. Moreover, comparative research in adult education should support researchers in becoming more aware of and sensitive to the challenges and boundaries of each other's understanding. It should support the awareness of one's own perspective. Comparative research in adult and continuing education may lead to a better understanding of one's own perspective by contrasting it with other perspectives. Ideally, it may lead to a personal attitude of 'constantly trying' to understand each other with personal effort. This cultivation of a comparative attitude may include also emotional and cognitive aspects of non-understanding.

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STORYTELLING AND OTHER SKILLS: BUILDING EMPLOYABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Vanna Boffo

Humans have no nature, but history.
(José Ortega y Gasset)

Abstract: The storytelling device introduces the search for our roots, as persons and human beings. To write an autobiography is to seek our roots not only through *retrospection*, *interpretation,* and *creation* but through an act of profound freedom towards ourselves. To tell our story is to put back together the pieces of our existence and, in doing so, to re-build it. Recounting our work, at a certain point in our professional life, is like putting it back at the centre of our lives, it is like giving meaning to our actions, and starting to understand and interpret them again. This is why it is so important to recount our work, both for the narrator and the listener. From this point, we are trying to put in front of the educational perspectives the narration of the self as a central point of reflection on the knowledge, competences, and capabilities for entering into the world of work with responsibility, awareness, and a deep sense of citizenship. Following these indications, we thought that it could be a useful exercise to reflect on professionals' stories in order to look inside the self. At the same time, we trust it is very important for young adults transitioning into the world of work.

1. Storytelling for professional development

> Stories constitute an important aspect of a person's identity [...]; they are ways with which we speak of our identity as people until, to a certain extent, we become a mirror of these identities [...] The wealth of stories that a person possesses in adulthood do not only form the source of his or her stability, or transformations, at the same time they become a work tool, a compass and means to find the way (Smorti, 1996: 71, own translation).

Following the studies by Jerome Bruner (1992; 2002) on one hand, philosophers of language on the other, and hermeneutists and systemic therapists on another still, the category of *storytelling* is central to understanding self-development. And it is all the more interesting and fruitful to look at these studies when dealing with the topic of young adults'

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training and education. Storytelling is a way of introducing ourselves to the world. All we do our whole lives long is tell our story, talk about ourselves and, by narrating *ourselves*, we enclose one story within the other.

We can assert that the storytelling movement, with the pivotal importance it places on self-narration to understand our lives, made its appearance a long time ago, dating back to the dawn of psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, even now, recognizing why storytelling is so central to understanding ourselves, to building our personal and professional paths, helps us to grow. Storytelling commits us towards the world, so that we may analyse the sustainability of individual choices which then have fundamental effects on the community's decisions. Indeed, it could be said that it is not just a matter of understanding contemporary categories, but an act of educational responsibility. We have to get to the heart of professional stories if we want to understand how to prepare the new generations to enter the world of work. The challenge of these few pages is to place three lines of educational reflection on the experience of adulthood – self-narration, education, and, last but not least, employability – in a virtuous circle, using stories to self-educate to build work and hence build the self for the sustainability of human and environmental development.

Studies on language and its centrality in human experience, as well as in the subject's formation, began in the field of philosophy, on one hand with Wittgenstein's reflections, and on the other with the developments of Carnap's logical neoempiricism. These studies then went their own ways, for example, arriving at the results of Rorty, whose philosophy consists of seeking a contingent vocabulary, shared by a social community (Rorty, 1989). For Rorty, philosophy is conversation. There exists no external reality, there is no world of which we have to be able to speak or investigate, because the world is what people are able to speak of and decide to live in. Words are bridges of communication between people and words only have sense if they are part of a vocabulary. Vocabularies change, they are flexible and alter in the contingency of the narratives. But the pluralism of vocabularies does not prevent people from communicating with each other or disable the capacity to open themselves "in solidarity" with the other (Rorty, 1989: 217-228). On another hand we have the reflection of Morin, only in appearance distant from the topic of communication, which places knowing how to understand as the means and at the same time end of human communication among the seven forms of knowledge necessary for education of the future (Morin, 1999: 110). There can be no progress in relations among individuals, nations or cultures without reciprocal understanding, without communication that achieves human comprehension through a process of empathy, positive identification and virtuous projection (Morin, 1999: 99).

Dewey writes in *Democracy and Education*:

> to be a recipient of communication is to have an enlarged and changed experience. One shares in what another has thought and felt and in so far, meagerly or amply, has his own attitude modified. Nor is the one who communicates left unaffected.' Indeed, 'not only is social life identical with communication, but all communication (and hence all genuine social life) is educative (Dewey, 2000: 214).

Borghi reminds us that education and communication are not agents of adaptation, but transformation (Borghi, 1992: 29). Hence, communication is a primary activity through which we relate to each other in a continual game of references to ourselves and others. Communication is activated using words, we are what we say, and we are the stories that we tell, hence the interest in investigating the textuality represented by our lives. Nevertheless, human existence can be read not only as one text, one story, but as many texts and many stories. While educational activity forms and transforms us, the many, multiple voices of everyday stories constantly change us too. We are transformed by the eloquent and destructuring words and silences that surround us. What is told in the stories is

> the need to make oneself heard, accepted and understood. Storytelling can have many reasons and purposes. But one of its essential aspects has to do with the dynamic of recognition between the person telling the story and the person to whom it is addressed. It is a dynamic that relates back to the social relationship which is established through storytelling (Jedlowski, 2000: 24-25, own translation).

To tell a story is to share it with those to whom it is addressed, and this means reaching out past the borders that mark our singularity (Jedlowski, 2000: 37) to go beyond the finiteness of being. Through storytelling we can recount ourselves to the other person and, during this narration, transfigure ourselves into a new form. As Pennac asserts in a masterly interpretation of the topic of thanking (Pennac, 2004: 64-67), the person who feels gratitude says thank you not as an acknowledgement or formality, but a promise of a meeting. The meeting is what happens between the self and the many *somebodies* who have given rise to that self, who fill the memory and the memories, who have listened to the everyday tales and guided the most varied feelings such as anger, affection and pain, from meagre sensations to sentiments rich and dense in lived experience. And, Pennac continues, in an astonishing play on words, the self is but the shadow puppet of the real subject, the self is the person who is lit by the reflectors of the other person's listening and the exchanged and rediscovered words.

The word that cures and communicates has become the storytelling that cures, but above all the storytelling that transforms different stories and remodels them according to new points of view. To build an alternative story, possibly shared and confirmed by other people who are important to us, so that it makes an image of ourselves acceptable and appreciable, can become an ability that leads to hope. Rewriting our story, narrating our existence, is a way of reflecting on and exercising the condition of being human, it is a way of finding new and necessary directions in life (Bettelheim, 1987: 67). To narrate our lives, and rebuild them through an autobiographical journey, is to *re-echo* long-buried experiences and make them resurface in the memory by *bringing them to mind*. In other words, it is to recover fundamental experiences of emotions, affections and feelings.

To tell one's autobiography is to *recall* and to *remember*; the former rebuilding the sources of the memory, the other relating the memory as a subjective, emotionally experienced state to the memory as the moment of producing a thought that enabled an experience to be learnt (Farello, Bianchi, 2001: 33). *Re-echoing*, *suggesting*, *recalling* and *remembering* can be said to be the four moments for a phenomenology of the memory. In addition to the memory, in order to gain that narratological perspective which can lead us to autobiographically rewrite our lives, we must be oriented towards *listening.* This means listening to ourselves, but essentially listening to the many selves that merge together or remain separate within us. Listening is the way to communicate with the most intimate and deep part of ourselves. By listening we welcome the self into ourselves. At the same time, it triggers a transformation that leads to self-formation.

Creating an autobiography can be approached as a methodology for personal re-construction or construction, a process of self-formation and self-planning. An autobiography is a conversation of the self with ourselves, it is what Demetrio calls *cognitive bilocation* (Demetrio, 1996), that is, the capacity to recount ourselves, delve into ourselves and seek ourselves, but at the same time to be where we think of ourselves, in a near or distant past experienced by one of our selves. *Cognitive bilocation* is the capacity to live the present and rediscover the past *in order to* imagine the future, to imagine the plans for ourselves, becoming teleological hope. Storytelling and autobiographies are tools for each other. To understand ourselves as a story is to begin to find the apparently hidden meaning which only autobiographical stories can bring to light, giving a sense to the many stories making up every person's life.

The relationship between reflection on personal stories and building professional pathways is central in the education of young adults in higher education contexts. When thinking of the care with which the new citizens have to be accompanied towards the wider and more critical expression of sustainability set out in the 17 points of Agenda 2030

for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, 2015), it is necessary to strive towards high-quality education and suitable employability for all. We know that without good-quality jobs, there cannot be the conditions to create well-being for the new citizens, new adults and new families. The well-being of the subject, not of the individual, but of the person, depends on the conditions in which he or she can live life. It is not enough to think of existence, the self, stories, narratives or autobiographies. The methods must transmit contents supported by concrete educational actions. That work is built by being educated towards work, and employability – one of the Europe 2030 economic development goals – is not only outlined within contexts of economic development. What I am interested in emphasizing is the strength of self-narration, which, in the same way as self-formation, depends on the contexts in which it is implemented and the tools with which it is developed. In university courses, which is what I am interested in, it is becoming vital to form new competences through new tools for the professions of the future. There can be no environmental well-being if we leave our students, graduates and post-graduates to themselves. We must and can act to build educational actions for employability and prepare our young people to know, interpret and understand their future, so that they are not caught out.

2. Some notes on storytelling: questions of method

So, I have asserted that the idea of preparation for work, starting from professional stories, has innovative educational value in the sphere of adult education studies. According to the line of reflection I am advancing, it is important to look into the reasons that have brought me to think of professional/personal stories. Hence, the critical path that I am proposing on one hand concerns the topic of stories as an aspect of building subjectivity, and on the other recalls the topic of self-education in order to be and become, transform, as Mezirow would say, through experiential contexts (Mezirow, 1991; Kolb, 1984). To speak of employability, it is important to begin from the self, while referring to a broad spectrum of studies which go beyond educational sciences and adult education.

In a little round house with a round window and a little triangular garden in front there lived a man. Not far from the house there was a pond with a lot of fish in it. One night the man was woken by a terrible noise and set out in the dark to find the cause of it. He took the road to the pond. Here the story-teller began to draw, as upon a map of the movements of an army, a plan of the roads taken by the man. He first ran to the South. Here he stumbled over a big stone in the middle of the road, and a little farther he fell into a ditch, got up, fell into a ditch,

got up, fell into a third ditch and got out of that. Then he saw that he had been mistaken and ran back to the North. But here again the noise seemed to him to come from the South, and he again ran back there. He first stumbled over a big stone in the middle of the road, then a little later he fell into a ditch, got up, fell into another ditch, got up, fell into a third ditch, and got out of that. He now distinctly heard that the noise came from the end of the pond. He rushed to the place and saw that a big leakage had been made in the dam, and the water was running out with all the fish in it. He set to work and stopped the hole, and only when this had been done did he go back to bed. When now the next morning the man looked out of his little round window, – thus the take was finished, as dramatically as possible, – what did he see? – A stork! (Blixen, 1959: 200).

Karen Blixen tells this story in her famous book *Out of Africa*. At the end of the story, she adds: "When the design of my life is complete, shall I, shall other people see a stork?" (Blixen, 1959: 200). The design of a life, its path can at a certain point be looked at like a path of sense, claims Cavarero, upon commenting this passage by Blixen (Cavarero, 2001).

The path of the man in the story told above can metaphorically represent the path of every person in search of life, it can correspond to the story that every person leaves behind, whose design can only be glimpsed if we are able to observe the footprints left behind from above. In the end, to be able to read this design is to be able to recognize ourselves. In this case, narration and self-narration become the predisposition in order to understand our lives. It is a matter of recognizing ourselves, re-knowing what we knew when we experienced it, seeing the route of our existence *from above*, interpreting and understanding ourselves anew. And it is this desire for knowledge and recognition of ourselves but also others and our world, our being in the place of vital existence that leads all people to communicate.

Communication, which Dewey considers a primary social process, first of all responds precisely to a deep human desire which is to reread ourselves, to understand ourselves by speaking or listening to ourselves, and to understand what surrounds us by rereading the text of our world. Ultimately, it is by reading, looking at and narrating themselves that humans seek themselves, telling their story to a probable listener, recounting themselves to their interlocutors, speaking about themselves to the other person who is listening. The most immediate traces and primordial steps of human communication are found in everyday communication, which always consists of single "narrative acts" (Jedlowski, 2000: 110)[1].

[1] The notion of narrative act was coined by Barbara Herrnstein Smith by paraphrasing Austin's now famous phrase *speech act*.

Every verbal expression is linked to a more or less brief dose of narration, which can go from a fragmentary account or barely hinted anecdote to more defined discourses marked by linguistic conventions which tend to be called *stories* or *tales* (Herrnstein Smith in Jedlowski, 2000: 65; see also Smorti, 1994)[2]. We are all capable of recounting something. It can be done disjointedly in everyday life or in a more systematic manner, by introducing the statement "something happened" into everyday conversations, or by giving the conversation the sense of a more defined discourse, recognized as an actual story. The discourse can be made of simple or the most sophisticated words, it can occupy an outlined space in time, or take on the importance of a fundamental and decisive piece of communication in which 'the joint presence of the interlocutors and reciprocity that is established appear as the guarantee of a denser relationship' (Jedlowski, 2000: 65). Recounting is an activity that is part of everyday conversation. Conversing and recounting are the parts of everyday communication activated during interaction and reciprocal exchanges. Narrating everyday life introduces to the social *fact*, it is a social transaction. Indeed, speakers direct their conversation towards a listener who is never passive. Furthermore, the addressee of the communicative action plays a function of interpreting its contents.

Narration is therefore the social practice in which two or more people share a story (Smorti, 1994: 66). The narrated story is negotiated within the conversation, it is communicated within a vital interaction between two or more interlocutors; every interruption, every change in tone or subject, gestures such as attitude, every strategy of mutual confirmation or negation can change the story, alter its sense, hence opening it up to various interpretations.

Bruner answers the question of what narration is, or what sets it apart from other forms of discourse and other ways of organizing experiences and knowledge. In the text *Acts of Meaning* he gives a thorough yet not exhaustive definition, open to interpretations in relation to the setting in which the narrations are defined and the situations from which the narrations originate. Bruner notes that the cognitive revolution field takes a more interpretative approach to cognition, which deals with *attributing meaning* and has gradually asserted itself over the years in the field of anthropology and linguistics, philosophy, literary theory and psychology. Hence, it is not a single context that gave rise to studies on narration,

[2] As Smorti asserts, narration is situated halfway between oral forms, such as conversations or interpersonal communication, and written forms, such as scientific, philosophical or literary essays. These two aspects have been defined, according to the terminology used by the Russian formalists, as *fabula* and *sjuzhet,* equivalent to the terms *story* and *discourse* used by Barthes. *Fabula* essentially describes the events in the story. *Sjuzhet* denotes the techniques that the author uses to present the story.

but scattered ones whose very complexity denotes the cultural pattern of the research today. The studies were started in various disciplines. The contributions of Ricoeur (1983;1984) are at the basis of all the others, and indeed it is Ricoeur who inspires Bruner in his research and origin of the construction of meaning.

Bruner claims that the first aspect in selecting a narrative is to consider it «composed of a unique sequence of events, mental states, happenings involving human beings as characters or actors» (Bruner, 1990: 43). Every narrative lives in relation to the environment in which it was formed, in the same way as its components do not have a life or a meaning of their own. The meaning of a story is prompted by the place and the way in which all the single parts are set out, that is, it depends on the plot or *fabula*. A narrative can only be understood through the plot and, at the same time, the form of the plot must, in turn, be extracted from the sequence of events (Bruner, 1995: 55).

The narrative can be *real* or *imaginary* without having a negative effect on its intrinsic narrative power, Bruner asserts. It will be the sequence of sentences that determines whether the story is true or false and this will enable the meaning of the tale to be deduced. Bruner continues by saying that the particular sequentiality is indispensable for a tale to be significant and for the mind to organize itself in such a way as to grasp its meaning (Bruner, 1995: 55). This *rule of sequence*, distinct to any narrative, means that the account possesses a structure within the discourse. Thus, the historian's empirical report and the novelist's fantastical tale share the narrative form (Bruner, 1995: 56), however surprising this may appear. It can also be added that the form of scientific discovery is also expressed in terms of a narration of events and circumstances. Holton, one of the most interesting and advanced science historians, used his work (Holton, 1984) to demonstrate how science is a territory cultivated by imagination and creativity, as well as by metaphors and visions about a *beyond* that narratives can describe and illustrate.

Storytelling is projected into the teaching environment as a form of transversal knowledge and a possible transdisciplinary methodology. In educational situations, in school or university classrooms, narrative topics can represent the conjunction of a formulaic, systematic and lifeless learning method with the opposite way of schooling, through stories, imagination, possibility and creativity.

Storytelling possesses a specific capacity to establish bonds between the exceptional and the ordinary. Indeed, its structuring capacity is based on an *impossible logic* (Holton, 1984: 58) that upsets the principles of the classic canons of 'non-contradiction' and the 'excluded third party' fundamental to Western thought. Indeed, accounts acquire meaning on the basis of their very capacity to explain deviations from the norm (Smorti 1994; 1997). In reality, the function of the account is to find an inten-

tional state that mitigates, makes a deviation from a canonical cultural model or at least makes it understandable. By extending this last property of narration, narrative methods could be used that allow students to get inside the problems and make them their own, in joyful discovery.

A fourth property of narration concerns its theatrical aspect. Storytelling makes an action plausible and strengthens the intentionality hidden beneath that action; it expresses the world of beliefs, desires and hopes. «It renders the exceptional comprehensible and keeps the uncanny at bay. […] It can even teach, conserve memory, or alter the past» (Bruner, 1990: 52).

Nevertheless, storytelling is not just a structure of plots or dramatization, nor historicity or diachronicity alone, it is also a way of using a language (Bruner, 1995: 68). Once again, supported by extensive sectors of psychological research, Bruner states that humans have an aptitude to set out or organize experience in a narrative form, in plot structures. The analysis of this aptitude derives from the Aristotelian notion of *mimesis*. Aristotle claimed (Smorti, 1997) that *mimesis* is not only the theatre's way of imitating life, so much so that it might seem as if the order of the narrative has to reflect the real-life events. *Mimesis* is grasping 'life in action', it is an elaboration or improvement on what happens. Ricoeur, who, as already mentioned, studied storytelling more than any other in the last century, states that «mimesis is a type of metaphor of reality, […] [it] refers to reality not to copy it, but in order to give it a new reading» (Ricoeur quoted in Bruner 1990: 46). Precisely owing to this metaphorical relationship, narrative cannot be obliged to match a world of extralinguistic reality. Stories, as previously asserted, are not interpreted on the basis of the classic rules of logic. «The very speech act implied in "telling a story" – whether from life or from the imagination – warns the beholder that […] we interpret stories by their verisimilitude, their "truth likeness», or, more accurately, their «lifelikeness» (Bruner 1990: 61). Stories, narratives, are *mimesis* in the Aristotelian sense of the word, as has also been explained by Ricoeur.

In the tradition of formal logic, analysis of the contexts of truth in affirmations is totally independent from the fact that they can be recognized as true or false, and the truth is considered in objective form. Assertions that belong to the formal territories of scientific truths are disconnected from the reality of sentences that are uttered on a daily basis. Nevertheless, verbal utterances are undoubtedly richer, in terms of meaning, in logically implied references. In other words, they embody «many more intentions than merely to refer: to request, to promise, to warn» (Bruner, 1990: 63). There are conditions of appropriacy according to which the various linguistic expressions are used. So, what determines the possibility of a verbal expression is the context in which said expressions are used. Grice went even further, highlighting how all linguistic conventions enabling the use of a particular verbal expression

are also restricted by a 'cooperative principle': «a set of maxims about the brevity, relevance, perspicuousness, and sincerity of conversational exchanges» (Bruner, 1990: 3; Grice, 1989: 71).

This gave rise to the consideration that meaning is not only generated within conventionally defined affirmations, sentences and scientific assertions. Grice's conditions of appropriacy and precepts (Grice, 1989) have enabled us to understand that formal textual analyses can give way to analysis where the function of situational language is fully recognized as bearing the strength of the meaning produced by the speakers' intentions. It is this passage, outlined in brief here, that has increased the urgency to consider meaning as what originates from human verbal/linguistic/communicative interactions. Meaning arises in the relationship between two or more speakers, its origin is cultural and conventional and no longer formal.

As Bruner asserts: «the concept of "meaning" understood in this principled way has reconnected linguistic conventions with the web of conventions that constitute a culture» (Bruner, 1990: 64; Grice, 1989: 71). Hence, we can extend this concept of meaning as the very *foundation* of narratives. Literary, oral, everyday and family narratives constantly give rise to the meanings of human existences. Narratives are inserted in a world made of events outlined in time and space. Life events are framed in great structures, schemes of memory or texts. These great structures provide an interpretative context for the single components contained in them. The meanings will be different depending on the context in which the speech data or actions are considered.

3. Stories model life and life models the stories

It is not possible to have a direct knowledge of the world. As human beings, it is not possible to have an objective description; no one has privileged access to the designation of reality. What is known about the world, what humankind knows, is due to experience had of and in the world. It is also impossible to know another person's experience of the world. It is only possible to interpret other people's experiences, that is «we can interpret the expressions of other people's experiences when they seek to interpret them for themselves» (White, 1992: 272, own translation). To interpret these expressions, to get as close as possible to other people's experiences, to be able to communicate between similar and not distant people, we need to identify our own personal experience in the experience expressed by others. But some issues arise concerning this same world of experience which is nought but the life flow that surrounds us. White asks a series of questions, which he tries to answer from a psychotherapeutic point of view. Through which process do

we develop an understanding of human experience and give it a meaning? What processes are involved in interpreting our experience? How does our personal lived experience influence our lives and relationships? (White, 1992: 273).

We have already seen that stories or narratives provide the dominant outline of lived experience, its organization and structure. «A story can be defined as a unit of sense that provides an outline for the lived experience» (White, 1992: 274, own translation). Hence human beings enter their stories, they are introduced into other people's stories, they live their lives through these stories. Stories are mechanisms through which human beings capture the sense of lived time. It is through narration, storytelling, that we manage to perceive the flow of the past, the flow of the present and the future. Concerning the questions asked previously, some answers can be provided in terms of the concept of story set out earlier. It is the stories in which human experience is situated that determine the meaning given to this experience. It is these stories that lead to the selection of the aspects of experience that will then be expressed. It is again these stories that determine real effects and directions in people's lives and relationships. Hence, human life is structured by these stories, it is somehow forged, modelled. The stories shape our own human lives through the process of interpreting the experience in the context of the stories which we are part of or introduced to by those close to us (White, 1992: 275). The proposal that White puts forward at this point is that life is a representation of texts (White, 1992: 277). And it is the representation of these texts that transforms people's lives. Bruner asserts that stories only become transformative when they are represented. This representation implies a concept of authenticity. The individual arrives at a sense of authenticity through the representation of the texts of his or her life. There is a degree of indeterminacy in the texts and stories, a certain ambiguity and incongruency. The stories are full of gaps, which human beings fill through a continuous narrative and representation of sense. Narrating is a bit like rewriting the text. Every account sums up in a different way from the last. «The evolution of a person's life and relationships is similar to a process of rewriting, the process due to which people enter stories with their experience and imagination, go beyond them and create their own» (White, 1992: 277, own translation).

Indeterminacy, ambiguity and uncertainty, modified through an ongoing negotiation with human experience, engage people in an 'original' journey in search of themselves, to seek a unicum and an initial fact, an original and an origin. The search for empathy, authenticity and listening to ourselves in this structuring of stories is also a search for communication with the world, in the attempt to give a coherent interpretation of it, in accordance with our humanity.

What is narrating ourselves and then making an autobiographical revision if not the will to seek a clue, a gauge that enables people to say themselves, to signify themselves without deceit? But there is more: the dichotomy between the cultures of the humanities and science, opened in the seventeenth century by the mechanical science of Galileo and Newton, the wound in human thought, has somehow been stitched back together. As Gargani (1999: IX) says, the transition between different and alternative symbolic codes, between implicit or explicit transgressions of different languages happened with the narration of stories, with recounted thought.

> The sedimentation of critical consciousness that over these years has passed through the exercise of language has come to rest on a recounted thought. As it was making the effort to tear off the covers from reality in order to grasp it, as it is in itself, instead of the objective, uncontaminated and neutral world, humankind met the world together with itself, together with the critical awareness of its languages and its tools of research. At that point, the game of interpretations and languages began. (Gargani, 1999: IX)

Humankind learnt disenchantment and exercising interpretation appeared as a life practice. So, starting from this disenchantment, which can be ascribed to the loss of securities sought and found in a theoretically given rationality (Gargani, 1999, own translation) discourse, dialogues and the practice of language erupted into contemporary culture. According to Gargani's original viewpoint, they did not presuppose things, or replace things, but started to speak of things, facts and reality through the filter that they themselves formed. Discourse, dialogues, languages and narratives became filters for the creation of communication that could 'tell' of humankind and more besides.

But the reflection on language that has spread in many fields of knowledge, causing humankind to make decisive leaps into uncomprehended and hidden territories, has also implied the necessary discipline of listening. As Gargani once again asserts, language has learnt that we speak and write only when we listen. It is in this act that the whole bond uniting one person to another, the essence of humanity itself, lies. And while we speak, we tell a story, and in order to tell a story we need a narrator, the person who tells his or her story, and the object of the story, whether it is an action or a person. The communication that is activated is the search for one's own humanity. It is in the sense in which language has been conceived of by philosophers, that is, as a well-defined logical mechanism mastered by its users, that Davidson observes «language does not exist» (Gargani, 1999: VIII). Therefore, there is no intrinsic relationship between language and reality, because the latter would instead seem to be an interpretative construct, a front of interpretations; but this front

gives rise to an ethics of communication: «the ethics of communication should not be interpreted as a duty which is external to linguistic phenomena, as an additional value, rather it should be conceived as being an essential condition inherent in any authentic communication» (Davidson, 1984: 446), it is a discipline within the word that gives it meaning and expressivity. Humankind is only free before what it is aware of. In a letter to Bertrand Russell, Wittgenstein writes:

> I keep on hoping that things will come to an eruption once and for all, so that I can turn into a different person. […] Perhaps you regard this thinking about myself as a waste of time – but how can I be a logician before I'm a human being! Far the most important thing is to settle accounts with myself! (Davidson, 1984: 446).

The ethics of communication presupposes the effort to dive into the intimate crevices of our inner selves, to courageously deal with the pain of existence. In order to speak and in order to do so, not in a superficial but an in-depth manner, it is necessary to delve into human nature and accept to deal with pain and suffering. Wittgenstein asserts: «If anyone is unwilling to descend into himself, because this is too painful, he will remain superficial in his writing» (Gargani, 1999: 9).

Through the act of speaking, during which human beings recognize themselves for what they are, or rather what they would like to be, on the basis of some projective idealization, a person can end up rewriting him or herself through the communicative relationship with an interlocutor. Gargani once again says: «the simple circumstance of being listened to by an interlocutor, even a silent one, arouses a process of self-narrative and identification in the speaker that is generated during a change» (Gargani, 1999: 9, own translation).

A new description of the self is a new birth; a new description of the self fulfils the task of becoming what we are (Gargani, 1999: 10). All of this absolutely requires the human being's discovery, invention and creative capacity to tell, recount and narrate him or herself, or at least attempt to do so.

Kafka asserts that

> contemporary human beings have retained use of the word, but lost its internal sensation. Contemporary human beings have lost the dimension of construction through the word, they have lost the ethical dimension of speaking, buried by the mass media's excess of words. It is instead in the flow of becoming, in crossing through the unforeseeable randomness of existence that human beings acquire recognition of themselves (Gargani, 1999: 14, own translation).

Through words, human beings open up to astonishment, not as a transitory condition, but as a condition creating existence. Because by

using words to tell ourselves, we make a movement towards the outside, it puts us in the position to open up, to feel astonishment; while we tell stories, we find new words to deliver ourselves to our narrative.

All of human communication between the subject/individual/person and other subjects/individuals/people lies in the experience of narration. «The passage from truth to the sense of truth coincides with the passage from ideas to relationships between people» (Gargani, 1999: 14, own translation). This passage is communication of our own story as a person to the other as a human being.

To make an autobiography is to tell ourselves to ourselves, and by storytelling, we make a reconstruction that provides a new meaning, but also a new richer and truer knowledge of the lived experience. It is the same Bruner who asserts that constructing the self is a narrative art, bound to the memory as an internal fact and to the external facts of situations/experiences that transform the self as we encounter them every day (Bruner, 2002: 72-73). Indeed, by «telling ourselves about ourselves» (Bruner, 2002: 72) we invent a story about ourselves, about what we are and who we are. When transcribed, this recounting and narrating ourselves to ourselves ends up forming an autobiography, enabling us to take stock of and reread our lives. Autobiographies are the self's encounter with the Other that transformed it, motivated it to be educated, made it into the being presented outside itself. In autobiographical accounts, the author has to contend with his or her own uniqueness, but also with the reflection that others have of the person under observation and with whom they interact. The self also concerns the other and others shape the self, in a game of interpretations that gives the question of identity an undoubtedly public value (Bruner, 2002: 77).

4. Professional stories, education and employability

The storytelling device introduces the search for our roots. To make an autobiography is to seek our roots not only through *retrospection*, *interpretation* and *creation*, but through an act of profound freedom towards ourselves. The search for freedom is one of the tasks that education has to set itself, through the many ways of learning to form ourselves. The autobiographical act is certainly an act that frees the life compressed and hidden in words over time. To write about ourselves is to free ourselves from the many ties that obstruct the paths through life and rediscover the true form that characterizes human matter. To tell our story is to put back together the pieces of our existence and, in doing so, to re-build it. Recounting our work, at a certain point of our professional life, is like replacing it in the centre of our lives, it is like giving sense to our actions, and starting to understand and interpret them again.

This is why it is so important to recount our work, both for the narrator and the listener.

Following these indications, we thought that it could be a useful exercise to reflect on professionals' stories in order to look inside the self. Hence, we started to propose the narratives of men and women setting out their choices, life paths and careers. As we have seen, storytelling is doubly important, both for the narrator and the listener. In the work with young university students at the University of Würzburg, during the Winter School which is part of the INTALL *International and Comparative Studies in Adult and Continuing Education* project (European Project, 2018), the goal that we wish to achieve concerns raising awareness of the professional career that attending Adult Education courses can lead to. The questions we would like to give rise to concern the professions of the future. In particular, we want to build a path of reflection for our international students, prompting them to ask themselves the question: «What training course am I doing and for what professional future?» It is a well-known fact that master's and PhD courses are often not directly linked to professional development. So, in a period when building employability is a pillar for the future sustainability of every country in Europe and the world, it is urgent to give our young people tools that can make them reflect on the contents of the subject on one hand, and on the sense of their personal and professional role on the other. Hence, the relationship between narration/story, education and employability.

Only recently has the category of employability been looked at in terms of teaching and education, leading to its inclusion in academic training courses. If we deal with school or university education, it is our duty to take the topic of employability into consideration in connection with the training processes provided in our educational institutions. Not only does employability feature in any training process in a formal context, but in non-formal and informal contexts too. Studies on this category were begun by two British scholars, Mantz Yorke and Peter Knight, who proposed it at the end of the 1990s as part of their studies on the role of teaching in higher education. There are ample and widespread studies above all in the economic field, but the greatest challenge is using the category at the pedagogical level. The definition of employability that is proffered and shared most by the academic community is this: «a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy» (Yorke, 2006: 3). As can be seen, the definition does not refer to job placement or job seeking, but underlines the importance of acquiring skills, know-how and personal capacities.

A lot of literature has been produced on employability (Pool & Sewell, 2007; Yorke & Knight 2006, 2007), but here I am interested in under-

lining how crucial it is to prepare young adults to take charge of their employability and how this is connected to achieving skills, especially transversal ones. It can be an interesting step to reread the stories of professionals to introduce the category of employability to the various sectors of adult education and understand how far life can be reconstructed as a text that narrates work. The proposed professional stories activity can be a starting point: in part story, in part autobiography, it connects education with the personal self.

On one hand, it will be important to include some autobiographical recognition practices such as observing and listening. The recollections brought to mind and produced using the memory will form the object and the text that we will listen to and observe. This memory exercise will be associated with reading the feelings and emotions connected to it. Observing, listening, bringing to mind, creating memory, building analogous situations, *feeling* a feeling and re-echoing an emotion form the corpus for an exercise in self-care that university education has always ignored, failing to recognize the human person's existence with relation to the self and confining the subject to the individual and pupil without passions, without memories, without emotions, an automaton set on learning *cognitive* contents. It takes extreme attention to learn to read ourselves, but it is necessary for the life plans which the culture provided by education/university can point towards. Hence, the employability-building workshop can be set up to create culture, the pivotal element of practical and theoretical learning.

The story of professional figures is a stimulus, a starting point, a vision, it connects students' emotional and affective sides and enables a connection between adults-workers and young people-students. Stories, as we have already broadly and amply seen, are what link the *lives* of professionals and young adults. Professional stories are the means for otherwise separate subjects to communicate, understand each other and converse. And in stories we can find bonds, processes, actions and indeed educational paths that otherwise would remain implicit, hidden. Stories, narrated lives are the basis, the presupposition to begin to reflect on knowledge, skills and capacities. It is a profoundly formative and educational process and it leads to the construction of citizens.

The main theme of the first project is *telling our stories* through aspects of other people's lives: it is a topic that leads to reflections on the family, studies, friendships, loved-ones, free time (we could add the categories of reflection we consider most opportune for the storytelling). This first exercise, after the professionals tell their stories, is an experiential survey into the emotions that the storytelling arouses in the subject, going through the reasons leading to the choice, the reasons for the cues they acted upon, and the reasons for the importance of the text. Indeed, even those texts that are unpleasant or not very appealing for the student taking them into consideration speak of his or her self.

The second line of work, emblematically called *narrative self-creation*, is suggested by Bruner's work *Making Stories*, whose research concentrates on the rise and fall of the narrative form in descriptions of ourselves. «We constantly construct and reconstruct ourselves to meet the needs of the situations we encounter, and we do so with the guidance of our memories of the past and our hopes and fears for the future» (Bruner, 2002: 72). The project can be split into three different types of exercises: 1. the *Wheel of Life*; 2. *Life Roles*; 3. *Life Phases*. All the proposed exercises could be thought of as building a mental map to read our professional careers. In the *Wheel of Life*, the students reflect on their satisfaction with their experiences at home, at university, with friends, at work and in love in the last six months, hence this exercise concerns the sense of ourselves. Then they map the future goals for the same fields. What is this activity for? It is to discover their emotions in everyday actions, to reflect on their actions from an emotional and affective but at the same time cognitive and critical point of view. It could be said that this phase of the work concerns telling our professional selves with reflexivity (Schön, 1987).

In the same way, the *Life Roles* exercise leads the students to think about their relationships, their condition as a person in the many life contexts: we are all children, brothers or sisters, students, graduates, parents or professionals. The choice of role implies the perspective we assume, the point of view from which we perceive ourselves in the professional and human community. It is another reflection on ourselves. Lastly, in the third exercise in this programme they are called upon to reflect on their *Life Phases*. What were the key moments in their decisions, choices, changes, successes or failures? Once again, it is central to reflect on our life course to begin to learn about our employability.

We have all followed our own paths, which we have traced more or less consciously. I believe that the first level of employability is to look at ourselves and understand where we are and where we want to go. *Employability* and *Adult Education* have a path to follow together. *Employability* can be considered a category of *Adult Education* in the sense of forming self-skills but also responsibility in young adults, and an ethical outlook towards themselves and others. Hence, tools such as drawing up a CV, formulating a correct covering letter for companies, understanding the labour market and the world of work, the capacity to become and be creative for our own lives and professions are elements connected to responsible growth towards maturity.

It is a duty of university education to build employability, both in countries with a blooming labour market, and in countries where this is not the case. We have seen how self-narration, the autobiographical dimension and self-awareness are unavoidable aspects in the growth of an adult and the construction of cognition, autonomy and responsibility. The latter are three aspects of the human person that express tech-

nical rationality, reflexivity on action and awareness of values. We have to create suitable spaces for educational actions that can strive to achieve professional awareness. As has been seen, it is not a matter of acquiring technical skills, but of creating a programme to acquire a critical capacity that can ease the adults' growth towards their professional futures.

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FACILITATING COMPARATIVE GROUP WORK IN ADULT EDUCATION

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Abstract: The purpose of this chapter is to describe and reflect on scholarly-based practices that can help facilitate comparative group work within the international and transnational[1] context of adult education. The first section of this chapter situates comparative group work within the larger context of comparative adult education, followed by a focus on how to facilitate a group of diverse learners with different societal and cultural experiences. The chapter emphasiszes an outcome-based approach, describing how to set up incremental learning outcomes to enable comparative group work to be successful; a team-based approach, elaborating on coaching strategies to facilitate comparative work group; and a strength-based approach about adult learner-centered strategies for engagement, empowerment, mentoring, collaboration, fun, and accountability when facilitating comparative group work.

1. Introduction

Comparative group work is one of the signature features of the International Winter School in Comparative Education at the University of Würzburg, Germany. The International Winter School is the 'heart' of the Erasmus+ partnership[2] *International and Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning* (INTALL) for master's students, PhD students, and practitioners. Since 2012, INTALL has taken place every winter, for two weeks, at Julius Maximilian University in Wür-

[1] The distinction between international and transnational has been broadly discussed. For an initial understanding, 'international' might be defined as the more superordinate term, including all processes of collaboration, cooperation, networking, and interrelations worldwide and beyond national and cultural borders. 'Transnational' relates to collaborations within these structures by different actors and providers of adult education, leading to multinational and relational interdependencies (see Schmidt-Lauff & Egetenmeyer, 2015).

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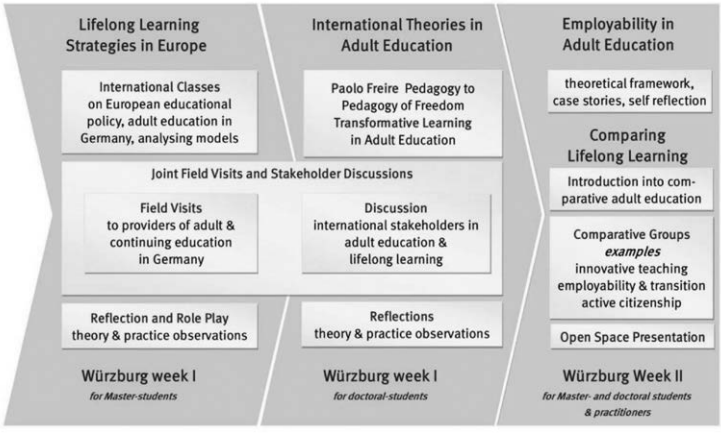
zburg, Germany. After a successful first strategic partnership *Comparative Studies in Adult and Lifelong Learning* (COMPALL), which developed the joint module and exchange programme, (Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, & Egetenmeyer, 2018), the objective of the new strategic partnership INTALL is to build a professional network for adult education and learning between the two largest European adult education associations and eight European partner universities (Universidade de Lisboa, Dublin City University, Universitá degli Studi di Firenze, Pécsi Tudományegyetem, Universita Degli Studi di Padova, Helmut Schmidt Universität/ Universität der Bundeswehr Hamburg, Deutscher Volkshochschulverband DVV International, European Association for the Education of Adults). Julius Maximilian Universität Würzburg coordinates the overall programme. Furthermore, the project brings professionalization activities in adult education and lifelong learning in academia and practice together in a systematic manner to train both students and practitioners in international comparative competencies during the online preparatory phase and the Winter School gathering. Figure 1 illustrates the structure of INTALL.

Figure 1 – Structure of the INTALL programme. [Source: INTALL, 2019, <https://www.paedagogik.uni-wuerzburg.de/lifelonglearning/programme/> (07/2020)]



The programme has a two-week structure: In the first week, students learn about international and European policies in adult education and lifelong learning. During the second week, practitioners join the programme. Then, both students and practitioners work together on their employability skills and conduct their own international comparative studies. All partners support the intensive phase during the Winter School through diverse *comparative groups*, working on changing contents related to key transnational questions (e.g. market crisis and employability, the accelerating erosion of structure and lifelong learning practices, professional

identity in a global modern world) with respect to national and local specificities (monitoring, continuing education providers, and target groups).

According to Bormann and Henquinet (2000), group work is «an assignment of two or more people interacting with each other and interdependently working together to achieve specific objectives» (p. 56). Comparative group work provides individuals with a unique opportunity to produce a deliverable that reflects multiple and diverse ideas with a collective identity. Comparative group work, especially in an academic setting, can be challenging to facilitate, especially when such comparative groups include participants from different countries approaching the same topic based on their different societal and cultural experiences. The purpose of this chapter is to describe and reflect on scholarly-based practices that can help facilitate comparative group work in the context of adult education.

2. Comparison, comparative group work, and cooperative learning

Facilitators from various disciplines, including comparative education, use comparative group work to enhance their students' learning. In comparative group work, students work on an activity or project in pairs, small or medium-sized groups by interacting, coordinating, collaborating, and learning from each other. On the one hand, it is a form of peer-to-peer instruction and support. On the other hand, comparative group work is an intended, didactically arranged form of (methodically) controlled understanding. It uses the fact that our daily life is generally full of comparisons and that «our reasoning is always guided by comparison, whether we intend it to be or not» (Palmberger & Gingrich, 2013: 94). According to Käpplinger (2017), «comparison is a daily operation» (p. 31). However, the sense of academic professionalization leads further with the idea of a «systematic and well-founded knowledge about the other beyond the limits of single experiences, social media, or public media hypes» (Käpplinger, 2017: 31). Otherwise, comparison may easily lead to prejudice and problematic interpretations. In a sense, comparative group work is a form of cooperative learning, which Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (2014) define as an instructional practice that uses small groups to facilitate peer-to-peer instruction. A cooperative group can be informal. For example, an instructor may have a small group of two or three students to work briefly on a prompt or develop an answer to a question. Cooperative group work can also be formal, as in the case of the International Winter School in INTALL. Such cooperative group work is formal, because it is part of the overall design of the programme, and students work in various groups during a period of four days during the second week of the Winter School to conduct comparative analysis on a topic and share the findings from their comparison with an audience.

Obviously, in the case of formal cooperative work group, the facilitator identifies the topic and defines the learning outcomes prior to the formation of the working group. Then, diverse students with specific interests in the topic join to share their individual case studies and work as a group to perform a cross-national comparative analysis. In other words, the group work enables the students to develop their own knowledge by linking new ideas to their prior learning and experiences. Such a process empowers students to perform beyond their current level, using the support provided by the facilitators and peers.

The overall background of learning in cooperative groups mirrors comparative approaches. There is «a great deal to be gained by learning about the experiences of others» (Slowey, 2016: 4). As expressed by T.S. Eliot (cited in *ibidem* 2016: 4):

- And the end of all exploring;
- will be to arrive where we started;
- and know the place for the first time.

Although comparative group work fosters peer-to-peer instruction, instructors still play a vital role as facilitators communicating the ground rules, helping students assume specific roles, monitoring progress, and encouraging students to continuously reflect on the process and focus on achieving a common goal. Existing literature suggests that cooperative group work carries many positive benefits for students. Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (2006) performed a meta-analysis, which found that cooperative learning contributes to producing greater academic achievement, self-esteem, and positive attitudes about learning. Similarly, Kuh, *et al.* (2007) also asserted that cooperative group work contributes to greater academic performance and student engagement. With regard to the Winter School in INTALL, some findings from the mid-term evaluation about the 'development of competencies induced by participating in the programme' illustrates that

> all ratings are considerably high, especially concerning aspects that refer to 'international' competencies and knowledge. For example, almost all participants (93%) claimed that their understanding of adult education and lifelong learning in other countries has increased very much or much 78% of the group have ticked a 4 or 5 when being asked if their intercultural competencies have improved (Riß, 2019: 22).

3. Comparative group work as part of comparative studies in (adult) education

When Field, Künzel, and Schemmann (2016) – after decades of comparative research and discourses – asked, «How can we move on to make

a case for CAE [Comparative Adult Education] that goes beyond learner participation and individual competences?» and Käpplinger[3] replied one year later (2017), he referred to Roby J. Kidd's list of seven points of «why compare» (Kidd, 1975: 10 cited by Käpplinger, 2017: 29):

- To become better informed about the educational system of other countries.
- To become better informed about the ways in which people in other cultures have carried out certain social functions by means of education.
- To become better informed about the historical roots of certain activities and thus to develop criteria for assessing contemporary developments and testing possible outcomes.
- To better understand the educational forms and systems operating in one's own country.
- To satisfy an interest in how human beings live and learn.
- To better understand oneself.
- To reveal how one's own cultural biases and personal attributes affect one's judgment about possible ways of carrying on learning transactions.

Taking all aspects seriously, comparative (adult) education is a highly challenging and risky, complex undertaking. According to Wilson (2003), comparative education involves «an intersection of the social sciences, education and cross-national study which attempts to use cross-national data to test propositions about the relationship between education and society and between teaching practices and learning outcomes» (Wilson, 2003: 3). Comparative group work that looks at trends, similarities, and differences related to aspects of adult education across several nation-states is definitely engaged in a comparative (adult) education study.

At the International Winter School in Comparative (Adult) Education, comparative groups are demographically diverse. As a result, they include graduate students (MA and PhD) and practitioners with different societal, cultural, and academic experiences. The diversity of comparative group work requires the utilization of inclusive teaching strategies, which can help the group reach its maximum potential. When individuals work in groups and feel a sense of belonging, they tend to be more engaged, and potentially more productive with respect to their contributions to the group.

[3] Käpplinger (2017) answers by compressing the seven points into five, with critical reference to contemporary trends and challenges such as historical, global, social, political, methodological, and modern dynamics (e.g. nationalism, populism).

A sense of belonging makes it easier for participants to build relationship quickly with members from different backgrounds. Interestingly enough, positive interactions with other members of a group contribute to increasing one's sense of belonging (Locks, *et al.* 2008). Obviously, the opposite is also possible in the sense that a diverse comparative work group can quickly become toxic, demoralising, dysfunctional, and less productive if members are anxious about their sense of belonging or the genuineness of the level of inclusiveness. For example, confirmation bias can quickly grow in a cross-national group (Scott, 1993). According to Scott (1993), confirmation bias refers to a tendency to search for, interpret, or recall information in a way that confirms one's pre-existing stereotypes or beliefs about another individual, group, culture, or society. An example of confirmation bias is when members of a group are aware of the stereotypes concerning the social and cultural backgrounds of other members and then start observing their behaviour during the activities in order to confirm such stereotypes. Spencer and Castano (2007) showed that stereotypes and confirmation bias of that nature can contribute to significantly reduced performances. In that context, the role of the instructors is vital in making every member of a comparative work group feel included in a genuine way and valued as an indispensable contributing member. The instructors or facilitators also have a responsibility to quickly, firmly, and politely challenge stereotypes and confirmation biases that may emerge while facilitating comparative group work.

Obviously, facilitating an inclusive kind of comparative work group requires a comprehensive approach, including a positive mindset and a cheerful disposition on the part of facilitators. Consequently, facilitators of comparative group work should:

- Examine their own identity development and self-concept and reflect on the extent to which bias may have affected their teaching without them even realising it.
- Foster a classroom atmosphere that embraces diversity by acknowledging the identity of each member, giving them an opportunity to share the best of who they are, continually stressing the opportunities offered by the diversity of the group, and highlighting students' valued identities to do well.
- Create an interactive and fair classroom environment that uses diversity as an asset (e.g. intentionally invite each member to contribute something to the discussions).
- Encourage the group to select categories that allow for comparisons that include the inputs of all members.
- Specify to every comparative group member some valued characteristics, skills, and assets that they hold based on their individual work and their contributions to the group interactions.

Furthermore, it is important for facilitators of comparative group work to understand that an inclusive classroom works best when it involves active learning strategies. An active learning classroom not only encourages learners to do things but also to think about what they are doing. In other words, the focus is not on the facilitator transmitting knowledge but on the participants reading, discussing, writing, and making decisions to progress towards achieving the goal of the comparative group work. This approach has the benefit of not only challenging learners to use a higher order of thinking but also for participants to hold each other accountable with the ultimate goal for the group in mind. However, it is important to understand that a goal is an aspiration or vision, which may not be attainable at times. Nonetheless, it is important to set a goal and strive to achieve it to the best extent possible.

4. An outcome-based approach to comparative group work

Facilitating a comparative group may be more efficient and productive when the facilitators use a comprehensive outcomes-based teaching and learning approach. In simple terms, outcomes-based teaching and learning consists of aligning the teaching activities with the learning outcomes to ensure a systematic instructional experience for the learner. According to the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP, 2014), learning outcomes are intended «sets of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process, either formal, non-formal or informal» (CEDEFOP, 2014: 164-165). Rather than focusing on what the teacher intends to teach, outcomes-based teaching and learning emphasises the intended learning outcomes for the learner as a possible result of the teaching. Therefore, in an outcomes-based teaching and learning process, everything starts with the articulation of the intended learning outcomes. Then, the curriculum content, the teaching methods and strategies, and the assessment process are aligned to achieve the intended learning outcomes. However, the facilitator of comparative group work in adult education should keep in mind that adult learners are agents of their own learning, enjoying their autonomy or even independence of conventional forms of knowledge, contents, and traditional pedagogical techniques and methods. Therefore, the expected learning outcome is only an intended outcome that should take into account the autonomy of the adult learner in educational practices.

Nevertheless, facilitators or instructors in comparative group work should approach their assignment as a systematic instructional process that aims at increasing instructional efficiency and facilitating a transformative learning experience for the learners. In planning a module,

the facilitators should be intentional clear about the instructional goals related to the intended learning outcomes, define specific learning objectives to incrementally reach the goals, adopt appropriate instructional strategies, and develop a plan to monitor how the learners are progressing towards achieving the learning objectives, and ultimately the intended learning outcomes. In a nutshell, the facilitator should clearly articulate incremental learning outcomes for the group work, which are related to both the academic objectives for the participants to achieve and the comparative analytical skills for them to develop. For example, the facilitators may develop the following outcomes to monitor during the comparative group work process. Upon completion of comparative group work, the participants will:

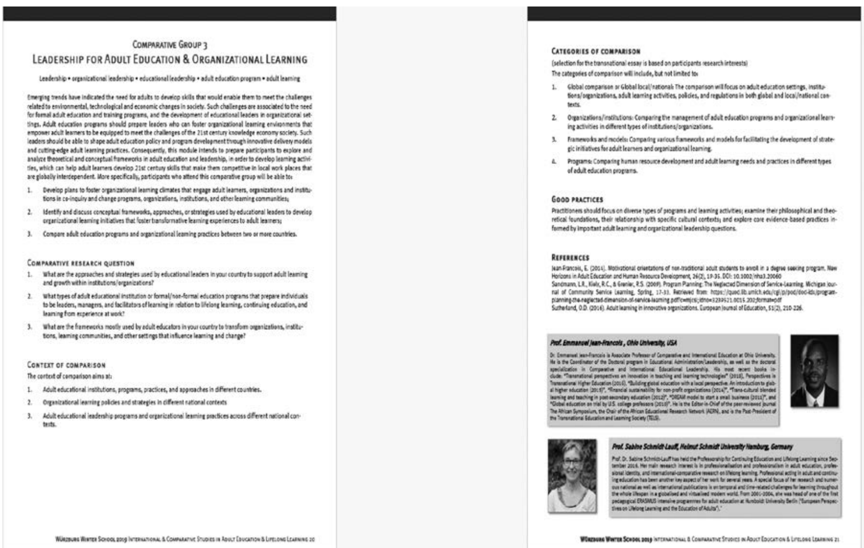
- Develop individual briefs about themselves and the national contexts of their countries in relation to the topic or theme for the group.
- Write a clear and concise purpose statement that includes the contextual units and categories or focus of the comparison.
- Write at least two research questions about the 'what' and 'how' of the transnational comparative analysis.
- Identify and define/operationalize the key variables in the research questions.
- Graph a diagram of the conceptual framework for the comparative analysis, which includes the categories of comparison.
- Describe a step-by-step process for the transnational comparative analysis.
- Describe how the contextual units and the categories will be used to analyze and interpret the findings.
- Outline a plan for the presentation of the transnational comparative analysis.
- Deliberate on the roles and responsibilities of each member to perform the transnational comparative analysis and present the findings to an audience.
- Make a creative presentation of the transnational comparative analysis to an audience.

5. A team-based approach to comparative group work

A comparative working group performing transnational comparisons over an extensive period of four successive days (during a two-week intensive Winter School programme including many more comparative theories, and approaches) operates almost like a team that was given the task to present their comparative findings to an audience at the end of the fourth day. Like a team, there is an inherent context to cooperate to achieve a common goal but also to perform well during the presentations

of the findings. With that in mind, a team-based approach can be helpful to assist in facilitating comparative group work. In fact, team-based learning is simply a structured small-group learning approach that is rooted in the preparation of students before a class period so that they can work together more efficiently during the class period. The International Winter School in Comparative Adult Education is basically designed that way. In the Winter School booklet, different topics and comparative groups are described so students can choose in advance (Fig. 2).

Figure 2 – Example from the 2019 Winter School. [Source: INTALL, <https://www.paedagogik.uni-wuerzburg.de/fileadmin/06030230/2019/INTALL_Winter_School_2019.pdf> (07/2020)]



COMPARATIVE GROUP 3

LEADERSHIP FOR ADULT EDUCATION & ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

Leadership • organizational leadership • educational leadership • adult education program • adult learning

Emerging trends have indicated the need for adults to develop skills that would enable them to meet the challenges related to environmental, technological and economic changes in society. Such challenges are associated to the need for formal adult education and training programs, and the development of educational leaders in organizational settings. Adult education programs should prepare leaders who can foster organizational learning environments that empower adult learners to be equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century knowledge economy society. Such leaders should be able to shape adult education policy and program development through innovative delivery models and cutting-edge adult learning practices. Consequently, this module intends to prepare participants to explore and analyze theoretical and conceptual frameworks in adult education and leadership, in order to develop learning activities, which can help adult learners develop 21st century skills that make them competitive in local work places that are globally interdependent. More specifically, participants who attend this comparative group will be able to:

1. Develop plans to foster organizational learning climates that engage adult learners, organizations and institutions in co-inquiry and change programs, organizations, institutions, and other learning communities;
2. Identify and discuss conceptual frameworks, approaches, or strategies used by educational leaders to develop organizational learning initiatives that foster transformative learning experiences to adult learners;
3. Compare adult education programs and organizational learning practices between two or more countries.

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What are the approaches and strategies used by educational leaders in your country to support adult learning and growth within institutions/organizations?
2. What types of adult educational institution or formal/non-formal education programs that prepare individuals to be leaders, managers, and facilitators of learning in relation to lifelong learning, continuing education, and learning from experience at work?
3. What are the frameworks mostly used by adult educators in your country to transform organizations, institutions, learning communities, and other settings that influence learning and change?

CONTEXT OF COMPARISON

The context of comparison aims at:

1. Adult educational institutions, programs, practices, and approaches in different countries.
2. Organizational learning policies and strategies in different national contexts
3. Adult educational leadership programs and organizational learning practices across different national contexts.

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CATEGORIES OF COMPARISON

(selection for the transnational essay is based on participants research interests)

The categories of comparison will include, but not limited to:

1. Global comparison or Global local/national: The comparison will focus on adult education settings, institutions/organizations, adult learning activities, policies, and regulations in both global and local/national contexts.
2. Organizations/institutions: Comparing the management of adult education programs and organizational learning activities in different types of institutions/organizations.
3. Frameworks and models: Comparing various frameworks and models for facilitating the development of strategic initiatives for adult learners and organizational learning.
4. Programs: Comparing human resource development and adult learning needs and practices in different types of adult education programs.

GOOD PRACTICES

Practitioners should focus on diverse types of programs and learning activities; examine their philosophical and theoretical foundations, their relationship with specific cultural contexts; and explore core evidence-based practices informed by important adult learning and organizational leadership questions.

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Prior to the face-to-face meeting at the University of Würzburg, each student has to work with the facilitators to develop an individual essay or case study and upload it to WueTeams (a Moodle platform of the University of Würzburg open to all participants). The key aspect is that all students in a comparative group work on a similar topic, addressing similar research questions but using the contexts of their countries. Prior to their meeting as a comparative group, all participants use a common conceptual framework to develop their essays, read the same basic texts shared by the facilitators, and receive feedback from the same facilitators. Therefore, prior to their meeting, there is a preparatory phase in terms of content and group interaction designed to increase participants' inclination to work as a team towards the common goal of performing a transnational comparative analysis.

Svinicki (2004) explained that in a team-based learning process, the «focus is on the mental representation of information by the learner» (Svinicki, 2004: 242). Hrynchak and Batty (2012) argue that team-based learning is based on the main elements of constructivist learning in the sense that the instructor serves as a facilitator and learners develop new understandings by confronting their preconceptions with their new experiences. In other words, the interactions in a team can contribute to opening up questions, creating (self-)reflective space, and developing new knowledge. Obviously, the facilitator serves as a coach to help the learner focus on the goal, the objectives for each day, the efficient use of time, and a constant reflection on the team-based learning process. In a sense, a team-based learning approach is similar to a flipped classroom or at least helps achieve what Hake (1998) asserted about students' interactive engagement in a flipped classroom, which is «heads-on (always) and hands-on (usually) activities which yield immediate feedback through discussion with peers and/or instructors» (Hake, 1998: 65). In a nutshell, a flipped classroom consists of exposing learners to new materials or content prior to coming to class, using various support materials such as lecture videos, podcasts, or readings, and then use the class time to apply/problem-solve, discuss, and reflect on such materials or content.

6. A learner-centered approach to comparative group work

The International Winter School in Comparative Studies in Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Würzburg includes not only master's and PhD students but also practitioners working in adult education or continuing education or lifelong learning activities. Therefore, they are all adult learners, and the facilitators of their comparative group work should consider the facilitation principles available in andragogy by using a learner-centered approach. The learner-centered approach has its foundation in the constructivist and subjectivist theory. According to Krause, Bochner, and Duchesne (2003), constructivism asserts that learners construct knowledge for themselves. Maypole and Davies (2001) argue that learners construct knowledge through their interactions with their environment (cognitive constructivism) and their facilitator and peers (social constructivism). The key factor in a constructivist approach is that learners are the architects of their own knowledge creation and hence in control of their learning process. In the context of comparative group work, a learner-centered approach means that the participants – who are adults – are given autonomy and control over their choice of topic, the way they organise the group work, their deliberation strategies, task delegation, and peer-to-peer accountability.

The subject-theoretical perspective on learning stresses the relation and interaction (social, cultural, environmental) of each learning process. «The subject's point of view is a social position from which the learning subject – guided by interest – relates to the possibilities of participation, i.e., the ability to act in society» (Ludwig, 2017: 49). In addition to the constructivist approach, learning is understood much more as a «process that always encompasses a relationship between the individual and society and which relates to social contradictions'» (Ludwig, 2017: 51). As adult learners, participants of comparative group work bring a wealth of life experience to the classroom. Consequently, the facilitators in comparative group work should use andragogical strategies to facilitate a transformative learning experience for such adult learners. Some examples of key andragogical strategies include but are not limited to the following.

Integration: As indicated earlier, the adult learner comes to the classroom with prior knowledge and experiences. Knowles, Holton, & Swanson (2005) asserted that the integration of life experience and academic work is rooted in the fact that adults learn best from their own experience and prefer learning that is immediately relevant to their lives. It is important for the facilitators of a comparative group to account for such experience in a comprehensive manner. First of all, the facilitators should allow for sufficient time to invite and allow the members of a comparative group to share their prior knowledge and experiences. If the group is not aware of these experiences, it is impossible to incorporate them as assets for the group work process. Then, it is important to refer to specific aspects of participants' prior knowledge and experiences when illustrating how each member can contribute to the comparative analysis. The integration of group members' prior learning and experiences into the facilitation process may contribute to building better relationships both between the facilitator and the learners and among peers.

Collaboration: Most adult learners like active and collaborative learning, especially if it is structured to be productive. Kasworm (2014) referred to an active and collaborative classroom for adult learners as a *connected classroom*. In a connected classroom, the adult learner is given the opportunity to connect their current adult worlds with the activities in the comparative group. For example, inside the comparative group, participants may be assigned to work in pairs on specific aspects of the project; then, they are asked to report their work to the rest of the group. Pairs may be formed based on similar prior knowledge and experiences, and the ability of members to complement each other. Price and Baker (2012) argued that it is possible for adults to develop meaningful relationships simply through the shared classroom experience. This means that even without extra-curricular activities, students can develop meaningful relationships inside the classroom. In other words, even if adult learners do not socialise outside of the classroom, it is possible to develop meaning-

ful relationships simply by interacting and working together in class. As Donaldson *et al.* (2000) asserted, adult students may engage in meaningful peer interaction «both before class, in class, during breaks, and after class» (Donaldson *et al.*, 2000: 8).

Self-direction: Adult students are self-directed learners. Obviously, self-directed learning is a key element of andragogy (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005) and should be taken into account when facilitating comparative group work that includes diverse adult learners. Merriam (2001) explained that the adult learner does not necessarily come to class with an innate self-directedness, but the potential is there. Therefore, the facilitators should help the adult learners develop the ability to direct their own work. In other words, just because adult learners are self-directed does not mean that the facilitator should be passive. The facilitators should instead tap into learners' potential for self-directedness to gradually help them direct their own work. In other word, the facilitators provide (and ensure) the space and then gradually transfer the responsibility for the learning outcomes to the comparative group through modelling (i.e. showing how to do it by example), communications (i.e. communicating the incremental self-directed process), and feedback (i.e. providing feedback on progress towards self-directedness). A premature transfer may have a negative effect on the group, making it feel unguided, unsupported, and lost. This would definitely not be conducive to a productive group environment.

7. Strategies for learner engagement in comparative group work

Learner engagement is essential for a successful facilitation of comparative group work. This last section (in lieu of a conclusion) provides ideas on how to develop and implement a strategy. Jean-Francois (2018) shared twelve principles of innovative teaching, which include but are not limited to empowering additional ownership of learning, novel student engagement experience, glocal-minded pedagogy, built-in fun in learning, and reliance on fair/adjustable accountability.

Empowering additional ownership of learning: In comparative group work, participants should be empowered to take the maximum level of ownership of their learning. Empowering the learners starts by valuing and validating their previous experiences. It is important not to single out student identities, because this can lead to marginalization. Instead, students' experience can be called upon when there is a clear connection between a student's experience and a given activity. Empowering also means providing individual feedback that acknowledges the strengths of a given participant. Such empowerment can help create a sense of belonging, consequently affecting student engagement. Ultimately, a group is empowered when members have the time, space, and autonomy to use the frameworks and guidance

given to them and start organising their work on their own. For example, this can take the form of ensuring that the group deliberates on clearly defined roles for each member, key deliverables, and a timeline to monitor individual and group progresses towards the completion of their tasks.

Novel student engagement experience: In intensive comparative group work, student engagement requires the utilization of novel strategies that are different from the routine participants are used to. As Jean-Francois (2018) argued, a «novel student engagement experience brings passion for learning a subject matter, because of a deeper connection that is created between the learner and the engaged learning experience» (Jean-Francois, 2018: 9).

Glocal-minded pedagogy: As mentioned in previous sections of this chapter, comparative group work includes participants from various countries. A facilitator should therefore be mindful of and use pedagogical frameworks that account for both the global and the various local (i.e. national) contexts involved in the comparative group. The facilitator should inquire from participants and conduct one's own desk research about the dominant teaching practices in the various societal and cultural contexts represented in the group and conduct additional desk research of their own. This may enable the facilitatir to reconcile facilitation practices with those of the various national contexts represented in a group.

Built-in fun in learning: Being too rigid and conventional when facilitating comparative group work is a constant temptation given the pressure of time and the unpredictable nature of working with a transnational group for the first time. Fun is a great equalizer that can help overcome that temptation. Jean-Francois (2018) argued that «if a teaching strategy can help a learner associate learning with fun, this association becomes a great motivator» (Jean-Francois, 2018: 11). It is important to stress that fun does not mean chaos but an atmosphere that allows participants to feel safe being themselves and laughing at themselves while taking seriously the quality of work required to achieve a common goal for the group. When participants work in a nurturing and fun but purposeful atmosphere, they produce a lot of work without feeling the anxiety that could come with it.

Reliance on fair/adjustable accountability: A productive comparative group effort is one in which everyone is accountable to everyone. Jean-Francois (2018) argued that «when acountability is linked to learning outcomes, it becomes not a regulation to punish the learner, but a guide to monitor progress toward the achievement of objectives, goals, and outcomes» (Jean-Francois, 2018: 12). Accountability requires that a role is assigned or assumed by each member of the group. Not only does this help everyone take responsibility, it may also help eliminate a common problem in group work, namely dominance of a single student or conflict avoidance by others. The facilitator should explain to the group the role of positive interdependence and individual accountability, and how

any group member can help keep the other on task. Also, the facilitator should circulate around during group work, to acknowledge and praise partial progress, observe issues or potential issues, and intervene to help move forward on a task.

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DEVELOPING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION. EXPERIENCES FROM AN INTALL WINTER SCHOOL COMPARATIVE WORKING GROUP

Balázs Németh

Abstract: Active citizenship became a research issue for adult learning and education in 1995 when the Council of Ministers decided to make 1996 the Year of Lifelong Learning. Moreover, the Lisbon programme, in the year 2000, reinforced the relevance of the issue and, along with employability, connected it to lifelong learning. That is why since 2001 comparative adult learning and education researchers have put a specific focus on analysing active citizenship and bridging it to adult learning. For this very reason, a distinguished Comparative Working Group was formed at the 2019 Winter School of the Erasmus+ Intall project – on the one hand, to collect different national/regional and local narratives and understandings of active citizenship and, on the other, to gather examples, good practices, formations of active citizens, or trajectories of how to learn for active citizenship as routes and processes of lifelong learning. The same Winter School comparative group tried to analyse the similarities and differences collected in an effort to relate them to existing theoretical frames offered by key authors on the topic, including Baert, Jansen, Jarvis, Johnston, Wildemeeersch, and others.

This paper discusses the experiences of the comparative working group and formulates some special conclusions and comments for further actions of comparative studies in adult learning and education.

1. The role of adult learning and education in the development of active citizenship

I presume that the development of democracy depends on more open and accessible forms of education and learning. I also think that democracy depends on people's participation in exercising their rights and taking responsibility for their thinking and actions in both local and global dimensions.

Therefore, it is essential to consider the role of higher education in the promotion of active citizenship through university lifelong learning, which UNESCO (UNESCO, 1998, 2001) found to have a strong impact on active citizenship. Another element of this approach is to recognise the role of adult learning as a tool to develop citizenship and, moreover,

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active citizenship. It is worth reasoning, however, that adult learning and education, in the last two centuries throughout the developed world, has become an essential tool to orient individuals and their communities towards change with a great emphasis on knowledge transfer in formal, non-formal, and informal environments. Likewise, adult learning and education has been used to generate development by balancing the social and the economic through more rights given to ordinary people to change their own thinking by participating in various community actions, including political and economic involvement by social groups or religious formations.

Adult learning and education, after the age of revolutions (1789-1850), started to mean a rather new approach to creating more and more open access to education in adulthood by establishing study circles, special schools for adults (Sunday schools, parochial schools, industrial vocation-based alliances or *Vereine* (in Germany), folk high schools, etc.) and involving higher education in disseminating useful knowledge to a growing number of people (Fieldhouse, 1996; Steele, 2007). This era of 'free education' from 1850 to 1920 generated and accelerated a new kind of thinking about schooling, education, and teaching, as well as about access and time and people's basic rights to learn, to think, to articulate their thoughts, and so on. This resulted in reform-pedagogy or andragogy (the new kind of adult education thinking) based on the work of several scholars dealing with education, philosophy, and – soon after the turn of the century – psychology and sociology.

On the other hand, the two world wars and the great European civil war from 1914 to 1945 brought tensions and gave way to nationalism, Nazism, fascism, and communism, which did not permit the rise and stabilization of modern democratic and civic societies, even in different ways and venues (Nuissl & Pehl, 2000).

It was only after 1945-1950 that democratisation and human rights could be universally declared essential both for modern societies and for their individual members. It also turned out that another fifty years were needed in Europe for the Central-Eastern part of the continent to leave behind dictatorship and build liberal market economies and democratic societies (Németh, 2014).

And yet, adult learning and education today mirrors the fact that access to learning is not for everyone and that 'equal opportunities' is a neat slogan but difficult to realise for every single citizen of a country. On the one hand, adult learning is considered an important tool for adults to develop their skills; on the other, it is expected to make adults recognise that change is something that they ought to make use of and not simply endure. This is a recognition of the fact that European education and training policy, as formulated in the famous White Paper of the EU Commission in 1995 (EC, 1995), is driven by a rather individualistic

approach. The White Paper called attention, amongst other important issues, to second-chance schooling, an important benchmark of today's lifelong learning in Europe. Furthermore, another White Paper on governance by the European Commission (EC, 2001) pointed out that a more humanistic approach to the realisation of proper governance would require particular forms of collaboration with citizens, involving active and deliberate participation, responsibility, and dignity regarding their communities and other local formations of social care and development.

In the last fifteen years, European education and training policy slowly but distinctively turned to adult learning, highlighting several issues in two communications (the second an action plan), but not active citizenship (EC, 2006, 2007).

Active citizenship was mainly used in reference to lifelong learning in response to pressure coming from UNESCO and some academic circles to fight back the narrow and rather reductionist views of education focusing on the economy and employability.

2. Understanding citizenship and active citizenship

According to Baert, active citizenship is an open-ended process for which no single definition exists (Baert, 2003). Another essential distinction is that education and higher education are important for learning citizenship skills and building collective and multiple identities. Therefore, higher education helps

> to facilitate the *critical interrogation* of dominant cultural codes and symbols in order to help finding connections between power and culture, to encourage the *exploration* of cultural perspectives and codes embedded in *different meanings*, values and views, and *personalising the political so as to d*econstructing dominant codes of information by discovering personal experiences of learning citizenship (Jansen, 2003: 43-55).

Johnston, however, pointed out that we can learn about citizenship when learning is about citizenship as *status,* but we can also learn through citizenship when we reflect on the *experiences (practice)* of *individual and collective citizenship*. Also, we can learn for citizenship, which means *active citizenship* (Johnston, 2005).

If we share such a model of learning combined with citizenship, we ought to consider that citizenship is generally related to rights (civil, political, and social) and participation. On the other hand, according to Baert, *active citizenship is about the conscious practice of rights and the recognition of status*. It means that the challenge is to redefine democratic citizenship and social responsibility, which are both at risk. Eventually, we have to

find a balance between individual freedom and collective interest, and that is where participatory competencies play a role (Baert, 2003). One can agree with Longworth's argument that «encouraging active citizenship means that celebrating learning is connected with active citizenship by individuals, families, organisations and communities» (Longworth, 2006: 86-88). It is not at all surprising, therefore, that Longworth connected active citizenship and the development of learning cities and regions: «One of the most important indicators of successful learning cities and regions is the extent to which their citizens participate in active citizenship programmes that enhance community living, learning and social cohesion» (Longworth, 2006: 153) I think that higher education and related university-based lifelong learning need to promote such city-region development through learning.

Jarvis pointed out in his famous Helsinki speech in September 2000 that lifelong learning was a key factor in raising socially essential forms of capital – namely, social capital based on 'value-rationality' – through developing human resources and through strengthening and developing learning competencies and skills (Jarvis, 2001). In 2004, Jarvis underlined the importance of the issue of active citizenship as an integral part of European lifelong learning policy (Jarvis, 2004). At the same time, he argued that «*citizenship is now a responsibility rather than a right*» and that there «*is still a fundamental conceptual difference between citizenship and active citizenship – the one about rights and the other about the exercise of responsibility*» (Jarvis, 2004: 12, my emphasis).

Also, he pointed to the emergence and spread of the model of the *knowledge-based society*, which he claimed had played a key role, together with the harsh constraints brought on by the global economic crisis, in Europe's renewed focus on education and training to promote growth, competitiveness, and employability through combined actions and responsibilities of member states and their citizens. Jarvis clearly indicated that the *Memorandum* (EC, 2000) conceives of responsible citizens as active (employed!) members of society, taking actions to solve the problems in their environment. The role of education and training, he concluded, is to help the individual become an employable and active citizen in their community (EC, 2000: 14).

Higher education institutions also joined the discussion on lifelong learning with a more intensive involvement through EUA (the European University Association)[1] and, after 2002, through EUCEN (the European Universities Lifelong Learning Network)[2]. From that time onwards, a significant number of academic researchers have indicated

[1] EUA Trend-reports: <www.eua.be> (07/2020).

[2] More on EUCEN: <http://eucen.eu> (07/2020).

that a new systemic framework is under construction in education and training which aims to generate more quality, partnership-based development, and the dissemination of knowledge through ICT-based tools (Field, 2007).

Those trends of the past fifteen years made us revisit the topic of active citizenship in the context of the Erasmus+ INTALL Winter School programme for 2019. For this reason, the organisers of the project called for a specific Comparative Working Group to discuss some recent challenges and issues referring to active citizenship and its relevance to adult learning and education. The call in the bulletin of the 2019 Winter School underlined the specific comparative dimensions we had drawn for this programme right at the beginning of fall 2018 by recognising that active citizenship became a research issue in adult and lifelong learning in 1995 through the preparation of 1996 as the Year of Lifelong Learning and through the planning and initiation of the Lisbon process, which combined lifelong learning with the goals of employability. The approach tried to emphasise the collection of country-specific examples referring to models, approaches, and practices (Winter School 2019 Student Guide, 2019).

The co-organisers underlined that the Working Group would encourage participating students to make use of their country/region-specific studies to relate the topic of active citizenship to adult education and lifelong learning and, consequently, relate and compare their findings to:

- the meaning of active citizenship in the countries/regions represented by group members;
- the practices of active citizenship in the countries/regions represented;
- available strategies on adult education and lifelong learning with references/contexts of active citizenship.

Other contexts of comparison were connected to:

- the roles/impacts of existing or missing law;
- the impact of existing/missing policies;
- the influence of existing/missing discourse amongst civil society groups on the roles of adult education to promote and develop active citizenship.

The call recommended some specific categories of comparison and claimed that participating students ought to search and identify some good practices reflecting:

- community-based learning activities to raise participation in adult and lifelong learning;
- learning festivals, adult learners' weeks to integrate members of vulnerable groups;
- specific intercultural programmes to strengthen identity and belonging;

- local/regional initiatives, formations to develop collaborations, understanding recognition and trust amongst communities and their members;
- examples of collecting and sharing valuable knowledge and skills around labour, community, and the environment with sustainability concerns.

The coordinators of the Working Group had collected and made available some key readings for students to contextualise the main focus of the Comparative Working Group and to relate the topic to the overall programme of the 2019 Winter School.

It is very important to highlight the roles of preparatory online lectures and, more importantly, the consultation amongst coordinators and students in the Working Group. These environments enabled students to formulate their essays in a way that both addressed questions around the main topic of the Working Group and collected some relevant good practices to lay the groundwork for the comparative work of the second week of the Winter School. Generally, the comparative work was based on the country-specific narratives students represented.

3. The input of participating master's students

There were six master-level students – three from Italy, two from the Korean Republic, and one from Azerbaijan – who enrolled in the Comparative Working Group and provided country/region-specific 'transnational essays' on active citizenship through adult education and lifelong learning with specific dimensions.

Ms. Daria Chiellini and Ms Chiara D'Urso provided a joint essay on *Participation through art to foster active citizenship: The cases of Tuscany and Sardinia*.

Ms. An Sohee and Ms Kim Junghyun wrote their essay on *Developing active citizenship through adult learning and education in Korea*.

Ms. Martina Scapin wrote her essay on *Developing active citizenship through adult learning and education: A comparative research among European and Italian policies*.

Ms. Naila Ismayilova's essay dealt with *Challenges of adult education in Azerbaijan*.

Students had the opportunity to engage in ongoing consultations on WueCampus (Moodle Platform of University of Würzburg), which has been specifically developed for the Winter School series. Together with Professor Heribert Hinzen, we counselled the abovementioned students on how to improve their essays to meet the criteria of the Working Group and to finalise their works by mid-January for uploading and cross-read-

ing amongst fellow group members. Those consultations were also used to develop those essays in terms of format, style, contents, and references. Students were guided on how to properly use some basic methods of comparative research on active citizenship when trying to identify reasons for selecting their focus on the country-specific field referring to their countries/regions together with some specific choices and limitations to be identified.

It is necessary to discuss the five essays we received from the students in the Comparative Working Group. The essays discussed below brought in some valuable contexts of citizenship and active citizenship through country-specific realities:

Essay 1. Ms. Daria Chiellini and Ms. Chiara D'Urso (Italy) provided a joint essay on *Participation through art to foster active citizenship: The cases of Tuscany and Sardinia*.

This first essay from Italy presented a particular focus on the impact of art as a tool for promoting participation and motivation in the framework of active citizenship. The first chapter explored the concepts of democracy, lifelong learning, and participation, and how those subjects might be conceived in the European scheme. In the second chapter, the essay explored current European and Italian policies and collected some particularly relevant policies in Tuscany and Sardinia on active citizenship that were implemented through projects. The third chapter focused on certain practices from those two regions. Therefore, national practices were reflected by the frame of *Cittadinanzattiva* and compared to examples of Tuscany and Sardinia on how art may stimulate the inclusion of people of all ages.

This essay came to the conclusion that more could be done to develop active citizenship and to foster the inclusion of citizens into community matters. It recognised the lack of proper provision of information for citizens about the opportunities available to them. Another conclusion was that more attention was paid to citizens' participation at the regional level; however, those particular regions exhibited some significant differences. Tuscany was considered more active with its rich resources and practices, but both regions brought practices of urban regeneration as examples of effective implementation. Adult education could well make use of the topic indirectly by involving people through community-based actions to get acquainted with different customs, traditions, values, and so on, which may promote trust and tolerance within their communities.

Let us underline that the structure of the essay served the comparative approach by working with examples and practices from the highlighted Italian regions. The essay was written with quality style and incorporated quality references.

Essay 2. Ms. An Sohee and Ms. Kim Junghyun (Republic of Korea) wrote their essay on *Developing active citizenship through adult learning and education in Korea*.

This second essay from the Republic of Korea analysed the scope of promoting active citizenship through raising the practical capacities, abilities, and qualities considered necessary to effectively and actively participate in the learning society. The essay pointed out that the Korean narratives of active citizenship cannot be separated from life experiences based on participatory democracy. The two authors of the essay explained that it means to make the life world more democratic and rationally form a public point of view by learning and practicing autonomy, responsibility, and co-operation in civil society.

In Korea, active citizenship learning, in terms of actual discourses in adult education, is achieved through experience in building democratic relationships in real life. Also, this concept reflects the aim to address social and economic inequalities and to restore social justice based on the traditions of adult education, such as radical adult education and mass education. The concept of active citizenship is therefore called 'democratic citizenship', a term that links education to its role to form democratic citizens through adult education and lifelong education. However, it must be underlined that, according to the essay, forming democratic citizens through education is a kind of civil education led by civil society, in other words, people's lifeworld. In this regard, referring to Korea's special situation, education for democracy, or education for active citizenship, means education as part of a specific social movement to build a civil society in accordance with the democratic movement.

The authors pointed out that such democratic education includes civil politics education and education related to civil movements to realise various kinds of politics of life. In this context, practitioners would talk of 'publicity' in what citizenship is. It is, according to the narrative of the essay, to reflect publicity as an agreed value within democratic processes, so it explains why civic groups are called 'democratic civic education' instead of 'civil education'.

The essay collected some specific cases of active citizenship development and civil engagement programmes, for example the *civic engagement programme of the Hope Institute*, providing a detailed description of each programmes with reference to active citizenship.

Another case focused on the *Guro District Citizen Leader Academy of Seoul National University*, a complex development programme based on the four types of learning according to Delors (Delors, 1996). Its aim is to train special trainers to develop activities for local communities around democratic citizenship and participatory actions.

Essay 3. Ms. Martina Scapin (Italy) wrote her essay on *Developing active citizenship through adult Learning and education: A comparative research among European and Italian policies*.

This essay related citizenship to *European citizenship* and elaborated on recent contexts of the development of citizens both in social and political

dimensions referring to skills development, employability, and the social integration of youth as part of the European approach.

In the case of the Italian policy, the development of citizens through job promotion was explained using the specific practices of *La Buona Scuola, Garanzia Giovani Italia,* and *Servizio Civile*. Those policy practices give people interested in the topic of citizenship an understanding of the implications that have to be recognised to get the meanings of those 'good practices' to follow the introductory chapters.

The author linked her essay to three different cases. The *Model to dream* was selected as a recent initiative to help tackle social exclusion amongst young people in order to fight back racism, violence, and xenophobia by providing open discourses on the true life stories of young adults turning into collaborative and open actions. The second practice, *App Cittadini attivi*, illustrates the way citizens in the city of Padua can indicate problems and, accordingly, make suggestions about neighbourhood services, safety, and the like.

Thirdly, the author mentioned a personal example. Namely, it turned out that the *MA programme in Management of Educational Services and Lifelong Learning can also be recognised as a valuable basis* to help young adults engaged in community and social developments to collect relevant skills, knowledge, and practical experience, for example, through the international collaborations of universities by addressing challenging topics where adult and lifelong learning may help. This thought also informed the conclusion of the essay.

Essay 4. Ms Naila Ismayilova (Azerbaijan), in her essay, dealt with *Challenges of adult education in Azerbaijan*.

The fourth essay took a special approach to the topic of the Comparative Working Group by describing a specific situation of citizenship education and the promotion of such activities. The case of Azerbaijan was thoroughly elaborated through understanding the structure and mechanisms of adult education and, consequently, the roles of civil society organisations in the launch of a relatively successful campaign to raise participation and performance among adult learners.

The essay collected some relevant drivers of change and identified the concrete opportunities of and barriers to the development of adult education, together with citizenship education as a significant field of practice provided by civil society organisations collaborating with stakeholders active in the field, together with groups representing local and regional public claims and trying to turn it to social actions of support, exchange, and development. Another challenge indicated in the essay concerns the difficulty of getting top-down policy approaches to meet and recognise bottom-up struggles and actions of civil society.

The conclusion of the essay called for adult and youth education to become part of development programmes in order to raise young adults'

basic skills and civic skills along with improving their VET skills and social skills.

4. The challenge and limitation of global citizenship - conclusions

Prior to its active knowledge exchange at the Würzburg Winter School, the Comparative Working Group was influenced by the topic of global citizenship, that is, the challenges of socio-political responsibilities, environmental concerns, identity issues, and collaborations when forming communities and neighbourhoods through cities and regions.

Professor Hinzen, former director at DVV International and UIL advisor on Adult and Lifelong Learning, joined our Comparative Working Group as co-moderator. He pointed out the directions and main focuses of global citizenship and its impact on, for example, the Sustainable Development Goals, regional focuses of adult and lifelong learning to highlight similarities and differences between Europe, Asia and the South-Pacific, Africa, the Arab World, and Latin-America. For this reason, the Comparative Group worked to identify reasons for those similarities and differences in the approaches to and development programmes in citizenship education in the countries/regions represented in the group.

Therefore, not only the context of active citizenship but also the local and global dimensions of its development signalled some particularly important choices and limitations participants highlighted in their group work and the presentations they gave to other members of the Winter School. in this respect, the Winter School became a good foundation for collecting and sharing knowledge with intercultural perspectives in a comparative frame.

Finally, we have to highlight the results of the comparison as a major outcome of the Comparative Working Group:

- Although it was rather difficult for the student members of the working groups to effectively apply analytical comparative tools in their papers to study their countries, the topic of citizenship allowed them, on the one hand, to identify some significant similarities and differences in country-specific cases and, on the other, to identify a number of reasons for those similarities and differences.
- Moreover, students of this particular Comparative Working Group strongly focused on collecting practical examples of learning for citizenship and learning through citizenship, incorporating those examples/cases into their analysis as part of their country-specific transnational essays.
- Another outcome of the Winter School are students' improved skills in comparative analysis and studies in the field of adult education and

lifelong learning. They learned to use their comparative work to gain a better understanding of adult learning and education in the countries they represent, identifying similarities and differences on the basis of collected and shared practices and theories relevant to their topics.
- Eventually, students improved their skills working with internationally available documents, data, and publications (online and print) to support their reasoning.

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PART II

COMPARATIVE PAPERS ON ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS AS A POLICY INSTRUMENT FOR LIFELONG LEARNING IN GHANA, MALAYSIA AND SERBIA

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Abstract: The development of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) around the globe has been influenced by Anglo-Saxon countries and a global policy of intergovernmental organisations. The main aim of this paper is to explore how recently developed NQFs in diverse global contexts – Ghana, Malaysia, and Serbia – fulfil two proclaimed objectives: recognition of prior learning (RPL) and support for lifelong learning. Based on a comparative analysis of official national and international policy documents relevant to the NQFs in these selected countries, conducted using the method of documentary analysis, our findings indicate that despite differences according to type, scope, and stage of development, all three NQFs are used as a policy instrument for lifelong learning on the one hand, while on the other hand, they reinforce a vocational perspective of RPL, lifelong learning, and adult education.

1. Introduction

As a result of globalisation processes, educational policy has internationalised and become a product of international intergovernmental organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the European Union (EU), the World Bank, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and international nongovernmental organisations (Németh, 2016). These organisations strive to promote precisely defined norms, values, and discourses in the field of (adult) education; they also seek to shape education policy and transform education systems around the globe in particular directions,

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albeit mainly through 'soft power', because their formal mechanisms are limited. Moreover, as many scholars argue (e.g. Biesta, 2015; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), intergovernmental organisations in particular are shifting education policy towards market strategies and neoliberal values, which are reflected in a culture of performativity, accountability, measurement and the effectiveness of education, evidence-based educational practice, and outcome-based education.

The establishment of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) around the globe can be seen as one of these influences of intergovernmental organisations, supporting a shift towards lifelong learning (LLL) and outcomes-based learning qualifications. Studies so far have shown that the development of NQFs has been influenced by Anglo-Saxon countries and the global neoliberal policies of intergovernmental organisations (Allais, 2014; Young & Allais, 2013), which position NQFs as a 'magic bullet' capable of resolving many educational problems: NQFs are designed to facilitate the transparency, comparability, quality, and efficiency of learning and qualifications; they supposedly promote second chances and a learner-centred approach to education, bridge the gap between education and the economy, and enable recognition of prior learning (RPL)[1] (Raffe, 2013; Werquin, 2007). However, as shown by research evidence collected from the NQFs of 'early starters' and developing countries, which draw heavily on models developed in the United Kingdom, NQFs are in fact unable to fulfil the broader set of objectives and purposes they claim (Allais, 2014). Further research is needed around the globe on NQFs developed under the influence of intergovernmental organisations and their recommendations – that is, European qualifications framework for LLL (EQF) (European Parliament & Council, 2008; Council, 2017), ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) (2017), and others (Cedefop, 2017; UNESCO, 2012). Furthermore, as NQFs are seen as 'catalysts for LLL', we are especially interested in how NQFs interact with mechanisms for RPL to achieve more open and flexible 'lifelong-learning-oriented-pathways for learning' (Cedefop, 2017: 9).

The main aim of this paper is thus to explore whether newly developed NQFs found in diverse world contexts enable RPL and thereby support LLL. Therefore, the following research question was formulated to guide our research process: How are newly established NQFs in Ghana, Malaysia, and Serbia used as a policy instrument for LLL?

[1] In this paper we use the concept of RPL – that is, the idea of recognising prior learning ('learning outcomes') wherever (in various contexts) and whenever (through lifespan) learning took place – although other concepts known under the acronyms of APEL (used also in Malaysia), PLAR, VPL, RVA (used also in Ghana) emerged in different locations (see Andersson, Fejes, & Sandberg, 2013: 405; UNESCO, 2012).

We first briefly introduce the theoretical framework. Next, we outline our methodological approach and provide argumentation for our selection of cases. In the comparative analysis section, we present cases in line with the comparative categories selected, discuss similarities and differences, and draw interpretations. We argue that, on the one hand, NQFs in Ghana, Malaysia, and Serbia are used as policy instruments for LLL, supporting RPL; on the other hand, they reinforce a vocational perspective on RPL, LLL, and adult education.

2. Theoretical framework

Efforts to establish NQFs have been supported by various international organisations such as the EU, the OECD, UNESCO, the World Bank, and the ILO, and have 'spread through processes of cross-national policy borrowing' (Raffe, 2013: 144). One consequence of this is that more than 150 countries worldwide are now in the process of developing and implementing a NQF and that seven regional qualifications frameworks have been developed (e.g. the EQF in Europe, the AQRF in Southeast Asia), which means that NQFs are becoming a global phenomenon (Cedefop, 2017). In this way, the NQF has become one of the most important areas of interest of international education policy, despite a shortage of evidence showing that NQFs achieve their objectives and purposes (Allais, 2017; Raffe, 2013; Young and Allais, 2013).

One of the main characteristics of newly developed or 'new-style frameworks' (see Mikulec & Ermenc, 2016: 4), formulated under the recommendations of international organisations, is the recognition of RPL as one of the main instruments of LLL (cf. Elken, 2015) and a means of connecting (a) formal, non-formal, and informal learning; (b) general, academic, and vocational education and training; (c) quality assurance, credit systems, and RPL; and (d) the needs of the labour market(s) and education and training system(s) (Bohlinger & Münchhausen, 2011).

Although NQFs have been developed to respond to the economic and social processes of globalisation by giving countries access to global/regional education and labour markets (Raffe, 2013), different types of NQFs, with different objectives and different change processes, have emerged worldwide:

- Some of the main objectives of the NQFs are to: (a) make education and training systems more transparent and understandable, as well more demand-focused; (b) increase coherence and coordination of this system; (c) promote LLL; (d) promote RPL; (f) establish parity of esteem between general and vocational education; (g) review standards; (h) promote the international mobility of learners and workers; (i) transform economy and society, and the like (Raffe, 2013: 147).

- Some of the main types of the NQFs are: (a) 'communications framework', which is typically loose in design, voluntary, outcomes-referenced, and aimed at improving the transparency of an existing system; (b) 'transformational framework', which is typically tighter in design, outcomes-led, oriented towards a demand-led system, and aimed at defining qualifications in line with an imagined future system; (c) 'reforming framework', which is typically statutory with stronger requirements, and aimed at reforming the existing system (Raffe, 2013: 149). Other scholars have proposed other typologies (for an overview see Allais, 2017: 771–773).
- Some of the main characteristics of NQFs are: frameworks of communication as opposed to frameworks of regulation; weak and strong frameworks: partial and comprehensive frameworks; unit-based and qualification-based frameworks; institutions-led as opposed to outcomes-led frameworks; descriptive frameworks as opposed to occupational frameworks and employer-led, outcome-based frameworks (Allais, 2017: 771).
- Different stakeholders engaged in the coordination of NQFs are: international organisations; governments; central agencies; (public and private) educational providers; industry and employers or professional bodies (Raffe, 2013: 151).

This diversity of NQFs has important consequences for the main concept upon which they are based: learning outcomes. It is worth remembering that the concept of embedding learning outcomes in an NQF has its roots in the competence-based approach to vocational education in England and is derived from the belief that all qualifications should be expressed independently of learning pathways and educational programmes. However, the concept of learning outcomes used in European/global education policy is an extremely loose concept, that is, a political construct without clear definition, mostly defined as 'statements regarding what a learner knows, understands, and is able to do on completion of a learning process', which can be interpreted in several ways. In some countries, learning outcomes are understood as learning objectives, in others as occupational standards or standards of competencies, and in others still as educational standards; learning outcomes can also be interpreted differently in different education subsystems within one country (see Mikulec, 2017: 469-460; Mikulec & Ermenc, 2016: 5-6). This means that in practice, learning outcomes play a rather modest role in NQFs, especially in communication (or loose, descriptive, or institution-led) frameworks and are mainly led by educational institutions and not employers or professional bodies.

Nevertheless, the concept of learning outcomes plays a crucial role in linking NQFs with systems of RPL (European Council, 2012; UN-

ESCO, 2012; UIL 2018); if qualifications are defined by learning outcomes, we can use level descriptors and standards to place them at the appropriate NQF level and also assess them independently of the route by which they were obtained. Moreover, if the learning outcomes to be acquired through RPL or formal education are the same, then NQFs and systems of RPL are closely linked (Bohlinger & Münchhausen, 2011: 12). The NQF and RPL should thus be working towards a common goal; they enable individuals to progress in their learning careers on the basis of learning outcomes, acquired in formal, non-formal, or informal settings, which are independent of duration and specific educational programmes (Cedefop, 2018). Therefore, NQFs and RPL are seen as main elements for realising LLL policy (Cedefop, 2017: 74-75) or as crucial elements of national LLL strategies (Bohlinger & Münchhausen, 2011: 8).

However, as global education policy models reinforced by international organisations do not have a direct causal impact on national education policy but are rather re-interpreted in the national context and have intended and unintended effects, it is necessary to study NQFs that might look very similar on paper in different economic, social, and institutional settings, as well as their purposes and how they work (Allais, 2017; Mikulec, 2017; Raffe, 2013). Having said that, in what follows, we will explore how NQFs adopted by three developing countries on three different continents (a) promote LLL and; (b) interact with RPL.

3. Methodology

For this paper, we adopted a comparative perspective in researching the field of adult education (Egetenmeyer, 2016; Reischmann & Bron, 2008). Inspired by the 'Relationship Model for Comparative Research in Adult Education' (Egetenmeyer, 2016: 85), which enables an analysis of mutually interrelated contexts such as (trans)national contexts, (non) participants and learners, provisions and effects, as well as different sectors (state, market, civil society) and time dimensions (past, current, future) in adult education, we took into account different aspects of the model. Therefore, in the transnational context, we focused on international organisations and countries. For provisions and effects, we focused on policies, while for (non)participants and learners, we focused on relevant stakeholders. Regarding sector and time, we mainly addressed the state level and current time perspective. From the vertical perspective of analysing macro, meso, and micro levels, we primarily focused on macro (international organisations) and meso (states) levels of analysis. In this way, it is possible to better understand the relations surrounding NQFs in different countries.

The NQFs included in this analysis are found in three different countries on three different continents: Ghana, Malaysia, and Serbia. There were three main reasons why we chose these NQFs. Firstly, we wanted to include NQFs from developing countries that were formulated under the influence of (different) international organisations. Secondly, the researchers either were natives of these countries or had a special interest, knowledge, and language skills necessary for the countries selected. Thirdly, these three country cases all endeavour to link their NQFs with mechanisms for RPL and to open new LLL pathways for learning (Cedefop, 2017) – a claim critically investigated in our research. For these reasons, three different comparative categories were developed to guide our comparison: (a) national policies on NQFs; (b) structure of NQFs; and (c) relationship between NQFs and RPL.

The method of documentary analysis, a content-based approach to analysing documents, is used because it allows for investigating central concepts referred to by policy documents (cf. Field & Schemmann, 2017). Regarding the selection of sources, we chose official national policy documents, regulations, policy documents from international organisations and their reports, and official data on websites, as well as journal articles and reports on NQFs in Ghana, Malaysia, and Serbia to improve the reliability and objectivity of comparison.

4. Comparative analysis

In this section, country data are presented in line with the three comparative categories, followed by an identification of similarities and differences and their interpretation.

4.1 National policies on NQFs

Ghana has an NQF for its technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector, which is overseen by the Council for TVET (COTVET). COTVET was set up 'to co-ordinate and oversee all aspects of technical and vocational education and training in the country'; its «major objective is to formulate policies for skills development across the […] formal, informal and non-formal sectors» (COTVET, 2019). Although the NQF as a policy instrument may complement or even help to operationalise a national LLL policy or strategy, there is currently no LLL policy in Ghana. However, a new Education Sector Plan was approved for the period 2018-2030. According to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL, 2019), this document commits to increasing «equitable access to quality non-formal education by promoting key components of the *Belém Framework for Action*» and reaffirms that «adult

and non-formal education is a central theme in Ghana's newly endorsed Education Sector Plan». This means that, despite the absence of a national LLL policy in Ghana, UIL is eager to highlight any seemingly shared priorities.

Ghana's TVET NQF aims to establish connections and equivalencies between all occupational qualifications beyond a basic level while pushing a series of wider reforms by increasing access for TVET employees to further education and training, improving the quality of products and services provided by Ghana's workers, and facilitating LLL opportunities for individuals in informal professions (UIL, ETF, & CEDEFOP, 2017: 221). In light of this final objective, Ghana's NQF acknowledges informal learning, and it is argued here that this reflects UNESCO's discourse on the RPL (UNESCO, 2012) within the context of LLL. Furthermore, UNESCO, including the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for TVET, is active in TVET internationally and, therefore, attempting to shape developments and bolster its authority-legitimation link in the sector. Specifically, the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre aims at «promoting UNESCO normative instruments and standards' and 'promoting good and innovative practices in TVET» (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2019). In 2016, UNESCO published its recommendation concerning TVET, which argues that «well-articulated outcome-based qualifications frameworks […] should be established» and that «Member States should promote the mutual recognition of qualifications at national, regional and international levels, in relation to the mobility of learners and workers» (UNESCO, 2016: 6-7). Such support for NQFs in TVET is also reflected in UNESCO's strategy for TVET, which promises ongoing support for policy development in accordance with the recommendation's priorities, including the promotion of NQFs (UNESCO, 2016b: 7). By addressing TVET and differentiating qualifications according to formal or informal/non-formal status, Ghana's NQF fits well within UNESCO's policy discourse, despite the absence of a national LLL strategy.

For Malaysia to become a developed nation in the near future, LLL is seen as a necessary investment in a knowledge-based economy in the era of information, communication, and technology. As a starting point to promote LLL, the Prime Minister established a new Ministry of Higher Education in 2004 to promote, support, and empower higher education as well as LLL in Malaysia. As one of its initiatives, the ministry launched the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) in 2007. It was implemented in 2011 and revised in 2017. The MQF is an instrument that creates and classifies qualifications based on a set of nationally agreed criteria, is benchmarked against global practices, and reforms academic levels, learning outcomes, and the existing credit system (MQA, 2017: 6). These criteria are accepted and used for all qualifications awarded by recognised higher education providers. Hence, the MQF integrates and

links all national qualifications. It also provides educational pathways to link qualifications systematically. These pathways will enable the individual to progress through credit transfers and RPL in the context of LLL (MQA, 2017: 9). The MQF also supports quality, with the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) as its gatekeeper.

The purpose of the MQF is to support the *National Education Philosophy* and the multiple policy goals described in *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025* (MQA, 2017: 10). The MQF has nine objectives: to secure standards of qualifications and reinforce policies on quality assurance; to promote the consistency of nomenclature of qualifications; to provide mechanisms for the progression or interrelation between qualifications; to encourage collaboration between public and private higher education providers and skills training providers; to encourage parity of esteem among academic, professional, technical, vocational, and skill training providers; to establish a functional credit system; to provide accessible public information on programmes or qualifications in higher education; to promote the presentation of qualifications in understandable form; and to articulate links with qualifications from outside Malaysia (MQA, 2017: 6–7).

The MQF links most clearly to UNESCO's policy discourse by adopting its definition of TVET (MQA, 2017: 17). As a major subsector of the LLL system, TVET is found at secondary, post-secondary, and tertiary levels, incorporates work-based learning and promotes proficiency advancement, which may lead to a qualification. It also includes literacy and numeracy, as well as transversal and citizenship skills. Consequently, the MQF gives special attention to TVET from levels 1 to 5 of the framework.

By setting Serbia's NQF in the context of national policies, we can see that, for almost a decade, its establishment has been one of the main strategic measures related to the development of LLL (Education Development Strategy in Serbia 2020, 2012; Law on Adult Education in Serbia, 2013). The NQF is perceived as an instrument for promoting LLL. Leading strategic documents in Serbia regarding LLL include the *Education Development Strategy in Serbia in 2020* (2012), in which the NQF occupies an important position as «an instrument for ensuring the quality of education»; it is designed to provide «support for the development of a modern, relevant and flexible education system» (Education Development Strategy in Serbia in 2020, 2012: 77). Furthermore, the NQF is intended to facilitate the «development of qualifications standards based on the labour market demands and the society requirements as a whole» and to ensure that «the entire education system is oriented towards the learning outcomes» (Report on AP Strategy 2020, 2018: 8).

The main goals of the NQF (Report on AP Strategy 2020, 2018: 8) are: to link the world of work and education; to link different elements of education in a coherent framework (standards, competences, and learning outcomes with the processes of planning, monitoring, and evaluation); to

reform different elements of education (i.e. based on qualification standards, learning outcomes, modern curricula); to provide relevant qualifications for the development of LLL; and to provide learners with easier progression through the education and training systems. As the education system in Serbia is often characterised as 'ruthless' towards those who leave it, the supportive role of the NQF for learners is also enabled through the setting up of career guidance and counselling subsystems. Furthermore, the NQF defines different ways to gain qualifications, through formal and non-formal education and RPL, and has the character of a comprehensive framework.

NQF development and implementation in Serbia is strongly influenced by the EU and its EQF recommendations, as the adoption of the NQF is an integral part of the European integration process. In April 2018, the Law on NQF in Serbia was adopted, which has paved the way towards the development of the entire system of qualifications and has referenced the NQF to the EQF. In addition, during the process of NQF development, the European Training Foundation (ETF) played a major role by providing professional and financial assistance (ETF Final Report, 2018: 2).

4.2 Structure of NQF

Ghana's NQF, which only addresses TVET, has eight levels. Level descriptors indicate the qualification(s) ascribed to each level: the first two are dedicated to informal apprenticeships ('Proficiency I' and 'Proficiency II'), whereas subsequent levels proceed through a hierarchy of formal qualifications, finishing with 'Doctor of Technology' at the eighth and final level (UIL, ETF, & CEDEFOP, 2017: 222). The level descriptors also denote learning outcomes, which are divided into 'knowledge' and 'skills and attitudes'. Across the eight levels, learning outcomes categorised as 'knowledge' generally refer to the learner's development of a 'knowledge base', as well as theoretical and conceptual knowledge that provides a foundation for practical skills. As the levels advance, emphasis is placed on applying knowledge when conducting professional tasks, as well as knowing how to manage resources and conduct research (UIL, ETF, & CEDEFOP, 2017: 223-224). In terms of skills and attitudes, learning outcomes range from 'the ability to perform routine and predictable tasks' and competence with tools and machinery at the first two levels (informal apprenticeships), to 'transferable skills', 'self-direction', and 'decision-making' at the more advanced levels (UIL, ETF, & CEDEFOP, 2017: 223-224).

Stakeholder engagement in working towards the successful implementation of the TVET NQF is an ongoing challenge in Ghana, particularly with regard to the complications of RPL. Steenekamp and Singh (2012: 55) summarise the situation by finding that «stakeholders do not recognise their shared responsibility to ensure that *Recognition* happens»; however, the same study found that industry is already

contributing to the development of competency-based training (CBT) programmes within the TVET sector.

In Malaysia, the revised MQF maintains eight levels benchmarked to a regional framework: the AQRF. Certificates are at Levels 1 to 3, Diploma at Level 4, Advanced Diploma at Level 5, Bachelor's Degree at Level 6, Masters' Degree at Level 7, and Doctoral Degree at Level 8 (MQA, 2017: 30). Levels 1 to 5 are specifically meant for TVET. Furthermore, the levels in the MQF are differentiated by learning outcomes, credit hours, and student learning time, and are described according to the expected students' capabilities in the following aspects: depth, complexity, and comprehension of knowledge; application of knowledge and skills; scope of communication/interpersonal skills, information and technologies skills and numeracy skills; degree of autonomy and responsibility; breadth and sophistication of practices; and scope and complexity of application (MQA, 2017: 18). In the revised MQF, learning outcomes are redesigned to give clarity in differentiating the demands of learning by each qualification level and also by professional context and situation. There are now five clustered domains: knowledge and understanding; practical/work skills; interpersonal/communication, ICT and numeracy skills/entrepreneurial skills; leadership, autonomy and responsibility; personal skills and ethical skills (MQA, 2017: 18).

The core structure and basic elements of the NQF in Serbia are regulated by the Law on the NQF in the Republic of Serbia (2018). Qualification is defined as «a formal recognition of acquired competences». The core elements of the NQF are its levels, described in categories of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes, and types of qualifications. Qualifications in the NQF are classified into eight levels and four sublevels (6/1 and 6/2, 7/1 and 7/2), while four major types of qualifications are recognised: general-basic education and upper-secondary education (levels 1, 4); vocational education and adult education (levels 2, 3, 4, 5); academic-higher education (levels 6, 7, 8); vocational-higher education (levels 6, 7). Furthermore, the NQF features learning outcomes, which are defined as «clear statements about what an individual is expected to know, understand, and be able to demonstrate, or perform after the completion of the learning process» (MQA, 2017: 1). Learning outcomes are used to evaluate competences and place qualifications at different levels.

4.3 Relationship between NQFs and RPL

The first two levels of Ghana's NQF are titled 'Proficiency I' and 'Proficiency II' and are both presented with the status 'Informal/Non-Formal', suggesting that they were devised to capture and recognise informal and non-formal TVET learning. In practice, the first two levels target informal apprenticeships in particular, with an estimated 82

per cent of Ghana's economic activity and 80 per cent of basic skills in the country located in the informal sector (UIL, ETF, & CEDEFOP 2017: 226). These two levels help to shine a light on a huge area in need of attention in Ghana. In the *Global Inventory of Regional and National Qualifications Frameworks*, Ghana's NQF is referred to as a case in which there is RPL (UIL, ETF, & CEDEFOP, 2015: 29); in the context of UNESCO's promotion of LLL and, with it, the extension of RPL practices for non-formal and informal learning, Ghana's TVET NQF is a 'good practice' example. It promotes «access to lifelong learning for all, especially those working in the informal economy» (UIL, ETF, & CEDEFOP, 2017: 221) and facilitates the «validation of informal and non-formal learning' as a 'key component of Ghana's lifelong learning strategy» (UIL, ETF, & CEDEFOP, 2017: 225). At the regional level, the TVET NQF was identified as accommodating non-formal and informal learning «to address progression pathways for the TVET learners» (Steenekamp & Singh, 2012: 35).

Informal apprenticeships are still, in most cases, disparate programmes implemented by an indeterminate number of providers in the private sector. To understand how the TVET NQF can recognise informal learning of apprenticeships, it is necessary to assess the qualifications available to learners who participate in informal apprenticeships. One option is the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) proficiency examination, which does indeed feature a competency-based model by assessing skills through both oral and practical tests, thus providing informal apprentices (including those who are illiterate) with the opportunity to acquire a nationally recognised certificate (Palmer, 2009: 70). Still, most informal apprentices do not take the NVTI proficiency examination, with possible barriers including cost, perceptions of the qualification's usefulness, and a lack of awareness that it even exists (Palmer, 2009: 71). The NVTI examinations available to informal apprentices, referred to by the institute as 'Trade Tests/Proficiency Tests', are available for more than 80 different areas of skills and result in the 'Proficiency I' grade, which can then advance to 'Proficiency II' (NVTI, 2019). These qualifications correlate with the first two levels of Ghana's TVET NQF, meaning that, if an apprentice works in one of the skilled areas covered by the NVTI trade/proficiency tests, opts to take a test and is successful, their learning is recognised; however, apprentices may not commit to an examination for various reasons, and so the challenge is how the TVET NQF might apply to these individuals and their learning. Another significant issue for analysis is the capacity of the TVET NQF to RPL of informal apprentices who received a trade-association certificate, or a certificate provided by an apprenticeship manager. The challenges posed by such a diversity of certification methods are significant in the region

of West Africa, to which Ghana belongs. This was acknowledged in a recent UIL (2018: 24) publication on RPL: «The informal sector represents between 80 per cent and 95 per cent of all jobs in West African economies. Education and training systems are very fragmented, adding to the difficulty of engaging people through credentialism». Accreditation and certification are problematic in a sector as fragmented as Ghana's informal apprenticeships.

The Malaysian NQF is particularly designed for individuals and social groups who have missed formal educational opportunities when they were younger. It provides flexible pathways for all learners in a more systematic way by linking qualifications from three different sectors. Additionally, the NQF supports credit accounts and credit transfers that allow learners to progress both vertically and horizontally, with their prior learning recognised whether acquired formally, non-formally, or informally (Cedefop, 2017: 340).

The Blueprint on Enculturation of Lifelong Learning for Malaysia (2011-2020) emphasised that Malaysia was committed to enculturing LLL as an important agenda for the education sector (Fadzil, 2014: 370; Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). The MQF promotes LLL in Malaysia as it provides pathways that enable the individual to progress through credit transfers and RPL across the skills, vocational and technical (TVET), and academic sectors. In 2011, the MQA introduced RPL: a systematic procedure that includes the identification, documentation, and assessment of prior experiential learning to decide the extent to which an individual has achieved the learning outcomes necessary to access a programme of study and receive credits (MQA, 2016: 1). RPL provides an opportunity for individuals with working experience but lacking formal academic qualifications to pursue their studies in higher education institutions (HEIs). Generally, learning acquired through formal training and work experience will be evaluated in the assessment of RPL. Currently, RPL in Malaysia is accepted as an entry requirement to HEIs for Level 3 (Certificate), Level 4 (Diploma), Level 6 (Bachelor's Degree), and Level 7 (Master's Degree) (MQA, 2017: 38).

The assessment for credit transfer is carried out by learners who choose to undertake either a challenge test or portfolio submission, depending on the nature of the course and the advice given by the appointed RPL advisor. A challenge test can be in the form of a written test, oral examination, or performance assessment. Meanwhile, a portfolio is a formal document containing a compilation of evidence listing the learner's prior learning over a period of time. Assessors must evaluate whether the content and evidence written in the portfolio shows the achievement of learning outcomes. Learners must achieve 50 per cent of each course's learning outcomes in the challenge test or portfolio assessment (MQA, 2016: 8).

RPL is still a novelty in Serbia. It remains in its establishment phase and is seen as an activity of adult education. RPL is conceptualised as 'assessing the knowledge, skills and abilities acquired through education, life or work experience' (Law on National Qualification Framework in the Republic of Serbia, 2018: 1) with the aim of enabling further learning and increasing competitiveness in the labour market. Furthermore, RPL in Serbia is presented in accordance with European recommendations. By RPL, vocational qualifications are acquired at Publicly Recognized Organizers of Adult Education Activities (PROAEA) through a special procedure in which (in accordance with the standard of qualification) knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained based on work or life experience are being assessed, and after which an appropriate public document or certificate is issued in accordance with the Law on adult education (Law on National Qualification Framework in the Republic of Serbia, 2018: 6). Although the Law states that the qualifications can be acquired through RPL at PROAEA, in practice, these activities are still at the beginning, and at the moment, policymakers work on the regulations and rulebooks of the RPL and its connection with NQF, which will further define all procedures.

5. Comparison and interpretation

Looking across the three country cases of Ghana, Malaysia, and Serbia, a number of similarities and differences emerge. This section will highlight examples of both, but given the paper's theoretical framework, similarities will receive more attention: identifying those aspects that three different countries on three different continents have in common will reveal some trends in global NQF development.

Mirroring the policy discourses of international organisations such as UNESCO and the EU, in all three contexts the NQF is conceived as an instrument for the promotion of LLL. In Ghana and Malaysia, commitment to RPL strengthens this correlation. Ghana's NQF facilitates RPL as a 'key component of Ghana's LLL strategy' (UIL, ETF, & CEDEFOP, 2017: 225) and, similarly, the MQF categorical support for RPL is presented in the context of LLL. In Serbia, the NQF is also regarded as a means to advance LLL, though the contribution of RPL is not signalled quite so explicitly.

In terms of purposes and objectives, the NQFs in all three countries attempt in some way to connect education with the world of work, though in Ghana there is a particularly explicit focus on occupational qualifications, whereas Malaysia concentrates on higher education. In both cases, a narrower scope is attributable to a non-comprehensive NQF model, which targets individual sub-sectors; Serbia's NQF, on the other hand, is comprehensive and covers the whole education system.

Furthermore, all three countries are similar in that they recognise the role of NQFs in promoting LLL opportunities. Objectives differ, yet all three expect their NQFs to lead to some improvement in 'quality'. Indeed, an NQF's purposes and objectives indicate its type and, with stated aims of improvement, all three go beyond the communications framework towards more reforming framework model in line with Raffe's (2013) NQFs typology. Malaysia's NQF sits somewhere between the *communications* and *reforming* models, as it aims to provide accessible information on existing higher education qualifications (communication) while improving the system for learners to accumulate and transfer credits (reform). Serbia's NQF aligns more with the *reforming* model by seeking to prompt positive system-wide developments in terms of standards, learning outcomes, and curricula. Ghana goes slightly further by at least in part positioning its NQF as a means of extending qualification control into the informal economy; the framework thus moves towards the *transformational* model.

With the evidence provided, it is possible to conclude that, in all three countries, NQF development has been influenced by the policies of international organisations. On a global level, Ghana, Malaysia, and Serbia are all members of UNESCO. On a national, more country-specific level, Ghana is in the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), Malaysia is a member of the ASEAN, and Serbia is actively seeking to join the EU. As has been argued, the way in which the first two levels of Ghana's NQF explicitly target non-formal and informal learning reflects UNESCO's well-established discourse on RPL. The influence of international organisations is even more discernible in the cases of Malaysia and Serbia. Both ASEAN and the EU have produced regional reference frameworks to aid learner and worker mobility – the AQRF and the EQF, respectively – and Malaysia and Serbia have deliberately sought to correlate their own NQFs and these regional policies. As explained at the start of the theoretical framework, a number of international organisations have advocated for the development of NQFs; such advocacy has had an impact on all three countries this research is focusing on.

Moving from the purposes and influences that shape the three NQFs to their structures, an obvious similarity is that they all have eight levels, ranging from basic to advanced qualifications. As is the norm, the NQFs also feature level descriptors, and 'knowledge' is a descriptor found across all three. Regarding the remaining descriptors, Ghana and Serbia take a similar approach by covering 'skills' and 'attitude(s)' (with 'ability' a fourth category for Serbia). Malaysia instead refers to 'capabilities' and/or 'competencies' alongside knowledge. In all three countries, learning outcomes are specified according to level descriptor and qualification level. In Ghana's, Malaysia's, and Serbia's NQFs, knowledge includes acquisition as well as application, while skills range from the more technical

(e.g. using tools, machinery, and other technology) to the more abstract (e.g. decision-making, autonomy, and responsibility).

In recommending that countries develop NQFs, international organisations have often noted how this policy tool can facilitate RPL. UNESCO, for example, has made this point by encouraging the integration of non-formal and informal learning outcomes into NQFs. Accordingly, the NQFs developed by Ghana, Malaysia, and Serbia all, to varying extents, support RPL. In Ghana's case, the first two levels are dedicated to non-formal/informal learning, and Serbia's NQF was designed to accommodate RPL at some qualification levels. Malaysia's NQF, meanwhile, links to the country's RPL system, and the credit system it seeks to reform is designed to enable learners to transfer vertically and horizontally between formal, non-formal, and informal learning opportunities. There is some dissimilarity when it comes to why: Ghana and Serbia promote RPL for the acquisition of vocational qualifications, whereas Malaysia focuses on RPL to widen access to higher education. However, in conclusion, all three countries' attempts to use NQFs to support RPL and create pathways between learning modalities are symptomatic of a LLL policy discourse. The more problematic step is not just making it work in theory but also in practice, as success depends on widespread collaboration.

6. Lessons learned

In conclusion, we would like to point out some lessons learned. Firstly, we found strong evidence that NQFs in Ghana, Malaysia, and Serbia were developed under the influence and recommendations of international organisations through the process of cross-national policy borrowing, largely because of the socio-economic pressures of globalisation faced by developing countries (Raffe, 2013). Secondly, in policy terms, we found evidence that all three NQFs are designed, to varying extents, with the aim of promoting and realising LLL, as well as to support RPL. However, it must be noted that, with the aims of enhancing national competitiveness, human capital, mobility, and access to regional markets, NQFs reinforce a vocational, utilitarian, and instrumental perspective of LLL and RPL (Andersson *et al.*, 2013), as well as adult education. Thirdly, our findings are limited; all three NQFs were developed quite recently, meaning that their long-term impact remains to be seen and, from a policy perspective alone, we cannot make conclusions about the real impacts of NQFs on LLL and RPL in practice. Therefore, different economic, social, and institutional settings in which NQFs are embedded (Allais, 2017), as well as learners' experiences of NQFs, should form foci of future comparative research.

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STUDYING ADULT EDUCATION. A COMPARISON OF MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMMES ON ALE IN GERMANY AND THE US

Jessica Kleinschmidt, Claire Garner, Jörg Schwarz

Abstract: Earning a university degree in adult education continues to be one prominent way of becoming an adult educator. That is because obtaining a comprehensive academic education is considered essential, especially in conjunction with the aim of professionalising adult education. But how do the contents, structure, and aims of study programmes differ internationally, and how does this relate to different concepts of the professional role? This study compares master's programmes in adult education in Germany and the United States. The findings point at characteristic differences in the relation between academics and practice.

1. Introduction

The field of adult education is subject to relatively little regulation, especially compared with other areas of the educational system, such as the school system. Adult education is characterised not only by a broad variety of providers but also by the diversity of adult educators in terms of their educational and professional biographies. As part of the 2019 Würzburg Winter School on *Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning*, the comparative group *Occupational Structures and Professionalisation of Adult Education* examined institutionalised career pathways in adult education. Owing to the diversity of the field, however, there is no simple answer to the seemingly simple question of how to become an adult educator. As a basis for a systematic international comparison, we have to focus on just one such career pathway of becoming an adult educator. Completing a study programme in adult education can be seen as not only as an empirically significant institutionalised career pathway but also as a particularly informative case for an empirical analysis of career pathways, which should also relate to theoretical debates on the professionalisation of adult education.

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In this paper, we will examine the aims, structures, and contents of master's study programmes in adult education. In comparing the situation in Germany with that in the US, we analyse how these characteristics of study programmes relate to specific academic and professional cultures as well as their relationship to each other. First, we will introduce basic theoretical reflections on professionalisation and academisation in order to point out relevant dimensions for further analysis. We will then describe the underlying methodological framework of comparative adult education and describe the methodology of the study at hand, the data sources, and the analytical approach used. Based on a juxtaposition of the situation in Germany and the US, the findings are then described in terms of their similarities and differences. For each country, we will first take a broader look at the basis of secondary data analysis and then perform a closer qualitative examination of typical examples of study programmes. We will connect these findings to professional and academic cultures to interpret the similarities and differences identified. Finally, we will summarise our conclusions and describe the lessons learned.

2. Professionalisation through academisation?

The idea of modernity relied heavily on the belief in a steady progress of society with rationality as a basic normative pattern, science and education as important institutions for its realisation, and the professions as its spearhead in social practice:

> It seems evident that many of the most important features of our society are to a considerable extent dependent on the smooth functioning of the professions. Both the pursuit and the application of science and liberal learning are predominantly carried out in a professional context. Their results have become so closely interwoven in the fabric of modern society that it is difficult to imagine how it could get along without basic structural changes if they were seriously impaired (Parsons, 1939: 457).

Not only the belief in societal progress driven by science and rationality but also the belief that professions play a leading role therein may seem somewhat naive from today's point of view. One could argue that the general decline of the normative power of truth and rationality in public discourses and the corresponding rise of mistrust in science and academia we have been witnessing might indicate a final turning away from basic ideas of modernity (Peters *et al.*, 2018). In the case of the professions, a substantial change in their societal role and importance has been discussed for some time now, and there are theoretically conclusive positions that even see the professions as a purely transitional phenome-

non (Kurtz, 2002; Stichweh, 2006). Nonetheless, since the mid-twentieth century, various occupations have been oriented towards the promising ideal of professionalisation. Academisation is frequently seen as the most important milestone in this process. Not only is the emergence of the traditional professions closely related to the development of their corresponding disciplines in academia and of the university in general (Stichweh, 1994). In the (early) debates on the characteristics of a profession, there also seemed to be a consensus on the importance of a comprehensive academic education or – to put it more accurately – the close relation of the professions to disciplinary bodies of academic knowledge. We should thus take a closer look at the relations between professionalisation and academisation as institutional, knowledge-related, and cultural relations.

2.1 Institutional Relations

The institutional relation between professionalisation and academisation can by analysed in terms of their historical order. Education (and adult education in particular) is a rather young discipline and strongly influenced by the ideas of the enlightenment and the institutionalisation of (formal) education systems. Academisation is based on the practical need to establish a scientific foundation for educational practice and the education of future professionals, especially of teachers. We can thus characterise the development of education as an academic discipline as a process of secondary academisation (Stichweh, 1994). At the same time, academic research may lead to the development of new research areas or even sub-disciplines and (special subjects in) study programmes. As this knowledge is translated into practice, it may lead to a change in occupational profiles or even new professions – which we could describe as secondary professionalisation (Nittel, 2000). Such relations between discipline and profession, as well as their historical formation, will influence current study programmes and are expressed in forms of *institutionalised responsibility for a specific professional practice formulated in educational goals*.

2.2 Knowledge Relations

To describe knowledge relations as a practical application of academic knowledge would be inadequate in two ways: first, the 'application' of this knowledge in practice is challenging and makes a core characteristic of professional practice. Unlike 'recipe knowledge' (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), academic knowledge requires professionals to actively and constantly mediate between its generalised and abstract form and the uniqueness of the case at hand (Oevermann, 1996). In analysing study

programmes, we can thus focus not only on *contents* but also on the *forms that define the body of knowledge that is imparted in the study programme and apparently considered relevant for future professionals*.

Second, 'application' does not imply a one-way-relationship. Professionals also take part in the (re-)production of this knowledge. Sometimes, professionals also take on positions in the discipline (e.g. in medicine, where a professor may be working as a physician, doing research, and teaching at the university, all at the same time). In the analysis of study programmes, we should therefore also focus on the question of how the *relation between 'theory' and 'practice'* is conceptualised.

2.3 Cultural Relations

Study programmes not only impart the knowledge defined by the respective discipline but also represent specific cultural environments, which should be analysed as well. Building on the study of disciplinary cultures (Huber, 1991), Barbara Friebertshäuser analysed study programmes as transitional spaces where different cultures amalgamate: the disciplinary and the professional culture jointly shape the culture of study programmes (Friebertshäuser, 1992). Studying then not only means to incorporate a defined body of disciplinary knowledge; it also has to be analysed as a wide-ranging socialisation process in which students implicitly learn to *be* an adult educator. Such forms of habitualising certain practices and incorporating certain patterns of thinking, perceiving, and acting is a relevant prerequisite for performing in professional practice (Oevermann, 1996). In the empirical investigation of study programmes, we can focus on *how disciplinary and professional symbolic orders are imparted* in study programmes.

3. Methodology

In times of globalisation and international networking, both of which also affect adult education, the methodology of qualitative international comparative research is an important approach. While an international perspective allows for a review of the situation in other countries and international organisations, a comparison of individual cases identifies commonalities and differences and searches for justifications (Egetenmeyer, 2014: 16).

Our research interest arose in the context of the 2019 Würzburg Winter School, where occupational structures and professionalization – and particularly institutionalised career paths in adult education – were discussed. Although these professional career paths varied widely, interna-

tional comparison did reveal that in all countries, university programmes in adult education played a significant role. This similarity is explored in this article. To limit the scope, the focus is solely on master's degrees.

Egetenmeyer's relationship model for comparative research in adult education forms the basis for our concrete research focus and approach, as well as for the formulation of categories for comparison. This includes three comparative dimensions: provision/effects, the transnational context, and (non-)participants/learners (Egetenmeyer, 2016: 85). Based on the findings from the model, the transnational context of *countries* is the focus of our research. Looking at the US and Germany may even enable a cross-continental comparison (North America and Europe). Our research aims for a mix of quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

The first step is a quantitative review of study programmes in adult education at a national level. This provides a first overview and thus a basic understanding of the object of the comparison. For the US, we primarily used data from the National Center for Education Statistics for our analysis. It should be noted that this centre is a federal agency responsible for collecting and analysing educational data. In contrast, a large part of the data for Germany was collected by scientists who focus on the field of education. One example is the Datenreport Erziehungswissenschaft, published in 2016. Examples of categories for comparison include the political framework, the number of master's programmes, the titles of these programmes, the degree titles, and formal structures.

In the next step, a methodical approach based on a qualitative analysis is employed. In terms of the Egetenmeyer model, we are concerned with the *provision/effects* area of the cube. Internal university policies, such as module manuals, study descriptions, and examination regulations, are particularly valuable sources of information. One adult education master's programme from each country is examined, with the *Education and Adult Education* programme at the University of Oklahoma serving as the example for the US and the *Master of Education* at the Technical University of Chemnitz as the one for Germany. These two master's programmes are examined in terms of their structure, content, accreditation and further employment opportunities.

4. Case Study: Juxtaposition

Heyl argued that studying education with a focus on adult education is the most appropriate method of acquiring adult pedagogical knowledge and necessary competences for the field of adult education (Heyl, 2012: 40). The starting point for our analysis is a quantitative consideration of the structure and content of degree programmes in education. For the purpose of this comparison, it is important to note that 1.00 US college

credit hour is roughly equal to 1.67 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System hours (Pop, 2018).

4.1 The general situation in Germany

In the 2017/18 winter semester, 61,323 people studied education in Germany, which made it the 11th-most popular degree programme in the country (Destatis, 2018). Bachelor's and master's degree programmes are offered by many public universities across Germany; however, they all differ in content and structure. According to German educational policy, master's and bachelor's degrees are part of the tertiary education sector, which includes universities and equivalent institutions of higher education (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2018: XIV). It should be noted that, in addition to university degrees, a variety of other types of certification courses are available in Germany. One example is the *Lecturer in continuing education* course offered by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Industrie und Handelskammer, 2019). However, these certificates are considered part of the quaternary education sector, which represents continuing education (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2018).

The following results are drawn from a 2015 study by Grunert, Ludwig, Radhoff, and Ruberg. On the basis of module manuals and study descriptions, they analysed study programmes in education at bachelor's and master's levels at all public universities and universities of education in Germany. There were a total of 190 subject-specific bachelor's and master's programmes at 63 universities, including 86 bachelor's and 104 master's degree programmes, with 54 universities offering both. As these figures show, there are more master's programmes in education than bachelor's programmes. The master's programmes were usually structured as single-major models, which are most commonly rated at 120 credits. In observing the time structure, most master's programmes take four semesters to complete. Students who passed the master's examination are awarded a Master of Arts. The titles of the master's programmes were found to be diverse. A total of 51 per cent (n=53) of universities used names that made reference to *Erziehungswissenschaften*, *Bildungswissenschaften*, or *Pädagogik*, partly in combination with the relevant specialisation (18,3%, n=19). Of the master's programmes with specialised titles, nine (13.6%) referenced adult education, further education, or vocational education. In 23 out of 34 master's programmes, it was possible to select a concentration in adult education (Grunert *et al*., 2016: 20).

Information on programme contents was taken from the documentation on adult education and continuing education published by Witt and Müller in 2015. Whereas bachelor´s programmes were found to focus on universal foundations of education, the main emphasis of the master's

degree programmes was on more advanced work areas. For example, 55 per cent of programmes addressed organisation and leadership, whereas 31 per cent focused on research and research methods. A total of 28 per cent of the universities offered a master's programme based on the practice and work profile of an adult educator (Witt & Müller, 2015: 6).

4.2 The general situation in the US

In the US, 145,681 master's degrees in education from post-secondary institutions were conferred in 2015/2016. Education was thus the second-most popular field of study, behind only the business sector with 186,834 master's graduates (NCES, 2017). The website of the US Department of Education (USDE) lists programmes in the field of education, some of which produce professionals who train and educate adults in non-education sectors as well. Three of them contain the keyword *adult* in their title and are related specifically to adult education. Another degree programme with a direct connection to adult education is titled *Community College Education*. Ordered from most-to fourth-most frequent title, the labels commonly applied are: Adult and Continuing Education and Teaching, Adult and Continuing Education Administration, Community College Education, and Adult Literacy Tutor/Instructor (NCES, 2019).

There are only twelve universities with a bachelor's degree in adult education, but 140 institutions offer these programs as an advanced degree (i.e. master's and doctoral degrees). All these master's programmes usually take four years to complete.

There are 96 public institutions, 32 private non-profit institutions, and 12 private profit-oriented institutions that offer these programmes. Public institutions with a four-year advanced degree programme thus clearly have dominant position in adult education (NCES, 2019).

In the US, higher education institutions typically offer a Master of Education (MEd) degree with an emphasis on a specialist field. Depending on the university, the master's degree may be a Master of Science (MS) or a Master of Arts (MA). The degrees as offered by universities differ in title from those listed on the website of the Department of Education (NCES, 2019). For example, North Carolina State University offers a Master of Education degree with a specialisation in Adult and Continuing Professional Education, whereas Pennsylvania State University offers a Master of Education degree in Lifelong Learning and Adult Education. Achieving one of these degrees requires 30-64 credit hours. Most universities require between 35 and 40 credit hours to complete their programme, depending on whether the degree will be awarded as an MA (generally requiring closer to 35 credit hours) or a MS (generally requiring closer to 40 credit hours) (College Choice, 2019).

Traditional degree programmes, especially bachelor's programmes, at higher education institutions in the US are taught in daytime classes on a semester basis. Advanced degree programmes in adult education offer a more diverse range of learning opportunities, such as distance learning. Alternatively, more institutions seem to prioritise weekend or evening courses or provide *credit for life experience* (NCES, 2019). The number of alternative degree opportunities available at higher institutions suggests that universities may expect 'non-traditional' students to seek advanced degrees in adult education (College Choice, 2019; NCES, 2019).

While it is of course important to present quantitative data in order to illustrate the diversity of the topic and provide an overview of a country-specific design, a comparison of concrete examples from the US and Germany is equally interesting as it facilitates better understanding of our chosen categories for comparison: the thematic priorities, modular structures, research orientations, and occupational opportunities of a master's programme in adult education.

4.3 A closer look: The case of Technical University Chemnitz (GERMANY)

First, it should be noted that the Master of Education at the Technical University Chemnitz (TUC) in Germany explores education and focuses on adult education/continuing education, making it a master's programme with a specialised focus. This type is offered at 51 per cent of universities in Germany (Grunert *et al*., 2016: 24). That is not the only aspect that makes this programme seem typical of Germany, however. A standard study period of four semesters and a total of 120 credits also reflect German trends. Furthermore, like 85.7 per cent of German university degrees, this programme builds on a bachelor's degree offered at the same university (Grunert *et al*., 2016: 20; TUC, 2016). In this case, the Master of Education follows a Bachelor of Education, which deals with the theoretical and methodological foundations of teaching and learning processes (TUC, 2018).

When examining the content of education degrees in Germany, it makes sense to establish a connection to the recommendations formulated by the German Educational Research Association as the core curriculum of education. The core curriculum serves to compare education at different university locations, facilitate the mobility of students, and aid communication in various occupational fields (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft, 2010: 51).

The master's programme at TUC is divided into three basic modules, three advanced modules, two in-depth modules, a supplementary module, an internship, and a master's thesis (TUC, 2016). The basic modules focus on qualitative research methods in education and the basics of so-

cio-scientific data analysis. These elements are examples of the study unit *Bildungsforschung and basics of research methodology*, which is part of the core curriculum. Totalling 20 credit points, the modules not only meet the requirements of the study unit but in fact exceed them by two credit points (TUC, 2016; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft, 2010: 53). The advanced and in-depth modules focus on aspects of pedagogy, with an emphasis on the analysis and design of educational and learning processes in the fields of adult education/further education and general education. These modules are based on the core curriculum, as is evident from the module descriptions, which mention theory, research, and framework conditions, as well as references to professional competencies in adult education. The core curriculum recommends the establishment of a teaching-research project. This type of project requires students to work on a research question from the field of adult education under the supervision of a tutor (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft, 2010: 53). This recommendation is implemented in the Master of Education at TUC in an in-depth module titled *Analyses of adult education*. At this point of the study programme, the focus on adult education becomes evident for the first time. Research methods and scientific knowledge, as well as methodology specifically related to adult education, are now explicitly mentioned in the module descriptions. These modules are developed and taught by the staff of adult education professorships. Altogether, the adult education/continuing education modules provide a total of 21 credits, fewer than the 24 credit points required in the core curriculum. This is because of the lack of a supplementary module in the study programme, which means that students have to select a lecture and a seminar from other fields. Depending on the lecture and seminar chosen, a direct connection to adult education is not always ensured. Instead, students are given the opportunity to pursue an interdisciplinary approach (TUC, 2016). In addition to thematic focus areas and a research project, the core curriculum includes an internship in the field of adult education in order to gain professional competences (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft, 2010: 53). The importance of an internship is also recognised in the master's programme at TUC, which requires a six-week, full-time internship (i.e. eight hours a day, five days a week). The choice of field is up to the students, however, and they may choose not to intern in adult education, as recommended in the core curriculum. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that any field can provide insights into the field of adult education if approached from the right perspective. The same applies to the master's thesis, which is the last component of the programme (TUC, 2016). After passing the master's examination, TUC students are awarded a Master of Arts degree (TUC, 2016). As for the professional applicability of the master's programme: according to the advertising brochure for newcomers to the programme, which out-

lines possible professional careers, graduates gain access to a variety of employment opportunities in the German and international job market. Examples include education management, programme planning, personnel development, education policy, and teaching (TUC, 2017).

4.4 A closer look: The case of the University of Oklahoma (US)

The University of Oklahoma (OU) offers a Master of Education degree in Adult and Higher Education. Students from all undergraduate and graduate disciplines can participate in the programme, which is why the university itself considers it interdisciplinary. The interdisciplinary nature of the programme is further expressed through modules which include concepts and competencies which pertain to a variety of disciplines connected with the field of Adult and Higher Education, such as management, evaluation, programme planning, and human relations (OU, 2019). Students choose from five emphases, all of which require 36–39 credit hours to complete: *Community College Administration*, *Higher Education Administration*, *Intercollegiate Athletics Administration*, *Student Affairs*, and *Workforce, Adult and Continuing Education* (OU, 2019). Owing to the option of full-time or part-time study, the duration of the programme ranges between 2.5 and 4 years. Any Master's Degree in Adult and Higher Education at OU, regardless of programme emphasis, requires the same four major core/required courses. These mandatory, inflexible courses are four credit hours each. At this point of the programme, the direct connection to adult education is already evident in the titles of the courses, which include *The Adult Learner*, *Administration of Adult and Higher Education,* and *Introduction to Research in Adult and Higher Education* (OU, 2019).

We will focus on the study emphasis of *Workforce, Adult and Continuing Education* (WACE). The close thematic connection to adult education is particularly evident in the choice of courses. Flexibility in the coursework is designed to allow learners to tailor some courses to their academic interests and professional goals. Options include *Program Planning for Adult Education*, *Management and Administration of Training Functions,* and *Evaluation Strategies for Learning and Performance* (OU, 2019). As these few examples indicate, the courses prepare students for the practical work of an adult educator. In the following part of the study programme, the students again have some flexibility in choosing a course from a selection that includes *Transformative Learning in Adult Education*, *Neuroscience-based Learning and Adult Development,* and *Issues and Trends in Workplace Learning* (OU, 2019). These examples show a focus on learning theories. A practicum experience is also required to further connect theory and practice, which in the master's programme takes the form

of a 90-hour internship in the field of adult education. At least 60 hours must be spent in the field, the rest of the time can be used for individual reflection. In the WACE specialisation, the practicum requirement may be substituted for 'one year of experience working in the WACE field' (OU, 2019). This is considered equivalent to the practicum experience. No matter the area of emphasis, all students of this Master's programme are required to take a comprehensive, take home exam once they complete all other requirements.

The structure of the Master of Education degree in Adult and Higher Education at the University of Oklahoma is designed to prepare students with skills that are transferrable to a variety of roles, for an assortment of audiences, and for various levels of responsibility and leadership. Graduates compete for work positions as, for example, trainers, adult educators, programme planners, or distance education specialists (OU, 2019).

5. Comparison and Interpretation

As we can see from the juxtaposition above, both Germany and the US provide many different ways of becoming an adult educator by earning a university degree. In general, education degrees are popular in both countries and offered by a wide variety of higher education institutions. But even comparing only the general situation in Germany and the US already highlights some major differences.

Studying adult education in Germany usually requires specialisation in a study programme in education or pedagogy. Despite the growing variety in degree titles as a result of the Bologna Process, they all stand in the tradition of *Diplom-Pädagogik*. A common foundation in education with the option of specialisation in various educational fields is reflected in the general structure of the study programmes and in the internal differentiation of the German Educational Research Association (GERA, 2019). Adult education plays an important role as one of the 14 subdisciplinary divisions of the GERA and is one of the most common specialisations in education degrees, both at bachelor's and master's level.

In the US, there is a much broader range of study programmes concerned with adult education and involving different thematic concentrations (e.g. literacy education or workplace learning), which even lead to different degrees (MEd, MSc, MA). This can be linked to the fact that, in the US, adult education is not institutionalised as a subdiscipline of education (e.g. it is not a division within the American Educational Research Association (AERA, 2019). The structure of the discipline of adult education seems to reflect the fact that adult educators work in various areas of educational practice. Bachelor's degree programmes in adult education are also much less common than advanced degree pro-

grammes. Thus, a master's degree in adult education in the US is much more likely to be combined with an undergraduate degree in a different subject, which might define the subject area in which an adult educator eventually works. Lastly, the basic data showed that study programmes and the options for completing them are much more diverse than in Germany. The availability of opportunities in the US such as distance learning, weekend or evening courses, and especially the idea of credit for life experience suggest that 'non-traditional students' play a much more important role in master's programmes in adult education than they do in Germany.

Our comparison of the general situation in Germany and the US shows similarities and differences. Not only does the structure of study programmes in education differ between the two countries, adult education is also defined as a subdiscipline in Germany, whereas in the US it is not. The structure of study programmes in Germany reflects the status of adult education as a subdiscipline of education insofar as a master's degree in adult education usually follows a bachelor's degree in education. Master's degree programmes in the US are tailored more to the individual students and are thus geared more towards professional practice.

A closer look at one selected master's programme in each country allowed us to better understand and interpret the differences. The first step was to compare the structure and contents of the courses. As a similarity, it could be noted that compulsory basic modules provide an introductory overview of the subject matter. At TUC, every student follows a prescribed sequence of modules, over the course of which specialised topics such as adult education are addressed in advanced and in-depth modules. In contrast, the master's programme at OU is more flexible. Students have to make two choices: which working field in adult education to pursue and which learning theories to study. Whereas the OU programme is practice-oriented, the focus of teaching at TUC is on theoretical knowledge and empirical methods. To bridge the gap between theory and practice, master's programmes at both universities prominently feature an internship. At six weeks, the internship at TUC is longer than the one at OU (90 hours) and thus allows students to gain more practical experience. OU further offers the opportunity to replace an internship with a year of practical experience in adult education.

Academic education takes on a mediating position between discipline/theory on the one hand and profession/practice on the other. This requires forms of teaching and learning that enable students to acquire scientific knowledge as well as practical experience (Schüßler & Egetenmeyer, 2018: 1080). Both courses feature different structures and content to try to bridge the gap between the two. However, there are differences in focus: OU follows a practice-oriented approach, whereas TUC highlights the theory of the discipline.

Future employment opportunities were another category for our comparison. Remarkably, despite differences in their structure and content, the descriptions of the two master's programmes indicate similar employment opportunities. Special emphasis is placed on the area of leadership and management as well as teaching. No reference is made to adult education institutions. Instead, the wide variety of employment opportunities in different sectors of the job market is highlighted. The case studies show that within adult education there are attempts at academisation as a form of professionalisation, which is mainly apparent in the fields of leadership, teaching, and planning. The relationship between academisation and career goals is particularly clear at OU. The flexible structure of the master's programme enables students to specialise in the working field of adult education. In contrast, the programme at TUC focuses on general academic education in the field of education. The various specialisations afford students a range of employment opportunities, including adult education.

One possible reason for the differences in orientation of the master's programmes is that structural differences can be assumed to arise because of the orientation of the programmes towards different target groups: The master's programme at OU is aimed at 'non-traditional' students, whereas TUC focuses on recent college graduates who will enter the workplace once they complete their degree. The situation is different in the US, where college students are parents, caregivers, full-time workers, and retirees (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2015). The difference between these study programmes in terms of target groups raises questions about opening up higher education institutions as places of lifelong learning. This process of opening up is one of the goals of the Europe-wide conversion of study structures in the course of the Bologna Process. Steps in this direction have been taken in Germany over the years but continuing academic and vocational education are usually not part of the university sector but of the free market (Dollhausen, 2015). The conditions in master's programmes must change if 'non-traditional' students are to be integrated into universities, which must include flexibility in terms of time and location (evening courses, online courses) and flexible forms of exams. Some of these aspects are reflected in the structure of the master's programme at OU, such as part-time study that allows for time flexibility, an exam that is completed from home, and recognition of relevant experience as equivalent to an internship.

6. Lessons learned

In this paper, we examined one institutionalised way of becoming an adult educator. Theoretically, we conceive of academisation as one im-

portant part of a professionalisation process. This led us to the assumption that study programmes can be analysed regarding underlying institutional, knowledge-related, and cultural relations between the academic and the occupational field.

In comparing the situation in Germany and the US, we were able to more closely examine the relation between science and practice. The juxtaposition shows that master's study programmes in Germany and the US explicitly promise to prepare their students for professional roles in the field of adult education. The results show that in Germany, study programmes in adult education are very much shaped by the structure of disciplines and subdisciplines and by the order of general studies being followed by specialisation. In the US, the discipline and its institutions as well as the study programmes are much more oriented towards the needs of the working field and the demands of the emerging professionals.

In the US, there is greater openness to a range of disciplinary approaches and practical orientation of master's programmes. Programmes are more accessible to students with diverse disciplinary backgrounds and 'non-traditional' students who begin the master's programme already having practical experience from different areas of adult education. Practical experiences can even be credited as academic performance. In Germany, the focus is still clearly on 'traditional' students who have completed an undergraduate programme in education and immediately continue with the master's programme – preferably at the same university.

The different academic and professional cultures, along with the different levels of diversity of students, may also strongly influence cultural relations. But in order to further investigate these cultural relations, other empirical approaches and more in-depth qualitative data sources are needed, which was beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore, how institutional and knowledge relations are reflected in daily study practice and how they form a specific study culture that is relevant for the socialisation of future professionals are core questions for further research. The relation between different study programmes and the structure of the field of adult education should also be examined on the basis of a greater number of examples.

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ADULT EDUCATION POLICIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND AND PORTUGAL: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Paula Guimaraes, Marta Gontarska

Abstract: Education for sustainable development is presently a relevant topic in the policies of international organisations (such as UN/UNESCO and the European Union) and in national contexts such as Poland and Portugal. Within the policies implemented, civil society organisations and social movements undertake (adult) education for sustainable development projects and activities that have an important impact by raising awareness and promoting changes in the behaviour and attitudes of both countries' populations. However, several challenges can be pointed out regarding the implementation of these initiatives. These challenges will be highlighted in this article, which focuses on the comparison of policies and practices implemented in Poland and Portugal.

1. On (education for) sustainable development: Some introductory thoughts

Sustainable development emerged as a relevant topic mainly after the 1970s owing to critical statements made by several authors, politicians, and environmental activists concerning a development approach based on economic growth and the wide-ranging destruction of natural resources to foster mass production and consumption. Within this frame, UNESCO had a relevant role when in 1972 it organised the Stockholm Conference, where participants discussed the environmental risks of what Escobar (1995) refers to as a liberal understanding of development. After this conference, the idea that the planet was not owned by one single country or a small number of countries, such as the developed ones, was stressed at several events, emphasising the fact that ecological problems do not stop at national borders (Sachs, 1999).

By then the aim was raised that an alternative (different from the capitalist approach) understanding of development could be possible in terms of ways of living, producing, and thinking about life. According to this aim, the need for a stronger connection between humans and nature was stressed. Following these developments, in 1987, UNESCO formed a

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commission in charge of what was called the Brundtland report[1], *Our Common Future*[2]. This document was the first to use the expression *sustainable development* (Sachs, 1999: 26). This report emphasised the idea that people in general, and politicians in particular, should think about sustainable development when considering both economic growth and social development. Additionally, life on earth would have to be based on the necessary harmony between the present and the future. Therefore, economic growth would have to be socially and ecologically sustainable. In this report, it was stressed that all countries would need to agree on a common strategy, keeping in mind, however, the different stages of development that countries were in (WCED, 1987: 39).

Jacobi (2003) argued that this report revealed a different approach to the prevailing understanding of development. This approach reinforced the links between the economy, technology, society, and policy. At the same time, it stressed the need for ethical behaviour and attitudes concerning the preservation of nature. According to Sachs, the idea was to establish a «marriage between development and environment» (Sachs, 1999: 26). Since then, it has become clear for researchers, politicians, and people in general that development can neither be achieved without sustainability, nor sustainability without development (Tilbury *et al*., 2002).

Since the 1990s, the UN and UNESCO have developed a wide range of initiatives in order to promote sustainable development and to raise awareness concerning environmental issues. These initiatives have somehow changed the meaning of sustainable development, enlarging its meaning, and have established a clear link with (adult) education and lifelong learning. The 1990s were declared the Decade of Sustainable Development, and the first conference on this topic took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. In 2002, at the World Summit, the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2004-2015) was declared, putting the focus on education, specifically on what was referred to as the impact of school education on awareness raising and changes in behaviour and ecological attitudes (Jacobi, 2003). Later, the relevance of lifelong learning was stressed in Agenda 2030, with Objective 4 stating the need for quality education for sustainable development promotion. Complementarily, the implementation of a wide range of lifelong learning initiatives allowing people in general, no matter their age, to be more sensitive to environment problems and solutions was clearly emphasised, as well as the various domains of influence: economic, political, cultural, civic,

[1] This report was named after Gro Harlem Brundtland, a former minister of environment and prime minister of Norway, who was in charge of the commission that produced it.

[2] Data accessed in <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>.

educational, and ecological. Even if results up until today seem to lack consistency, it is a fact that international organisations (such as UN and UNESCO) have had a strong influence not only on the definition and discussion of the concept (Barros & Guimarães, 2019) but also on education for sustainable development national policies, for instance in Poland and Portugal. These developments have followed different paths but also show some similarities, owing to types of civil society organisations and social movements found in each country under analysis, as we will stress in further sections of this article.

2. On the role of civil society organisations and social movements in (adult) education for sustainable development

In several countries such as Poland and Portugal, non-governmental organisations have had a significant role in raising awareness among broad social sectors in what concerns sustainable development issues. The concept of education for sustainable development encompasses a quite diverse range of organisations and initiatives, with some activities closely related to school education curricula and others more directed at the general population.

Concerning the role of civil society organisations in adult education, in this case education for sustainable development, Lima argues that three types may be found. The first type relates to organisations that are sites for multicultural and educational production oriented towards democratic citizenship, social change, and justice (Lima, 2011: 154). These organisations are characterised by self-governance and active participation of those joining the programmes. At these institutions, education is directed at promoting political education projects and aimed at changing ways of thinking, living, and producing in local, national, and international arenas.

The second type includes organisations that can be considered bureaucratic extensions of local services of the government and public administration. These institutions are relevant partners of public departments in educational provision (Lima, 2011: 154). Applying for public funding, these organisations are strongly dependent upon state programmes and guidelines. Therefore, the projects and activities implemented favour mainly people's functional adaptation to the aims of existing public policies. In these organisations, education activities tend to have as their main outcome state control and regulation as well as educational modernisation.

The third type is linked to organisations that can be seen as quasi-market units, corporate institutions oriented towards the learning market and its customers (Lima, 2011: 155). These organisations can be seen as

enterprises operating along profit-making guidelines and for this reason are considered by the government to be more efficient in the development of public provision. Activities promoted are aimed at fostering learning by individuals in order to have more autonomous citizens, able to make rational choices and taking more responsibility in their decisions. Adults involved in these projects and activities are very motivated to learn, because they believe learning will allow people to be more competitive in social arenas and in the labour market.

The role of civil society organisations and social movements has been recognised as crucial in learning processes understood as exchanging knowledge and skills between activists to negotiate with decision makers. The specific construction of social movement learning could be one of the most important factors describing the adult education processes in activism. Knowledge and skills learnt in this process are the outcome of structural power issues, fostering the understanding of these social movements' place in the world, in interpersonal communication and group skills as well as in general learning in social action (Underhill, 2016: 160-161; Foley, 1999).

Based on development education at the European Union (EU) level, the question about the future of global issues such as sustainability has been raised by Troll and Krause (2016). These authors highlight the systemic approach of sustainability in a range of areas of global economic, political, and ecological spheres. Considering the potential of both civil society organisations and social movements towards global systemic change, a typology of a global citizens movement has been presented. The three conceptual types of a global citizens movements include: (type A) connecting local power struggles; (type B) global thinking & global regime change; (type C) radical new humanity. Under type A, connecting local power struggles is rooted in local activism, grassroots movements, and niche struggle with a strong bottom-up approach to the decision making level (both national and global). Under type B, global thinking & global regime change are established on the local level, but the movements' contribution to changes on a global policy level (in the areas of culture, language, discourse, and views) and their visibility in the worldwide movement are significant. Under type C, radical new humanity is the most radical proposal for rejecting policy work, focusing issues beyond the political power relations struggle and constructing alternative global narratives. Troll and Krause argue that global education stakeholders (especially non-governmental organisations and their activists) have experience both in global thinking and in identifying interlinkages between global issues and local realities, as well as in raising critical reflection on them but also in developing skills and resources to offer support in the transformative learning and exchange process of a global movement (Troll & Krause, 2016: 148-152).

3. Methodological options taken

In this article, we discuss education for sustainable development in Poland and Portugal. The main purpose is to compare some recent developments in both countries concerning policies and practices implemented by non-governmental organisations. The following question guides this discussion: How can similarities and differences between education for sustainable development policies and practices be interpreted in countries such as Poland and Portugal?

These two countries were selected because they are different in terms of the total number of inhabitants (38 million in Poland and around 10 million in Portugal) but similar in economic terms, with tourism and service sectors as a growing influence. Additionally, Poland is a central European country, under neoliberal globalisation influences since the 1990s, which in the last two decades has seen growing interventions by non-governmental organisations in various areas of work, like social care, education, democracy participation, policy work (like watchdog organisations), and sustainable development (such as the work achieved by Grupa Zagranica, the national platform of non-governmental organisations working on development cooperation, humanitarian aid, democratic transformation, and global education). Portugal became a democracy in the 1970s after almost 50 years of authoritarian rule. Non-governmental organisations committed to environmental awareness have a long tradition, with a couple of these organisations, such as QUERCUS[3] and ZERO[4], being quite influential in terms of policy and social media agendas.

The discussion presented in this article is based on document analysis (Bowen, 2009) of Polish and Portuguese secondary sources of a wide range of policy and research texts (e.g. official documents, national research and articles on education for sustainable development).

The next sections of this article are devoted to comparison. Egetenmeyer (2012: 80) stresses four steps for developing comparisons. *Descriptive juxtaposition* includes the collection of data of these countries' education for sustainable development policies and practices. The second step includes *analytical juxtaposition*. The main task is based on searching for common features in both countries' policies and practices. Additionally, *descriptive comparison* involves identifying common and different features within each country. Finally, *analytical comparison* is intended at interpreting differences and common characteristics in selected countries.

[3] Data accessed at <https://www.quercus.pt/> (07/2020).

[4] Data accessed at <https://zero.ong/> (07/2020).

4. Education for sustainable development in Poland: Fragile political context, civil society-driven practice

Both sustainable development and global education in Poland have been recognised as part of national policy: commitment to these ideas was considered one of the country's obligations when joining the EU in 2004 and is an outcome of the implementation of EU policies (Kuleta-Hulboj & Gontarska, 2015: 5-9). Education for sustainable development is defined as a synonym of global education in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)[5] signed on 26 May 2011 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, and Grupa Zagranica. The MoU is an outcome of a multi-stakeholder process on global education between ministries, education institutions, non-governmental organisations, local governmental institutions, teachers, and academic experts. To foster global education, all sides declared their will: to keep up the multi-stakeholder dialogue on global education; to amplify joint activities and to promote activities on global education both in the area of formal and informal education; to establish a common definition of global education; and to create the catalogue of good practices on global education. In spite of the relevance of the aims established, Jasikowska argued that the memorandum is a relatively weak policy commitment, marking optional additions to the existing development policy programmes. Still, the process was relevant in developing cooperation between civil society and the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jasikowska, 2018).

Education for sustainable development is also a part of the Ministry of the Environment's programme on ecological education. Therefore, we can consider two possible interpretations of the term. Based on the understanding of development and its relations with globalisation, sustainable development relates to global education which is a part of the development cooperation defined by the bill dated 16 September 2011 (amended on 10 November 2013)[6]. Additionally, global education is understood «as part of civic learning and education that broadens perspectives and raises awareness of existing global phenomena and interdependencies. The main goal of global education is to prepare receivers for facing the challenges related to worldwide humanity» (Official definition of global education, 2011[7]). The target groups are identified broadly in an annual

[5] Memorandum of Understanding on supporting the development of global education of 26 May 2011: <https://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Porozumienie,w,sprawie,wspierania,rozwoju,edukacji,globalnej,1165.html> (07/2020).

[6] Bill on development cooperation: <https://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Ustawa,o,wspolpracy,rozwojowej,1128.html> (07/2020).

[7] Official definition of global education, 2011: <https://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Edukacja,globalna,1603.html> (07/2020).

plan of development cooperation, which reads: «The activities on global education will be targeted at the broad public, children, young people and adults in the frame of formal, informal, and non-formal education» (Annual plan of development cooperation in 2019, 2018: 13). The policy framework is not specifically targeted at adults; however, the implementation of the policy is targeted at people involved in a wide range of educational activities. It is also important to add that people considered adults are mostly in-service teachers, although students, academics, and business representatives are also mentioned as target groups in the main call for proposals announced every year by the ministry (Call for proposals, Global education, 2018[8]).

Polish non-governmental organisations implement and conduct various projects based on different strategies, scale, and objectives on education for sustainable development/global education rooted in EU policies of development cooperation primarily understood as awareness raising in partner countries (located outside the EU). It has been quite challenging to implement development policies in Poland – a country with a post-soviet history, described as semi-peripheral, and not having a colonial past (Starnawski, 2015). After 2015, education for sustainable development/global education became clearly related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG, Sustainable Development Goals, 2015) referring to education, climate change, and gender equality. The top-down approach of the EU is strongly recognised. Likewise, EU funding, especially from the Development Education & Awareness Raising Programme and Erasmus+, together with a lack of interest in global challenges by formal education organisations in Poland, opened up a lot of space for non-formal and informal education activities led by civil society organisations (Rudnicki, 2015). Therefore, Rudnicki argues that this topic has been unheard and marginalised for decades in formal education. Education conducted at the margins of formal education is considered the pedagogy of small activities, without relevant influence in mainstream discussion. Non-governmental organisations were important in raising this issue and have been quite effective in promoting resistance, reflection, and changes in discourse and learning (Rudnicki, 2015). The role of these organisations has been a good strategy to try to build a bridge between formal and informal education in Poland, and many of these institutions actively promote education rooted in critical education.

[8] Call for proposals, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018: <https://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Konkurs,%E2%80%9EEdukacja,globalna,2018%E2%80%9D,2758.html> (07/2020).

5. Education for sustainable development in Portugal: Emergent policies, puzzling practices

Since the Democratic Revolution in 1974, Portugal has established the Ministry of Environment/Secretary of State of Environment and Natural Resources and approved corresponding legislation. In parallel, the Global Education Network Europe (2014) argues that Portugal in present times has a public development education strategy on global education, which includes the subject of education for sustainable development. This strategy involves some main government departments such as the Ministry of Education and Instituto Camões[9], as well as non-governmental organisations such as CIDAC[10] included in a platform for non-governmental development organisations.

In spite of these developments, when it comes to education for sustainable development, Portugal does not have a formal strategy specifically for this issue; it has largely been following EU leadership. According to Schmidt (2012), several phases can be identified: In the first phase, from 2005 to 2007, the guidelines for this leadership were defined, and each member state had to elaborate a national plan of intervention, methods and indicators for evaluation, which was achieved in Portugal. The second phase, from 2008 to 2010, was aimed at implementing, assessing, and eventually reformulating the main guidelines of intervention. The third phase, from 2011 to 2014, was dedicated to disseminating the existing intervention plan. However, several delays were identified, and today it is not possible to find a national Education for Sustainable Development Plan apart from several ministries' activities referring to this matter, such as the those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[11], specifically the report titled *UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development: Contribution for its Promotion*[12] and initiatives such as the commemoration of international years, conferences, continuing education programmes, exhibitions, and the publication of scientific books and articles. It should also be mentioned that the Ministry of Education has included the topic of sustainable development in regular school curricula, namely in compulsory education. Moreover, several publications such as *Education for*

[9] Data accessed at <https://www.instituto-camoes.pt/> (07/2020).

[10] Data accessed at <https://www.cidac.pt> (07/2020).

[11] Data accessed at <https://www.oei.es/historico/decada/contibutos-03-07-2006.pdf> (07/2020).

[12] Data accessed at <https://www.unescoportugal.mne.pt/pt/temas/um-planeta-um-oceano/educacao-para-o-desenvolvimento-sustentavel> (07/2020) (in Portuguese, *Década das Nações Unidas da Educação para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável - Contributos para a sua Dinamização em Portugal).*

Citizenship: A Guide for Education for Sustainability. The Earth Chart were published and have been used in schools[13].

The public administration has not created a specific official structure for this purpose up until now, although this topic is part of the development and territory cohesion policies of different ministries such as the Ministry of Environment. Therefore, Schmidt (2012) claims that there was not a significant effort to establish a public administration entity. The main outcome was a lack of information concerning this issue in civil society. Recent surveys show that public opinion does not have enough data for holding a consistent opinion on environmental issues, energy production, consumption, scientific progress, not even on existing legislation, funding programmes, or EU institutions in charge of such subject. Therefore, there is a gap between public administration mechanisms and structures of decision and civil society; complementarily, official documents are considered well-written but useless when it comes to making effective changes (Schmidt, 2012: 60).

In Portugal, there is a platform of non-governmental organisations devoted to development education[14], including institutions such as CIDAC, and several partnerships of non-governmental organisations involved in education for sustainable development[15], such as QUERCUS and ZERO. These organisations implement different education for sustainable development projects in line with UNESCO and EU goals directed at adults, young people, and children and involving mainly non-formal and informal education activities. Additionally, these organisations cooperate with regular schools in the implementation of several projects aimed at raising awareness concerning environmental issues, such as the diversity of fauna and flora, the preservation of natural resources, recycling practices, and climate change (Schmidt, 2012). These projects have involved in-service teachers' training, educators and activists of non-governmental organisations, as well as people in general willing to develop knowledge and skills on a wide range of topics such as bird watching and natural resources preservation.

6. Ambiguity between policy discourses and practices: Comparing and interpreting education for sustainable development in both countries

In terms of similarities, in both cases the non-governmental sector is dominated by organisations of two types, according to Lima's typol-

[13] Data accessed at <http://www.rcc.gov.pt/SiteCollectionDocuments/ECTG-EducCidadania-2006.pdf> (07/2020) (in Portuguese, *Educação para a Cidadania. Guião para a Educação para a Sustentabilidade - Carta da Terra).*

[14] Data accessed at <http://en.plataformaongd.pt/> (07/2020).

[15] Data accessed at <https://apambiente.pt/index.php?ref=16&subref=142&sub2ref=181> (07/2020).

ogy (2011): those with a more critical approach towards education and a focus on social change and transformative learning and those that act as local service providers (funded in the majority of cases by national or EU programmes) due to the lack of specific local and national governmental institutions. Organisations with a critical and transformative approach (such as the Institute of Global Responsibility in Poland) don't have a major influence on the general public. However, many interesting and innovative activities have been conducted to promote critical and global citizenship education and participatory methods of education and facilitation (such as the philosophy for children and communities in Poland) scaled up to EU or even global level. The non-governmental organisations with a systemic approach to education – the second type according to Lima's typology (2011) – such as the Centre for Citizenship Education in Poland, disseminate the offerings of national policies, work closely with the governmental institutions in analysing the teacher training curriculum, and prepare educational materials according to the curriculum. This type of organisation has a significant offer complementing formal education activities that fill gaps and answer to several institutions' and beneficiaries' demands. This situation is clear also in Portugal (Schmidt & Guerra, 2013).

From the perspective and typology of Troll and Krause (2016), organisations implementing education for sustainable development in both countries have strong local connections, working under the existing system/regime and trying to influence global thinking by transforming existing processes and mechanisms according to characteristics of the type B – global thinking & global regime organisations (Troll & Krause, 2016). Their main contribution is to introduce sustainable development and global issues in the educational discourse and to contribute to global change by implementing changes in the formal education system at national and local levels. The changes are much more significant due to the good cooperation with governmental institutions and policy makers, especially extending the governmental services and EU guidelines.

The most consistent projects to be found in both countries are the ones that are linked to formal education and based on the cooperation with schools, targeting mainly in-service teachers and students. These organisations play a leading role in implementing projects and campaigns but don't have a major impact on general awareness in society. In fact, non-governmental organisations are largely dependent on grants from local/national departments and EU funding programmes, following practices close to the local services providers' type of civil society organisations (Lima, 2011), which don't ensure a stable, long-term cooperation between partners (Schmidt & Guerra, 2013).

A division between the education approach (with activities such as conferences, trainings, workshops, publications, lectures, and movie

screenings) and the campaigning approach (with activities such as petition signing, social media activities, and building the network of activists) is evident. In general, projects are targeted at adults also and are related to learning and awareness raising processes (Troll & Krause, 2016: 144). Projects with an education approach have a strong focus on the multiplication of the results of cooperation with in-service teachers, teachers' trainers, educators from non-governmental organisations, and other training institutions. Activities specifically targeting in-service teachers both online and face-to-face include conferences and seminars, offline trainings, online webinars, mentoring, lessons scenarios and other educational materials, and joint activities at schools/local communities. Projects are focused on adult education understood as professional development in the area of teaching practice focused on sustainable development and global education issues.

There is also a focus on informal education and adults' engagement in online and offline activities among the projects with a campaigning approach in Poland and in Portugal. Activities targeted at adults are mostly events like movie screenings, debates, taking part in cultural and music festivals, and online activities such as signing petitions, short education clips, and social media awareness raising campaigns. In parallel with these projects, some others have been implemented in cooperation with mass media, such as those fostering information dissemination concerning domestic practices of recycling and the reduction of energy consumption (e.g. the TV show 'Green minute' on a Portuguese television channel[16]). Public departments and international organisations such as UNESCO have also organised several conferences and debates, as well as online activities and social media initiatives and campaigns directed at awareness raising.

In terms of differences, it is clear in both countries that different approaches influenced the implementation of strategies by civil society organisations, especially when it comes to networking and synergies between different stakeholders. Polish non-governmental organisations are gathered around the national Concord platform, in which the working group coordinates the exchange of information and advocacy work with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Portuguese civil society seems much more fragmented and focused on local initiatives, even if a few non-governmental organisations such as QUERCUS and ZERO are influential in policy-decision processes on environmental issues.

[16] In Portuguese, *Minuto Verde*, a one-minute TV show that airs every working day of the week, presenting daily activities relevant to education for sustainable development. This show has aired on the TV channel RPT1 since 2006. For more information, please see <https://www.quercus.pt/as-nossas-rubricas-de-comunicacao> (07/2020).

Complementarily, it is worth mentioning that the comparison on education for sustainable development in Portugal and Poland was challenging due to a main difference linked to the understanding of sustainable development. In Poland, researchers have traced the idea to global development, based on the ecological and climate change approach as one of the key factors. The idea incorporates the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030). In Portugal, sustainable development has been much more linked to biodiversity, an ecological and local approach to development. That said, both ideas could be identified by Pashby (Pashby, 2012) as part of global (citizenship) education, contributing to the promotion of social justice on a global level and working with a critical understanding of the history of global relations.

7. Several challenges faced: final thoughts

This article includes comparisons of education for sustainable development policies and practices in Poland and Portugal. In Poland, discourses on education for sustainable development and global education are the outcome of a fragile recent political process in which practices are found to be largely driven by civil society organisations. Following a similar path, the existing policies in Portugal reveal puzzling practices – more coherent practices are those related to projects and activities implemented in formal education institutions, like regular primary and secondary schools. Additionally, in both countries, civil society organisations involved in education for sustainable development (and global education) have been acting largely as extensions of government departments (Lima, 2001) and EU guidelines and funding programmes; however, if fragmented projects and activities are to be found in these institutions, several of these practices foster critical education and promote global thinking on the global regime (Troll & Krause, 2016).

Therefore, civil society organisations and social movements involved in education for sustainable development currently face several challenges in both countries under analysis. The first challenge relates to changes in the political arena towards more moderate or conservative parties (as well as nationalistic in Poland) that influence policies and practices. In the past, adult education had a relatively strong status, even if this was clearer in some specific periods; today, however, it is not recognised as politically driven and holding a controversial agenda (Rudnicki, 2015). Within this line of reasoning, only some ideas on sustainable development and global issues (linked for instance to pollution, water pollution, etc. – mainly the topics that are part of EU indicators to be achieved by each member state) are present in the school curricula of both countries.

The second challenge is the scale of the projects and activities conducted by non-governmental organisations, which is still limited in both countries, specifically those that are not school related. Most of the organisations are project-funded, meaning no major awareness raising campaigns and scaled-up online and offline activities are possible to design and fund. The disease of grant-dependence (Rudnicki, 2016; Schmidt & Guerra, 2013) has been argued by several authors to result in short-term projects as a main outcome. This situation counteracts the sustainability of such initiatives and the long-lasting effects they should have.

The third challenge is linked to the local character of practices in both countries, as most projects and initiatives relate to matters that affect places where participants actually live. From this point of view, it is difficult to find projects and activities that go beyond local areas, which shows that from the point of view of those planning initiatives, education for sustainable development issues are still very localised, hiding the importance sustainable development may have as a global topic (Schmidt & Guerra, 2013: 209).

These challenges have to be linked to two other ideas, which, however, would need further data collection using different techniques to be fully interpreted. The first idea refers to the lack of synergies and strategic cooperation between governmental, non-governmental, and private sectors supporting the idea of education for sustainable development. The lack of strong partnerships that can be found between civil society organisations and government departments when implementing projects and activities might be a relevant challenge faced by civil society organisations involved in education for sustainable development when it comes to the development of practices that are effective in terms of changing the behaviour and attitudes of the general population. The second idea relates to the fragility of institutions and social movements involved in education for sustainable development, which anticipates the weakness of learning in social action (Foley, 1999) within this filed. In fact, even if civil society organisations in both countries are well known for delivering services at low costs and at the margins of public service providers, they have limited human resources and expertise, which seems to restrict the impact they may have in policy discourses and the practices implemented.

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EMPLOYABILITY AS A GLOBAL NORM: COMPARING TRANSNATIONAL EMPLOYABILITY POLICIES OF OECD, ILO, WORLD BANK GROUP, AND UNESCO

Shalini Singh, Søren Ehlers

ABSTRACT: This article analyses transnational policies on employability to understand the development of employability as a global norm and reflects about its consequences for stakeholders in the field of lifelong learning.

1. Introduction

The global skills mismatch, low-paid and low-productivity jobs, problems of the informal sector, large-scale unemployment, and resulting socio-economic and political problems have made employability a top priority on the policy agenda of most policy actors. The structural shifts in the labour markets led by the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (focussing on artificial intelligence) and Globalisation 4.0 (Schwab, 2019) have forced policy actors to reconsider education policies. Governments bank upon education, especially lifelong learning policies, to ensure that individuals who get educated also get employed and remain on the labour market for as long as possible. Further, they must continue to engage constructively with the society so that the cost of ensuring their welfare remains low. In most countries, the implementation of such education policies remains a challenge due to a lack of resources, expertise, and even political will. Consequently, key global players in the field, including the OECD, the World Bank (hereafter WB), the ILO, and the UNESCO, play a major role because unlike states, these organisations have data, resources, expertise, willingness, and stability for devising long-term policy solutions and managing stakeholder interests in an efficient manner.

Despite the fact that lifelong learning policies were first devised to promote employability (OECD, 1996), orienting lifelong learning policies towards employability has met strong resistance from many stakeholders

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in the field. The paper reflects about the possibilities for such stakeholders by analysing the following questions:

1. What constitutes the global norm of employability and why?
2. How did it develop?
3. What policy choices do states and sub-state stakeholders have in relation to adopting or refusing this global norm?

Selected policy documents with a global scope and an instrumental role in the development of the norm from key policy actors including The OECD, The ILO, The WB, UNESCO, and other international organisations and platforms are compared because of their pivotal role in the process. Further comparison along time between 1992 (when employability policies started to develop) and 2018 (when the latest available empirical data were used as sources for this paper) is made. Finnemore and Sikkink's model of *norm dynamics* (development and change in norms) provides the conceptual framework.

The paper is divided into six sections. The first section includes the problem description, research questions, methodology and the design for the paper. The second section includes a review of existing literature about employability as a concept and is used afterwards to highlight the difference between understanding employability as a concept (embedded in research, professional understanding, and practice at sub-state level) and as a global norm (embedded in transnational policies). The third section explains the conceptual framework. Section four includes a description of employability as a global norm, its links to lifelong learning, a chronological mapping of documents, and the comparative analysis. Discussion and conclusion follow in Sections five and six, respectively.

2. Employability

The concept of employability is not new, but its connotations have changed over time. In the 1940s, it was defined in terms of the individual's ability to work based on age, capability, and family commitments (Gazier, 1999). In the 1960s, health, disability, and social background became relevant considerations. In the 1980s and 1990s, individuals' productivity; their cumulative marketability (income that they can earn) based on human, social, and cultural capital; and meaningfulness of employment for them became predominant notions (Gazier, 1999). Thus, employability can be defined as an individual's ability (depending upon various considerations) to be on the labour market (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Brown *et al.*, 2003; Brown & Hesketh, 2004; Berntson *et al.*, 2006; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005; Yorke, 2006; McGrath,

2009; Wilton, 2011). The individual bears the responsibility as well as enjoys the freedom to shape this ability (Wilton, 2011). Failure to become employable might not only depend on the choices of the individual but also on their context. Employability can hence be relational (Gazier, 1999; Clarke, 2008; Wilton, 2011).

Contextual factors influencing an individual's ability can be categorised as a) *demand factors*, such as jobs available and labour market conditions such as competition, rules and regulations, macroeconomic factors, and the like; and b) *supply factors,* such as generation of individual assets (knowledge, skills, competencies) and factors (like inequality) affecting it, an individual's personal circumstances detrimental for gaining or losing employment, and the like. (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Peck & Theodore 2000; de Grip et al., 2004; McQuaid, Green, & Danson 2005; Gore, 2005; Wilton, 2011). Education and labour market-related choices of individuals shape their employability and might be guided by the *return on investment* they make (Peck & Theodore, 2000; McGrath, 2009). This return on investment approach is narrow and has been specifically problematic for the following reasons.

1. It has led to a vast body of research, literature, and practices regarding supply-side corrective measures (educational offers) to deliver 'employability skills' by changing curricula, regulations, staff reorganisations, linking industry and education, and the like, which contradicts the essence of employability itself. The assumption about the possibility to deliver fixed 'employability skills' (as products) makes the whole concept of employability (a constantly changing flexible process) irrelevant. The whole narrative around it thrives on the biased assumption that employability is the individual's responsibility, meaning the individual must make choices for becoming employable. This paper shows that employability policies include individual responsibility as only one of many components. Therefore, limiting the efforts towards employability to supply-side solutions through lifelong learning and education is a short-term, unrealistic strategy and wastage of resources (see Section four).
2. It has hindered the shift in the approach from *teaching* to *learning.* Providers assume and argue that they should *teach* individuals to become employable and thus, limit their free choices for *learning.* This notion about the flexible nature of employability and the non-existence of specific employability skills is well described in transnational policies on employability (see Section four).
3. At the macro level, it could be difficult to calculate accurate individual investments and returns on investment because of the intangible aspects of employability like social and emotional costs and benefits (Wolf, 2002).

As a policy norm, employability is a solution for multiple socio-economic problems and a driver for unlimited but sustainable growth. The same is discussed in detail in Section Four.

3. Conceptual framework

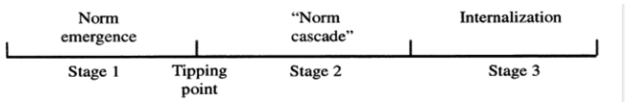
The conceptual framework of this article draws on the literature about *norm dynamics* (emergence, establishment, and change in norms).

Norms can be defined as shared understandings and behavioural standards manifested as rights and responsibilities of stakeholders involved (Krasner, 1982; Florini, 1996; Finnemore, 1996; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Krook & True, 2010). They produce order and stability, regularise stakeholder behaviour, and limit alternatives for policy choices (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). The development, survival, and power of norms therefore requires that they are based on a stable agreement among stakeholders (Krasner, 1982; Gilardi, 2012). Stakeholders might resist or refuse to accept norms if they do not *appear* to benefit them. Norms are thus portrayed as a positive sum agreement among all stakeholders (especially the most powerful ones) and usually remain vague to accommodate conflicting stakeholder interests (Krook & True, 2010). Norms might emerge as an *institutionalised complex, collection,* or *cluster* to portray a complex set of interrelated problems and solutions (Moore, 2012; Winston, 2018). Sustainable development is such an example, with many correlated norms about economic growth, social inclusion, environment, and the like woven together to represent a certain notion of development.

Norms could be *constitutive* (standardising behaviour in new situations without much precedent, for instance cyber norms when computers and internet were introduced), *evaluative/prescriptive* (standardising behaviour based on what should ideally be done in a given situation), or *regulative* (ordering and constraining the behaviour of stakeholders) (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). They are relevant for actors that take policy decisions based on what is the socially determined appropriate behaviour (*logic of appropriateness*) in a certain situation rather than thinking about the consequences (*logic of consequences*) of their choices (March & Olsen, 1998; Checkel, 2005; Moore, 2012; Gilardi, 2012). However, in the long run, conforming to what is appropriate rather than thinking about short-term consequences might also be conforming to the logic of consequences because legitimacy generated by confirming to the so-called appropriate has its own benefits through image creation, legitimacy, and the like.

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) describe norm dynamics (creation and development of norms) in three different stages: *norm emergence*, *cascade,* and *internationalisation* (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Emergence and Development of a Norm (Norm Dynamics). [Source: Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 896]



Norm emergence may be facilitated by human agency, indeterminacy, favourable occurrences, and positive linkages among promoted or existing norms and/or values (Checkel, 1998; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Carpenter, 2007; Fukuda-Parr & Hulme, 2009; Krook & True, 2010). They are promoted by *norm entrepreneurs* (actors that promote them) on different platforms till a *tipping point* (acceptance by a critical mass or about one-third of potential acceptors) is reached (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

The second stage in norm dynamics, or *cascading,* begins after the *tipping point* is reached (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Stakeholders who accept the norm are rewarded, whereas those who resist are punished (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Reward and punishment depend upon the sensitivity of stakeholders, and even a symbolism, such as negative international reaction against states, might be consequential (Gilardi, 2012).

When the norm is adopted by most stakeholders, the debate about why it should be adopted comes to a halt, and its adoption is taken for granted (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). In this third stage of *norm dynamics,* called *norm internalisation*, the *burden of proof* (argument for not accepting the norm) shifts from norm entrepreneurs and followers to those who resist it (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Gilardi, 2012).

The choice of platform, or *venue,* plays a crucial role in the process. It includes *membership*, *mandate*, *output status*, *procedures* and *legitimacy* (Coleman, 2011).

Membership refers to considerations about who is active on the platform and in what capacity (Coleman, 2011; Krook & True, 2010). Specific and clear norms can be formulated with a small number of homogenous stakeholders, large power differences, top-down power relations, and pro-norm human actors (experts, bureaucrats, etc.) (Beach, 2004; Coleman, 2011). On the contrary, a large number of heterogeneous stakeholders with limited power difference, and anti-norm human actors lead to ambiguous norms masking disagreements (Beach, 2004; Coleman, 2011).

The *mandate* (focus and scope of discussions) and *output status* (product) are closely linked factors. Limited mandates with single or few issues and a small scope often facilitate intense discussions. Larger mandates with multiple issues and a broad scope may lead to ambiguous and complicated agreements, bargaining, trade-offs (compromises), logrolling

(exchanging favours), and the like (Koh, 1997; Coleman, 2011). *Output status* (or outcomes) of negotiations may be binding or non-binding on the stakeholders, may be visible or unnoticed, and may come in various forms like reports, treaties, and laws (Coleman, 2011).

Procedures regarding what happens when, how, and who regulates it, include the dominance of pro- and anti-norm stakeholders in procedures like drafting, bundling of items to be discussed, agenda for discussion, chronology, and sequencing of items and procedures for arriving at decisions (like voting of various forms, veto and consensus) (Kauffmann, 1996; Coleman, 2011).

Legitimacy (acceptance) of the *venue* refers to whether the stakeholders consider it an appropriate (or inappropriate) forum for the discussion about the norm (Coleman, 2011). It is usually based on precedents (Coleman, 2011). Fruitful negotiations in the past related to similar or related norms can increase the credibility of a *venue and favour norm acceptance* (Coleman, 2011). Contrarily, negative connotations like failed negotiations may lead to less credibility, mistrust among stakeholders, and influence mobilisation against norm acceptance (Coleman, 2011).

Norms change constantly as a result of their competition with other rising or declining norms; changes in meanings associated with them or their components; and changes in context, positions, and internal dynamics of norm entrepreneurs and stakeholders (Krasner, 1982; Florini, 1996, Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Krook & True, 2010). *Boomerang effects* or the involvement of *transnational advocacy networks (TANs)* to create pressure on potential norm accepters for accepting a norm might induce changes in norms due to the internal dynamics of these *TANs* (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Krook & True, 2010). Thus, norms change constantly while they are promoted and adopted (Sandholtz, 2008; Wiener, 2009; Krook & True, 2010).

4. Development of employability as a global norm: mapping and comparison of policy documents

The OECD has been the most influential actor in relation to employability policies. In 1992, OECD member countries approached it for policy solutions to deal with the challenges of an increasing social welfare burden. These countries were marred by high unemployment and precarious, low-paid, low-productivity jobs with poor working conditions. Consequently, the OECD proposed the *1994 Jobs Strategy,* featuring macro and microeconomic policies to fuel *limitless but sustainable economic growth* (OECD, 1994).

The OECD proposed structural and macroeconomic reforms (e.g. tax reforms); engagement of the private sector as employer and inves-

tor; active labour market policies; cuts on social security (especially in Europe); measures to encourage people to work (even in low-paid jobs); and reduced reliance on social benefits. It also proposed to link all non-work (not depending on labour market participation in any way) social benefits to work. The disadvantaged and marginalised were an exception, but attempts to engage them with the labour market were also proposed (OECD, 1994). Further, wages (in favour of *employers*) and working conditions (in favour of *employees*) were to be made flexible (OECD, 1994). Self-directed lifelong learning was proposed to equip the individual for coping with technological dynamism and structural shifts in labour markets caused by contextual changes (OECD, 1994). Education quality, early childhood education, school-to-work transitions, investments in equipping individuals (especially the least qualified and disadvantaged ones) with relevant skills, and the integration of education in national qualification frameworks were emphasised (OECD, 1994). Industry-education linkage, standard assessments for training, recognition of prior, non-formal, and informal training, and mobility were suggested, too (OECD, 1994).

Individuals were supposed to take advantage of these reforms, actively participate in the labour market, constantly engage in self-directed lifelong learning, and transform themselves into a highly productive human resource (OECD, 1994). In case individuals failed to make adequate choices or lagged behind due to disabilities or marginalisation, all stakeholders, particularly the state, was to support them (OECD, 1994). Thus, the *state* had to bear the responsibility of engaging other stakeholders and creating a conducive environment around the individual in which they could make free choices to shape their career (OECD, 1994).

In 1996, the OECD published the first consolidated policy on lifelong learning and received a five-year mandate to further develop the same (Ehlers, 2019). Mapping and comparison (Table 1, 2, and 3) show that employability evolved from a policy solution in 1994 to an essential strategy for sustainable development in 2018.

Table 1 shows the *emergence* of employability as a global norm between 1994 and 2010. OECD proposed it in 1994, reviewed it in 1998, and assessed it in 2006 (OECD, 1994, 1998, 2006). Despite acknowledging a drop in unemployment, the OECD observed that implementation lags still led to limited outcomes (OECD, 2006). OECD thus reorganised and restructured the policy to facilitate its implementation in 2006 (OECD, 2006). Comparison reflects the shift in focus of policy recommendations from formulation to implementation and evaluation.

The influence of OECD was limited to high-income countries, but UNESCO and ILO included elements of the OECD strategy in their policy recommendations to low-and middle-income countries strug-

gling with poverty, unemployment, and many other challenges similar to the ones faced by high-income countries in the 1980s (UNESCO, 2001; ILO, 2004). The proposals of UNESCO and ILO changed the narrative around employability and included a rights-based and social-justice-oriented approach to fit the contexts in low- and middle-income countries (Table 1). However, many low-and middle-income countries adopted the idea (not reform) of lifelong learning (Jakobi, 2012) but continued to focus on primary education and gender parity in education policies, thereby failing to integrate their policies in favour of employability since their resources were diverted to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (Singh, 2018).

During the financial crisis, the ILO brought representatives of different social partners together, highlighted the failure of past policy packages for socio-economic development in low-and middle-income countries, raised the issue of ensuring decent work and social justice, and called upon the high-income G20 countries to rescue low- and middle-income countries (ILO, 2008a; 2008b). The ILO proposed the implementation of the OECD strategy in low-and middle-income countries to ensure that their recovery from the financial crisis was accompanied by their recovery from a long-term jobs crisis (resulting from past policy failures) (ILO, 2009).

In 2009, the G20 countries invited the ILO to formulate a comprehensive strategy with an approach focussing the move from *employment to employability* (G20 Research Group, 2009). The ILO engaged representatives of all possible stakeholders and drew on its own recommendations to formulate a comprehensive strategy, which was in no way different from the core OECD strategy (ILO, 2010; OECD, 1994). The only concrete differences included references to stakeholders from low- and middle-income countries, other international organisations, and regional and multilateral institutions, as well as some keywords closely connected to the concerns of the low-and middle-income countries. In other words, the OECD strategy was extended to low-and middle-income countries between 2008 and 2010 by the ILO, using the financial crisis as a *window of opportunity*. The documents in Table 1 deal with guidelines for policy formulation and abstract ideas for their implementation.

The policies between 2010 and 2016 (Table 2) were evidence-based, featuring concrete recommendations about implementation, performance evaluation, and benchmarking in favour of employability. The WB issued the STEP (Skills Towards Employment and Productivity) framework for performance measurement and benchmarking in 2010 (The World Bank, 2010). An overall education policy from the WB followed in 2011 aiming at 1) introducing concrete *reforms* in the education systems of low-and middle-income countries and 2) building a

global knowledge base based on innovation and empirical data (The World Bank Group, 2011). In 2013, the OECD and the WB introduced more benchmarking and performance indicators in collaboration with the European Training Foundation, the ILO, and the UNESCO for comparing low-income countries; against OECD standards (OECD & The World Bank, 2013). The ILO released a detailed policy analysis from 12 Asian, African, and Latin American countries in 2013 and launched the *Global Public-Private Knowledge Sharing Platform on Skills for Employment* for engaging all possible stakeholders and sharing knowledge resources in 2014 (ILO, 2013; Global Public-Private Knowledge Sharing Platform on Skills for Employment, 2019). In 2015, the OECD launched the WISE (World Indicators of Skills for Employment) database with comparable 1999-2014 data from 200 countries, using identical parameters for high-, middle-, and low-income countries (OECD, 2019). Meanwhile, the UNESCO aligned policy reforms in low-and middle-income countries with the international development agenda through the Shanghai Consensus (2012) and policy advice in relation to the post-2015 international development agenda (UNESCO, 2012; 2014).

Table 1 – Norm emergence: employability as a global norm, comparison of policy documents over time (1994-2010). [Source: Authors' own, based on documents mentioned in the text and references]

Actors & year	Target Group(s)	Policy Objectives	Challenges	Policy Aspect
OECD 1994	OECD countries	Limitless but sustainable economic growth	Unemployment	Formulation
OECD 1998	G8 countries	Limitless but sustainable economic growth	Engagement of private sector as investor and employer	Review
UNESCO 2001	Low- and middle-income countries, social partners	Ensuring individual access to TVET as a right, national and international development	General policy follow-up of their own policy	Formulation
ILO 2004	Low- and middle-income countries, social partners	Engage social partners in lifelong learning, ensuring decent work	Full employment, poverty eradication, social inclusion and sustained economic growth	Formulation
OECD 2006	OECD countries	Limitless but sustainable economic growth	Increase labour market participation especially among low-income groups, ageing population in OECD countries, economic rise of labour-rich countries like China and India, fast pace of technological advancement	Assessment of implementation/ Evaluation
ILO 2008a	Countries receiving development aid	Social justice through decent work	Achieve development through decent work	Formulation
ILO 2008b	Low- and middle-income countries, social partners	Ensuring sustainable development to balance fast pace of economic growth with social aspects	Low productivity leading to low development, failure of past policies and high growth countries to balance economic growth with social aspects	Formulation
ILO 2009	Low- and middle-income countries, social partners	Ensuring sustainable development to balance fast pace of economic growth with social aspects	Financial crisis, jobs crisis	Formulation
G20, 2009	G20 countries and international organisations	Limitless and sustainable growth, balancing social aspects of growth	Recovery from financial crisis and need for international cooperation among international organisations	Formulation
ILO, G20 2010	Low- and middle-income countries, social partners	Limitless and sustainable growth, balancing social aspects of growth	Financial crisis	Formulation & implementation

In 2016, the ILO, the OECD, the WB, and IMF came up with a consolidated policy on employability, signifying the standardisation and convergence of their employability policies and their alignment with the international development agenda (OECD *et al.*, 2016). Employability was thus directly or indirectly pushed on the agenda of most stakeholders who accepted the advice of any of these organisations or agreed to the international development agenda manifested as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015).

Table 2 – Norm cascading: employability as a global norm, comparison of policy documents over time (2010-2016). [Source: Authors' own, based on documents mentioned in the text and references]

Actors & year	Target Group(s)	Policy Objectives	Challenges	Policy Aspect
OECD 1994	OECD countries	Limitless but sustainable economic growth	Unemployment	Formulation
OECD 1998	G8 countries	Limitless but sustainable economic growth	Engagement of private sector as investor and employer	Review
UNESCO 2001	Low- and middle-income countries, social partners	Ensuring individual access to TVET as a right, national and international development	General policy follow-up of their own policy	Formulation
ILO 2004	Low- and middle-income countries, social partners	Engage social partners in lifelong learning, ensuring decent work	Full employment, poverty eradication, social inclusion and sustained economic growth	Formulation
OECD 2006	OECD countries	Limitless but sustainable economic growth	Increase labour market participation especially among low-income groups, ageing population in OECD countries, economic rise of labour-rich countries like China and India, fast pace of technological advancement	Assessment of implementation/ Evaluation
ILO 2008a	Countries receiving development aid	Social justice through decent work	Achieve development through decent work	Formulation
ILO 2008b	Low- and middle-income countries, social partners	Ensuring sustainable development to balance fast pace of economic growth with social aspects	Low productivity leading to low development, failure of past policies and high growth countries to balance economic growth with social aspects	Formulation
ILO 2009	Low- and middle-income countries, social partners	Ensuring sustainable development to balance fast pace of economic growth with social aspects	Financial crisis, jobs crisis	Formulation
G20, 2009	G20 countries and international organisations	Limitless and sustainable growth, balancing social aspects of growth	Recovery from financial crisis and need for international cooperation among international organisations	Formulation
ILO, G20 2010	Low- and middle-income countries, social partners	Limitless and sustainable growth, balancing social aspects of growth	Financial crisis	Formulation & implementation

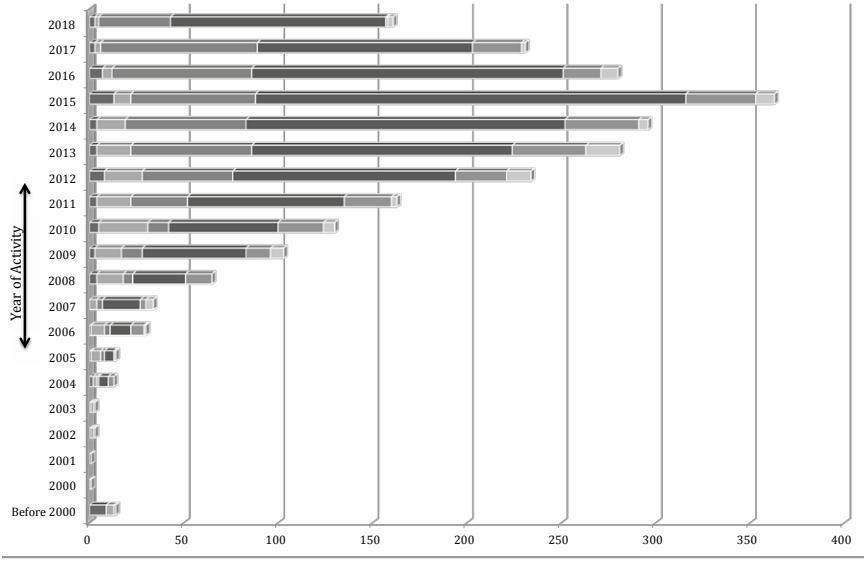
Policies after convergence (post-2016) include concrete guidelines for implementing policy reforms to promote employability as a component of the sustainable development agenda (see Table 3). Policy models and reform strategies were released by the UNESCO in 2016 and 2018; by the UNESCO and the ILO in 2017; and by the OECD in 2018 (UNESCO, 2016; Platform for Advancing Green Human Capital, 2017; OECD, 2018; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2018).

Table 3 – Norm internalization: employability as a global norm, comparison of policy documents over time (2016-2018). [Source: Authors' own, based on documents mentioned in the text and references]

Actors & year	Target Group	Policy Objectives	Challenges	Policy Aspect
UNESCO 2016	UNESCO countries	Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	New strategy for youth employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning	Implementation
Platform for Advancing Green Human Capital (ILO, UNESCO and others) 2017	All stakeholders	To balance economic growth with environmental aspects	Achievement of social justice and job creation through ecological transition	Detailed implementation guidelines for reforms
OECD 2018	OECD countries	Inclusive growth through better job quality and inclusion of left out groups	Inequality of income, structural changes in labour market, globalisation, and ageing population	
UNESCO 2018	UNESCO countries	Implementation of SDGs	General policy follow-up on UNESCO policy	

Comparison of selected activity by policy actors (Fig. 2) shows that the cumulative activity to promote employability as a global norm at the international platforms was quite low till 2006, became considerably high in favour of convincing and pressurising states to implement employability policies during 2010–2016, and started declining afterwards (post-2016) even though still remaining relatively high.

Figure 2 – Selected activities by international organisations to support the development of employability as a global norm. [Source: Authors' own, based on information available on the Global Public-Private Knowledge Sharing Platform on Skills for Employment (2019, online source)]



	Before 2000	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
▪ Statistical information	9	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	4	3	5	4	8	4	4	13	7	3	3
▪ Case studies and good practices	4	1	0	0	1	2	5	7	4	14	14	26	18	20	18	15	9	5	3	2
▪ Research papers and synthesis	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	3	3	5	11	11	30	48	64	64	66	74	83	38
▪ Advocacy and information material	1	0	0	1	1	5	5	11	20	28	55	58	83	118	138	169	228	165	114	114
▪ National policies and initiatives	0	0	0	1	1	3	1	7	3	14	13	24	25	27	39	39	37	20	26	1
▪ International standards and strategy papers by international organisations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	7	6	3	13	18	5	10	9	2	3

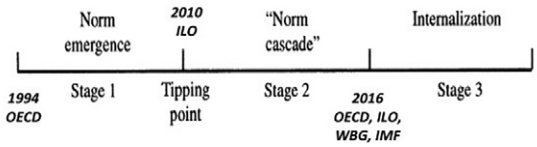
5. Discussion

Comparison and mapping shows that despite different challenges and policy objectives, the core policy on employability (as proposed by the OECD) did not change. However, modifications were introduced for implementation based on contextual considerations, empirical evidence, inclusion of heterogeneous stakeholders, need for legitimacy, and oth-

er factors characterising the change in the *venue* of policy formulation (OECD, 2006, 2018; ILO, 2010).

Employability emerged as a global norm between 1994 and 2010. Despite the fact that the core elements of this norm were already in place by 2006, it took four years and one favourable event (financial crisis) to push it to the *tipping point* in 2010 (Fig. 3). While the relatively small number of homogenous OECD member countries accepted a clear norm on employability in the beginning, the ILO provided the *legitimacy* needed to promote it globally by engaging stakeholders from a large number of heterogeneous low-and middle-income countries.

Figure 3 – Development of employability as a global norm. [Source: Authors' own, based on Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 896]



The OECD acted as the *norm entrepreneur,* as it developed and promoted the policy. Together with the WB, it led the *cascading* through implementation guidelines, performance standards, indicators, establishment of comparative data platforms and analysis of data, policy reviews, measurement, and benchmarking between 2010 and 2016.

The ILO, the UNESCO, and other organisations chose to jump on the OECD bandwagon. Lack of expertise and limited means, especially after the financial crisis, contributed to an increased acceptance of employability among states based on the *logic of appropriateness*. After the convergence of policies in 2016, *norm internalisation* began.

International organisations, especially the UNESCO, aligned the norm of employability with the *norm cluster* representing Sustainable Development. The key policy actors managed to increase their influence through *norm development* and ensured that the states (primary sources for funding) and other stakeholders depended on them. By embedding and linking different norms to a norm cluster, they pushed the stakeholders indirectly to internalise all norms. Linking lifelong learning to this norm as an education strategy, for instance, made it essential for stakeholders to accept employability-oriented policies and then conform to measurement and data standards woven around the whole narrative of the norm cluster of sustainable development. This trend is visible in other policy areas as well, for instance in case of Development Education (Singh, 2018).

The existence of a limited number of key players (four) facilitated the development of a clear norm, but the engagement of these actors also caused changes. The ILO pushed for inclusion based on social justice

and dialogue among social partners; the UNESCO promoted a rights-based approach; the OECD promoted ceaseless, balanced, and inclusive growth (for optimum utilisation of resources), and the WB induced policy integration and standardised measurement (through indicators and comparative data). However, the most remarkable changes to the policy were triggered by implementation problems.

Transnational employability policies have a strong influence on education and lifelong learning policies across the globe. The OECD devised lifelong learning policies as a strategy to promote employability in the early 1990s, materialising existing ideas (since the late 1960s) of the Lifelong Education and Learner Centric Approach into a concrete policy (Ehlers, 2019). This change was marked, among other changes, with changes from a humanistic orientation to an economic orientation, from process-orientation to product or process orientation, and from teacher-centric to learner-centric approaches in education (Ehlers, 2019). The most prominent change however, was the shift in focus of policies from *lifetime employment to lifetime employability* (Gurria, 2011, online source).

Employability was proposed as a *constitutive* norm (new policy solution) in the beginning. During cascading, it became *prescriptive* due to elements like performance benchmarks, indicators, and the like. In the post-2016 period, it has become rather *regulative* in nature. States conforming to the sustainability agenda find it difficult to reject employability now because it is aligned with the norm cluster of sustainable development (with many other norms including those on environment, inclusion, gender, etc.), and most stakeholders have made commitments to achieve it. *Path dependency* of accepting sustainable development has pushed stakeholders to promote and internalise the norm of employability. Lifelong learning is also a part of the same cluster and promoted as a sustainable policy for education, with employability as one of its foremost objectives. Thus, for the stakeholders who are not convinced by the notion of orienting policies in favour of employability, options for reconsidering effective implementation are open but the possibilities for rejecting the norm look rather doubtful.

6. Conclusion

A comparative approach not only enables an understanding of the similarities and differences among certain entities, processes, or phenomena, and the reasons thereof, it also facilitates the identification and mapping of change linkages among variables. From the comparison of policy documents by key global policy actors over time, it is evident that ignoring the objective of employability in lifelong learning is not an option for stakeholders anymore. The key policy actors have ensured the

development and consolidation of employability as a global norm and have integrated it with the norm cluster (sustainable development). The strengthening and survival of these actors depends on the strengthening of such norm clusters and thus, they tend to weed out all stakeholders with intentions to do otherwise using strategies like performance measurement. Rejecting employability may amount to rejecting the idea of sustainability. Thus, the way forward for stakeholders who stand dissatisfied with the current notion of employability and its linkage with lifelong learning is either to influence the evolution of the norm in a favourable way or to wait for some other favourable norm to replace it. In the second case, the risk of being weeded out as unsustainable and thus irrelevant cannot be denied.

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ARE TEACHERS AGENTS OF CHANGE? TEACHER TRAINING AND THE GENDER DIMENSION IN ADULT EDUCATION: ITALY AND NIGERIA IN COMPARISON

Bolanle C. Simeon-Fayomi, Valentina Guerrini, Denise Tonelli

ABSTRACT: Adult education can play a fundamental role in changing existing gender hierarchies, breaking down gender stereotypes, and promoting gender equality. Teachers can be important agents of change, but they not only have to be aware of their behaviours, attitudes, and views, they also have to be able to understand the specific needs and interests of learners, to use gender-based methods, and to implement practices free of gender stereotypes. In order to do this, adequate education and training are needed, but both in Italy and Nigeria, gender issues are not part of the education and training curriculum, and much remains to be done for raising awareness of this issue.

1. Introduction

According to The Gender Equality Glossary and Thesaurus issued by the EIGE (2009), sex is defined as the «biological and physiological characteristics that define humans as female or male», whereas gender is related to the 'social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and the relationship between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men'. Therefore, when we talk about sex, we refer to characteristics biologically determined at birth; gender, in contrast, is related to categories and attributes that are socially constructed. Gender, like culture, is a human product, and it is continuously created and re-created by everyone, even unconsciously (Lorber, 1994; Connell, 2006). Roles and responsibilities associated with men and women can vary within and between cultures and change over time (UNESCO, 2015); they are determined in the family and in social and cultural contexts.

In spite of the considerable progress made, in many countries, women are still depicted as running the house and caring for children, whereas men are wage earners and protectors (European Parliament, 2013). According

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to Raghavendra (2014), it is at home and at school that the understanding of the relationships between men and women begins. But as much as education plays a fundamental role in contributing to social and cultural changes (Gender Equality Commission, 2015), it can also reflect and reproduce gender inequalities through teaching methods, school curricula, textbooks, and interactions within the classroom (Akpakwu & Bua, 2014).

That goes for all orders of school, from kindergarten to adult education. According to Akpan and Ita (2015), teachers are the most important component of any educational system because they have a key role to play in shaping the behaviour, thinking, and attitudes of the students in the teaching/learning situation. That is why teachers and educators must be qualified, trained, motivated, supported (UNESCO, 2015), and aware of their behaviours, attitudes, and views concerning gender. In order to perform their tasks in the best possible way, teachers need not only adequate education but also consistent pre-and in-service training.

Specifically in the field of adult education, the function of the teacher/facilitator is to help learners to live more successfully, that is, among other things, «to assist them to increase competence or negotiate transitions in their social roles» (Smith, 2007). This also means helping students to challenge gender constructions affected by political, cultural, economic, social, and religious factors, to name a few. In this field, teachers can really be agents of change, but competencies to address gender issues and encourage gender equality should be promoted through both pre-and in-service teacher training programmes (UNESCO, 2011).

This paper will take into consideration the profile of adult teachers/facilitators in Europe and Africa, considering the reality of two different countries where gender equality is still far from being achieved: Italy and Nigeria.

This work aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How are adult teachers/facilitators educated and trained in Italy and Nigeria?

RQ2: What role does gender education play in the pre- and in-service training curriculum?

The comparison will be conducted analysing documents and regulations at an international and national level. The first chapter will examine the main international gender policies and the way in which they have been transposed and implemented at national level in Italy and Nigeria.

The second chapter will take into account the adult education system in the two countries with particular reference to the public sector. First, pre-service and in-service training will be taken into account, and then gender issues will be analysed in depth.

In the third chapter, similarities and differences between the two countries will be outlined and finally, in the last chapter, the conclusions will be drawn.

2. The gender dimension in international policies

In international legislation, there are many references to education and training, which are both perceived as the most effective tools for achieving gender equality in the social and working context.

The 1979 Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Cedaw) is the most important legally binding international document on women's rights. It encourages countries to eliminate any stereotype concerning male and female roles at all levels and to promote mixed education and other forms of education that contribute to achieving this goal (Article 10). Gender equality is considered a cornerstone for human progress and sustainable development.

In the context of the global conferences on gender equality, the IV International Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995 is paramount: after female poverty, education and training are considered the second strategic intervention area. The goal is to eliminate, through empowerment and gender mainstreaming, the obstacles that prevent the improvement of the female condition.

Likewise, the 2000 Millennium Summit and the Fourth World Conference on Women, both held in New York, consider the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment priority objectives to be achieved by 2015.

But despite the improvements over the years, in 2015, on the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing conference, no country had yet achieved full gender equality. A cultural change to eradicate attitudes that maintain male superiority was still lacking; women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world.

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an action programme signed by 193 UN member countries, gender equality remains one of the priority goals for sustainable development, to be achieved by 2030.

The inter-relatedness of the different goals sends a strong message about the realisation of gender equality in different sectors. For example, gender equality in education cannot be achieved only through education-specific efforts; it also depends on interventions in other sectors. At the same time, progress toward gender equality in education can have important effects on equality in employment, health, and nutrition.

Furthermore, the Education 2030 Framework for Action, a tool to help the international community achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education, explicitly recognises gender equality as a guiding principle linked to the realisation of the right to education.

Moving now to Europe, the European Union has always made great efforts to promote gender equality in all sectors, introducing equal treatment legislation, gender mainstreaming, and specific measures for the ad-

vancement of women. When we talk about equal opportunities today, it is mainly because of the promotional role of the European Union, which has urged the Member States to legislate in this area. The Europe 2020 strategy and the European Pillar of Social Rights represent a good opportunity for the EU to consolidate its efforts in the field of gender equality.

The strategy for equality between women and men presented by the European Commission in September 2010, the European Commission's work programme from 2010 to 2015, is aimed to promote gender equality, which is seen as a turning point in economic growth and sustainable development. It provides for economic independence for women and men, equal pay for equal work, equality in decision-making processes, and the promotion of women's rights outside the European Union.

In 2010, the European Union adopted a charter of women's rights to increase equality between women and men in Europe and worldwide. It focuses on five key points: the economic independence of women, the equal representation of women in decision-making and power places, respect for the dignity and integrity of women, the end of all forms of violence, and finally action beyond the borders of the European Union.

After 2010, gender policies were reaffirmed and renewed in the 'Europe 2020' Strategy. In the new proposal, education and training remain central to promoting empowerment, development, and progress, and play a crucial role in meeting the many socio-economic, demographic, environmental, and technological challenges facing Europe and its citizens (Council of the European Union, 2009). In particular, for inclusive growth, the European Union underlines the need for lifelong learning for all, especially for women, who often stop working for family leave.

The triangle of training-employment-social inclusion is at the heart of many European policies aimed at promoting training, and especially lifelong learning, through the acquisition of new key competencies that guarantee the social inclusion of all the weakest sections of the population, including women. Europe is constantly questioning the institutions responsible for education and training, whose efforts must be aimed at promoting innovative methodologies, not at transferring and sharing knowledge between countries in and outside the union.

To sum up, much effort has been made, and gender mainstreaming has been embraced both at an international and national level, but gender equality is still far from being achieved although, in recent years, significant progress has been made.

Gender inequality remains, in fact, very much a reality in most societies: the World Economic Forum's 2018 Global Gender Gap Report states that, at the current pace, it will still require 108 years to achieve full parity globally, in the sense of having equal agency, equal access to resources, and equal power concerning decision-making between women and men.

3. The gender dimension in Italy

According to one of the fundamental principles of the Constitution of the Italian Republic, ratified in 1948, all citizens are equal before the law, «without distinction of gender, race, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions» (Art.3). The inclusion of gender equality among the Italian Republic's fundamental principles underlines the importance of this topic at the national level.

The Constitution indeed regulates gender equality in the main spheres of women's and men's life, and specific measures are adopted both to ensure equal treatment and rights and to promote equal opportunities between women and men (Art. 51).

Since its adoption in 1995, the Italian government has firmly supported the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with the main aim of removing any form of discrimination and developing gender-sensitive policies, with special attention to the phenomenon of violence against women and girls (Italian Government, 2014).

In 1996, the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council was established to highlight the national approach to equal opportunity issues and to coordinate actions aimed at the implementation of gender equality policies. Furthermore, the National Code for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, established in 2006, constitutes the legal framework on gender equality and introduced the principle of gender mainstreaming.

The European Report *Gender Differences in Educational Outcomes* (Eurydice, 2010) highlights how all countries, with some exceptions including Italy, carry out training activities for adults and students to educate them on the culture of respect and equality in school and to prevent gender discrimination.

In Italy, until 2010, there was no binding legislation to prevent gender stereotyping and discrimination because, as far as education is concerned, equality seems to be a reality: female enrolment in high school and university is higher than male enrolment, and women graduate in a shorter time and with better outcomes than men. As a number of studies underline (Ulivieri, 1996; Biemmi, 2010; Guerrini, 2015), teachers are not very aware of gender stereotypes at school and the importance of gender education because they think school is a neutral space that guarantees equal opportunities to all.

But in recent years, something has changed, and a number of measures have been implemented. Decree-Law n. 104 of 12 September 2013, which contains «urgent measures in the field of education' with reference to school staff training» (Art. 16), says that «in order to improve the teaching performance, there are training activities and mandatory updates of school staff with particular attention to increasing skills related

to education for affectivity, respect for diversity and gender equality, and overcoming gender stereotypes».

Similar indications can be found in Decree-Law n. 93 of August 2013, where attention is paid to the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, first and foremost trying to train the educational staff to raise awareness and to inform, also through textbooks, male and female students. Finally, the most important legislative reference is Law 107 of 2015, known as 'Buona Scuola' (good school), which forces all levels of schooling to prevent gender discrimination and gender violence, for instance through teacher training. Besides, the law sets forth that the three-year educational plan of each school has to ensure the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities, promoting education for gender equality at all school levels and the prevention of gender violence and all kinds of discrimination. Students, teachers, and parents have to be aware of the topics related to sexual or gender-based violence.

Other important tools are the National Operational Programmes (PON) administered by the Ministry of Education, University, and Research and funded by European Structural Funds. The PONs are intervention plans designed to help improve the educational system, and the principle of equality has been present from the very beginning of the project (Italian Government, 2014).

Moreover, gender equality is a transversal goal of Erasmus+, the European Programme to support not only education, training, youth, and sport but also teaching, research, networking and policy debate on EU topics.

However, there is no compulsory training in gender issues for teachers, trainers, and educators, so it still depends on individual initiative. Often women are more interested in the subject than men. However, the issue of gender education begins to be perceived as an indispensable prerequisite for the prevention of violence and the creation of equal relationships between men and women.

4. The gender dimension in Nigeria

In most developing countries of the world, issues around gender inequality are laced around the socio-cultural practice of the community, and this forms the basis of how gender is treated and addressed in each sector and activity. In Africa, and Nigeria specifically, the culture of patriarchy is deeply rooted, and men dominate all spheres of women's lives. Women are often in a subordinate position, particularly at the household and community level, and this permeates all activities and sectors (UNESCO, 2015).

The principle of equality is stated by the Nigerian constitution of 1999, which bans any form of discrimination based on origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties.

The first national machinery with a specific mandate for women's affairs in Nigeria, the National Commission for Women, was established by Decree in 1989. It was upgraded to a full-fledged Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in 1995 and was renamed Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development in 1999. The current name of the Ministry is Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, which is decentralised to local government structures through the Women in Development Units.

Besides, Nigeria adopted a National Gender Policy in 2006 to reduce gender inequality, not as an end in itself, but as a prerequisite for achieving 'peace, security, well-being and poverty reduction for all, including women' (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2016).

5. Adult education and teacher education and training

UNESCO (1976) defines adult education as

> […] the entire body of organised process whatever the content, level or method, formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, college and universities as well as apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviour in the two-fold perspectives of full personal development.

In this process, the teacher plays a key role in achieving high-quality education for all learners. As stated in the Nigerian National Policy in Education (2009), «no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers», in other words, teachers have an important role in any meaningful transformation (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Teachers are no longer seen as merely a source of knowledge but have the task of facilitating access to different forms of knowledge, both inside and outside the classroom (Bohan, 2015).

According to the definition of UNESCO, training is meant «to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviour and skills required for teaching at the relevant level».

The knowledge and skills acquired during the initial training are only the starting point in the professional career of teachers. Initial training and mentoring programmes enable teachers to develop their professional skills and establish useful links with the school environment. Continuous professional development provides teachers with the opportunity to improve their skills and adapt them to today's rapidly

changing environment (Commissione Europea, EACEA, & Eurydice, 2018). In its Communication on School Development and Excellence in Teaching to Start Life in the Right Way, the European Commission stresses the importance of teacher training for the quality of teaching, highlighting the role that collaborative work and continuous professional development can play (European Commission, 2018). It also highlights the need to provide specific support to teachers, especially during the early stages of their careers. Besides, «the stage at which newly trained teachers move from initial training to professional life is seen as crucial for further professional engagement and development and for reducing the number of teachers leaving the profession» (European Commission, 2013: 9).

6. Adult education in Italy: The Provincial Centres for Adult Education

In the field of adult education in Italy, there are both public and private institutions offering a range of courses for adult learners: non-profit associations, unions, church, folks universities, and universities of the third age. The Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIA), managed by the Ministry of Education, University, and Research, established by DPR 263/12 and D.I. 12.03.2015, are the main public structures specifically focused on the promotion of both formal and non-formal adult education activities.

They have been in operation since the school year 2014/15, when they replaced the Permanent Territorial Centres (CTP) of 1997 to meet the needs of «all adults without a compulsory school qualification, as well as those adults who, although they have obtained a qualification, intend again to involve themselves in the education and training system» (Ministerial Ordinance 455/1997, Art. 3, para. 2).

Unlike the CTPs, the new centres are independent educational institutions, structured by province; currently, there are 128 Provincial Centres for Adult Education operating in Italy.

They provide courses leading to certificates in compulsory education and secondary school qualifications but also courses to promote the enhancement of basic skills, foreign languages, and digital competencies, as well as literacy and Italian courses for foreigners. Students are citizens aged 16 and over. In the last few years, the number of displaced people attending the courses has increased as well because a certificate of proficiency in Italian at level A2 is required for obtaining a residence permit.

The courses are financed by public funds both at the European and national and regional level.

The centres employ teachers appointed by the Ministry of Education, University, and Research.

The staff consists of primary school teachers, who work on the literacy of foreigners, and secondary school teachers, who usually teach Italian, history and geography, mathematics and science, technology and foreign languages. A new teacher profile, with specific training in Italian as a second language, was introduced in 2016.

7. Teacher education and training in Italy

Teacher training in Italy varies by age group: nursery (3-5 years old) and primary school teachers (6-10 years old) have the same initial teacher training, whereas secondary school teachers (11-19 years old) have a different one.

Until 1998, only a four-year upper secondary school diploma was required to teach in primary schools. Currently, there is a specific and compulsory five-year degree programme. The curriculum includes courses and exams in pedagogy, didactics, intercultural pedagogy, and child psychology. Besides, in order to obtain professional teaching status, teachers must pass an examination at national level.

This innovation implies a different perception of the teacher's work, which is less and less considered a mission but increasingly considered a profession that requires practitioners to develop and refine their skills in the course of their life (Federighi & Boffo, 2014).

Secondary school teachers, in contrast, need a master's degree in a subject field as well as a certificate of attendance of a specific course in pedagogy and didactics.

The academic training curriculum of primary school teachers does not include mandatory gender-related exams; students can choose 'gender education' as a minor subject if offered by their university. Issues about gender discrimination and gender equality can be introduced in general and social pedagogy, but it depends on the sensibility of the lecturer and, in any case, it is not compulsory.

Even for secondary school teachers, gender education is not a compulsory subject in the specialisation course.

Both newly recruited primary and secondary teachers must complete a one-year training course that includes preparatory meetings, training workshops, peer-to-peer activities, and online training.

In general, each teacher in the probation year has a tutor, preferably of the same subject area.

At the end of the probation year, the teachers will have their final interview in front of an evaluation committee.

In law 107/2015, the Ministry of Education and Research states that teacher training is «compulsory, permanent, and structural», identifying nine national priorities to which the contents of the various actions

should be linked. Individual schools have the opportunity to decide how to provide in-service training, according to the three-year school project, but the number of hours per year is not defined.

In addition to the compulsory courses, teachers can participate in other training activities according to their interests. They can choose between different courses focused on intercultural education, didactics, special needs, technologies, and education. Gender-related courses are not very common, although in recent years, they are offered more often, also in online mode.

In fact, due to the incredible growth of gender violence, recent years have seen an increase in legislative proposals regarding gender education in schools. There are some initiatives at the local or regional level, which, however, remain isolated. Besides, there are many differences between the different parts of Italy. Recently, the Ministry of Education specified the main areas of in-service teacher training, which include the achievement of gender equality, inclusion and disability, failure and early school leaving.

In conclusion, at present, growing attention is paid to gender education, but the process is still very slow.

8. Adult education in Nigeria

The field of adult education in Nigeria has been neglected and under-explored, as in other British colonies, for a long time because both the colonial masters and the missionaries who brought education to Africa mainly dealt with formal education (Chijioke, 2010). In the post-independence period, the relevance of adult education was recognised especially concerning literacy (Obasi, 2014).

According to UNESCO, 35 million Nigerian adults are illiterate, and this has an impact both at the individual and societal level. Therefore, the state organises mainly literacy programs even though one of the goals of the National Gender Policy is to expand the scope of adult literacy and vocational training, regardless of gender, disability, and geographical location. In recent years, the government, in order to reduce unemployment, has given more importance to entrepreneurship courses, starting the Skill and Entrepreneurship Acquisition (SAED) programme, which offers a wide range of courses: agro-allied, automobile, beautification, construction, cosmetology, culture and tourism, film and photography, and the like.

Adult literacy courses are mainly organised by the Federal Ministry of Education in collaboration with the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, an agency of the Ministry. Literacy is considered critical both to economic development and to individual and community well-being. In 2017, the federal govern-

ment, through the Ministry of Education, established 780 adult education classes nationwide and employed adequate facilitators to run the programme (Aluko, 2017).

9. Teacher education and training in Nigeria

Although much progress has been made in recent years, a low entry standard of trainee teachers, fruitless pre-service training, and inadequate in-service training are still a reality in Nigeria's education (Fasoyiro, 2016). With regard to adult education, Ukwuaba (2015) points out that Nigeria has a shortage of teachers and that staff often does not have qualifications or proper training. Sometimes adult education institutions have no choice but to use anybody as an adult educator. This has a major impact on the quality of teaching.

The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) and the Nigerian Union of Teachers are working hard for the registration, accreditation, and certification of the teachers and to reduce the number of uncertified teachers in an effort to promote professionalism (Fareo, 2015).

Since 1998, the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) has been the minimum qualification required for primary school teachers and junior secondary school teachers; it can be achieved at a College of Education after three years of study and, in terms of level, it is comparable to one year of a bachelor's degree in education.Teachers working in a senior secondary school need a bachelor's degree in education or a bachelor's degree in a subject field combined with a postgraduate diploma in education (Nuffic, 2017).

Newly recruited teachers are supervised during the first year by an experienced professional mentor, who helps them with both subject knowledge development and professional practice. In addition, during the first few (induction) years, teachers are assigned a mentor in the school where they are appointed (Fasoyiro, 2016) in order to develop a professional identity. Other forms of support are provided through education experts or peer networks (Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ekpefa-Abdullahi, 2015).

Even though teachers for all levels of the educational system shall be professionally trained, as stated in the National Policy on Education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2014), there are no specific gender-related courses.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) specifies gender-related topics to be present at all levels of education, including gender-sensitive learning environments, gender roles in society and culture, gender equality, gender gaps (meaning, causes, and ways of closing gaps). Besides, the Nigerian teacher education curriculum was revised in 2012, in part to address gender issues (Unterhalter, Poole, & Winters, 2015).

Continuing professional development of teachers comes from various sources and agencies and in various forms. There are different institu-

tions that are responsible for providing professional training for teachers: universities, colleges of education, the National Teachers Institute, schools of education in polytechnics, the National Mathematical Centre, and the National Institute of Nigerian Languages (Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ekpefa-Abdullahi, 2015). Also, each state/province organises periodic training and assessment exercises for teachers, which form the basis of their promotion from one level to another (Fareo, 2013).

Two models of in-service training for teachers in Nigeria are most commonly used (Oyebade, 2008): the workshop model, that is, the most common form of continuing professional development, and the school-based teacher professional support model. In this second case, activities may include direct classroom support by the facilitators and supervisors, staff meetings involving head-teachers and teachers, demonstration lessons by teacher-educators or mentors, and visits to the school by mentors (if external).

Additionally, in-service programmes are provided through distance learning. The National Teachers Institute, a distance education college, for example, provides courses for the continuing professional development of teachers (Amadi, 2013).

10. Two countries in comparison

When it comes to gender equality, the two countries considered here, Italy and Nigeria, are at the bottom of the list, one in Europe and the other in Africa, despite the fact that gender equality is one of the fundamental principles of their respective constitutions. Furthermore, the gender perspective plays an important role in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of policies, and different laws have been issued to guarantee equal opportunities and to promote women's empowerment. It should be noted that both countries have a political authority that deals with gender equality and equal opportunities. In theory, therefore, all the conditions for men and women to have equal rights and opportunities are in place, but in reality this is not the case: the transformation of cultures and practices remains a challenge.

11. Education and training of teachers in Italy and Nigeria

As already noted, education has a fundamental role in creating awareness and challenging gender stereotypes, but in both Italy and Nigeria, there is still much to be done to train teachers to be agents of change.

In both countries, the professional preparation of teachers does not generally provide effective approaches, techniques, and methods of intervention specifically aimed at adults.

In Italy, a university degree is needed to teach adults in a public institution, whereas in Nigeria, the minimum qualification is a Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE), equivalent in terms of level to one year of a bachelor's degree in education.

Besides, Nigeria has a shortage of qualified teachers and tries to solve the problem by requiring teachers to upgrade their qualifications. In this regard, it should be noted that even in Italy, it was possible to teach adults with a four-year high school diploma until 1998.

In the first years of service, in both countries there is a special focus on teachers and their training, as if the first years of work were a test to demonstrate whether the training received was functional or not. In Nigeria, the role of peers and the figure of a tutor or mentor is particularly strong and important, especially in the first years of service, whereas in Italy, this figure is not as influential and important as in Nigeria: Mentoring is limited only to the first year of teaching, and the mentor is more a formal role than a reference point for the newly recruited teacher.

12. Gender education in the teacher training curriculum

In teacher education, both in Italy and Nigeria, gender education is not compulsory; its inclusion in the curriculum depends on the sensitivity of lecturers. It has only been in recent years that both countries have focused on a gender-based training of teachers, mainly because of the high number of gender-based assaults, but gender education has not officially entered the training curriculum of teachers. In-service training, although compulsory, does not include gender education either. The topics of the in-service courses are chosen by the teachers, which means everything depends on personal sensitivity. This reveals a lack of awareness in both countries regarding gender issues and the need to enable teachers to combat stereotypes and prejudices that have taken root in society.

In both countries, it is mainly the Ministry of Education that organises and gives directives on the subjects of in-service training courses, even though other bodies, public or private, may offer training courses to teachers. These courses are mainly carried out through lessons and, above all, through workshops, where the teachers, often in small groups, work together to produce didactic activities and simulate lessons. Increasingly, updates are provided in blended forms or online to help overcome differences between different parts of the countries or between different educational institutions.

Neither of the two countries has a history and tradition of gender-based teacher training, because gender issues were not covered, at least not until now. In Italy, things have been changing since 2015, and there are now national indications to introduce gender training, but in Nigeria, this aspect is still struggling to get off the ground.

13. Conclusions

Gender discrimination does not appear to be such an urgent and important problem, neither in Italy nor in Nigeria, especially in the world of education and teacher training.

In both countries, gender sensitivity and gendered instructions are found to be based on the teacher's perception of 'what is'. There are no guidelines or rules on gender issues in classrooms. Invariably, the issue of differentiation and closing the achievement gap between female and male learners has not been addressed. The gender brain difference and its impact on instruction and learning have not been emphasised either. The issues of nature and nurture, school dropout, discipline, behavioural disorder, and learning disabilities are not handled by gender. Studies have shown that the male learner needs more space to learn, is not as good in reading and writing as the female learner, and tends to be more physical, whereas the female learner multitasks better. It must be acknowledged, therefore, that there are different behavioural management and learning needs. To effectively tackle this, the teacher should be given several days per year to be trained and retrained to acquire skills and gain knowledge to handle gender issues in classrooms and to really become an agent of change.

In both countries, much remains to be done, especially in the initial phase for raising awareness on the issues. Teacher training, in general, reflects a country's political and social commitment, revealing how much more needs to be done at the political and educational levels to raise awareness of the issue of gender inequalities. Gender education is not only useful when there is an episode of discrimination of marginalisation but should become a fundamental part of the training path, pre- and in-service, of teachers and other professionals in the adult education sector.

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FOSTERING CRITICAL REFLECTION IN THE FRAME OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN ADULT EDUCATION: ITALIAN AND NIGERIAN COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES

Tajudeen Akinsooto, Concetta Tino, Monica Fedeli

ABSTRACT: Critical reflection (CR) is an important process for making decisions on complex issues that influence individuals and societal life. The ability to inform our perceptions and thoughts through the results of critical reflection on our assumptions is fundamentally important in order to face the challenges connected to adult life (Kreber, 2012). Under the perspective of transformative learning (Mezirow & Associates, 2000), the paper discusses the similarities and differences between the ways in which the Italian and Nigerian higher education systems support students' critical reflection. The results show how the two systems are on the right track to implementing the process at the micro and meso levels.

1. Introduction

Critical reflection is one of the important elements of transformative learning. It brings about fundamental change in one's beliefs or assumptions. It mostly occurs when there is an understanding of thoughts, feelings, and actions that are contradictory (Taylor, 2009). It «requires us to ponder our practices, processes and identities. It also requires us to look beyond our own circumstances to the external factors, policies, and people that might influence the choices we make and the actions we take» (Sutherland, 2013: 111). It enables individuals to better understand their own professionalism through experience (Lucas, 2012). Bringle and Hatcher (1999) explain that critical reflection leads individuals to examine and question their personal beliefs, opinions, and values through observation, questioning, and the connection of facts, ideas, and experiences to derive new meaning. Fook (2015) sees critical reflection as a process that has two aspects: reflective analysis and change. Fook further explains that it is reflective analysis, especially of power relations, that leads to change motivated by a new understanding of that analysis.

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The role of critical reflection has been recognised in education, particularly in higher education. It is a teaching approach that is important in fostering emancipatory transformative learning (Freire & Marcedo, 1995). Its goal is to help learners «rediscover power and develop an awareness of agency to transform society and their own reality» (Taylor, 2008: 8). Fook (2015) asserts that «the aim of critical reflection is to assist the learner to unearth and unsettle assumptions (particularly about power) and thus to help identify a new theoretical basis from which to improve and change a practice situation» (Fook, 2015: 446). It fosters integration between theories and practices which promotes students' learning and self-confidence (Lucas, 2012). It enables learners to connect theoretical knowledge obtained in the classroom with practice (Brooks, Harris, & Clayton, 2010); when this happens, it is called applied learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Schwartzman & Henry, 2009). Applied learning is important because «theoretical knowledge without practical application creates the Ivory Tower intellectual incompetent to face the everyday challenges of life» (Schwartzman & Henry, 2009: 5). Shandomo (2010) asserts that critical reflection «facilitates introspective learning from values, beliefs, knowledge, and experiences that contribute to perspectives of one's self, other people, and the world» (Shandomo, 2010: 103). It brings about individual development through awareness of self, the community, and of one's capacities (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999). Learning outcomes associated with critical reflection include thinking, learning, and the assessment of self and social systems (Smith, 2011).

Given the above arguments, this paper discusses, at different levels and based on comparative methodology, the similarities and the differences between how the Italian and Nigerian higher education systems support students' critical reflection, a major element of transformative learning. This paper seeks to provide answers to the following questions in the context of comparing Italy and in Nigeria:

- Do teachers/educators encourage learners' critical reflection?
- How does the institutional context support or inhibit innovative ways of teaching?

2. Theoretical framework

The theory of transformative learning was developed by Jack Mezirow in the 1970s and 1980s. According to Mezirow (1997), transformative learning theory presents the nature of adult learning as a composition of ideal conditions. These conditions are: «transforming frames of reference through critical reflection of assumptions, validating contested beliefs, through discourse, taking action on one's reflective insight, and critically assessing it» (Mezirow, 1997: 11). Mezirow (2009) explains that transfor-

mative learning is the «learning that transforms problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change» (Mezirow, 2009: 22). He defines a frame of reference as 'a predisposition with cognitive, affective, and conative (striving) dimensions' through which learning occurs among adults by «elaborating existing meaning schemes, learning new meaning schemes, transforming meaning schemes, and transforming meaning perspectives» (Mezirow, 2009: 22). It is through critical reflection that frames of reference are transformed (Mezirow, 1997). Frames of reference are structures of assumptions and expectations through which individuals make sense of their world, including associations, concepts, values, feelings, and conditioned responses (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2008). He identifies two dimensions of a frame of reference: a habit of mind and a point of view. A habit of mind refers to the broad predispositions individuals use to understand experience, whereas a point of view refers to a cluster of meaning schemes (Cranton, 2005). Mezirow (1991) defines a meaning scheme as «the particular knowledge, beliefs, value judgments, and feelings that become articulated in an interpretation» and defines a meaning perspective as «a habitual set of expectations that constitutes an orienting frame of reference that we use in projecting our symbolic models and that serves as a belief system for interpreting and evaluating the meaning of experience» (Mezirow, 1991: 42). He identifies three types of meaning perspectives: an epistemic meaning perspective, which deals with how knowledge is acquired and how it is being used; a sociolinguistic meaning perspective, which focuses on how individuals perceive social norms, culture, and the use of language; a psychological meaning perspective, which encompasses a person's self-concept, personality, emotional responses, and images and dreams (Cranton, 2005).

Transformative learning is cognitive or logical in nature. In this case, it could be seen as a philosophy that deals with how adults learn to reason. It could bring about dramatic changes, or change could be incremental, which may involve objective or subjective reframing (Mezirow, 2009). Taylor (2009) identifies two theoretical frameworks for transformative learning: the first views transformative learning as personal transformation and growth while the second views transformative learning as personal and social transformation. In both frameworks, Taylor explains the role of critical reflection with regards to learning. In the first framework, it leads to self-critique and brings about greater understanding of one self in relation to others; in the second, critical reflection leads to ideological critique and brings about greater understanding of power and political consciousness for personal and societal transformation.

Cranton (2005) defines transformative learning as «the process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, per-

meable, and better validated» (Cranton, 2005: 630). It is the «process of constructing and appropriating new and revised interpretations of an experience in the world» (Taylor, 2008). Wang and King (2006) explain that the fundamental change in perspective that changes the way adults perceive and engage with the world is the main focus and strength of transformative learning. It is described as learning that changes the way individuals think about themselves and their world, and that involves a shift of consciousness (Corley, 2008).

According to Mezirow (2009), transformative learning involves ten phases:

> a disorienting dilemma, that is, a particular life event or life experience such as the death of a loved one or a job change; self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame; a critical assessment of assumption; recognition that others have gone through similar process, however painful it may be; exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions; planning a course of action; acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan, provisional trying of new roles, building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions by one's new perspective (Mezirow, 2009: 19).

Taylor (1998) explains that there are three core elements of transformative learning: individual experience, critical reflection, and dialogue. However, other elements that are of great importance have evolved over time: a holistic orientation, awareness of context, and an authentic practice (Taylor, 2009). Critical reflection is the focus of this work and, according to Taylor (2009), it refers to «questioning the integrity of deeply held assumptions and beliefs based on prior experience» (Taylor, 2009: 7). Reflection is «the process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience» (Mezirow, 1991: 104). According to Mezirow, content reflection refers to an examination of the content or description of a problem; process reflection involves checking on the problem-solving strategies that are being used, whereas premise reflection leads the learner to a transformation of meaning perspectives.

Corley (2008) suggest that adult educators can foster transformative learning in their classes by creating a climate that supports transformative learning, knowing their students and the types of learning activities that most appeal to them, and developing and using learning activities that explore and expose different points of view.

3. Case studies of Italy and Nigeria

The two case studies were performed in the comparative group work that took place during the 2019 Winter School programme of the IN-

TALL project. Early on in the group discussion, it was highlighted how the two contexts – the university of Padua in Italy and Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria – are on the right track to implementing the practice of critical reflection among students at micro and meso levels, even though some improvements are still necessary. Promoting critical reflection among younger generations means to provide them with the possibility to not only constantly question their assumptions and their habits of mind – consisting of value judgements, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings – through which they interpret the world but also to develop critical thinking. In this sense, a transformative teaching process can become a way to promote new attitudes of learning and changes through which learners interact with environments, using autonomous and responsible thinking. That is precisely the responsibility of adult education: helping people to become autonomous thinkers and to be able to negotiate their own values, beliefs, and meanings instead of acting uncritically. «Becoming critically reflective of one's own assumptions is the key to transforming one's taken for granted frame of reference, an indispensable dimension of learning for adapting to change» (Mezirow, 1997: 9). Therefore, to ensure significant adult learning requires teachers/educators to have the ability to select appropriate educational practices based on the definition of learning needs, to set educational objectives, materials and methods, and to evaluate learners' growth using innovative methods.

For long time, based on a traditional teaching and learning perspective, supporting learners' transformative learning through the critical reflection practice has often been considered a time-consuming activity, but something is changing in the contexts of education and training.

4. The case of University of Padua

In response to EU recommendations (2011, 2013) a process of change is being registered in the Italian academic context, where some universities are questioning their role in society, a change strongly reflected in their teaching practices and methodologies. Specifically, at the University of Padua, a systemic new and transformative process is happening within the different departments. In fact, in the past, the use of innovative teaching strategies and the development of creative learning environments rarely happened and depended on the individuals' actions, without generating any important impact on academic culture; but now significant and original change is occurring. In 2016, a group of instructors in the engineering department, faced by increasing dropout from their courses, started questioning their teaching methods and wanted to introduce new teaching strategies. This move initiated a bottom-up process of change, which year after year influenced all

university departments, evolving into a model of faculty professional development called *Teaching4Learning@Unipd* (T4L), with pedagogy professor Monica Fedeli serving as scientific coordinator. The model – built on *Active Learning* and student-centered approaches, on sharing and dialogical processes, and peer/feedback observations (Fedeli & Tino, 2019) – is designed to promote the improvement of teaching methodology and the development of a *Faculty Learning Community (FLC)* and to generate peer learning, action research, and a continuous process of innovation. The FLC is a community well supported by the *Change Agents,* a group of interdepartmental faculty who received upper-level training in their role of promoting a culture of change in their departments, supporting new faculty and those colleagues who want to innovate and share their teaching practices as well (Fedeli, 2019). It has been a process of change that has promoted two levels of awareness: at the micro level, because it has helped the professors involved to reflect on ways of changing their teaching and learning perspective; at the meso level, because these professors identified strong connections between their practices and the academic cultural and political system. It has been a process of change that saw the *Change Agents* as a group of 'middle managers' who by means of bottom-up activities started to develop some innovative proposals and asked the academic system to implement some new policies. These policies have enabled the investment of a relevant amount of money in teaching innovation at the University of Padua, achieving a significant impact on the revision of teaching practices, which are now more focused on some key aspects of the active learning perspective:

- learner-centered teaching approach;
- self-directed learning;
- participatory methods;
- facilitating small and large group discussion;
- formative feedback;
- assessment for learning;
- positive relationship between teachers and students;
- introduction of new technology to support interactive didactics.

These are all meaningful and interactive strategies that require to support students' reflection. Participation, discussions, and interactions are authentic practices that inevitably promote students' reflection on their own beliefs, thoughts, and assumptions.

This important transformative process of changing teaching practices at the University of Padua has already involved more than six hundred professors. Even if this is a relevant outcome, some more efforts need to be made to involve also that part of the faculty that still uses a traditional approach marked by the predominance of lectures and content delivery,

a low level of student participation with the teacher in the active role and students in the passive role, and an overall formal relationship between teachers and students. This traditional approach was often highlighted during the T4L programme, where the use and subsequent discussion of the *Teaching Perspectives Inventory* (Pratt & Collins, 2000) helped participants become aware of their traditional teaching and learning perspectives, encouraging them to make more conscious methodological choices and changes as well. In this perspective, the main purpose of the T4L programme is to involve the whole community of faculty, and to generate a systematic innovative impact as a new 'ID-University Card'. It is a process that is generously supported by institutional policy, as evident in the annual substantial financial investment on the teachers' training: one million euros per year.

5. The case of Obafemi Awolowo University

The role of teacher education in the development of a nation cannot be overemphasised. This is because the productivity of an educational system depends to a large extent on the quality of its teachers, which is in turn determined by the quality of its teacher education programme. Teacher education deals with the training and re-training of teachers for a nation's educational system. It is the process of preparing, training, and educating a prospective teacher for role performance in a teaching-learning situation (Ekpiken & Ukpabio, 2014). It is a specialised area of education that is concerned with policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and skills needed for effective and efficient functioning in the classroom, school, and wider society (Esu, 1995). It is the 'professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work in accordance to the need of the society at any point in time' (Osuji, 2009). Ekpiken and Ukpabio (2014) argue that teacher education is a catalyst for sustainable national development. This is because it trains a nation's manpower, who in turn utilises the human and material resources for the transformation and development of the nation.

As stated in the National Policy on Education, teacher education in Nigeria includes pre-service training and in-service training (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2008). Pre-service training refers to training or education received before the commencement of teaching services (Osuji, 2009). The National Policy on Education further states that induction shall be part of the teacher education programme in the country. Specifically, the policy states that «all newly recruited teachers shall undergo a formal process of induction» (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2008:

40). This function is carried out by the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), an agency of the Federal Ministry of Education.

In Nigeria, teacher education is offered by different educational institutions, such as colleges of education, universities, and the National Teachers Institute. The colleges of education (public and private) and NTI award the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), which is the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession. The universities as well as the NTI offer postgraduate diplomas, degrees, master's (research and professional), and doctorates in different areas of education.

Ekpiken and Ukpabio (2014) explain that teacher education in Nigeria is based on two basic models: the consecutive model and the concurrent model. According to the consecutive model, «a teacher first obtains a qualification in one or more subjects and then studies for a three- or four-years period for the first degree depending on the entry qualification» (Ekpiken & Ukpabio, 2014: 586). In the concurrent model, «the student teacher simultaneously studies one or more academic subjects with various methods of teaching and professional courses leading to the award of bachelor's in education» (Ekpiken & Ukpabio, 2014: 586).

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2008), the goals of teacher education shall be to:

1. produce highly motivated, conscientious, and efficient classroom teachers at all levels of our education system;
2. further encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
3. help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;
4. provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing situations;
5. enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2008: 39).

In order to regulate and control the teaching profession at all levels in the country, both in the public and private sectors, the Federal Government of Nigeria established the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) by TRCN Decree No. 31 of 1993 (now TRCN Act CAP T3 of 2004). The TRCN Act (2004), therefore, categorised teachers in the country into four classes:

A- Class: Holders of a Ph.D. in education or a Ph.D in a different field plus education (i.e., a post-graduate diploma in education);

B- class: Holders of a master's degree in education or a master's degree in a different field plus education (i.e., a post-graduate diploma in education);

C- class: Holders of bachelor's degree in education or a bachelor's degree in a different field plus education (i.e., a post-graduate diploma in education);

D- class: Holders of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) or its equivalent.

Teaching practice is an important component of the teacher education programme in Nigeria. It gives student teachers the opportunity to develop and improve their professional practice in the context of the real classroom under the guidance and supervision of a trained teacher and their lecturers (Azeem, 2011). During teaching practice, pre-service teachers are able connect theory with practice. It enables pre-service teachers to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). From the framework of transformative learning, Yost, Sentner & Forlenza-Bailey (2000) identified two important elements for critical reflection to take place: structured field experience under the guidance of a coach and a knowledge-base in education that enables pre-service teachers to connect knowledge with experiences. These two elements are present in the teaching practice exercise that student teachers undergo as part of their professional training programme.

6. Comparison of the case studies: Differences and similarities

The following comparison is based on the preparatory report that each student presented during the comparative group work (CGW), which is part of the intensive programme that each year brings together many international students in Wurzburg. In February 2019, that programme was part of the INTALL project, which is managed by a European consortium. During the international CGW, four countries were involved in the discussion: Nigeria, Italy, Turkey, and the Netherlands. Even if this chapter was written in line with the comparative process developed within the CGW, only two cases were considered: Italy and Nigeria.

Before presenting the analysis of the differences and similarities between the two case studies, it is useful to specify what comparative research is. According to Charters and Hilton (1989), comparative research is not about placing data 'side by side' (Charters & Hilton, 1989: 3) but rather about understanding and interpreting the reasons for and meaning of similarities and differences between phenomena. It is a process that leads to interpreting similarities and differences on the basis of interrelating the contexts at different levels (Egetenmeyer, 2017). According to this perspective, the discussion that took place during the 2019 Winter School intensive programme highlighted two important common categories of comparison for the Italian and Nigerian contexts: a) the teaching methods; and b) the role of the

educator. During the in-depth discussion, each category was broken down in sub-categories (Table 1).

Table 1 – Comparison of Italian and Nigerian universities by two main categories. [Source: Authors'own]

Categories	Sub-categories	Italian university	Nigerian university
Teaching methods	Use of online platform	√	√
	Fields visits	√	√
	Group discussions	√	√
	Role play	√	√
	Peer-learning/feedback	√	
Role of the educator	Questioning	√	√
	Supportive	√	√
	Open to discussion	√	
	Facilitator	√	√
	Mentor in mentorship system		√
	Vertical (formal) relationship	√	√
	Horizontal (informal) relationship	√ (few)	√ (more)

In the juxtaposition of *teaching methods* and *role of the educator* at the two universities, it seems there are more similarities than differences. In both contexts, participatory teaching practices are the main feature of the teaching approach based on, above all, two types of *teaching methods*:

- 'in-class' activities, such as *group discussions* and *role play*. They are practices that transform the students' and teachers' role in the classroom; they give all of them both voice and responsibility, generating a power balance in the teaching and learning process laying the ground for a self-directed learning approach. As mentioned in section 2.1, teachers at the University of Padova have been paying more and more attention to this kind of leaning environment since 2016, thanks to the T4L programme. However, for an overview of teaching methods in Italian academia, it is important to highlight that the CGW discussion that there are different level of didactic innovation at the various Italian universities: some teachers use only a traditional teaching approach; some use a mixed teaching approach; others use active learning didactics occasionally; and a few teachers make the effort to implement participatory learning and teaching practices on a daily basis.
- 'Out of the school' activities such as the use of the *online platform* and *field visits*. At both universities, the *online platform* is provided as a space

where students can open discussions, share materials, complete group work (collaborative wiki work, workshop, Padlet group activities, glossary, etc.) and where, sometimes, teachers provide learning material in order to design flipped classroom activities. These are activities that students can complete outside of the classroom and from everywhere according to their personal needs. Other important outside activities are *field visits*; they are proof that the two institutions try to connect formal and informal learning, and to raise awareness of the societal changes and needs as well. For instance, at the University of Padova, many teachers developed the Work-Related Learning (WRL) programme, which emphasises cooperation with employers to integrate generic skills development into the curriculum (Frison *et al.*, 2016). In Nigeria, Students Industrial Work Experience (SIWES) for engineering students, residency and internship programmes for medical and nursing/pharmacy students, and Teaching Practice Exercise for education students exist as part of the approved minimum academic standards in the various degree programmes for all the Nigeria universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics.

Concerning teaching methods, the difference between the two case studies is the use of peer learning/feedback. In fact, while at the Nigerian university, this learning practice is not used as a teaching strategy, at the University of Padova, many teachers, above all of in the field of education, are implementing it. An Italian study investigating this strategy showed how students benefit from the peer feedback process, not only in terms of learning and understanding but also in terms of becoming more responsible protagonists of their own learning process (Grion & Tino, 2018).

With regard to the second category, the explicative sub-categories, related to *the role of the educator,* are strictly connected to the first one. At both universities, in fact, the dominant presence of the participatory approach is connected to the *role of the educator* as a supportive and facilitator for students, always ready to question his/her teaching and aware that teaching methods need to be constantly improved. Even if the two categories are connected, there are some differences at the two universities in terms of how the *role of the educator* manifests itself. The Italian context is marked by the educator's openness to discussion; an informal relationship between teachers and students is found only in a few cases, and the role of *mentor in the mentorship system* is never mentioned. This means that in Italy, the discussions are generally focused on the content of the course and rarely on personal dimensions, and that the transformation of the educator into mentor requires more cultural change. At the Nigerian university, the cited dimensions show the opposite picture: the dominance of the *informal relationship,* together with the role of edu-

cator as *mentor,* reflects the presence of a *mentorship system*. Moreover, in Nigeria, there is more of an informal relationship between educators and learners. This is because Nigerian society is known for communal living, which promotes human connections whereby people who are not immediate family members are seen as part of one's larger family. However, it is the formal relationship that opens the path towards informal relationships. Moreover, educators still remain the providers of course contents.

7. Lesson learned

In order to investigate the level of teaching innovation connected to supporting students' critical reflection and the role of Italian and Nigerian institutions, this paper discussed two main categories that emerged during the CGW of the 2019 Winter School: *teaching methods* and *the role of the educator.* Applying the comparative categories revealed many similarities and few differences between the two cases (see paragraph 5), but these seem to originate from both common and different factors. Even if the shared feature of teaching methods at the two universities can be identified in institutional policy support (meso level), it has a different origin. In fact, in Nigeria, institutional policy seems to be intertwined with Nigerian society at large, which is characterised by communal living promoting human connections. This is because effective programme planning and implementation – in this case, a teacher education programme – is based on a continuous exploration of contextual factors such as knowledge about the people, the organisation, and the wider environment (socio-economic, cultural, and political climate) (Caffarella, 2002). This means that next to the formal teachers' training programmes, there is a consistent cultural dimension that facilitates the use of participatory teaching methods to create a *mentorship system* and to support a more informal relationship between teachers and learners. It seems that the idea of a traditional community involving the intergenerational exchange of know-how as a natural process still exists. This finding may also be interpreted as showing the small influence of globalization. In Italy, institutional support finds its origins not only in the innovative attitude of the University of Padua (meso level), in which the T4L programme finds its roots, but also in European policy recommendations (EC, 2011; 2013) (mega level), which constantly invite member states to innovate teaching practices for promoting European citizenship development through students' lifelong learning attitude. This is a dimension that is inevitably promoted by the connection between formal and informal learning and participatory methods based on critical reflection practices. In fact, group discussions, peer/feedback/learning, and role play are practices that involve students in a reflective process that impact their assumptions and premises.

In both countries, the role of the educator is also strongly related to political and cultural dimensions. In fact, in both countries, the role of the educator is influenced by the teachers' political training: at the meso level in Nigeria, and at the meso and mega levels in Italy. In addition, in Nigeria, a cultural dimension plays a strong role concerning this aspect; in fact, in this country, the strong communal living perspective has led to the dominance of horizontal relationships between students and teachers, and it seems to be identified as a natural characteristic of teaching methods. In Italy, where for a long time the formal relationship has controlled learning environments, the shift from a formal to an informal relationship is happening in some contexts and is often connected to the teachers' educational background and training as well as their personal attitudes.

This analysis produced answers to both the first research question – «Do teachers/educators encourage learners' critical reflection?» – by identifying the introduction of participatory methods as a way to support students' critical reflection in both academic contexts; and to the second research question – «How does the institutional context support or inhibit innovative teaching methods». In fact, in both countries, there are political actions related to the implementation of teacher training regulations that are determined at meso and macro level in Nigeria (the National Policy on Education, Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria), where the education system encourages the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers, helps them to fit into the social life of the community in order to achieve national goals; and at meso, macro, and mega level in Italy, where the national education system is created according to a European perspective (EC, 2011, 2013) that includes the innovation of teaching approaches.

The overall result of this comparative analysis shows how the two countries with different cultural and political systems respond to teaching innovation as a common and current issue.

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PART III

PROJECTS AND PRACTICES FROM ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

ADVERTISING ADULT EDUCATION OFFERINGS IN A PORTUGUESE QUALIFICA CENTRE USING SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS

Geraldine Silva

ABSTRACT: In the context of adult education, Qualifica Centres throughout Portugal are responsible for the dissemination of adult education pathways available to adult learners. There is a huge variety of dissemination tools. Leaflets, informational notes in the region's newspapers, establishment of partnerships, advertising spots on the radio, and the use of social networks are some of the methods used by centres. This paper on good practices outlines the advertising efforts made by the Qualifica Centre of Azambuja using social networking, specifically the centre's Facebook account, and their results.

1. General framework

The Qualifica Centre of the public school of Azambuja is a Portuguese adult education provider.

The centre is located in the town of Azambuja, in the suburban area of the district of Lisbon, and covers the municipalities of Azambuja, Alenquer, and Cartaxo. However, at the end of 2016, the two latter counties were given their own Qualifica Centres, operated by public providers. By 2011, the municipality of Azambuja had 21,814 registered inhabitants.

In terms of economic activity, according to the National Institute of Statistics, in 2011 the distribution of the employed population was as follows: 3.7 per cent worked in the primary sector (involving extraction and/or production of raw materials), 25.3 per cent in the secondary sector (involving the transformation of raw materials into goods), and 71 per cent in the tertiary sector (involving providing services to consumers and businesses).

The most relevant economic activity sectors by volume of business are wholesale and retail, manufacturing, transport and warehousing, administrative and support services, and accommodation and catering. As for the existing needs of qualification, 9.3 per cent of the population of Azambuja have no basic schooling, 57.5 per cent of the population have a basic level of education, and 18.6 per cent have a secondary education degree.

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Geraldine Silva, *Advertising Adult Education Offerings in a Portuguese Qualifica Centre using Social Networking Tools*, pp. 183-190, © 2020 Author(s), CC BY 4.0 International, DOI 10.36253/978-88-5518-155-6.12, in Regina Egetenmeyer, Vanna Boffo, Stefanie Kröner (edited by), *International and Comparative Studies in Adult and Continuing Education*, © 2020 Author(s), content CC BY 4.0 International, metadata CC0 1.0 Universal, published by Firenze University Press (www.fupress.com), ISSN 2704-5781 (online), ISBN 978-88-5518-155-6 (PDF), DOI 10.36253/978-88-5518-155-6

The low levels of qualification that exist in the area reinforce the need for the secondary school of Azambuja to be an adult education provider with the existence of a Qualifica Centre in the school's facilities.

Concerning professional fields, as stated in the internal annual report of Azambuja's Qualifica Centre, the need to provide for the qualification of the active population is even more evident. Qualification needs are evident in areas such as logistics, commerce, electricity and energy, hospitality, and catering, directly related to the most relevant sectors of economic activity in the region and in transversal areas of emerging importance such as audiovisuals and multimedia production and social work and guidance.

Created by decree no. 232/2016 of the Ministry of Education and Labour, Solidarity, and Social Security, the Qualifica Centre of the secondary school of Azambuja began its activity in mid-October of 2016. The adult education centre transitioned from a Centre for Qualification and Vocational Training to a Qualifica Centre, offering the population the following training and qualification pathways, whose information is available on the website of the National Agency for the Qualification and Vocational Training:

- processes of recognition, validation, and certification of competences at a basic and secondary school level, consisting in recognition of prior learning.
- Processes of recognition, validation, and certification of basic and secondary vocational skills in the areas of logistics and commerce.
- Adult education and training courses (EFA courses) for the primary and secondary level, aiming at a school certification.
- Certified modular courses in cooperation with private training providers.

The Qualifica Centre of Azambuja requires the following human resources: one coordinator, two technicians for the orientation, recognition, and validation of competences, and a team of trainers who are teachers at the basic and secondary school of Azambuja.

This centre is intended for all those seeking a qualification, with a view to continuing their education and/or transitioning to the labour market, namely young adults aged 18 or over and adults from the age of 23 onwards.

One of the major goals continues to be the will to contribute to the upskilling of Azambuja's qualification level, both by guiding young adults to a more adequate and conscious training and by offering adults the most adequate training according to their profile and needs.

Our action does not focus on a target audience with very specific characteristics. However, so far, many of the individuals who have enrolled in our centre are young people between the ages of 18 and 23 and

adults with no secondary education completed, or workers with precarious employment contracts.

2. Challenges

The Centres for Qualification and Vocational Training and Qualifica Centres benefit from funding from the European Social Fund through an application to the Operational Human Capital Programme.

In order to monitor the degree of execution of the contracted goals, the Centre for Qualification and Vocational Training and Qualifica Centres are responsible for fully registering the entire centre's activity in the Integrated Information and Management System for Educational and Training Pathways platform. This consists of a digital programme coordinated by the General Directorate of Statistics of Education and Science for the management of the network of educational and training offers of young and adult trajectories.

In the last monitoring report of the Azambuja School's Centre for Qualification and Vocational Training, the following execution data were verified:

Table 1 – Performance of Azambuja Centre for Qualification and Vocational Training from October 2015 to December 2016. [Source: Integrated Information and Management System for Educational and Training Pathways platform]

Approved goals for 2016		Achieved results in 2016	
enrolment	certification	enrolment	certifications
498	64	54	16

Table 1 shows that enrolments were much lower than required, with only 54 enrolments in the centre and 16 certifications issued in processes of recognition and validation of competencies.

Nevertheless, during that period from October 2015 to December 2016, an effort was made by the Centre for Qualification and Vocational Training team to promote the centre and its qualification programmes among the adult population as follows:

- Information about the centre was displayed in the facilities of the secondary school;
- a brochure featuring adult courses and trainings was handed to parents during school meetings with their children's teachers.
- promotional leaflets were distributed in the town of Azambuja and local businesses, as well as major companies in the residential area;
- the centre and its offerings were presented at a city hall meeting;

- informal and formal collaboration agreements were established with companies and other training providers.

In terms of public advertisement, the Centre for Qualification and Vocational Training and Qualifica Centres did not benefit from the same amount of advertising as the previous national programme of adult education, known as the New Opportunities Initiative. Nevertheless, in April 2017, the Portuguese National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Training (ANQEP) made efforts to publicise the Qualifica Centres using television and radio spots.

Internally, the Qualifica Centre of Azambuja felt the need to increase the number of enrolments due to the new Operational Human Capital Program application (2017-2020), in which a compromise to attain 400 enrolments per year was made. But one problem persisted: How to get adults interested in enrolling in our centre? We believed that the advertising investment made by the National Agency was extremely important to raise awareness of the programme among the population, but we doubted it would be enough on its own to encourage adults in the area of Azambuja to enrol in our centre in substantial numbers.

3. Implementation of the good practice

On 20 January 2017, I was given permission as an orientation, recognition, and validation of competencies technician to create an informal Facebook page to advertise both the activities and course offerings of our Qualifica Centre. From January 2017 until 31 December 2018, I was in charge of project implementation, including the creation and management/revision of posted contents. The page contained general information such as our address, contacts, centre staff, and other features.

The main goal was to increase the number of adults enrolled by advertising our centre and the outcomes of our work (e.g. school certifications) using adults' testimonies and pictures of certified adults.

Invitations to follow the page were sent to users from the area of Azambuja. The page currently has 3,800 followers. Our target group were adults residing in Azambuja and surroundings, as well as commercial establishments or pages of civil society associations based in the county.

In early 2017, our activity focused on disseminating publications about the centre and our activities: What is a Qualifica Centre? Who can benefit from it? What is the centre's schedule and contacts? Which pathways are offered for adults? How can people enrol? When will the courses begin? All of our courses are free of charge– a fact that was also important to highlight.

In mid-2017, we proceeded to post pictures of adults (with their consent) on the day of their certification. We wanted to show that people known in and around Azambuja attended and completed their schooling in our centre. We believed that other people could be motivated to enrol in our centre by recognising people they know in our publications.

It was also a very good way to advertise our centre, because acquaintances of adults that concluded the basic or secondary level of education would share the publications on their own Facebook pages. The publications would be seen by even more people, allowing friends and family to comment and share the images.

Towards the second half of 2017, in addition to publicising the adult education pathways available at the Azambuja centre, such as EFA courses and processes of recognition, validation, and certification of competencies, as well as pictures of certifications, we expanded the range of courses for adults, co-organising certified modular trainings for active adults, with qualifications above the sixth year of schooling.

These courses were widely advertised on our Facebook page and were very much appreciated by adults residing in the Azambuja area who held a university degree and wanted to attend short courses to improve language or ICT skills.

The main partners were private, external training centres, with the possibility of providing certified training on an itinerant basis, to whom we proposed a cooperation protocol. While our centre advertised the training, created the schedule, and formed the classes (by registering participants in the Integrated Information and Management System for Educational and Training Pathways platform and collecting the necessary documents for registration), the training entity provided the training in our facilities and also issued the certificates.

The first publication advertising a certified modular training in our centre was released on 4 October 2017. This publication advertised a 50-hour English course (beginners).

Between 15 January 2018 and 28 November 2018, several short-term courses administered in our facilities were advertised, namely Spanish (beginners), Spanish (advanced), Excel advanced functionalities, English (beginners), English (advanced), German (beginners), Chinese (beginners), multimedia content development, and first aid training.

These trainings were organised based on adults' general interests in various fields of training, as expressed in their responses to a questionnaire made available on our Facebook page prior to registration.

Following the announcement of the courses, we explained how to enrol in the centre, namely by asking adults to provide documents to register all the data in the Integrated Information and Management System for Educational and Training Pathways, and formed the training groups.

Some challenges were encountered in terms of managing the social media page; specifically, the need to carefully manage the page so that the institutional aspect of the content would not get lost, and the need for continuously verifying the page's contents in response to the very frequent interaction of followers, who requested an almost immediate response to questions and comments, seven days a week. As a result, there was a need to reorganize my work as a technician to be able to manage the site without neglecting the orientation, validation, and certification processes.

4. Outcomes of the good practice

The Qualifica Centre of Azambuja benefited from both our internal advertisement and the public advertisement by the National Agency. In April 2017, the Portuguese National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Training advertised the Qualifica Centres using a series of radio and television spots, thereby raising awareness of the existence of the centres and the added value of the qualification.

Internally, the social media account, especially designed for adult learners and created to target the adult population of Azambuja and the surrounding area (people over 18 years old), was a success based on the proximity established with the population of Azambuja and the virtual and personal interactions that produced numerous enrolments. We had very quick and direct feedback: when adults enrolled in our centre or called our facilities, they would mostly refer to the contents published on our Facebook page.

Since all the entries in the Qualifica Centre are registered in the Integrated Information and Management System for Educational and Training Pathways, we verified the following: from 1 January 2017 to 30 November 2017, 146 adults enrolled in our centre, of whom 77 were referred to processes of recognition, validation, and certification of competencies, ..and 74 to other training offerings (EFA and certified modular training, for example). As one can verify in the section "achied results for 2017" of table 2.

Table 2 – Performance of Azambuja Qualifica Centre from January to December 2017. [Source: Integrated Information and Management System for Educational and Training Pathways platform]

Approved goals for 2017					Achieved results for 2017				
enrolments	total referrals	referrals to other offers	referrals to recognition of prior learning	certifications	enrolments	total referrals	referrals to other offers	referrals to recognition of prior learning	certifications
400	360	144	216	86	146	151	74	77	29

Concerning total referrals, we achieved 151 referrals in 2017, exceeding the number of enrolments. This is due to the fact that in 2017 we also completed the referral of adults enrolled the year before.

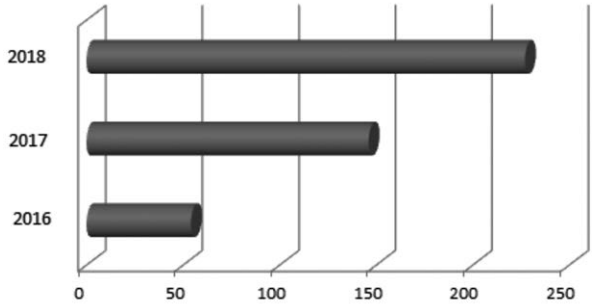
The year 2018 was a period of greater co-organisation and dissemination of modular certified training, advertised in our social network. From 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018, the Qualifica Centre of Azambuja presented a total of 227 enrolled adults, 47 of whom were referred to recognition, validation, and certification of competencies processes and 155 were referred to other offers (EFA, short term courses, etc).

Table 3 – Performance of Azambuja Qualifica Centre in the period from January to December of 2018. [Source: Integrated Information and Management System for Educational and Training Pathways platform]

Approved goals for 2018					Achieved results for 2018				
enrolments	total referrals	referrals to other offers	referrals to recognition of prior learning	certifications	enrolments	total referrals	referrals to other offers	referrals to recognition of prior learning	certifications
400	360	144	216	86	227	202	155	47	37

Therefore, according to figure 1, an upward trend in terms of enrolments can be observed.

Figure 1 – Enrolments per year in Azambuja Qualifica Centre in the period from 2016 to 2018. [Source: Integrated Information and Management System for Educational and Training Pathways platform]



In conclusion, advertising our Qualifica Centre via a social networking page was a good practice because it allowed us to establish easier interactions and proximity with Azambuja's adult population and promoted a greater diffusion of our pathways in an inexpensive manner. It allowed for constant updates and almost immediate feedback concerning our offerings, enrolments, and so forth.

It also allowed for responding more immediately to online requests for clarification and doubts, and for scheduling meetings and interviews with adults reluctant to take the initiative to approach or centre to ask those first questions in person. It allowed for mobilising adults who previously were not interested in participating in continuous training.

In summary, we proved the usefulness of creating a social media page to advertise adult education courses and training programmes. By doing so, we were able to reach new users of social media, who regardless of their age are more and more connected to the online world.

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THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM: A REFLECTION ON GOOD PRACTICE IN THE USA

Miriam Douglas

ABSTRACT: This good practice essay puts the Community Education Program (CEP) as a focus for comparison between West Virginia (USA) and Germany/European Union (EU). The essay is a combination of reflections on qualification frameworks, learning outcomes, lifelong learners/learning, transnational organisations, the Scottish Framework, a number of good practices, and accreditation from a research and practical perspective. Despite substantial research efforts, a national qualifications framework (NQF) or accrediting body for the CEP could not be identified in the US. The goal is to continue research on a national and international level. In the meantime, the good practice efforts, established through various features, continue to apply.

1. Setting the scene

In 2012, I was hired by West Liberty University, West Virginia, USA, to newly develop, design, and implement the Bachelor of Arts in Community Education Program (BA in CEP) as a non-formal and progressive educational alternative to formal and traditional education programmes. The BA in CEP is the main focus of this essay, even though there is also a programme at the master's level [Master of Arts in Education (MA Ed): Community Education – Research and Leadership].

This good practice essay on the CEP reflects my good practice perspective in connection to exploring different roles that national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and learning outcomes play in national policy contexts. It describes the influence of national (and international) initiatives on curricula design, qualifications, and lifelong learning from a research/theoretical and practical perspective.

1.1 CEP design and development

The programme was designed on the basis of a comparative research study, in connection with a document analysis of data on community education/non-formal education, available in research articles and the world wide web (Douglas & Camden, 2015). Using this theoreti-

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cal research as a foundation, theory was put into practice by designing the CEP with its seven majors: Community Arts, Disabilities Services, Educational Leadership in Faith-Based Organisations (Youth Ministry), Museum Education, Outdoor Education, Sports, Recreation and Wellness, and Teaching English and Global Education.

1.2 Practical aspect

The programme was developed for students interested in becoming educators working with the lifelong learner (LLL), outside of the traditional classroom in a non-formal and/or in-formal learning environment. Graduates of this programme will be able to work in non-formal educational/out-of-the-classroom educational settings, non-profit sectors, and community-based organisations. The programme proved to be one of the most progressive programmes locally, but also nationally. Research and needs assessment at the time found no other programmes of this kind locally or nationally.

1.3 Learning outcomes

When the BA in CEP and the MA Ed programmes were designed and developed, applicable NQFs did not exist in the US. Consequently, a guiding framework for learning outcomes was missing.

1.4 Practical aspect

Learning outcomes in the CEP framework were based on goals and objectives that I developed newly and individually for the CEP (Table 1). This resulted from the fact that I was not able to identify a framework or accrediting body in the US that would provide a clear outline, including (learning) outcomes, for a non-formal educational programme in higher education. Even though NQFs are developing rapidly in Europe and other parts around the globe, this trend does not appear to have reached the US. While learning outcomes and standards are the norm in formal educational settings, this is not the case for non-formal educational models. Learning outcomes and NQFs are supposed to solve many educational problems, but the US appears further away than other countries (many in Europe) from bridging this gap between education, the economy, and support mechanisms for the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

1.5 Lifelong learner/learning

Lifelong learning (LLL) is one of the cornerstones of the Community Education Program. The definition of LLL used for the CEP appears to differ from the European ones. As Laal (2011) points out, 'to think that one

can find an essential, basic or incontestable definition of LLL is to embark upon a search for a chimera' (Laal, 2011: 470). She further adds that «the term of LLL has a wide currency and great practice in contexts, its meaning is often uncertain» (Laal, 2011: 470, as quoted in Aspin & Chapman, 2000). The following definition by Laal (2011) applies to the described CEP:

> LLL comprises all phases of learning, from pre-school to post-retirement, and covers the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal, and informal learning. It means that learning is a process [that| occurs at all times in all places. It should be a process of continuous learning that [is] directed towards not only providing [for] individual needs [but] also [those] of the relevant community (Laal, 2011: 470).

In contrast to this definition, the prevalent definition of LLL in the US refers more to adult education and learning, as well as outdated adult learning policies. The European Association for the Education of Adults states on its website that the US and Europe both approach lifelong learning mainly from an adult learning perspective (COOPERATION, 2016), which stands in contrast to the perspectives and definition of LLL in CEP and Laal (2011). Both view lifelong learning more as learning «that should take place at all stages of life cycle (from the cradle to the grave) and […] life-wide; that is embedded in all life contexts from the school to the workplace, the home and community» (Laal, 2011: 471). Elken (2015) states that the EU «has been on the forefront of developing lifelong learning (LLL) policies» (Elken, 2015: 710). It becomes evident that, compared to the US, Europe is at the forefront of LLL research and its practical application through policies.

1.6 Practical aspect

The idea of progressive lifelong learning is practically reflected by and implemented in the CEP through collaborations of non-profit organisations in the tri-state area of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio and higher education (West Liberty University). CEP students and graduates serve, among others, the underserved by teaching in non-formal learning environments or keeping and/or starting non-profit organisations in their smaller cities instead of migrating to wealthy, larger cities and communities.

2. Implementation and challenges

2.1 Transnational organisations

Transnational organisations that put national qualifications into frameworks, and hence spark policy discourses, are indispensable systems for the

validation of non-formal and informal learning. Higher education frameworks, like accreditation and quality assurance, should be mentioned in this context. These formal systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning in formal learning environments of higher education (e.g. universities) are mostly unavailable in the US but are fairly typical in other countries (especially in Europe).

2.2 Practical aspect

It was the goal for CEP to link transnational perspectives, systems, and frameworks to be one of the first programmes in the US to be either accredited by national qualification networks or at least to apply their frameworks and/or objectives to secure credibility, validity, reliability, and quality. CEP was intentionally designed with an international, global, and transatlantic aspect to enable students to experience a different culture and approach in a comparative way by participating in study abroad trips to Germany. The Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) of WV received this idea well, reflected by its decision to award a grant. Ultimately, a memorandum of understanding with Julius Maximilian University, Würzburg (Germany) and West Liberty University, West Liberty (USA), was brought to fruition.

2.3 The Scottish Framework

Allais (2010) claimed that the Scottish Framework, which is the 'paradigmatic example of a comprehensive communications framework', is the most successful and useful one (Allais, 2010, quoted in Raffe, 2013: 155). Despite my research efforts, no accrediting body for the CEP could be identified in the US. Outside of the US, I found an accrediting body supporting the BA in CEP at the University of Edinburgh. Scotland's Standards Council for Scotland (CLD) appeared to be the most useful, practical, and applicable one (Professional approval process, n.d.).

Even though this model covered many of the learning objectives and goals that CEP strives for, evidence from national case studies suggests that cultural and country-specific educational variables have to be considered (Raffe, 2013). I concluded that a NQF that is effective for one country cannot simply be transferred to another country and prove successful.

2.4 Practical aspect

Raffe's (2013) article on *What is the evidence for the impact of National Qualifications Frameworks?* Was eye-opening regarding the difficulties I was facing when applying the Scottish National Qualifications Framework to the programme I am leading in the US. Raffe agrees with Allais (2010) that «the Scottish framework is widely recognized as relatively success-

ful, but it built on incremental policies pursued over several decades; its success would therefore be difficult to replicate» (Allais, 2010, as cited in Raffe, 2013: 158), especially when taken out of context.

Other research and statistics, like the Global Inventory of Regional and National Qualifications Frameworks (2017) suggest that «the USA already has a well-developed system of recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of non-formal and informal learning, but these systems often refer to high school programs or non-credit instruction» (Regional and National Qualifications Frameworks, 2017: 607). Programmes in higher education are not considered.

Even though there is a major movement nationally towards the development of programmes similar to CEP, accrediting bodies have not yet been established. None are currently available in the US. As a consequence, and as an unfortunate solution to this challenge, programmes have to stay 'unaccredited', and/or have to look to other countries to find accrediting bodies. In those cases, the major challenge of replicating other countries' NQFs becomes apparent (Raffe, 2013: 158).

3. Outcomes

3.1 Good practice/s

National qualification frameworks in Europe and developing countries around the globe are a recent development and can best be described as 'a work in progress'. It was suggested that practitioners should 'not only focus on qualifications frameworks as independent phenomena, but should consider [the] wider context in which they are embedded' (Miculek, 2018).

3.2 Practical aspects

The good practice efforts regarding CEP reflect this idea of qualification frameworks, embedded in a variety of ways that lead to good practice, through the following applied features:

- Programme/s: The graduate programme is a Master of Arts in Education degree with an emphasis in Community Education – Research & Leadership. The undergraduate programme consists of a Bachelor of Arts in Community Education with seven majors (previously listed).
- Partnerships: The CEP partners with the Center for Arts and Education on West Liberty's main campus. It is a «multi-faceted hands-on learning laboratory and resource center focused on the integration of the arts, creativity, and technology» (Center for Arts & Education, n.d.). Since 2016, it has been a partner in the Data Fluency Programme with Carnegie Mellon University (Zambito, 2016). Lou Karas, director of

the centre, is also one of the main instructors in the BA and the MA Ed programmes at West Liberty. Other partnerships include public and private schools, as well as non-profit organisations in the tri-state-area of West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) is another partnership effort in which CEP is getting educated and striving to be more actively involved.

- Committees: The Internationalisation Committee is one of several committees on which I serve as chair. Its goals include study abroad trips, semester long exchanges, and the internationalisation of the curriculum. CEP students are highly encouraged to participate in these programmes. They have the opportunity to receive credit by participating in a two-week summer study abroad trip to Würzburg, Germany. Other opportunities, partnerships, and collaborations are in the works. The Outdoor Learning Spaces Committee's mission is the creation of outdoor learning spaces across West Liberty's campus.
- International/Global Internationalisation and global education play an important role in CEP (Table 1). West Liberty University established a memorandum of understanding with Julius Maximilian University. The goal of this memorandum is closer collaboration and partnership of the two universities with the objective of creating a variety of international opportunities for both entities.

4. Lessons Learned

4.1 Accreditation – Data collection and research

Although there is currently no applicable accrediting body available for CEP in the US, the programme engages in various efforts to collect data and other reliable information for possible future accreditation. LiveText is used as a data gathering tool. It is 'a leading provider of campus-wide solutions for strategic planning assessment and institutional effectiveness' (LiveText, n.d.). This tool is used to add credibility, reliability, and validity to CEP.

Since accrediting bodies or national qualification frameworks are difficult to find in the US, one goal is to research and find them in other countries (e.g. Germany) and/or support their development.

4.2 Practical aspect

Throughout my research, I have networked with and learned from other organisations, including the Leibniz Institute for Educational Trajectories (LIfBi) in Bamberg and the Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education (DIPF) in Frankfurt am Main.

I worked on this topic on top of my full-time teaching and administrative load at West Liberty University. Part of my upcoming sabbatical leave will be used for in-depth research, additional work, and expanded networking on this topic.

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100 YEARS OF VOLKSHOCHSCHULE – 50 YEARS OF DVV INTERNATIONAL. LOCAL AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON ADULT EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Heribert Hinzen

ABSTRACT: Adult education has multiple histories in countries around the globe. In the case of Germany, the year 1919 is of high importance, as the Volkshochschulen (VHS) – literally translated as folk high schools, more broadly as adult education centres –became a constitutional matter. Today, they are the largest institutionalized form of adult education in Germany with millions of participants every year. In 1969, the ongoing international activities of the VHS were institutionalized into what is known today as DVV International. This year's celebrations are used for contextualizing the development of adult education and thus for remembering the past with a view to the future of our profession.

1. Introduction

The year 2019 is an important year for adult education. It brings a number of challenging anniversaries for those of us working in adult education and lifelong learning on a national and global level. The Volkshochschulen (VHS) are celebrating the centennial of their inclusion in the German constitution, and in 1969, the predecessors of DVV International were institutionalized as the international activities division of the VHS national association (Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband, DVV) to reflect their growing numbers and global reach. We look therefore to a double anniversary: 100 years of Volkshochschule and 50 years of DVV International.

When making plans for the 2019 Winter School at Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg, the organizers invited me to co-moderate Comparative Group 8 on *Developing active citizenship through adult learning and education*. This topic was very important to me during my university years and all those decades working for DVV International. So I teamed up with a long-time colleague , Prof. Bálasz Németh, and invited participants to reflect on *Adult learning and education: Active global citizens for sustainable development – a political, professional and personal account* for a Working Paper Series of the Centre for Research & Development in Adult and Lifelong Learning at the University of Glasgow (Duke & Hinzen, 2018).

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Heribert Hinzen, *100 Years of Volkshochschule – 50 Years of DVV International. Local and global perspectives on adult education and lifelong learning*, pp. 199-211, © 2020 Author(s), CC BY 4.0 International, DOI 10.36253/978-88-5518-155-6.14, in Regina Egetenmeyer, Vanna Boffo, Stefanie Kröner (edited by), *International and Comparative Studies in Adult and Continuing Education*, © 2020 Author(s), content CC BY 4.0 International, metadata CC0 1.0 Universal, published by Firenze University Press (www.fupress.com), ISSN 2704-5781 (online), ISBN 978-88-5518-155-6 (PDF), DOI 10.36253/978-88-5518-155-6

My preparations for the comparative aspects of the Winter School generated the idea to additionally give a public guest lecture to present the ideas and practices of anniversaries now happening in German adult education – an idea that eventually became the topic of the present contribution. A set of slides helped to offer some key findings I developed through my involvement in the work of the VHS and DVV International. They guided me through the presentation, which I was to write down only later for this publication.

2. University Context

A few years back, I started a series of seminars at German universities in Augsburg, Cologne, Hannover, and Würzburg. These institutions were concerned with promoting their students' historical awareness and with remembering the past by looking at selected examples in the field and profession of adult education.

What are central historical developments that had lasting effects on the way we live together today? How can we work towards a better understanding of the past, which after all has an impact on our present and future? How can educational institutions contribute to that effort? What is the potential of adult education within the process of lifelong learning? These were the questions we tried to answer in the seminars using select examples of historical dimensions in order to show their local, national, regional, and even global impact.

The seminars used a variety of methods and materials, encouraging presentations and discussions. Important documents were analysed; local memorials and monuments explored and visited. Specific themes were suggested and selected at the beginning of the seminars, such as *1914-2014: 100 years of World War 1*, *Reconciliation and collaboration between Turkey and Armenia in adult education*, *The end of German colonialism in Africa*, more specifically in today's Namibia and Tanzania.

These earlier seminars were a good foundation for the follow-up activities I am currently doing with events, meetings, and functions on *100 years of Volkshochschule – 50 years of DVV International* at a variety of institutions. In the seminars, we look at local and global perspectives in adult education and lifelong learning for sustainable development. Again, students are encouraged to select themes for their oral presentations and written assignments. They can have historical dimensions or address today's social reality, for instance the role of VHS in the development of skills and competencies for migrants and refugees. They can select adult education in Belarus, Mexico, or Cambodia, compare studies involving ethnic groups, or analyse the policy and practice of adult education in prison or in environmental emergencies. All of this helps

in getting an understanding of the role of adult education in local and global perspectives.

3. Comparative Aspects

The VHS is an institution that provides a diverse range of learning opportunities throughout life, but especially for adults. It has similar historical traditions in other countries. We should see them in the context of workers' education, reading and study circles, and university extension. On the one hand, they were part of the late Enlightenment, a legacy visible today in strong components of citizenship education; on the other hand, they were part of the industrial revolution, evident today in employability programmes and vocational training. Of course, there are also many differences and variations when comparing these community-based forms of adult education.

At some points, I tried to offer at least some historical-comparative perspectives on other current anniversaries and celebrations in adult education by mentioning a few – such as the United Kingdom, where November 1919 saw the publication of the Final Report on Adult Education by the Ministry of Reconstruction (Report, 2019), the 40th anniversary of the Department of Andragogy at the University of Belgrade, the 70 years since the first CONFINTEA took place in Helsingör in 1949 (Knoll, 2014), or the 50th anniversary of the New Year's Eve speech by Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere under the title *Education Never Ends* (Nyerere, 1979) They all create opportunities to deepen our understanding of adult education as a profession on the move and find out what is similar, or different, or what they have in common.

There are similarities to other forms of community-based adult education, both in Europe and in Asia. One example is the Kominkan in Japan, which followed World War II as an instrument supported by the Japanese government to foster democratic developments; today, the Kominkan system has an intake of almost 10 million participants (Sato, 2016). So much is known and has been written about the beginnings of folk high schools in the Nordic countries, with Nicholas Frederic Grundtvig as their founding father; today, the study circle idea and practice is still strong (Bjerkaker & Summers, 2006). Less is known about other places: Moldova, for example, where the first folk high school was founded in 1918 in the capital Chișinău; or Hungary, where the village of Bajaszentivan saw a gathering with the name of folk high school in 1914.

It would be interesting to adopt a historical-comparative perspective and study community-based institutionalized adult education and community learning centres by taking an in-depth look at their roots, developments, and turns in respect to structures, institutions, programmes,

activities and participants and gain an understanding of their future in the age of digitalization. Maybe this is an endeavour for the near future, when this current flow of anniversary events is over. Such a study could build on a survey which already analysed Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in six Asian countries (Duke & Hinzen, 2016).

4. History as Context

Anniversaries can serve as cultural memory (Assmann, 2018), an opportunity for us to collectively remember the past for the sake of the future. The 100 years of VHS thus have to be seen in context. From my point of view as a German citizen, I am aware that 100 years ago the Weimar Republic, our first democracy, emerged at the end of the monarchy, at the end of World War I, the November revolution, and the end of German colonialism in Africa and Asia. But the end of something always has the potential of breeding something new and better. That is why we remember the past for the sake of the future.

The year 1919 was also the time when, after a period of intense struggle, female suffrage became a reality. In Germany, it was also the start of the eight-hour work day, the founding of Bauhaus architecture. And now we also celebrate 100 years of VHS as our community-based adult education centres. Nowadays, you find them everywhere in German villages, towns, and cities, with more than 9 million adults participating in all kinds of education, learning, and training activities.

A key success of advocacy or foresight at the time was a clause that was included in the Weimar constitution under Article 148, which read: «Das Volksbildungswesen, einschließlich der Volkshochschulen, soll von Reich, Ländern und Gemeinden gefördert werden» (Translation: The adult education sector, including the Volkshochschulen, shall be supported by the national, regional, and local governments.) Today there is such a governance framework for policy, legislation, and financial support for adult education, which is a fundamental building block available to all centres and their activities (Vosskuhle, 2019).

It should also be noted that, as community-based institutions, each VHS has its specific historical context of why and when it was founded. The VHS in Aachen, for example, was founded only after the end of World War II. It was initiated by the Allies as part of the re-education programme. They saw the VHS as potential institutions to strengthen democracy. Adult educators from Germany were sent to Sweden to study the folk high school system there. In the smaller town of Bornheim, where I live, which actually is a merger of some twenty villages following an administrative reform, the municipality did not establish a VHS until 1979. However, that is reason enough to celebrate 40 years

with a public event, a lecture on digitalization in adult education, and an exhibition in the city hall.

Looking at the planning and implementation of all these commemorative events, we saw the need to do something practical. We therefore welcomed the offer by the German Institute of Adult Education–Leibnitz Centre on Lifelong Learning (DIE) to write a handbook on how to celebrate anniversaries in adult education (Heuer & Hinzen, 2018). The book provides a conceptual framework on cultural memory and history, as well as many examples on how the preparations of the current events provide innovative ideas for archives and exhibitions, events and cooperation.

5. Celebrations and Marketing

Celebrating 100 years of VHS in Germany in 2019 is a high-level, because many local VHS, including Cologne, Düsseldorf, Dresden, Mannheim, or Stuttgart, will be 100 years old, while others are even older or some younger. The centennial will be celebrated at the national level and in a decentralized way all across the country. At the heart of the centennial is the fact that the VHS became a constitutional matter in 1919; that is why celebrations started with a ceremony in February at St. Paul's Cathedral in Frankfurt, where Andreas Voßkuhle, the President of the German Federal Constitutional Court, gave the keynote, bringing the historical perspective of the 1919 constitution to the education-related commitments in today's basic law (Voßkuhle, 2019). More than 500 invited guests attended the event.

Since then, hundreds of celebrations have followed on the community level at individual VHS. In Essen, they even used the slogan of the time, which in German reads 'Aufbruch', a mixture of awakening and joint departure, to remember the past and mark the importance of adult learning for the future. VHS Essen could even prepare a film on their 100 years, which premiered during the celebrations. The screening took place in the Lichtburg, a cinema also founded 100 years back and still one of the largest in Germany. Hamburg is another special case: here, the year 1919 saw the foundation of both the VHS and the university, and both institutions are in the same foundational document by the Senate of the City of Hamburg. University professors at the time were asked to support the VHS through lectures in their respective fields of expertise and interests. A stamp commemorating the occasion was approved by the Minister of Finance and is now in use. DVV International launched a special website providing detailed information on plans and publications, as well as documenting all the events through an interactive map (www.100jahre-vhs.de).

Likewise, DVV International and DIE joined hands to produce a major publication. A project team worked together for two years, selecting 100 key events (one for each year between 1919 and 2019) and asking individual authors to write stories (one page for each year, illustrated by one picture) to finally have a book on the history of VHS (Schrader & Rossmann, 2019). In the run up to this important year, the academic journal *Bildung und Erziehung* agreed early to publish a thematic issue to discuss historical roots, provide evidence of developments, dig into urban as well as rural examples, and look into the future. Of this edition, 2,000 copies were distributed to all VHS and representatives of ministries, parliaments, and other institutions in education and research (Hinzen & Meilhammer, 2018). A special issue of the *Hessische Blätter für Volksbildung* followed, discussing today's VHS in the context of political, cultural, and vocational adult education by inviting professionals to provide concise opinions (Hessischer Volkshochschulverband, 2018).

Most importantly, there are activities embedded in a marketing strategy that uses all events to further advertise the VHS and their activities to reach out also to those younger and older adults who may not be close enough to continuing and realizing their learning opportunities. Together with all the state-level VHS associations, the DVV International as a national association is coordinating and disseminating a number of initiatives under the slogan *100 Jahre Wissen teilen,* which can be translated as 100 years of sharing knowledge. This builds on a slogan used 100 years ago by the working class movement: *Wissen ist Macht*, or knowledge is power. The slogan *100 Jahre Wissen teilen* is used by DVV International on all publications, posters, letters, and other communication tools.

6. Global Commitments

CONFINTEA is the acronym for the UNESCO world conferences on the development of education, training, and learning during adult life, and brings together representatives from government, civil society, academia, and international organizations. For professionals and civil society, such conferences create the possibility to influence the content and orientation of the global debate and the documents coming out of that debate. Later, the respective recommendations and commitments can be used for advocacy work. CONFINTEA takes place every 12 years. The first was 1949 in Helsingör, Denmark, the most recent one in Belem, Brazil, in 2009. CONFINTEA VII is planned for 2022 in a country still to be decided (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2017).

Non-formal education, especially for youth and adults, is an important part of lifelong learning. Related activities are implemented by community-based institutions at the local level. Governments should therefore

support community learning centres (CLCs) through policy, legislation, and funding. Otherwise, leaving no one behind, the new claim coming from the global level, will remain an unfulfilled promise. However, a look at the current status quo reveals: More can be done and should be done in most countries.

Let us take one example from CONFINTEA VI. The Belem Framework for Action (BFA) states clearly: «Lifelong learning "from cradle to grave" is a philosophy, a conceptual framework and an organizing principle of all forms of education, based on inclusive, emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values». Later, in pointing to details, the BFA states: «We recognize that adult education represents a significant component of the lifelong learning process, which embraces a learning continuum ranging from formal to non-formal to informal learning». And with respect to CLCs, the BFA calls for «creating multi-purpose community learning spaces and centres» (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2010).

The 17 *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDG) were agreed upon by the United Nations in 2015 to cover the years up to 2030. The overall education goal is to «ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all». And in respect to CLCs: «Make learning spaces and environments for non-formal and adult learning and education widely available, including networks of community learning centres and spaces and provision for access to IT resources as essential elements of lifelong learning» (UNESCO, 2015a).

Based on CONFINTEA VI and the SDG, the 2015 UNESCO General Conference came up with a new *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education,* in which community-based and institutionalized forms of adult education were strongly supported again by a special clause: «creating or strengthening appropriate institutional structures, like community learning centres, for delivering adult learning and education and encouraging adults to use these as hubs for individual learning as well as community development» (UNESCO, 2015b).

In this context, it may be helpful point out that the UN-enshrined right to education should not be interpreted solely as a right to schooling. One may want to argue that in the age of digitalization and globalization, lifelong education and learning is the right we should be struggling for. This is not to undermine or minimize the importance of early childhood education or all forms and levels of the school system. We must have high-quality kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools. But this needs to be continued into vocational and professional training, and that is where adult and higher education come in as educational service providers with a lifelong orientation. The VHS and other forms of adult education and community learning centres play a critical role – especially as the majority of people in society are adults, and being adults is the longest part of life.

7. *VHS Today*

Since their beginnings, the VHS have seen continuity and growth for the most part, interrupted, however, during the Nazi period when the VHS were banned or integrated into the system of Nazi propaganda. After 1945, they experienced different and diverse developments during the period of a divided Germany. The reunification of East and West Germany in the early 1990s was based on the country's federal structure, bringing five new *Länder* (states) together with the eleven old ones, and creating a population of now about 80 million. The VHS in each of the *Länder* built their own associations (e.g. the Bavarian or Saxonian VHS associations); at the national level, those 16 associations with their members make up the DVV International.

If we want to know more about the situation of VHS today, we can easily access the relevant details, as the VHS have full statistical records for the last 55 years. They are collected by DIE on an annual basis, and here are some figures for 2016: all are part of the local village, town, city, or regional structure of education and culture. Half are legal entities as associations; others are part of the municipality or act as not-for-profit companies. All receive funding via legislation on state level, support by the local government, and fees from participants. Overall, Germany boasts more than 900 VHS with 3,000 sub-centres, with VHS Munich being the largest, enrolling a total of 250.000 participants in 2016.

All VHS together had more than six million participants in courses and an additional 3 million in lectures, excursions, or study tours related to politics, languages, health, culture, or vocational skills. Languages and health are the largest areas with around 60 per cent of all course offers. Almost 75 per cent of participants are in the age range of 25-64 years, whereas 16 per cent are older than 65 years, a proportion that has grown by 4.3 per cent in the last decade. Those above 65 are especially interested in issues related to politics and the environment, arts and culture, health and nutrition (Huntemann & Reichart, 2016).

Although the VHS structure is the largest within the system (or market) of adult education providers, it is not the only one. The Catholic and Protestant churches have their own adult education associations, and so do the trade unions, the farmers associations, political foundations, and others. To understand the current situation in Germany even better, it may be helpful to look at the figures that DIE director Josef Schrader offered to a meeting of VHS directors in larger cities: An analysis of the statistics of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research shows that in Germany about 3 million children are in kindergarten, 8 million in primary and secondary schools, 2.5 million in vocational training, and 3 million in colleges and universities. By contrast, all sorts of adult education providers combined (general, civic, vocational, academic) en-

rol 26.5 million people, a figure that shows the high importance of this sub-sector within the lifelong learning spectrum, and the relevance of the VHS contribution of about 9 million participants (Schrader, 2017).

8. DVV International

The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association, in short DVV International, was institutionalized in 1969 after a longer period of international activities not only in Europe but also with partners in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. There is a diverse history, with cooperation in Europe starting as part of reconciliation after World War II and cooperation in Africa being was part of decolonization. It also involved national and regional associations working together: DVV International joined the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) in 1953, and in 1964, DVV International represented EAEA in the founding event of the Asia Pacific Association of Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) in Australia. Together they founded the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) in 1973, following CONFINTEA III, the World Conference on Adult Education, which UNESCO convened in Tokyo in 1972 (Hinzen, 1994).

The history of DVV International is documented quite well, as the two previous celebrations – 25 years in 1994 and 40 years in 2009 – were both used for collecting a wealth of documents, reports, studies, and statistics, which are helpful for anyone interested in its development. Taking these anniversary volumes together, they cover almost 1,000 pages with numerous examples on how DVV International was influenced by political, social, economic, and cultural decisions, and how in turn DVV International as part of civil society advocacy action tried to influence global adult education and lifelong learning policies and practices towards sustainable development and poverty reduction (Hinzen, 2009).

Today, DVV International cooperates with some 200 partners in more than 30 countries through its regional and national offices. One of its activities is supporting local adult education centres on three levels: Interventions on the macro level are related to policy, legislation, and financing; the meso level deals with the training of staff and infrastructural developments; the micro level concerns the diversity of activities reflecting a variety of themes and courses for the different target groups, including those continuing their education and learning in later life. Since 1973, the journal *Adult Education and Development* has been published, and in recent years it has covered important issues of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), including *Communities, Skills and Competences, Inclusion and Diversity, Role and Impact of Adult Education* (www.dvv-international.de).

DVV International has just published a commemorative book titled *50 Years DVV International. Half a Century of Adult Education*. It is a collection of stories looking into 50 countries where work was done in the past or is taking place now (Hirsch, Jost, & Waschek 2019). It was made available for the major event of the anniversary year, which was celebrated alongside the Adult Education and Development Conference (AEDC) in May 2019 in Weimar. This AEDC specifically dealt with adult education and learning within the implementation of the SDG, a key issue in all the work of DVV International throughout this decade. The AEDC was also prepared by another publication on *Youth and Adult Education in the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Role, Contribution and Further Potential* (Schweighöfer, 2019).

During the previous AEDC in 2017 in Tbilisi, Georgia, a set of key messages on Adult Education/Community Learning Centres (AEC/CLC) where agreed upon, including:

> *Policy, legislation, and financing*: For AEC/CLC to function well, similar legal provision, governance, and support structures as those available for schools, vocational training, and higher education are needed. Funding should be adequate, predictable, and sustainable.
> *Roles, functions*: AEC/CLC are multifunctional and innovative institutions. They cater for education and training, community information, opportunities for counselling to learners and potential participants, and act as social and cultural meeting places and centres for arts and exhibitions.

A report on the inputs and outcomes of that conference was made available in an article *Erwachsenenbildungszentren als Entwicklungsfaktor – Verantwortung, Strukturen und Nutzen* (Translation: Adult Education Centres as a Key to Development: Responsibilities, Structures, and Benefits) (Hinzen & Jost, 2018). Again, an interesting collection of case studies on *Adult education centres as a key to development – challenges and success factors* was prepared in advance and later distributed widely as part of the DVV International series on *International Perspectives in Adult Education* (Avramovska, Hirsch & Schmidt-Behlau, 2017).

9. Looking Ahead

Community-based adult education is an important component in the work towards a system of lifelong learning. In the age of globalization and digitalization, institutions of education, training, and learning change in many respects. But as much as we believe in the importance of kindergarten, schools, vocational and higher education and struggle to support them as institutions, adult education also needs an institutional back-up. Policy, legislation, and financing are required for all sub-sectors of edu-

cation. Only then can VHS and other adult education centres provide their professional services to those who want to continue their learning after and outside schooling.

This lifelong, life-wide, and life-deep dimension calls for a high level of cooperation of all sub-sectors in education and training, and serious joint efforts with so many institutions in the social, economic, and cultural sectors, like cities, companies, and museums. If this cannot be achieved, then we will not see a system of learning opportunities throughout life.

In the future, the local and national dimensions of VHS, as well as the global perspectives of DVV International, will be strongly oriented towards policies and practices of sustainable development. Global education monitoring reports such as *Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all* (UNESCO, 2016) will hopefully monitor closely the contribution of adult education and lifelong learning on an annual basis, which should lead to higher recognition. For the time being, it may be wishful thinking to see stronger support for adult education centres around the globe by local and national governments as well as the international development aid architecture. On the other hand, the German case of the VHS and its inclusion in the constitution 100 years ago shows that such moves can make a difference. Let us therefore cooperate towards such a better future.

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[1] Last access: 07/2020.

CURRICULUM GLOBALE: A GLOBAL TOOL FOR PROFESSIONALISING ADULT EDUCATORS

Thomas Lichtenberg

ABSTRACT: Curriculum globALE (CG) is a cross-cultural core curriculum for training adult educators worldwide. It was developed jointly by the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) and DVV International. In five modules, it describes the relevant skills needed to lead successful courses and provides guidance on their practical implementation. Curriculum globALE has been applied in many partner countries and in Germany itself. Evaluation results show that CG is a professionalisation tool for adult educators that can be applied successfully worldwide. Graduates confirm a wide use of the newly acquired competences for their educational work. However, the practical application of CG is also faced with a number of challenges.

1. The Context

DVV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV), the German Adult Education Association. DVV represents the interests of the approximately 900 adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) and their state associations, the largest adult and continuing education providers in Germany. As the leading professional organisation in the field of adult education and development cooperation in Germany, DVV International has committed itself to supporting lifelong learning for 50 years. DVV International provides worldwide support for the establishment and development of sustainable structures for Youth and Adult Education. To achieve this, DVV International cooperates with more than 200 civil society, government, and academic partners in more than 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe.

The work focuses on literacy and basic education, vocational training, global and intercultural learning, environmental education and sustainable development, migration and integration, refugee work, health education, conflict prevention, and democracy education.

DVV International does not render its educational services to the envisaged target groups directly but channels its services through cooperation with national civil society organisations. These civil society organisations

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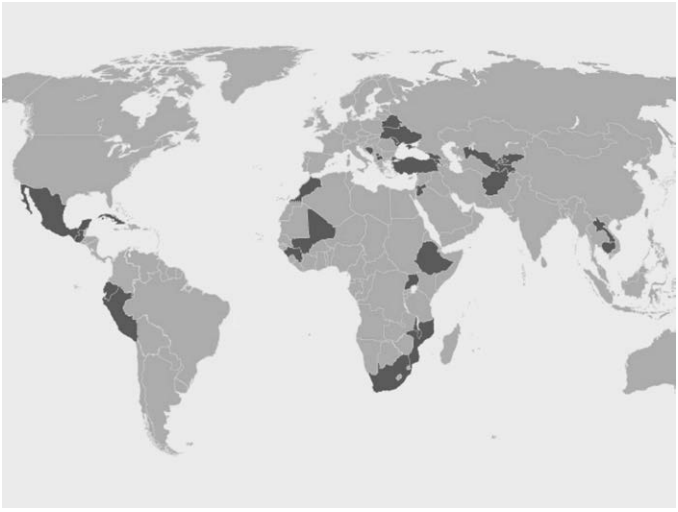
show very different levels of educational professionalism. Some partner organisations provided trainings of inappropriate quality due to a lack of teaching skills. This resulted in high drop-out rates, unsatisfied participants, and failure to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Based on these experiences made worldwide, DVV International concluded that a core curriculum for the training of adult educators was required.

Figure 1 – Partner countries of DVV International. [Source: <http://www.dvv-international.de/weltweit> (07/2020)][1]



2. *Curriculum globALE (CG)*[2]

The German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) and DVV International jointly developed a cross-cultural core curriculum for the training of adult educators to achieve the following aims:

- to enhance the professionalisation of adult educators working in different contexts by providing a common competence standard;
- to support adult education providers in the design and implementation of train-the-trainer programmes;
- to foster knowledge exchange and mutual understanding between adult educators across countries and regions.

[1] This applies to all other online sources unless otherwise noted.

[2] <http://www.dvv-international.de/materialien/curriculum-globale/> (07/2020).

Curriculum globALE is a modularised and competency-based framework curriculum for the training of adult educators worldwide based on three main pillars:

- existing train-the-trainer programmes from the context of the project work of DVV International;
- existing national qualification systems and standards for adult educators;
- transnational competency standards for adult educators which have been drawn up within the framework of European projects.

The qualification level is that of a basic qualification for the area of adult education. The learning outcomes described in the curriculum constitute a qualification that course instructors, trainers, lecturers, and similar individuals should have as a prerequisite for carrying out their work in a professional manner. With reference to the European Qualification Framework (EQF), the competence level targeted by the curriculum would be classified at around EQF level 5[3]. The learning outcomes described in the curriculum form the standard-setting core, which is consistent across all countries and cannot be changed. In this sense, CG can also be considered to include a kind of meta competence framework for adult educators. However, since the contextual conditions and the specific needs of the target groups will vary considerably between different regions, institutions, or domains, the elements listed above – topics, suggested literature, proposed teaching methods – have more of a recommendation character. They can be changed to a greater or lesser extent in line with the specific application context. The whole curriculum is allocated 25 ECTS credit points[4], corresponding to a workload of approx. 660 hours for the participants.

Figure 2 - Logo of Curriculum GlobALE. [Source: <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/materials/teaching-andlearning-materials/curriculum-globale> (07/2020)]

The core curriculum looks like this:

[3] <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page> (07/2020).

[4] <https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system-ects_en> (07/2020).

Table 1 – Core curriculum of Curriculum globALE. [Source: DVV International/author's own]

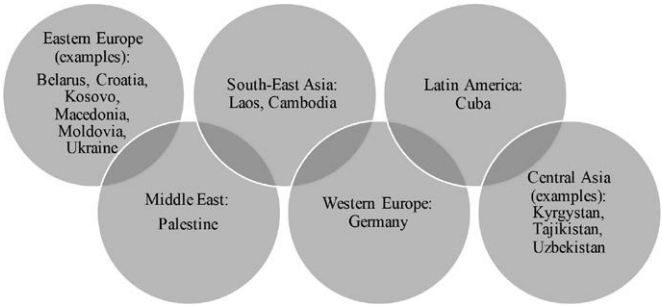
Name of Module	Main content (headers)
Module 0: Introduction	Information on Curriculum globALE Information on the training Information on training provider Information on and expectations of participants globALE expectations towards the participants Building relationships
Module 1: Approaching Adult Education	Understanding the variety and diversity of adult education Adult education in the national and global context Adult education as a profession and the role of an adult educator in the sense of the Curriculum globALE
Module 2: Adult learning and adult teaching	Learning theories and reasons Didactic activity in adult education Knowledge forms Adult learning Education motivation
Module 3: Communication and group dynamics in adult education	Communication in adult education Group dynamics in adult education
Module 4: Methods of adult education	Integrating methods in instruction Overview of methods
Module 5: Planning, organisation, and evaluation in adult education	Phases of the professional cycle of activity of an adult educator Needs assessment Planning Organisation Evaluation Ensuring quality
Elective module(s)	Regional-geographic Target group-specific Subject-specific Situation-specific Regulation-specific

3. Practical application and experiences

Making use of all available background sources on the professionalisation of adult educators, CG was developed in 2012-2013; it was piloted and evaluated from 2014 onwards and disseminated to a number of countries. In 2015-2016, a second, revised version of CG was published, and suitable supporting material was developed. Today, CG is available in ten different lan-

guages[5]; each version can be downloaded from the DVV International website. Since its introduction, CG has been implemented in a number of countries:

Figure 3 – Countries where Curriculum globALE has been implemented. [Source: Author's own]

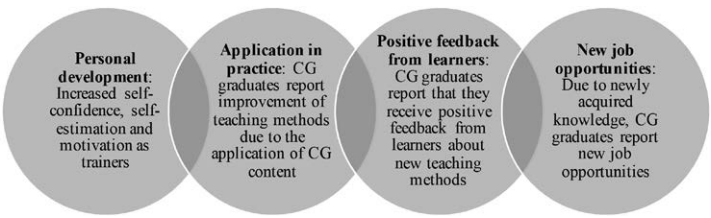


Curriculum globALE is about to be introduced in more countries, especially in African countries. The main experiences can be summarised as follows:

- Whenever the idea of CG as a professionalisation tool for adult educators was voiced, it became evident that there is a tremendous need for this kind of professional training.
- The number of applicants normally exceeds the number of available places considerably; this offers the opportunity to select the most suitable candidates.
- Participants normally come from governmental in-training institutions, universities, colleges of education, branches of adult training centres, and local NGOs.
- Curriculum globALE is normally implemented over a period of 1-2 years (may vary strongly from country to country).

In most cases, each module was evaluated individually; a comprehensive assessment was requested after the full implementation of CG. The results of these assessments can be summarised as follows:

Figure 4 – Results of the assessment. [Source: DVV/Author's own]



[5] Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, English, German, Lao, Macedonian, Russian, Spanish, Serbian.

4. Challenges of practical implementation

In spite of this overall positive feedback, the further implementation of Curriculum globALE is faced with a number of challenges. Firstly, there is wide-spread individual adaptation of modules to the local context, meaning that CG is implemented differently in each country. This sometimes makes learning outcomes difficult to compare, because not all obligatory modules are implemented as intended; hence the achieved learning outcomes deviate in cases. At this stage, there is no standard certificate issued to successful participants, and countries tend to develop their own – unaccredited – certificates. Normally, the implementation of CG starts with the training of influencers to lay the foundation, and these influencers spread professionalisation within their countries. This requires master trainers in the first place who are able to train the influencers. In practice, it turns out there is a lack of master trainers available to kick-start the whole process of implementation. Furthermore, although the CG core curriculum was translated into different languages, further translations into local languages are often required, especially when applying it at the local. At this stage, CG is implemented at the country level and primarily financed through financial resources provided by DVV International. The financing of a broader roll out in the various countries depends on individual solutions and remains unresolved in many cases.

5. Way forward

Guidelines for trainers have been developed and circulated to provide more hands-on support for the practical implementation of Curriculum globALE. A new project is about to be launched to develop online tools that complement the existing learning material and provide e-learning opportunities in addition to regular classroom teaching. Ways to harmonise the implementation of CG are being analysed to finally reach a standard certification verifying the achievement of learning outcomes as envisaged by the curriculum.

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EAEA YOUNGER STAFF TRAINING AS A LEARNING JOURNEY

Silvia Tursi, Aleksandra Kozyra

ABSTRACT: The EAEA Younger Staff Training is a good example of a successful initiative that encourages the professional development of adult education staff, builds new collaborations, and explores the diversity of policy and practice in adult learning in Europe. Organized annually since 2011, the training programme has undergone several modifications over the years to adapt to the changing needs of adult education professionals. The paper looks at the content and structure of the programme, with specific attention to how these have evolved and the rationale behind the changes. It also briefly describes why the training programme continues to be successful and its benefits for both the participants and the organizers.

1. The role of the European Association for the Education of Adults

In a field marked by diverse occupational profiles, with frequently little recognition at the policy level and consequently inadequate funding, what can be done at the European level to support adult education professionals in their work? How can adult education staff be encouraged to learn from the diversity of practice in Europe, and ultimately to improve their practice – be it as an adult educator, project manager, or communication officer? These are the questions that have been on the agenda of EAEA from its early days, as the association recognized the need for more opportunities for professional development for adult education professionals and capacity-building for adult education organizations.

Since 2011, the European Association for the Education of Adults has been organizing the EAEA Younger Staff Training (YST), which targets staff working in adult education organizations with relatively little experience. As an umbrella organization representing 130 organizations in 44 countries, EAEA aims at impacting EU policies on non-formal adult education and lifelong learning by cooperating with EU institutions as well as civil society organizations, project partners, and other stakeholders on the international, European, and national level.

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Another EAEA objective is to provide opportunities for training and networking, of which Younger Staff Training is a flagship example. Participant feedback shows that the course was a valuable experience for them, introduced them to EU initiatives in adult education, the diversity of policy and practice across the continent, and encouraged networking with like-minded professionals. At the same time, designing and carrying out the training programme has been a learning journey for the EAEA as an organization as well, allowing the staff to adapt to changes, to respond to new challenges, and to reflect on their expertise and role as a European umbrella organization in the process.

2. Professional development as a persisting challenge

As widely discussed in the academic literature (Bron & Jarvis, 2008; Przybylska, 2008; Nuissl, 2009), professionalism and professional development in the field of adult education are challenging topics to explore. As highlighted in the CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review for Europe and North America (Kozyra, Motschilnig, & Ebner, 2017), there is a variety of educational pathways that can lead to work in the field, with no clear view of the profile of competencies required from adult learning staff to fulfil their professional tasks. Often individuals working in adult education do not even have a specific educational background in the field, but rather have gained experience in different fields and start working in adult education at later stages of their career.

This presumably comes from the predisposition or common belief that adult education mainly means teaching, whereas in reality, as observed in Nuissl (2009), it includes a broader range of concepts. According to Nuissl, counselling and guidance, media, programme planning, and support to both leaders and teachers are part of the concept of adult education.

As observed in Przybylska (2008), initiatives that are aimed at a standardization of professional qualifications and training in the field of adult education have not yet reached their goal. Those working or planning to work in adult education still have a variety of choices of professional development, from non-formal training courses to academic degrees. In most cases, there is no single pathway to follow; it is up to the individual to choose what best reflects their professional needs and career aspirations. In some countries, those interested in obtaining qualifications as adult educators might find it difficult to find programmes or courses that would offer initial education and training, with in-service programmes more readily available (Milana, 2010).

Few adult education professionals work in the field full time; most are employed on a part-time basis, or as freelancers, which, worryingly,

might leave them in precarious employment situations (Kozyra, Motschilnig, & Ebner, 2017). Figures from the GRALE III monitoring survey (2016: 58) report that while 81 per cent of the 134 countries offer initial pre-service education and training programmes for adult education staff, globally only 31 per cent of the respondent countries have in-service continuing professional development with sufficient capacity.

With these challenges in mind, EAEA launched an annual training programme in 2011 aiming to support younger staff in their professional development and to ultimately build a network of young European professionals in adult education. 2011 was a momentous year for the adult education sector in Europe: The European Agenda for Adult Learning (European Commission, 2011) had just been launched and placed within the larger scope of the Education and Training 2020 framework (European Commission, 2009). Participation rates in mobility schemes of the Grundtvig action under the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013) had been steadily on the rise (EAEA, 2018). As a European association, EAEA felt that it was the right time to launch a training programme that would focus on the European dimension of adult education and lifelong learning.

3. Reaching adult education staff: Defining target groups and formats

One of the key challenges we initially faced was defining our target groups. In a field to which some professionals turn having already acquired experience in another area, who exactly could be considered 'younger' staff? To also accommodate those participants who started working in adult education later in their career, we first set the age limit at 40. However, with time and after Younger Staff Training had been in place for several years, we scrapped the age limit altogether; instead, we encourage the participation of those who have only worked in adult education for a maximum of five years.

Our target group – 'younger staff in adult education' – was intentionally broad and supposed to represent the variety of professions in the field described earlier. Our participants might be project or programme managers, communication planners, or staff working primarily on policy and advocacy. This also reflects the fact that adult education organizations in Europe might work on multiple levels: some locally as adult learning providers, nationally or regionally as umbrella organizations, others as research institutes or communication hubs. As one of the primary objectives of the training programme has been to showcase the diversity of the field, we have always considered it an advantage to bring together staff working in different capacities and who might, in turn, have very different perspectives and expertise.

Understandably, this brings another challenge: what should the programme's focus be to make it relevant for adult education professionals with diverse roles in their organizations, or working at different levels? Starting with the principle that everyone working in the field can and should be an advocate for adult education, and taking into account the emergence of new EU strategies for adult education in the early 2010s, the syllabus of the first editions was designed around key European initiatives in adult education and lifelong learning, as well as the roles of European institutions and civil society in improving the sector across the continent.

Consequently, getting insights into the European institutions and how they work and meeting key stakeholders in lifelong learning at the EU level were key elements of the programme, which is why the training venue was established in Brussels, where EAEA is based. Participants visited the European Parliament and the European Council, they met with representatives of the Adult Learning Unit at the European Commission and with Members of the European Parliament who sit on the Culture and Education (CULT) Committee. They were also introduced to the work of EAEA as well as other civil society organizations in the field of lifelong learning, such as the Lifelong Learning Platform. In some years, they also got a chance to participate in policy debates and other events of Lifelong Learning Week, a Brussels-based civil society initiative.

What played an equally important role was the exchange between participants on adult education structures, policies, and practices that exist in their countries. Called 'Adult education in my country', these discussions highlighted the structural differences in different geographical contexts, but also common challenges, encouraging peer learning in a comfortable environment. The combination of different modes of delivery – inputs, study visits, and peer-learning sessions – was crucial to the success of the course.

4. Adapting to the changing context

After three successful editions, some challenges began to emerge. Launching a pan-European call for participants started to prove challenging. Generally speaking, with the adult education sector remaining grossly underfunded (EAEA, 2017), few organizations can afford to send staff members to locally-based training programmes, let alone to an international one. Funding opportunities for staff mobility, while available, have eventually become more difficult to access.

In-service Grundtvig training, offered under the Lifelong Learning Programme until 2013, made the application process relatively easy: participants could directly apply for funding to participate in a training

course that interested them. Funding rules changed when the programme was merged with Erasmus under the common title of Erasmus+: to participate in foreign mobility, organizations now have to apply for funding as part of a larger application, detailing aims and objectives, planned dissemination or sharing the knowledge within the organization. The deadlines have also become strict: National Agencies accept applications until early February and only organize an additional round in the autumn if there is still funding available (European Commission, 2015). New rules implied that most organizations needed a certain amount of time to adjust, and especially to learn how to structure a fully-fledged application and explain their motivation to be able to receive the funding. While many organizations did eventually become more skilled and successful in applying for Erasmus+ KA1 mobility, some EAEA members report that they lack staff resources to take on the lengthy task of drafting an application (EAEA, 2018).

This had far-reaching consequences on the number of Younger Staff Training applications, which sharply decreased after Erasmus+ was launched in 2014. The terrorist threat in Belgium around that time had its impact as well, and having previously hosted 20 participants for each edition, in 2016 we found ourselves cancelling the programme due to insufficient interest.

With capacity-building remaining central to EAEA activities, giving up on Younger Staff Training altogether was out of the question; however, given the above-mentioned challenges and the continuously changing landscape of adult education, adjustments had to be made. This is why in early 2017 we decided to remodel the programme, restructuring it to have a different focus each day. Having carefully looked into our expertise, and at what might potentially be useful for younger staff in adult education (based, among others, on the feedback that we received from our members), in 2017 we built the four-day training course around the following topics: policy and advocacy, communication and outreach.

We also found it was becoming more and more important to include a session that would support participants in writing project applications. As reported in Nuissl (2009), management activities such as fundraising, project management, and building of cooperation networks have become increasingly relevant for many adult education contexts and actors. The results of the FinALE project (2018) confirm this observation, reporting that programme and project funding are among the main funding tools that support adult education, making it relevant for staff working for adult education providers and organizations to have some knowledge and awareness related to funding tools.

Having also introduced a new communication strategy for the training course, timed around the Erasmus+ KA1 application period, with a new visual identity and increased use of social media to target younger

audiences, our attempts to remodel the programme proved to be successful: we received over 20 applications. With the new format having ultimately worked well in practice, we decided to keep it for the foreseeable future, with some modifications introduced when planning each edition. For example, the themes for each day slightly change every year, depending on our strategic focus (every year EAEA adopts an 'annual theme') and also on what we found worked best – or could be improved – compared to the previous year.

A few elements, however, remain unchanged: we start the course by dedicating half a day to getting to know each other, discussing expectations and common topics of interest; in a similar vein, the last day is focused on reflecting on the training programme, building new contacts, and discussing future cooperation. The second day is organized around European policy and advocacy, as we found that regardless of the level at which participants are working, it helps to put their working context into a larger picture. While the focus of the other two days might differ – in past years, we discussed successful communication strategies, outreach, or life skills – we tend to keep a similar structure for each day, and we work increasingly on sequencing the content. We start with a peer-learning 'adult education in my country' session – whose focus depends on the theme of the day – followed by an input session and a workshop.

A good example of this structure is perhaps the day during which we focus on policy and advocacy. We lay the foundations for policy discussions during the 'Adult education in my country' sessions by asking participants to reflect on the priorities of adult education policies in their countries, on the overall recognition of the sector at the policy level, and the role of civil society in policy development. This frequently helps to set the scene: while in some cases policy priorities might be different across the represented countries, in others we can already distinguish certain parallels, for example an increasing focus on basic skills. Over the past few years, the input has been provided by a representative of the Adult Learning Unit at the European Commission, who presents European policy frameworks and initiatives on adult learning; a civil society perspective is provided by EAEA. The last part of the day is dedicated to supporting participants in making their voice heard about the importance of adult education at the policy level: through a hands-on workshop delivered by our policy officer, participants can get insights into the steps to good advocacy and practice planning their own campaign.

This structure has proved to be appreciated by participants; results of the evaluations in 2017 and 2018 showed that the content was organized logically and was relatively easy to follow. What seems to work particularly well is the addition of practical workshops – participants appreciate being given the time and guidance to work on their own ideas, such as an advocacy campaign – as well as the use of interactive methods through-

out the programme: working in small groups, ice-breaking activities, and energizers. This approach contributes towards the main goal of the course, which is not only to increase participants' knowledge on policies and practices in adult education at the European level but ultimately to establish a community of practice.

5. What participants think: Taking feedback into account

What has remained unchanged since the very first edition of the training programme is the key role of regular feedback from participants. A feedback session is always included mid-way through the course; it is organized as an open discussion with the participants on what they enjoyed most and what changes, if any, they would like to see in the coming days. As most of the sessions are delivered by EAEA staff, there is always room for adjusting the course: in past years, we added more breaks and energizers when needed and adapted one of the morning discussions to include some topics of interest that had emerged.

While initial reactions at the end of the course remain important – we ask for short written feedback in addition to small-group discussions about immediate impressions – since 2017 we have also included a slightly more detailed evaluation form, which is shared online one month after the programme, giving participants some time to reflect on what was most successful and what could still be improved. Admittedly, we added the extra evaluation form with some concern over whether many participants would take the time to complete it; we were surprised to find that almost all of them submitted a reply.

The feedback that we received has been overwhelmingly positive (both in 2017 and in 2018, all of the respondents were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the course); nevertheless, we were also offered a few suggestions for improvement, which we always welcomed and used later on to adjust the programme. Most notably, we made certain changes to the schedule of the sessions, eventually extending the programme to five days. We also dedicated more attention to some elements that proved successful, such as visits to local adult education providers.

6. Impact and the way ahead

While the evaluations we carried out after each edition have shown that it was a positive, instructive, and enjoyable experience for our participants, gathering long-term results is far from easy. Part of the difficulty comes from the fact that some of the participants of the earlier editions no longer work for their sending organizations and are thus more diffi-

cult to reach. Although we are yet to conduct a more structured follow-up with former participants, we have learnt informally that some stayed in touch and later developed projects together or hosted each other for study visits. Many joined the online Younger Staff community to continue the exchange. Some went on to become vocal and well-established adult education advocates; two of the first-year participants were eventually elected to the EAEA Executive Board; one of them is now on the Steering Committee of the Lifelong Learning Platform.

From an organizational point of view, preparing – and remodelling – the programme has also proven to be an interesting, challenging, and ultimately beneficial experience for us as a team. We start planning each edition together, from discussing practical things – such as the date – to reflecting on the previous year and possible changes to the programme. While the membership and events officer is in charge of the overall coordination, from drafting and finalizing the programme, staying in touch with participants to carrying out evaluations, other team members also play an important role, for example by leading some of the training sessions. Working together has certainly been crucial for the programme to succeed.

Our positive experiences with Younger Staff Training have also encouraged us to experiment with other formats. Between 2014 and 2016, we organized a series of training sessions online within the framework of the European Adult Education (Young) Professionals Learning Platform (AE-PRO), a Grundtvig multilateral project. Marked by high completion rates and participant engagement, the online course also proved to be successful (Ebner & Berman, 2016). Upon popular demand, we launched a follow-up Erasmus+ project, Upskilling Pathways in AE-PRO (2018-2020). We also started preparing our first Senior Staff Training, to be launched in 2020. This will certainly come with other challenges on the way, but we are looking forward to confronting them.

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