Low skilled take their qualifications "one step up"

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

2. ANALYSIS OF THE KEY FACTORS UNDERPINNING THE GOOD PRACTICES

2.1. *Areas and issues addressed by the key factors selected*
Paolo Federighi

The analysis of good practices has highlighted some key factors which tend to foster the success of the educational actions promoted.

We shall summarise these factors under five different perspectives as represented in the Figure below.

Figure 1 – Factors found in the practices described in the European Inventory
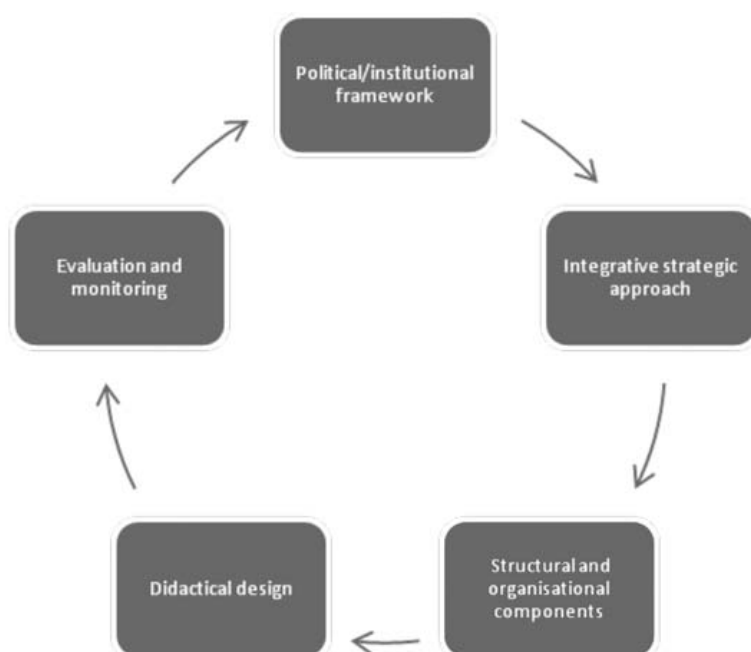
The *political and institutional framework* makes reference to the existence of a context where all key institutional actors, public and private, State and enterprises are endowed with the institutional instruments neces-

sary to promote a policy aimed at outreach to low-skilled adults. As we shall see, this means in particular a focus on work and everyday life as a source of new learning experiences, including informal learning.

The *integrated strategic approach* refers to the multiplicity of places and actors which are involved. To reach low-skilled adults it is necessary to transform their life and work environments into places of learning. The local community – with its libraries, museums, cultural centres, etc. –, the home, the business, the army, the association, the prison, etc. are all places which can generate learning experiences. The enhancement and promotion of effective interventions is based on the cooperation between institutional actors and non-institutional actors, who can assume specific roles in this matter.

The *organisational components* make reference to the necessity that the programmes aimed at outreach to low-skilled adults are equipped with three essential components: (1) political measures capable of impacting on demand (and which act on economic factors and of creation of availability of time for learning); (2) support and guidance services which operate both as regards the demand (information, motivation, guidance, counselling, certification etc.), and the offer of education and training; (3) measures which assure the quantity and quality of the offer of learning (variety of opportunities linked to different contexts, creation of chains which allow the education and training to be adequately provided, quality of the adult educators).

The *didactical design* is founded on the necessity that the learning offer of learning opportunities develops new didactical forms related to work and daily life, based on less formal and embedded methods. The personalised character takes form through direct connections with life phases and the vocational history of the low-skilled adults. The key of didactical design is based on codified knowledge which the subject does not yet possess, which is in use in his/her life or work environment. In this sense, in addition to active didactical methods, it is necessary to adopt methods integrated with the activity carried out by the subject in daily life and in work.

Evaluation and monitoring highlights the necessity to take on a results-oriented approach as well as an approach which takes into consideration the desired impact of the interventions being promoted. To this must correspond both self-management and the constant improvement of the educational quality, but also the activation of an independent, modern public system of inspection and control.

2.2. Political and institutional framework orientation
Paolo Federighi and Francesca Torlone

2.2.1. The strategic idea of one step up

Enabling the low skilled to enhance their level of qualification is based on a strategy and a policy aimed at the growth of adults' capacity to transform their daily lives starting from their working and personal conditions.

This goal must be present in the strategies that inspire education, training and work policies. We must admit that the problem exists, translate it into a strategy of economic and social development, identify the resources that must be assigned for the purpose, define the responsibilities of the State, companies and individuals and, lastly, show where the 77 million citizens can develop their level of qualification.

Box 1 – Integrated policies

The Danish flexicurity model combines high mobility between jobs with a comprehensive social safety net for the unemployed and an active labour market policy (the so called "golden triangle"). The high degree of mobility from employer to employer is linked to the relatively modest level of job protection. That implies that there is a quite high percentage of the employed who are each year affected by unemployment and receive unemployment benefits or social assistance. But the majority of these unemployed people manage to find their own way back into a new job thanks to the effective active labour market policies included in the flexicurity system. (*Integrated policies in the flexicurity model, Denmark*).[10]

The more complex the adult's socio-economic circumstances the greater the need to harmonise actions that could bring them into situations of autonomy and development.

The connection between education and work is crucial for citizens whose autonomy – not only economic – is based on the possibility of finding, maintaining or searching for a job. Such a connection implies a strategy which does not divide, but tightly connects personal to professional growth.

Box 2 – How to reach cooperation between different educational organisations and programmes

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The central features of the Noste Programme are:
- outreach work in workplace contexts outside educational institutions and organisational settings
- engaging in face-to-face contacts and negotiations with the target group and with employers
- tripartite collaboration at various institutional levels providing advisory services, guidance and counselling as part of the outreach process.

The Noste Programme has been in place since 2003.
(*Noste Programme/Outreach activities for low skilled workers, Finland*).

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[10] European Commission (2008), "YOUTH: Young in Occupations and Unemployment: Final Report 2008", and "Country case study reports - Pathways to work: Current practices and future needs for the labour market integration of young people", available at http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=448&furtherNews=yes

This must be accompanied with new ideas in learning, new patterns closer to the natural processes of learning and further from the concepts of typical schooling. In such a way the job does not just become the objective of the learning, but the source of it and the place for personal development. This is also the case for other life contexts of adults.

2.2.2. *Putting in place policies and infrastructure*

The implementation of a development strategy to address low level education has consequences such as:

• Providing clear stable structures where citizens can apply for services. At the same time, public institutions, required to guarantee functioning and quality, must be identified.

Box 3 – Public policies for the low skilled

Municipal KomVux schools provide secondary education as well as compulsory schools, secondary schools and adult education residential centres (where specialist courses are held). Additional courses are run by local public bodies, independent secondary school courses and public education schools.
(*Komvux – KOMmunal VUXenutbildning/Municipal Adult Education, Sweden*).[11]

The integrated actions adopted by the Competence Centre are for promoting education and training within small and medium enterprises (fewer than 20 employees). Businesses, skilled and unskilled employees, competence centre middle managers, and teachers and trainers participate in competence development and continuing education. Centres were set up in 2006.
(*Competence Centre, Denmark*).

• The interpretation of such an objective in plans, programmes and adequate financing to achieve a measurable impact, based also on the financial commitment of public and private parties and – amongst them – companies.

Box 4 – Basic competence in working life

The 'Basic competence in working life' programme's opportunities have been taken up by a number of private and public enterprises with employees who need basic skills training. The programme is part of the government's overall competence policy. The education providers, which may be public and private providers and even companies themselves, if they have the necessary teaching staff, organise the courses and help recruit the participants in cooperation with enterprises. Trade union representatives often play an important part in the recruitment phase and throughout the whole process of setting up a course. The programme has been running 2006.
(*Basic competence in working life programme, Norway*)

• The creation of sustainable conditions for participation in education and training through the encouragement of motivation to invest in education and training, reduction of direct and indirect costs and the guarantee of returns.

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[11] Isfol (2008), *Fostering the participation in lifelong learning. Measures and actions in France, Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom-The specific measures*, I libri del Fondo Sociale Europeo-Unione Europea e Ministero del Lavoro, della Salute e delle Politiche Sociali, ISSN 1590-0002.

Box 5 – Sustainable conditions to enhance participation in education and training

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The individual credit card for training is based on the ILA (Individual Learning Account) model and is intended to overcome obstacles of access to education and training, to develop ways back to work and the integration and personalisation of learning courses for those involved. It is particularly effective in helping those with low educational levels (EQF2) back into training and education. It combines three different aspects: institutional financing of education and training, supply of information and counselling services and the participant's freedom in his/her choice of learning. This measure allows the individual to develop a varied learning path over a number of years. The practice was introduced in 2005. It has had a special importance as a measure for unemployed people during the 2009-2010 economic crisis.
(*Individual credit card for training-ILA card, Italy*).

The Adult Learning Grant (ALG) is one of the key learner support schemes put in place by the Learning and Skills Council in order to remove financial shortcomings as a barrier to participating in learning. the ALG is intended to help low income adults studying full time for their first full Level 2 or first full Level 3 qualification with the cost of learning. the amount eligible adult learners can receive varies and depends on their financial situation. the ALG was announced in July 2003 as part of the "Government's Skills Strategy 21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential". Following the first pilots of the ALG, it was expanded to cover the whole of England in 2007/08.
(*Adult Learning Grant, United Kingdom*).[12]

- For some groups in the population in particular conditions, special routes for approaching jobs and education and training must be contemplated. In these cases the aim is not certification; it is building a personal life project.

Box 6 – Integrated support for labour market integration of some disadvantaged categories of citizens

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Integrated support for labour market integration (SIIL) is a service designed to reduce the risk of social and labour market exclusion of people with psychological, social and economic disadvantages as a result of low level basic and transversal skills, personal fragility and social vulnerability. It encourages the acquisition of social and professional roles through workplace mediation that consists of accompanying the person throughout his\her professional integration process, and stimulating its emancipatory effect. The integrated approach of the service is based on a strong cooperation among local centres and services providing counselling, education and training and introduction into the labour market.
(*SIIL-Sistema Integrato Inserimento Lavorativo/Integrated support for labour market integration, Italy*).

2.2.3. Models of policies for the development of basic education

The good practices collected highlight four different types of approach, potentially complementary, which must be taken into consideration while building strategies and policies:

1. **Formal approach**: formal education and training systems can also be adapted and extended based on the relationship between the school/training centre and other learning contexts (social environment, job,

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[12] Isfol (2008), *Fostering participation in lifelong learning. Measures and actions in France, Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom-The specific measures*, I libri del Fondo Sociale Europeo-Unione Europea e Ministero del Lavoro, della Salute e delle Politiche Sociali, ISSN 1590-0002.

etc.), and as a function of demand manifested in the adult's social life and/or the job market, and resulting in the consequent adaptation of curricula and learning models. In such cases – also when the objective is to obtain a professional qualification – the learning does not take account of the specific needs of one company, but rather aims to provide the job market as a whole with workers who are employable in several types of companies. It is education and training to achieve an occupation – and therefore mainly addresses adults in search of a job. This approach tends to be characterised by the following features:

- Revision of the learning programmes in the sense of a strong relationship between basic training and professional qualifications – requested by the job market and social competences.

Box 7 – Standardised open learning programmes

In the Cards 2004 project, public and private education and training providers (trainers and researchers) were provided with additional expertise to develop a more flexible basic skills programme. This involved developing a new curriculum consisting of six terms, each lasting 18 weeks. The first (I) and second (II) terms are equivalent to the level of the first four grades of primary education. These terms are designed for adults who have not completed the first four years of primary school. Terms three (III) to six (VI) match the level of the remaining four years of primary education and are, therefore designed for adults who have completed only the first four years of regular primary education. The "Cards 2004" project started in 2007 following an overall review of the government's initiative and ended in May 2009 (*second phase of the governmental initiative*).
(*Basic education and vocational training for low skilled workers, Croatia*).

- Definition and standardisation of learning outcomes and adaptation of curricula in achieving such aims;

Box 8 – Standardised open learning

Aula Mentor is an open learning system adopted by *Ministerio de Educación*. Curricula are arranged in a way that they standardise learning outcomes. They comprise, for instance: (1) "*Aula Mentors*" with a PC and internet connection, where students can access tutor support, find materials, and get assistance in deciding on their learning pathway, and (2) the "*mesas de trabajo*" (work stations), virtual environments for studying and communicating included in the Mentor server platform. The practice was started in 1992.
(*Aula Mentor, Spain*).

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2. The **approach centred on embedded learning**, which aims to build learning pathways both structured and incidental, while at work or in some regular social activity. In its method of developing specific competences (fine tuning), this approach consists of organising activities carried out in the workplace or elsewhere, in order to accelerate the learning of the interested adult.
   The most significant element is that this approach tends to bring into central focus what is going to be learnt in the workplace or in other contexts (e.g. sport, volunteering) in an informal way. It is therefore

a model in which the education and training potential present in a specific social or professional activity (the manufacturing of yogurt, the production of animal feed) is used for the personal and professional development of low skilled adults.

It is an approach which, for those with a low level of education, is carried out through close cooperation between government, company and other agencies, including one which also provides certification and professional qualifications.

Box 9 – Embedded learning approach

The experience concerns language learning while the workers carry out the tasks, duties and functions assigned to them. The management of the workplace learning is entrusted in part to the learners themselves who must recognise, choose and decide if and how to use learning opportunities. This is what happens at *Passage gGmbH in Hamburg*. In learning combined directly (embedded) with the work context and job roles, the willingness to learn is strengthened by the learners sharing their personal expertise in work processes with the trainers, who are language experts in reading, writing and communication. The underlying concept is that workplace-related language skills training can only be developed by taking into account particular work processes and contexts. Both skills (language and work processes) blend to form *ad hoc* materials, which are strongly contextualised with respect to the production process and centred around the workers' training needs, as thoroughly investigated by an external service centre. The practice started in 2007.
(German in the workplace, Germany).

The British Army has succeeded in addressing the need for sound literacy and numeracy skills that are foundation skills which underpin the ability of Service men and women to assimilate training, to carry out their duties effectively and safely and to take advantage of career opportunities. From 2000 to present the Basic Skills Agency (now NIACE) has worked in partnership with the British Army to provide basic skills to army recruits.
(Basic skills in the British Army, United Kingdom).

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3. The **alternance approach**, based on developing public education and training institutions at various levels (up to university) exclusively open to workers, enrolled by the company in which they work. The workers attend learning courses that aim to improve understanding and ability to carry out a specific – usually complex – work activity. Enrolled people usually dedicate up to 50% of their time to education and training activities and the remaining time to productive activities within companies. Certification and qualification are issued after completion of education and training.

In the past, the model of alternance was mainly used for young apprentices, and now is also used for adults. It is a model usually reserved for those with a job contract. In fact it requires long periods away from the workplace. For this reason, the financial cost for the company is particularly onerous. Its extension to unemployed adults is made through integrated social policies (disbursement of minimum wage subject to execution of the work activity) or active labour market policies. In these cases, the labour cost is entirely or partially paid by the State.

Box 10 – Dual system centred on alternance

In Luxembourg, a legal measure offering adults the opportunity to make up for a lack of vocational education and certification or to acquire an additional certification. Participants get a contract of employment and a salary after admission to the dual vocational system (company based apprenticeship training complemented by attendance at a vocational school). After finishing the apprenticeship, the opportunities for them in the Luxembourg labour market noticeably increase.
In terms of the company-based aspect, if young people get an allowance for the apprenticeship, the adults get the minimum social welfare benefit. The difference is reimbursed by the State to the company.
The practice was introduced in 2000.
(*Financial incentive in adult apprenticeship, Luxembourg).*

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4. The **validation approach**, which is characterised by accrediting and motivating the adult on what has been learnt during work and life experiences and with a subsequent aim of validation and recognition through appropriate methods, sometimes leading to certification. During this study, this approach was found in a number of countries and contexts. The following features describe two specific types:

    •   Adoption of widespread national systems of validation for knowl–edge acquired in life and work;

Box 11 – Recognition and validation of vocational competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts

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The *Centro Novas Oportunidades* (CNO/New Opportunities Centres) identifies and validates skills that have been acquired through informal, non-formal or formal learning by adults with limited schooling and ultimately awards a diploma equivalent to an official certificate. The NOC was set up in 2003 and has been growing throughout Portugal ever since. The target is to reach 500 in 2010.
(*New Opportunities Centres, Portugal).*

In Romania, individuals who would like vocational competences acquired through non-formal and informal routes to be assessed with a view to recognition apply to an assessment centre authorised for the appropriate occupation or qualification. The certificates of competency have the same value as the nationally recognised graduation or qualification certificates issued in the authorised formal accreditation system. The practice was adopted in 2004.
(*Recognition and validation of vocational competences acquired in non- formal and informal contexts, Romania).*

•   Adoption of correlation systems between formal and informal models through the introduction of activities bringing people up to the level to achieve school diplomas.

Box 12 – Low skilled employees access a national diploma

The *Evoluance* (Evolution) programme of the French group Danone is a qualification programme with the aim of helping the company's low skilled employees access a national diploma or enter a VAE-*Validation des acquis de l'éxperience.* The national network of public and adult education centres, Greta-*GRoupements d'ETAblissements,* is involved as well as the body respoonsible for the formal adult education service in France. The programme began in 2004.
(*Evoluance-Basic education for workers in Danone, France*).

2.3. Integrated strategic action
Simona Sava

Once the vision and the political aim are set, their realisation requires coherent, integrated action by all relevant players, with clearly defined responsibilities. As well as achieving the goal of enabling people to take their qualifications 'one step up', the implementation of the political perspective requires a diversified infrastructure, cooperation among different players, and reliable data for understanding the wealth of evidence and the complexity of the situation of these adults, and the combined measures and support services.

To reach the low skilled adults, different actors acting in multiple settings and places are to be involved.

The experiences presented in this study show how the solutions to the different situations of adults with low qualification levels, and the systems put in place, are tailored to the problems they are facing. The national, regional, or local infrastructure and network of institutions involved will vary in the distribution of responsibilities, and in the relevant players needed to achieve an integrated, coherent way of acting according to the level of intervention (e.g. top-down approaches, such as national large scale initiatives, versus bottom-up initiatives, at a smaller scale, at local/ regional level, but with promising results).

Key success factors of an integrated, coherent strategic approach to supporting adults with low qualification levels to go 'one step up' appear to be:
1. Identifying and involving all relevant players.
2. Combining different measures.
3. Defining realistic objectives for programmes and projects.
4. Defining responsibilities clearly.
5. Basing approaches on sufficient and empirical data.

These factors are explored below, using concrete examples from the data collected across Europe.

2.3.1. Identifying and involving all relevant players

The diversity of problems people with low levels of qualification are faced with call for different kinds of expertise to be involved in addressing them (e.g. imprisonment, no or insufficient qualifications, incomplete basic education or basic skills needs, migrants with literacy problems mainly related to the mastering of the national language of the host country,

outside of the labour market, or at its periphery). For a specific problem it is necessary to define who the relevant players are; how they can act together or complement each other in providing educational and non–educational services; how the responsibility can be divided among them; or what might be a strategic partnership.

Not only the specific nature of the problem, but also the level of need has an impact on the number of players to be involved, and on the geo–graphical coverage. This will determine if large scale national initiatives or small scale local ones are to be initiated.

Box 13 – National large scale initiative, formal educational provision

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A 10 year-long governmental initiative launched in 2003 in Croatia with the aim of helping adults to complete their elementary education, improve their literacy level, and train for basic occupations leading to   a qualification in demand on the labour market, thus enabling them to get a better job (*first phase of the governmental initiative*). Its implementation meant several combined approaches, one aimed at fostering political dialogue and consensus among the most important partners at all levels (municipalities, local authorities, companies, the Croatian Employment Service, adult education providers, primary and secondary schools, open universities, employer associations, non-governmental and non-profit organisations). (*Basic education and vocational training for low skilled workers, Croatia*).

In 2002 the B*ack to Education Initiative-BTE* was launched as part of the Irish Government's programme for Second-Chance and Further Education. The overall aim is to increase the participation of young people and adults with less than upper secondary level education in a range of flexible part-time learning opportunities. The BTE complements existing full-time provision in further education funded by the Department of Education and Science. The Back to Education Initiative comprises two Strands:
A Formal Strand, delivered by Vocational Education Committees (local education authorities) who provide the bulk of the provision, and a small number of post primary schools who provide adult education courses.
A Community Strand, with 50 community groups offering BTEI provision. 10% of the annual BTEI budget is allocated to these groups.
(*Back to Education Initiative, Ireland*).

All examples provided show that the 'one step up' strategy would not work for these specific target groups without a holistic view of their life situation and their daily environment, as their problems and concerns are not educational ones, but mainly relate to securing a decent life. The more specific the environment (prison, army, F.E.), the easier it is to define all relevant players. The broader it is, the more initial analysis is needed to assess the complexity of the environments and to define the relevant players that might work together.

Box 14 – Education and training programmes for inmates

In the prison of Nitra-Chrenova, partners provide different qualifications, the university offering a general course on everyday law and the municipality a "Citizen and democracy" foundation course. *The Women in Prison programme* has succeeded in: overcoming issues of low levels of literacy; improved self-knowledge, the quality of family life, and the understanding of human rights; raised educational levels and qualifications gained, and developed self-confidence in relation to the labour market, within a common educational programme.
(*Educational programme for women in prison, Slovakia*).

The national programme (2006-2010) "*Creation, Testing and Realisation of the Pedagogic Improvement Programme for Imprisoned People*" (Latvia), has succeeded in overcoming issues of prisoners with no professional qualification and with very few opportunities to be employed on release. 76% (about 5,000) of those involved are prisoners with no qualification or occupation.
(*New solutions for increasing employment possibilities of the former inmates, Latvia*).

The army also provides a well–defined environment with a limited number of players. Places like army and prisons are increasingly seen as non–traditional sites for learning.

Box 15 – Remote sites for integrating learning into daily life

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A pan-Army approach was developed to enable those whose literacy and numeracy have not benefited fully from the civilian education system to meet (and exceed) the basic skills standards that Army life demands. Organised on a regional basis, basic skills learning opportunities (including full diagnostic assessment and access to national testing) are available through in-house provision delivered via a network of 30 Army Education Centres (AECs), six initial Army training units and over 120 ICT-based learning centres in the UK and overseas (including a virtual learning centre). Up to 25,000 applicants across the UK are assessed annually.
(*Basic skills in the British Army, United Kingdom*).

Workplaces are similarly increasingly involved as learning environments for people with low educational levels which directly relate to their everyday life and welfare. When linked to training on the job, this may involve only one player, usually a big company that has developed in-house training and qualification provision for its employees with no or a low level of qualification (see Danone, in France, or Fornetti, in Romania). When it is about SMEs, which have limited capacity for training their employees, other link institutions, or partnerships with educational providers are needed.

Box 16 – Embedded learning related to the job

The *Literacy Integrated into the Job* programme developed specific vocational training, customized to the special needs of additional language learners with few literacy skills. The vocational training was to prepare them to get a job in the cleaning sector (since 2005).
(*Literacy integrated into the job, Belgium*). See also Box 9 – Embedded learning approach.

In contrast to these specific needs, when adults need a general support service such as counselling to guide them on their way, the players

providing such services vary considerably. Also, when the aim is to reach very diverse adults and motivate them to attend further education, many institutional players, drawn from almost the whole community educational infrastructure may need to be involved to respond to learners' interests and personal situations.

Box 17 – General support services

The Portuguese New Opportunities Centres are to be found in: state schools, job training centres, professional associations, town halls, local associations, private companies, not-for-profit institutions, other local establishments and organisations.
(*New Opportunities Centres, Portugal*).

The Permanent Territorial Centres (PTC), since 1999, , play the complex role of promoting and encouraging the coming together of those working in the same area (e.g. secondary education institutes, vocational training agencies, associations, businesses, trade unions, employment centres and local authorities) for the planning, promotion and/or provision of educational and vocational training activities for adults.
(*Permanent Territorial Centres, Italy*).

In response to the general aim of inspiring and motivating adults to re-engage with and re-enter formal or non-formal education, a very diverse range of institutions can be relevant players (e.g. the Nordic Centre for Cultural Heritage Learning- NKC, Jamtli Museum, Regional museum in Jämtland, the State Regional Archives in Östersund, Birka Folk High School, the Unemployment Office, the Östersund Municipality, etc.). The preparatory courses aim to enable and motivate the participants to start basic or vocational training again, by '*learning to learn*'.
(*X-Press on tracks, Sweden*).

Thus relevant players need to be identified in response to the type and size of the problem. All relevant players and stakeholders must be involved, in the light of the territory served (town, village, region, state) and the task to be addressed, including not only schools and enterprises, but also support services and civil society organisations.

The complexity of the problems addressed usually requires integrated actions and measures, and support links connecting them.

2.3.2. Combining different measures

Most of the examples provided have used integrated approaches to support low skilled adults to overcome the difficulties of their situation and find a job, as the causes and effects of such situations are different.

The large scale initiatives consisted of the different integrated measures needed to put in place a functional and good quality system. This mainly occurred in countries where the system was to be newly implemented, like the new EU Member States, and there was a need for action on many levels. The measures aimed also to be flexible enough to adapt to adults' different experiential backgrounds, relating either to measures of validating and integrating their previous knowledge and skills acquired in informal and non-formal learning contexts, or to measures enabling them to take responsibility and make their own choices for the qualification route to follow by providing them with learning vouchers.

Box 18 – Combined measures, multidimensional design

The *Second Chance Programme* was developed in different phases and continuingly extended. Implementation of the programme involved a number of elements, including measures to develop institutional capacity, through: a) Developments in educational policy to regulate the implementation of the Second Chance programme; b) Organisation of training sessions; c) Development of curriculum and educational materials; d) Monitoring and evaluation; e) Information campaigns.
The programme provides individual training and recognition of prior learning, based on both the curricular standards for basic education and the vocational training standards. The learners have the benefit of counselling and support services within the programme.
The offer is at two levels: Second Chance for Primary Education and Second Chance for Lower Secondary Education (the latter including a vocational training component).
(*Second Chance Programme, Romania*).

In the countries with more experience, the combined national scale measures were more specific and focused, with targeted actors.

Box 19 – Specific measures and targeted institutional actors

The *Basic Competence in Working Life Programme* was launched in 2006, with the aim to set up basic education projects in enterprises and to monitor the implementation of the measures taken. The Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning, Vox, has been entrusted with the coordination, support and on-going evaluation of the programme. Networks and consortia were set up: enterprises were able to apply for public funding, and finance was made available for basic education courses in public institutions. Employers were included in the programme from the outset as an effective strategy to utilise companies' existing infrastructure for employee development to develop adapted training and further education courses.
The Norwegian government has also set up a *Framework for Basic Skills for Adults* which the applicants for training grants use as a frame of reference while defining the competence levels of various participants.
(*Basic competence in working life programme, Norway*).

As the problems the adults are facing are multidimensional, combined measures, tailored to their situations are needed.

Box 20 – Tailored combinations of measures

Apprentices lacking basic competences in literacy, numeracy and ICT are supported and mentored on their route to graduation by an integrated tailored training aimed to overcome their learning barriers for entry to the dual vocational training system. An individual curriculum is developed with the learners. A very detailed process of assisting the young adults was designed, supported by voluntary social pedagogical mentoring, and close co-operation between the basic education trainers, training centre management and teachers at vocational schools.
(*Basic education for apprentice/JUMP Project - "Jugendliche in Bewegung", Austria*).

The *Learndirect* programme provides learning aimed to improve skills, find a job, change careers or progress at work, to people over the age of 16 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Since 2000, more than 2.5 million learners have participated.
(*Learndirect, United Kingdom*).

Guidance and counselling integrated into teaching was provided at non-residential folk-high schools in *Denmark* for young adults with low literacy, as part of the participant's job plan provided by a job centre. The approach was aimed at building confidence and motivation for further learning, and thus 'transition' entitlements were designed.
(*Guidance and counselling at non-residential folk-high schools, Denmark*).

Such targeted approaches show the complementary measures need-ed to support adults in overcoming their learning barriers. Even when they are designed more as individual educational programmes, the cooperation between different players with different expertise char-acterises the integrated approach. More elements of the integrated approach are involved while running awareness campaigns which aim not only to raise awareness, but to give adults "on the spot" support and guidance about concrete further steps to be taken. As such, campaigns involve a wide range of relevant players, more de-tails about them will be provided below, where the responsibility of each is described.

Irrespective of the size and range of the measures taken and combined, they always relate to the aim to be reached.

2.3.3. Defining of a realistic objective for programmes and projects

To be able to design and implement integrated strategies, clear and realistic aims need to be defined. The strategy must define a clear and re-alistic objective, based on a clear problem definition and a clear strategic aim. This is the precondition for further precisely planned and realised activities to ensure the success of the strategy. This is even more impor-tant since the task of learning is always multi-dimensional and complex for these target groups.

Box 21 – Clear aims, priorities and targets

The overall aim of the *Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)* in Ireland was to increase the participation of young people and adults with less than upper second level education in a range of flexible part-time learning opportu-nities. The BTEI has a number of specific priorities:
- Introducing greater flexibility into the Irish education system which has had a predominant emphasis on full-time provision and time specific entry and exit opportunities.
- Promoting greater synergy between different forms of provision.
- Assisting individuals in combining family, personal and work responsibilities with learning opportunities.
- Engaging hard-to-reach groups in learning activity.
- Addressing the low literacy levels of the Irish adult population by providing a bridge from literacy provision to other courses.
- Offering a wider range of choices, which are appropriate to the particular circumstances of learners, and leading to national certification or accreditation with a strong focus on increasing the number of Irish adults who have certification at upper secondary level or equivalent.
- Addressing specific skill needs, by providing courses in business, tourism, art and craft, childcare, healthcare and a broad range of disciplines within the services sector as well as offering access to Information and Com-munications Technology training.

(*Back to Education Initiative, Ireland*).

In-depth reflection is needed on how challenging to make the aims and objectives, to determine realistic and affordable ways of reaching them. Objectives which are too general make it difficult to anticipate the measures needed, while a too narrow aim might not be integrative enough.

Consideration must also be given to the time scale needed to ensure realistic objectives in the time available. With a longer time frame, intermediate objectives acting as milestones are important to show how the overall objective will be reached.

Box 22 – More ambitious targets based on experience and continuity

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The national campaign *Mother and Daughter in School* was initiated in 2001, in line with the UNESCO initiative to make a 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015 and to provide equal access for all adults to primary and continuous education.
The initial campaign ended in 2007. Due to its success, a new more extensive campaign has been initiated from 2008 until 2012, with the goal set by the Turkish government to reduce the number of illiterates by 40% by 2012. In 2008 356,011 people were reached, a large increase compared with previous years, which makes the government confident that the goal set for 2012 will be reached.
(*Mother and Daughter in School, Turkey*).

However, generally speaking, the overall aim is to enhance people's control over their own lives, for which a common framework of learning opportunities needs to be created, aimed at enhancing learners' chances by offering more possible choices.

At the more operational level, it is crucial that the structure of the work follows the aims of the programme to enable 'one step up' for the learners. The commitments and obligations of all involved organisations must clarify this aim and show appropriate activities to reach it.

Beside a clear aim, it is important to draw up a frame of reference for a core of the basic competences for all relevant fields, competences that enable people to secure decent lives for themselves (*see Box 19*).

2.3.4. Defining responsibilities clearly

Given the number of players and activities to be carried out to bring hard to reach adults back into education and employment, a clear definition of how each of them will contribute to the final aim is needed. The drivers and decision-making centres of a strategy also need to be identified (eg. civil society, some ideologies, economic development, etc.), and the needed levels of action specified.

Box 23 – Clear responsibilities among networked partners

The *Noste* is a national programme launched by the Finnish Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and social partners in 2003. Its aim is to find out how to reach, motivate and support low skilled working adults with little experience of post-compulsory education. The programme consists of 59 regional and provincial Noste projects organised as networks of various providers of adult education (including vocational adult education centres, vocational institutes, adult education centres, folk high schools, upper secondary schools, apprenticeship training centres, business centres, associations and job centres) and their working life partners. The Noste Programme includes one national outreach project, coordinated by the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK). The network organisations of the regional Noste projects supported the outreach work by enabling cooperation between different educational organisations and training programmes, exchange of knowledge and expertise and use of existing relationships and networks with workplace contexts, as well as providing a broad range of programmes and courses for the students.
(*Noste programme/Outreach activities for low skilled workers, Finland*).

The structure of work in the partnership also needs to be clarified, as can be seen in the above example. In most cases there is one institution to coordinate the programme and the partners; the others generally work through a variety of networks, but with shared duties, clear roles and responsibilities.

The successful implementation of a programme based on a partnership with shared responsibilities depends on some key factors, including: clear and accepted aims, relevant capacity building, defined roles, clarifying the structure of communication, interests met of all partners, commitment and evaluation of impact.

The examples presented in this study demonstrate a number of different types of strategic partnership:

- The first type is a complementary partnership, in which organisations of different kinds join together in a working scheme. This could be, for instance, a partnership of schools, administration, enterprises, cultural institutions, labour market agencies, ministries and public bodies on all regional levels (local, regional, national).
- The second type is the additional partnership, in which many organisations of the same kind are working together. This means, for example, schools and administrations in neighbouring regions, to enlarge the scale of provision and access. Providers may be organised in additional partnerships.
- The third type is the supportive partnership, in which organisations and bodies are involved in supporting the process and the delivery of the programme. Supportive partners mostly support financially, and sometimes are helpful in political or ideological questions.

The size and diversity of the partnership depend on the level of intervention (national scale, versus regional/ local coverage), and on the complexity of the problem. In most cases the responsibilities of the partners are shared.

It is important to stress that local responsibility needs to be enforced, to ensure the proximity of intervention to the real life situation of these people. *Local governance* can draw up effective and tailored *local strategies* which will encourage local authorities, employers, colleges and voluntary organisations to work together to meet the needs of the low skilled people in the most effective ways. A diversified and tailored infrastructure can be developed if local players have the power to set up the offer for learning and support services. Also employers should be motivated to strengthen a culture of learning in and out of work, as part of the infrastructure and network for learning.

Box 24 – Enforced regional/local responsibility and governance

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Adult basic education addressed to parents of immigrant pupils showed how in the province of Prato 7 municipalities set up an inter-institutional network and a joint project to respond to the issue of high levels of inward migration and signed a Protocol Agreement. They were supported by the Region of Tuscany which made the financial resources available, the Prato County and the National Ministry of Education.
The objective is to support and develop a collaborative relationship between schools and local authorities in order to research new strategies for integrating foreign children of school-going age and to promote courses aimed at educating for diversity through the full involvement of all teachers, parents and students.
The actions planned relate to the following areas: *Reception services* (including the welcoming of parents and young people, guidance, recognition of skills, certification of educational credits and debits); Italian language workshops; intercultural workshops and active citizenship workshops; staff training, parenting support through the involvement of voluntary and third sector associations; counselling for teachers and non-teaching staff (by cultural mediators and linguistic facilitators) etc.
(*Adult basic education addressed to parents of immigrant pupils, Italy*).

Removing the barriers to access for all adults with less than upper secondary level education requires articulated actions at different levels: from the certification (and accreditation system) of different forms of provision, to designing open and flexible access, transfer and progression pathways to different/ alternative education or employment, and ensuring that people find it easier to gain credit for any learning they have undertaken. This also means introducing greater flexibility into the education system, as well as greater synergy between different forms of provision and bridges between the different learning pathways. This creates more opportunities for learners to move between different parts of the system, in this way widening the range of learning opportunities available, as more choice means more chances.

This approach builds bridges mainly inside the educational system (passages between formal and informal learning, alternative routes, credit system, etc.) and also between the educational system and the "real" world of the people at the workplace and in the social environment. Above all, supported by awareness campaigns, it builds up an effective system for informing people about their possibilities.

Box 25 – Bridges for alternative learning pathways

Reintegration of women in the healthcare sector programme is addressed to women with rural and/or migrant backgrounds struggling to get back into the labour market after a long period out of employment, for family reasons. Different healthcare institutions provide training courses for this target group to learn and validate healthcare skills and competences. Most of them had no formal qualification.
The successful participants of the training courses not only had their skills validated, but also found employment at one of the participating healthcare institutions.
(*Reintegration project-migrant women in healthcare sector, Netherlands*).

2.3.5. Basing strategy on sufficient and empirical data

The interventions designed into an integrated strategy are to be based on the use of empirical data, research findings and documented experiences (also from abroad), that can give information not only about the size of the problem, but also suggest areas and ways of tailored intervention, providing at the same time a scientific and reliable rationale.

Box 26 – Relevant and reliable data

In Scotland the information about the size of the target group reached by the good practice is quite precise: The International Adult Literacy Survey (1996) suggested that approximately 23% of Scotland's adults (800,000 people) had some level of literacy or numeracy difficulty. New research (New Light on Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (2008) suggests that 36% of Scotland's adults do not have the literacy skills they need to be able to achieve everything they might in their personal lives and in their work and that 71% of adults lack the numeracy skills they need in order to be able to achieve everything they might.
(*Networking and partnership with adult literacy tutors in Scotland, United Kingdom*).

Knowledge of the problems, the structure of the field and the advantage and disadvantage of actions, along with careful analysis of the situation is fundamental to ensuring an in–depth understanding of the whole complexity of the problem, and to make sure that quick decisions are not taken that might be wrong.

Box 27 – Gathering empiric facts

The primary aim of the NOBI Network and the Coordination Centre, *German in the workplace,* is to find solutions which emphasise the responsibilities of society, the labour market, and the companies themselves. The prime purpose of the programme is to enable migrants with limited German language skills to participate in cultural, social as well as working life without, however, demanding one-sided assimilation. Thus, one of the main tasks of the project is to develop training programmes for companies and adapt learning methods and materials which are relevant to the respective target group or company.
To do so, drawing on identified work-related and individual needs, the Coordination Centre, *German in the Workplace*, offers to design and deliver customised programmes for in-house training in companies. The focus is on the language skills specific to a particular company, which are identified on site by observing and analysing work processes.
(*German in the workplace, Germany*).

Also, very important is the information coming from peer learning activities, from "lessons learnt" in running similar activities. Going into the concrete reality and gathering the empiric data, and also listening to the "learner's voice", forms the basis to make sure that we have a proper understanding of their situation and needs.

Box 28 – Encourage the learner's voice

The *Adult Learner's Week* in United Kingdom is one of the learning campaigns and activities which promotes and encourages the "learner's voice". Adult Learners' Week was conceived as a national campaign, with local action. Some of the *key elements* of the campaign are: the local coordination through *learning festival groups* or regional coordinators; the   of a *learner network* to promote learning through word of mouth; the inspiring award on behalf of learners who have had a life changing experience through learning.
(*Adult Learner's Week, United Kingdom*).

Consistent, broad and rigorous information collection (that might come also from monitoring and evaluation), can open debate about the implications of the strategy as the whole, or of the different measures. A stronger and broader analysis of the benefits and costs of the intervention over time, and systematic experimentation on what works, is also need-ed, and these aspects are addressed in the section on *Evaluation* below.

2.4. *Organisational components*
Vanna Boffo

2.4.1. *Promoting the demand for education and training centred around the individual*

The key factor in creating specific organisational conditions is to focus on the promotion of learning demand. Good practices in such diverse cultural, social and environmental contexts as those observed in the European countries in question, are characterised by an underlying spirit of promotion of the individual, as a person having to determine how to build one's life path through empowerment and personal growth.

The organisation of each practical activity destined to become a successful practice is founded on this unspoken assumption: the notion that the individual must become the primary agent of his/her very own "project" and must therefore become "his/her own guide" in life, in places of study and at work.

Box 29 – Promotion of the Individual through a learning path

The *Back to Education Initiative* aims to facilitate adults' access, transfer and progression to other education and employment pathways. The Initiative is designed to overcome the inflexibility of the existing further and adult education system by providing adults with the opportunity to combine education with other family and work responsibilities. In this case the education and the learning is combined with the opportunities of the labour market.
(*Back to Education Initiative, Ireland*).

All the prisoners after release could find employment and work as welders. For example, in the period of 2007-2009, two-thirds of the programme's participants passed the centralised qualification exam and acquired the 2nd professional qualification level. They started work in the prison's production unit, which enhanced their professional competences providing the opportunity for paid work and to develop new social skills in labour relations.
(*New solutions for increasing employment possibilities of the former inmates, Latvia*).