Thematic Report 1

Ensuring Basic Skills for All

Working Group 1

Abstract

Ensuring Basic Skills for All – From Basic Skills to Key Competences

Working Group 1 focused on two major issues in order to understand how Lifelong Learning (LLL) can develop in the Asian and European regions. The first issue explored possible definitions and a contextual understanding of LLL. The second issue focused on how to improve and promote LLL to ensure widening participation, with special focus on inclusiveness – i.e. what measures can be implemented to improve the competences and skills of a growing section of the population.

WG 1 defined its role in the following way: the focus should be firmly placed on a practical and pragmatic understanding of the theme, that is to say, the group focused on establishing informed definitions to create better and more focused educational programmes.

The overall theme of "Ensuring Basic Skills for All" involved three important strategic issues to be addressed in the course of the work of the group. ***Ensuring*** was defined as an elaboration of what it means to ensure educational provision on a significant scale. Ensuring therefore involves an elaboration of principles and methods of participation and involvement. The term ***basic skills*** explicitly focused on the important definition of what basic skills are and how they might differ from or coincide with basic *competences* and basic *qualifications* as well as the ways in which this definition reflects an overall understanding of contemporary society as well as of an understanding of learning and the education system. Finally, ***for all*** draws attention to the inclusive aspects of learning initiatives and how these initiatives may reach marginalised groups and those sections of the population that do not normally benefit from educational provisions.

This elaboration of the themes yielded two major conclusions concerning the use of the definition as a proactive factor in LLL development while acknowledging the importance of dividing the definition process into two levels. The first level concerns the importance of the alignment and understanding of general definitions as a value foundation, i.e. a general understanding of LLL as a factor for individual growth, including the need for active citizenship and sustainable growth of public- and private-sector organisations and institutions. The second level involves the formulation of operational definitions aligning LLL initiatives with the overall conceptual programme of LLL in a specific context. This process must take into account the needs of the learner, the community and stakeholders.

Furthermore, it was concluded that a shift from "basic skills" to "key competences" is necessary. "Competence" can be regarded as generic in the sense that skills and qualifications form integral parts of the term "competence". The term competence also emphasises a holistic aspect and views social implementation in terms of the dynamic and purposeful use of skills and qualifications together with knowledge and experience. By extension, the concept of competence is more in line with the needs of the 'knowledge society', i.e. critical and analytical skills. Thus the following definition is proposed:

"Foundational competence involves the practical application and demonstration of knowledge and/or skills. The defining characteristic of competence is the effective and creative deployment of knowledge and skills in human situations – such situations comprise general social as well as specific occupational contexts. Competence draws on attitudes and values as well as on skills and knowledge. Competence refers to the process and the results of the application of knowledge and skills to a set of tasks and is typically acquired by practice."

Eight Key Competences:[1]
- Literacy, numeracy and science (foundational skills)
- Foreign languages (e.g. English)
- ICT skills and use of relevant contemporary technology (ICT literacy)
- Social competence
- Ethical competence
- Entrepreneurship
- Learning to learn
- Cultural competence

Aspects of the definition

Special attention has been drawn to the *aspects and conditions of the process of definition*. These have been grouped under a set of topics which can be applied to any process of definition, e.g. how to reconcile the various aspects of LLL in both an individual and a collaborative context. It is crucial to define the *context and the impetus* of LLL initiatives, regardless of whether these are applied in a local or a global context.

Formal recognition/accreditation of competence

The group emphasised the interrelation between the definition of skills and competences and their accreditation. This involves the establishment of transparent and user-friendly systems of measuring formal, non-formal and informal competences that would be valuable for learners, the community and organisations that require competences of various kinds.

Case Study and Best Practice[2]

To determine the practice and impetus of learners' p articipation in LLL, WG 1 carried out case studies involving eight ASEM member countries. The study focuses on examples of best practice concerning widening participation and social inclusion in projects and programmes on an institutional level. Fifteen case studies bear witness to strong development in the promotion and expansion of LLL initiatives. Furthermore, the case studies indicate that cross-national exchange of experience is a valuable tool in identifying developmental mechanisms and synergy on the level of implementation and institutional change.

Key Areas for Action

The most significant finding of the case study was the apparent move towards "the flexible learning provider". This term covers projects or institutions that are able to provide tailo r-made learning and training opportunities in a dynamic mode that draws on the diversity of learners or groups of learners. The role of teacher has been redefined as a person who can design learning initiatives and adapt the learning environment to suit the needs of both the learner and the community. Instruction and guidance are increasingly being assigned equal status, together with the recognition of their inherent interrelation and the need for their interaction. Pedagogy is moving from the classroom into the community, and various projects are testing innovative ways of combining formal and non-formal training/learning.

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[1] The proposed eight key competences are based on the work of the European Commission and the agreement on key competences arrived at in this forum.

[2] The term best practice has been defined and elaborated by the group as follows: best practice is viewed as an opportunity for identifying underlying principles as opposed to comparing different practices with a view to ranking. Thus the diversity illustrated in the examples plays a crucial part.

Several projects try out a variety of incentives targeted at marginalised groups. Prisoners, substance abusers and others who are exduded from the labour market are offered learning opportunities spanning from one-to-one instruction and working in small, locally based groups to more traditional training. The process is supplemented by personal guidance as well as financial and administrative incentives aimed at easing the entry process and improving motivation for participation. The dissemination of information through the media has in some cases proved a successful way of reaching out to learners traditionally excluded from the educational system.

If incentives and transparency are to be improved, new and more sophisticated systems of accreditation must be developed. Experience to date has shown that innovative measures, both in national education systems and in a cross-national context, are required to facilitate the exchange of competences and afford a broader view. This is intimately connected with another important finding of the group: the promotion of LLL seems to be most successful when based on partnership models, i.e. when stakeholders join forces to provide financial support and share responsibility.

Recommendations

Based on the experience gathered, WG 1 recommends the continuation of the ASEM cooperation framework in the form of the establishment of target-oriented development groups to exchange knowledge and experience, experimental project clusters for the development of new models of LLL and the establishment of an observatory to assess progress and support the development of evaluation models.

Thematic Opportunities for Future ASEM-Cooperation:

Recommendation 1: Common efforts to strengthen competence transparency

Recommendation 2: Development of new cost-effective financial models and quality-control systems for LLL initiatives

Recommendation 3: Further development of evaluation models of LLL learners' achievements and initiatives for vulnerable groups

Recommendation 4: Creation of partnership models

Recommendation 5: Strengthening promotional efforts and incentives

Recommendation 6: Institutional change and development of learning environments

Recommendation 7: Strengthening the efforts targeted at vulnerable groups with a view to widening participation in LLL initiatives

Based on the positive experiences of our cross-national working group, it is our hope that the report and the recommendations will form the basis for an extended working process to facilitate further development of the themes and exchange of experiences gathered.

Introduction

1.1 Background

Working Group 1 (hereafter WG 1) was established at the Copenhagen Conference on 16-18 January, the first meeting of the group. As the smallest group in the ASEM IV project on Lifelong Learning (hereafter LLL) the group was concerned to establish a process that would represent and make room for the great diversity of the European and Asian countries. This has been the greatest challenge. Although not all member countries were represented, the group has striven to reflect the diverse understandings of the meaning of LLL in differing context as well as the various ways of implementing the process. WG 1 has actively sought to reflect this state of affairs in its reports and case studies. Another challenge revealed at the Copenhagen meeting was to ensure a strong practical orientation in the work of the group. With respect to the theme for WG 1 – "Ensuring Basic Skills for All" – our aim has been to disseminate knowledge and information about how this can be achieved and shed light on the ways in which projects and programmes in the two regions provide unique insights into LLL as an important educational endeavour in all countries involved.

1.2 Acknowledgements

The working group and networks
The group that was established in Copenhagen and expanded in the course of the process consisted of the following member states and organisations:

Member Organisation	Country	Direct participation	Contributor
Wan Nur Ibtisam Ministry of Human Resources	Malaysia	▓	
Rahmah Sahamid Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA)	Malaysia	▓	
Azman Muhammad Ministry of Education	Malaysia	▓	
Areeya Rovithee Ministry of Labour	Thailand	▓	
Seah Seng Choon National Trade Union Congress	Singapore	▓	
Arne Carlsen The Danish University of Education	Denmark	▓	
Andreas Pierrou National Agency of Education	Sweden	▓	
Inez Bailey National Adult Literacy Agency	Ireland	▓	
Gary Brooks Department for Education and Skills	United Kingdom		▓
Vangelis Intzidis General Secretariat for Adult Education	Greece	▓	

Chair and Group Management
- Senior Advisor Jørn Skovsgaard – the Danish Ministry of Education
- External Advisor Lars Alrø Olesen – the Danish Ministry of Education

Other support to WG 1
Beside the contributions of the WG members, the WG received valuable contributions from:
At the Bangkok meeting 4-5 April:

Representatives of the government of Thailand:
- Mr Elawat Chandraprasert, Permanent Secretary
- Mr Surin Chiravisit, director general, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
- Ian Cummings – ILO (International Labour Organisation)
- Arief Sadiman – SEAMEO (South East Asia Ministers of Education Organisation)
- Kua Wongboonsin - College of Population Studies Chulalongkorn University – Thailand
- Chandra Pitrachat – Distance Learning Foundation - Thailand

Site Visit on Lifelong Learning provided by the Somboon Industrial Group of Thailand represented by Kasamon Kittiampon, director.

At the Dublin meeting 3-5 June:

- Margaret Kelly – Department of Education – The Republic of Ireland
- Liz Higgins – Department of Foreign Affairs – The Republic of Ireland
- Paddy Greer – ASEM IV – Working Group 3

Site Visit on Lifelong Learning provided by the Dublin Adult Literacy Centre.

We would like to thank all group members for their enthusiasm, industriousness and friendship. We also express our gratitude to the governments of Thailand and Ireland for hosting our meetings, and we thank the Somboon-group and the Dublin Adult Literacy Centre for their extraordinary hospitality, friendship and willingness to share their experience with us.

1.3   Themes and scope of work

The overall theme of "Ensuring Basic Skills for All" involved three important strategic issues:

Ensuring :   Defined as an elaboration of what it means to improve educational provision for all. Ensuring thus involves an elaboration of principles and methods of participation and involvement.

Basic Skills :   A focus on the important definition of basic s*kills* and how these differ from or coincide with basic *competences* and basic *qualifications*; more precisely, the ways in which such definitions reflect our general understanding of society and affect our conceptions of the learning and education systems.

For all :   The call for an understanding and elaboration of the inclusive aspects of learning initiatives and the ways in which these initiatives can reach vulnerable groups and those sections of the population traditionally excluded from the educational system.

In accordance with the above and the Terms of Reference of the ASEM IV, the work of WG 1 is grouped in four major themes:

Theme 1: Definition of Basic Skills[3]
- to contribute to an operational and conceptual definition of "basic skills" in contradistinction to "basic qualifications" and "basic competences"[4]
- to identify national and regional definitions and perceptions of basic skills, basic qualifications and basic competences

Theme 2: Implementation of Policies on Basic Skills – Experience and Development
- to consider the ways in which definitions are applied in ASEM member countries and how these may be effectively implemented in educational policy, curricula and education- and training programmes

Theme 3: Basic Skills and Participation - **Concepts and Best Practice**
- to discuss and consider examples of educational-, social- and labour market policies and practices that have a positive impact on participation, employment and active citizenship

Theme 4: Basic Skills and Social Inclusion - **Concepts and Best Practice**
- to reveal the links between low levels of basic skills of adults and poverty, unemployment, poor health and crime and draw on examples of initiatives to involve marginalised groups in education

The Working Process
The working process of WG 1 has been based on three (4) WG meetings (Copenhagen, Bangkok, Dublin, (Singapore)), where all participants supplied written contributions reflecting the practice and views of their country regarding the above-mentioned themes. The task of the chair was to put these together in the document in hand. To elaborate themes 3 and 4, participants were invited to undertake national case studies to reflect what they deemed to be important aspects of already available examples of best practice. The resulting 15 case studies bear witness to the fact that his aspect of the group's work has made an important contribution to the exchange of experience. The case studies show that there are valuable experiences to be exchanged between the two regions, especially on the subject of project and programme development.

The Report
The report is divided into three main chapters. Chapter 2 collects views on themes 1 and 2. This chapter reflects our discussions and conceptions of definitions and the ways in which these may profitably be employed in the implementation of LLL policies. Chapter 3 presents the findings of the case studies. The aim was to identify and gather trends revealed in this study. Finally, in Chapter 4 we have formulated seven recommendations for the future cooperation of the ASEM IV. This is done on two levels. We have listed seven thematic recommendations and indicate how these recommendations can be implemented in the ASEM cooperation framework in the future.

The annex presents the case studies in their full length in the form they were submitted by the participants. We have chosen not to edit this very valuable material to conform to a strict format. However, for the sake of clarity, the material has been standardised to some extent.

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[3] Theme 1 involves two closely related topics, which are integrated accordingly.
[4] This means that the WG definitions must address nominal as well as operational aspects.

Understanding and working with the themes

- WG elaboration of themes 1 and 2

2.1   Introduction – Review of Present Definitions

In this chapter we shall outline the findings of WG 1 concerning the definition of basic skills and the related concepts of competence and qualifications, and especially how the complex *art of definition* can be understood and utilised in a cross-national context.

At the steering committee meeting in connection with the opening conference in Copenhagen in January 2002, the chairman of WG 1 stressed that the question of definition in the LLL-initiative needed to be approached with a measure of pragmatism.

The process of definition takes place in different settings and is promoted by various international organisations. So far, the most sophisticated and, from an academic point of view, the best argued, was established in the OECD project Definition and Selection of Competences – *DeSeCo*.
It is also interesting to note the implementation work carried out by expert groups under the EU Commission. Recently, one of the expert groups under the EU Commission changed the name of their task from "basic skills" to "key competences".

There is no reason to 'reinvent the wheel' and WG 1 has thus felt free to pick the low-hanging fruit in terms of getting inspiration and drawing on the experiences gathered in the work of other expert groups. On the other hand, the group has not confined itself to these and has consciously striven to elaborate on the material already available.

2.2   From Skills to Competences - Aspects of the Definition Process

Ideally, definition ought to be an open and continuous process. The ways in which basic skills or competences are understood and conceptualised must always be considered in relation to underlying driving forces that have to be identified and understood at the same time. In a school context, the driving forces might be the social or democratic aspects of schooling. In an industrial context, the driving forces are, for instance, market position and the survival of companies. Thus definitions are not static or given entities. We propose a division of the definitions into:

A **general and broad definition** seeks to the greatest possible extent to apply to all contexts. This general definition may thus be termed "universal" or "global". This provides the starting point for an **operational definition,** which is conceived as the process definition. Operational definitions reflect differences in context and requirements and must be defined and agreed upon in the actual situation to fit the given sector, target group, political circumstances and objectives.

All in all, we regard the art of definition as a substantial contribution to an ongoing, long-term process with epistemological, social as well as political implications. This point of departure was endorsed by the steering committee. In the following, we will introduce some of the aspects that were considered important in the definition process of skills, competences and qualifications.

Aspect 1: Definitions and the Focus on Lifelong Learning

It is important to emphasise the separate but complementary aspects of "Life" – "Long" – "Learning" when establishing definitions. General definitions must reflect the central aspects of these three words to clarify their distinctions and connections:

Life   Involves an understanding of quality of *life*, sustainability of *life* and development throughout *life*.

Long   Involves an understanding of *continuity in the process and changing circumstances of life*, and "long" in the broad sense of the *formal, informal and non-formal content of learning* and the acquisition of skills, competences and qualifications.

Learning   Involves an understanding of how both the individual and the community assess and value learning, and the continuous focus on the learning process as a process of individual growth through active involvement as citizen, employee or employer.

Aspect 2: Increased Focus on Competence

The discussions in the WG revealed that a shift from "basic skills" towards "key competence" had to take place. In the first instance, this is due to the fact that "competence" can be regarded as generic in the sense that skills and qualifications are integrated parts of the term. Our immediate view was that the notion "competence" embraces "skills" and "qualifications".[5] Moreover, this implies a synthesis of personal *potential* and *capability*. The term competence also emphasises a holistic aspect and considers social implementation in terms of the dynamic and purposeful use of skills and qualifications together with knowledge and experience. By extension, the concept of competence is more in line with the needs of the 'knowledge society', i.e. critical and analytical skills. Thus the following definition is proposed:

"Foundational competence involves the practical application and demonstration of knowledge and/or skills. The defining characteristic of competence is the effective and creative deployment of knowledge and skills in human situations – such situations comprise general social as well as specific occupational contexts. Competence draws on attitudes and values as well as on skills and knowledge. Competence refers to the process and the results of the application of knowledge and skills to a set of tasks and is typically acquired by practice."

In a knowledge society, competence takes precedence over skills and qualifications. Since competence expresses a holistic conception of the learning mode of individuals, it also encompasses and combines the use of skills, qualifications and knowledge. Thus competence points towards an integrated approach that enables us to reflect on tacit knowledge as a valuable attribute of the individual, while an orientation towards skills and qualifications tends to reflect only explicit knowledge.

The notion "competence" is simply better suited to the knowledge society than the more restrictive terms "skill" and "qualification", but this is one aspect that needs to be explored further.

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[5] In the process of writing the report, we tried - but failed - to express this in a graphic model, thus revealing a substantial amount of uncertainty concerning the understanding and use of the terms "qualification", "skill" and "competence". As a result, we may reasonably conclude that the relation between as well as the use of these terms call for further theoretical investigation and clarification.

Foundational competence can be subdivided into eight key competences:
- Literacy, numeracy and science (foundational skills)
- Foreign languages (e.g. English)
- ICT skills and use of relevant contemporary technology (ICT literacy)
- Social competence
- Ethical competence
- Entrepreneurship
- Learning to learn
- Cultural competence

Aspect 3: **Definition with respect to employability, personal fulfilment and/or active citizenship**
A difficult moment in the definition process is addressing the distinctions between skills, competences and qualifications in relation to employability, active citizenship and the personal fulfilment of learners with a view to ensuring society's optimum development, nurturing and deployment of human, social and cultural capital.

It is important to avoid rigid distinctions in a general definition. The adoption of a holistic approach facilitates an understanding of the fact that active citizenship is a valuable tool in ensuring employability/self-employability and vice versa. Generally, active citizenship and employability must be regarded as mutually dependent. However, as far the operational aspect is concerned, the holistic approach may prove difficult to implement. In order to be cost effective and reach as many potential participants as possible, training programmes, methods and learning environments must be target oriented and focused. In order to achieve a stronger integration of LLL, employability, active citizenship and significantly improving the quality of life for more people, new training modes and learning environments must be developed. The development of learning methods that are closely linked to the everyday lives of individuals, greater emphasis on informal and non-formal learning environments as well as methods for their assessment and accreditation are all important means towards this end.

Furthermore, the principles of entrepreneurship should be introduced and taught at school, since employability in a knowledge society is increasingly bound up with 'self-employability'.

Aspect 4: Interrelation of Definitions, Formal Recognition and Evidence
The group did not focus exclusively on the definition of skills, competence and qualifications, but especially on the question of how means of formal recognition can be developed to provide information and documentation/accreditation and be of service to both individual citizens and the community at large.

We have illustrated the above in an overview model that provides a useful starting point for understanding the importance of formal recognition as well as the different aspects involved.

Fig 1.0
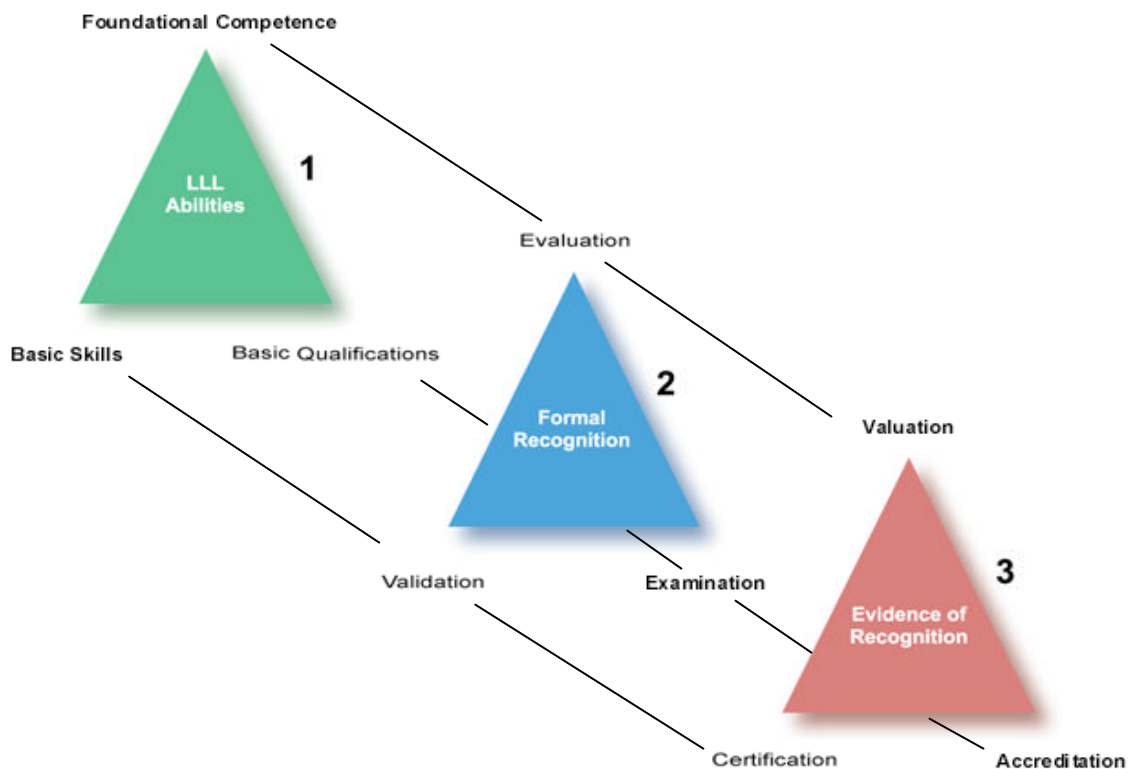
This model provides an overview of the possible process based on a definition of competences, skills and qualifications, their impact on a possible system of formal recognition as well as the concrete effects in the form of different types of documentation or evidence of how these "LLL abilities" are obtained.

Aspect 5: Definitions and Context
During the Copenhagen conference Mr A.K.P. Mochtan drew attention to the fact that Asian contexts represent a rich diversity ranging from less developed nations dominated by agriculture to some of the most sophisticated technologically developed societies in the world that are already integrated in a global knowledge-based economy. Mr Mochtan stressed that, in order to be successful, any definition and any political initiative must take the specific context in which its implementation is supposed to take place into account. Accordingly, the basic preconditions relating to economy, ways of production and culture must be acknowledged. It is obvious that the European context is also characterised by great diversity. Significant differences can be identified between Mediterranean countries and, for instance, the Scandinavian countries as well as between the western and eastern parts of Europe.

Discussions of societal development tend to be biased by an implicit assumption that dominant types of societies succeed each other almost like stations along a railway track – moving from "*agricultural society*" to "*industrial society*" to "*service society*" and on towards "*knowledge society*". Some countries already

operate with the term "post-industrial society". But societies simply do not progress in a linear fashion.

Firstly, it is important to realise that changes in the dominant modes of production, even if they occur over a very short period of time, always create a period of transition between at least two dominant modes.[6]

Secondly, the development of new modes of production usually involves a new social "division of labour" in the sense that an emerging mode of production will initially depend on a previous mode (or modes) of production.[7]

Thirdly, cultural and social changes related to changes in the dominant modes of production occur in the form of shifts in the dominant "codes" – principles for understanding and reflecting on cultural, social, political and economic phenomena and the ways in which these reflections and understandings are communicated. This was already recognised by Alvin Toffler in his path-breaking work "The Third Wave":

"Every civilization has a hidden code – a set of rules and principles that run through all its activities like a repeated design. As industrialism pushed across the planet, its unique hidden design became visible. It consisted of a set of six interrelated principles[8] that programmed the behaviour of millions. Growing naturally out of the divorce of production and consumption, these principles affected every aspect of life from sex and sports to work and war."[9]

Following this train of thought, we can recognise the tremendous impact that changes in modes of production have had on our lives and our societies – migration from rural areas into cities and back again, familial structures, demographics, infrastructure and the education system, and conceptions of the dominant purpose and aim of education and learning in particular have undergone significant changes.

The complete picture of changes in modes of production and their social and cultural implications is complex – and although a new mode of production will, as already stated, not exclude or eliminate old ones, it will certainly influence them.[10] Moreover, it is obvious that – seen in a global perspective – development moves at a different pace and creates different patterns from one continent to another and from one nation to another. However, it might be possible to generate a matrix reflecting the economic, social and cultural development of societies to reveal a specific pattern for one country that is compatible/comparable with patterns in other countries.

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[6] In many industrial societies the industrial breakthrough took place over a period of several decades, and even developed industrial societies still rely to some extent on agricultural modes of production.

[7] Thus the development of the service sector depends on the existence of a strong industrial sector.

[8] These principles are 1) Standardisation 2) Specialisation 3) Synchronisation 4) Concentration 5) Maximisation and 6) Centralisation.

[9] Toffler, Alvin: The Third Wave, London 1980, p. 59 ff.

[10] The transition from an agricultural to an industrial society, for instance, does not eliminate agricultural production altogether, but it typically leads to an "industrialisation" of farming. More machinery is used in production and farmers begin to refer to their activity in industrial terms.

Fig 2.0
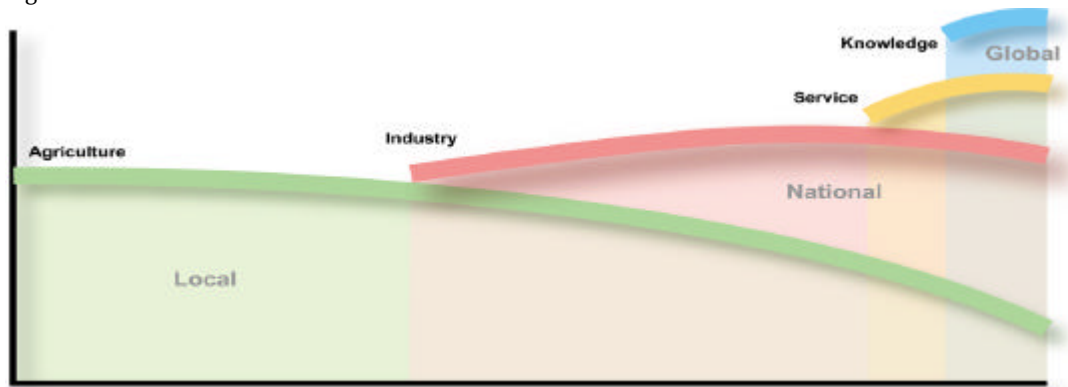
Below, we will outline a number of characteristics of each mode of production and their implications for school and learning.

Agricultural society
Production is dependent on nature (landscape, climate, etc.), and work is organised in annual cycles according to the changes of the seasons.

Farms exhibit a high degree of self-sufficiency, and surplus production can be sold or exchanged on the local market. Thus production in general is based on small local communities and the result is low-value products for the local economy - it is not necessary to leave the village.

School equips farmers with basic skills and plays an important role in the building of nations by creating a sense of community that is closely bound up with nationality and religion. Schools acknowledge that children provide manpower and school holidays take place in peak production seasons. *Schools are often related to religious institutions; piety, humility and good manners are the main values instilled in children.*

Industrial society
Machinery replaces manpower and animals, and production is based upon an analytical structuring of the working process dividing the work into simple sub-sequences – the assembly line. Logistic measures make production independent of the changing of the seasons.

Production targets a wider (regional/national/global) market. Large amounts of cheap standardised products create an explosion in the total production and consumption of material goods. Political tension between employers and employees are often solved through collective agreements between groups of organised workers and employers.

School equips the workers with basic skills along with an inherent accept of industrial logistics and discipline – "Do your duty and demand your rights!" is the slogan for all labour market agreements in industrial societies. *Instilling discipline is the main task schooling.*

Service society
Greater material welfare provides new opportunities and creates new patterns of consumption. Internal migration increases and identification shifts from the local to the national level. New career-oriented life styles emerge – the middle-class becomes a dominant cultural and political factor.

School equips the population with basic skills and functions as a sorting mechanism, allocating the next generation to different slots in the labour market and the education system according to the abilities and achievements of students, thus contributing to the perpetuation of social stratification. *Instilling motivation and cooperation is the main task of schooling*

Knowledge society:
An increase in cross-border production, international trade and the development of new technologies supporting global transfer of information.

Tasks related to logistics, information and communication become crucial for production. Increased production of material goods leads to increased individualisation – the production and consumption of customised goods becomes more and more common in richer nations.

The market expands, but so does global competition, and companies must consider their options and possible threats in a global perspective characterised by rapid change. Class structures change dramatically and a more complex pattern of social stratification emerges.

The scope of education is expanded to encourage risk-taking behaviour and an open strategic attitude to change among students. At the same time, the education system must be organised to meet the individual needs and abilities of students.

Since we at this stage only have a vague idea about how the knowledge society will develop, it is difficult to make predictions for the next decades. In the service society we asked ourselves: What schools for the future? But it is by no means a given that knowledge-based societies need schools – perhaps we should word the question differently: What future for the schools?

An example – the model applied to a Danish context:

A few indicators accurately reflect the development of Danish society and thus afford a relevant interpretation of the context to which LLL initiatives in Denmark must be related. Let us take a look at some important dates:

1800:   Denmark is entirely dependent on agriculture, with more than 85% of the population living in rural areas. People are typically born, raised, live and die within a radius of a few miles. However, the mode of production (large estates) is insufficient and unsustainable. Denmark faces political, economic and social crisis. The advisers of the king, who have absolute power, call for reform.

1813:   State bankruptcy.

1814:   The first piece of legislation introducing compulsory education is issued. It is compulsory for parents to provide education for their children. School is considered an important tool in building the nation.

1848:   New constitution – turning Denmark into a democracy with a constitutional monarchy.

1870:   First industrial wave.

1899:   General labour-market agreement defining rights and duties on the labour market.

1956:   The number of people employed in the industrial sector equals the number employed in agriculture.

1958:   New educational legislation eliminates the differences between schools in rural areas and schools in the cities.

1960s: New curricular and pedagogical guidelines for schools state that the purpose of the school is to produce balanced individuals. The service sector expands rapidly in the tax-funded welfare state. Access to higher education is made possible for students from homes with average incomes through public loan and grant schemes.

1975:   Corporal punishment is forbidden - order in school is maintained through dialogue. New educational legislation expands compulsory education from 7 to 9 years.

1993:   New educational legislation states that teaching must meet the needs and abilities of the individual pupil.

2.3   Curriculum and Didactics in an International Perspective

Professionalism in the education system should always be analysed within the framework of didactics – what actually happens in the encounter between teachers and students. Professionalism should be understood as applicable principles for learning, teaching and the purposeful use of the outcomes of this activity – knowledge, competence, etc.

In an international perspective, we have found an interesting terminological distinction between the notions "didactics" and "curriculum" – a distinction that seems to be deeply rooted in the respective professional cultures and traditions of different nations.

The Anglo-American tradition extensively applies the notion of "curriculum" – (from Latin *curriculum* 'course, racing chariot', from *currere* 'to run'), while the German and Scandinavian traditions rely on the notion of "didactics" – (from Greek *didaktikos*, from *didaskein* 'to teach'). [11]

The curriculum tradition generally focuses on the identification of relevant content in educational- and teaching programmes and describes how subjects are constructed in a framework for situated learning – a curriculum. A curriculum sets out specific attainment targets for the activity and the tradition is usually regarded as being result-oriented.

The didactic tradition has predominantly focused on teachers' selection of content and planning of relevant teaching in relation to the needs and abilities of students. The general external descriptions and the legal framework for these activities in the education system are regarded as guidelines relating to "purpose" rather than regulations to meet specific targets. The tradition is regarded as process-oriented.

International surveys and other projects seeking to assess and compare the function and quality of national education systems with other systems often attract considerable attention from educational professionals. A general concern is whether such comparative analyses might lead to top-down

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[11] Source: The New Oxford Dictionary of English: Oxford University Press 1998, 2001.

intervention in terms of attempts to implement strategies gleaned from a "foreign" tradition that is completely divorced from the value system that has gradually developed within the national culture. Educational professionals will typically try to fend off such interventions. On the other hand, there will always be professionals representing the view that outside inspiration is a prerequisite for progress.

Qualitative reflections on the strengths and weaknesses at the heart of different traditions are rare. The following scheme is an attempt to outline two dominant traditions in the international debate on educational systems[12] with a view to identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Finally, it will address the question of whether a synthesis of the two traditions along with an in-depth description of the national context might contribute to the development of national educational strategies that acknowledge and respect individual points of departure, while at the same time enabling us to learn from experiences gathered in an entirely different setting. A careful presentation of such a scheme might prove to be an eye-opener for the professional environment and contribute to engaging teachers and leaders in a debate on these issues – this, again, is a prerequisite for systemic change in the education sector.

Fig. 3.0

Curriculum	**Didactics**
Determination of subjects, attainment targets, progression in instruction and content in external frameworks.	Teachers' choice of content, methods, learning-materials corresponding to the needs and abilities of students.
Conceptual learning.	Contextual learning.
Learning is the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge in the pursuit of individual achievement.	Learning is a purposeful interpersonal activity in the pursuit of social aims.
Focus on: • Result • Capacities/skills • Summative assessment/ test, examination	Focus on: • Process • Capabilities/competences • Formative assessment/ dialogue, feedback.
Strengths: • Measurable results • Transparency • Predictability • Rigorous training	Strengths: • Learner-centred • Attention to tacit knowledge • Dynamics • Motivation through activities that are meaningful to students

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[12] The curriculum tradition has been dominant in an Anglo-American context, but its apparent weaknesses have given rise to debate and a call for reform leading to some degree of frustration among professionals. The didactic tradition has been dominant in Scandinavia and to some extent in Germany and Holland. The participation of these countries in international surveys and the political response to modest results has caused professionals to believe that the system is being increasingly geared towards the Anglo-American tradition.

Fig. 3.0 (continued)

Weaknesses:	Weaknesses:
• Lack of flexibility/ rigid system	• Lack of reference to standards/ diversity
• Content becomes obsolete	• Lack of justification/legitimacy
• Tendency towards elitism	• Documentation of outcome is difficult
• Instrumental learning	• Tendency to provide little challenge for gifted students
• Learning and the purpose of learning are divorced and not always clear to students	• Necessary training basics are not always meaningful to the students

It is not the point of this scheme to prove the superiority of one tradition compared to the other. On the contrary, we will suggest that the two traditions look to one another to reveal their respective weaknesses and find inspiration in the other system. Eventually, the two traditions might create synergy, and synthesis might occur as a result of the process.

The models of definitions that we propose in this chapter promote an overview and systemic understanding. For the working group, the next step will be to explicate these in the form of proposals and recommendation.

Participation, involvement and social inclusion in LLL

- WG elaboration of themes 3 and 4

3.1   National Case Studies

Introduction

In this chapter, WG 1 shall outline the key findings gained from the elaboration of themes 3 and 4. The chapter is based on the case study carried out by the working group and will especially focus on the presentation of examples of best practice and trends with a view to widening participation and involvement in lifelong learning and the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups in society. The first part of the chapter introduces the national case studies. The second part further elaborates the findings and provides an analysis of the trends towards widening participation and the inclusion of marginalised groups.

The choice of the case study as a method was determined in the first instance by the fact that it affords the possibility of illustrating a number of examples of best practice in the participating countries. The overall purpose of the case studies was to reveal tendencies in a cross-national context regarding new methods of widening participation and involvement in lifelong learning and the crucial aspect of social inclusion and the promotion of learning and training initiatives aimed at the most vulnerable groups in society (e.g. prisoners, substance abusers, refugees, etc.)

The case study was introduced at the WG meeting in Bangkok in April, and in the following month the working group submitted 15 case studies covering eight countries in the ASEM cooperation framework. The study was presented and elaborated at the WG meeting in Dublin in the early days of June. An overview of the submitted case studies is found in the annex.

The content of the case study

The case study has been carried out based on a standardised framework that has in some cases been supplemented with background analysis regarding educational policy, definition of the target groups involved and the choice and justification of methods. The table of contents for the case study looks as follows:

- Short summary of project / programme / initiative - Abstract
- Justification / evidence of case (e.g. evaluation)
- Background / objectives and principal activities
- Main experience/learning outcomes (to the extent available)
- Global experience / perspective (proposed)
- Implementation (recommendations)
- Further information (URLs / e-mail addresses)/ catalogue of best practice

The 15 case studies are enclosed on the CD-rom.

Method of analysis of the case study

The analysis has focused on how these cases can be used to illustrate experiences gained with a view to involving more people in lifelong learning activities. This also includes the aspect of how existing institutions or organisations have been able to change their practice and working methods in order to reach new target groups. Furthermore, the analysis has focused on the cases as "pattern breakers" in the effort to raise levels of competence and qualification among vulnerable groups.

This has lead to an analysis of different practical incentives to improve the motivation of specific groups. As the question of incentives is also addressed by WG3, we have chosen to focus on rather specific methods on a micro level (projects). The analysis involves three steps:

- Collection and categorisation of the case studies based on a standardised format
- Discussion and group work to reveal principles and propose recommendations
- Comparative analysis of the use of new methods and practices

The aim of the analysis has been to prioritise and present a number of recommendations to further the development of methods and practices for widening participation and inclusive involvement of the most vulnerable groups in society in LLL.

3.2   Overview of the case studies - categories

Fig. 4.0 presents an overview of the 15 case studies. The case studies represent a variety of different practices that can be grouped into four categories:

- Programme-based initiatives (project clusters)
- Individual project initiatives
- Institutional/organisational initiatives
- Media-supported initiatives (promotion and educational broadcasts)

Program-based initiatives refer to cases that collect experience from a number of projects, e.g. organised in a national initiative or strategy for the development and promotion of LLL. Individual projects are activities that are allocated limited time and resources and aim to test activities either as experimental/development work that may eventually be implemented as policy or as practices in individual organisations or institutions.

Institutional/organisational initiatives are activities that are part of an institutional strategy to change or expand activities regarding method, objectives or target groups. Finally, some initiatives have sought to access new groups of learners by using various media to distribute learning programmes.

It is important to keep in mind that the boundaries between these types of activities are not rigid. Nevertheless, they present a picture of the great variety of strategies used.

Fig. 4.0:
ASEM Case Studies - Overview
Themes 3 and 4 - **Positive Impact on LLL Participation and Vulnerable Groups**

Country	Case id./ Name	Initiator/ Responsible agency	Sector (s)	Target group	Involvement strategy
Malaysia 1.	GIATMARA A skill programme for all – 15-40 years	Funded by government www.giatmara.my	Public sector/civil sector	All 15-40 year-old citizens – especially in rural areas	Establishment of training centres, parti cularly in small and rural areas. High degree of training flexi bility and local com munity involvement.
Thailand 2-3.	His Majesty the King's project	NGO / partnership programme www.dltv.th.org	All	The distance learning pro gramme in principle pro vide training for all who seek im-provement (Thailand + region)	Distance learning broadcast available 24 hours a day.
	The Somboon Group LLL and human resource development Competence Visa	Somboon in cooperation with Ministry of Labour and Welfare. Joint Venture. www.somboon.com	Industrial sector	Workers at the company. Potential workers.	Maintain and develop groups of employees within the company. Visualise and recognise individual competences.
United Kingdom 4-6.	The Pathfinder Project - Residential courses	State Government Programme www.basic-skills.co.uk	Public sector	Unemployed and people on benefit. Civil servant. Low skilled employees.	Exploring new and focused training methods – e.g. integrated with family life.
	The Pathfinder Project - Financial incentives	State Government Programme www.basic-skills.co.uk	Public sector	Unemployed and people on benefit. Civil servant. Low skilled employees.	Grant scheme to improve incentives for participation in training and completion by national test.
	The Pathfinder Project - Prisoners	State Government Programme www.basic-skills.co.uk	Public sector	Prisoners	Intensive training based on training principles of residential courses. Extensive test programme and specially educated teachers for the target group.
Singapore 7.	Skills Redevelopment Programme	Government funded programme / Labour Market organisations	All sectors	Company employees. Employees not sponsored by their companies.	The programme offers a special flexible funding model that encourages companies to promote continuous training. The surrogate programme offers a possibility for people on the margins of the labour market.

Fig. 4.0:
ASEM Case Studies – Overview (continued)

Country	Case id./ Name	Initiator / Responsible agency	Sector(s)	Target group	Involvement strategy
Ireland 8-10.	NALA Initiatives	NGO and various partnerships www.nala.ie	The Labour market in general / Unemploy ment and community work/educ ation	All categories of unemployed people	Explore new training models to combat social exclusion in education. Develop principles of non-formal education and alternative incentives.
	Return to Education Programme	NGO in association with state agencies www.nala.ie	Public sector	Unemployed in weakest categories.	Integration between community work and education – smooth linkage between work and education.
	Return to Learning Workplace Project	NGO in association with local governments www.nala.ie	Public sector	Public and civil servants.	Maintenance and further development of skills/competences – job-related and coordinated with workplace, organised in small groups.
	TV & Radio Distance Education	NGO in association with media www.nala.ie	All	All	Involvement through media and the significance of high viewership.
Denmark 11-13.	Frivilligheds-formidlingen The Volunteer Development Centres	NGO – local non-profit organisations www.sm.dk	Civil sector	Long-term unemployed people excluded from labour market – pensioners.	Training and education in non-formal environment – use of self-help groups and tailor-made training.
	Daghøjskolen "The Day High School"	Local government funded institution	Public sector	Unemployed and people excluded from labour market, early school leavers.	An education programme based on the experience of participants. Tailor-made and highly supported by counselling and peer support.
	The Competence Account	Government initiative www.nkr.dk	Cross-ministerial working group with social partners	All	Creating a platform for monitoring the development of competences in Denmark compared to other countries.
Sweden 14.	The Adult Education Initiative "Kunskaps-lyftet"	All municipalities jointly with National Agency for Education	Public sector	All people without updated elementary and upper secondary education.	Development of new infrastructure of adult education. Strengthen flexibility and encourage new ways of learning.

Fig. 4.0:
ASEM Case Studies – Overview (continued)

Country	Case id./ Name	Initiator / Responsible agency	Sector(s)	Target group	Involvement strategy
Greece 15.	The National Adult Education Strategy of Greece	General Secretariat for Adult Education (GSAE)	Public sector	The general population (post-sixteen education), for education in the knowledge and information society.	Promoting adult education in general. Promoting non-formal system of education and training. Supporting socio-cultural approach in adult education. Combating social exclusion.

3.3   Trends in the improvement of participation

In the following, some of the findings from the case studies will be highlighted and explored in the light of cross-national discussions regarding trends in the practical and strategic aspects of widening participation in LLL.

In the first instance, this calls for a discussion of the guiding principles and conditions for widening participation. The principles presented below constitute an integration of the principles identified in the case studies with the normative discussion concerning principles that took place in the working group.

The principle of active involvement
The first condition for participation is active involvement of the participants in the learning process and in the selection of the learning content. This means that learning activities must be based on full participation in the design of programmes.

The principle of community relevance
The learning programmes must to the greatest extent possible be community related. To improve participation, learners must be able to recognise the relevance of their endeavours in the local or regional context where they will apply the abilities gained in the learning process.

The principle of tangible support
The learning environment must provide tangible support in order to solve some of the logistic problems that vulnerable learners in particular might face and that may create barriers for stronger participation (transport, childcare, opening hours, etc.).

The principle of integrated learning
There must be a clear understanding of the interrelation between employability and active citizenship. The learning programmes must be developed and designed in such a way as to provide competences directed at the labour market and employability, and at the same time enhance the learners' rights as citizens and their responsibility towards the community
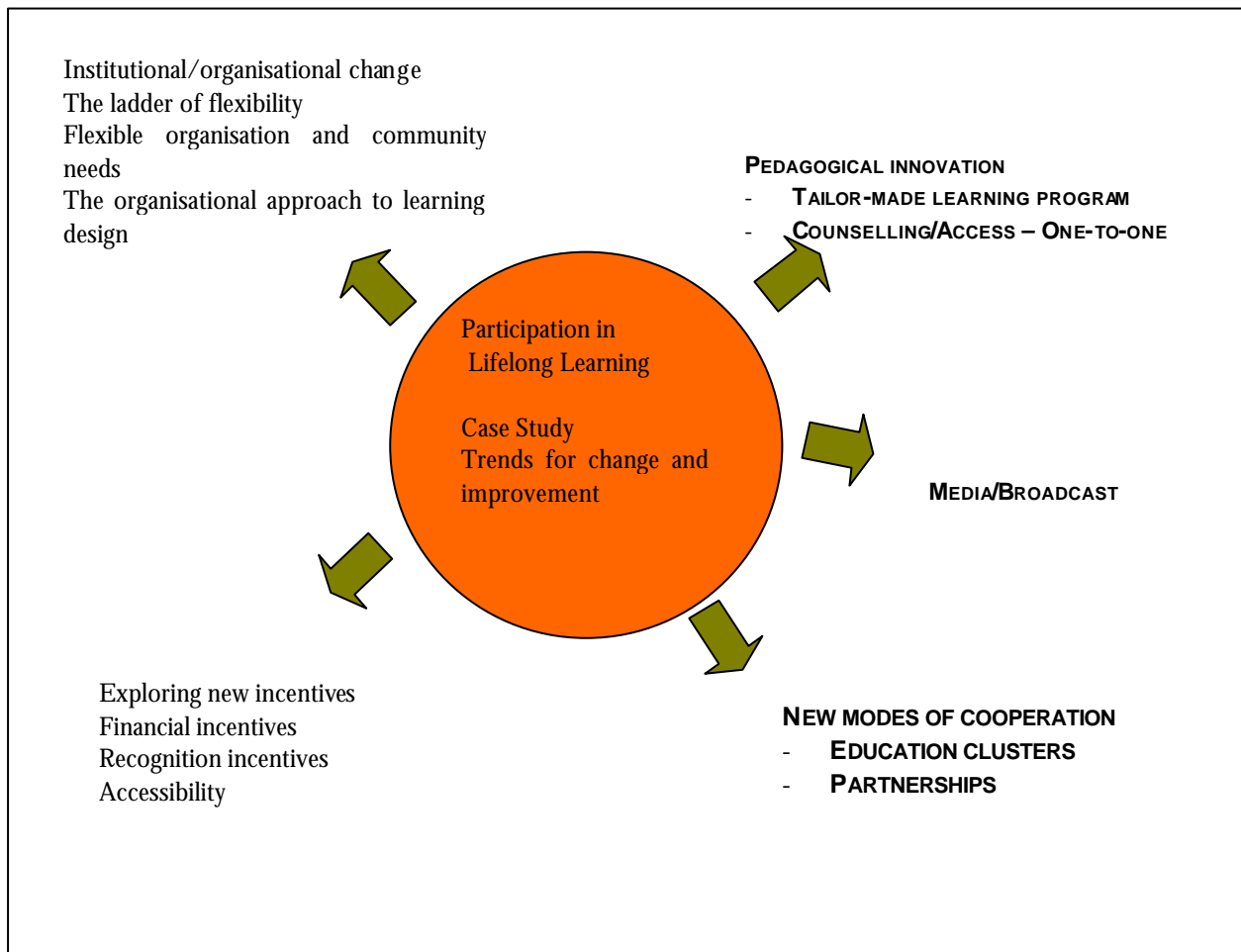
3.4 Areas of change

The case studies reveal a number of innovative strategies to live up to these principles as a whole or as part of the development strategy. All case studies bear witness to *a major shift from the learning process as a schooling process towards a conception of the learning process that emphasises the outcome for individual learners*, thus shifting the focus from standardised processes to tailor-made and situated learning modes.

This, of course, has a strong impact on the organisation of learning and the role of the teacher. The teaching situation becomes more complex and differentiated, which also calls for a re-conceptualisation of the notion of teaching in terms of a broader understanding of what teaching is.

The most significant findings of the case studies relating to change can be summarised in the following model:

Fig. 5.0:

Institutional/organisational change
The ladder of flexibility
Flexible organisation and community needs
The organisational approach to learning design

PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION
- **TAILOR-MADE LEARNING PROGRAM**
- **COUNSELLING/ACCESS – ONE-TO-ONE**

Participation in
Lifelong Learning

Case Study
Trends for change and improvement

MEDIA/BROADCAST

Exploring new incentives
Financial incentives
Recognition incentives
Accessibility

**NEW MODES OF COOPERATION**
- **EDUCATION CLUSTERS**
- **PARTNERSHIPS**

Institutional/organisational change

The conceptual ladder of flexibility

The study includes cases directly aimed at establishing new models for an educational organisation/ institution based on a model or a design for future organisation. Institutional or organisational change originates from a different angle, propelled by a strong demand for flexibility in the educational activity and programme. This is due to a growing demand by learners (participants) for a flexible admissions process. Flexibility can only be achieved through changes in the current organisation of programmes.

In the Swedish case (14), the programme sought to elaborate what "the challenge of flexibility" means in an LLL programme, and especially in the organisation or institutional framework in which it takes place.

Fig. 6.0
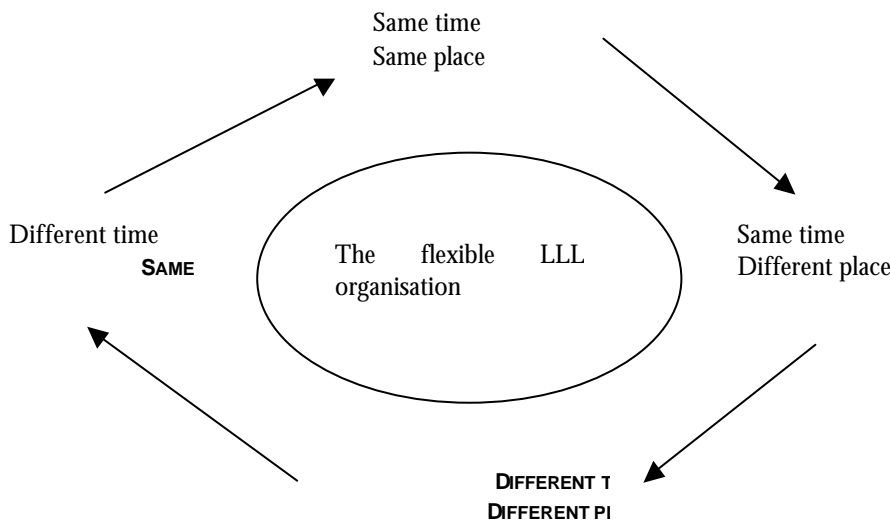
Same time, same place:	e.g. various forms of traditional classroom instruction.
Same time, different place:	e.g. distance learning, e-learning, use of media.
Different time, different place:	e.g. complete freedom; study at home, education at home.
Different time, same place:	e.g. education in a fixed location but at optional times.

This model shows the range or ladder of flexibility in the organisation of modern LLL programmes. It also reveals the inherent challenge for most educational institutions in providing educational programmes that respond to the needs and expectations of various users. As far as widening participation is concerned, this model provides the insight that different programmes can employ different means of distribution and thereby reach new target groups.

Flexible organisation and community learning needs

From an organisational point of view, the Malaysian Giatmara programme (1) furnishes very useful insights concerning the establishment of mobile and flexible learning units in rural and remote areas. The underlying idea of the programme is to fulfil the learning needs of 15-45 year-old people who are unable to attend training outside their communities. The Giatmara programme is capable of organising small units within a few months that can provide participants with certified training that meets the needs of the community. The Giatmara model refines the idea of the "satellite training/learning unit" connected to a "central learning resource and designer" (a national NGO).

This case illustrates how the principle of community relevance and sensitivity can provide access to learning programmes for people normally excluded by distance from participating in accredited educational offers.

The organisational approach to "learning design"

A significant experience gained from the case studies is related to the fact that all these projects strive to widen the traditional role of the teacher. Most programmes highlight the contribution made by a coordinator, a mixture of a learning designer and an organiser, who is able to organise and coordinate the great number of aspects that have to be taken into account when designing learning activities and choosing methods.

This may reasonably be regarded as an innovative extension of the role and task of the teacher from a person who provides something to a person who constructs something – i.e. the learning environment. Different words are used to describe this role – "coordinator", "pathfinder", "learning designer" or "partnership coordinator". In the projects/case studies described, this person/function plays a key role in the organisation of activities. The result is an integration of the learning organisation, the learning environment and the learning process (content and methods).

While the case study does not furnish a unified conception of this role, it provides the beginnings of an understanding of the new role of the teacher in LLL activities:

- The ability to make a thorough assessment of the needs of possible participants
- The ability to reconcile these with the wider expectations (e.g. based on an understanding of key competences/definitions and conceptions)
- The ability to negotiate and establish a learning agreement/plan with the active involvement of the learner, the learning programme and the community (i.e. a company, a public authority or civil society)
- Designing the learning programme and the learning environment in terms of content, learning methods and recognition

Such a re-conceptualisation of the dynamic role of the teacher requires an organisation that is able to respond to this flexibility. Changes in learning modes will require changes in the institutions that provide LLL programmes. This will be seen in the form of stronger emphasis on team-building, collaborative learning systems, utilisation of ICT and involvement with the community as a learning environment.

Such institutional change will alter the traditional organisational position of the institution from an "island in the community" towards a *network organisation* that will depend on its ability to establish relations and turn these relations into benefits and outcomes for learners.

The two Danish case studies (11 & 12) represent such learning environments that are highly sensitive to the involvement of learners and to creating learning activities that are highly relevant for the community in which these activities take place.

The case study presented by the Somboon Industrial Group (3) presents an interesting organisational initiative, where an industrial plant is turned into a "Sunday school" in the weekends. The buildings are used to organise training programmes related to basic skill development and human resource development programmes aimed at the qualification of the work force, and to programmes aimed at subjects that further active citizenship, such as social responsibility, drug prevention and family support. This is a concrete example of organisational flexibility close to the learner's environment.

Innovation in Pedagogy

All the case studies represent innovational efforts in pedagogy. Innovative pedagogical strategies are a crucial factor in widening participation and social inclusion due to the fact that a large number of unemployed and low skilled workers often have a negative view of themselves as learners and of their previous educational achievement. They typically express embarrassment at their low educational attainment and have largely had negative experiences in the formal school system.

One trend in this pedagogical innovation takes the form of stronger integration between formal, informal and non-formal teaching and training. In the case from the United Kingdom on residential courses, training is closely related to the possibility for e.g. single mothers to bring their children, thus combining formal training with family support. In the Giatmara programme, training and learning is combined to meet the needs of the local labour market.

Another trend in the innovation of pedagogy is the continuous emphasis on the move towards a learner-centred mode of teaching, where teachers consider themselves counsellors rather than educators. It is significant that most learning activities aimed at vulnerable groups progress from a 'one teacher/tutor to one student' mode, to working in small groups and finally on to a more traditional pedagogical approach – classroom instruction. However, a great number of LLL learners never move beyond the 'one teacher/tutor to one student' situation. These trends are clearly revealed in the Irish case study.

In the Danish case study (10-11) the main trend is project-based pedagogy, which in theme and content is closely related to the experience of participants. The so-called Day High School is predominantly based on this pedagogical principle.

Exploring incentives

To widen and improve participation in LLL activities, some of the cases have concentrated their efforts on the creation of special systems of incentives. These can be grouped in the following categories:

Financial and direct support for participation in LLL
This includes individual grants for taking part in learning activities. In the UK Pathfinder Financial Incentive Project (5) the strategy involves a financial programme where each eligible learner receives a total grant of £250 affording each learner the possibility to attend learning programmes and to take a national test in literacy. Each learner is free to choose from a wide range of programmes and will pay directly for the instruction he or she receives. Finally, the grant will cover the cost of the national test programme.

The experience has so far been positive, though it is stressed that increased grants were only a decisive factor for three out of ten learners. Concerning the possibility of taking the national test on levels 1 and 2, the financial incentives seem to be a significant motivational factor. More than 50 % felt more motivated to follow the training in order to pass the test. In the Swedish case (14), a similar individual grant system was applied and especially focused on people over the age of 50 who were keen to attend upper secondary programmes.

Indirect support and incentives

In the case study from Singapore, support was given directly to the companies taking part in the programme. The Skill Development Fund gives support to companies and organisations acting as e.g. surrogate employers for groups of unemployed individuals. The fund covers training fees and absentee payroll subsidies. The fund covers between 90 and 100% of these costs. In this case, the motivation for participating in training and learning activities is highly supported by companies and organisations as third partners. The surrogate programme in particular is a model where companies and organisations can be regarded as providing an indirect incentive for the individual learner.

Accessibility and transparency

Other types of incentives described in the case studies are of a non-financial nature. Increased access to the labour market or further education possibilities through learning programmes constitutes an incentive for a growing number of people. These incentives often involve direct counselling and career planning. Here, the accreditation of skills and qualifications plays an important role. The idea of providing a *computer driver's license*, for instance, is an example of a clear and direct incentive. One very interesting example of a similar incentive is the introduction of a so-called Competence Visa by the Somboon Industrial Group of Thailand in case no. 3. In this case, a private organisation has taken the initiative to create a picture of the personal and individual competence of each employee.

Incentives and social and gender aspects of participation

Finally, the Danish case studies have shown that participation in training and learning is an effective means of counteracting social isolation. The large group of women excluded from the labour market, in particular, has derived great benefit from this type of combined social and learning-oriented activity.

Discussions in WG 1 made it clear that gender is a significant factor, especially in a Northern European context. Experience has shown that men are most difficult to involve in LLL activities. Men who are excluded from the labour market constitute an extremely vulnerable group and so far it has proved difficult to provide effective incentives for this group.

New Modes of Cooperation

The case studies introduce various partnership models. Most projects and/or programmes tend to involve a number of stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. The Irish "Return to Learning Workplace Project" builds on the cooperation between government agencies, NGOs and local authorities, and focuses on promoting training for low skilled workers. In this programme, a special "partnership facilitator" has been established to coordinate cooperation between the different stakeholders.

The Singapore "Skills Redevelopment Programme" is based on a partnership between the state, trade unions and representatives from 30 industrial sectors. Furthermore, a number of NGOs are invited to join the programme. In the Swedish programme, implementation is the task of local government, but

local implementation is achieved by inviting a number of public and private training providers. Here, the partnership between local government and training providers is initially based on competition. The Giatmara program in Malaysia is founded on small locally based training units and is thus highly dependent on the creation of partnerships between national organisations and local partners.

The case study does not explore the question of how partnership and synergy can be established to greatest advantage. There seems to be a lack of development experience regarding the ways in which clusters of training providers can utilise training resources, facilities and specialised knowledge.

Media and LLL broadcast

The case studies from Ireland and Thailand present media based and broadcast learning programmes, which in the case of Thailand were considerably successful in reaching participants in remote areas and in the border regions, and proved to be an important supplement to other LLL initiatives.

The Irish example reached a significant percentage of the population. The "Read Write Now" TV-series reached a peak of 270.000 viewers and established contact with more than 10.000 people wishing to receive the free learning package accompanying the programme. The success of the Irish programme is the result of the successful combination of education and entertainment.

3.5   Trends towards the inclusion of vulnerable groups in LLL

The final aspect of the case studies discussed in WG 1 concerns the relation between social exclusion and participation in lifelong learning. A number of the conclusions arrived at regarding participation also account for the question of vulnerable groups. However, we would like to call attention to some of the aspects relating to the prevention of social exclusion and the successful involvement of vulnerable groups in LLL.

WG 1 would like to emphasise the difficulties in the definition of the term 'vulnerable'. There are great differences in the ways this term is conceived by institutions on the one hand and the group in question on the other. In our view, vulnerability primarily characterises groups suffering from long-term exclusion, those who are placed in an oppositional relation to society (crime, abuse, violence), and especially groups that are excluded from both the labour market and the local community.
In our endeavours to find new pathways towards widening participation and involvement of these groups, we have found it important to focus on the resources and strong points of these groups of people.

This issue is explicitly addressed in the case studies from Ireland, the United Kingdom and Denmark. One of the conclusions arrived at in the WG was that we still lack experience with involving vulnerable groups with a view to lifelong learning. A long-term strategy to prevent social exclusion through increased focus on preventive measures in the school system is called for.
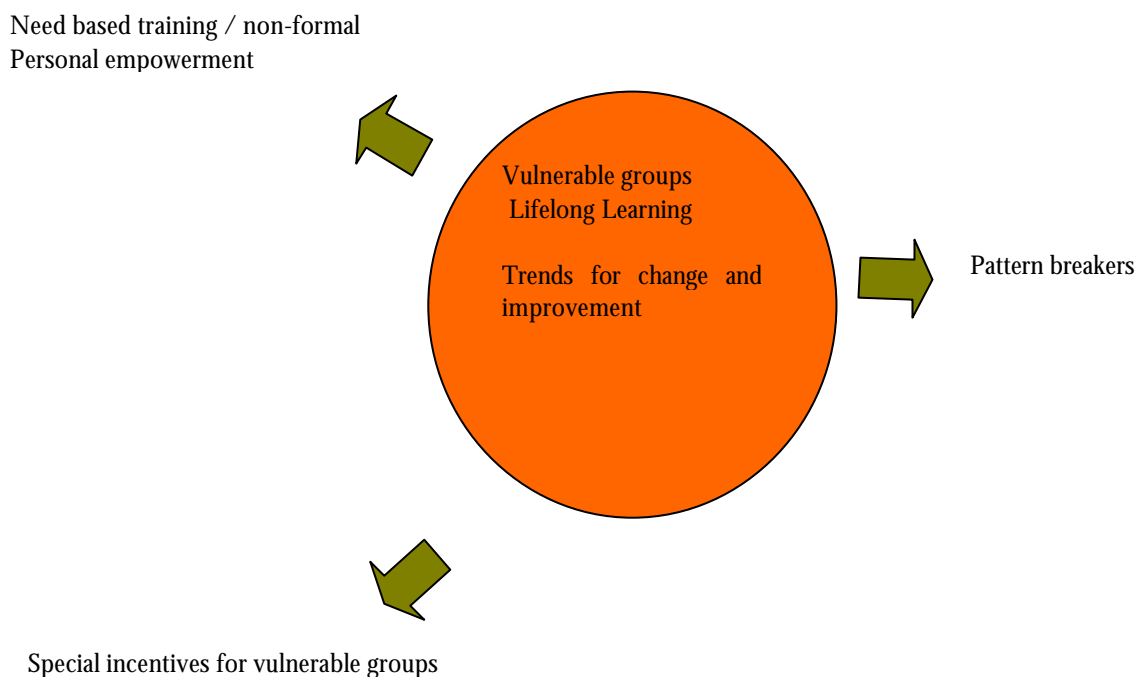
WG 1's elaboration of the theme is mainly based on the case studies mentioned. These can profitably be taken as a point of departure for new initiatives and still require elaboration in a cross-cultural context. The case studies deal with at least three types of social exclusion. The case studies supplied by the UK and Ireland described two learning programmes for prisoners and criminals. Ireland also initiated a programme for substance abusers. These programmes deal with what could be termed *people*

at risk with low prospects of returning to the labour market without extensive support, e.g. in the form of a clear improvement in their learning abilities.

The last case study from Denmark deals with people involved in volunteer work, and, among these, a growing group of people who are more or less permanently and deliberately excluded from the labour market. Through their involvement in societal activities they appear to have created their own "third labour market" that provides support to the elderly or the handicapped. In this case, social inclusion has proven to be a path to acceptance and involvement as active citizens and, for some, even a path to participation in important projects concerning local social development.

The trends gathered from the case study can be illustrated in the following model:

Fig. 7.0:

Need based training / non-formal
Personal empowerment

Vulnerable groups
Lifelong Learning

Trends for change and improvement

Pattern breakers

Special incentives for vulnerable groups

Need based training

One of the findings was that the barriers to formal education must not be underestimated. The case studies show that one-to-one instruction has a significant effect in terms of personal empowerment and increased personal awareness. The cases clearly indicate that the personal relation between the counsellor/teacher and the vulnerable learner is a crucial factor for sustained participation. Men in particular seem to benefit from working in small peer groups, especially when training is of a technical nature (such as computer training etc.).

In the Danish case study involving the Centres for Volunteer Development, training explicitly addresses some of the problems that the participants face as volunteers. Instead of formalised training, volunteer work is used as an entry point into the learning process.

Special incentives

As stated earlier, motivation for taking part in LLL is ideally promoted through a number of tailor-made incentives. The lesson from the case studies concerning the most vulnerable groups is that incentives that eliminate logistic problems such as childcare, transport, etc. prove most successful. Financial incentives combined with benefits provided for these groups seem to be another significant factor together with one-to-one contact in creating an entry point and sustaining participation.

The pattern breakers

The Irish case study emphasised that communication through word-of-mouth is a particularly successful means of reaching out to substance abusers or people who have left prison. Pattern breakers - people who have been able to make significant changes in their lives and break the patterns that have kept them in a state of social exclusion on the margins of the labour market and return to a normal life in the community - can play an important role as "ambassadors" for the promotion of LLL.

Recommendations and proposals for future ASEM initiatives

- Towards practice and implementation in ASEM follow-up activities

4.1   Introduction

In this chapter we shall highlight the recommendations discussed and decided by WG 1. The recommendations reflect the concluding discussion by the working group and were gathered at the working group meeting in Dublin in June.

4.2   Institutionalisation of LLL – in general and in the ASEM cooperation framework

The process of institutionalising LLL is of paramount importance, especially in the practical implementation of policies and initiatives. In the first instance, those aspects of LLL impinging on educational reform at all levels of the education system must be addressed. At the same time, it is imperative to strengthen awareness of the importance of having clear and explicit strategies for lifelong learning in existing institutions.

Furthermore, the process of institutionalisation must be strengthened through explorative strategies involving partnerships and a redefinition of the role of the teacher in order to formulate indicators in concrete initiatives.

In the context of the ASEM IV, the concrete institutionalisation of recommendations and initiatives will benefit from being anchored in and supported by a selected institutional entity in Europe and in Asia. This entity should:

- Occupy a *cross-national position* in each region (e.g. CEDEFOP[13] and SEAMEO[14])
- Address *cross-ministerial and coordinated approaches* to the initiatives taken in the context of, for instance, working groups or through the establishment of an observatory

4.3   Proposed recommendations

The below recommendations reflect, to the highest extent possible, the discussions as they took place in the working group. The recommendations are divided into two levels.

The first level involves what we call the "thematic framing" of the recommendation and outlines the problems and challenges that may profitably be subjected to further investigation in a cross-national perspective and possibly extended with supplementary activities.

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[13] Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.
[14] South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation.

The second level describes the practical initiatives proposed by the working group with a view to elaborating the themes in a cross-national context, supplemented by a presentation of existing ASEM initiatives or findings.

The main focus of WG 1 – as stated in the Terms of Reference – was on the implementation of initiatives, the presentation of examples of best practice and the exchange of practical strategies to improve LLL initiatives. Naturally, this has influenced the content and as well as the scope of our seven recommendations.

The recommendations relate to institutional and practical aspects (programmes and projects) and are targeted at those who are in the position to implement LLL initiatives, namely managers of institutions, human resource managers in companies, programme and project managers and dedicated professionals in the field of education.

4.4   Thematic recommendations

Recommendation 1:   Common efforts to strengthen competence transparency
Recommendation 2:   Development of new cost-effective financial models and quality control systems for LLL initiatives
Recommendation 3:   Further development of evaluation models of LLL learners' outcomes and initiatives for vulnerable groups
Recommendation 4:   Creation of partnership models
Recommendation 5:   Strengthening promotional efforts and incentives
Recommendation 6:   Institutional change and development of learning environments
Recommendation 7:   Strengthening efforts aimed at vulnerable groups and their participation in LLL initiatives

Recommendation 1: Common efforts to strengthen competence transparency
From the outset, ideas on how to create tools for a better overview and transparency of skills, qualifications and competences were discussed. The discussion focused on the question of how trans-national transparency could be achieved. At some stage, the idea of a "*Competence Passport*" was discussed. However, the WG was aware that this idea is not immediately practicable. The importance of increased transparency between nations, regions and different educational systems and companies is obvious, but this idea requires further elaboration of how this process can be put into practice in a realistic and productive fashion. Thus we recommend continuing discussions with a focus on:

- Defining and elaborating principles of transparency
- Exchanging forms and methods in portfolio based systems
- Assessing political and legal aspects
- Collecting models of existing systems

It was stressed that methods of demonstrating competence must address formal, non-formal and informal competences and include aspects relating to employability and active citizenship. These methods should aim to integrate individual assessment and transparency on a systemic level.

Recommendation 2: Development of new cost-effective financial models and quality control systems for LLL initiatives
Excellence in the administration and qualitative development of educational initiatives is a theme requiring continuous elaboration. Administrative excellence relates both to the implementation of

educational policies and to the qualitative improvement in the content and utilisation of resources. This recommendation affects almost all aspects of LLL initiatives, since it aims to ensure the optimum use of resources through an ongoing critical assessment of priorities.

One of the problems relating to qualitative development concerns the cultural differences between educational cultures and available quality control systems. Most quality control systems are "born" and developed in the industry and service sectors, and the language and terminology used are often far removed from the language and terminology used in the education sector. However, qualitative development is greatly needed and thus it is of greatest importance to develop and exchange systems that have proven useful in the management of education and LLL activities.

Regarding excellence in the financial management of LLL initiatives, it is obvious that unified systems cannot be developed in a cross-cultural perspective due to substantial differences in financial legislation and practice from one country to another.

The recommendation should therefore be viewed as an opportunity to explore examples of best practice in financial management and qualitative development in a cross-national context. It is an opportunity to demonstrate different practices, but also to build support for e.g. the elaboration of quality indicators, qualitative methods of description and financial review and monitoring systems, which are useful on an institutional level and can be integrated as part of educational activities without bureaucratic and complicated reporting. The key factor in such an exploration is that it will ultimately lead to the development of models for the improvement of institutional management and learning quality.

Recommendation 3: Further development of evaluation models of LLL learners' outcomes and initiatives for vulnerable groups

This recommendation falls in line with recommendation no. 2. However, they differ in as much as recommendation no. 2 mainly focuses on the management aspects of education, while a further development of evaluation also focuses on the reflection and assessment of learning outcomes for all groups participating in LLL initiatives. WG 1 recommends that evaluation be taken up as a main theme for the further exchange of experience within the ASEM cooperation framework. This might involve:

- Exchange of evaluation models with an explicit focus on learners' outcomes and the evaluation of learning processes
- Evaluation with a special focus on the ways in which different countries and programmes seek to promote learning activities for vulnerable groups, and a consideration of the pedagogical approaches and incentives that have proved successful for these groups
- Exploring the interface between systems of evaluation and recognition – their communication and organisation
- Evaluation of cross-national initiatives in the ASEM cooperation framework. This could be organised in the form of an observatory for the unified efforts to develop and promote LLL

Recommendation 4: Creation of partnership models

A number of case studies bear witness to the fact that efforts to strengthen LLL initiatives derive considerable benefit from various partnership models, where the different actors in the community or region join forces.

When it comes to sharing the resource burden in particular, new partnerships between the public and private sector would prove invaluable to providers of LLL initiatives and improve the possibilities of

learners. In this respect, lifelong learning is intimately bound up with the promotion of social responsibility and new partnerships, as evidenced by initiatives undertaken by, for instance, the European Commission.

However, as promising as this sounds, local initiators might be left with a number of questions regarding:

- How private organisations and public authorities may join forces
- The financial and legal aspects of such partnerships
- The sharing of tasks and priorities – especially when it comes to focusing LLL initiatives on either active citizenship or employability, or both

The WG further recommends an increased focus on professional partnerships and the ways in which different educational institutions and organisations can work in close cooperation as clusters – e.g. sharing ICT investments or drawing on the abilities of teachers and learning programmes for mutual benefit. This falls in line with the European Council's recommendation to look to e.g. schools as training and learning providers in the community.

To improve the spread of partnership models, the WG recommends continued exchange of experience between nations and regions, since this is an area of development most regions are unfamiliar with.

Recommendation 5: Strengthening promotional efforts and incentives
An important condition for widening participation in LLL initiatives is related to methods of promotion and increasing motivation through incentives in the form of direct financial support, measures aimed at improving labour market access or initiatives to counteract social isolation. A substantial amount of resources and efforts have already gone into the promotion of LLL, with varying degrees of success. WG 1 recommends joint efforts to review a number of promotional initiatives undertaken over the last decade in order to:

- Identify successful communication strategies and methods
- Understand the relation between cultural context and promotion
- Elaborate alternative means of promotion

Regarding LLL initiatives, the same procedure could be applied in order to reveal learners'/participants' views of important incentives – be they financial and logistic, or measures that have improved individual learners' outlooks on their future or career.

Incentives should also consider the logistics of the training/learning provision and environment in order to understand fundamental barriers to participation. WG 1 has chosen to focus on incentives at a micro level aimed at individual learners or groups of learners.

Recommendation 6: Institutional change and development of learning environments
WG 1 recommends continued discussion of "flexible and site based learning environments" in their broadest sense. This involves a number of sub-themes that might merit further investigation in the framework of cross-national cooperation:

Principles and methods of institutional change - Institutional change aimed at enhancing flexibility in accordance with the model presented in this report.

- *Same time, same place:* e.g. various forms of traditional classroom instruction.
- *Same time, different place:* e.g. distance learning, e-learning, media use.
- *Different time, different place:* complete freedom; study at home, education at home.
- *Different time, same place:* e.g. education in a fixed location but at optional times.

The effective use of ICT in LLL initiatives – Exploring the ways in which ICT can profitably support the content and methods used in LLL initiatives.

Exploring the diversity – between formal, informal and non-formal learning and the ways in which it influences the learning environment – both processually and physically.

Recommendation 7: Strengthening efforts aimed at vulnerable groups and their participation in LLL initiatives

Social inclusion and efforts to widen and sustain participation for the most vulnerable groups have been an import theme in WG 1. Discussions have focused on the question of how to develop incentives and increase motivation for these groups (e.g. prisoners, substance abusers and socially marginalised individuals). The case study revealed that initiatives are already underway, but there is still much to be done in the way of identifying pedagogical methods as well as means of promotion and motivation.

One of the paths towards widening participation is the exploration of non-formal learning environments. An acknowledgement of the barriers and negative experiences with formal learning often found in these groups must result in a new understanding of their circumstances and an assumption of social responsibility. The following sub-themes have been identified:

LLL - Vulnerable groups and employability (surrogate models where companies, organisations and institutions offer combined learning and working opportunities for vulnerable individuals or groups).

LLL - Vulnerable groups and active citizenship (civil society and 'third labour market' initiatives, where people who are excluded from the labour market can be involved in combined community work and situated learning activities).

Finally, WG 1 would like to call the attention to the need for an exploration of projects and initiatives that have proved capable of breaking the pattern of exclusion. These pattern breakers (initiatives, persons or groups) should be highlighted as examples of best practice in dealing with the most vulnerable groups in society.

Practical recommendations for ASEM follow-up

This second part of our recommendation outlines a number of proposals concerning practical ways of elaborating and developing the thematic recommendations.

Generally, the WG found that the cross-national make-up of the group was extremely conducive to the exchange of experience. It appears that there is an inherent potential for synergy in diversity, and the WG clearly benefited from this circumstance in as much as it pointed towards new solutions and revealed common experiences.

The target-oriented working group

The working process cannot rely exclusively on the exchange of experience. Therefore we recommend that future working groups set out clear goals and expectations, in much the same way as WG 1. In our assessment, the ASEM cooperation framework would derive great benefit from highly target-oriented groups.

Project clusters for exploration and development

Furthermore, we recommend the establishment of trans-national development clusters between Asia and Europe to work with comparative project teams across nations with a view to:

1. Identifying and promoting experience already gained in the form of examples of best practice.
2. Exploring new models through the use of experimental project frameworks and subsequent evaluation of these models.
3. Exchange of consultancy – to create networks for cross-national consultation and counselling.

Observatories

We propose the establishment of either an observatory or observatory groups to monitor the development of joint activities between Europe and Asia. This might take the form of evaluation initiatives or evaluation support to projects and working group activities.

The Asian–European cooperation framework is already equipped to fund initiatives for the exchange of experience and even for establishing explorative project work involving a number of institutions or organisations. However, in certain cases these initiatives might require extended funding. The recommendation of the WG on this matter should be read as a catalogue of themes that have primarily evolved on the background of the case study, which clearly demonstrates the great benefits to be derived from cross-national cooperation in the practical implementation of LLL initiatives.