

# Adult Learning and Education in Europe, North America and Israel

CONFINTEA V1 Regional Pre-Conference  
Budapest, 3-5 December 2008

[helen.keogh@cdu.cdvec.ie](mailto:helen.keogh@cdu.cdvec.ie)

# Background

- 51 countries - 32 reports (+ 2 to A-P report – K & T); 6 reports after 15.07.08
- Rich information (15 – 334 pages) + other sources
- Challenges
  - ALE . . . . .? Mainly 2008 . . .
  - VET & ‘second-chance’ for ESLs ONLY
  - Limited information on:
    - non-formal provision; tertiary ALE
  - Data
- Broad brush strokes . . . . .
- Already out of date?

# ALE

**Adult education** denotes the entire body of **ongoing learning processes**, formal or otherwise, whereby people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their **abilities**, enrich their **knowledge**, and improve their **technical or professional qualifications** . .

Adult learning encompasses formal and continuing education, non-formal learning and the spectrum of informal, incidental learning. . . (H Declaration 1997)

# Contextual challenges in 2008 (Why adult learning?)

1. Economic  
Competitiveness/  
Kick-start economies

2. Demographic  
\* ageing  
\* migration

4. Political  
Maintenance/development of  
democratic societies

3. Social  
Social Inclusion

+ 5. Personal  
Development

# Spectrum of Development of ALE

c. 6/7 countries

c. 16 countries

c. 10/11 countries



Systemic approach  
Enabling legislation  
Partnership/  
decentralisation  
Stakeholder finance  
Flexible, integrated  
Good levels  
Coherent system  
Quality frameworks  
IPD/CPD of personnel  
M&E  
Informs policy

**Policy**  
**Legislation**  
**Governance**  
**Financing**  
**Provision**  
**Participation**  
**Qualifications**  
**Quality**  
**Research**

Fragmented  
Legislative basis  
Little partnership at any  
level  
Very limited financing  
Rigid/'Schooling' approach  
Very low levels  
Disjointed  
Limited concern  
Sporadic M&E  
Sporadic

# Spectrum of State Involvement

Mixed model

**'Public service'  
model**  
ALE as 'public good'  
Strong involvement  
of state

Mixed model

**'Market'/'quasi-  
market' model**  
ALE as 'private  
good'  
Minimal  
involvement of  
state

Position dictated by:

**History** and/or **Ideology** and/or **Resources**

Sweden – Germany – Switzerland – Poland

# Governance Trends

- Pluralist structures & fragmented political responsibility
  - Subsidiarity - decentralisation
  - Multiple stakeholders - partnership 'key building block'
  - Participative structures
    - Inter-ministerial, inter-institutional; inter-organisational co-operation
    - National/regional/local co-ordinating body
    - Networks
    - National/regional associations for non-formal AL stakeholders
- 'Rich mosaic' or 'confusing melange'?

# What policies are in place?

- Influence of the **Lisbon Agenda – EU-27+; IPA; ENP**
- Influence of **OECD/UIIL** reports
- **Public policy** has to create effective **frameworks** in the context of a wide range of **‘collateral’ policy-making** – employment; welfare; health
- **Financing; provision; qualifications; quality**

# Policy Goals - Tensions

- Economic, social and/or cultural policy??
- Social movement?
- Learning for a living : learning for living
- HRD/employability : HPD/social cohesion
- Knowledge economy : knowledge society
- More & better jobs : better social cohesion
- A public good : a private good
- Political control : market control
- Quantity: quality

But . . . non-zero sum game

# Policy challenges

- dearth of (evidence-based) policy
- fragmentation
- limited implementation
- limited M&E

# What legislation is in place?

- Least regulated element of LLL
- Specific legislation for (I)VET – almost all
- Specific legislation for ‘second chance’ in c. 19
- Specific legislation for non-formal ALE in approx 10 EU-27 Member States
- Integrated legislation for formal and non-formal ALE in c. 5 countries
- Statutory right to ALE in a few countries, e.g. FR; BE; NO; SE
- Legislation alone is not enough!

# Who pays?

- Incomplete information
- Ideological as well as technical issue – ‘hot’ topic – national enquiries
- Financing as productivity enhancement or as redistribution & equity mechanisms?
- A series of hortatory Communications in EU-27
- Multi-source - stakeholder co-financing
  - Employers ; Individuals
  - Public authorities; Civil society
  - Foreign funders

- **Public funding** in cases of ‘market failure’
- **Incentivising investment** -
  - To subsidiary levels of government- US
  - **Employer-oriented**
  - **Demand-driven** financial mechanisms
    - individual learning accounts
    - training vouchers; loans
    - tax measures; pay-back clauses
    - PEL
- **Returns on investment** – impact

# Who is learning?

**Benchmark** – 12.5% of adults aged 25-64 in E&T in any 4-week period by 2010 in EU-27

- **2000 - 7.1% - 2007 - 9.7%**
- **2006 - 2.3%** of adults participated in **formal AL**; **6.4%** participated in **non-formal AL**
- **2006 - SE (32.1%), DK (29.2%) & UK (26.6%)** – **1.3%** each in **BG & RO**
- **7 countries** already achieving 2010 target
- **WANTED: 4 million adults!**
- **USA** – **>50%** of adults aged 16+ in some form of ALE in 2001

# Gaps in participation

- ‘Matthew effect 1’ - volume & distribution - a ‘double-edged sword’?
- Adults with high level of education are **> 6 times** > likely to participate than low skilled
  - **3 times** > likely to participate if have at least upper secondary level
- Age - persons aged 55-64 participate **4 times** less (4.6%) than persons aged 25-34 years (15.5%)
  - **61%** of aged 55+ have never used a computer

# Gender

- More women than men in ALE
- Participation in CVT of employed women ranged:
  - from  $> 55\%$  in **DK, FI, SE**
  - to  $< 10\%$  in **EL, HU, IT**
  - and c.  $1\%$  in **RO**
- The rate of participation of employed men ranged from c.  $50\%$  in **DK** to  $< 1\%$  in **RO**
- Gender not significant for ICT skills but age is
- Women in majority in some ALE – **PL (U3A); CY; Israel (p/Us); Turkey (literacy)**

# Priority Target Groups

- Working age & unemployed adults & many also target those aged 50+
- Migrants (Comm 2006 Key Message 4)
- Publicly financed provision for migrants frequently non-formal AL
  - language training/civic, social & cultural support to facilitate labour market integration - US; Israel; Russia; Armenia
- Ethnic minorities – Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 – 8/9 countries

# What are adults learning?

- **Adult vocational education & training (VET)** including IVT and CVT
- **‘Second-chance’ ALE** - ‘first-chance’?
- **Liberal, popular, general, non-vocational non-formal ALE** - social and cultural policy and/or social movement
- **Adult tertiary education**
  - Armenia; Russia

# 'Second-chance' ALE

Addresses a wide range of divides, viz.,

- **knowledge** divide; **skills** divide
- **digital** divide; **gender** divide (e.g. ethnic minorities); **age** divide

A **social inclusion and equality instrument** serving multiple purposes, viz.,

- **compensatory** (recompense for learning not achieved)
- **educational** (prepares for next level)
- **economic** (the labour market)
- **redistributive** (access to qualifications)
- **promotion of equality** (between sectors)
- **inter-generational**

# Literacy Learning

- **Communication in the mother tongue** - 1st key competence for LLL
- **IALS** (OECD 1997; 2000) - 25% - 50%+ of adults lacked literacy levels considered minimum for life & work - not just minorities/migrants → -  
> mobilisation of forces
- A shift from a **skills-based approach** → **development of competences** for processing information & generating knowledge
- Multiple approaches – as learning support; stand-alone; integrated - **workplace; family; themed**

# VET

- 13+ m additional jobs, many at the highest qualification level, 2006 – 2015
- Employers - major providers of ALE in many countries but SE Europe, CIS ..
- Majority of ALE in workplace ..
- Spread in volume of training - 2005
  - Finland & Sweden joint first - 50%- 60% of employees reached at work
  - Most Southern, Central and Eastern MS - barely 20% reached & < 20% in BG, PT, RO
- Recent MS/SE Europe/CIS - mainly micro-enterprises with limited resources for up-skilling

# Liberal/Non-formal ALE

- Not covered by explicit public policy, action priorities or funding
- In local communities & social movements; in E&T institutions
- Long tradition in **Nordic** & other countries of democratic learning/popular enlightenment through residential and day FHSs, study associations &/or study circles
- **Finland - programme for liberal ALE 2008–2012** in cooperation with key stakeholders

# Qualifications

- **Recognise & reward** learning, ideally wherever, whenever & however achieved
- **Visibility & 'currency'**
- **Qualification 'systems'** - diffuse and incoherent -> confusion (US)
- **Based on inputs or on completion of learning programme**

# Qualifications

- **FR, IE, MT & UK** have NQFs (4)
- **17 countries** progressing development of overarching NQF
- **7 countries** not yet formally committed to NQF
- **SE Europe, CIS and Russian Federation** – through IPA & EPN
- **EQF - 2010** - MS to relate national qualifications to EQF

# Validation of non-formal & informal learning – EU-27+

- **Visibility**
- **Appropriate level**
- **Reduces opportunity costs**

**Access to:** - programme/ partial or full award

- **Common European principles** - overarching basis for validation (2004)
- **2007 - voluntary European guidelines**

# Progress

- **7 countries** in EU-27 + NO - advanced
- **8 countries** - integrating system
- **France** - **fully integrated independent system**;  
2005 - 20,000 full qualifications
- **Portugal** - **New Opportunities Initiative**  
– qualify 1m workers by 2010
- **Denmark** - civil society sector & education  
ministry - **tools** for documentation of competences  
from liberal ALE, community/voluntary work

# Challenges

Requires active involvement of ALE providers, social partners & civil society -> 'zone of mutual trust' for systems that are credible, transparent & acceptable

- Technical
- Cultural
- Political
- 'Matthew effect 2'

# Quality in ALE

- **Quality explicitly on the agenda, particularly for VET - adults have access to ‘second-chance’**
- **A Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) (2004) - VET**
- **European Network on Quality - 2005**
- **2008 - European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) to replace CQAF –**
- **Nordic countries, AT & DE - advanced QA**
- **CZ, RO & SI - introducing QA systems**

# ALE Personnel

Professional development of personnel a vital determinant of quality of ALE

- Data incomplete
- Status, conditions & pay
- Full-time : part-time employees
- Generally, not a regulated occupation
- Many routes
- In-service training rather than IPD?
- Competence Profiles – CH; DE; FR; UK
- Key competences study - EU

# Research in ALE

- **Limited**
  - Volume
  - Scope
  - Impact
- **Needed**
  - Infrastructure
  - A knowledge base
  - Culture of evidence-based policy-making
  - Interface for impact
  - Review

# Recommendations

- Policy
- Legislation
- Governance
- Financing
- Provision
- Participation
- Qualifications
- Quality
- Research



Policy

ALE!

