

# LLLight in Europe

LifeLong | Learning | Innovation | Growth &  
Human Capital | Tracks in Europe

## Examining how lifelong learning policy works across Europe

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# How can policy support lifelong learning in companies?

- EU sees lifelong learning as essential to the success of European enterprises, and to international economic competitiveness of Europe as a whole
- *What needs to be done to develop public policies, which really support lifelong learning in and around companies?*

# Understanding policy on lifelong learning

- “Globalisation”
  - Nation state weakening in face of markets, global forces, technology, migration).
  - Growing role of international organisations
- EU states still “accountable” to electorates
  - challenges their legitimacy
  - unable (unwilling?) to deliver Keynesian welfare state benefits (full employment, social security, etc.)
- Multi-level governance (esp. in EU)

## Policy “networks”

- Growing theory about “network-like” forms of organizational practice and arrangement
  - “lateral or horizontal patterns of exchange, interdependent flows of resources, and reciprocal lines of communication” (Powell 1990: 296).
  - the language of “networks” now widespread in sociology, organisational studies, economics, business, political science
- “network” society – based on ICT – rather than “information”/“knowledge” society (Castells)

# Policy “trails”

- Our solution to problem of how to trace
  - paths and direction of policy
- and experiences of
  - policy-makers
  - other policy actors
- Geographical/spatial metaphor of *trail* captures how policy is shaped by various
  - agents/actors and
  - social, political, economic environments

# Policy Trail Method

- How public policies support workplace LLL
- Government intervention in regulation/ shaping of LLL in the private sector
- Analysed legislation & policy initiatives
- 14 case studies in/around enterprises
  - interviews with samples of managers, workers and policy actors, and analysis of company documents
  - DK (1), DE (7), IT (1), SK (1), ES (4)
  - >250 employees: 5; <250 >50: 5; <50: 4.

# General considerations

- In policy terms, LLL is “transversal”:
  - important support role across many policy areas
- “Law of unintended consequences” applies
  - LLL can be strengthened (or damaged) almost accidentally by policies targeted on other issues
- Innovation-oriented working environments encourage some types of LLL
  - in these, public support for work-related LLL less necessary, because it happens “spontaneously”

## Key concerns

- How does public policy support participation and investment in lifelong learning by companies and their employees?
- How do partnerships and networks contribute to developing and supporting lifelong learning opportunities within and around companies?
- How does interplay of external/internal business circumstances privilege or exclude forms of lifelong learning in companies?



# Public Policy

- Government programmes/legislation allocate public funds to support LLL for employees
  - Tax relief for employee LLL in most countries
- In DK, IT, ES, collective agreements ensure free of cost access to training regardless of employers' attitudes
- Employers' associations etc. give access to information about public funding

# Companies' knowledge of public policy

- Companies often rely little on (and not really aware of) public subsidies for training
- Uncertain about whether current public policy measures are effective in encouraging LLL
- In knowledge intensive and innovation-oriented firms, publicly-subsided LLL often seen as not meeting specific staff needs
- Experience designing employees' LLL helps companies use public provision effectively
  - in both E&T and in R&D

## Partnerships and Networks

- Apprenticeships & traineeships in public (higher) education help companies generate knowledge exchange & skills development dynamics with education & research bodies
- NGOs & professional networks are peer-to-peer learning and knowledge transfer – help companies know more about E&T needs, and to align these with business development
- For SMEs, membership of specialized NGOs can help development HR expertise

## Partnerships and Networks – *caveat*

- Where companies use partnerships and networks to achieve competitive or business advantage, regulation may be needed
- For instance, when companies, working with public educational institutions, may use this to market their products (“product placement”)
- Public authorities may need to regulate this

# Business environments & lifelong learning

- High skill requirements & high skill-based products shape companies' approach to LLL
- Where products/services are project/research-based, companies prefer informal learning
  - this means less investment in formal training
- In such companies, public policy has little/no impact on staff informal learning

# Professions, regulation, and HR

- Professional regulations can have a big impact on participation in LLL:
  - in some occupations (e.g. architects, health/social care) creates LLL needs and ensures of implementation training & development plans
  - among highly skilled employees, can seem bureaucratic
- In companies with HR function (dealing with training needs), professional development & LLL strategically driven in company interests.
  - public policy had limited influence: managers showed strong sense of how to encourage LLL for employees

## Some summary points

- LLL has transversal role in many policy areas
- Strengthened/damaged by other policies
- Innovation-oriented work environments encourage some kinds of LLL
- What's the role of LLL in high-skill workplaces?
- Experience of designing LLL helps companies use public LLL effectively
- Business partnerships & networks help LLL

# What is the LLLight'in'Europe project?

- FP7 research call on Lifelong Learning
- Coordinated by Zeppelin University
- January 2012 to September 2015
- Project Director: Peer Ederer
- Budget: 3.44 mio Euro
- Supervisory Board:
  - Xavier Prats Monne, Deputy DG Education and Culture
  - Andreas Schleicher, OECD
  - Oskar Heer, Global Head of Education Daimler AG
  - Iain Murray, Senior Policy Officer on Education, Trade Union Congress
  - Roger van Hoesel, Managing Director Food Valley Netherlands



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Thank you for your attention

and

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