Paul Downes

Access to Education in Europe

A Framework and Agenda for System Change

Springer

Access to Education in Europe

Lifelong Learning Book Series

VOLUME 21

Aims & Scope

"Lifelong Learning" has become a central theme in education and community development. Both international and national agencies, governments and educational institutions have adopted the idea of lifelong learning as their major theme for address and attention over the next ten years. They realize that it is only by getting people committed to the idea of education both life-wide and lifelong that the goals of economic advancement, social emancipation and personal growth will be attained.

The *Lifelong Learning Book Series* aims to keep scholars and professionals informed about and abreast of current developments and to advance research and scholarship in the domain of Lifelong Learning. It further aims to provide learning and teaching materials, serve as a forum for scholarly and professional debate and offer a rich fund of resources for researchers, policy-makers, scholars, professionals and practitioners in the field.

The volumes in this international Series are multi-disciplinary in orientation, polymathic in origin, range and reach, and variegated in range and complexity. They are written by researchers, professionals and practitioners working widely across the international arena in lifelong learning and are orientated towards policy improvement and educational betterment throughout the life cycle.

Paul Downes

Access to Education in Europe

A Framework and Agenda for System Change

Springer

Paul Downes
Educational Disadvantage Centre
   St. Patrick's College
Dublin City University
Dublin, Ireland

For my mother, Terry O'Connor, and my late father, Tony Downes, with love

Foreword

In the early 1970s, I was appointed as a Community Development Worker for a large housing estate in a city in the East Midlands of England. It was a neighbourhood experiencing social and economic difficulties. Its residents existed on low incomes, with high levels of dependency on welfare benefits and high rates of unemployment with poor educational achievements. Many adults and young people lacked the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The boys' secondary school in the centre of the housing estate did not offer any of its pupils the chance of sitting the school leaving examinations, which were standard in England at that time, because the Head teacher did not believe that the boys were capable of passing them.

The Community Development project began working on the estate with members of the adult community, and after discovering their interests, concerns and skills, it established a number of non-formal adult learning groups. Those who participated began a learning journey, which for some led on to gaining formal qualifications and to higher education. The growing numbers of women and men who were involved in learning became active community leaders on the estate supporting their neighbours and organising schemes to make improvements in their area.

In 2013, all state secondary schools in England are required to enter their students for school leaving examinations, but levels of educational underachievement remain stubbornly similar to those of the 1970s. In the same East Midlands city in 2010/2011, a study of the educational achievements of 19-year-olds revealed that less than one third of white males had gained a level 3 qualification, which is required to enter higher education. Other groups including those of Caribbean heritage had even poorer outcomes (Department for Education, England 2012).

The problem of social exclusion leading to inequality in education is one that is common and persists in most European countries and was recognised by Jacques Delors, the President of the European Commission (1985–1995). He asserted that Europe's best asset is its grey matter and that Europe is wasting the talents of millions of its citizens by not providing access to the educational opportunities needed to develop those talents.

From the early years of the twenty-first century, the European Commission has put its weight behind supporting lifelong learning for all. In doing so it has drawn attention to the fact that almost 80 million European citizens have low levels of literacy and qualifications and as a consequence are in danger of experiencing social exclusion. In the future there will be less demand for low-skilled workers, and higher levels of skills, creativity and innovation will be required for Europe to compete in a global market. While the EU has no legal powers over Member States' education and training systems, the Council has agreed certain targets regarding participation in Higher Education and Adult Education and for the reduction of early school leaving. Further it has agreed that Member States submit annual reports to the Commission regarding progress and performance in education and training. However, these reports reveal that progress is slow and even declining in relation to some of the targets.

Dr. Paul Downes' book brings a fresh and welcome analysis of access to education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups in Europe. His study of 12 countries' approaches to access to higher education, non-formal adult education and education for prisoners in a lifelong learning context is unique in its scope and range. He examines the systems and obstacles which have prevented or delayed the EU's aspirations being delivered, offering an innovative conceptual framework for understanding systems of relation to overcome exclusion. He provides qualitative evidence of the different systems, methods and outcomes in countries from the North, West and Central-Eastern parts of Europe. He explores the meaning of marginalisation and disadvantage in different countries and how these impact upon access to education.

Paul Downes' own vast experience and knowledge of education and disadvantage in Europe has enabled him to authoritatively cover a wide field in this book. He has lectured in a large number of European universities, contributed to many research projects, advised international bodies and engaged in community projects. He has an understanding based upon experience, of the potential of non-formal adult education and prisoner education for the empowerment of individuals and groups.

By reviewing the educational institutions, strategies, policies and practices in the 12 countries and analysing successful approaches to the inclusion of socio-economically marginalised groups, Paul Downes' conclusion is for further action to be taken to combat exclusion from access to lifelong learning and higher education by using structural indicators, which would enable rigorous monitoring and transparency. The structural indicators cover a variety of measures designed to increase access to higher education, non-formal adult education and education for prisoners. They are based upon those actions which have been found to be the most successful in enabling access to learning opportunities for socio-economically marginalised groups. The indicators are designed to be used by the European Commission and Member States, but many could also be used at regional, local and institutional levels to measure and monitor progress and enable comparisons to be used. The most relevant indicators can be selected to be used at any one time dependent upon the goals and circumstances of the bodies concerned.

This conclusion is one which deserves consideration by all who have responsibilities for education in Europe. The use of such structural indicators would provide a way forward in meeting the objectives of overcoming underachievement in education by systematically addressing the problems of access to educational opportunities experienced by disadvantaged groups. The wide benefits of education and its positive impact on individuals' life chances, income, employment, parenting, self-confidence, health and civic participation are now fully recognised. It is time to extend these benefits to those who have been excluded. Paul Downes' book has provided clear, thoughtful and new insights into how we should proceed in that direction.

President of the European Association   Sue Waddington
for the Education of Adults (EAEA) (2008–2013)

Acknowledgements

Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction: Developing a Conceptual Framework for Access to Education for Socio-economically Marginalised Groups: A Systems Focus

'Between the idea and the reality falls the shadow'

T.S. Eliot

How can access to higher education and lifelong learning for socio-economically marginalised groups not itself become marginalised? There is no shortage of impressive policy documents at European Union level advocating a commitment to lifelong learning. However, lifelong learning agendas for marginalised groups frequently tend to get caught in the shadow of inertia between the ideal and real and between strategy and implementation.

As an illustrative example, severe scepticism is evident from the following Senior Manager in a major Irish prison regarding any kind of prison mission statement or strategy for lifelong learning:

> When questioned about the prison mission statement and whether it refers to lifelong learning or rehabilitation goals, the Senior Manager stated, *well now it doesn't mention lifelong learning at all* and went on to give his views on it: *the vision statement for the prison service is something like it would help people to prepare people for their release to live law abiding life styles, but I wouldn't pay any attention to vision statements [or strategic plans] because they are rubbish, in terms of meaningfulness. They mean nothing. Our numbers here in the last six months just simply highlight the lunacy and the cosmetic foundation and the shallowness of that mission statement…I would argue that the Irish prison service vision statement is just a cosmetic exercise in having a vision or a statement or whatever.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

According to this view, mission or strategic vision statements are, at best, mere simulacra. They are analogous with the skill of the painter Zeuxis in Athens to paint grapes so realistically that birds came to peck at them, but with no substantial reality behind them. On this view, it is not simply a disjunction between strategic intent and material effect, a Cartesian split between mind and body. It is rather, at worst, a shadow by intent, a pretence and a dissimilation for the purpose of casting forth a mere image of commitment. The real defeats the idea, in diametric opposition to it and subverting its very goals. This call for going beyond what the UN Special

Rapporteur for the Right to Health calls 'window dressing' (2005a, b, paragraph 67) serves to highlight the need for systems of accountability to ensure that commitments are carried out and are not simply on paper. The key purpose of this book is to develop a system level scrutiny to promote access to higher education and lifelong learning for socio-economically excluded groups in Europe.

Traditional research on barriers to accessing education tends to focus on discrete issues rather than examining these issues in a holistic, systemic fashion. For example, two well-known US surveys of participation (Carp et al. 1974; Johnstone and Rivera 1965) found the following to be especially significant barriers: cost, lack of time, inconvenient scheduling, lack of information about educational opportunities, job responsibilities, home responsibilities, lack of interest and lack of confidence. This research led to a commonly recognised tripartite distinction between situational, dispositional and institutional deterrents to accessing education for marginalised groups. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) added a fourth category, namely, information barriers. Interpersonal relational barriers, such as fear of success, also require acknowledgment (Horner 1972; Ivers and Downes 2012).

Johnstone and Rivera (1965) distinguished between influences external to the individual or beyond his or her control (situational deterrents) and those based on personal attitudes or dispositions towards participation (dispositional deterrents). Cross (1981) proposed a third category of institutional barriers giving as examples scheduling or location problems, lack of interesting or relevant offerings, procedural problems related to enrolment and red tape and lack of information regarding educational opportunities. In particular, among those items which had commonly been subsumed by Cross (1981) and others under the 'situational' category of deterrents, three distinct source variables emerged: one related to occupational constraints, one to family constraints and one to cost. In regard to prior intuitive conceptions of institutional deterrents, judgements of benefit (or, more precisely, lack of benefit) were observed as being conceptually distinct from perceptions of both cost and programme quality. These barriers all operate within a traditional subject-object dualism—the subjective dispositional barriers and objective situational, institutional and informational barriers. It is a background *systemic* context of relation, prior to the subject-object dualism, that is to be sought.

Based on an international comparative study, Schütze and Slowey (2002, p. 318) distinguished six institutional and macro-level policy factors which appeared to either inhibit or support participation by non-traditional students in higher education:

1. Institutional differentiation in the adult education system: horizontal and vertical differentiation, articulation and transfer routes, student choice and information, no dead-end routes, equivalence of general and vocational routes and coordination between different sectors/programmes. These characteristics are important not only with regard to adult education but also with regard to initial education
2. Institutional governance: institutional autonomy and flexibility
3. Access, for example, a specific policy and outreach strategy for lifelong learners, open or flexible access, recognition of work and life experience, special entry routes and involvement in regional development/service for the community

4. Mode of study, such as modular courses and credit transfer, part-time mode, distance learning and independent study
5. Financial and other support
6. Adult education opportunities: provision of relevant courses, appropriate scheduling and affordable fee levels

These issues are vital. However, conceptually they offer little beyond the schema of institutional and situational barriers. It is not a *systemic* vision of barriers and system change to those barriers.

Jarvis (2007, 2008) offers a range of important criticisms of systems theories generally, in his accounts of lifelong learning policy and practice, which will be subsequently explored. A central one, for current purposes, is that systems theories are difficult to reconcile with a theory of action (Jarvis 2007). Developing a conceptual framework for understanding key structural features of access to education and lifelong learning systems requires a further layer to aid and abet action. This layer will be seen to be one of developing structural indicators for access to higher education and lifelong learning, whether at macro, micro or other system levels. This will be done by analogy with the UN framework on the right to health which has done much to develop systemic examination through structural indicators. Identifying structural indicators at system level for lifelong learning invites focus on enduring yet potentially malleable features of a system (Downes 2013a). In the words of the UN Special Rapporteur on the international right to the progressive realisation of health (2006):

> 54. *Structural indicators* address whether or not key structures and mechanisms…are in place. They are often (but not always) framed as a question generating a yes/no answer. For example, they may address: the ratification of international treaties… the adoption of national laws and policies…or the existence of basic institutional mechanisms…

Generally structural indicators are framed as yes/no answers. This facilitates questioning regarding gaps in services and supports in relation to access to higher education and lifelong learning to ensure that a solution-focused approach occurs for the analysis rather than simply a narrowly descriptive account. The focus with structural indicators is on relatively enduring features (structures/mechanisms/guiding principles) of a system, features that are, however, potentially malleable. Examples of structural indicators could also include curriculum aspects, institutional admission criteria for entry, etc. Another important dimension embraced by structural indicators is that of legislation in an area, for example, offering a statutory right to post-primary education.

The conceptual framework developed in this book will seek to translate structural features of system change into structural indicators for system scrutiny and accountability for a social inclusion agenda. The illustrative structural indicators for access to higher education and lifelong learning being proposed are by no means exhaustive for these domains. Other issues for systemic view may arise when learners' voices and voices of those experiencing social marginalisation are centrally embedded into accountability systems across Europe and the UN. These yes/no structural indicators are less expensive to assess than process and outcome indicators and an accountability system could require various levels of proof to ascertain the accuracy of the yes or

no response given regarding a specific indicator (Downes 2011b, 2013a). These structural indicators are factual and verifiable in a given setting. They offer a kind of X-ray into key features of a system. Structural indicators can operate at different system levels such as individual institution, local, regional, national, EU and UN levels. A number of such structural indicators have been developed in a systems approach for early school leaving prevention (Downes 2013b). Structural indicators can offer transparency not only for comparative purposes but also with regard to self-assessment on progress over time.

Generally, research in education has tended to neglect a systemic approach, in comparison with health research. Likewise, the UN right to education is more underdeveloped in its systemic framework than the UN framework of structural and process indicators for the right to health that will be relied upon by analogy for access to education. Whereas Tobin (2012) observes that the international legal right to health can 'often be strengthened by the insights of other discourses' (p. 104), the reverse is also the case—this legal discourse can offer insights to be transferred to other discourses, such as an educational policy and psychological discourse on access for marginalised groups. These insights for system accountability are not necessarily predicated on a rights-based approach, though they may pave the way for such an approach at a later date.

1.1   Scope of the Book

A systemic focus on access to higher education and lifelong learning enters terrains of educational, developmental and community psychology. This is allied in an inter-disciplinary fashion with a social policy and educational research focus, together with extrapolation by analogy with relevant legal dimensions to the international right to health. While the initial systemic framework emerges from Bronfenbrenner (1979), a further step in systemic analysis is developed in the concluding chapters; this additional step is to interrogate systems through a wider, though related lens, of a dimension of Lévi-Strauss' structural anthropology (1962, 1963, 1973), *via* early Foucault's structure of exclusion and early Heidegger's background context of being.

In this interrogation of systems of access to (a) higher education, (b) non-formal education and (c) prison education, the primary dimension for current purposes is access to education with regard to social inclusion, social exclusion and social class. The terms employed throughout include reference to individuals and groups experiencing social marginalisation, social exclusion and socio-economic disadvantage. These terms will be used interchangeably for current purposes, as will be the term socio-economic exclusion.

Social marginalisation is described by the World Health Organization as the process by which certain vulnerable groups may be prevented from participating fully in social, political and economic life in a community. This occurs when the necessary intersectoral policies and support mechanisms are not in place to enable their full participation (WHO Regional Office for Europe 1993). This strongly

overlaps with perspectives describing social exclusion. People are considered to be socially excluded if they are prevented from participating fully in economic, social and civil life and/or when their access to income and other resources (personal, family and cultural) is so inadequate as to exclude them from enjoying a standard of living that is regarded as acceptable by the society in which they live (Gallie and Paugam 2000). According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA 2003b), social exclusion can be defined as a combination of lack of economic resources, social isolation and limited access to social and civil rights; it is a relative concept within any particular society (CEIES 1999) and represents a progressive accumulation of social and economic factors over time. Factors that could contribute to social exclusion are problems related to labour, educational and living standards, health, nationality, drug abuse, gender difference and violence (European Council 2001). According to the European Commission's Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General, Public Health and Risk Assessment Directorate Health Determinants Unit and Expert Group on Social Determinants and Health Inequalities, the terms disadvantaged/marginalised/vulnerable are applied to groups of people who, due to factors usually considered outside their control, do not have the same opportunities as other more fortunate groups in society.

The European Commission (2001) describes social inclusion as being:

> When people can participate fully in economic, social and civil life, when their access to income and other resources (personal, family, social and cultural) is sufficient to enable them to enjoy a standard of living and quality of life that is regarded as acceptable by the society in which they live and when they are able fully to access their fundamental rights. (p. 34)

The social inclusion focus of this research with regard to socio-economic and social class barriers to educational participation does not preclude consideration of issues pertaining to, for example, access to education and disability, learners with special needs, those experiencing substance abuse, psychiatric problems, homelessness, etc., especially as many of these other issues bring the consequent heightened risk of poverty. However, the central focus of this study is on socio-economic disadvantage, social inclusion, social exclusion and social class with respect to increased access to education opportunities.

The Commission (2006) clearly recognises wider social contextual factors associated with poverty as key barriers to educational participation:

> While education is often seen as a route out of social disadvantage, research shows that education policy initiatives alone have only limited success in removing inequalities and barriers to inclusion. If inequalities and disadvantage have multiple causes (which is nearly always the case), tackling them requires strategies that bring together multiple agencies and policies such as migration, employment, welfare, housing, justice and health… Combined social and educational strategies that tackle poverty, inequalities and related aspects of disadvantage at their roots are likely to be much more successful than purely educational interventions in influencing overall patterns of educational and social inequality and inequity. (p. 9)

The variety of terms used to describe 'disadvantage' is perhaps a reflection of the fact that it is a complex phenomenon resulting from the interaction of factors that

are usually construed as economic, social, cultural and educational (OECD 1992). Kellaghan (2002) offers the following exposition of conceptions of 'disadvantage':

> While each of the terms emphasises a particular aspect, there is fairly general agreement about a number of factors. First, the condition is associated with low income and material poverty. Second, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds are marginal to the labour force, something that is most evident in rates of unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment. Third, disadvantage is transmitted across generations, and upward social mobility is limited. Fourth, individuals in disadvantaged circumstances rely heavily on the state for income support. Fifth, they generally have had limited schooling and/or poor levels of achievement. Sixth, disadvantage is often concentrated in what are called areas of social deprivation in cities, in conditions that breed crime, drug abuse, family breakdown, and general social disorganisation…; however it is not confined to such areas. (p. 17)

However, Kellaghan's (2002) emphasis on the term 'disadvantage' has been criticised as a negative labelling, offering a pejorative, deficit model of working class communities (Spring 2007; Derman-Sparks and Fite 2007; Downes and Gilligan 2007; see also, Cummings et al. 2011). To acquiesce in the labelling of self and others as disadvantaged is a badge of disempowerment. It gives flesh to the internalisation of failure.

This rejection of language such as 'educational disadvantage' has occurred in a French context through the establishment of Ambition Success Network (*Réseaux ambition réussite, RAR*) and Networks for School Success (*Réseaux de réussite scolaire, RSR*). Thus, an 'Educational Success Service' exists within the Social Cohesion Department of, for example, the Nantes municipality. This conceptual and terminological shift has not yet occurred in the OECD *Education at a Glance* reports, which, for example, refer to 'disadvantaged schools' (2012, p. 88, p. 91; 2013, p. 382). It is notable that the need to go beyond deficit models was recognised already by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) systems theory.

The interchangeability of these terms—social exclusion, marginalisation and disadvantage—needs to be combined with recognition that their meaning and application may differ in a given country context. Recognition of the need for a somewhat differentiated approach to application of criteria of socio-economic exclusion/disadvantage is particularly pertinent in the area of access to education as the same indicator may have a different contextual meaning in a different country. Koucky et al. (2010), for example, trace the different implications for inequality in access to third-level education for the dimensions of father's education, mother's education, father's occupation and mother's occupation in different European countries. They highlight that the most important family background factor in terms of access of young people to tertiary education currently is, in Austria, the occupation of their fathers, whereas in Belgium it is mother's education, in contrast with Denmark, where the most important family background factor is father's education. While target groups may differ across countries regarding the application of criteria of social exclusion, marginalisation, disadvantage, etc., an important focus to be held throughout is on the effects of such socio-economic and socio-cultural factors on individuals and groups experiencing barriers to education, including barriers

to deriving appropriate benefit from education, whether in university or other educational contexts.

The scope of the research findings presented in this book is based on national reports, completed in 2010, from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, England, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Russia, Scotland and Slovenia. These were designed by the author, in dialogue with the research consortium, as part of the European Commission Sixth Framework Project, *Towards a lifelong learning society*. Across the 12 national reports, 196 interviews took place in total with members of senior management from 83 education institutions, as well as from senior officials in government departments relevant to lifelong learning in each country. Sixty-nine of these interviews were with senior representatives from higher education across 30 institutions.

The corpus of this research is qualitative in focus. Caution must be taken in generalising the responses from the interviewed institutional representatives to other institutions in the same country and beyond. It is documenting at times perceptions as much as facts. Yet this is not a clear-cut dichotomy as perceptions of leading institutional officials can affect the factual reality of practices within an institution, while factual accounts are invested with theory-laden assumptions (Popper 1957; Feyerabend 1988; Kuhn 1962). Another limitation to representativeness of the interviews and institutions is that some national reports were confined to institutions from specific regions of a country only, for example, Belgium-Flanders and Russia-St. Petersburg.

The findings across the participating countries are intended to be illustrative of relevant issues and practices rather than being exhaustive; these illustrative examples from the qualitative research interviews and national reports are neither intended to summarise nor describe the current situation in every participating country nor to give a quantitative account of the frequency and prevalence of such practices across a given country.

A particular focus in this book is on Central and Eastern European contexts. While there is a cross-section of European countries, including Russia and Norway from outside the European Union, it is not being claimed that the issues raised across these 12 contexts are exhaustive of institutional and national policy and practice concerns across the EU. Many European countries are not included in this research, with a particular gap being for many Southern European countries, what Sultana (2001) describes as Mediterranean space as a regional unit. This Mediterranean spatial region is largely excluded from the countries participating in this study, with the exception of Slovenia which is included; this is clearly a limitation of the current research.

Institutions were selected for the national reports so that major kinds of institutions providing adult education were represented. It was also sought to include major state universities in each national report. Respondents were selected based on their position in the institution at senior management level. Interviews were conducted with senior management of education institutions, as well as senior government officials and other stakeholders in adult education, such as non-formal education institutions and community groups and those involved at a senior level in prisons and prison education.

The institutional focus of this study, including analysis of national and regional level strategic policies in this area does not directly involve the voice of the learner.[1] It is to be hoped that a future focus on institutional and national level reform will include more qualitative research on the perspectives of the learner regarding given institutions.[2] Moreover, a wider focus than that offered in this book would need to centrally interrogate institutional supports for learners' ongoing participation in higher education. Barriers to entry are only part of the story (Bamber and Tett 2001; Bamber 2002).

Niçaise (2010a) observes that 84 million Europeans live in poverty today, based on an estimate of the EU definition of relative poverty as 60 % of the median disposable income per consumption unit. These figures do not give full effect to the current impact of 'austerity' in the current economic crisis in Europe.

According to the OECD (2005) Society at a Glance, income and wealth inequalities vary across countries with the Nordic countries, Austria, the Czech Republic and Luxembourg having the lowest levels of inequality and Portugal, the USA, Poland, Turkey and Mexico the highest levels of inequality. Of the OECD data available in this 2005 study, only a few of the countries in the current study are represented on this income inequality scale. Of these countries, the lowest levels of inequality are in Austria, followed by Norway, with Hungary, Ireland and the UK having higher levels of inequality along the scale. This scale is obviously prior to the current economic crisis in Europe.

Families in Europe with a low-educated head face a poverty risk which is twice that of families where the head has completed secondary education (24 % versus 13 % on average for the EU 27) (Niçaise 2010a). It is recognised that poverty-related barriers to lifelong learning include psychological aspects such as stress, depression (World Health Organization 2003; Kessler 2009), lack of sleep due to anxiety, lack of confidence (Downes and Maunsell 2007), as well as issues of time and space to read, lack of childcare support (Maunsell et al. 2008), discomfort of dwelling (Niçaise 2010b), insufficient transport availability, etc. These require a wider focus than one on access to education. Some of these issues will be engaged with through the interrogation of institutional and national strategies and practice. However, many poverty-related dimensions affecting engagement with education, including food poverty (Downes et al. 2006; Downes and Maunsell 2007; Callaghan and The HBSC Ireland Team 2010) and substance abuse (Downes 2003; EMCDDA 2003a, b), are largely outside the scope of this book. Moreover, a focus on important dimensions to access such as housing, taxation and health are outside the scope of

---

[1] However, framing of the questions for the varying educational institutions was informed by an earlier subproject of *Towards a lifelong learning society* regarding learners' motivations.

[2] A partial remedy to give recognition to the need for more participation of the voice of the learner, not simply in responses to questions but as regards formulating the questions asked, was, through a pilot project for the research, engaged in by three of the consortium teams, namely, the Belgian, Russian and Irish teams. This piloting of questions with focus groups of learners from traditionally marginalised social groups led to a range of issues and themes which were incorporated into the template for questions asked in the 12 national reports which inform this book.

the current study. This delimitation of the scope of the book is not in any way meant to minimise the key role of overcoming poverty and social exclusion for equalising access to education across social groups. Jonsson (1993), for example, emphasises that probably the major explanation for the declining association between social origins and educational opportunity observed at that time in Sweden was the equalisation of living conditions, a conclusion that Shavit and Blossfeld (1993) also applied to the context of the Netherlands.

Formal education is intentional from the learner's point of view. It leads to certification which leads to the next educational level. In contrast, two key features of non-formal education for current purposes are that it does not directly involve certification or assessment, and its classes offer a potential bridge for the learner to the formal education system. Every country has its own interpretation of non-formal education because the definitions used reflect the needs, traditions, culture and policy of that country (Holford et al. 2008). Non-formal education is viewed by UNESCO as being 'organised and sustained educational activities' which 'may take place both within and outside educational institutions, and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out of school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non-formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the 'ladder' system, and may have a differing duration' (1997, p. 41). This definition includes a perspective on duration of a course.

It is important to distinguish non-formal education from informal learning. The latter is defined as by UNESCO as '…intentional, but it is less organised and less structured…and may include for example learning events (activities) that occur in the family, in the work place, and in the daily life of every person, on a self-directed, family-directed or socially directed basis' (1997, p. 41).

While distance education and e-learning is examined to some degree in the section on access to education in prisons, it is not an emphasis in this book. Slowey and Schuetze's (2012) review of developments in the past decade across wide international contexts refer to 'the not-yet-realized potential of e-learning', stating that 'One of the more surprising outcomes of the country case studies is the lack of any sizeable progress in the use of online technology' (p. 284) across the examined countries, Mexico, Canada, the USA, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, Brazil, the UK, Sweden, Austria, Germany, Ireland and Portugal. Nevertheless, an important example of the potential for distance education is the Digital Secondary School, Miskolc, Hungary that was cited as an example of good practice in Downes (2011a). The principal target group of the programme is adults experiencing socio-economic exclusion who come from the North-Eastern part of Hungary. Originally the project was aimed at Roma adults with political ambitions, but after some years, it was opened to other candidates. According to the educational director's estimations, the current proportion of Roma students in the school is around 50 % (Balogh et al. 2010). There is much recent enthusiasm about MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) run free of charge at, for example, universities such as Stanford, MIT, Harvard and Berkeley. Yet the complex issues of preventing plagiarism, assessment

by computers of exam answers for contested truths in humanities and social sciences, and wider issues of cultural colonisation in an international context through such courses are beyond the scope of this book.

The structure of the book is fashioned around its central concepts. Chapter 2 situates the issue of access to higher education and lifelong learning within the context of the European Commission's and Council's key documents and strategies in this area. Chapter 3 concentrates attention on interrogation of systems in order to better understand system change, as well as to highlight the need for improved frameworks for systems theory to examine system blockages to such change. Chapter 4 seeks to shed light on developing structural indicators to scrutinise such system blockages and system change. Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 then offer an outline and discussion of key proposed structural indicators for access to higher education and lifelong learning at European level, based on problems and examples of good practice extracted from the 12 national reports on access to education that inform this book. Chapters 5 and 6 propose structural indicators at the macro-exosystemic level for access to higher education for socio-economically excluded groups. Chapter 7 puts forward such structural indicators at the micro-mesosystemic level for access to higher education. Chapter 8 identifies structural indicators at the macro-exosystemic level for non-formal education, while Chap. 9 does so for the micro-mesosystemic level of non-formal education for socio-economically excluded groups. Chapter 10 extracts structural indicators at the macro-exosystemic level for prison education, and Chap. 11 proposes such structural indicators for the micro-mesosystemic level of prison institutions and education. The concluding Chap. 12 summarises and develops the argument for this proposed agenda of structural indicators at European level and beyond, while acknowledging some cautionary notes in relation to this. It also offers a proposed innovative conceptual framework for understanding system change and opening up system blockage, building on issues highlighted in the 12 national reports, to offer a more dynamic model of inclusive systems to go beyond Bronfenbrenner's (1979) static systemic framework.

Summary The key purpose of this book is to develop a system level scrutiny to promote access to higher education and lifelong learning for socio-economically excluded groups in Europe. Traditional research on barriers to accessing education tends to focus on discrete issues such as situational, institutional, dispositional or informational deterrents rather than examining these issues in a holistic, systemic fashion. Generally, research in education has tended to neglect a systemic approach. A central criticism of systems theories is that they are difficult to reconcile with a theory of action (Jarvis 2007). Developing a conceptual framework for understanding key structural features of access to higher education and lifelong learning systems needs a further layer to aid action and policy. This additional layer of understanding requires development of structural indicators for access to higher education and lifelong learning, whether at macro, micro or other system levels. This will be done by analogy with the UN framework on the right to health which has done much to develop systemic examination through structural indicators.

The conceptual framework developed in this book will seek to translate structural features of system change into structural indicators for system scrutiny and accountability for a social inclusion agenda. The illustrative structural indicators for access to higher education and lifelong learning being proposed are by no means exhaustive for these domains. In this interrogation of systems of access to (a) higher education, (b) non-formal education and (c) prison education, the primary dimension for current purposes is access to education with regard to social exclusion and social class. A phasing out of language such as 'educational disadvantage' and the term 'disadvantaged' is due to the recognition that it is a negative labelling, offering a pejorative, deficit model of working class communities.

The scope of the research findings presented in this book is based on national reports, completed in 2010, from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, England, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Russia, Scotland and Slovenia, as part of the European Commission Sixth Framework Project, *Towards a lifelong learning society*. Across the 12 national reports, 196 interviews took place in total with members of senior management from 83 education institutions, as well as from senior officials in government departments relevant to lifelong learning in each country. Sixty-nine of these interviews were with senior representatives from higher education across 30 institutions. This research is qualitative in focus. Caution must be taken in generalising the responses from the interviewed institutional representatives to other institutions in the same country and beyond. The findings across the participating countries are intended to be illustrative of relevant issues and practices regarding access to education for socio-economically marginalised groups rather than being exhaustive. A particular focus in this book is on Central and Eastern European contexts. Institutions were selected for the national reports so that major kinds of institutions providing adult education were represented. It was also sought to include major state universities in each national report. Respondents were selected based on their position in the institution at senior management level. Interviews were conducted with senior management of education institutions, as well as senior government officials and other stakeholders in adult education, such as non-formal education institutions and community groups and those involved at a senior level in prisons and prison education.

References

Balogh, A., Józan, A., Szöllősi, A., & Róbert, P. (2010). *The institutional aspects of adult education in Hungary.* Budapest: TARKI Social Research Centre. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Bamber, J. (2002). Critical reflection and readiness for university in non-traditional students: Implications for informal educators. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 8*(1), 73–87.

Bamber, J., & Tett, L. (2001). Ensuring integrative learning experiences for non-traditional students in higher education. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning. The Journal of The Institute for Access Studies and the European Access Network, 3*(1), 8–16.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Carp, A., Peterson, R., & Roelfs, P. (1974). Adult learning interests and experiences. In K. P. Cross & J. Valley (Eds.), *Planning non-traditional programs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Callaghan, M., & The HBSC Ireland Team. (2010). *Food poverty among schoolchildren in Ireland*. Galway: Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway.

CEIES (Statistics Users Council). (1999, November 22). *Social exclusion statistics*. Conference proceedings, joint conference, Imac Research, Esher, UK.

Commission Staff Working Document. {SEC(2006) 1096}. Accompanying document to the communication to the Commission {COM (2006) 481 final}. *Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems*.

Communication from the Commission. {COM(2001) 678 final}. *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality*.

Cross, K. P. (1981). *Adults as learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cummings, C., Dyson, A., & Todd, L. (2011). *Beyond the school gates*. London: Routledge.

Darkenwald, G. G., & Merriam, S. B. (1982). *Adult education: Foundations of practice*. New York: Harper and Row.

Derman-Sparks, L., & Fite, K. (2007). Disadvantage and diversity in early childhood education. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 47–56). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Dooley, C., Downes, P., Maunsell, C., & McLoughlin, V. (2010). *Promoting social inclusion: The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Ireland*. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Downes, P. (2003). *Living with heroin: HIV, identity and social exclusion among the Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia and Latvia*. English version. Tallinn: Legal Information Centre for Human Rights.

Downes, P. (2011a). *A systems level focus on access to education for traditionally marginalised groups: Comparing policy and practice in twelve European countries*. Comparative Report for the EU Commission on behalf of the Research Consortium for the EU Framework Six Project 'Towards a lifelong learning society: The contribution of the education system'.

Downes, P. (2011b). *Structural and process indicators for assessing national and regional authorities' contribution to access to education for traditionally marginalised groups*. Invited seminar presentation, May 17, 2011, European Commission, Place Madou, Brussels.

Downes, P. (2013a, January 28–29). *Developing multi-agency and cross-sector synergies in and around education*. Invited presentation for 5th meeting of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (EAC), Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, Brussels.

Downes, P. (2013b). Developing a framework and agenda for students' voices in the school system across Europe: From diametric to concentric relational spaces for early school leaving prevention. *European Journal of Education, 48*(3), 346–362.

Downes, P., & Gilligan, A. L. (2007). Beyond disadvantage: Some conclusions. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 463–491). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Downes, P., & Maunsell, C. (2007). *Count us in: Tackling early school leaving in South West Inner City Dublin. An integrated response*. Dublin: South Inner City Community Development Association (SICCDA) & South Inner City Drugs Task Force.

Downes, P., Maunsell, C., & Ivers, J. (2006). *A holistic approach to early school leaving and school retention in Blanchardstown current issues and future steps for services and schools*. Dublin: Blanchardstown Area Partnership.

European Council. (2001). *Draft joint report on social inclusion* (COM(2001) 565 final).

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. (2003a). *Annual report 2003: The state of the drugs problem in the acceding and candidate countries to the European Union*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. (2003b). *Annual report on the state of the drugs problem in the European Union and Norway*. EMCDDA 2003 selected issue *Social exclusion and reintegration*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Feyerabend, P. (1988). *Against method* (2nd ed.). New York: Verso.

Gallie, F., & Paugam, D. (Eds.). (2000). *Welfare regimes and the experience of unemployment in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Holford, J., Riddell, S., Weedon, E., Litjens, J., & Hannan, G. (2008). *Patterns of lifelong learning: Policy and practice in an expanding Europe*. Vienna: LIT Verlag.

Horner, M. S. (1972). Toward an understanding of achievement-related conflicts in women. *Journal of Social Issues, 28*, 157–176.

Ivers, J., & Downes, P. (2012). A phenomenological reinterpretation of Horner's fear of success in terms of social class. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 27*, 369–388.

Jarvis, P. (2007). *Globalisation, lifelong learning and the learning society: Sociological perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Jarvis, P. (2008). *Democracy, lifelong learning and the learning society: Active citizenship in a late modern age*. London: Routledge.

Johnstone, J. W. C., & Rivera, R. M. (1965). *Volunteers for learning: A study of the educational pursuits of American adults*. Chicago: Aldine.

Jonsson, J. O. (1993). Persisting inequalities in Sweden. In Y. Shavit & H.-P. Blossfeld (Eds.), *Persistent inequality: Changing educational attainment in thirteen countries* (pp. 101–132). Oxford: Westview Press.

Kellaghan, T. (2002). Approaches to problems of educational disadvantage. In A. L. Gilligan (Ed.), *Primary education: Ending disadvantage. Proceedings and action plan of National Forum*. Dublin: Educational disadvantage Centre, St Patrick's College.

Kessler, R. (2009). Identifying and screening for psychological and comorbid medical and psychological disorders in medical settings. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 65*(3), 253–267.

Koucky, J., Bartušek, A., & Kovařovic, J. (2010). *Who gets a degree? Access to tertiary education in Europe 1950–2009*. Prague: Education Policy Centre, Charles University.

Kuhn, T. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1962). *The savage mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1963). *Structural anthropology* (Vol. 1, C. Jacobsen & B. Grundfest Schoepf, Trans.). Allen Lane: The Penguin Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1973). *Structural anthropology* (Vol. 2, M. Layton 1977, Trans.). Allen Lane: Penguin Books.

Maunsell, C., Downes, P., & McLoughlin, V. (2008). *National report on lifelong learning in Ireland. LLL2010: Sub-project 1: Towards a lifelong learning society in Europe – The contribution of the education system*. Dublin: Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College.

Niçaise, I. (2010a, September 28–29). *A smart social inclusion policy for the EU: The role of education and training*. University of Leuven and NESSE. Presentation at the Belgian EU Presidency conference *Breaking the cycle of disadvantage – Social inclusion in and through education*. Ghent.

Niçaise, I. (2010b, September 28–29). *A smart social inclusion policy for the EU: The role of education and training*. University of Leuven and Nesse. Paper for distribution at the Belgian EU Presidency conference *Breaking the cycle of disadvantage – Social inclusion in and through education*. Ghent.

OECD. (1992). *High quality education and training for all*. Paris: OECD.

OECD. (2005). *Society at a glance*. Paris: OECD.

OECD. (2012). *Education at a glance 2012: OECD indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD. (2013). *Education at a glance 2013: OECD indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Popper, K. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Schütze, H. G., & Slowey, M. (2002). Participation and exclusion: A comparative analysis of non-traditional students and lifelong learners in higher education. *Higher Education, 44*, 309–327.

Shavit, Y., & Blossfeld, H.-P. (Eds.). (1993). *Persistent inequality: Changing educational attainment in thirteen countries*. Oxford: Westview Press.

Slowey, M., & Schuetze, H. G. (2012). All change – No change? Lifelong learners and higher education revisited. In M. Slowey & H. G. Schuetze (Eds.), *Global perspectives on higher education and lifelong learners* (pp. 3–22). London: Routledge.

Spring, N. (2007). Tracing the language of educational disadvantage. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 3–10). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Sultana, R. G. (Ed.). (2001). *Challenge and change in the Euro-Mediterranean region: Case studies in educational innovation*. New York: Peter Lang.

Tobin, J. (2012). *The right to health in international law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

UNESCO. (1997). *Educating for a sustainable future: A transdisciplinary vision for concerted action*. Paris: UNESCO.

United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2005a, February 11). Commission on Human Rights Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Paul Hunt.

United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2005b, February 21). Commission on Human Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Paul Hunt, Mission to Romania.

United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2006, March 3). Commission on Human Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Paul Hunt.

World Health Organisation. (1993). *Health for all targets: The health policy for Europe*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe.

World Health Organization. (2003). *Caring for children and adolescents with mental health disorders: Setting WHO directions*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Chapter 2
System Blockages for Access to Education in Europe: Paper Commitments and Substantive Gaps

2.1 The European Union's Strategic Priority on Paper of Access and Lifelong Learning as a Means of Fostering Social Inclusion: Falling Between Two Stools in the ET2020 Targets?

An array of diverse calls for the encouragement of continuing or lifelong education and the creation of a 'Learning Society' have come from international organisations, including UNESCO, the European Commission and the OECD, as well as national governments across the world (Faure et al. 1972; Delors 1996; Tight 1996; Belanger and Valdivielso 1997; Elliot 1999). Developments at European Council level regarding access to education and lifelong learning include the EU Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') (2009/C 119/02).[1] Significantly the EU Council (2009/C 119/02) agrees on a range of strategic priorities for lifelong learning that go far beyond simply employment goals to include social cohesion, personal and social fulfilment and active citizenship:

1. In the period up to 2020, the primary goal of European cooperation should be to support the further development of education and training systems in the Member States which are aimed at ensuring:

   (a) The personal, social and professional fulfilment of all citizens
   (b) Sustainable economic prosperity and employability, whilst promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue

---

[1] The Council recognised that the earlier 'Education and Training 2010' work programme established for the first time a solid framework for European cooperation in the field of education and training, in the context of the Lisbon Strategy. This was based on common objectives and aimed primarily at supporting the improvement of national education and training systems through the development of complementary EU level tools, mutual learning and the exchange of good practice via the open method of coordination.

Setting out 'a strategic framework spanning education and training systems as a whole in a lifelong learning perspective', the EU Council (2009/C 119/02) goes on to state:

> Indeed, lifelong learning should be regarded as a fundamental principle underpinning the entire framework, which is designed to cover learning in all contexts—whether formal, non-formal or informal—and at all levels: from early childhood education and schools
>
> 1. Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies
> 2. Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship (p. 3)

This statement amounts to a reiteration of the wide scope of lifelong learning explicated in earlier documents of the EU Commission (2000, 2001).

There is a strong commitment on paper to access to education for marginalised groups in this important Council document. Under 'Strategic objective 3: Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship', the EU Council (2009) seeks 'to foster further learning, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue'. The key dimension of access to education is made an explicit priority as follows:

> Education and training systems should aim to ensure that all learners—including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with special needs and migrants—complete their education, including, where appropriate, through second-chance education and the provision of more personalised learning. (p. 4)

Referring to *Strategic objective 1: Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality,* EU Council (2009/C 119/02) commits to *Expanding learning mobility* as follows:

> Work together to gradually eliminate barriers and to expand opportunities for learning mobility within Europe and worldwide, both for higher and other levels of education, including new objectives and financing instruments, and whilst taking into consideration the particular needs of disadvantaged persons. (p. 9)

Moreover, a European Commission staff working document (2009) highlights that 'education and training is identified as a key element throughout the renewed Social Agenda for opportunities, access and solidarity. This stresses the role of education and training in relation to…combating poverty and social exclusion' (p. 8).

The EU *Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning* (2011) specifically makes a call to:

> encourage higher education institutions to embrace less traditional groups of learners, such as adult learners, as a means of displaying social responsibility and greater openness towards the community at large.

In its Annex, highlighting priority areas 2012–2014, it invites Member States to focus on 'Promoting flexible learning pathways for adults, including broader access to higher education for those lacking mainstream access qualifications and diversifying the spectrum of adult learning-opportunities offered by higher education institutions'. Again recently, the European Council conclusions on investing in education and training (2013) invite EU states to 'ensure that…equal opportunities for access to quality education are provided'. However, despite all this momentum of commitments at European Council of Ministers level, it is important

to contextualise the still limited scope of the expansion of access to higher education and lifelong learning in a European domain.

In a summary of high educational attainment of the adult population (20–64-year-old) between 2004 and 2009 in the EU, the Commission staff working document (2011) observes that:

despite this overall increase, when considering the high educational attainment of the 25–64 years old adult population in 2008… the EU is still performing well below some key competitors. For instance, with 24 % of the working age population having high educational attainment, the EU lies 25 percentage points below Canada (49 %), 19 percentage points below Japan (43 %), 17 percentage points below the USA (41 %) and 12 percentage points below Australia (36 %). While only the best performing EU countries manage to compete with Australia, the worse performing EU countries present high education attainment levels ranging between the ones of Brazil (11 %) and Mexico (16 %). (p. 74)

Significantly, the Commission (2006) recognises:

increased participation in tertiary education in Europe has not enhanced equity. It has improved the absolute prospects of those from less advantaged backgrounds, but it has not improved their relative prospects. The average annual increase in the participation rates of young people from low socio-economic groups has in most cases failed to keep up with the increase in the total participation rates. The participation of young people in tertiary education has a strong correlation with the educational attainment of their parents and the socioeconomic background of their families. In many countries, those whose parents have completed some tertiary education are twice as likely to participate in tertiary education as those whose parents lack upper-secondary level qualifications. (p. 23)

Whereas the European Council (2009, 2011) and this earlier Commission document both raise concerns about the equity of access to higher education across social classes, this issue has fallen off a cliff into a distinct vacuum in the 2011 Commission staff working document. Mobility of higher education students examined in the Commission staff working document (2011) (p. 36) employed four indicators, focusing on foreign and Erasmus students, with nothing on social class mobility within countries. Its chapter on 'Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship' examined migrants and lifelong learning though not migrants' higher education participation. Of further concern is that this document is deafeningly silent on social class dimensions to higher education participation, as is the subsequent Commission Communication (2012) *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes.* This latter document does, however, cite as 'evidence of underperformance' (p. 2) that 'alarming low' (p. 5) participation in lifelong learning is only 8.9 % of the population across Europe.

ET 2020 sets five major benchmarks, or outcome indicators, in relation to education. These are regarding early childhood, basic skills, early school leaving, tertiary education and lifelong learning. This extension of the Lisbon strategy to go further in relation to lifelong learning and social inclusion in ET 2020 amounts to an implicit recognition that, in the words of Nicaise (2010a), 'Lisbon 2010 has failed to achieve more inclusion/cohesion because this dimension was neglected'. From his analysis of EU social inclusion policy in relation to education, in a keynote address for the EU Belgian Presidency Conference in September 2010, Nicaise

further concludes that 'there is room for stronger coordination between social inclusion and education policies at EU level'. Nicaise (2010b) highlights the overall picture of growing income inequality in the EU, based on OECD (2008) research, and reiterates that 'recognising the failure of the Lisbon Strategy to reconcile both objectives [of economic growth and social cohesion] is a first step towards a smarter strategy for the future' (p. 20).

Two of the five EU benchmarks for Education and Training ET2020[2] are central to the issue of access to education for marginalised groups and are prima facie relevant to a view of access to education being an EU strategic priority on paper. These are that (1) the share of 30–34-year-olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 40 % and (2) an average of at least 15 % of adults aged 25–64 should participate in lifelong learning. The first of these is viewed with especially high strategic priority, as the Commission Staff Working document (2011) highlights:

> two of these five benchmarks—to reduce the number of early school leavers; and to increase the share of young adults holding tertiary education qualifications—have been given further importance having been selected headline targets for the Europe 2020 for socio-economic development to 2020. These benchmarks link education and the labour market and have great importance for employability and jobs. (p. 10)

Yet even this high strategic priority is being met with a caution of system inertia at national levels:

> The new benchmark for tertiary attainment levels among the young adult population foresees that by 2020 at least 40 % of 30–34 year olds should hold a university degree or equivalent. The trend since 2000…would suggest this is attainable by 2020. Member States' targets, as set out in their first provisional National Reform Programmes, are by and large very cautious and would suggest a lower rate of progress, possibly leading to non-achievement of the target by 2020. (p. 19)

Of additional concern is the situation in Europe regarding the lifelong learning target:

> Participation in adult lifelong learning improved in the period 2000–2005 but has since slightly declined and currently reaches a level short of the benchmark of 12.5 % agreed for 2010 and significantly below the 15 % target for 2020. (Commission Staff Working Document 2011, p. 7)

As Ulicna et al. (2011) highlight, due to considerable investments and new financial resources, mainly due to EU structural funds, the participation rates in adult education in the New EU Member States have increased in the period 2000–2007. Nevertheless, they recognise that this needs to be balanced with the fact that over the period 2003/2004–2008, several new Member States have actually seen a negative change

---

[2] The other three ET2020 benchmarks are that:

– At least 95 % of children between 4 years old and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education.
– The share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10 %.
– The share of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15 %.

in the participation of adults which could indicate that the injection of new finances only led to an increase over a limited period of time.

The Commission Staff Working document (2011) highlights the investment gap in higher education across European countries, when set against an international backdrop:

> While public investment in tertiary-level education in the EU is only slightly below the level in the USA, it is nearly twice as high as in Japan. However, private investment in higher education is much higher in both the USA and Japan. As a result, total investment in higher education institutions in the EU (for all activities, including both education and research) was in 2007, 1.3 % of GDP, well below the level in the USA (3.1 %) and also lower than in Japan (1.5 %), Russia (1.7 %), and Korea (2.4 %), but higher than in Brazil (0.8 %), China (0.5 %, 2006) and India (0.4 %, 2006). (p. 64)

Though needing to be balanced against priority investment at other levels of the education system, this investment gap translates into real consequences for levels of population with higher educational attainment in Europe.

Not only is there an investment deficit in higher education across Europe, but there is also a strategic deficit in relation to access to education for lower socio-economic groups. Not only is there a need for interrogation of the European countries' comparatively poor performance internationally in developing participation in higher education, there is a need to place opening up barriers to access to higher education more firmly on the policy agenda at EU level and across national levels in Europe. It appears that the equity, social cohesion and active citizenship issue of access to higher education for lower socio-economic groups is currently falling between two stools in relation to the ET2020 targets. It is relevant on paper to both higher education and lifelong learning benchmarks but arguably being sufficiently prioritised by neither.

An encouraging and significant step forward that has taken place in the *Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning* (2011) document— under the 'Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through adult learning' heading, in its Annex—is the invitation for Member States to focus on 'Addressing the learning needs of…people in specific situations of exclusion from learning, such as those in…prisons,[3] and providing them with adequate guidance support'. This is the first Council Resolution in the area of lifelong learning to explicitly embrace prisoners within its scope of relevant target groups, via a social cohesion and active citizenship lens.

It is notable that the EU Council's 'Youth Guarantee' (April 2013) explicitly recognises the need for a differentiated approach to engaging young people experiencing social exclusion. In the words of the Council Recommendation (2013), this 'Youth Guarantee' 'refers to a situation in which young people receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of 4 months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education'; this Council Recommendation (2013) goes on to state that 'When designing such a Youth Guarantee scheme, Member States should consider overarching issues such as the fact that young people are not a homogeneous group facing similar social environments'.

---

[3] As well as hospitals and care homes.

The Commission (2006) distinguishes a number of different dimensions:

> It is useful to distinguish between equity in *access* (the same opportunities for all to access to quality education), in *treatment* (quality educational provision suited to individuals' needs once in the system) and in *outcomes* (the knowledge, competences, skills learnt and qualifications achieved within an educational system). In places, this paper and Communication also consider equity of *participation* in education and training, which means a combination of access to education and treatment of an individual once inside the system. To focus solely on equity in access without taking into account a number of variables including the socio-economic background of the learners, the type of institution or its location could lead to the compounding of existing social and educational inequalities (independent from the potential of the individual learner). (p. 7)

Equity in access is formal equality in the Aristotelian sense of treating like cases alike, and unalike to be treated in an unalike fashion. While this Aristotelian formula masks the assumptions in the selection process for the criteria under which the like and unalike are to be judged, it is evident that the European Commission is committed to a wider conception of access to education than simply that of formal equality. The concern with individual differences and needs, as well as with participation and outcomes, provides a broadening of focus into more substantive conceptions of equality of opportunity and outcome. The need to challenge the effects of social exclusion in society through pathways which include access to education is a key assumption; it is also evident that access issues underpin the key strategic priorities of promotion of democratic values, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue, as well as of employability and personal, social and professional fulfilment of all citizens throughout the EU.

The European Platform against Poverty proposes the development of innovative education for marginalised communities in order to enable those experiencing poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and to take an active part in society. The Commission (2006) also emphasises poverty-related barriers to access:

> evidence shows that the most disadvantaged are also the most risk and debt averse and, without a family culture of learning, they often prefer to begin earning straight away rather than enter higher education. (Davis and Lea 1995) (p. 25)
>
> … In systems without loans, students have to rely heavily on their families' income to pay for accommodation, transport and food which has clear consequences for equitable access and participation. (Barr 1993; Dur and Teulings 2004; Greenaway and Haynes 2004) (p. 25)

Even from this brief review of European Council and Commission documents pertaining to lifelong learning and access to higher education, it is evident that the EU is committed—on paper—to a wider conception of access to education than simply that of formal equality. The concern is not only with the degree of such a commitment to be implemented in reality but also with the need for greater focus on a strategy for overcoming system blockages to implementation of access to higher education and lifelong learning issues as a priority.

Wolter's (2012) observation of notable changes in the past decade or so in German higher education, nevertheless, notes a resistance to reforms to open access to higher education:

> Unfortunately, lifelong learning oriented indicators play only a minor role in the new funding and allocation procedures so that there are not really any additional incentives for higher education institutions to extend their activities in this area…Regrettably, adopting lifelong

learning structures, opening up for non-traditional students…have often been eyed suspiciously as detrimental to the achievement of academic excellence. (p. 47)

In Sweden, Thunborg and Bron (2012) highlight that since 2001 there is a legal obligation for universities to have 10 % of non-traditional students, but in practice some universities do not accomplish this and meet some resistance from lecturers.

Slowey and Schuetze's (2012) international review suggests that 'overall, higher education has been slow to adapts its missions, structures and understanding of knowledge and learning—in short, its culture—to the demands for a more open, flexible and egalitarian system' (p. 4). It is also notable that international research using large-scale surveys to examine inequality focusing on income inequality suggests that the middle classes have been the main beneficiaries of the expansion of higher education (Blanden et al. 2005). Schuetze and Slowey (2002) cite their research from ten countries (Austria, Australia, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden, the UK and the USA) on the reluctance of the more elite universities to open up access for non-traditional students, while emphasising that in some countries, it was 'largely state policy which was seeking to intervene to encourage—or even push—universities to open their doors to new types of students' (p. 316). This conclusion of the key role of the State in setting an agenda for access to higher education has implications also for Central and Eastern European countries which were not part of Schuetze and Slowey's (2002) and Slowey and Schuetze's (2012) studies. It is also notable that in the context of Poland, Heyns and Białecki (1993) observed at an earlier date that 'the elite universities, however, have remained highly selective in Poland with relatively stable enrolments and with little variation over time' (p. 307).

Lunt (2008) observes that in the UK context, the total increase in participation rates at higher education masks a considerable variation by social class, with a perceived trade-off between excellence and equity. Severe barriers to higher education in the form of radical increases to university fees have been introduced by the current Conservative-Liberal Democrat Government in Britain. This is less a shadow of inertia blocking access to education than a direct ideological attack on the idea of university education being available to those without extreme wealth. This radical distancing of the current Conservative-led government in Britain from social inclusion concerns in education is also manifested in it being the sole EU country to refuse to sign up to the Council Recommendations on Early School Leaving in June 2011. It awaits to be seen if this policy direction in the UK is not for turning, thereby leaving Britain outside the Pale of a European consensus in this area.

Hoelscher et al. (2008) found that the most common reason given by students in England for choosing an institution (university or further education college) was its location (though, importantly, this does not concern distance learning). This was mentioned as a single reason for choice by one third of students regardless of the educational pathway chosen. Good location was defined as proximity with home or with family, proximity with a big city or well served by transport. This access concern lies in some tension with a currently fashionable drive to merge higher education institutions to maximise their research capacities in an international environment.

The UNESCO Faure report (1972) develops a concept of blocked societies and blocked educational systems which preserve the privilege of an elite. The established elite offers a convenient and formally equitable method of recruiting its successors across generations, through educating those from its own social class while picking out a selected few from the less favoured social classes. This method offers a number of advantages for the ruling social classes: It gives society a safety valve; it makes sure of fresh blood for the elite, while giving them a good conscience through the provision of formally equal opportunities. Blocked educational institutions are also thereby somewhat reminiscent of the static society in Plato's *Republic,* where political and thus educational power resides with the class of guardians, in contrast to those of the common people or the soldiers—with the proviso of Plato that, in exceptional cases, a promising student may be promoted from the other social groups into the guardian class.

The question arises not only as to whether European countries are blocked societies, containing blocked higher educational systems. A blocked society with regard to access to higher education exists along a continuum of blockedness, with varying degrees of inertia to change. A basic focus of this book is on sites of blockage regarding access to education for marginalised groups and how to overcome these—whether for access to higher education, non-formal education or prison education. This book by no means purports to offer a comprehensive account or description of the European systems in these areas. Rather it seeks to illustrate a range of concerns regarding the shadow of system inertia and solutions to overcoming such blockages—concerns which arguably have much resonance internationally beyond their immediate illustrative contexts.

2.2   Access to Education for Marginalised Groups: A Neglected Focus in University Rankings

Diversity of social classes and ethnicities offers the potential for an improved learning and discursive experience of students in areas of the humanities and social sciences in particular, where cultural dimensions are major aspects of knowledge development. In other words, domains such as law, psychology, history, geography, social work, sociology, politics, education, literature and business can significantly benefit from interrogation through a learning involvement with diverse voices rather than through participation from a largely homogenous, dominant culture of students. At least in many such domains in the humanities and social sciences, quality and access can be not only reconciled but can be argued to require each other. This is a clear consequence of a Vygotskyan framework for intellectual development which prioritises socio-cultural interaction as pivotal to learning.[4]

---

[4]This argument can go beyond a Vygotskyan framework to engage with a level of *challenge* to cultural assumptions and cultural conformity—a challenge that may not be possible within a Vygotskyan framework (Downes 2009).

Moreover, Reay et al. (2007) interrogate 'the ability to move in and out of spaces marked as 'other'' (p. 1047) as a feature of cultural capital. While Gibbons (2002) argues that the global economy requires individuals who can interact with people of other races and nationalities openly and respectfully, this position could lead to the danger of universities simply seeking out international students who would pay higher fees and take university places of those citizens from the home country experiencing social marginalisation. An advocacy of the need for embracing 'otherness' as a feature of a university's cultural capital (at least in the humanities and social sciences) would require the safeguarding of 'otherness' in relation to social class in its allocation of university places. This 'otherness' also requires more than simply assimilation into a homogenous university culture but rather to provide for diversity of subcultures at university level to then move beyond treating difference as 'otherness'.

Against this backdrop, a university institutional culture needs to be evaluated with regard to its fostering of capacities in its students for relations with diverse 'others'. This invites the need for an accessibility index as an indicator of university quality internationally, at least for the humanities and social sciences. In other words, international university rankings need to include an access and diversity ranking not simply to promote access issues but also as an indicator of the quality of the learning environment for students. In doing so, it is to be recognised that this requires a significant broadening of the criteria for international rankings of universities, as currently the focus of such rankings is narrowly on areas such as maths, science, medicine and engineering, with other major dimensions of university work such as quality of teaching excluded from such rankings.[5]

Based on a social contract framework that shifts the domain of the social contract away from an ancient mythical prehistory (invoked by Rousseau and others[6]) to a current ongoing and future societal agreement, Rawls' (1971) principle of open position[7] provides an important rationale for such an access strategy concentrating, especially, on specific departments and professions in the arts, humanities and social sciences, where humans are the subject matter and their subjective vantage points contribute to its knowledge base:

---

[5]There are three worldwide university rankings initiatives regularly published: the Academic Ranking of World Universities from Shanghai's Jiao Tong University, the World University Ranking from the Times Higher Education (THE) and since added, the QS World University Ranking. In the 'Shanghai' ranking, institutions are ranked according to six criteria mainly related to their scientific production. The 'THE' ranking on the other hand applies criteria covering the international dimension of staff and students, teacher to student ratios and peer reviews.

[6]And beyond a simply empirical social contract criticised, for example, by Durkheim (1893/1984).

[7]This key principle of open position does not necessarily require commitment to Rawls' (1971) overall social contract framework in his classic work, *A Theory of Justice*. For example, his assumption of a veil of ignorance in the formation of the social contract implies an abstract, impersonal other which is open to critique from the perspective of relational conceptions of morality and justice, such as those of Gilligan (1982) and Benhabib (1988). Other avenues for critique of Rawls (1971) include his liberal emphasis on equality of opportunity, while neglecting an equality of outcomes focus (Zappone 2002).

the principle of open position…expresses the conviction that if some places were not open on a basis fair to all, those kept out would be right in feeling unjustly treated even though they benefited from the greater efforts of those who were allowed to hold them. (p. 84)

Yet Rawls' principle goes further to implicate other helping professions, such as medicine. It critiques a paternalistic approach to 'helping' the other, while excluding the other.

A report by Usher and Cervanen (2005) exploring global higher education rankings has sought to develop indicators in order to provide the 'first systematic and rigorous exploration of the affordability and accessibility of higher education within an international comparative context'. It develops a composite affordability ranking for 16 countries, though none are from Central and Eastern Europe.[8] Usher and Cervanen (2005) state at the outset that their set of indicators of affordability and accessibility are simply a first step towards a 'more nuanced and accurate exploration of indicators' to inform comparative analysis in this area.

The six indicators of affordability constructed by Usher and Cervanen (2005) are as follows: education costs as a percentage of ability to pay, total costs as a percentage of ability to pay, net costs as a percentage of ability to pay, net cost after tax expenditure as a percentage of ability to pay, out-of-pocket costs as a percentage of ability to pay and out-of-pocket costs after tax expenditures as a percentage of ability to pay. These indicators are granted different weightings of importance. Usher and Cervanen (2005) recognise the complexity within terms such as ability to pay and explore pathways for cross-cultural comparison.

The four indicators of accessibility constructed by Usher and Cervanen (2005) are as follows: participation rates, attainment rates, gender parity index and what they call the Educational Equity Index (EEI). As with affordability indicators, the accessibility indicators are granted different weightings. This affordability and accessibility index focuses on data at the national level rather than offering direct examination of universities at the institutional level.

These indexes offer a promising basis for moving further to an institutional and not simply a national focus on accessibility and affordability indexes. There is a need to develop an integration of a university's performance regarding accessibility and affordability with its research performance, teacher to student ratios, etc., so that all these dimensions can be part of a composite score in international rankings of universities, especially in relation to the humanities and social sciences.

The need for broader criteria for university rankings has been recognised at EU Commission level. The Commission has launched an initiative 'for the design and testing of a new multidimensional university ranking system with global outreach'

---

[8] The countries ranked for affordability (as distinct from accessibility) of higher education are as follows, in a sequence where the first on the list is the most affordable and the last the least affordable based on their composite indicators: Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium (Flemish Community), Ireland, Belgium (French Community), Austria, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, Australia, the USA, Britain, New Zealand and Japan. This order of ranking, being prior to the current economic crisis, may now have changed. Finland and the Netherlands emerge as the two countries consistently scoring highest when both accessibility and affordability are combined.

that is also independent from public authorities and universities. According to the 3rd Annual Symposium on University Rankings and Quality Assurance in Europe, held in June 2011 in Brussels, by the Centre for Parliamentary Studies, its aim is the design and testing of a new multidimensional university ranking system, one with a more global outreach. The symposium organisers hoped that with its emergence on the EU higher education agenda, a new comprehensive ranking system would not only facilitate greater transparency and accountability of universities but also help policymakers to develop longer-term strategies as part of the broader HE modernisation agenda for Europe. Launched in February 2013,[9] the Commission's U-Multirank proposes to rate universities in five separate areas—reputation for research, quality of teaching and learning, international orientation, success in knowledge transfer and start-up contribution to regional growth. *A glaring omission here is a focus on access for diversity and community engagement.* This is indicative of the lower level of priority currently given at European Commission level to access to education issues for marginalised groups.

In the context of Canada and the USA, Schuetze (2011) observes the need to provide incentives to universities to recognise what he calls 'regional engagement and service as a university mission'. In doing so, this recognition would serve as a counterweight to university preoccupation with research rankings. Schuetze (2011) cites the US example of the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification of Community Engagement as an example of indicators to analyse and recognise university engagement with the community. These indicators operate under four basic headings, namely, institutional identity and culture, institutional commitment, curricular engagement and outreach and partnerships. These offer an important potential step forward also in a European context. However, it is notable that despite the 50 indicators developed under these four categories for community engagement in the Carnegie Foundation's Classification, none of these directly address the issues of either accessibility or affordability. This is a significant vacuum. The framework of structural indicators for access to education being developed for current purposes may inform international perspectives on intergenerational social mobility and accessibility beyond a European context. However, this framework is not contingent on expansion of the European Commission's U-Multirank to include an access/ diversity agenda.

Against this backdrop, it is clear that any common analytical framework to interrogate system reform for access to education needs to incorporate a perspective on system inertia—on system blockages to reform. A problem-solution focus needs to be held throughout to locate enduring features of system resistance to opening access, whether in Europe or beyond.

Summary   Two of the five EU benchmarks for Education and Training ET2020 are central to the issue of access to education for marginalised groups and are prima

---

[9]The U-Multirank has already been criticised by the influential League of European Research Universities which represents 21 leading research-intensive universities, regarding the reliability and validity of the data sought to be collected, as well as raising concerns about the burden this data collection puts on universities.

facie relevant to a view of access to education being an EU strategic priority on paper. These are that (1) the share of 30–34-year-olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 40 % and (2) an average of at least 15 % of adults aged 25–64 should participate in lifelong learning. There is a need to place opening up barriers to access to higher education more firmly on the policy agenda at EU level and across national levels in Europe. Despite a number of commitments in EU Council and Commission documents in the past decade, it appears that the equity, social cohesion and active citizenship issue of access to higher education for lower socio-economic groups is currently falling between two stools in relation to the ET2020 targets. It is relevant on paper to both higher education and lifelong learning benchmarks but arguably being sufficiently prioritised by neither.

It is evident that the EU Commission is committed—on paper—to a wider conception of access to education than simply that of formal equality. The concern is not only with the degree of such a commitment to be implemented in reality but also with the need for greater focus on a strategy for overcoming system blockages to implementation of access to higher education and lifelong learning issues as a priority. Regarding prison education, the EU *Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning* (2011) is a significant step forward as the first Council Resolution in the area of lifelong learning to explicitly embrace prisoners within its scope of relevant target groups, via a social cohesion and active citizenship lens.

Diversity of social classes and ethnicities at university offers the potential for an improved learning experience of students in areas of the humanities and social sciences in particular, where cultural dimensions are major aspects of knowledge development. Domains such as law, psychology, history, geography, social work, sociology, politics, education, literature and business can significantly benefit from interrogation through a learning involvement with diverse voices rather than with a largely homogenous, dominant culture of students. In many such domains in the humanities and social sciences, quality and access can be not only reconciled but arguably require each other. This is a clear consequence of a Vygotskyan framework for intellectual development which prioritises socio-cultural interaction as pivotal to learning. A university institutional culture needs to be evaluated with regard to its fostering of capacities in its students for relations with diverse 'others'. This highlights the need for an accessibility index as an indicator of university quality internationally, at least for the humanities and social sciences.

The EU Commission's U-Multirank (2013) proposes to rate universities in five separate areas—reputation for research, quality of teaching and learning, international orientation, success in knowledge transfer and start-up contribution to regional growth. A glaring omission here is a focus on access for diversity and community engagement. This is indicative of the lower level of priority currently given at European Commission level to access to education issues for marginalised groups. Despite the 50 indicators developed under four categories for community engagement in the Carnegie Foundation's Classification in the USA, none of these directly address the issues of either accessibility or affordability.

References

Barr, N. (1993). Alternative funding resources for higher education. *The Economic Journal, 103*(418), 718–728.

Belanger, P., & Valdivielso, S. (Eds.). (1997). *The emergence of learning societies: Who participates in adult learning?* Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd.

Benhabib, S. (1988). The generalized and the concrete other. In S. Benhabib & D. Cornell (Eds.), *Feminism as critique* (pp. 77–96). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Blanden, J., Gregg, P., & Machin, S. (2005). *Intergenerational mobility in Europe and North America*. London: Centre for Economic Performance.

Commission Staff Working Document. {SEC(2006) 1096}. Accompanying document to the communication to the Commission {COM (2006) 481 final}. *Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems*.

Commission Staff Working Document. {SEC(2009)1616}. *Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Indicators and benchmarks 2009.*

Commission Staff Working Document. {SEC(2011) 526}. *Progress towards the common European objectives in education and training indicators and benchmarks 2010/2011.*

Commission Staff Working Paper. {SEC(2000) 1832}. *A memorandum on lifelong learning*.

Communication from the Commission. {COM(2001) 678 final}. *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality*.

Council Conclusions on investing in education and training—A response to Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes and the 2013 Annual Growth Survey (15 February 2013).

Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 *on establishing a Youth Guarantee* (2013/C 120/01).

Davis, E., & Lea, S. E. G. (1995). Student attitudes to student debt. *Journal of Economic Psychology, 16*(4), 663–679.

Delors, J. (1996). *Learning: The treasure within: Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st century*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Publishing.

Downes, P. (2009). Cultural conformity within Vygotsky's paradigm for education: A critique from the perspective of early Heidegger. *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny* [Journal of Education, Poland], *2*(212), 97–114.

Dur, R. A. J., & Teulings, C. N. (2004). Are education subsidies an efficient redistribution device? In J. Agell, M. Keen, & A. Weichenrieder (Eds.), *Labor market, institutions and public regulation* (pp. 123–161). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Durkheim, E. (1893/1984). *The division of labor in society*. New York: Free Press.

Elliot, G. (1999). *Lifelong learning: The politics of new learning environment*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

EU Council. (2009/C 119/02). *Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020')*.

EU Council. (2011). *EU Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning* (2011/C 372/01).

Faure, E., Herrera, F., Kaddoura, A. R., Lopes, H., Petrovsky, A. V., Rahnema, M., & Ward, F. C. (1972). *Learning to be: The world of education today and tomorrow*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Publishing.

Gibbons, M. (2002). White trash: A class relevant scapegoat for the cultural elite. *Journal of Mundane Behaviour, 5*(1), 1–11. Published by California State University.

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Greenaway, D., & Haynes, M. (2004). Funding higher education. In G. Johnes & J. Johnes (Eds.), *International handbook on the economics of education*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Heyns, B., & Białecki, I. (1993). Educational inequalities in Postwar Poland. In Y. Shavit & H.-P. Blossfeld (Eds.), *Persistent inequality: Changing educational attainment in thirteen countries* (pp. 303–336). Oxford: Westview Press.

Hoelscher, M., Hayward, G., Hubert, E., & Dunbar-Goddet, H. (2008). The transition from vocational education and training to higher education: A successful pathway? *Research Papers in Education, 23*(2), 139–151.

Lunt, I. (2008). Beyond tuition fees? The legacy of Blair's government to higher education. *Oxford Review of Education, 34*(6), 741–752.

Niçaise, I. (2010a, September 28–29). *A smart social inclusion policy for the EU: The role of education and training.* University of Leuven and Nesse. Paper for distribution at the Belgian EU Presidency conference *Breaking the cycle of disadvantage- Social inclusion in and through education.* Ghent.

Niçaise, I. (2010b, September 28–29). *A smart social inclusion policy for the EU: The role of education and training.* University of Leuven and NESSE. Presentation at the Belgian EU Presidency conference *Breaking the cycle of disadvantage- Social inclusion in and through education*. Ghent.

OECD. (2008). *Education at a glance*. Paris: OECD.

Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap.

Reay, D., Hollingworth, S., Williams, K., Crozier, G., Jamieson, F., James, D., & Beedell, P. (2007). Inner city schooling 'A darker shade of pale?' Whiteness, the middle classes and multi-ethnic. *Sociology, 41*, 1041.

Rousseau, J. J. (1762). *The social contract* (M. Cranston, Trans., 1968). New York: Penguin Books

Schuetze, H. G. (2011, March 4). *Regional engagement and service mission of universities: North American perspectives*. Presentation at Higher Education in challenging times: Questioning the unquestioned, Dublin City University, Dublin.

Schuetze, H. G., & Slowey, M. (2002). Participation and exclusion: A comparative analysis of non-traditional students and lifelong learners in higher education. *Higher Education, 44*, 309–327.

Slowey, M., & Schuetze, H. G. (2012). All change—No change? Lifelong learners and higher education revisited. In M. Slowey & H. G. Schuetze (Eds.), *Global perspectives on higher education and lifelong learners* (pp. 3–22). London: Routledge.

The EU Commission's U-Multirank (2013) http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/u-multirank_en.htm

Thunborg, C., & Bron, A. (2012). Higher education and lifelong learning in Sweden. In M. Slowey & H. G. Schuetze (Eds.), *Global perspectives on higher education and lifelong learners* (pp. 97–111). London: Routledge.

Tight, M. (1996). *Key concepts in adult education and training*. London: Routledge.

Ulicna, D., Ure, O. B., & Werquin, P. (2011). Critical factors and good practice in implementation of lifelong learning strategies. Order 99 Framework Contract No EAC 19/06 DG Education and Culture.

Usher, A., & Cervanen, A. (2005). *Global higher education rankings: Affordability and accessibility in comparative perspective*. Washington, DC/Toronto: Educational Policy Institute.

Wolter, A. (2012). From individual talent to institutional permeability: Changing policies for non-traditional access routes in German higher education. In M. Slowey & H. G. Schuetze (Eds.), *Global perspectives on higher education and lifelong learners* (pp. 43–59). London: Routledge.

Zappone, K. (2002). *Achieving equality in children's education*. Dublin: Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College.

Chapter 3
Conceptual Framework and Agenda: Beyond Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1995) to Interrogation of Blocked Systems via Structural Indicators

3.1 Introduction

Systems theory is one way to anticipate key issues regarding bridging the gap between policy and implementation, idea and reality. This issue of policy and strategy implementation is one of personalities, power and economics, but it is also a wider conceptual problem. It invites a level of interrogation beyond the axis of the ideal and real. It requires a level of scrutiny to ensure that between the idea and the reality falls not merely the image.

As a key purpose of this book is to examine access strategies and policies in order to develop positive *system level* change, there is a need for theoretical understanding of systems. Systems theory is not a unified field. It encompasses a variety of differentiated approaches, most of which originate back to the first writings on systems in the second half of the twentieth century.[1]

An interdisciplinary conceptual framework for access to higher education and lifelong learning is being sought to be developed in this book. This framework draws from a number of paradigmatic attempts to question beyond Cartesian distinctions between mind (idea) and body (real). These include initially Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995) account of various levels of concentric nested systems to express human development in context, in developmental and educational psychology. The limitations to Bronfenbrenner will be seen to lead, in the concluding chapter, to aspects of

---

[1]As Schwarz (2007) noted, system sciences are essentially rooted in four fields, namely, cybernetics (Wiener 1948; Foerster 1984), general systems theory (Bertalanffy 1968), Prigogine's far from equilibrium living systems (1984) and non-linear dynamics, i.e. chaos theory (e.g. Lorenz 1963). The general systems theory (Bertalanffy 1968) movement recognised the existence of systems in various disciplines and postulated general principles and laws that apply to them (see also Capra 1982; Downes 1993). It advanced the development of subtypes of system sciences such as Miller's (1978) living systems theory or Luhmann's social systems theory (1984).

the structuralist anthropology of Lévi-Strauss in his account of systems of relation.[2] These understandings will be briefly supplemented by early Foucault's (1972) search for fundamental structures of exclusion and early Heidegger's (1927) questioning of a background context of relation or being, prior to the ideal-real distinction. All of these approaches have one dimension in common, namely, the search for a background system of relations to the ideal-real opposition. This is not rocket science. It expresses the truism that system change requires understanding of a system—in its relations to itself and to other subsystems.

Rubenson (2008) observes the need to theorise from the 'discrepancy between normative and empirical constructions' in lifelong learning. A systems level focus requires holistic thinking, seeing the 'wholeness' and going beyond individual levels of analysis (Foster-Fishman and Behrens 2007) to bridge this discrepancy between the normative and empirical. The landmark UNESCO Faure report on lifelong learning (1972) touched upon the potential relevance of a systems analysis for education systems (p. 128, p. 161), though in a tangential and underdeveloped fashion. In doing so, it raised concerns with static conceptions of a system and highlighted the need to consider not so much a systemic approach but rather an inverted, diametrically opposite non-system approach for education (p. 161). This deschooling non-systemic approach, presumably influenced by Illich's (1972) famous work on deschooling society, understates the need to recognise that even attempts at a non-systemic approach invariably develop simply a different kind of system of relations requiring analysis.

Insights of structuralism and poststructuralism[3] would emphasise that a systemic (or postsystemic) focus applies not only at the level of formal educational structures but also with regard to systems of relation for cultures and subcultures, including systems of language and meaning involved in constructing realities of such cultures. In other words, systems of relations need to be considered at different levels, and *to ignore a systemic level focus in search of a non-system is a limited approach*. The question is more: how to develop dynamism and overcome inertia within different levels of systems and subsystems as part of system change? Denial of systemic levels of analysis does not assist with the task of going beyond static, blocked hierarchical systems of relations.

---

[2] Moving beyond conceptions of the signifier (idea) and signified (thing) in language, Lévi-Strauss' structuralism echoes that of linguist Saussure in interrogating differential contrasts between terms rather than seeking meaning in an isolated term. It differs from other kinds of structuralism, such as that of Althusser (1971) in sociology and Piaget (1971) in psychology.

[3] For accounts of structuralism, see Saussure 1954, Culler 1976, Jakobsen 1973, and Lévi-Strauss 1962, 1963, and for reviews of poststructuralism, see Habermas 1987, Derrida 1982, 1997, Kvale 1992, Simons and Billig 1994, Usher and Edwards 1996, and Downes 2012.

3.2   Conceptual Framework: Interrogating Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995) Systems Framework in Educational, Developmental and Community Psychology for Access to Education

3.2.1   A Systems Focus as a Multilevelled Approach

A key theoretical framework is Bronfenbrenner's (1979) well-recognised ecological theory of systems used in developmental, educational and community psychology, where he distinguishes a range of different system level interactions, ranging from micro relations in the immediate setting to meso-, exo- and macrosystem levels of 'generalised patterns' (p. 8). A mesosystem involves interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates—for a child, home, school neighbourhood and peer group and, for an adult, family, work and social life (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 25). An exosystem involves one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect or are affected by what happens in the setting containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 25). Focus on the meso- and exosystemic levels highlights that there is a key need for the dimension of relations between educational institutions and other groups to be included.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) systems level framework offers a multilevelled focus for action to bring constructive system level change. This focus offers a starting point to examine strategies for overcoming imbalance or alienation within the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems. Understanding human development and lifelong learning demands more than direct observation of behaviour on the part of one or two persons in the same place; it requires examination of multiperson systems of interaction not limited to a single setting and must take into account aspects of the environment beyond the immediate situation containing the subject (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 21). It offers insight into the key issue of examining relationships between different settings and institutions. Moreover, it is committed to allowing for understanding in naturalistic settings to bridge the gap between theory and practice.[4]

A wider institutional perspective has provided a useful paradigm for better understanding of social structural impacts of educational change. Walters and O'Connell (1988) point out the value of a systemic analysis that 'educational change is an institutional process, and individuals make their choices within these institutional contexts' (p. 1126). In a US context, McLaughlin (2006) suggests that 'in part this lack of attention to system learning within education reflects the fact that only recently has the system been considered as a unit of change' (p. 226).

---

[4] In the language of psychology, this feature of Bronfenbrenner's work is a commitment to ecological validity. Concerns with ecological validity arise elsewhere in psychology, where observations in a laboratory or clinical context may not generalise beyond the artificial setting in which the findings were observed (Neisser 1976).

A systems level focus is gaining increasing attention in domains related to lifelong learning, such as community psychology, where a special edition of the *American Journal of Community Psychology* was dedicated in 2007 specifically to a systems level approach (e.g., Foster-Fishman and Behrens 2007; Tseng and Seidman 2007). Youth settings are frequently being viewed in a systemic perspective by international researchers, such as Durlak et al.'s (2007) meta-analysis of studies relating to systems change in positive youth development programmes. At a school systems level, including schools' relations with their surrounding community, Downes (2009) has applied a variation of a systems theory approach with regard to preventative and intervention strategies for eliminating bullying. Ulicna et al. (2011) adopt a systems theory approach when using parallels with health care policies for analysis of the domain of lifelong learning at an EU level. There is an increasing interest in analysing systems of care in community psychology (Cook and Kilmer 2012; Suarez et al. 2012), as well as interrogating interagency collaborations and multidisciplinary teams as part of a common system of interventions in education (Downes 2011a; Edwards and Downes 2013a, b).

3.2.2 System Transitions in Education

A number of key strengths in Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995) systems focus need to be highlighted with regard to their relevance to access to education issues, before analysing key limitations to his theory that will need to be addressed subsequently. One such key strength is Bronfenbrenner's central focus on *transition* difficulties across contexts:

> The development potential of a setting in a mesosystem is enhanced if the person's initial transition into that setting is not made alone, that is, if he enters the new setting in the company of one or more persons which whom he has participated in prior settings. (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 211)

This extraction of a general principle of transition difficulties across contexts resonates with well-recognised transition difficulties between educational systems—such as those for students in moving from primary to post-primary school and from preschool to primary school.

Jarvis (2007, 2008) develops a concept of 'disjuncture' in the adult learning context which is of relevance also for a transition between systems focus on access to education in relation to marginalised groups. A disjunctural experience involves a challenge to the taken-for-granted life-world of the individual involving a 'situation when our biography and the meaning that we give to our experience of a social situation are not in harmony' (Jarvis 2007, p. 3). Jarvis (2007) envisages disjuncture as a continuum (p. 139), where at the extreme it leads to alienation and anomie in the learner. While Jarvis (2007) emphasises that some disjuncture is necessary for new learning, and the existential-phenomenological tradition of Heidegger (1927) would conceive of a sense of uncanniness or not-at-homeness at an inevitable part

of the *Angst* of experience,[5] the concern is to minimise such experience of extreme disjuncture between the individual and the organisational culture of the third-level institution. A key path to do so is not only through organisational supports but through a critical mass of students from similar working class backgrounds to contribute to the creation of new organisational cultures and subcultures.[6]

Resonant with Bourdieu's (1986) conceptions of cultural capital, Jarvis (2007) describes disjuncture as where 'our biographical repertoire is no longer sufficient to cope automatically with our situation' (p. 11). This is particularly pertinent for those experiencing marginalisation and a biographical repertoire where perhaps no one from the family has been to university before so that they are first-generation third-level students. This potentially alienating force of the institutional culture of the university (Bamber et al. 2000) needs to be addressed in a systemic access strategy seeking to engage with those traditionally underrepresented at third-level education.

A systemic focus highlights that problems of transition are not simply those of the individual who is moving from one context to another, but is more centrally a system level problem due to discontinuities in the systemic environments or climates of educational institutions. Thus, for example, Downes et al. (2006) observed the system level disjunction between primary and post-primary school climates in a sample of designated disadvantaged schools in Dublin, Ireland; a statistically significant number of students differed between late primary and early post-primary with regard to perceptions of being treated fairly in school and willingness to ask a teacher a question in class about an academic issue. Such concerns with transition across contexts provides the rationale for school site-based professional development (Dooley and Corcoran 2007; Kennedy 2007), in order to embed changed patterns of behaviour in the life context of the educational institution.

An implication of a system level focus on transitions, advocated by Bronfenbrenner, is that there is a need for sustained interventions, developing over time, rather than merely once-off interventions. Change to a system, whether a system of relations of behaviour, communication or otherwise, requires sustained interventions. Tseng and Seidman (2007) observe a disconnect between human resources and social processes to explain why professional development activities that provide one-time, off-site training to teachers or staff fail to change the interactions teachers or staff have with youth. This dimension of programme intensity in order to embed change in a pattern of relations has been recognised internationally in the area of drug use prevention strategies (Morgan 2001) and for school bullying prevention and intervention (Downes 2009). A systemic focus invites the implication that a systemic inertia and resistance to change typically needs to be overcome. To challenge habitual patterns of relation, the intervention must adopt an ongoing focus on implementation and change management.

---

[5] Bronfenbrenner's (1979) emphasis on 'phenomenological' aspects of systems, nevertheless, is not a 'predilection' for existential-phenomenological approaches (p. 22).

[6] Williams et al. (1993) describe the formation of institutional culture, where culture is the commonly held and relatively stable beliefs, attitudes and values that exist within an organisation. They define an attitude as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner to a given object or idea.

Stanton (2008) states that a possible explanation for institutional inertia in education is a lack of policy memory. He criticised how the policies introduced in recent decades in the United Kingdom (National Curriculum, NVQs, GNVQs, Curriculum 2000, Modern Apprenticeship) failed to learn from previous mistakes, with an over-engineered learner assessment regime, at the expense of the promotion of learning. This need for a policy memory within an institution is a corollary of the principle of the importance of sustained interventions for change to occur.

Bronfenbrenner expands his account of transition level issues across systems as follows:

> The developmental effects of a transition from one primary setting to another is a function of the match between the developmental trajectory generated in the old setting and the balance between challenge and support presented both by the new setting and its interconnections with the old. The nature of this balance is defined by previous hypothesis specifying the conditions of micro-, meso- and exosystem conducive to psychological growth, with due regards to the person's stage of development, physical health, and degree of integration with as opposed to alienation from the existing social order. (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 288)

Bronfenbrenner's preoccupations here are important for contexts of education and relations between policy and practice across institutions. They can be construed as being part of a conceptual concern with contextualism, going back to Montesquieu's dictum that it would be *un grand hasard*, a great coincidence, if laws in one country could be transferred in a meaningful fashion to another country's context. In the twentieth century, this contextual focus on meaning was implicitly echoed by Saussure, Wittgenstein and jurisprudentialist H. A. Hart's analyses of language as a system or game of interrelated meanings. Wittgenstein (1958) and Hart (1961) in particular emphasised the transition and change across contexts for the meaning of even the same word or linguistic phrase.

3.2.3 Systems: Beyond a Unidimensional Focus

A further strength of Bronfenbrenner (1979) is his account of developing links between different parts of the system and subsystems in a two-way flow. He recognises that 'environments are not distinguished by reference to linear variables' (p. 5). The development potential of a setting varies inversely with the number of intermediate links in the network chain connecting the setting to setting of power (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 256). Bronfenbrenner presents a reformulation pertaining to the microsystem by adding in Mead's (1934) concept of the significant others to refer to other people in the immediate environment. He states that 'the same force-resource model that captures the developmentally relevant characteristics of the developing person can be applied as well to the developmentally relevant features of significant others… the belief systems of parents…may be especially important in this regard' and 'can function as instigators and maintainers of reciprocal interaction with the developing person' (Bronfenbrenner 1995, p. 638). Thus, interpersonal links are also key from this perspective. In the context of lifelong learning and the European Commission,

Chabera (2011) has recognised 'persisting challenges' as including 'links between sectors, levels, forms of learning', as well as 'stakeholder coordination/involvement'. Such systemic linkages require a two-way flow between subsystems. Chabera (2011) goes on to highlight the need for more evidence regarding 'coordination of complex lifelong learning systems'.

Part of the logic of the need for a two-way flow in a system of 'reciprocity' (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 57) is that there be feedback from those receiving interventions and supports in a system. Mutual feedback generates a momentum of its own that motivates the participants not only to persevere but to engage in progressively more complex patterns of interaction. The result is often an acceleration in pace and an increase in complexity of learning processes. (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 57)

Feedback built into systemic responses would go beyond simply having one pathway for feedback but rather to allow for multiple channels of feedback. In the school envisaged as a system, it has been argued that feedback from students on bullying in school would need to be available from more than one source such as the school principal, or year head (Downes et al. 2006; Downes 2009). Reliance on simply one source for feedback may result in a system level blockage and failure in communication. A similar underlying assumption of diversity in feedback pathways underpins Spillane et al.'s (2006) distributed leadership approaches which envisage multiple groups of individuals in a school context guiding and mobilising staff in the instructional change process through interdependency rather than dependency.

The capacity for strategic interventions at different levels to bring about 'inter-influences' must be recognised. 'Inter-influences' cause modifications in the system but:

> Inter-influence is a particular type of relation between factors, events or (sub)systems. It is non-deterministic without being random, and it does not exhibit strict causality, while nevertheless showing an influence on the future state of the system. Inter-influences are pervasive in complex systems of the web type …Inter-influences are one of the ways self-organisation takes place in a complex system. (Hardy 2001, p. 36)

Acknowledgement of such a system of interinfluences invites recognition that any assumption of a one to one relationship between an antecedent input and a consequent output and outcome is an unwarranted simplification (Rachlin 1984; Downes 2007). It is rare that one 'magic bullet' cause will bring about sustained systemic change. Rather, a multilevelled focus is needed to bring about system level change (Downes 1993). An implication of systems theory for lifelong learning and access to higher education is that change amplifiers must be operative throughout the entire system if they are to effect self-transcendent change (Downes 1993). They involve interplay between *both* bottom-up and top-down forces for change. Such interplay is a dynamic one where one direction does not subsume the other. This contrasts with Connolly's (2003) description of the way in which the formal education system may inappropriately adopt methods from community education to suit its own purposes. While seeming to value the methodology of community education, specifically to target marginalised groups, Connolly (2003) argues that the formal adult education system borrows some of the approaches to force people to attend

through 'top-down, compulsory imposition on people who have very little social power' (p. 15).[7] Furthermore, the community education sector is contained and deprived of resources, which she terms the 'glass fence'.

While developmental psychology has moved beyond simple linear causality to an understanding of interacting risk and protective factors (Rutter 1985), a systemic perspective recognises the complex interplay of reciprocal factors (Hardy 2001) that challenge traditional causal models. It interrogates the systemic background relations underlying the foregrounded risk and protective factors. A systems change perspective recognises the need to go beyond simple one-directional models of causality, as Hirsch et al. (2007) emphasise:

> The unidirectional models we use to try to draw links between a set of variables and an outcome are not consistent with what we know about the complexity of the phenomena we hope to study. (p. 239)
>   systems thinking stresses chains of reciprocal, causal relations. (p. 241)

3.2.4 Systems as Key Silent Conditions for Complex Causal Influences

Tudge et al. (2009) argue that many researchers fail to distinguish between Bronfenbrenner's early work in 1979 and his later, supposedly mature, theory of development. However, this later theory that gives emphasis to proximal processes in the search for primary mechanisms in immediate environment interactions with the individual (e.g., Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998) is perhaps less innovative, though more detailed, than his initial systems framework. Bronfenbrenner's later concerns with foreground proximal processes to complement background systemic relations is a shift of emphasis to causal relations, whereas the background systemic relations involve more a focus on *conditions* for causality. Though Bronfenbrenner does not appear to make this point explicitly, his systemic background focus amounts to a preoccupation with key conditions rather than simply with causality.

A tendency to overlook background necessary or even simply supportive conditions for the cause to 'work' is criticised in Mill's (1872) challenge to a clear-cut distinction between causal and non-causal states:

> It is seldom if ever between a consequent and a single antecedent that this invariable sequence subsists. It is usually between a consequent and the sum of several antecedents the concurrence of all of them being requisite to produce, that is, to be certain of being followed by the consequent. (p. 327)

Mill noted that very often one antecedent is termed the cause, the other antecedents being conditions. Intervention models that 'work' causally have hidden necessary conditions in the system of relations, without which the more obvious causal elements could not have occurred, just as striking a billiard ball to hit another presupposes the

---

[7] See also Holford et al. (2008) on social control aspects of some lifelong learning approaches.

necessary condition of gravitation. Causes necessarily operate within a background of supporting conditions that are structured sources of the cause's efficacy. It is precisely these silent background conditions that Rutter (1985) argues have been frequently overlooked within developmental psychology:

> it is commonly but wrongly assumed that a significant main effect in a multivariate analysis means that that variable has an effect on its own. It does not. What it means is that there is a significant main effect for that variable, after other variables have been taken into account: that is not tantamount to an effect in the absence of all other variables. (p. 601)

A neglected achievement of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) background systems focus was to secure a focus in psychology on such background systemic conditions and to develop at least an initial framework for their interrogation; it is a view of the importance of background conditions, not so much as necessary conditions, but as key supportive conditions. This interpretation of Bronfenbrenner through the lens of key silent conditions for causal impact in a system paves the way for the further step of identifying structural indicators to scrutinise specific key system *conditions* for access to education. The structural indicators may furnish a sound to amplify key—previously silent—system background conditions.

3.2.5   Systems as Growth Rather than Deficits

Another important contribution of Bronfenbrenner's systemic model is concentration on promotion of growth rather than simply focusing on deficits. Bronfenbrenner rejects the deficit model of human function and growth, in favour of research, policy and practice committed to transforming experiments. Such a transformative approach challenges, alters and restructures the existing social order to make a more human ecology, to create micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems that better meet the needs of human beings (Bronfenbrenner 1979). He describes such a deficit model as follows:

> [A] Deficit model of human functioning and growth assumes that human inadequacies or disturbance in human behaviour and development reflects a deficiency within the person or from a more enlightened, but fundamentally unaltered perspective, within the person's immediate environment. (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 290)

A need to focus on growth rather than deficits has been an assumption of the humanistic psychology tradition of Maslow (1970) and Rogers (1961),[8] as well as more recently of the positive psychology movement which includes positive school

---

[8] Fromm (1957, 1980), for example, represents a humanistic psychology tradition that, in contrast to Maslow (1970) and Rogers (1961), fully interrogates deficits and problems in human experience and behaviour while also giving strong emphasis to positive human potential. Fromm's humanism has been influential in adult education, via Freire's (1972) conception of the banking model of education where information and knowledge is possessed; Freire explicitly derives his critique of banking education from Fromm's account of an alienated *Having* mode of relation, in contrast with a *Being* mode of existence.

psychology. Similarly, in the health domain, health promotion rather than simply disease prevention has oriented a notable shift of emphasis. Van Alphen (2009) highlights that even the term 'early school leaver' categorises people *ex negativo* rather than to the specific characteristics they do possess (p. 554).

3.3 The Need for Focus on System Blockage and Displacement in Moving from Inert to Inclusive Systems: Key Limitations to Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995) Understanding of Systems

3.3.1 A Stronger Focus on Time

A major limitation to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework of concentric nested systems of interrelation, 'each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls' (p. 3), is that it tended to omit a dynamic focus; it neglected scrutiny not only of time but also of *system change* over time. This is a key issue in the context of lifelong learning and system change. Sultana (2008) highlights the importance of a temporal dimension, namely, the *pace* of change, for educational system reform. The more static concerns of Bronfenbrenner (1979) offer a limited conceptual framework for system reform, whether for access to education or other systems.

Bronfenbrenner himself called the ecological model into question in the early 1980s because, although studies of children and adults in real-life settings were by now commonplace, there was a surfeit of studies on context without development. He did acknowledge some responsibility for this lack of direction because *The Ecology of Human Development* had much more to say about 'the nature and developmental contribution of the environment than the organism itself' (Bronfenbrenner 1995, pp. 616–617). This basic lack of a framework for change in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model is a serious limitation; Capra (1982) emphasises that a living system is never static and that 'a high degree of non-equilibrium is absolutely necessary for self-organisation' (p. 291).

Criticisms which Elder directs at Bronfenbrenner include the lack of temporal perspective in his original ecological model from 1979 and also the limitations of the term 'ecological transition' in this work as it 'did not address developmental change nor the proximal processes that occur in organism-environment interaction' (Moen et al. 1995 pp. 122–123). These deficiencies were sought to be addressed with Bronfenbrenner's later 'ecological concept of chronosystem' which captures 'all of these interacting elements over time - the developing person, the nature of the environment, and their proximal processes of interaction' (Moen et al. 1995, p. 123). This was subsequently expanded into micro-time and macro-time (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) set out that 'learning and development are facilitated by the participation of the developing person in progressively more complex patterns

of reciprocal behaviour with someone with whom that person has developed a strong and enduring emotional attachment, and when the balance of power gradually shifts in favour of the developing person' (p. 60). Commenting on this formulation many years later, Bronfenbrenner sets out that it 'imposes an unstated limit on the sphere in which developmentally fostering activities operate. Activities are confined by default to the domain of interpersonal interaction'; he states that this is an 'unwarranted limitation' (Bronfenbrenner 1995, p. 614). Bronfenbrenner (1989) was of the view that his 1979 approach focused too much on context thereby under-playing the active role the individual plays in his/her own development, though Tudge et al. (2009) note that Bronfenbrenner's earlier work never committed to a view of context without individual interrelation to that context.

It is important to emphasise another aspect of such a temporal focus which has been given attention in psychology, though not so much by Bronfenbrenner. Incorporating a temporal dimension to a system allows for what Gergen (1973) describes as a *reflexive* turn in psychology; understanding patterns of behaviour and systemic relation in historical-temporal terms allows for these patterns to be self-conscious and malleable at least to some degree. System malleability increases with such a temporal framework for understanding. Gergen's (1973) critique of social psychology was precisely in relation to its neglect of this temporal dimension generally in its research on human behaviour in society. In doing so, he implicitly followed concerns with temporal dimensions in the social sciences, such as those of Popper (1957) who treated truth claims in the social sciences as mere historical trends rather than universal laws—temporal preoccupations presaged also in the phenomenology of Husserl and early Heidegger (1927). Pace of change has also been a focus of Heller's (1978) account of Renaissance society in Europe which she describes as bringing an epoch marked by 'a quickening of the pace' (p. 186) compared with the Middle Ages; Toffler (1970) characterises Western industrial society as suffering from 'future shock' due to the rapidity of cultural and experiential change for the individual; Gergen's (1994) subsequent account of the impact of change of pace of experience on the individual emphasises that the self becomes 'saturated' with rapid experiential change.

3.3.2   System Change in Time as Overcoming System Blockage or Displacement

While a view of concentric nested systems could be traced to Dante's *Paradiso*, a vestige of such a lineage in Bronfenbrenner's systems theory is the limited conception of blockage, displacement or even repression as patterns within a system. Apart from transition difficulties between subsystems, there is little interrogation of absence of presence in Bronfenbrenner's concentric structured model. Yet an understanding of the *inferno* or *purgatorio* of *system blockage* is key to system level reform. There is a need for system level understanding that better encapsulates not only system level blockage or alienation (Downes and Downes 2007) but also *movement or*

change to system level blockages. This gap in understanding system change means that Bronfenbrenner's accounts offer little understanding of system blockage and displacement. It is arguable that these deficiencies were only partially addressed with Bronfenbrenner's later concept of chronosystem to express temporal dimensions.

To offer further interrogation of Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995) systems framework pertaining to access to education issues, it is necessary to consider a range of important objections to systems theory, generally, including from within perspectives on lifelong learning. Jarvis (2007) discusses Parsons' (1951) version of systems theory highlighting that this version 'presupposed the social structures and learning in a manner of adaptation so that the patterns of society should be maintained' (p. 18). This avenue of critique implicitly echoes that which Habermas (1987) makes of Luhmann's autopoietic systems as inviting a conservative ideology. It arguably applies a fortiori to another application of a version of systems theory, such as Teubner's (1989) characterisation of the legal system as a quasiautonomous autopoietic system of norms, procedures and relations impervious to change and thereby largely unquestionable in its practices.[9] The critique by Jarvis and Habermas here is apt in relation to static, inert, alienated systems which do not invoke a key dimension of change over time to its structures. Similarly, mechanistic systems of computer models of mind in cognitive science (e.g., Newell and Simon 1972; Newell 1990; Simon 1969) are criticised at a systemic level for their static, inert conceptions of space underpinning these models (Downes 2006, 2010a, b, 2012).

3.3.3 The Need for Change Towards Inclusive Systems that Facilitate Individual Agency

There is a need to introduce dynamic features of *inclusive* systems—in contrast to *inert* or blocked systems—that require a focus on change and time. This also invites the pivotal dimension of human agency (see also Williams 1992; Downes 2003; Greene 2003) within this process of system level change. In doing so, this engages with a further concern of Jarvis (2008, p. 120) regarding the loss of individual responsibility within the 'totality' of the system. No one becomes responsible for systems failure. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) focus on 'functional systems', both 'within and between settings' (p. 7), is, nevertheless, somewhat cognisant of the danger common to many systems theories of excising the individual from relevance in a discourse of functionality.

---

[9] Teubner's (1989) position is clearly unsustainable, unless through equating law simply as force. For example, Kelsen's (1945) *General Theory of Law and State* recognises that the basic norm of a legal system, from which other legal norms are derived, is created by an act of will and is not a conclusion from a premise based on an intellectual operation. Similarly, another major jurisprudential thinker, Hart's (1961) foundational 'norm of recognition' underpinning the legal system amounts to a recognition that this is merely assumed to be valid rather than justified intellectually. These are just some examples of how a self-contained, autonomous legal system of norms, procedures and practices is a logical chimaera; it is governed by power relations and is not a deterministic process, *contra* Teubner's portrayal of the legal system.

A framework of inclusive systems theory, going somewhat beyond Bronfenbrenner here, would not deny that an inert, alienated system tends to reify the individual within it. Neither is it being denied that much of the literature on management which Jarvis (2008) is critical of (e.g., Senge 1990) involves the problematic subsuming of the individual to the group and system.[10] However, a framework of inclusive systems theory for education recognises, like Bronfenbrenner, the possibility of reciprocal interaction between an individual and the system and sub-systems he/she is involved with—so that a temporal process of development of a connective system can facilitate human learning and agency, including change to that very system. Nevertheless, the focus for current purposes is on the *background system conditions* the individual operates within and engages with, rather than centrally on the individual's motivation per se. In doing so, it is not being argued that a systems theory explanation is a total or totalising one; focusing on key silent conditions, it is but one lens for furthering understanding of these issues at cross-national, national, regional, local, community and individual levels.

Very often it is the individual, interpersonal, relational dimension that is key to the success of a given practice. Sultana (2008) refers to 'the people dimension of the implementation challenge' (p. 5) in the context of educational reform. A systems framework provides *conditions* to facilitate the agency of 'the people dimension' to implement reform.

Jarvis (2007) identifies a range of other significant objections to systems theory highlighted by Abercrombie et al. (2000, pp. 354–355) from a sociological perspective. These include that systems theory cannot deal adequately with conflict or change and that its assumptions about equilibrium in society are based on a conservative ideology. Both of these criticisms are apt for at least Bronfenbrenner's (1979) early model. It is important also to distinguish an inclusive systems—beyond inert systems—framework from Edmund Burke's (1790) famous conservative under-standing of prerevolutionary French society as an organic one overturned by the French revolution; inclusive systems are not to be equated with traditions and cus-toms extolled by Burke which amounted to a premodern perspective anathema to human rights. A somewhat more appropriate reference point is Durkheim's (1933) tripartite distinction between mechanical, organic and contractual solidarity, though only in so far as an inclusive systems framework implies movement from a mecha-nistic system. An inclusive systems vantage point is more a framework for relations of change and can be also integrated with a contractual dimension through structural indicators for access to education for marginalised groups. It is being sought to include a framework for movement from the inert, mechanistic towards the inclusive 'organic', via a contractual indicators dimension.[11] The inclusive systems

---

[10] The organic systems framework developed in Downes (1993) and Downes and Downes (2007), as a pedagogy of the 'processed', precisely critiques the passive processing of the individual into an inorganic educational system, thereby sharing much of the concerns outlined above by Jarvis regarding conformity in an inorganic, mechanistic system.

[11] In doing so, it is not being claimed that a mechanical system is in the Durkheimian (1893/1984) sense of a societal relation based on the features of repressive law and solidarity by similarities, nor that an organic system is based on 'cooperative' (p. 98) law as restitution and solidarity arising

framework being developed for access to education is not being derived from a legal systems reference point in Durkheimian fashion, nor from a Durkheimian reliance on a body metaphor for the organic, also influential in the psychological thought of early Freud (Downes 2011b).

A variant of the criticism that systems theory cannot adequately deal with conflict or change is that it may be interpreted as offering a bias of the established. This would be through equating current, existing structures with organic, natural, self-evident ones. It would confer a false legitimacy on the actual. Yet this is far from being the case with an inclusive systems approach which interrogates structures as being alienated and inert, and thereby needing paths for change, while being cognisant of what Sultana (2001) describes as a 'sensitivity to the robustness of the ecologies of school structures and cultures' (p. 25). An inclusive systems theory approach must not be an epistemological bias of actuality over possibility; rather with time and change a focus of moving beyond inert systems, its priority is that of possibility[12] for change. It investigates the features of pathways for possibility, for change towards inclusive systems and from alienated, inert systems.

Other criticisms listed by Jarvis (2007) include that systems theory is so abstract that its empirical references are hard to detect, it is tautological and vacuous and that it is difficult to reconcile assumptions about structural procedures with a theory of action. This is despite Bronfenbrenner's (1979) view that systems theory is key to policy relevant approaches (p. 8). The need for concretisation of systems theory is a real one; the framework of structural indicators as conditions for change in relation to access to the education system which are being sought to be developed in this book is one avenue towards concretising a systems level approach in practice.

A final criticism made by Abercrombie et al. (2000), and highlighted by Jarvis (2007), is a vital one—that systems theory's assumptions about value consensus are not well grounded. Systems theory discourse, invoking terms like holism, can blur the underlying value differences and power differentials underpinning such terms; it can obfuscate competing values and silence dissenting voices from the 'whole'. Yet it

---

from the division of labour and assumptions that individuals are different from one another. A more detailed examination of the relation of an inclusive systems theory framework to Durkheim's tripartite distinction is beyond the scope of this argument. Suffice to highlight for current purposes three important limitations to Durkheim's (1893/1984) functionalism. These include the following: its minimising of a role for individual agency in the 'determinate system' of a society 'with a life of its own' (Durkheim 1893/1984, p. 39); his characterization of societies as 'primitive', 'savage' and 'the very lowest societies' (Durkheim 1893/1984, p. 92) as being an example of a Western ethnocentrism common in psychology and sociology (see also Brickman 2003); and lack of feminist critique of the division of labour described by Durkheim (see also Fraser (1987)).

[12] See also Greene (2003) on a potential for change focus in developmental psychology. At an ontological rather than epistemological level, Kearney (1992) observes that Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927) involves a shift from an Aristotelian privileging of actuality towards a privileging of possibility as truth claims. A further feature here that is worth noting is that systems theory does not necessarily privilege continuity over discontinuity; Prigogine's (1984) systems theory account, for example, highlights the features of what he terms 'dissipative structures'. In Kuhnian (1962) language, it allows for paradigm shifts where the frames of reference change.

is important to envisage an inclusive systems theory as being as much a theory of implementation and of change implementation—as of one pertaining to selection of prior values for implementation. Concerns with issues such as sustained interventions, transitions and more subtle causal explanations than the traditional linear assumptions of change that A causes B are all with respect to implementation issues. In the current case, it is being taken for granted that access to education for socio-economically marginalised groups is an important social value that requires system level change and reform in order to further implement this value, in dialogue with relevant stakeholders. In this sense, systems theory may work optimally as a heuristic framework[13] in contexts where a shared, largely consensual value requires operationalisation in practice. This is not to assert that all or even most consensual values are necessarily optimal ones in any given society; nor is it to deny that implementation dimensions may bring their own value orientations. Conceived as mainly being a framework for implementation of system change, it by no means offers a full level of explanation; not only does it exclude a substantial theory of values underpinning selection of priorities for implementation, it also largely omits a framework for apprehension of power relations. Bronfenbrenner (1979) only briefly touches upon power dimensions in systems.[14] This is a serious limitation to such an implementation framework.

Jarvis (2008) proposes his own system level vision for society and lifelong learning, based on a model of a core substructure of economic/technological forces surrounded by different layers of a superstructure at international, national, regional/local and individual/organisational levels (pp. 46–47). This important vision of interrelating forces and subsystems impacting upon lifelong learning may perhaps be potentially amenable to interpretation within an inclusive systems theory framework, though not the static, reifying systems theory he rightly criticises strongly. Kjaer (2004) further cautions that policy implementation in a systemic network, as opposed to a hierarchy, means that power and responsibility tends to become more diffuse—and accountability is thereby difficult to ensure. Thus, a systemic focus on access to education needs to be combined with other frameworks for accountability, such as that of structural indicators.

Summary Systems theory is one way to anticipate key issues to bridge the gap between idea and reality, policy and implementation. As a key purpose of this book is to examine access strategies and policies in order to develop positive *system level* change, there is a need for theoretical interrogation of systems. As a starting point, a key theoretical framework is Bronfenbrenner's (1979) well-recognised ecological theory of systems used in developmental, educational and community psychology, where he distinguishes a range of different system level interactions, ranging from

---

[13] It is important to note that a dynamic systems theory is not what Lyotard (1984) would call a *metanarrative* purporting to be a total explanation or exclusive truth; it is but one lens or narrative to examine the issues of system level change for access to education.

[14] Bronfenbrenner (1979) offers a cursory examination of power in his account of dyadic relations and the shifting 'balance of power' (pp. 57–58), as well as regarding social role expectations as contexts of human development.

micro relations in the immediate setting to meso-, exo- and macrosystem levels. Key strengths in Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995) systems focus include: a general principle of transition difficulties across contexts; promotion of growth rather than simply focusing on deficits; recognition of the need for sustained interventions, developing over time, rather than merely once-off interventions; and a two-way flow in a system of reciprocity to incorporate feedback.

A neglected achievement of Bronfenbrenner (1979) was to secure a focus in psychology on background systemic conditions and to develop at least an initial framework for their interrogation; it is a view of the importance of background conditions, not so much as necessary conditions, but as key supportive conditions. This interpretation of Bronfenbrenner through the lens of key silent conditions for causal impact in a system paves the way for the further step of identifying structural indicators to scrutinise specific key system conditions for access to education. The structural indicators may amplify key previously silent system background conditions. A major limitation to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework of concentric nested systems of interrelation is that it tended to omit a dynamic focus not only on time but on system *change*. This gap in understanding system change means that Bronfenbrenner's accounts offer little understanding of system blockage and displacement. It is arguable that these deficiencies were only partially addressed with Bronfenbrenner's later concept of chronosystem to express temporal dimensions.

A range of important objections to systems theory are considered. Jarvis (2008) highlights the loss of individual responsibility within the totality of the system. No one becomes responsible for systems failure. A more dynamic framework of inclusive systems theory is needed to go beyond Bronfenbrenner; this would not deny that an inert, alienated system tends to render the individual passive within it. A framework of inclusive systems theory for education recognises, like Bronfenbrenner, the potential of reciprocal interaction between an individual and the system and subsystems within which he/she is involved. Other criticisms listed by Jarvis (2007) include that systems theory is so abstract that its empirical references are hard to detect, that it is difficult to reconcile assumptions about structural procedures with a theory of action. The need for concretisation of systems theory is a real one; the framework of structural indicators as conditions for change in relation to access to the education system which are being sought to be developed in this book is one avenue towards concretising a systems level approach in practice and for policy.

References

Abercrombie, N., Hill, S., & Turner, B. (2000). *Dictionary of sociology* (4th ed.). Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Althusser, L. (1971). Ideology and ideological 0073tate apparatuses. In L. Althusser (Ed.), *Lenin and philosophy and other essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Bamber, J., Ducklin, A., & Tett, L. (2000). Working with contradictions in the struggle for access. In J. Thompson (Ed.), *Stretching the academy*. Leicester: NIACE.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). Forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Brickman, C. (2003). *Aboriginal populations in the mind: Race and primitivity in psychoanalysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1989). Ecological systems theory. In R. Vasta (Ed.), *Annals of child development* (Vol. 6, pp. 187–249). Greenwich: JAI Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: A future perspective. In P. Moen, G. Elder, K. Luscher, & U. Bronfenbrenner (Eds.), *Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development* (pp. 619–647). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (1998). The ecology of developmental processes. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology* (Theoretical models of human development, Vol. 1, pp. 993–1028). New York: Wiley.

Burke, E. (1790). *Reflections on the revolution in France*.

Capra, F. (1982). *The turning point: Science, society, and the rising culture*. London: Flamingo.

Chabera, B. (2011). Some comments on the LLL2010 project and on LLL implementation in the EU. Presentation 7 February 2011, LLL2010 *Conference do three sides always make a triangle? Policy, institutions and learners in lifelong formal learning.* University of Leuven, Brussels.

Connolly, B. (2003). Community education: Listening to the voices. In *The adult learner*. Dublin: Aontas.

Cook, J. R., & Kilmer, R. P. (2012). Systems of care: New partnerships for community psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 49*, 393–403.

Culler, J. (1976). *Saussure*. London: Fontana Paperbacks.

de Saussure, F. (1954). Notes inedites de F. de Saussure. *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure, 12*, 49–71.

Derrida, J. (1972/1982). *Margins of philosophy* (A. Bass, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, J. (1997). *Of grammatology* (G. C. Spivak, Trans., Corrected Edition). Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Dooley, T., & Corcoran, D. (2007). Mathematics: A subject of rights and wrongs? In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 216–228). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Downes, T. (1993). *Pedagogy of the processed*. MA thesis, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth.

Downes, P. (2003). The relevance of early Heidegger's radical conception of transcendence to choice, freedom and technology. In M. J. Breen & E. Conway (Eds.), *Technology & transcendence* (pp. 160–173). Dublin: Columba Press.

Downes, P. (2006). *QDOSS: An agenda for development*. Dublin: QDOSS (Quality Development of Out of School Services).

Downes, P. (2007). Why SMART outcomes ain't always so smart…. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 57–69). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Downes, P. (2009). Prevention of bullying at a systemic level in schools: Movement from cognitive and spatial narratives of diametric opposition to concentric relation. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of school bullying: An international perspective* (pp. 517–533). New York: Routledge.

Downes, P. (2010a). Schema structure-content relativity: Part I. Deconstructing the absolute space assumptions underlying the schema concept founding cognitive science. *Cybernetics and Human Knowing, 17*(3), 7–43.

Downes, P. (2010b). Schema structure-content relativity: Part II. From image schemata to background spatial schemata of diametric and concentric relation. *Cybernetics and Human Knowing, 17*(3), 7–43.

Downes, P. (2011a). *Multi/Interdisciplinary teams for early school leaving prevention: Developing a European strategy informed by international evidence and research.* Research paper for European Commission, NESET (Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training).

Downes, P. (2011b). Concentric and diametric structures in yin/yang and the mandala symbol: A new wave of Eastern frames for psychology. *Psychology and Developing Societies, 23*(1), 121–153.

Downes, P. (2012). *The primordial dance: Diametric and concentric spaces in the unconscious world*. Oxford/Bern: Peter Lang.

Downes, T., & Downes, P. (2007). Pedagogy of the processed. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 24–38). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Downes, P., Maunsell, C., & Ivers, J. (2006). *A holistic approach to early school leaving and school retention in Blanchardstown current issues and future steps for services and schools*. Dublin: Blanchardstown Area Partnership.

Durkheim, E. (1893/1984). *The division of labor in society*. New York: Free Press.

Durkheim, E. (1933). *The division of labor in society* (G. Simpson, Trans.). New York: The Free Press.

Durlak, J. A., Taylor, R. D., Kawashima, K., Pachan, M. K., DuPre, E. P., Celio, C. O., Berger, S., Dymnicki, A. B., & Weissberg, R. P. (2007). Effects of positive youth development programs on school, family, and community systems. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 39*, 269–286.

Edwards, A., & Downes, P. (2013a). *Alliances for inclusion: Developing cross-sector synergies and inter-professional collaboration in and around education*. Commissioned Research Report, Oxford University, Department of Education and EU Commission NESET (Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training). Foreword to report by Jan Truszczynski, Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture.

Edwards, A., & Downes, P. (2013b). *Cross-sector policy synergies and inter-professional collaboration in and around schools: Examples and evidence*. Invited seminar presentation, European Commission, Directorate-General Education and Culture, Brussels, May 28, 2013.

Foster-Fishman, P., & Behrens, T. (2007). System change reborn: Rethinking our theories, methods and efforts in human services reform and community-based change. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 39*(3–4), 191–196.

Foucault, M. (1972). In J. Khalfa (Ed.), *History of madness*. London/New York: Routledge. 2006.

Fraser, N. (1987). What's critical about critical theory? The case of Habermas and gender. In S. Benhabib & D. Cornell (Eds.), *Feminism as critique* (pp. 31–55). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Penguin.

Fromm, E. (1957). *The art of loving*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Fromm, E. (1980). *To have or to be?* London: Cape.

Gergen, K. J. (1973). Social psychology as history. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 26*(2), 309–320.

Gergen, K. J. (1994). The limits of pure critique. In H. W. Simons & M. Billig (Eds.), *After postmodernism: Reconstructing ideology critique*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Greene, S. (2003). *Psychological development of girls and women: Rethinking change in time*. New York: Routledge.

Habermas, J. (1987). *The philosophical discourse of modernity: Twelve lectures* (F. Lawrence, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hardy, C. (2001). Self-organization, self-reference and inter-influences in multilevel webs: Beyond causality and determinism. *Cybernetics and Human Knowing, 8*, 35–59.

Hart, H. L. A. (1961). *The concept of law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Heidegger, M. (1927). *Being and time* (J. MacQuarrie & E. Robinson, Trans. 1962). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Heller, Á. (1978). *Renaissance man*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Hirsch, G. B., Levine, R., & Miller, R. L. (2007). Using system dynamics modelling to understand the impact of social change initiatives. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 39*, 239–253.

Holford, J., Riddell, S., Weedon, E., Litjens, J., & Hannan, G. (2008). *Patterns of lifelong learning: Policy and practice in an expanding Europe*. Vienna: LIT Verlag.

Illich, I. (1972). *De-schooling society*. New York: Doubleday and Sons.

Jakobsen, R. (1973). *The science of language*. New York: Harper.

Jarvis, P. (2007). *Globalisation, lifelong learning and the learning society: Sociological perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Jarvis, P. (2008). *Democracy, lifelong learning and the learning society: Active citizenship in a late modern age*. London: Routledge.

Kearney, R. (1992). Heidegger, the possible and God. In C. McCann (Ed.), *Martin Heidegger: Critical assessments* (pp. 299–324). London: Routledge.

Kelsen, H. (1945). *General theory of law and state* (A. Wedberg, Trans.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Kennedy, E. (2007). Literacy in designated disadvantaged schools. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 202–215). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Kjaer, A. M. (2004). *Governance*. London: Polity Press.

Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kvale, S. (Ed.). (1992). *Psychology and postmodernism*. London: Sage Publications.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1962). *The savage mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1963). *Structural anthropology* (Vol. 1) (C. Jacobsen & B. Grundfest Schoepf, Trans.). Allen Lane: The Penguin Press.

Lorenz, E. N. (1963). Deterministic non-periodic flow. *Journal of the Atmospheric Sciences, 20*, 130–141.

Luhmann, N. (1984). *Soziale Systeme: Grundriß einer allgemeinen Theorie*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp (English translation 1995) *Social systems*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Lyotard, J. F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

McLaughlin, M. (2006). Implementation research in education: Lessons learned, lingering questions and new opportunities. In M. I. Honig (Ed.), *New directions in education in policy implementation: Confronting complexity* (pp. 209–228). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Mead, M. (1934). *Kinship in the Admiralty Islands* (Anthropological papers of the American Museum of Natural History 34, Pt. 2, pp. 183–358). New York: American Museum of Natural History.

Mill, J. S. (1872). A system of logic. In R. F. McRae (Ed.), *Collected works* (Vol. VII, Books I, II, III 1973).Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Miller, J. G. (1978). *Living systems*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Moen, P., Elder, G. H., Jr., Luscher, K., & Bronfrenbrenner, U. (1995). *Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Montesquieu. (1749). *De L'Esprit des Lois*. Livre I, chapitre 3. J. P. Mayer & A. P. Kerr (Eds.), Gallimard 1970.

Morgan, M. (2001). *Drug use prevention: Overview of research*. Dublin: National Advisory Committee on Drugs.

Neisser, U. (1976). *Cognition and reality*. New York: W. H. Freeman & Co.

Newell, A. (1990). *Unified theories of cognition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Newell, A., & Simon, H. A. (1972). *Human problem solving*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Parsons, T. (1951). *The social system*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Piaget, J. (1971). *Biology and knowledge*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Popper, K. (1957). *The poverty of historicism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Prigogine, I. (1984). *Order out of chaos: Man's new dialogue with nature*. New York: Bantam.

Rachlin, H. (1984). Mental yes. Private no. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 7*, 566–567.

Rogers, C. (1961). *On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Rubenson, K. (2008, September 18). *Lifelong learning for all: Understanding the discrepancies between rhetoric and reality*. Lifelong Learning in Europe: LLL 2010 Dialogue Day, EU 6th Framework Programme, LLL2010, 7th Workshop, Prague, Czech Republic.

Rutter, M. (1985). Resilience in the face of adversity: Protective factors and resistance to psychiatric disorder. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 147*, 598–611.

Schwarz, E. (2007). Towards a holistic cybernetics. *Cybernetics and Human Knowing, 4*(1), 17–49.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline. The art and practice of the learning organization*. London: Random House.

Simon, H. A. (1969). *The sciences of the artificial* (3rd ed., 1996). Cambridge: MIT Press.

Simons, H. W., & Billig, M. (Eds.). (1994). *After postmodernism: Reconstructing ideology critique*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. J., & Gomez, L. M. (2006). Policy implementation and cognition: The role of human, social and distributed cognition in framing policy. In M. I. Honig (Ed.), *New directions in education in policy implementation: Confronting complexity* (pp. 47–64). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Stanton, G. (2008). *Learning matters. Making the 14-19 reforms work for learners: By emphasising learning programmes as well as qualifications; by learning from previous initiatives*. Reading: Perspective, CfBT Education Trust.

Suarez, L. M., Belcher, H. M. E., Briggs, E. C., & Titus, J. C. (2012). Supporting the need for an integrated system of care for youth with co-occurring traumatic stress and substance abuse problems. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 49*(3–4), 430–440.

Sultana, R. G. (Ed.). (2001). *Challenge and change in the Euro-Mediterranean region: Case studies in educational innovation*. New York: Peter Lang.

Sultana, R. G. (2008). *The challenge of policy implementation: A comparative analysis of VET school reforms in Albania, Kosovo and Turkey*. Turin: European Training Foundation.

Teubner, G. (1989). How the law thinks: Toward a constructivist epistemology of law. *Law & Society Review, 23*, 727–757.

Toffler, A. (1970). *Future shock*. London: Bodley Head.

Tseng, V., & Seidman, E. (2007). A systems framework for understanding social settings. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 39*, 217–228.

Tudge, J. R. H., Mokrova, I., Hatfield, B. E., & Karnik, R. B. (2009). Uses and misuses of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 1*(4), 198–210.

Ulicna, D., Ure, O. B., & Werquin, P. (2011). *Critical factors and good practice in implementation of lifelong learning strategies*. Order 99 Framework Contract No EAC 19/06 DG Education and Culture.

Usher, R., & Edwards, R. (1996). Liberal adult education and the postmodern moment. In J. Wallis (Ed.), *Liberal adult education: The end of an era?* Nottingham: Continuing Education Press.

Van Alphen, S. (2009). The educational quality of early school leavers and the cross-national variation of their income disadvantage. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 15*, 543–560.

von Bertalanffy, L. (1968). *General systems theory: Foundations, development, applications*. New York: George Braziller.

von Foerster, H. (1984). *Observing systems*. Salinas: Intersystems Publications.

Walters, P. B., & O' Connell, P. J. (1988). The family economy, work, and education participation in the US, 1890–1940. *American Journal of Sociology, 93*, 1116–1152.

Wiener, N. (1948). *Cybernetics or control and communication in the animal and human machine*. Hercann & Cie (Editeurs, Paris) Cambridge, MA/New York: The Technology Press/Wiley.

Williams, R. (1992). The human context of agency. *American Psychologist, 47*, 752–760.

Williams, A., Dobson, P., & Walters, M. (1993). *Changing culture: New organisational approaches*. London: Institute of Personnel Management.

Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *Philosophical investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Chapter 4
Structural Indicators for System Level Change for Access to Education for Marginalised Groups

4.1 An Agenda of Structural Indicators for System Level Change for Access to Education for Marginalised Groups at International, European Commission, National and Institutional Levels

In developing an argument for system-wide structural indicators for access to higher education and lifelong learning, it is important to acknowledge a double neglect at European level. Firstly, there has been a neglect of structural indicators overwhelmingly in favour of outcome indicators at European Commission level in education and social inclusion. Even the recent, important holistic Commission (2013) document on breaking the cycle of disadvantage lists a range of what basically amount to outcome indicators. Secondly, there has been a concomitant limitation of emphasis on the education sphere at Commission level, at least until recently. Niçaise (2010a) offers a pertinent critique of European Commission review processes of progress in relation to education with implications for themes of social exclusion:

> It must be admitted that the Open Method of Coordination [OMC] in Education and Training has been rather soft until now—softer indeed than the OMC in the fields of employment, social inclusion, pensions and health care. Targets were set but not implemented, and there was no system of feedback based on (specific) national strategy reports. The lifelong learning components of the national Lisbon reform programmes were insufficient and not focused on equity—let alone, social inclusion. The peer reviewing was mainly confined to good practice and not all stakeholders were involved. The cross-sectoral co-ordination between education and social affairs was weak, including at the level of the Commission and…even within the concept of the Lisbon strategy. (p. 15)

In a similar vein, Holford et al. (2008) conclude that EU Member States tend to consciously or unconsciously pick and choose between different EU policy priorities in relation to lifelong learning. Even in areas of education with EU2020 headline targets, such as the outcome indicator of 10 % early school leavers across Member States by 2020, there is an insubstantial review process for scrutiny of progress, despite highly progressive Commission documents (2011) and Council

Recommendations (2011). A more rigorous framework for review and transparency is required at EU level, whether for access to higher education and lifelong learning or other areas related to social exclusion and education. This necessitates further commitment to such review processes by EU Member States.

Adopting a UN right to health lens,[1] a framework of structural, process and outcome indicators has been argued to be relevant to an educational context for mental health dimensions to early school leaving in Estonia (Downes 2007), as well as human trafficking in the Baltic States (Downes et al. 2008). Though outside a direct UN right to health framework, structural indicators have been emphasised for identifying key dimensions of multidisciplinary teams (Edwards and Downes 2013a, b) and family support (Downes and Hagglund 2013), indirectly and directly for early school leaving prevention (Downes 2013a, c). Particular focus for current purposes is on structural indicators for system level scrutiny of access to higher education and lifelong learning over time by analogy with the UN right to health framework but not contingent upon it.

The focus with structural indicators is on relatively enduring features (structures/ mechanisms/guiding principles) of a system, features that are, however, potentially malleable. For a State to assert the presence of any given structural indicator, generally framed as a yes/no question, evidence may need to be furnished to validate this assertion. The detail of such evidence may depend on the kind of specific structural indicator and may require different levels of detail for different structural indicators. The level of detail may also depend on the form of the reporting process. Structural indicators can operate at different system levels such as individual institution, local, regional, national, EU and UN levels. A key feature of the questioning for structural indicators is that it leads to at least potentially verifiable factual statements (as yes/ no responses). Any suspicion that a state or education institution is window dressing through giving a positive response to a key structural indicator when in fact it is not in a position to do so can be followed up on, if necessary, with further questions to require proof of claims being made.

This incorporation of a focus on structural indicators goes beyond a traditional qualitative/quantitative distinction in assessing system level progress in an area. Furthermore, analysis through the lens of structural indicators goes beyond a discourse reliant on sharing models of good practice to seek to identify key structural conditions for good practice rather than seeking to blithely transfer a good practice from one complex context to another.

Outcome indicators measure the broader results achieved through the provision of goods and services. Outcome indicators will often be used in conjunction with benchmarks or targets to measure change over time (Downes et al. 2008, p. 287).

---

[1] The right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is given legal foundation by a range of international legal instruments, including article 25 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); and article 12 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well as the right to non-discrimination as reflected in article 5 (e) (iv) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

There are a number of limitations to outcome indicators. Outcome-based indicators provide little or no guidance for improvement (Stecher 2005). They do not explain why phenomena occur, or how they could be changed, or obstacles to their change. Moreover, an individual's learner-centred focus may be in conflict with a generic outcomes focus (Downes 2007, p. 58). The causal factors underpinning a commitment to outcomes require a scrutiny beyond a simplistic one to one relation between a given intervention and a particular outcome. There is a tendency highlighted in both psychology (Rutter 1985) and education (Downes 2007) to overlook background contingent conditions for the cause to work. The impact and potential role of the other background variables supporting a significant main effect of the outcomes from an intervention needs to be given full recognition, as does the need to move beyond simple causality to complex causality in understanding outcome indicators (Downes 2007, p. 59).

In the words of the UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (2006), '*Process indicators* measure programmes, activities and interventions. They measure, as it were, State effort', whereas 'outcome indicators will often be used in conjunction with benchmarks or targets to measure change over time'. It must also be noted that change to structural indicators over time can also help measure State effort and help explain why system change is not occurring. This renewed focus on temporal and change dimensions with regard to indicators parallels the need already highlighted for a temporal dimension to a system theory view of access to education; to remedy the previous neglect of change dimensions at a system level, a corresponding remedy is required to go beyond static outcome indicators as the sole or predominant kind of benchmark.

Process indicators address two limitations of outcome indicators. That is, process indicators provide a better picture of the quality of services and better information for programme improvement (Stecher 2005). The value of process indicators for research is that they are a measure of the services the education system is actually providing and information about system performance is critical for effective educational evaluation and reform. Those charged with setting education policy as well as those responsible for overseeing educational programmes cannot be effective without ongoing, valid information about the health of the system they govern (Stecher 2005). Process indicators focus on degree and quality, structural indicators are more to assess if something is or is not existing at systemic level. However, process indicators tend to require expensive detailed information.

The European Commission Communication (2007) observes that 'good governance' in the area of lifelong learning includes strong evidence-based monitoring and evaluation systems within national frameworks. However, the Commission staff working document (2006) highlights the slow progress made with regard to important outcome indicators for education and social exclusion:

> However, progress against the benchmarks adopted under the Education and Training 2010 Programme has been slow, especially in those areas related most closely to social inclusion. Unless significant improvements can be made in reducing the numbers of early school leavers, raising upper secondary completion rates and the acquisition of key competences,

Table 4.1 Access to educational institutions—examples of potential indicators

Illustrative examples of structural indicators	Presence of schemes for reserved places for marginalised and/or ethnic minority groups
	Availability of counselling/emotional support services
	Preparatory courses for entry
	Career guidance services
	Writing workshops in the institution
	Outreach strategies for marginalised groups
Illustrative examples of process indicators	Amount of institutional staff from target groups (e.g., gender, social class, ethnicity)
	Degree of community involvement in educational institutions
	Social climate of institutions: peer mentoring, induction days
	Teacher-student relations
	Processes for voices of learners to be heard
Illustrative examples of outcome indicators	Number of target group (enrolled, completing course)
	Percentage of early school leavers per annum

an increasing number of citizens will face the risk of social exclusion, marginalisation and disengagement at great cost to themselves, to the economy and to society. (p. 5)

On the specific theme of access to education, a recent Commission staff working document (2009) makes the following criticism of national data available on participation of adults and adult priority groups' participation:

Monitoring and evaluation measures require accurate data on participation and progress achieved, which is currently very scarce and often not comparable, mainly due to the lack of clear definitions and the fragmented character of the sector. (p. 84)

This Commission document goes on to note that only Estonia and Latvia provide predefined indicators in relation to participation in adult education and training out of all the national reports across Europe which describe their national strategies on lifelong learning (p. 104). This issue is again taken up in the Council Resolution (2011) on a *renewed European agenda for adult learning*, referring to 'the difficulty of adequately monitoring the adult-learning sector, due to a lack of sufficient statistical data and evaluation of policy measures'. Yet it does not open up the possibility of drawing upon the potential of structural indicators for system level scrutiny (Table 4.1).

The question arises as to the efficiency of such indicators for access. Waddington (2011) highlights that an investigative process at national level into structural, process and outcome indicators is especially feasible for structural indicators, as this requires little financial investment and no statistical data as such. This is because structural indicators are basically yes/no answers as to structural features of a system. As data collection for process and outcome indicators does require a quantitative dimension, these kinds of indicators would need to be employed somewhat more sparingly.

Structural indicators at institutional levels could occur as part of self-evaluation processes to inform national level progress. The obstacles here are less in terms of financial resources and more in terms of changing institutional inertia and

requiring access and participation for traditionally underrepresented groups to be an institutional priority. It may therefore require some change to institutional practices to ensure that this data is collected consistently. Höllinger (2010) summarises a list of frequently made recommendations regarding selection and use of indicators. These include:

> indicators should not only be available for an entire HE institution it should also be possible to break them into organisational units about which or by which decisions are made; it should be possible to make comparisons between various different disciplines; it must be clear which quality of a HE institution is being measured by an indicator or group of indicators, and this measurement must be made in a reliable way; it is important to distinguish between parameters that can be planned and controlled and those that the HE institution cannot influence. (p. 14)

There are a range of structural indicators pertaining to access to education that a higher education institution could clearly influence.

The benefits of European level structural indicators, as benchmarks of progress of Nation States in relation of access of marginalised groups to lifelong learning, are as follows:

- The indicators can offer transparent criteria for establishing a State's and university institution's progress in this area over time.
- They offer a framework for ongoing review and dialogue both within a State and across States.
- They allow for what is called in another educational context, ipsative assessment (Kelly 1999); the comparison point for progress is the State's and a given university's previous performance in relation to these indicators.
- Clear targets for progress can be established based on the indicators.
- The indicators can distinguish State and university effort in improving access from actual outcomes; they can offer an incentive for governments to invest in the area of access to higher education and lifelong learning.
- The indicators, as a cluster, provide a systemic level focus for change rather than reducing change to one simplistic magic bullet cause.
- They can include dimensions of progress for comparison within and between education institutions concerned with increasing access for marginalised groups.
- They can bring greater unity to an area recognised as fragmented at national levels.
- They are much less expensive to observe than outcome and process indicators, and thus, there can be more of them employed to scrutinise change in a system.
- The indicators provide recognition of diverse starting points of some countries relative to others (see Rajamani 2006 on this diversity in international legal contexts and Lewin 2007 on diverse starting points of countries in relation to access to education issues).

A range of structural indicators will be extracted for higher education, non-formal education and prison education. These are based on themes and issues emerging from the results of the 12 national reports, designed by the author in dialogue with the EU Sixth Framework Project research consortium, regarding

access to education for marginalised groups. The structural indicators emerging from this analysis are analysed at macro-exo- and meso-microsystemic levels, though at times there is some overlap between the levels at which an indicator may operate. It bears reiteration that it is not being claimed that these are the sole key structural indicators for access to education in Europe, and the proposed clusters of structural indicators for access to education in Europe need to be interpreted together with poverty prevention indicators. A systemic change vision requires that such structural indicators are engaged with together in clusters and not simply committed to individually in isolation.

It is important to note that at this stage of development of these indicators, it is not being proposed that they necessarily exist within a rights-based framework. However, they are to be very much compatible with a rights-based framework such as that outlined for structural, process and outcome indicators for the UN right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

4.2   Key Interpretative Principles Underpinning a Systemic Review of Structural Indicators for Access to Education Derived by Analogy from International Rights Discourse

The principles explored here for the international right to health have direct relevance by analogy to the development of a framework of structural indicators regarding access to lifelong learning for marginalised groups. For example, the UN Special Rapporteur (2006) emphasises the importance of focus on 'disadvantaged' individuals and communities in relation to indicators of the right to health:

> 25. in general terms a human rights-based approach requires that special attention be given to disadvantaged individuals and communities; it requires the active and informed participation of individuals and communities in policy decisions that affect them; and it requires effective, transparent and accessible monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The combined effect of these - and other features of a human rights-based approach - is to empower disadvantaged individuals and communities.

A key theme highlighted by the UN Special Rapporteur, for example, in his report on Romania (2005a, b), is the importance of community participation in health policy making:

> 19. Participation of the population in health-related decision-making at the community, national and international levels, is vital to the fulfillment of the right to health. It is also linked closely with the human right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, and other human rights. A human rights approach to health requires active and informed community participation, including in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of health strategies, policies and programmes. Participatory policy-making better reflects the needs of local communities and vulnerable groups, including…minorities, and helps create conditions conducive for good health.

This amounts to a clear international recognition of the importance of the principle of *community development* dimensions to policy implementation and design, as well as to practice.

The then UN Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights (2006) on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Paul Hunt, notes that the right to health is subject to *progressive realisation* and this requires development of indicators and benchmarks:

> 22. According to international human rights law, economic, social and cultural rights are subject to progressive realisation.[2] Those in the human rights community focusing on economic, social and cultural rights have given particular attention to indicators because they provide a way of monitoring progressive realisation. Indeed, it is in this context that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993) emphasises the importance of indicators: To strengthen the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, additional approaches should be examined, such as a system of indicators to measure progress in the realisation of the rights set forth in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

This amounts to a reiteration of the position of the Special Rapporteur in his 2005 (February 11) report:

> 33. The international right to physical and mental health is subject to progressive realisation and resource constraints. This has a number of important implications. Put simply, all States are expected to be doing better in five years time than what they are doing today (progressive realisation). And what is legally required of a developed State is of a higher standard than what is legally required of a least-developed country (resource constraints).
>
> 37. a State is obliged to use the maximum of its available resources towards the realisation of the right to health. And progressive realisation demands *indicators and benchmarks* to monitor progress in relation to mental disabilities and the right to health.

In the 2006 report, the Special Rapporteur goes on to state:

> 29. the Special Rapporteur wishes to emphasise that there is no alternative but to use indicators to measure and monitor the progressive realisation of the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

He observes (2006) that indicators of the right to health help the State assess progress over time in relation to their right to health obligations as indicators and benchmarks:

> 35. can help the State to monitor its progress over time, enabling the authorities to recognise when policy adjustments are required. *Second*, they can help to hold the State to account in relation to the discharge of its responsibilities arising from the right to health, although deteriorating indicators do not necessarily mean that the State is in breach of its international right to health obligations

It is this feature of progressive realisation—involving indicators and benchmarks—which offers an important potential step forward in relation to developing States' commitments to access to higher education and lifelong learning. The reference point is progress compared with previous performance in an area, whether that of health or access to education.

---

[2] ICESCR, article 2, para 1 (United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 993, p. 3).

Caddell ([2008](#)) extracts another important principle of *common yet differentiated responsibility* which he argues needs to be transferred from its recognition in environmental law to the international right to health context of human trafficking:

> there is little attempt within the [Trafficking] Protocol to recognise the different pressures under which the social services of different countries currently operate, with no concept of the 'common but differentiated responsibility' as seen in many multilateral environmental agreements applied in the Trafficking Protocol to recognise that some states are in a stronger position in terms of resources to underwrite the practical demands of compliance with their international commitments. (p. 125)

Caddell's ([2008](#)) criticism of the lack of a principle of common but differentiated responsibility depending on resources, applied to the context of human trafficking in the Baltic States, can also be applied to the domain of access to education for marginalised groups. This principle would allow for different rates of progress in relation to investment in progress across benchmarks and indicators, based on resources of the country. Thus, a framework of comparative assessment across States of success and failure in meeting indicators and benchmarks can be combined with ipsative assessment of States. In other words, assessment can take place of a State's progress with regard to its provision in this area, compared with its own previous level of performance in relation to access to higher education and lifelong learning. Such a framework allows for different dimensions of scrutiny and transparency regarding States' inputs and outputs with regard to improving access to education for marginalised groups.

Rajamani's ([2006](#)) authoritative account of the status of the principle of common yet differentiated responsibility in international law explores its contextual application in the areas of international human rights law, international economic law, international institutional law as well as international environmental law. She observes the need at times to keep such a principle 'carefully hemmed in' (p. 22) to specific contexts in the area of human rights—as, she notes, does the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ISESCR) 1966 which goes on to recognise implicit norms of differential treatment, such as in Article 2(1), which requires each state to take steps, 'individually and through international assistance and cooperation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources' with a view to 'progressive realisation' of the rights recognised in the Covenant.

The universality claims of human rights require that differential treatment between states is only 'grudgingly permitted' (Rajamani [2006](#), p. 47). 'The carefully circumscribed nature of differential treatment' (Rajamani [2006](#), p. 23) can include the need for states to act expeditiously and effectively to implement key indicators—and recognise that a common and yet differentiated responsibility is appropriate only in so far as it 'furthers equality rather than entrenches inequality' (Rajamani [2006](#), p. 6), and moreover, this principle ceases to exist when the substantive differences in contexts cease to exist (Rajamani [2006](#), p. 254).

Three obvious paths for a European review framework with regard to structural indicators for access to higher education and lifelong learning for marginalised groups are national assessments (e.g., by the Ministry for Education),

external assessments of progress and institutional self-assessments. These are well recognised across a number of country reports in 2009 in relation to quality assurance and are referred to in a Commission staff working document (2009 p. 117). Another important level here is the establishment of a review process at the level of the European Commission. This review process framework of structural indicators for access to higher education and lifelong learning would presumably work closely in tandem with evaluation of impact through the EU structural funds. As Niçaise (2010b) observes:

> …co-financing by the structural funds may serve as a positive incentive, if adequately linked to system reforms. A major strength of the structural funds is the systematic use of monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of co-financed measures. (p. 19)

Key interpretative principles for the international right to health, identified by Tobin (2012), that can be borrowed by analogy for such a review process for access to education include local context sensitivity and a margin of appreciation, legitimate aim and proportionate measures, beyond minimum core indicators, action guiding principles, beyond states to a community of interpretation, as well as an authoritative body for implementation. Local context sensitivity invokes a degree of flexibility that is 'sensitive to, informed by, and reflect[s] the needs and interests of local populations' (Tobin 2012, p. 111). It involves local community or stakeholder participation. This is related to 'a margin of appreciation' for States at national level 'to allow for a context sensitive implementation of the specific measures' (Tobin 2012, p. 12). An 'action guiding' (Beitz 2009, p. 46) approach would give emphasis to clarity, coherence and practicality of implementation in the construction of potential structural indicators. This would be combined with a 'collaborative process necessary to identify the practical measures required' for implementation (Tobin 2012, p. 98). Such consultation and negotiation involves a 'dialogue with the interpretative community' (p. 98). This interpretative community goes beyond simply nation states to local community stakeholders and target groups of potential learners, as well as third-level institutions. A focus on differential treatment between individuals requires justification through pursuit of a legitimate aim to adopt measures that are necessary, i.e., reasonable and proportionate, for the purposes of achieving the aim (Tobin 2012, p. 168).

Tobin's (2012) discussion of a 'minimum core obligation' approach, where a long list of minimum core indicators would be drawn up, leans towards a view that 'the long list of measures required of states is so onerous that few, if any, states are likely to be persuaded to adopt such an approach' (p. 117). This invites consideration of a different layered approach to structural indicators for access to education. While Tobin (2012) bemoans the 'lack of an authoritative body with the coercive powers necessary to insist upon the adoption of a particular interpretation of the right to health' (p. 118), the focus for current purposes would be on an authoritative body to instigate a review process in order to design criteria and monitor States' progress with regard to access to education for marginalised groups, whether at EU Commission level or more internationally (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Summary of key interpretative principles underpinning a system review of indicators for access to education

Community development	Common though differentiated responsibility
Local context sensitivity	Progressive realisation
A margin of appreciation	Beyond minimum core indicators
A community of interpretation	Action guiding principles
Legitimate aim and proportionate measures	An authoritative body for implementation

4.3   Structural Indicators: A Key Strategic Gap in the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) International Education Indicators

An important reference point for educational indicators in an international context is the OECD *Education at a Glance* Annual Report where 'issues of equity in educational outcomes and educational opportunities' are viewed as one of 'three major categories' (OECD 2012b, p. 17). With the exception of Lithuania and Bulgaria, all the other participating countries in the research informing this book are included in the OECD Education at a Glance framework of indicators.

Angel Gurria, the OECD Secretary-General, summarises the systemic vision of the OECD's indicators in the editorial to the 2012 annual report, 'The OECD Indicators of Education Systems (INES) programme seeks to gauge the performance of national education systems as a whole, rather than to compare individual institutional or other sub-national entities. However, there is increasing recognition that many important features of the development, functioning and impact of education systems can only be assessed through an understanding of learning outcomes and their relationships to inputs and processes at the level of individuals and institutions. To account for this, the indicator framework distinguishes between a macro level, two meso-levels and a micro-level of education systems. These relate to:

- The education system as a whole
- The educational institutions and providers of educational services
- The instructional setting and the learning environment within the institutions
- The individual participants in education and learning' (p. 18).

The INES programme, launched in 1988 (Gurria 2011), has evolved to include additional dimensions over time. Thus, for example, the 2012 annual report included a first-ever indicator on early childhood education and care and for the second time, an indicator to measure the successful completion of upper secondary programmes and, thus, the pathways between programmes. There has been scope for additional indicators in the recent past, and Gurria (2011) recognises a dynamic improvement in the quality of the OECD indicators over time, 'As the quality of international indicators improves, so does their potential for influencing the development of education systems. At one level, indicators are no more than a metric for gauging

progress towards goals. Yet increasingly, they are performing a more influential role. Indicators can prompt change by raising national concern over weak educational outcomes compared to international benchmarks' (p. 17). They offer a role as leverage of educational system change.

Caution with extension of OECD indicators for education is very much recognised in the foreword to the OECD annual reports (2011, 2012b, 2013). For example, these words in the foreword to the 2013 report acknowledge both national policy importance and administrative limits to extending indicators, 'First, the indicators need to respond to educational issues that are high on national policy agendas, and where the international comparative perspective can offer important added value to what can be accomplished through national analysis and evaluation…there is a general desire to keep the indicator set as small as possible, but it needs to be large enough to be useful to policy makers across countries that face different educational challenges' (p. 3). This is especially the case for the current OECD indicators given that they are '*quantitative*, internationally comparable indicators' (OECD 2013, p. 3, my italics). Collecting extensive quantitative data is a costly and time-consuming exercise requiring 'a major effort' (OECD 2013, p. 3) and extensive resources.

It has already been highlighted that collection of structural indicators is not a matter of enormous resources to provide quantitative data; structural indicators, at least as envisaged through the lens of the UN right to health, are potentially verifiable factual yes/no answers about structural enduring, yet potentially malleable, features of a system. Structural indicators are not quantitative statistical data, yet can be vital for policy interventions, once framed with sufficiently tight, specific wording as yes/no questions. Generally, they involve a focus on *what* is being done at system level and on *what* structures exist in a given system to address strategic goals while leaving the question of *how* it is being done as an ambit of discretion, a margin of appreciation for States and institutions; structural indicators do not constitute a disproportionate micromanagement to precisely dictate methods of *how* strategic goals are implemented at the system level.

Gurria (2012) illustrates that the scope of the OECD's indicators on access to education is not simply for descriptive purposes but as policy levers, 'Chapter C, Access to education, participation and progression, provides indicators that are a mixture of outcome indicators, policy levers and context indicators. Internationalisation of education and progression rates are, for instance, outcomes measures to the extent that they indicate the results of policies and practices at the classroom, school and system levels. But they can also provide contexts for establishing policy by identifying areas where policy intervention is necessary to, for instance, address issues of inequity' (p. 19). Structural indicators are another path into this systemic dimension to social policy intervention. Focusing on background enabling or hindering conditions for system functioning, structural indicators are more systemic and solution focused than predominantly causal and problem focused. This additional lens is comparable to the shift in public health discourse from simply a prevention-focused approach to a health promotion one. Here, structural indicators operate not only at the key levels of universal, selected and indicated prevention of barriers to accessing education but also

at the *promotion* of access level. They are holistic, systemic and solution focused in their interrogation of structural enabling conditions blocking or promoting system change in education. Structural indicators offer a distinctive focus on the availability of services and supports at system level for socio-economically excluded groups to access education.

The current OECD Education at a Glance focus is on relevant *outcome* indicators regarding access to education, such as the ones in the 2012 report examining population that has attained tertiary education (2010) and graduation rates at tertiary level (2010). Its scope also encompasses helpful *process* indicators, such as 'Percentage of 15-year-old boys and girls planning a career in engineering or computing', 'Percentage of 15-year-old boys and girls planning a career in health services' (p. 75). While it does refer to 'structural factors' in the analysis of how many students are expected to finish tertiary education, 'such as the length of tertiary education programmes or the obligation to do military service' (OECD 2012b, p. 63), these are not developed into structural indicators as such as a dimension of public policy. Similarly, it does engage with structural features of educational systems but does not do so systematically through the lens of structural indicators, referring to the 'structure of tertiary education: main programme blocks (2010) Proportion of graduations/graduates following the Bologna structure (or in programmes that lead to a similar degree in non-European countries)' (p. 70). Again, despite these references to structure, they are not conducted within an operative framework of structural indicators.

Interestingly, at times in the analysis of specific issues, distinct themes are identified for public policy that could be amenable to interpretation in terms of structural indicators, such as the headings 'extending parental leave to fathers' (OECD 2012b, p. 78) and 'instituting quotas to increase the number of women on company boards, empower specialised bodies and take legal action against employers who engage in discriminatory practices' (OECD 2012b, p. 79). These structural dimensions are considered by the OECD (2012b) in thematic rather than systematic fashion. In a different report, the OECD (2012a) again makes important thematic points for structural features of education systems such as to 'prioritise the development of positive teacher-student and peer relationships' (p. 4) but again does so thematically rather than systematically through structural indicators that would focus on consistent systemic availability of professional development and preservice for teachers for their classroom conflict resolution and diversity awareness skills. The implications of this are potentially twofold. A first step to the introduction of the proposed structural indicators for access to education could be to embed them as analytic themes in the OECD annual reports. This could serve as a prelude to a more specific and systematic scrutiny of these structural dimensions through systemic structural indicators for access to education at an international level. It is important to emphasise that the structural indicators for access to education being derived here for a European context, based on interviews across 12 European countries (including St. Petersburg, Russia), would inevitably need further adaptation for their extension internationally, beyond ones centred on European examples and contexts.

It must be acknowledged that any such adaptation internationally of the proposed structural indicators for access to education must give firm effect to overcoming what is a pervasive problem of intergenerational social mobility, as 'On average across OECD countries… just 37 % of students whose parents attained an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary level of education (ISCED 3/4) completed a tertiary education. Only one in five (20 %) individuals who come from families with low levels of education attains a tertiary degree' (OECD 2012b, p. 103). Countries outside the current study that may require further additional structural indicators to the ones being proposed here include 'In Italy, Portugal, Turkey and the United States, [where] young people from families with low levels of education have the least chance of attaining a higher level of education than their parents. In these countries, more than 40 % of these young people have not completed upper secondary education, and fewer than 20 % have made it to tertiary education' (OECD 2012b, p. 103). Adaptation of these structural indicators internationally may be as much a question of additional structural indicators than a dilution of the ones being proposed for current purposes. It needs to be held in mind that the power of such structural indicators for scrutiny of system change and reform resides less in individual indicators but in a cluster of common structural indicators across a system. Furthermore, a regional focus could also potentially be sustained with regard to distinctive clusters of structural indicators, as part of a differentiated approach to social policy development, as advocated by the common yet differentiated responsibility and progressive realisation framework outlined by analogy for other areas such as in international environmental and right to health law.

A temporal focus is already held for OECD indicators, such as 'trends in entry rates at tertiary level, by gender (2005–2010)' (p. 84). A progressive realisation focus to structural indicators over a similar 5-year period would be a natural extension of such a temporal focus conducted for this outcome indicator.

There is enormous flexibility in the potential use of structural indicators, whether at European Commission, UN or OECD levels. One possibility is the acceptance of a cluster of core structural indicators for access to education for marginalised groups, combined with optional indicators that may be more pertinent for specific regions. Core and optional indicators could also be supplemented by a country-specific focus on additional structural indicators regarding enablers for system reform regarding a specific issue that is especially problematic or a distinctive strength of a national educational system (Downes 2013b). This flexibility regarding the scope, as well as level at which structural indicators can be used, offers promise to exemplify the concerns with cultural differences and national specificity raised in the foreword to the OECD Education at a Glance report (2013), echoing forewords in earlier annual reports, 'while the indicators should be as comparable as possible, they also need to be as country-specific as is necessary to allow for historical, systemic and cultural differences between countries…the indicators need to be presented in as straightforward a manner as possible, while remaining sufficiently complex to reflect multi-faceted educational realities' (p. 3). A worthwhile avenue for investigation could be the opportunity to

incorporate elements of the clusters of structural indicators being proposed in this book into the existing OECD international indicators for education, working in conjunction with the EU.

It is evident from Gurria's words in the editorial to the OECD Education at a Glance report (2012) that access to higher education for socio-economically excluded groups is a major policy priority of the OECD, 'in an era when having a higher education degree is increasingly necessary to assure a smooth transition into the labour market, many OECD countries need to do more to increase access to higher education for young people from disadvantaged circumstances. For example, this year's edition finds stark differences in young people's chances of attending higher education, depending on their parents' educational background. On average across OECD countries, young people from families with low levels of education are less than half as likely to be in higher education, compared to the proportion of such families in the population. Meanwhile, a young person with at least one parent who has attained a higher education degree is almost twice as likely to be in higher education, compared to the proportion of these families in the population' (p. 15). Given this stark recognition of the importance and priority to be given to access to higher education issues for socio-economically excluded groups, an expansion of systemic scrutiny to structural indicators for system change would appear to be an important avenue for further progress for the OECD to consider. This applies a fortiori given that the resource commitment to structural indicators, both individual ones and clusters of structural indicators, is significantly less than the considerable resources already invested in quantitative outcome and process indicators. This insight has reached the UN level regarding the role of structural indicators for the international right to health and needs to be absorbed also by the OECD for education, without necessarily having to commit to clothing such structural indicators within a rights-based framework. Gurria (2012) acknowledges that the current international situation brings with it little room for complacency and much room for improvement, 'it's clear that increasing educational equity and opportunity for all students, regardless of their background, remains a deep and abiding challenge in all countries…' (p. 15). Structural indicators hold a focus throughout on problems and solutions at system level to scrutinise such potential for improvement.

4.3.1 A Critique of Indicators as a Neo-liberal Agenda: The Need for a Democratic Agenda of Accountability That Is Not Reduced to Neo-liberalism

Important concerns are being raised across education contexts regarding performance management models. Such a new managerialism (Clarke et al. 2000) gives expression to a neo-liberal agenda of increasing bureaucratisation, marketisation, deprofessionalisation and dehumanisation of the individual in an education system of performativity ruled by indicators and borrowed from business models (Gleeson and O'Donnabhain 2009; Lynch et al. 2012; Ball 2012, 2013). Yet developing

systems of accountability need not become simply a flat carpet of homogeneity wrapped in the colours of neo-liberalism.

Indicators are means, not ends and may not only serve important goals, largely unbeholden to commercial forces, but also be sensitive to vital process dimensions. They may be less suited for some contexts over others and need to be reconciled with respect for domains of individual and professional judgement, such as in teaching and learning (Ball 2013). Indicators, as external impositions, may not engage with change concerning educators' attitudes and values (Gleeson and O'Donnabhain 2009). Whether conceived of as an 'insidious policy technology' (Ball 2012, p. 19) expressing a quasi-Foucauldian disciplinary technology or otherwise, some of these conceptual tools are not, however, necessarily malign.

A view of indicators, especially outcome indicators, as a neo-liberal monolith serves as an important cautionary note against a technocratic functionalism in interrogation of systemic reform and upholds the centrality of substantive dialogue and collaboration. It also invites response to the need for a wider perspective on indicators than narrow outcome indicators assailed by critics of neo-liberalism. In deriving a systemic focus on accountability by analogy with UN right to health sources, this involves a shift of emphasis onto structural (and process) indicators, to be used judiciously. It seeks to extract the vitality of the democratic pulse to accountability, while eschewing reduction to radical imbalances of bureaucracy, commercialisation and dehumanisation that glue together many neo-liberal agendas in education. Ball (2013) acknowledges the potential role of wider system indicators than simply outcome indicators, such as those adopted by the UN for well-being. It is not system indicators per se that are problematic as vehicles of neo-liberalism but rather the kinds of ones used and the purposes, processes and intensity with which they are put to use. In some contexts their effects may be pernicious, in others, such as access to education, they may be helpful. The argument for current purposes is not one that seeks such indicators for all domains of education but is confined to system reform for access to education for marginalised groups.

Rajamani's (2006) classification of the principle of common yet differentiated responsibility in international institutional law may also be of relevance in constructing and implementing the proposed structural indicators for access to education for socio-economically marginalised groups in Europe. She distinguishes differential membership (differential eligibility to membership), differential decision-making (differential value of membership), differential contributions (differential costs of membership) and differential enforcement (Rajamani 2006, p. 38). Moreover, she notes that implementation criteria may provide for differential time-frames (p. 102), including delayed reporting schedules and 'soft approaches to non-compliance' (p. 104), differential financial assistance including through additional and incremental finances and multilateral funds (pp. 108–109). These dimensions are all pertinent to the proposed structural indicators for access to higher education and lifelong learning.

Green (2010) observes the importance of only a few outcome indicators to ensure clarity of purpose and for financial reasons. This is important to bear in mind for outcome indicators at national level which need detailed statistical data collection.

However, such parsimony of outcome indicators needs to be combined especially with a wider range of structural indicators and arguably also a somewhat wider range of process indicators. If access to education for socio-economically excluded groups is to be a genuine European and cross-national level priority, then it is important that sufficient indicators are in place to ascertain not only if change is taking place, but also why and how barriers to change may also be occurring. Moreover, if access to higher education and lifelong learning for individuals and groups who traditionally have been marginalised and alienated from the education system is to be a real policy priority at European and national levels, then it is quite simply inefficient to invest organisational time and resources in this priority without developing a system of clusters of structural indicators to examine the progress of such investment. Without it, the danger is one of lip service commitments at EU and national levels that are content to merely, in the words of Beckett, fail, fail again, fail better in reaching important targets as benchmarks of success.

Summary In developing an argument for system-wide clusters of structural indicators for access to higher education and lifelong learning, it is important to acknowledge a double neglect at European level. Firstly, there has been a neglect of structural indicators overwhelmingly in favour of outcome indicators at European Commission level in education and social inclusion. Secondly, there has been a concomitant limitation of emphasis on the education sphere at Commission level within the Open Method of Coordination, at least until recently.

Particular focus for current purposes is on structural indicators for system level scrutiny of access to higher education and lifelong learning over time by analogy with the UN right to health framework but not contingent upon it. The focus with structural indicators is on relatively enduring features (structures/mechanisms/guiding principles) of a system, features that are, however, potentially malleable. For a State to assert the presence of any given structural indicator, generally framed as a yes/no question, evidence may need to be furnished to validate this assertion. The detail of such evidence may depend on the kind of specific structural indicator and may require different levels of detail for different structural indicators. The level of detail may also depend on the form of the reporting process.

Structural indicators can operate at different system levels such as individual institution, local, regional, national, EU and potentially UN and OECD levels. It leads to at least potentially verifiable factual statements (as yes/no responses). This proposed incorporation of a focus on structural indicators goes beyond a traditional qualitative/quantitative distinction. Analysis through the lens of structural indicators goes beyond a discourse reliant on sharing models of good practice to seek to identify key structural conditions for good practice rather than seeking to blithely transfer a good practice from one complex context to another.

The proposed range of structural indicators is based on themes and issues emerging from the results of the 12 national reports. Benefits of European level structural indicators, as benchmarks of progress of Member States for access of marginalised groups to lifelong learning, include: the indicators can offer transparent criteria for establishing a State's and university institution's progress in this area over time; the

indicators can distinguish State and university effort in improving access from actual outcomes; they can offer an incentive for governments to invest in the area of access to higher education and lifelong learning; they can include dimensions of progress for comparison within and between education institutions concerned with increasing access for marginalised groups; and they can bring greater unity to an area recognised as fragmented at national levels.

The current OECD *Education at a Glance* annual reports examine structural issues thematically rather than systematically through structural indicators. An argument is made to expand the OECD's education indicators beyond outcome and process indicators. It is important to emphasise that structural indicators are much less expensive to observe than quantitative outcome and process indicators, and thus, there can be more of them employed to scrutinise change in a system. There is a need to distinguish a focus on structural indicators from a general critique of performance indicators as giving expression to a neo-liberal agenda in education. It is not being claimed that the proposed indicators are the sole key structural indicators for access to education in Europe. Moreover, they need to be interpreted together with poverty prevention indicators.

References

Ball, S. (2012). Performativity, commodification and commitment: An I-spy guide to the neoliberal university. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 60*(1), 17–28.

Ball, S. (2013, March 26). *Neoliberal education? Confronting the slouching beast*. Vere Foster Trust and the Institute of Educational Research in Ireland Public Lecture, National Gallery, Dublin.

Beitz, C. (2009). *The idea of human rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Caddell, J. R. (2008). Legal responses to people trafficking: An overview of the international and regional framework. In P. Downes, A. Zule-Lapimaa, L. Ivanchenko, & S. Blumberg (Eds.), *Not one victim more: Human trafficking in the Baltic State* (pp. 110–154). Tallinn: Living for Tomorrow.

Clarke, J., Gewritz, S., & McLaughlin, E. (2000). *New managerialism: New welfare?* London: Sage.

Commission Staff Working Document. {SEC(2006) 1096}. Accompanying document to the communication to the Commission {COM (2006) 481 final}. *Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems.*

Commission Staff Working Document. {SEC(2009)1616}. *Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Indicators and benchmarks 2009.*

Communication from the Commission. {COM(2007) 558 final}. *Action plan on adult learning: It is always a good time to learn.*

Communication from the Commission. {COM(2011) 18 final}. *Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda.*

Council Recommendation. {COM(2011) 19 final}. *On policies to reduce early school leaving* SEC(2011) 98 final SEC(2011) 97 final SEC(2011) 96 final

Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning (2011/C 372/01).

Downes, P. (2007). Intravenous drug use and HIV in Estonia: Socio-economic integration and development of indicators regarding the right to health for its Russian-speaking population. *Liverpool Law Review, 28*, 271–317.

Downes, P. (2013a, January 28–29). *Developing multi-agency and cross-sector synergies in and around education*. Invited presentation for 5th meeting of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (EAC), Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, Brussels.

Downes, P. (2013b, June 6–7). *Incorporating feedback from 10 cities for the development of a matrix of structural indicators for a systemic approach to parental involvement for early school leaving prevention*, Invited presentation, Gijon Municipality, Spain, meeting of EU URBACT initiative, PREVENT.

Downes, P. (2013c). Developing a framework and agenda for students' voices in the school system across Europe: From diametric to concentric relational spaces for early school leaving prevention. *European Journal of Education, 48*(3), 346–362.

Downes, P., & Hagglund, U. (2013, March 21–22). *Towards a system level review process of cities' approaches to parental involvement for early school leaving prevention: Key issues in the development of a matrix of structural indicators.* Stockholm meeting of URBACT initiative, PREVENT.

Downes, P., Zule-Lapimaa, A., Ivanchenko, L., & Blumberg, S. (Eds.). (2008). *Not one victim more: Human trafficking in the Baltic States*. Tallinn: Living for Tomorrow NGO.

Edwards, A., & Downes, P. (2013a). *Alliances for inclusion: Developing cross-sector synergies and inter-professional collaboration in and around education*. Commissioned Research Report, Oxford University, Department of Education and EU Commission NESET (Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training). Foreword to report by Jan Truszczynski, Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture.

Edwards, A., & Downes, P. (2013b, May 28). *Cross-sector policy synergies and inter-professional collaboration in and around schools: Examples and evidence*. Invited seminar presentation, European Commission, Directorate-General Education and Culture, Brussels.

Gleeson, J., & O'Donnabhain, D. (2009). Strategic planning and accountability in Irish education. *Irish Educational Studies, 28*, 27–46.

Gurria, A. (2011). *Editorial. OECD education at a glance 2011: OECD indicators* (pp. 13–20). Paris: OECD Publishing.

Gurria, A. (2012). *Editorial. OECD education at a glance 2012: OECD indicators* (pp. 13–15). Paris: OECD Publishing.

Green, A. (2010, September 28–29). *Learning, equality and social cohesion.* Keynote speaker at the Belgian EU Presidency conference *Breaking the cycle of disadvantage- Social inclusion in and through education*. Ghent.

Holford, J., Riddell, S., Weedon, E., Litjens, J., & Hannan, G. (2008). *Patterns of lifelong learning: Policy and practice in an expanding Europe*. Vienna: LIT Verlag.

Höllinger, S. (2010). *Financing of higher education*. Overall HE-financing and State-to-HE institution funding. Institutional funding mechanisms. Student financing. Vienna/Pristina: Institutional Development for Education Project.

Kelly, A. V. (1999). *The curriculum: Theory and practice*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Lewin, K. (2007). Presidential address to the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE) annual meeting, 'Diversity and Inclusion', Queen's University, Belfast, 8–10 September 2006.

Lynch, K., Grummell, B., & Devine, D. (2012). *New managerialism in education: Commercialization, carelessness and gender*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Niçaise, I. (2010a, September 28–29). *A smart social inclusion policy for the EU: The role of education and training.* University of Leuven and NESSE. Presentation at the Belgian EU Presidency conference *Breaking the cycle of disadvantage- Social inclusion in and through education*. Ghent.

Niçaise, I. (2010b, September 28–29). *A smart social inclusion policy for the EU: The role of education and training.* University of Leuven and Nesse. Paper for distribution at the Belgian EU Presidency conference *Breaking the cycle of disadvantage- Social inclusion in and through education.* Ghent.

OECD. (2011). *Education at a glance 2011: OECD indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD. (2012a). *Equity and quality in education: Supporting disadvantaged students and schools, Spotlight Report, Ireland*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD. (2012b). *Education at a glance 2012: OECD indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

OECD. (2013). *Education at a glance 2013: OECD indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Rajamani, L. (2006). *Differential treatment in international environmental law* (Oxford monographs in international law). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rutter, M. (1985). Resilience in the face of adversity: Protective factors and resistance to psychiatric disorder. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 147*, 598–611.

Stecher, B. M. (2005). *Developing process indicators to improve educational governance: Lessons for education from health care*. Santa Monica: Rand Education.

Tobin, J. (2012). *The right to health in international law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2005a, February 11). Commission on Human Rights Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Paul Hunt.

United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2005b, February 21). Commission on Human Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Paul Hunt, Mission to Romania.

United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2006, March 3). Commission on Human Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Paul Hunt.

Waddington, S. (2011). Respondent to presentation, Downes, P. (2011). *Subproject 5 LLL2010. A systems level focus on access to education for traditionally marginalised groups in Europe: Comparing strategies, policy and practice in twelve European countries.* February 2011, LLL2010 *conference do three sides always make a triangle? Policy, institutions and learners in lifelong formal learning.* Brussels: University of Leuven.

Chapter 5
Access to Higher Education for Socio-economically Marginalised Groups: Indicators at Macro-Exo Levels

Two important issues are foregrounded in this chapter regarding a strategic approach at macro- and exosystemic levels for access to higher education. These issues are a central driving committee at national level for access to higher education and lifelong learning for socio-economically excluded groups and clarification of the criteria used to ascertain socio-economic exclusion. These are prerequisites for further policy development at macro- and exosystemic levels and pave the way for a plethora of other issues regarding access to higher education and lifelong learning, discussed in subsequent chapters.

5.1 A Central Driving Committee at State Level for Access to Higher Education and Lifelong Learning for Marginalised Groups (Structural Indicator), Including Clear Funding Sources

A central driving committee for access to higher education and lifelong learning at national and regional levels gives expression to a systems theory concern with sustainability and sufficient intensity of impact to overcome inertia for change to occur throughout system levels. A Commission staff working document (2009) highlights that country reports observe that policy responsibility for adult learning is fragmented in many countries, with multiple ministries having responsibility for different aspects. This was highlighted in particular for the following countries: Belgium, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway and Slovenia. Latvia was singled out as being particularly diffused, with nine ministries involved in the relevant strategies and action plans. This concern also applies a fortiori to a displacement of focus across different ministries with regard to access to education for traditionally marginalised groups.

The Slovenian national report observes that there is a central driving committee for lifelong learning, 'A special unit for adult education' (Ivančič et al. 2010). However,

it would appear that a driving committee specifically for access to education for underrepresented groups is less evident in the context of Slovenia. Similarly, it emerges from interviews with government officials in the Austrian national report that there is a central committee at national level for lifelong learning but not for access and social inclusion issues in education:

> *We only have a real panel assignment for lifelong learning. There is also a steering committee for the whole lifelong learning process which is based in our house…What regards social inclusion, people with disadvantages, we don't have any committees, but it is nevertheless a main focus in our work. We know where the problems are from several research results, experts consulting and evaluations, which have been carried out. We know what needs to be done and discuss this also with other concerned resorts.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

It is envisaged by the Austrian Ministry official that the decentralisation of responsibilities in Austria would be a barrier to the establishment, scope and effectiveness of such a central driving committee:

> What are the obstacles to establishing any of these committees in your government ministry? *As the federal government hardly has any legal power in this respect according to the basic law of the 1970s, all nine regions and the federal government itself would have to make the same legal decisions. That's never going to happen…There are no clear competencies, meaning the Ministry of Education can only act suggestively, trying to stimulate certain processes with the help of financial aid.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Yet the need for a central driving committee for access is clearly evident in Austria, when the comments above of the Ministry official is considered together with the European Labour Force Survey 2003 findings that in Austria a university graduate is five times more likely to participate in adult learning than an adult with primary education.

In contrast, the English national report explicitly refers to a central committee at national level with responsibility for promotion of access to education:

> *Within HEFCE [Higher Education Funding Council for England] we have a number of strategic committees but we have one strategic committee which is the widening access and participation strategic advisory. And it's a committee which directly advises our board.* (Engel et al. 2010)

According to a senior official of the Committee for Labor and Employment, St. Petersburg, interviewed in the Russian national report, there is no central driving committee for lifelong learning, nor for access, in Russia. A key corollary of a central driving committee at governmental level must also be availability of indispensable statistical information—information which is absent for example in Russia:

> Currently, there is no governmental policy aimed at collecting data on adult education and especially on education for representatives of social risk groups. Therefore, it appears quite hard to especially track the numbers of early school leavers, ethnic minorities or orphans involved into the system of education and their changes over the recent years (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010).

Though there are not national or even major city level committees for access and lifelong learning in Russia, there is some evidence of driving committees at more local levels (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010). An advantage of a central driving committee

is that it would proof national and regional level decisions with regard to their impact, perhaps even unintended impact, upon traditionally underrepresented groups. This would address gaps in practice and barriers to implementation such as those highlighted in the Russian national report:

> The conducted research has shown that the governmental policy related to equal access to education for all categories of the population is far from being implemented. There are no special departments or at least positions in the city and regional administration that would deal directly with access to education or adult education. Each governmental unit (in our case the Committee for Education of St. Petersburg and the Committee for Labor and Unemployment of St. Petersburg) conducts some work in a way related to promoting and enhancing access to education; occasionally several units conduct joint projects aimed at lifelong learning or learners with disabilities, but these activities are not centralised and do not have a complex approach to the problem. In other words, instead of elaborating a set of common complex measures aimed at various disadvantageous categories in terms of enhancing their access to education, governmental units perform single irregular projects that are rarely effective and often embrace a small number of recipients…most administrative units work separately and are unaware of activities of their counterparts from other departments, which prevents them from centralised and multidimensional approach to the problem of decreased access to education for socially disadvantaged groups. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

It is of concern that in an Irish context, while the Government White Paper (2000) recommended the establishment of a national body to promote lifelong learning, this central driving committee has yet to be consolidated (Maunsell et al. 2008). This is less a matter of financing than of strategic neglect of the area of lifelong learning. However, a national office for equity of access to higher education has been set up in the Irish context, which does serve as a central driving body for access to higher education, if not lifelong learning more generally.

Financial barriers to such central driving committees at national level for access and lifelong learning are adverted to in the Lithuanian and Estonian national reports. In the words of one Lithuanian official interviewee:

> *As there is a crisis now, I don't think that we should create new structures; we should coordinate the existing ones better. We don't need one more structure that would help to implement a life long learning strategy that you mentioned. What we need is that each level according to its competence would concretise its activities in this range.* (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

An Estonian official interviewee uses finance as a rationale to advocate a laissez-faire approach in this area of access, socio-economic disadvantage and lifelong learning:

> What problems have occurred in creating relevant structural units? Is the ministry planning to create any structural units responsible for the above-mentioned areas (Social inclusion, access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, lifelong learning, functional literacy, non-formal education? *If we wished to create such structural units we should change the present division of work. Greater centralisation means more officials. We cannot afford that at the moment so the answer is no—the creation of such structural units is not on the agenda right now. Educational institutions, in particular institutions of higher education should be able to solve these problems themselves—this is what autonomy means. Speaking about long term development—maybe one day there will be some structural changes as well.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

It is of concern that according to this view, there is to be little state role for stimulating access to education for socio-economically excluded groups.

An additional concern in the context of Estonia is the following interviewee response on the lack of an access strategy and not only a structural gap at national level for access issues:

> Is there a national and/or government strategy for: access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups? *We have some problems in this area. Our hidden agenda, our aim is to gather as much information as possible so that when the economic situation improves and we can start talking about serious support and loan system based on actual needs, we will know what it will mean for Estonia. Which structures will be used is not known yet because we know that universities are not interested in managing a system which is based on needs. We are aware of the problem and are trying to find a solution although it cannot be done until after few years.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

While this official gives acknowledgment that access for socio-economically excluded groups is an 'issue for the future', another restriction at a strategic and structural level in Estonia emerges from the Government Departmental location of its lifelong learning section. With lifelong learning being a mere subset of vocational education, the structure of the Ministry for Education and Research in Estonia is set up to exclude the other key goals of lifelong learning in a European context, namely, social inclusion/cohesion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment:

> *We have a special division—the Adult Education Division. This division forms a part of the Vocational Education Department.* Adult non-formal education is the responsibility of the adult education department. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

That this gap exists at national policy level in Estonia is further evident from the Ministry of Education and Research official's words:

> *The mainstream understanding is that if a person is hard working enough he/she will manage without any help…There is even no discussion in the society. We don't talk about it; we do not have comprehensive policies.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The Hungarian national report reveals that there is a central driving committee at national level focusing on those experiencing disadvantage, allied with a national strategy for lifelong learning:

> Within the Ministry [of Education and Culture] there is a Directorate of Equal Opportunities with responsibilities of programme planning for highly disadvantaged population. This functions according to The New Hungary Development Plan. This Directorate mainly deals with professional planning of Social Renewal Operational Programme, also deals with preparing laws and legal works, and manages the operational tasks of implementation of legislation. (Balogh et al. 2010)
>
> In 2005, the government adopted a life long learning strategy. This governmental decision laid down the guidelines of planning between 2007 and 2013. (Balogh et al. 2010)

It is important to emphasise that a central driving committee at national level, specifically focused on lifelong learning and access to higher education, is with a view to facilitating a framework that would also embrace regional and local flexibility, rather than simply being a top-down imposition without dialogue. Such a

central driving committee with a social inclusion focus can also serve as a vital counterpoint to the danger of a purely outcomes and per capita funding-driven agenda, described by Leach (2013) as an increasing pressure in an Australian and New Zealand context:

> In order to secure funding that is contingent on student outcomes such as completion, institutions are likely to become increasingly selective about students they enroll, potentially disadvantaging under-represented students. (p. 280)

A central driving committee is not a panacea but rather one key systemic condition to maintain a strong policy focus at national level on lifelong learning and access for groups experiencing social marginalisation. It is evident from the following difficulties experienced by the adult education sector in the Hungarian national report that even where a central driving committee is in place, there are pervasive problems requiring to be addressed:

> Adult education is still not as popular and accepted in Hungary as it should be, and all those involved in this market would need to develop in order to expand the model.
>
> The legal environment of adult education is not at all suitable for the expansion of the model: Procedures are very bureaucratic, decisions are centralised and tax allowances that were much higher six-seven years ago have almost disappeared. Thus, the state could: Make procedures more flexible, with fewer sanctions and more encouragement; Allow local governments, institutes and individuals to make decisions instead of the highly centralised decision process at present; Give more tax allowances and other types of financial support to individuals. (Balogh et al. 2010)

The Hungarian report continues:

> The adult education market is highly segmented and has been stagnating for years. There is a need for a more dynamic market:
>
> *Hungarian adult education runs far below the necessary performance level, so it has a department which deals with the retraining of the unemployed, which is very complicated, and sorry for the term, operates as a highly corrupt system, which means that it's always the same people they retrain, so this department has a very serious dysfunction. On the other hand, there is a certain part of the Hungarian population, around 60–70 %, of which we take the best 10 %, but then nobody cares about the rest.* (Balogh et al. 2010)
>
> Universities and colleges still don't see adult education as an important element of their portfolio, but instead almost always prioritise master and doctoral programmes. (Balogh et al. 2010)

It is evident from the national reports that much work needs to be done in ensuring a systemic strategic approach is in place in relation to both access to higher education for socio-economically excluded groups and for lifelong learning in its varying aspects. In other words, many states that have strategies in these areas lack structures to ensure the implementation of such strategies. Without these central driving committees, there is a real danger that such strategies will only remain on dry paper. The further benefit of such committees to implement and review progress in this area is that they can provide reforms to existing strategies, clarification of funding strands, while also developing European good practice in this area.

5.2   Clarification of the Criteria to Ascertain Socio-economic Exclusion (Structural Indicator) Given the Observed Tendency, Especially in Central and Eastern European Countries, for Targeting to Occur for More Easily Identifiable Target Groups Like Those with a Disability or from an Ethnic Minority, In Contrast with Groups Experiencing Socio-economic Exclusion

The Lithuanian national report illustrates that socio-economic marginalisation is not a criterion for targeted access to university.

> The college does not provide any public information on student social profiles. *A few years ago there was a priority to farmers' children given in order to help them to enter those agricultural study programmes. But later it cleared out that we cannot distinguish any group. The entrance only depends on achievements at secondary school…*The question about different groups seemed unexpected to the [State College] management, as she could not answer it promptly: *Everybody talks about formal education....life-long learning… then I don't get it… Why should we distinguish any groups? If a student has a certain 'amount' of knowledge, then s/he can enter [higher education] easily.* (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

It is evident from the Lithuanian national report that disability is a clear category for analysis in relation to access, in contrast to the lack of analysis regarding access and socio-economic exclusion (Taljunaite et al. 2010).

A State university representative in Lithuania does however recognise a socio-economic dimension to access in this statement:

> *…from those social groups where families are big and income is low. And for those studying ones we have to give social scholarships. That's the main feature that we have more students from needy families.* (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

It would appear that at least some university institutions in Lithuania have developed a strategic focus on access for distinct target groups, even if this is not a universal systemic feature of the sector in Lithuania.

According to responses in the Estonian national report, socio-economic marginalisation is not a distinct criterion for targeting access to education:

> Could you please name the target groups whose access to tertiary education should be simplified in the first place? *There is no obvious answer. We do not have a clear picture about which target groups are underrepresented. Maybe the non-Estonian population? Actually, they have a proportional share of state commissioned (free of charge) study places.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

A Ministry for Social Affairs official in Estonia lists the following target groups, once again illustrating the lack of distinct criteria for socio-economic exclusion:

> *We have 8 risk groups. One person can belong to several risk groups:*
>
> - *Persons released from a penal institution, disabled people, people who do not speak Estonian*
> - *People aged 55+ years*
> - *Young people aged 16 to 24 years*

- *People who do not speak Estonian and need a language course*
- *Caregivers*
- *Long-term unemployed*
- *Disabled people*
- *Persons released from a penal institution.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

A private university interviewee in the Estonian national report identifies this issue as being problematic as to how to identify 'disadvantaged' groups:

> *The institution does not have any quotas for students from disadvantaged groups; neither has it been defined which people belong to disadvantaged groups.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The Slovenian national report observes that target groups for access to education supports do not exist on the basis of socio-economic disadvantage:

> In Slovenia, institutions usually have not set up any specific targets for the inclusion of different risk groups. The only risk group identified in Slovenia with regard to quotas is students from other countries. The ministry defines these quotas. They vary from 1–2 %. Other groups are not defined. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

It is also notable from the Russian national report that beyond unemployment, disability and being in prison, social marginalisation is not a general feature of policy making for access to education:

> It must also be noted that both committees mostly concentrate on very few underrepresented categories such as unemployed people, prisoners and people with disabilities. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)
>
> Interestingly enough, but when asked about reserved places for representatives of risk groups both informants would mostly talk about people with disabilities and prisoners. It seems like they are the only categories among risk groups that are taken into consideration in the educational discourse. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

However, elsewhere the Russian national report authors describe a socio-economic exclusion criterion as follows:

> Traditionally, the 'socially unprotected groups of population' (the official term used in Russia for socially disadvantaged groups) include senior citizens, persons with disabilities, persons with low income, families with 3 and more underage children, families consisting of one parent (official custodian) taking care of a person with disability, former military people, etc. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

Significantly, in contrast with Estonia and Slovenia, and to some extent Lithuania and Russia, Hungary does identify target groups based on recognition of the needs of those with low income:

> Other disadvantaged groups are defined by law, such as orphans, those who were in state care as children, people with three or more children or simply those who come from a low-income family. The number of disadvantaged students in the full-time programmes altogether is 783, thus one quarter of the entire 3200 full-time student population. (Balogh et al. 2010)

However, despite this legal definition based on low income, there is a lack of data in Hungary for this group regarding access to education and social background itself:

> No official database is available concerning social background, but—according to the interviewees' estimates—more than ten percent of the [adult secondary school] students are Roma, and quite some of the students live in poor living conditions. (Balogh et al. 2010)

Moreover, in Hungary, the interviewed Education and Culture Ministry official recognises that there is not a transparent set of criteria for establishing socio-economic exclusion but rather this identification is somewhat 'vague' apart from identification by ethnicity:

> *The underprivileged situation is a rather vague concept because underprivileged statuses can change in different periods. Currently such people are the ones who need special education, the underprivileged ones, the young Roma, the persons without any qualification, so the ones who fell from the educational system.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

It appears that the problem is not so much from a lack of legal definition for socio-economic exclusion in Hungary, but rather its application in practice beyond ethnicity criteria, in an often rapidly changing environment. However, a focus on socio-economic exclusion based solely on low income as distinct from low income plus education level, education level of parents,[1] accommodation type and possibly area of residence would make this target group one that is less dynamically changing. It would allow for a focus on socio-economic exclusion through the lens of relatively enduring features of a person's life, compared simply with income level alone. Moreover, it could strengthen a focus on access to higher education for first-generation students, where no one from their family had previously attended third-level education.

It would seem that much of the impetus for conceptualisation of socio-economic exclusion in Hungary has come from EU initiatives. A Hungarian Ministry for Affairs and Labour official outlines that most of the key strategies in the area of social inclusion have been based on EU funding:

> *There are a lot of strategies in relation to social inclusion: strategy for integration of Roma, women and men social equality strategy, and strategy for the elderly. Each strategy displays a variety of training in several relations, on the one hand, professional trainings, on the other hand trainings for the target group itself.*
> *And are these programmes are mainly realised by EU funds? Yes, they are.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

Against this backdrop, there is both an onus and opportunity at EU level to lead the development of criteria based on socio-economic exclusion for target groups for access to lifelong learning and higher education.

A Bulgarian university interviewee conceives of socio-economic criteria for supports as being a matter for the individual educational institution to verify rather than as a systemic dimension requiring a national level for regulation:

> *There are no specific discounts in the semester fee based on the financial status of students. It should be said that socially disadvantaged students have preferences in obtaining student housing, as well as a quota for social scholarships. Social scholarships are given for low family income. This is stipulated in the Students Council Regulation. On my observation however, part of the students are frequently against such scholarships as documents certifying social needs are sometimes misused. Often a certain social status is claimed, which the university has neither the capacity nor the right to verify.* (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

---

[1] See also the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) index of Economic, Social and Cultural Status (ESCS) which combines information on parents' occupation and level of education with home possessions available to a student rather than a direct measurement of income.

The Bulgarian national report highlights the following categories as target groups:

> The main admission requirement is the entry-level exam. After passing the exam, students from some vulnerable groups pay tuition fees at a reduced price, as stipulated in the Higher Education Act, Articles 68 and 70: people with 70 % disability, war veterans with disabilities, orphans, single mothers with three or more children are accepted on easier terms, and social grants are given to socially disadvantaged students, who also receive preferential treatment in terms of accommodation at the student dormitories. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

The Norwegian national report recognises that positive discrimination exists in relation to access to university based on ethnicity and for people with a disability, though none in relation to poverty and family educational background:

> Judging from the interviews, it seemed like the university maintained a special emphasis on students with disabilities and students with a background from other countries (this being first or second generation Norwegians or exchange students), although many of the available services are universal … A factor that underlines that these two groups are receiving special attention, is that both groups have their own section within the university, whose task is to take care of their interests and rights. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

The English national report highlights that 'social class issues have dominated in recent widening participation debates' (Engel et al. 2010), while socio-economic criteria are also key in Scotland:

> The widening participation of under-represented groups include data on those from state schools and colleges, from low socio-economic class (NS-SEC classes 4–7) and low participation neighbourhoods. (Weedon et al. 2010)

In Scotland, there is a recent tendency to move away from an area-based approach to identifying socio-economic marginalisation:

> It should be noted that the low participation neighbourhood statistic is no longer collected from Scottish universities due to the unreliability of post code data. (Weedon et al. 2010)

There may be regions where an area-based approach is an important one to identify risk groups, such as North Eastern Estonia which has extreme disparities in relative poverty and wealth compared with other parts of Estonia (Mikecz 2008). It is notable that an area-based approach is not adopted in Estonia when identifying risk groups. It is similarly significant in Estonia that ethnicity is not considered a factor for strategic priority for access, despite the potential need for many Russian speakers in North Eastern Estonia, Ida-Virumaa.

An area-based approach may not be a suitable general method of indicating socio-economic exclusion in Central and Eastern European states in particular—or in states with less obvious disparities in socio-economic status between its citizens. An area-based approach is in one way an index of an already highly stratified society in socio-economic terms; it is not an optimal model for a future vision of a society in relation to access and social inclusion, as it is predicated on the very assumption of extreme differences in relative wealth and deprivation. Thus, other socio-economic dimensions for access need to be crystallised for a transparent social policy. This is not to argue for the total excision of an area-based criterion but rather to acknowledge that it may serve as one dimension

within a wider range of criteria, though not as a governing criterion in the absence of the other criteria, such as intergenerational poverty, parental education and occupation, etc.

Another barrier to transparency and a strategic approach to access is the reluctance of some countries to distinguish students on the grounds of ethnicity—sometimes data collection based on ethnicity differences is even prohibited by law. The Bulgarian national report highlights that ethnicity is basically perceived as a confidential private matter of the individual.

Morrison (1993) has noted that 'the habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture' continuing that 'To notice it is to recognise an already discredited difference. To enforce its invisibility through silence is to allow the black body a shadowless participation in the dominant cultural body' (pp. 9–11). With regard to access to education for ethnic minority groups, this 'liberal' silence requires further debate and analysis, including at an EU level; the perspectives of the ethnic minority groups themselves in specific national contexts are a key reference point in moving this debate forward as part of commitment to the principles of local context sensitivity and a community of interpretation.

A Commission staff working document (2009) comments on a range of national reports:

> Many national reports describe priority disadvantaged groups who receive specific support to acquire key competences: e.g. learners with special educational needs, those at a socio-economic disadvantage, those with literacy needs (including migrants) and those at risk of dropping out. As a result of the financial crisis, the unemployed increasingly feature as a target group. (p. 101)

Yet this assumes that socio-economic disadvantage is a meaningful category in the cultural context of countries. It would seem from a range of interviews with institutional leaders that beyond a focus on income level, this is not necessarily the case. In a wide number of countries, those living in poverty and those who have left school early and experience barriers to education together with poverty are frequently omitted as an identifiable target group for priority with regard to national or institutional policy in relation to access to education. From the interviews across many of the national reports for this comparative study, it would seem that there is a particular difficulty in distinguishing such a target group for access to education and providing data on this group in at least a number of Central and Eastern European countries.

This finding is perhaps also an indirect implication of a Commission staff working document (2009) which notes that 'several countries specify the social dimension to widening access to higher education in their policies and strategies including targets to increase participation of students from lower socioeconomic groups, and to broaden overall access to higher education' (p. 130). Of the countries named as targeting lower socio-economic groups, namely, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania and Portugal, only two (the Czech Republic and Lithuania) are from Central and Eastern European countries.

Clancy and Goastellec's (2007) cross-national analysis highlights that there is significant national specificity in respect of the social categories which are used to

define social diversity. They offer the examples of geographical origin in Indonesia, ethno-racial dimensions in the USA and socio-professional and socio-economic grouping in France and Ireland to indicate this national specificity,[2] while concluding, 'the evolution of admission norms to higher education reveals how the legitimated categories used to read social diversity are being diversified' (Clancy and Goastellec 2007, p. 140). It is of concern however that much of the comparative data they cite on parental socio-economic and educational background criteria for selection of students into higher education in a European context is predominantly based on Western rather than Central and Eastern European contexts. Thus, for example, the EUROSTUDENT (2005) report on the social and economic conditions of student life in Europe includes 11 countries, but only one of these is from Central and Eastern Europe, namely, Latvia. Moreover, Latvia was one of two countries together with Italy which could not provide the relevant background socio-economic data, as Clancy and Goastellec (2007) observe. Similarly, Clancy and Goastellec's (2007) own table on college participation by family income or parental social class or education level (p. 150), based on available comparative data, does not include any Central or Eastern European country out of the seven countries examined.

The OECD selected indicators of participation in higher education (gross enrolment rates, net enrolment, enrolment intensity, percentage aged 25–34 and 35–44 with higher education, index of participation in higher education) across 27 countries are also examined by Clancy and Goastellec (2007). Here, there are four Central and Eastern European countries included, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia. While the recent admissions of Slovenia and Estonia to the OECD will help in remedying this imbalance, the question still arises as to criteria and pathways for recognition of legitimate socio-economic categories for inclusion as target groups for access to lifelong learning and higher education across Central and Eastern European countries.

As it stands, a common feature of interviews across institutions and national policy officials in Estonia, Bulgaria, Russia and Slovenia is that there exist neither criteria for access to higher education based on poverty, low parental education or socio-economic background nor a particular awareness of or willingness to seek such criteria. In Hungary and Lithuania, there is some focus on low income though this criterion appears relatively underdeveloped conceptually and also with regard to data collection for such a target group for access. Part of this may be due to a legacy of communist times where quotas were imposed in unpopular ways. Yet it is not simply due to this, as other identifiable groups are given quotas and positive discrimination in relation to access. Moreover, it cannot simply be explained on the basis that currently there are not significant social

---

[2] See also Leach (2013) on measures of socio-economic status (SES) in New Zealand being based on household income, occupation, household crowding, educational qualifications and income support, derived from their census data. However, Leach (2013) observes that in New Zealand 'there is no measure of SES in higher education although a decile system is used in schools' (p. 269).

class differences in many Central and Eastern European countries. Mikecz (2008) has, for example, highlighted that the highest relative inequalities across the whole EU exist in both Latvia and Estonia.

It is perhaps more explicable on the basis that in the recent past, such significant social class differences did not exist after the fall of communism. Both Downes (2003) and Allaste (2005) have highlighted that less cultural distance exists between university students in postcommunist countries and those experiencing social marginalisation. It would seem that the sociocultural correlates of social class differences have yet to harden and form in many Central and Eastern European countries, so that, for example, social class and accent, residential location, etc. are less firmly entwined than in many Western European countries (see also van Houtte and Stevens 2010 on socio-economic status criteria for minorities in Belgium). However, given the stark income inequalities in at least some Central and Eastern European countries, it would seem that social class and socio-economic status dimensions may be changing quickly in already rapidly changing societies.

Against this backdrop, Clancy and Goastellec's (2007) acknowledgement of a 'growing appreciation of the complexity of social identities' (p. 142) and call for a 'Higher Education Participation Index' (p. 151) to facilitate cross-country comparison applies a fortiori to the context of Central and Eastern European countries. This requires the development of common criteria for evaluation of socio-economic marginalisation as a target group for developing access programmes to higher education. A challenge is to do so without the negative 'deficit' labelling associated with describing individuals and areas as 'disadvantaged' (Spring 2007; Downes and Gilligan 2007; Bamber 2008) and to resist essentialist labelling. In doing so, it is important to recognise the limitations built into categorising. This complexity is well recognised in postmodern thought, for example, Lather's (1994) view of social categories as provisional constructions, Sayer's (1997) critique of categories being treated as essences and May et al. (2004) on hybridity of identities.

Other earlier critiques of a categorising mode of construction are offered by Tribe (1988) on the limitations of categorical definitions; Feyerabend (1988), Rosch (1978) and Tajfel (1978) on simplifications in categorisation; and Heidegger (1927) on categories to be contrasted with a more primordial relational mode of what he termed *existentialia*. However, even if categories are simplifications and not to be construed as essences, they do give rise to real-world effects, and their constructed social meanings have real-world consequences, sometimes neglected in postmodern discourses. A targeting of resources is needed but without a deficit categorisation of individuals, groups and areas, in the process of such targeting.

Part of a discussion on this issue also needs to embrace the wider issue of how to prevent the hardening of cultural barriers associated with relative inequality into sociocultural dimensions of social class such as accent, residential location, etc. It is far from inevitable that such socio-cultural dimensions to relative inequality have to emerge; preventing large levels of social inequality is one pivotal factor in avoiding such social class-related fissures to develop in society. From the perspective of access to education for groups experiencing socio-economic exclusion, there is some urgency

in promoting regional dialogue across Central and Eastern European authorities and for educational institutions to agree on transparent criteria for socio-economic exclusion, beyond low income alone, in order to facilitate a more strategic approach to access to education for this group.

The EU Commission can drive this process at the level of seeking a two-stage process from Member States. Firstly, that each country make transparent their chosen criteria for identifying need regarding social exclusion in education and secondly, that they decide how to frame this need in terms of opportunity rather than deficit language of 'disadvantage'. Both aspects of this two-stage process require the key interpretative principles of recognising local context sensitivity and a community of interpretation at national and local levels in working out the details of the elements of these two stages. This two-stage process would obviously be aided by development of the initial structural indicator highlighted in this chapter, a central driving committee at national level for access to higher education and lifelong learning for socio-economically excluded groups.

Summary of Higher Education: Macro-Exosystem A structural indicator of a central driving committee for access of marginalised groups to higher education and lifelong learning at national and regional levels gives expression to a concern with sustainability and sufficient intensity of impact to overcome inertia for change to occur throughout system levels. A Commission staff working document (2009) highlights that country reports observe that policy responsibility for adult learning is fragmented in many countries, with multiple ministries having responsibility for different aspects. This concern applies even more strongly to a blurring of focus across different ministries with regard to access to education for traditionally marginalised groups. A central driving committee at national level, specifically focused on lifelong learning and access to higher education, is with a view to facilitating a framework that would also embrace regional and local flexibility, rather than simply being a top-down imposition without dialogue.

Such a central driving committee with a social inclusion focus can also serve as a vital counterpoint to the danger of a purely outcomes and per capita funding-driven agenda. Though not a panacea, an advantage of a central driving committee is that it would proof national and regional level decisions with regard to their impact, including unintended impact, upon traditionally underrepresented groups. It is evident from the national reports that much work needs to be done in ensuring a systemic strategic approach is in place in relation to both access to higher education for socio-economically excluded groups and for lifelong learning. Many states that have strategies in these areas lack structures to ensure the implementation of such strategies. A further benefit of such committees to implement and review progress in this area is that they can provide reforms to existing strategies, clarification of funding strands, while also developing European good practice in this area. While financial barriers to such central driving committees at national level for access and lifelong learning are adverted to in some national reports, the issue is less one of finance than of whether sufficient strategic priority is to be given at national levels to access to education for socio-economically excluded groups.

A common feature of interviews across institutions and national policy officials in Estonia, Bulgaria, Russia and Slovenia is that there exist neither criteria for establishing target groups for access to higher education initiatives based on poverty, low parental education or socio-economic background nor a particular awareness of or willingness to seek such criteria. In Hungary and Lithuania, there is some focus on low income though this criterion appears relatively underdeveloped conceptually and also with regard to data collection for such a target group for access. From the perspective of access to education for groups experiencing socio-economic exclusion, there is some urgency in promoting regional dialogue across Central and Eastern European authorities and for educational institutions to agree on transparent criteria for socio-economic exclusion, beyond low income alone, in order to facilitate a more strategic approach to access to education for this group. The EU Commission can drive this process at the level of seeking a two-stage process from Member States. Firstly, that each country make transparent their chosen criteria for identifying need regarding social exclusion in education and, secondly, that they decide how to frame this need in terms of opportunity rather than deficit language of 'disadvantage'.

References

Allaste, A. (2005). Nightlife and substance use in Tallinn. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, 22*, 139–141.

Balogh, A., Józan, A., Szöllősi, A., & Róbert, P. (2010). *The institutional aspects of adult education in Hungary.* Budapest: TARKI Social Research Centre. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Bamber, J. (2008, December 10–12). *Foregrounding curriculum: Ditching deficit models of non-traditional students*. ESREA annual conference. Access, learning careers and identities network, Seville.

Boyadjieva, P., Milenkova, V., Gornev, G., Petkova, K., & Nenkova, D. (2010). *The role of Bulgarian educational institutions for the promotion of access of adults to formal education.* Sofia: Institute of Sociology. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Clancy, P., & Goastellec, G. (2007). Exploring access and equity in higher education: Policy and performance in comparative perspective. *Higher Education Quarterly, 21*(2), 136–154.

Commission Staff Working Document. {SEC(2009)1616}. *Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Indicators and benchmarks 2009.*

Department of Education and Science. (2000). *Learning for life: White paper on adult education*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Downes, P. (2003). *Living with heroin: HIV, identity and social exclusion among the Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia and Latvia.* English version. Tallinn: Legal Information Centre for Human Rights.

Downes, P., & Gilligan, A. L. (2007). Beyond disadvantage: Some conclusions. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 463–491). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Engel, L., Holford, J., & Mleczko, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education.* Nottingham: University of Nottingham. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

EUROSTUDENT. (2005). *Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe*. Hanover: Higher Education Information.

Feyerabend, P. (1988). *Against method* (2nd ed.). New York: Verso.

Heidegger, M. (1927). *Being and time* (J. MacQuarrie & E. Robinson, Trans., 1962). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Ivančič, A., Mohorčič Špolar, V. A., & Radovan, M. (2010). *The case of Slovenia. Access of adults to formal and non-formal education—Policies and priorities*. Ljubljana: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Kozlovskiy, V., Khokhlova, A., & Veits, M. (2010). *The role of Russian educational institutions in the promotion of access for adults to formal education*. St Petersburg: Department of Sociology, Saint Petersburg State University. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Lather, P. (1994). Fertile obsession: Validity after poststructuralism. In A. Gitlin (Ed.), *Power and method: Political activism and educational research*. London: Routledge.

Leach, L. (2013). Participation and equity in higher education: Are we going back to the future? *Oxford Review of Education, 39*(2), 267–286.

Maunsell, C., Downes, P., & McLoughlin, V. (2008). *National report on lifelong learning in Ireland. LLL2010: Sub-project 1: Towards a lifelong learning society in Europe—The contribution of the education system*. Dublin: Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College.

May, S., Modood, T., & Squires, J. (2004). Ethnicity, nationalism, and minority rights: Charting the disciplinary debates. In S. May, T. Modood, & J. Squires (Eds.), *Ethnicity, nationalism, and minority rights* (pp. 1–26). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mikecz, R. (2008). The economies of Estonia and Latvia—Fast growing eeconomies with increasing income inequalities. In P. Downes, A. Zule-Lapimaa, L. Ivanchenko, & S. Blumberg (Eds.), *Not one victim more: Human trafficking in the Baltic States* (pp. 211–231). Tallinn: Living for Tomorrow.

Morrison, T. (1993). *Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination*. New York: Vintage.

Rammel, S., & Gottwald, R. (2010). *Social inclusion in formal and non formal adult education: Findings from Austrian institutions and government representatives*. Krems: Danube University. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Rosch, E. (1978). Principles of categorisation. In E. Rosch & B. B. Lloyd (Eds.), *Cognition and categorisation*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Sayer, A. (1997). Essentialism, social constructionism and beyond. *The Sociological Review, 45*(3), 453–487.

Spring, N. (2007). Tracing the language of educational disadvantage. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 3–10). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Stensen, O.-A., & Ure, O.-B. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Norway*. Oslo: Fafo—Institute for Labour and Social Research. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Tajfel, H. (1978). *Differentiation between social groups*. London: Academic.

Taljunaite, M., Labanauskas, L., Terepaite-Butviliene, J., & Blazeviviene, L. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education*. Vilnius: Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Social Research Institute. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Tamm, A., & Saar, E. (2010). *LLL2010 subproject 5 Estonia country report*. Tallinn: Institute of International and Social Studies/Department of Social Stratification, University of Tallinn. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Tribe, L. H. (1988). *American constitutional law* (2nd ed.). New York: Foundation Press.

Van Houtte, M., & Stevens, P. A. J. (2010). School ethnic composition and aspirations of immigrant students in Belgium. *British Educational Research Journal, 36*(2), 209–237.

Weedon, E., Riddell, S., Purves, R., & Ahlgren, L. (2010). *Social inclusion and adult participation in lifelong learning: Officials', managers' and teachers' perspectives.* Edinburgh: University of Scotland. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Chapter 6
Access to Higher Education for Socio-economically Marginalised Groups: Indicators at Macro-Exo Levels

Building on issues explored at macro-exosystemic levels in Chap. 5, one common thread among a number of structural indicators highlighted in this chapter is a focus on State-led incentives for promoting access to higher education for socio-economically marginalised groups. This incentivisation process is interrogated as needing to occur for third-level institutions, including at distinct faculty and departmental levels, in the so-called 'elite' universities, as well as through pathways that include or produce equivalent effects to reserved places for students from backgrounds of socio-economic exclusion. A second unifying principle is that of representation and targeting. This leads to a range of structural indicators concerning representation of target groups in decision-making structures and processes at national and institutional levels, as well as targeting groups of particular vulnerability such as orphans and children in care, as part of a strategic approach to promoting diversity of access to higher education.

6.1 The Need for a Formal Obligation on Institutions from the State to Improve Access and for Incentives for Third-Level Institutions Such as Differentiated Funding from the State Based on Implementation of Access Goals (Structural Indicator)

A notable theme emerging from the Norwegian national report is that of incentives such as differentiated funding from the State for third-level institutions based on implementation of access goals:

> [the interviewee] argued that differentiated funding of students should be applied: *I believe that we should be more creative and constructive and perhaps say that not all students should be financed in the same manner. If a student possesses certain characteristics, the institution should be eligible for higher economic funding…*More concretely, he asserted that students who were admitted on the background of appreciation of prior learning

experiences perhaps required more follow-up than other to students, and as a result, the institution in question should be entitled to receive more funds. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

A Hungarian Education and Culture Ministry official recognises the need for a clear funding source to give priority for access for socio-economically excluded groups:

And one of the most important things, which should be done, is to have a very clearly defined, separate fund established for curing this problem. The institution which tries to accomplish vocational training and development for underprivileged ones should benefit not only from supporting vocational education but let there also be a dedicated source, which is distributed by competition. (Balogh et al. 2010)

Performance of education institutions in relation to access would be incentivised by the State whether through competition or by encouraging cooperation between universities on this issue.

This point of State-funded financial incentives for private educational institutions in relation to access is addressed in the Slovenian national report:

Private adult education provider (formal and non-formal): According to information gained from our interviewees, students from vulnerable groups such as unemployed, immigrants and those with a disability do not participate in college programmes. Unemployed people are enrolled in secondary education where the expenses are covered from Active employment policy programme. The school does not organise any activities to bring in participants from these groups. Their target population is made by the adults who are able and willing to pay their study. *Do you know what the problem of those unemployed is? Who is going to pay for their study? Certainly this may be an interesting group but we are given nothing, we are financed exclusively from fees of our students and quite often this is a problem—we postpone payments… but unemployed… here?* (Ivančič et al. 2010)

Elsewhere the Slovenian national report acknowledges the following viewpoints of interviewees:

When asking about possible state measures to increase participation from underrepresented groups, both interviewees suggested that the state should perhaps introduce some financial incentives. However respondent 2 was not sure that it would really help though it may be important. What would help is to guarantee a job after finished education. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

The Scottish national report highlights this key role of incentivisation for universities to open their doors to a more diverse student population:

In addition to teaching and research funding, the funding council provides higher education institutions with a Widening Access and Retention Premium (WARP). This funding was introduced to help higher education institutions to improve the retention rate of students from deprived backgrounds. The amount provided to an HEI is based on the number of students from deprived backgrounds; there is a considerable variation between elite and post-92 students in terms of intake of this group of students. (Weedon et al. 2010)

In spite of government initiatives to encourage widening participation, the university's main mission remains focused on world class research and knowledge creation. This according to staff means that it has to attract highly qualified students. Its student population reflects this as it is made up largely of advantaged young students from less deprived backgrounds. Although the university has put measures in place to attract students from more deprived backgrounds it has failed to meet its target on widening participation to socially disadvantaged students. Its funding has not been affected by its failure in meeting this target. This is in contrast to the colleges who are closely tied to specific social inclusion

targets and outcomes and funding is withdrawn and reallocated to another institution if targets are not met. (Weedon et al. 2010)

From this Scottish example, it emerges that incentives must be linked to real consequences.

It is evident from the following account of the Ministry official from Education and Research Ministry in Estonia that there are no developed incentives for universities for access for underrepresented groups, nor specific targets:

> *In Estonia the main underrepresented group are the Russian-speaking population. I think that we should also talk about gender, region, and social economic status. We are trying to bring to the fore the issue of underrepresented groups. Take, for example, the language issue. We have taken it into account in higher education. Then there is the regional aspect. As regards the access of adults to higher education it has not been recognised as a problem yet.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

Significantly, recent reforms regarding university funding in Russia which have moved to a per capita fund, based simply on number of students, serve as a barrier against provision of additional funds to those universities which open their doors to students from socio-economically excluded groups (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010). This system level change of the basis for funding universities in Russia discriminates by impacting against those institutions which perform better in relation to provision of access to traditionally marginalised groups. This change is of serious concern.

A rationale that opening access to university for traditionally excluded groups requires more institutional resources and therefore additional State funding is given in the Belgian national report:

> [The interviewee] explains why so few colleges for higher education and universities have a policy on working with vulnerable groups, the interviewed senior manager states. Working with those groups means a teacher has a different position in the class. It will also involve a higher level of interactivity, because those groups pose different questions, dare to criticise the teacher, need more support, have specific demands about when preparing and taking exams, etc. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

The theme raised here of students who are less conformist and 'dare to criticise the teacher' is arguably an important contribution to the culture of learning in an institution. Course material requires critique and not a mere absorption and transmission of information model (see also Glasser 1969; von Glaserfeld 1995).

An implication of the following interviewee quoted in the Belgian national report is that access to lifelong learning cannot simply be left to market forces:

> *Devoting a great deal of attention to some disadvantaged groups is, put in financial terms, not a very interesting option for an adult education institution. Slow-learning at-risk groups and disadvantaged groups play no visible role in society and often bring along some problems, such as lack of motivation, money problems and other personal issues. Above all, the fact that they are not used to take classes makes them harder to work with and requires the application of a different didactic approach.* (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

It is important also to note that this assumption that those experiencing socio-economic exclusion may be less able academically treats such a group in undifferentiated fashion and fails to recognise exceptional and excellent academic potential among some experiencing social marginalisation.

It is evident that in Austria there exists little or no financial incentive for an institution to broaden its student population to include traditionally underrepresented groups:

> According to the interviewee from operational level, the Austrian education system is very selective and doesn't provide adequate permeability. The promotion of access for risk groups to third level institution should therefore already start in secondary schools, as encouragement or discouragement for further education mainly takes place in this stage. Universities later don't have this extent of influence anymore and besides might not be so interested in changing the selectivity neither. The interviewee from management level confirms the lack of interest in widening the access accordingly: *In my judgment, I don't see such incentives.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

This promotion of incentives clearly invites a role for funding from EU and national levels. The implementation of such incentives also needs to be predicated on the appropriate structures and strategies being in place at national level.

6.2   State-Led Incentives to Different Faculties and Departments Within Third-Level Institutions to Increase Access: A Faculty and Departmental Level Focus to Increase Access (Structural Indicator)

There is little evidence in the national reports of a distinctive faculty or departmental level of strategic focus on access to education for socio-economically excluded groups. It is an area ripe for further policy development.

Though it does not currently exist in Austria, the interviewed Education Ministry official in the Austrian national report is open to development of a coherent access strategy for *teachers* from traditionally marginalised groups and ethnic minorities:

> Is there any State incentive for third level institutions training teachers to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can be teachers at a) elementary school level, b) high school level? *I wouldn't have heard of it.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)
>
> What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive? *We need a different mix of teachers, especially in urban areas where certain ethnic groups may be represented more strongly. There is a strong interested on the operative level. We are still a little behind in strategic planning, which I think stems from the relatively wild re-orientation phase of the whole teacher training sector, with these new Austrian teacher training colleges where we 'melt' more than 40 institutions…On the whole I don't think there are big obstacles. We just have to do it. Maybe it isn't so much a problem of reserving admission, because I think that there are enough places….We just have to improve the attraction of teacher training for these groups, that's what I see as a problem….* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

An Austrian official from the Ministry of Science commented on this issue through emphasising the need for a proactive role from national level to influence performance agreements with universities:

> *There are chances regarding ethnic minorities, I am speaking now about contents of another Ministry, because the discussion in Austria is progressing and it would be necessary and*

appropriate to have a certain inclusion. Obstacles on one hand can be because the teacher training colleges in Austria now basically have a new legal basis, not exactly like the universities' autonomy, but still other control elements have to be implemented.

Owing to political basic conditions there are limits to motivating institutions like universities…Anything going beyond the core business of a university or university of applied science will only be addressed once the core business has been secured…A classical incentive would be the performance agreements between the Ministry of Science and the universities, provided that the necessary funds can be made available. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Much depends here on what is construed as the 'core business' of universities. It would seem that a certain amount of institutional resistance from universities in Austria is expected to a strategic approach to access generally and specifically targeting faculty and departmental levels. Part of this could be overcome through differentiated funding from the State at a departmental and faculty level (in the performance agreements across universities and through a national development plan) to incentivise those departments and faculties which develop proactive access strategies and practices. Höllinger's (2010) words in general are apposite for this structural reform:

The clear structuring of decision-making powers regarding the measures employed to achieve goals that is laid down in the performance agreement and in the goal agreements makes it necessary to monitor continuously the achievement or non-achievement of goals and requires indication of where goals must be adapted to respond to new or previously unknown circumstances. (p. 29)

According to a Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture senior official:

Research shows that within higher education institutions teacher training faculties are at a low level. Margins are rather narrow to stimulate the underprivileged ones to emerge in teacher training. However, they could better deal with disadvantaged students.

Long term programmes for Roma children to become a teacher, do not exist. This would be good to have similar programmes, but stronger, clearer and more opened intentions would be necessary from the government side. (Balogh et al. 2010)

This issue is explored in further detail in interviews in the Hungarian national report:

[There is a] programme called 'Útravaló', which helps the underprivileged ones getting into higher educational institutions. The essence of the programme is to support students to attend faculties they want. The government cannot influence institutions for example to admit 10 Roma on Faculty of Law so that they run legal aid service for Roma after their graduation. This could be done by knowing in advance that Roma students will achieve at least 100 points and for this reason the threshold can be 100. There are no scholarships for let's say to educate more Roma economists. The existence of special scholarships would help the system a lot. Independently from education areas the idea to have more educated Roma is a common effort but we cannot influence people on what to become: lawyer, economist, poet or translator. (Balogh et al. 2010)

The English national report gives an account of institutional and programme area self-assessment which includes an access-related dimension:

One of the unique features of the college is the well developed self-assessment process. The college has an annual self-assessment process and report, which drives development for the following year. Moreover, *as part of the self-assessment process will be to flag up any under*

achieving groups (Senior). In the internal self-assessment report that is completed at the end of every academic year, staff completes an analysis of statistics, including both admission and retention of students. As stated by a senior manager, *one of the things we look at is we look at the ethnicity and profile within our centres. We split it all into subject specific categories.* (Engel et al. 2010)

There is enormous scope for the development of departmental and faculty level self-assessment processes in relation to promotion of access, as part of a wider institutional self-assessment process in this area across Europe and beyond.

Höllinger (2010) contrasts traditional and performance-based allocation mechanisms in higher education, noting in an international context that as a rule financing systems are mixed systems. Finland is cited as an example of a higher education system where a performance-based budget is an independent budget item that is not contained in the basic budget (p. 10). There is a need to establish a fund (nationally and at EU level) where university faculties could compete based on their performance in relation to access—and participation—of specific target groups. In providing this fund at faculty and not simply university level, faculties would be encouraged to engage in a substantial outreach dimension to engage with target groups, including fostering more diverse pathways for admission to the faculty and more preparatory courses prior to admission. Incentives here could also be given for cooperation across universities for access, outreach and community engagement.

It would appear that a departmental and faculty level focus on access to education promotion is radically underdeveloped across many European countries (see also Croxford and Raffe 2013 for a focus on differentiated access across faculties within the same institution in a UK context). It is further evident that the EU Commission is an obvious starting point for providing funding to incentivise progress in this departmental and faculty level for access to education in higher education. The Commission Communication (2005) extracts a focus on differentiation in quality and excellence, stating:

> This requires some concentration of funding, not just on centres and networks that are already excellent (in a particular type/area of research, teaching/training or community service)—but also on those who have the potential to become excellent and to challenge established leaders. (p. 5)

Implicit in this vision, especially regarding community engagement and potential, is that aspects within a third-level institution may excel in the area of good practice in fostering access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups; it need not necessarily be at the level of the whole institution.

This Commission Communication (2005) continues with this theme of targeting resources at subsections within a university institution:

> Additional funding should primarily provide incentives and means to those universities (they exist in every system) and to those groups/individuals (they exist in each university) that are willing and able to innovate, reform and deliver high quality in teaching, research and services. This requires more competition-based funding in research and more output-related funding in education. (p. 8)

Yet the implications of such logic need to be made more transparent with regard to the issue of incentives and means regarding access for groups experiencing social

marginalisation. In other words, this Commission position invites extension of its logic to that of access strategy and implementation, not simply at a university level but also for 'groups/individuals' within a university, in other words, specific university departments, faculties or sections and centres of excellence within departments. Financial incentives at faculty/departmental level to promote access to education for socio-economically excluded groups would follow from such a logic. This strategic implementation approach coalesces with the emphasis in the student-centred research of Downes and Maunsell (2007) on the need for access strategies linked with specific university faculties which are particularly relevant to the needs of the local community in a traditionally working class area of Dublin, Ireland—faculties and departments such as law, psychology, social work, youth work, medicine, education, social policy, community development, health promotion, etc. Ross (2011) has emphasised the importance of diversity of access to the teaching profession in particular.

6.3   An Access Strategy for the So-Called 'Elite' Universities (Structural Indicator)

From the perspective of the Scottish national report, a bifurcation between the so-called 'elite' universities and other third-level institutions emerges as a danger in relation to access to education for marginalised groups:

> What might be some of the future challenges for the policymakers? These include:
>   ensuring that access to higher education is not achieved through the development of a two-tier system. It is clear that widening participation is still of importance but also that the university sector is being encouraged to diversify.…Unless there is a change in the differential values attached to degrees from different types of institutions this is likely to maintain current educational inequalities in society and the labour market. (Weedon et al. 2010)

A Scottish Funding Council interviewee was of the view that 'elite' institutions were unlikely to change their current focus on research and academic excellence:

> *The funding council is charged with widening participation, and we have our 'Learning for all' initiative and are supportive of the widening access forums and the articulation hubs and all this sort of thing. But if one is brutally honest we haven't done very well so far, in times of rising student numbers, we got rising numbers from non traditional backgrounds, but not rising at a faster rate than the rest.* (Weedon et al. 2010)

Whilst there was reference to pressure from the funding council on widening participation in elite institutions, it was clear from the interview with this senior manager of the funding council that the funding council sees admission policy as the remit of the institution:

> *We would take the view formally that admissions policy is a matter for individual institutions.* (Weedon et al. 2010)

In contrast to Bamber's (2005) observation that widening access has moved steadily up the agenda of even the so-called 'elite' universities in the UK, possibly

due to the influence of the then New Labour government, there is a tendency of this interviewee to speak with resignation about the possibility of 'elite' universities opening their doors to allow access for students from diverse backgrounds:

> *Our new corporate plan does talk absolutely openly about diversity of mission of Universities, so we are moving away from this concept of all Universities are the same… they never have been the same, they have different missions, so I do think that we do have opportunities to build greater senses of having a single post-school curriculum within regions. What I don't think we will do, and let's be honest about this, is crack articulation into the research intensive institutions. It's worth continuing to bang at that and to keep them up to the mark, but we are not going to see transformational change in the next five years.* (Weedon et al. 2010)

The Scottish national report overtly raises this concern regarding access and 'elite' universities:

> This quote highlights the tensions in Scotland (and the rest of the UK) between developing internationally acknowledged research and the widening access agenda. There has been public debate around the development of a 'two tier' system of research intensive old/elite[1] and new (post-92) universities which have a stronger focus on teaching. Differential funding allocations may lead to the development a two tier system. In the elite universities there is resistance to the widening access agenda and the proportion of students from low socio-economic backgrounds has actually fallen. (Weedon et al. 2010)

The Scottish national report also raises concerns regarding more recent funding incentives that may undermine access goals:

> Colleges are seen as key to widening participation and new universities as providing a route to degree qualifications for non-traditional students. However, recent funding measures which favour elite universities may undermine further developments of such routes into higher education. (Weedon et al. 2010)

This bifurcation between a university sector and other third-level institutions in relation to access is also notable in Austria:

> In Austria an under-representation of low socio-economic groups can be noted in all higher education systems, whereas universities of applied sciences show a more equal composition of students with respect to the educational backgrounds of their parents. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Resistance to access to education for diverse and traditionally marginalised groups clearly emerges from the following example from the Hungarian national report:

> Almost all students already have a college or university degree when entering the adult education of this university, and most of them also have a stable job. This institute targets the elite with the highest quality programmes, as detailed by the Head of Development in the Centre for Learning Innovation and Adult Learning: … *so the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, okay, not as much as Yale, is an elite university. In our institute, acceptance is determined by professional quality and not by social considerations.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

---

[1] Note the term 'elite' university is often used to refer to the old universities and those that are part of the Russell group (this is a UK-wide group). Russell group universities all have a medical school. They are research intensive institutions.

In total it has 23,000 students. Part of a challenge to this institutional resistance to access to education for diverse and traditionally underrepresented groups would involve the need to question narrow and reductionist conceptions of 'professional quality':

> The [university management] interviewee does not think that they should change their portfolio in order to attract less qualified people (the 70 % of the society mentioned above, that has never participated in adult education). (Balogh et al. 2010)

A key issue here is for recognition that the quality of the learner is to be assessed not simply upon entry but empirically, based on the individual learner's performance while attending courses in the 'elite' university. Experiences of other countries, such as Ireland, are that access students can perform as well as students entering university through traditional pathways. According to a Trinity College Dublin evaluation of the performance of its access students:

> The majority of [Trinity Access Project] graduates entered Trinity College through the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR). The academic achievement levels of TAP [Trinity Access Project] graduates mirrored those attained by the graduate population of Trinity College, with a II.1 class of degree the most frequently awarded. (TAP 2009, p. 4)

Poverty and socio-economic disadvantage is not a commentary on an individual learner's potential and quality, but rather on the external environmental barriers that have served to constrain such potential.

This Irish HEAR scheme offers more flexible academic entry requirements based on socio-economic status, eligibility for a grant, etc. It is important to note that these more flexible academic entry pathways, nevertheless, require a particular standard of achievement, and ongoing supports are also provided for access students by the university. In a Spanish context, Lassibille and Gomez (2008) argue that reducing entry standards to satisfy the demand for higher education from an increasing pool of secondary school leavers, who are not necessarily equipped with the basic skills needed to succeed in higher education, would have adverse effects. An argument for more flexible entry standards to university is not an argument against criteria for minimum entry standards.

As the words of this Estonian Education Ministry official highlight, the issue of access to elite universities requires focus on the earlier stage of elitist selection processes for schools at post-primary and even, as in Estonia, primary level:

> *People believe that if you have finished a so-called elite school (one of the best schools in Tallinn or Tartu that accept 7 year olds to year one on the basis of entrance tests) then you have the right to a state funded study place, because you are better than others. Nobody seems to realise that the advantages of an elite school graduate may be the result of his/her better starting position compared with a graduate from a secondary school in the countryside or a small town. Our society does not recognise that social fairness is a problem. People do not want to see it.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

Koucky et al. (2010) emphasise the role of shorter, vocationally oriented, non-university tertiary institutions in making access to education in Europe move from an elite to a mass phase since the 1960s. They list the development of what were the polytechnics in Britain and Finland, the *Fachhochschulen* in Germany and Austria,

the *Institutes Universitaires de Technologie* and *Sections des Techniciens Supérieurs* in France, Higher Professional Schools in the Czech Republic and Flemish *Hogescholen,* inter alia. Healy and Slowey (2006) provide a rationale for the emergence of the key role of non-university higher education institutions in providing access to education to traditionally underrepresented groups:

> In Ireland, as many other countries, expansion of participation in higher education in general and for non-traditional learners, in particular, has been through the rapid growth of higher education provision in institutions other than universities…from the point of view of learners such institutions tend to be more geographically dispersed and hence located in familiar and convenient localities. In addition they tend to have expertise in offering support to 'new to learning' students…From the point of view of the State…the *per capita* student cost differentials between the different sectors make investment in colleges, institutions of technology and the like relatively more attractive than in universities. (p. 372)

Koucky et al. (2010) make the provocative point that:

> Some experts believe that expansion of tertiary education is only a way of diverting new candidates from elite institutions by offering them second-rate institutions. (p. 12)

Without needing to advocate such a view, while also being sceptical of attributions of generic motivation to institutions and states as if they are a unitary whole rather than constituted of individuals with frequently divergent opinions and motivations, the issue of access to the so-called elite universities for traditionally marginalised groups does need to be tackled at a European level.

The Norwegian national report raises the issue of a perceived tension between a university desire to be in the world's top 100 on international rankings and access issues:

> The university seems to be highly concerned about performing well when it is being measured. This is especially clear when it comes to attempts to climb on international rankings. Then the goals and the strategy for reaching these goals are in many instances designed for remaining well ranked. Consequently, other important areas may be overlooked or given low priority, because they do not make a difference with regard to what the university is being measured against. A previous statement from one informant seemed to affirm such an assumption, as she believed that the social environment of the university should become a part of the Ministry's assessment of the university prior to the annual budgetary allocation. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

This tension is described even more directly by senior university management interviewees in the English national report:

> *the biggest thing that has destroyed all this is the Research Assessment Exercise, which has now become a disaster in Britain; you can't get anybody to do any lifelong learning, any full-time staff because the entire promotion prospects depend upon getting research grants and publishing.* (Engel et al. 2010)

A representative from a different university in England raised the same point:

> The university perceives the current pressure of evaluation, such as the Research Assessment Exercise, limited to highlighting the *fantastic successes* University A has had with more non-traditional students. *There is a need to be judged in some slightly different way…we're all universities, we're all equally good, but we're good in different ways and in different things.* (Engel et al. 2010)

The following account in the Scottish national report explicates one university's attempts to pursue goals both of 'world-leading' academic excellence and of diversity of student intake:

The university's overall mission was the creation and dissemination of knowledge. It marketed itself as a world-leading centre of academic excellence and sought to attract students on the basis of academic excellence. Widening participation measures developed since the publication of the Dearing and Garrick reports have led to the institution developing a number of measures to increase the diversity of its student population. It now sought to attract a *wide range of applicants from different social, cultural and educational backgrounds, including those who come from schools or colleges where relatively few students progress to university, and those who will be the first generation in their families to become university student*. This commitment was potentially in tension with its stress on academic excellence and the admissions office interviewee explained that there were many challenges involved in widening participation. The admission office had developed a set of criteria for admission in consultation with departments across the university. In 2004 a centralised admissions system was set up which meant that issues in relation to increased diversity and equality could be looked at across the institution rather than only within the departments. The institution had an Academic Services Section which is responsible for quality, academic administration, academic committees, academic regulations and change projects. (Weedon et al. 2010)

On the approach of this university, while diverse intake could require additional supports for students, diversity could also contribute to improved quality of the learning process for students.

6.4   Representation of Target Groups (Including Ethnic Minorities in the Decision-Making Structures and Processes at National Level Regarding Access to Education (Structural Indicator))

It is pivotal that a discourse on access and targets centrally involves those being 'targeted' so that they are subjects and not mere objects of social policy. This is occurring to some extent, for example, in Lithuania, according to this response from an Education Ministry official:

Are representatives from risk groups involved in a) creation and b) implementation of strategies and programmes? *They are surely involved in implementation; there are working groups containing representatives from adults' associations. They are involved in creation, too—adults' association creates a strategy. For instance, [representatives] of ethnic minorities give proposals for ethnic minorities [strategy], [representatives] of people with disabilities give them for their integration [strategy]. When there is a common document being arranged, for instance, for examinations' adaptation—[there were] representatives of the people with disabilities.* (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

In contrast, the Russian national report reveals a lack of such involvement from those groups being targeted, according to the response of a senior official of the Committee for Labor and Employment, St. Petersburg:

Let's go back to the risk target groups. Are their representatives involved in these committees? *No, not really.* (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

This lack of stakeholder involvement in Russia is evident from the following response of a senior government official:

The informant from the Committee for Labor told us that representatives of risk groups were not involved in either designing or implementing outreach approaches to reach those who are excluded from education. In fact, this question caused surprise and even some misunderstanding because such idea seemed to her weird and unnecessary.

   I don't really see how this can be possible. People who design outreach strategies are the employers of the Committee, those who work here officially. I don't think we will be inviting other people to increase our outreach work just because they belong to the category we want to reach. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

A barrier to access to education noted in the Hungarian national report is the previous experience of lifelong learning of those in previous decades:

At present, participants in adult education belong to a generation that had bad experience with these kinds of programmes, as they were forced to participate in them after the rapid and over-whelming changes of the 1990s' political and economic transformation. (Balogh et al. 2010)

Yet one way to help overcome such bad experiences of previous programmes among a cohort of learners is to involve them in the decision-making processes regarding access to education and concerning the content and quality of such educational courses. This occurs in at least limited form in Hungary:

Are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in these committees? *I cannot give an exact answer to this question. I suppose, during the consultation period, these action plans will be harmonised through discussions with the affected national representative organisations. Probably there is a civilian circle as well, but I cannot define the way and mode of their existence. Concerning special political issues, the ministry have to consult with representative bodies as provided by law. Such issues are for example: creating new laws and new projects.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

The important point was made by an interviewee in the Hungarian national report that while consultation is obliged by law, this tends to become a formal process rather than being one of substantial voice for diverse groups:

In many other cases strong civilian organisations based on unwritten laws intervene in discussions. There is a consultation period before decisions are made, when interest groups, professional circles, and civilian groups can express their views. According to Hungarian law the consultation is considered to be compulsory. The law defines the ways and modes of discussions, but in my opinion this is not a real partnership. I think, partnership is, when the partner organisations are involved right from the beginning of the process of planning. (Balogh et al. 2010)

Tokenistic consultation leads to a loss of trust, as is highlighted in the Hungarian national report:

The level of trust is rather low in many areas. A basic precondition of trust is transparent planning and cooperation and less ad hoc conciliation. The committees or organisations do not feel that they have a say in most of the issues. Do you mean problems with trust between committees, or trust between the committees and the affected groups? *This is a mutual thing. For example, many groups do not believe that their opinions will be built in the project; however, long term cooperation must be based on mutual trust. Participants do not feel that it is worth taking part actively because feedback is not provided to them in the majority of cases. Though transparency is a very important precondition, it is not a characteristic*

feature of law-making process. As a short summary, I can say that the second condition of trust is not given either. (Balogh et al. 2010)

The English national report reveals that there is not direct representation for target groups. Their voices are mediated by representatives:

Regarding whether WAPSAC (Widening Access and Participation Strategic Advisory Committee) has any representation from target groups, from at risk groups, *Not formally. What it has is practitioners working in the field predominantly, so people who are responsible for this area of policy within institutions, Pro Vice Chancellors with responsibility for, and heads of widening participation would typically be the dominant membership. It also has NUS membership to represent the student voice, but we haven't explicitly, other than in the sense that we are always concerned to make sure that our committees are representative because of our widening equality agenda, but we do not have the learner voice formally represented on that committee, except in one area where we do have some work with disabled groups, where we have an advisory body.* (Engel et al. 2010)
    We then would consult with bodies that represent those learners rather than explicitly putting them on a strategic [committee]…. (Engel et al. 2010)

It is important however to emphasise that consultation may mean a range of different things. Arnstein (1969) sets out a range of useful distinctions here in her 'ladder' of citizen participation. Referring to informing, consultation and placation, Arnstein (1969) categorises these as degrees of tokenism. She describes informing as an important step, but one which often takes the form of a one-way flow of information. Consultation is also an important step, but is not enough if it is not combined with other forms of participation. Placation is moving towards partnership, but it is still tokenistic as it usually takes the form of appointing a few handpicked individuals to a committee. For Arnstein (1969), other steps in ascending order offer degrees of citizen power. These are partnership, delegated power and citizen control. They account for the redistribution of power and decision-making authority in a particular programme or strategy. Citizen control occurs where local communities are in full charge of policy and managerial aspects of a programme. A challenge is to translate this need for socially excluded citizens' power beyond local contexts and programmes to meaningful, substantial participation in national decision-making.

The Irish national report offers examples of university consultation and partnership with members of the Irish Travelling community:

In relation to ethnic minorities, University A targets Irish Travellers, acknowledging that they face particular challenges throughout their education. The Access Service includes members of the Irish Travelling Community in all of its initiatives. They work with local Area Partnerships, communities, Irish Traveller support groups, youth agencies and schools and with the parents and students of the Travelling community to overcome some of the barriers they encounter as they progress through the education system. They run a scholarship programme for Traveller students making the transition to the senior cycle of secondary school. (Dooley et al. 2010)

From this account it is unclear the extent to which the Travelling community are actively involved in the design of such cooperative initiatives rather than being simply recipients of it:

The University works closely with members of the Travelling Community. The Senior Access Official set out that, *the ways of informing the Traveller Community. They have been*

quite successful. We're continuing to work closely with them. The difficulty is to increase engagement for students at a very basic level, from primary to secondary…We have Award Ceremonies…we work with a few schools where there are a high percentage of students from Travelling communities. The Official talks about how long this engagement has been taking place, *I think it's been about 5 years now…We have a number of conferences for parents, for students. They've been very well attended.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

It is notable that this strategic connection with Travellers operates against the backdrop of a wider university commitment to community and civic engagement:

The Senior Access official explains, *I think how we look at access in…[University A] it has also been very positive. It's always been part of our strategic plan for the university.* The Community Engagement strategy is the social component of the university strategy. The Civic Engagement strategy sets out that the university is part of a wider community and it both contributes to and draws on the strengths of this community. (Dooley et al. 2010)

This Irish example gives practical effect to the European Commission dimension of active citizenship for lifelong learning. Schütze (1987) observed the impetus in North America for the majority of university institutions to be built on the idea of a university as a service agency for the whole community. In contrast to the USA and with some exceptions, this specific commitment to community engagement appears much less developed in universities across a number of European countries.

The Estonian national report raised the issue of representation and consultation with members of the Russian-speaking population in Estonia:

How is the Russian-speaking population involved in the development of the policies? *The Students' Union has Russian-speaking members representing the Russian-speaking population. The division between two language groups is not that big in this area.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The following response from an Estonian official raises the question as to whether central government wishes to hear voices of those 'on the ground' who may offer dissent and conflict with their perspectives, and thereby be labelled 'destructive':

Much depends on how active, exuberant and competent local people are. We are interested in partners who can contribute to the process. If a destructive person is appointed we will not be happy but we have to work with that person too …. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The Austrian Education Ministry official cites a type of floodgates argument for limited representation:

In the steering group of lifelong learning we tried to keep it small, as we considered it as not possible to include all the single groups on institutional level. If you invite one group, suddenly 10 others want to join as well, and it would be unfair to make a selection. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

However, commitment to key principles of voice and representation cannot be simply marginalised due to administrative convenience in policy decision-making processes. These examples highlight a certain level of institutional resistance in European contexts to representation of and consultation with members of target groups for access to education in a decision-making process.

6.5   A System of Reserved Places or Equivalent Approach to Increase Participation of Underrepresented Groups at the Third Level (Structural Indicator)

The Scottish national report gives expression to the practice of allocating university places to mature students on a different basis to university entry compared to younger students:

> Admission policies: Mature students could gain entry without the required entry level qualifications normally expected of school leavers. All students were invited to attend an interview. Students aged 21 and over are classified as mature students. (Weedon et al. 2010)

This is also a practice observed in the Irish national report for mature students, which significantly goes further through developing an allocation system of reserved places based on criteria of socio-economic exclusion:

> In 2009, the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) was nationalised. HEAR facilitates school leavers experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage to apply for reserved places in HEIs [Higher Education Institutions]. The seven universities and the seven Colleges of Education extended the scheme from 305 to all 730 secondary schools in Ireland. The new HEAR scheme broadens access opportunities to third level education for school leavers from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds across the country, recognising that disadvantage affects a cross section of all communities and is not confined to clearly identifiable areas or regions. The scheme targets those students who have the ability to succeed in higher education but for a variety of social and economic reasons may not otherwise get the opportunity to attend third level. (Dooley et al. 2010)

The Irish national report continues:

> A Senior Access Official spoke on access and the development of HEAR, *the last 10 years have been magnificent in some respects, there has been an absolute proliferation in terms of the school, community outreach links, huge opportunities for collaboration amongst the HEIs on joint initiatives, aimed at increasing the numbers of non-traditional students. I think one of the great successes has been the Higher Education Access Route, HEAR.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

A clear pattern of institutional resistance to quotas based on socio-economic exclusion or ethnicity is evident across a number of national reports, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. For example, in Bulgaria, a University Vice-Rector stated:

> *Ethnic quotas are definitely not an appropriate or fair method for admission in the higher education school. In actual fact the university is not a social welfare institution. It is true that education together with its selective function has an integrating one as well, but integration should be based on the fundamental relation: abilities-work-achievements-desire for proving oneself in the community and society. The other option would mean suppression of the desire for more knowledge and more skills achieved through education.* (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

Elsewhere in Bulgaria, a consistent pattern emerges of a lack of reserved places and a lack of willingness to even consider such a practice:

> The college does not assign quotas for students from certain social or ethnic groups. Before, during socialism, there were quotas for certain ethnic minority groups, like students from Turkish or Roma origin. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

> The college does not specifically aim to accept a concrete percentage of students from disadvantaged groups. This situation is similar to the ones of other institutions of higher education. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

This resistance to positive discrimination through reserved places at university for socio-economically excluded groups is based on legislation in Bulgaria:

> SWU has no practices of providing quotas for disadvantaged groups. This policy is in compliance with the Higher Education Act, whose Regulation the University is obliged to adhere to. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)
> *No, we shouldn't do that! It is NOT lawful!!* (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

The Lithuanian national report also refers to legal barriers to quotas:

> The practice of reserving places or the imposition of quotas for specific target groups does not exist. All adults must have equal access to education according to equal opportunities and anti-discrimination laws. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

However, it is notable that positive discrimination in education based on socio-economic need does occur in Bulgaria:

> SWU grants social scholarships and those approved have the right to preferences in obtaining student housing. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

Thus, it would seem that the objection is not to the principle of positive discrimination in education based on socio-economic need, but rather its specific application through a quota system. It is the operationalisation in practice of the reserved places that is deemed problematic.

It is evident from the Slovenian national report that there is no system of reserved places, and it is based, as with Bulgaria and Lithuania, on a formalist assumption of equality that does not recognise indirect discrimination, in other words, discriminatory effects and impact:

> There are no additional criteria for non-traditional students. All students regardless of their characteristics have the same possibilities to enrol in programme. *All citizens are equal.* (Ivančič et al. 2010)
> The Institution does not and cannot have any schemes for reserved places for traditionally disadvantaged groups. In Slovenia, this is managed at a national level. At the moment, only quotas for foreign students are in action. There is no law against having quotas but it is customary to adhere to what the relevant ministry is saying concerning reserved places. The faculty could have its own policy concerning the issue. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

Neither is there a system of reserved places for groups experiencing social exclusion in Hungary:

> The ministry and the government do not have tools to influence one's preferences when entering the higher education. It would be possible to do this in two ways (but in the teacher training a strong counter-selection and an over qualification would appear): either with lower scores on entrance exams, (of course the institutions are against this idea) or by raising the norms of higher education. But this version is not supported by the institutions either. (Balogh et al. 2010)

In Estonia, different institutions appear to follow different approaches with the principle of positive discrimination for access for certain groups recognised in places:

There are no admission quotas for different groups [to the university]: *We do not take into account candidates background or nationality; we only look for talent.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

However, some reserved places exist in Estonia at national level, according to the response of this governmental interviewee to the following question:

About half of the 4th level and more than a quarter of the 5th level educational institutions in Estonia reserve some study places for disadvantaged students. What is the government's role in this? *As I said our universities are autonomous. The government has reserved study places for teachers and some places for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

According to a university representative in Estonia, some categories for positive discrimination in relation to access do exist, though not one based on socio-economic disadvantage:

Not much can be done to support the disadvantaged groups: the selection board can admit up to five students who have a disability <u>or</u> were raised in an orphanage <u>or</u> lived in a shelter; they have to pay only the registration fee. If the number of such candidates is bigger five people are selected who are admitted. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The Estonian national report also highlights the following categories for positive discrimination regarding reserved places:

<u>In higher education</u> reserving places for certain groups is not very widely used—only very few free of charge study places are reserved for people with special needs and athletes. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

There is a need for a change of institutional mindset in many university institutions to become more open to access issues and to be more informed about what it would entail, as these examples from the Russian and Austrian national reports illustrate:

When they were asked to define the main reason preventing underrepresented categories from receiving education, they said: *Well, nothing. You go and get it.* (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)
   (Access) Services? How would you define that? (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)
   In Austria generally positive discrimination is not a policy instrument favoured by most actors on policy level or institutional levels. On the level of singular courses there seem to be declarations of intent concerning social inclusion (not necessarily using such a term). On a more general level of the institution as such there seems to be no regulation concerning reserved places or target numbers. This is very much in line with what we know from other tertiary educational institutions where reserved places for any social groups are not regarded as necessary or even desirable. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

This change in institutional mindset is claimed to have occurred in an Irish university education over recent years, largely due to the positive performance of students who entered the university through reserved access places, albeit with certain minimum entry requirements (Dooley et al. 2010).

The Bulgarian national report offers some grounds of support for reserved places from the following interviewee:

The most effective way for improving the access of students from disadvantage groups to higher education is by setting up a special quota for them. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

An interviewee for the Estonian national report also indicated a willingness to discuss system change to promote access:

The government should support and the school should also support talented students who are in a bad economic situation. We will discuss that. So far we have not set such rules. The system may change. The OECD report also indicated that the support system is elitist, those who need help are not supported. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

It is evident from the Austrian national report that institution resistance to reserved places could be overcome through performance agreements led at national level, as illustrated by the response of the following government official:

Is there any State incentive for third level institutions to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can enter courses for professions of particular influence in their local community such as a) law, b) social work, c) youth work, d) psychology, e) other?

In my perception this is no topic. Maybe I would add that the open access for psychological studies has been limited by admission exams but there are no intentions for reservation. This wouldn't be possible for universities owing to the open access but it could be resolved by way of the performance agreements, thus getting the universities to address the target groups. Admission financing could be used to approach these questions, if it was part of the universities of applied science's development plans…would be possible to enforce within the framework of the national development plan, which could also include strategies to widen access for non-traditional groups like working students. This would need to be discussed at the council of ministers within the Austrian national government. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Another interviewee in the Bulgarian report offers the following perspective on a key dimension for access as a different means of obtaining the same aim as reserved places:

The most just way for improving the access of students from disadvantage groups to higher education is through organising preparatory admission courses for them. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

It is evident that a historical suspicion of a quota system lingers from Soviet Union times in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe. A related issue is a concern as to whether reserved places would provide an access process and procedure which is transparent. Corruption concerns and motivational issues for the learner are particular objections to reserved places in a Russian context:

Such quotas decrease the motivation of potential learners rather than attract them to studies. Another counter-argument is that under the conditions of lacking transparency in students' enrollment people who don't really have the right to exemptions use fake documents to get them, whereas real target groups remain out of touch. (Veits and Khokhlova 2011, personal communication)

Szelényi and Aschaffenburg's (1993) overview of the quota system in Hungary in their review of educational inequality from postwar Hungary until the early 1990s referred to the phenomenon of 'outright bribes' and 'informal networking' (p. 295) in securing college places for the 'social elite'. They also observe 'evidence that some parents may even have secured admission for their children by misrepresenting their class position on school application forms' (Szelényi and Aschaffenburg 1993, p. 295),

while rejecting the argument that quotas designed to reverse longstanding inequalities are 'doomed to failure'.

There is a need to recognise that a system of reserved places can even improve quality as more diverse perspectives become offered and—most importantly—that a system of reserved places for socio-economically excluded groups can still require high and differentiated standards of minimum requirements for entry for such target groups. This would provide a key difference from quotas in the Soviet Union. Of further relevance on this issue is that international law not only does not preclude positive discrimination and quotas but at times actively supports principles of positive discrimination.

An argument that entering university through a quota system may be stigmatising for the individual can be countered by recognising that such a pathway for entry is voluntary and it is still open to the individual to seek to enter through the mainstream admission pathway. Further, in countries where alternative pathways for entry exist, such as Ireland, it is an option for the incoming student to keep private the means by which he or she entered the university. Moreover, with a critical mass of students entering university through diverse admission pathways, such stigma would be radically lessened (see also Share and Carroll 2013). An argument against quotas based on stigmatisation is even less convincing where other supports based on need, including socio-economic need, such as campus accommodation, scholarships, etc., are provided. While these other supports could also be construed as stigmatising, the choice to accept them is left to the individual.

Given the negative historical experience of quota systems in many Central and Eastern European countries, it is clear that imposition of a system of reserved places to improve access for socio-economically excluded groups would be counterproductive. Imposition of such a system would also be in tension with EU principles of proportionality and subsidiarity. Nevertheless, there are a number of ways forward in relation to this key issue for access. One way forward here is for incentivised schemes of reserved places for institutions to offer, rather than necessarily mandatory schemes. In such an incentivised scheme for providing reserved places for socio-economically excluded groups, a concern with quality would be addressed through provision of a range of minimum standards for entry. Such minimum standards, while different from a mainstream admission pathway, would nevertheless allow for relatively stringent criteria for access combined with an opportunity for third-level institutions to assess the performance of such nontraditional students who enter university through this broadened pathway.

Another option would be to provide an incentive for a university to reach a specific target of students from socio-economically excluded backgrounds and leave it open to the institution to devise different pathways than reserved places to meet this target. In other words, a system of reserved places is a means to an end of increasing access, and the same goal could be met through other means and pathways; as was suggested by an interviewee in the Bulgarian national report, increased investment in preparatory admission classes for nontraditional students, including those experiencing socio-economic exclusion, could be another effective pathway to increase access.

6.6   A Coherent Support Strategy for Access to Third-Level Education for Orphans and Young People in Care (Structural Indicator)

Based largely on developmental psychologist Bowlby's (1968, 1973, 1980) significant work on attachment theory for the World Health Organization, orphanages have been phased out in many countries due to recognition of the need of children for attachment to a specific sustained caregiver rather than to a series of members of staff in an orphanage. Subsequent to Bowlby's work, other research in developmental psychology has emphasised the pivotal role of one significant other for promoting mental health (Levitt 1991; Antonucci 1990). Thus, orphanages have been largely replaced by adoption and foster care in Western Europe. However, orphanages still remain in a number of countries in Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia. Against this backdrop, the question arises as to how to better support orphans and those in care, in order to facilitate their access to lifelong learning, including university education.

The situation in Estonia reveals a lack of systematic and strategic support for orphans in relation to access to lifelong learning and university education, with a rather ad hoc approach being employed on this issue:

> *Some students come from children's homes. They receive support from local authorities. Children's homes also take interest in their progress.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

A different school in the Estonian national report illustrates a largely informal relation and strategy of supports for orphans:

> *Problematic students often come from children's homes. We cooperate with children's homes, keep in touch.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

Strategic direction is clearly needed at national level for this target group for access, including through dialogue with the young people themselves about how the Estonian State can better support their education and provide them with emotional support during their time of accessing education, where needed.

The Estonian national report provides the following figures for orphans:

> Orphans and children deprived of parental care (according to the Ministry of Social Affairs 1,420 children lived in children's homes and in foster care as at 15th May 2008; as at 31st December 2007, 455 children were in foster care. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The need for strategic direction for access to education for orphans, including provision of necessary supports, appears to be particularly acute in Russia. The Russian national report gives the following account:

> The number of orphans in Russia remains on a very high level and most institutions for children left without parental custody are full. Orphans under 18 years live in orphanages or board school and receive regular primary and secondary education. The level of education in those schools is normally lower than in regular schools; therefore, orphans have quite unfavorable conditions when entering vocational and higher professional education institutions because their qualification is often lower than that of their counterparts. Many of them, however, aren't eager to continue their education. Unfortunately, the statistics on educational and career paths of young people leaving orphanages is unavailable. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

Specific supports for orphans described in the Russian national report are as follows:

> According to the law 'On Education' from 2000, orphans and children without parental custody are accepted to the formal vocational and higher professional education institutions without competition. In other words, they can pass all exams with the lowest pass grade and be accepted. The age limit for this law has been changed from 18 to 23 years. Orphans and children without parental custody are provided with free education and full provision during all time of their studies. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)
>
> All orphan students, along with the academic scholarship, also receive monthly social scholarship. Today, their academic scholarship is 400 rubles and the social scholarship is 600 rubles. Therefore, an orphan student can rely on a 1000-ruble scholarship each month. Besides, the state gives more money to the school in order to provide orphan students with better lunches, stationary and hygienic products (tooth paste, soap, etc.,). (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

However, there are a range of barriers and problems for this group, according to the Russian national report:

> The measures aimed at increasing the access to education for another socially disadvantaged category—orphans - also proved to be malfunctioning…many institutions try to avoid such help to their learners in order to get rid of extra expenses. The second major problem is that qualification of orphans received in orphanages and board schools is so low that they are unable to pass entry exams even with the minimal result. Therefore, the only option for them is very low-rated education institutions with non-demanded specialisations and no competition due to low interest to them on the part of both learners and employers. The number of orphans entering such institutions is still very low. Therefore, it appears that orphans, who often require much more adaptation and social inclusion than their counterparts a priori, have no opportunities to obtain higher education despite the privilege conditions provided by the law. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

In the Lithuanian national report, it is evident that supports for orphans are not sustained and may occur in an ad hoc manner:

> As there is The Vilnius SOS Children's Village in the neighborhood in Ozo Street where there are 70 orphaned or abandoned children living, the school management and school teachers organised students' voluntary work there. However, this was only for two years and now according to the management only some individual students are involved, but no organised efforts are taken. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

The Lithuanian national report also highlights a missed opportunity for interaction and supports between a teacher training institution and an orphanage:

> *Two meters away from the Teacher Training Faculty there is a Centre of Orphaned and Abandoned Children. Our faculty prepares social workers…but there's no contact with them.* (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

This is further indicative of a lack of strategic approach for orphans and children in care to access education.

This group may be particularly vulnerable in the context of the current recession. This is an implication of the following words in the Bulgarian national report:

> The financial crisis will undoubtedly create serious difficulties for the various aspects of university education, as well as for certain social groups. These difficulties will be many times stronger for the representatives of disadvantaged groups because their resources for coping with the crisis are much less as compared to the other groups. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

Social and emotional supports, academic supports and broader career advice is clearly needed to be made available to orphans in the context of Russia, Estonia and Lithuania, as well as Hungary and Bulgaria, where orphans were also referred to in their national reports. Financial support for fees and accommodation is an important provision, but it requires much more than this to ensure access to education for this particularly vulnerable group.

All of these structural indicators, whether focusing on State incentives or representation and targeting, require a strategic approach at national level and a commitment of financial and personnel resources, to instantiate these structural indicators in practice. The European Commission must be a key driver of these approaches, if more than lip service is to be paid to access and social inclusion issues in higher education in Europe.

Summary of Higher Education: Macro-Exosystem A common thread among a number of structural indicators highlighted in this chapter is a focus on State-led incentives for promoting access to higher education for socio-economically marginalised groups. This incentivisation process is interrogated as needing to occur for third-level institutions, including at distinct faculty and departmental levels, in the so-called 'elite' universities, as well as through pathways that include or produce equivalent effects to reserved places for students from backgrounds of socio-economic exclusion. It is important that incentives be linked to real consequences.

In a number of countries, it is evident that there is little incentivisation taking place at national level for third-level institutions to open their doors to groups experiencing social marginalisation. There is a need to establish a fund (nationally and at EU level) where university faculties could compete based on their performance in relation to access—and participation—of specific target groups. In providing this fund at faculty and not simply university level, faculties would be encouraged to engage in a substantial outreach dimension to engage with target groups, including fostering more diverse pathways for admission to the faculty and more preparatory courses prior to admission. Poverty and social marginalisation is not a commentary on an individual learner's potential and quality, but rather on the external environmental barriers that have served to constrain such potential. It is important to emphasise that an argument for more flexible entry standards to university is not an argument against criteria for minimum entry standards. Incentives here could also be given for cooperation across universities for access, outreach and community engagement. The issue of access to 'elite' universities also requires focus on the earlier stage of elitist selection processes for schools at post-primary and even, as in Estonia, primary level. A number of arguments are considered for and against reserved places for socio-economically excluded groups at the third level.

Further key principles are those of representation and targeting. This leads to a range of structural indicators concerning representation of target groups in decision-making structures and processes at national and institutional levels, as well as targeting groups of particular vulnerability such as orphans and children

in care, as part of a strategic approach to promoting diversity of access to higher education. It is pivotal that a discourse on access and targets centrally involves those being 'targeted' so that they are subjects and not mere objects of social policy. Commitment to key principles of voice and representation cannot be simply marginalised due to administrative convenience in policy decision-making processes. Some examples are highlighted in a number of national reports of a certain level of institutional resistance in European contexts to representation of and consultation with members of target groups for access to education in a decision-making process. While orphanages have been largely replaced by adoption and foster care in Western Europe, they still remain in a number of countries in Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia. Against this backdrop, the question arises as to how to better support orphans and those in care, in order to facilitate their access to lifelong learning, including university education. Financial support for fees and accommodation is an important provision in some countries, but it requires much more than this to ensure access to education for this particularly vulnerable group.

References

Antonucci, T. C. (1990). Social supports and social relationships. In R. H. Binstock & L. K. George (Eds.), *Aging and the social sciences* (3rd ed.). San Diego: Academic Press.

Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Planning Association, 35*(4), 216–224.

Balogh, A., Józan, A., Szöllősi, A., & Róbert, P. (2010). *The institutional aspects of adult education in Hungary*. Budapest: TARKI Social Research Centre. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Bamber, J. (2005). Curriculum design: Encouraging special attention in non-traditional students. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, The Journal of The Institute for Access Studies and the European Access Network, 7*(2), 23–38.

Bowlby, J. (1968). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 1. Attachment*. New York: Basic Books.

Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 2. Separation, anxiety, and anger*. London: Penguin Books.

Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 3. Loss: Sadness and depression*. New York: Basic Books.

Boyadjieva, P., Milenkova, V., Gornev, G., Petkova, K., & Nenkova, D. (2010). *The role of Bulgarian educational institutions for the promotion of access of adults to formal education*. Sofia: Institute of Sociology. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Communication from the Commission. {SEC (2005) 518}. *Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: Enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy*.

Croxford, L., & Raffe, D. (2013). Differentiation and social segregation of UK higher education, 1996–2010. *Oxford Review of Education, 39*(2), 172–192.

Dooley, C., Downes, P., Maunsell, C., & McLoughlin, V. (2010). *Promoting social inclusion: The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Ireland*. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Downes, P., & Maunsell, C. (2007). *Count us in: Tackling early school leaving in South West Inner City Dublin. An integrated response*. Dublin: South Inner City Community Development Association (SICCDA) & South Inner City Drugs Task Force.

Engel, L., Holford, J., & Mleczko, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education.* Nottingham: University of Nottingham. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Glasser, W. (1969). *Schools without failure*. New York/London: Harper & Row.

Healy, T., & Slowey, M. (2006). Social exclusion and adult engagement in Lifelong Learning—Some comparative implications for European states based on Ireland's Celtic Tiger experience. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 36*(3), 359–378.

Höllinger, S. (2010). *Financing of higher education*. Overall HE-financing and State-to-HE institution funding. Institutional funding mechanisms. Student financing. Vienna/Pristina: Institutional Development for Education Project.

Ivančič, A., Mohorčič Špolar, V. A., & Radovan, M. (2010). *The case of Slovenia. Access of adults to formal and non-formal education—Policies and priorities.* Ljubljana: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Koucky, J., Bartušek, A., & Kovařovic, J. (2010). *Who gets a degree? Access to tertiary education in Europe 1950–2009*. Prague: Education Policy Centre, Charles University.

Kozlovskiy, V., Khokhlova, A., & Veits, M. (2010). *The role of Russian educational institutions in the promotion of access for adults to formal education.* St. Petersburg: Department of Sociology, Saint Petersburg State University. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Lassibille, G., & Gomez, L. N. (2008). Why do higher education students drop out? Evidence from Spain. *Education Economics, 16*(1), 89–105.

Levitt, M. J. (1991). Attachment and close relationships: A life-span perspective. In J. L. Gewirtz & W. M. Kurtines (Eds.), *Intersections with attachment*. Hillsdale: Erlbaum.

Rammel, S., & Gottwald, R. (2010). *Social inclusion in formal and non formal adult education: Findings from Austrian institutions and government representatives.* Krems: Danube University. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Ross, A. (2011, December 8–9). What makes for fair education and how much is possible? Keynote Presentation, Measures to Combat Educational Disadvantage—A European Consultation Symposium. European Commission, Directorate-General, Education and Culture, Brussels.

Schütze, H. G. (1987). New frontiers-old barriers: Adults in higher education: An introduction to the issues. In H. Schütze, M. Slowey, A. Wagner, & P. Paquet (Eds.), *Adults in higher education: Policies and practice in Great Britain and North America* (pp. 7–20). Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.

Share, M., & Carroll, C. (2013). *Ripples of hope: The family and community impact of Trinity College Dublin access graduates*. Dublin: Children's Research Centre, Trinity College.

Stensen, O.-A., & Ure, O.-B. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Norway.* Oslo: Fafo—Institute for Labour and Social Research. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Szelényi, S., & Aschaffenburg, K. (1993). Inequalities in educational opportunity in Hungary. In Y. Shavit & H.-P. Blossfeld (Eds.), *Persistent inequality: Changing educational attainment in thirteen countries* (pp. 273–302). Oxford: Westview Press.

Taljunaite, M., Labanauskas, L., Terepaite-Butviliene, J., & Blazeviviene, L. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education.* Vilnius: Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Social Research Institute. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Tamm, A., & Saar, E. (2010). *LLL2010 Subproject 5 Estonia country report*. Tallinn: Institute of International and Social Studies/Department of Social Stratification.

Trinity College Dublin. (2009). *'What happened next?' The employment and further study experiences of Trinity graduates 2002–2008*. Dublin: TAP -Trinity Access Programmes.

Vermeersch, L., & Vandenbrouke, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Belgium's Flemish Community*. Leuven: KatholiekeUniversiteit. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Von Glaserfeld, E. (1995). *Radical constructivism: A way of knowing and learning*. London: Falmer Press.

Weedon, E., Riddell, S., Purves, R., & Ahlgren, L. (2010). *Social inclusion and adult participation in lifelong learning: Officials', managers' and teachers' perspectives*. Edinburgh: University of Scotland. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Chapter 7
Access to Higher Education for Socio-economically Marginalised Groups: Indicators at Micro-Meso Levels

Access strategies require not only a macro-exosystemic focus but one that scrutinises individual third-level institutions, as well as relations between institutions and local communities and target groups at micro-mesosystemic levels. Breaking down cultural barriers of socio-economic exclusion requires a firm strategy expressed at the institutional level; it necessitates that a university or other third-level institution is proactive in this regard. Key dimensions of institutions' strategies interrogated in this chapter include a dynamic approach to engagement that embraces a range of features including availability of campus resources to socio-economically excluded groups and communication with spokespeople for marginalised groups additionally involving formal links with representatives of target groups. Again as at the macro-exosystemic level, the theme of representation and targeting comes to the fore.

A dynamic outreach approach is argued to go beyond mere information-based approaches while outreach also needs to embrace common generational cohorts of immigrants, primary and secondary school students and to develop preparatory admission classes. A further corollary of the need for a dynamic approach for the institution is to recognise need for internal institutional change, including for staff attitudes and campus use of resources.

7.1   Education Institutional Strategies for Access for Groups Experiencing Socio-economic Exclusion (Structural Indicator)

The English national report highlights how particular third-level educational institutions place access central to their institutional ethos, strategies and structures. In the words of the Inclusion Manager:

> In the college governance, *there is a standards and diversity committee, and that's like board of governors' level, I attend that, where that really does monitor everything we're doing*. The purpose of the standards and diversity committee is *to make sure that those*

whole access, widening participation, equalities issues were being acted to …we do go out and work in communities where the need is, and it is almost always successful. If you go out and work with people and I think that would be a major part of our tactic, if people aren't coming in, go out and work with them. (Engel et al. 2010)

A similar strategic, structural focus for access to education is evident from this example of a tertiary institution in the Scottish national report:

This strategic plan also highlighted the role that the college played in the community and emphasised its key aims of inclusion and widening access:
   We will continue to ensure access to provision via community-based learning to some of (the city's) poorest communities….it is crucial that we maintain and build on our commitment to be an inclusive and outward looking institution that welcomes and supports learners from all communities. (Weedon et al. 2010)

The Bulgarian national report highlights the explicit expression of access priority goals in the mission statement of a Bulgarian university:

Through its Mission, Shumen University strives to provide a quality education, to introduce innovative educational methods and practices to improve the access of the disadvantaged groups to education, and to maintain contacts with local communities. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

The Irish national report highlights a consistent feature of Irish universities, namely, the availability of a distinct role and service in the institutions for promotion of access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups:

The Senior Access Official explained, *on the access side, I look after students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and my remit is to encourage students from those backgrounds into third level education.* The access service's schools programme works in partnership with school and college staff, local communities, undergraduates, and young people attending primary and secondary schools to change attitudes to education in the community and ensure the students stay within the school system and continue onto third level. (Dooley et al. 2010)

It is important to emphasise that this access office operates against the backdrop of institutional structures and strategies to promote access to education for socio-economically excluded groups and other underrepresented groups.

This Belgian university has the following mission statement:

University College Ghent strives to excel in education, research, service provision and practice of the arts. Through the expertise of its staff and graduates and the valorisation of its research, University College Ghent is making a valuable contribution to a critical, creative and open society. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

Significantly, there is no explicit goal here of the university's role in relation to the promotion of access, social inclusion and cultural diversity.

A Slovenian interviewee implies that national influence would prompt a strategic approach to access, but in the absence of such national direction, the institution adopts neither strategy nor structure in this area:

There is also no formal committee to promote and implement an agenda for increased access in the college and they are also not systematically monitoring the number of marginalised students. *We would tackle this if the number or pressure were, let's say, bigger.* (Ivančič et al. 2010)

According to the Lithuanian national report, there is a need for external review of strategies and structures of educational institutions in relation to access. This implies direction from a national level for such reviews:

> It may be presumed that a sceptical attitude to institutional strategies may be a reason why there is no clear structure and systemic approach while promoting the access of adults to the education system. Moreover, even though internal evaluation is being constantly conducted, there is no external review process. A problem of developing a systemic approach could be solved if 'paper' strategies and implemented programmes would be more interrelated. Also, the system of external review should be better elaborated. The current situation states that promotion and implementation of agenda for increased access is considered rather additional work than the main work for some employees at university. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

Finance appears to be one barrier, at least in Lithuania, to an institutional set of strategies and structures to implement access to education for traditionally under-represented groups:

> According to management representative's comments [in a State university] there are not sufficient finances for specialised committees working on increased access. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

However, a key issue is one of strategic priority and appropriate implementation structures if access to education were a sufficient priority at national and institutional level. Much seems to depend on the individual will of people in power in educational institutions in Lithuania, according to its national report (Taljunaite et al. 2010).

A similar picture to Lithuania emerges in Austria where there is little evidence of educational strategy or structure to guide or drive access to education for marginalised groups:

> Neither of the interviewees could tell about any institutional support services [in this university] in order to facilitate access for socially disadvantaged groups. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

The Austrian national report continues with the following interviewee response to the question, 'Is there a Social Inclusion/Access/Lifelong Learning Committee at institution level to promote and implement an agenda for increased access in your college? If yes, please give details':

> According to the interviewee from management level, lifelong learning is a focus in the university. A particular committee, which deals with social or educationally disadvantaged groups doesn't exist as far as the person knows. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

A common thread emerges from the above example of this Austrian university: There is an absence of strategic policy level commitment at the institutional level to access and social inclusion. This is given expression through the lack of structures such as key committees to promote these issues within the university. Against this backdrop it is unsurprising that there are no institutional supports at the university to facilitate access and social inclusion. This is not a case of lip service being paid to access issues; there is not even lip service being paid. Neither institutional discourse nor practice promotes access in any way for socio-economically excluded groups in their examples.

Of further concern is that both interviewees from senior management in the university are of the view that this university is typical in Austria with regard to access issues:

In your opinion, with regard to promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups, is your organisation a) typical of most formal educational organisations, b) more developed or c) less developed? Please explain your answer. *I would estimate it as typical, as average, like other higher education institutes in the tertiary sector, particularly universities. I don't have the impression, that this is a priority in the universities at the moment, that they would start an initiative together in this direction.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

However, there is at least some openness to reform in this area from an interviewee in a university of applied sciences in Austria:

Directly regarding a committee (in charge of social inclusion) I don't know anything right now. But you make me think this would be a good idea, to introduce certain structures concerning this, to have some committee that organises things and looks at the whole topic. This is a good idea. As I said, there are some bodies which are dealing with this. But one to look only at this? (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

It is notable that an Austrian Ministry of Science official indicated the relatively low priority given to social inclusion and access at both national level and also by Austrian university institutions:

Are there any plans to develop committees to develop policy and monitor its implementation in any of these areas where there are no current committees? *Social inclusion is basically acknowledged as part of the activities enforced by the EU but there are no current plans to set up new groups.*

What are the obstacles to establishing any of these committees in your government ministry? *The Ministry of Science includes issues like social inclusion, access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups and non-formal education as part of lifelong learning. I don't see the possibility of establishing a separate group for each of these issues concerning universities, because we would not get their acceptance for these issues. We rather use the lifelong learning topic in general and then also give attention to the three mentioned issues (social inclusion, access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups and non-formal education)…The community/stakeholders as far as universities are concerned would not consider these issues as relevant enough to spend staff resources on them. We deal with the topic under the header of lifelong learning and partly also within the framework of European Qualification Frame or also NQF. More is hard to achieve at the moment.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Workload and financial obstacles are perceived as further barriers to the development and implementation of an access strategy in Austria, according to the Ministry official.

The Ministry official presents a picture of momentum being required from international and national sources to raise awareness of access issues at the institutional level in Austria. If educational institutions receive international and national funding, there is a clear need for this to be employed as leverage with institutions to open their doors to a wider access strategy and agenda, including through dedicated strategic committees to monitor progress with regard to implementation of access to education and supports for such students' ongoing participation in education.

Institutional strategies must also take on board the issue of change to the institutional culture itself of the university. The Bulgarian national report observes initial efforts at institutional cultural change:

Being a University of tolerance, we have taken several initiatives to improve the access to our university. These include: accepting students from disadvantaged groups who have not made the list of admitted candidates, improving the access to the university buildings (building ramps and, restrooms for people with disabilities, etc. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

There is a need to move beyond a focus on 'tolerance' to one of celebration of institutional cultural and subcultural diversity.

An Austrian university interviewee invokes a conception of 'strange'ness which is somewhat resonant with Jarvis' (2007) 'disjuncture':

With students, this has been proved, there are quite different expectations and different preconditions if they come from different social backgrounds. We have known about that for decades. It starts with language. No, it starts with people from less educated backgrounds experiencing the university as something strange. Those children coming from academic background, they know how things work because they have learnt about it in an informal way at home. Children from backgrounds far away from University, they need to be informed thoroughly, need to be supported, need to be socialised in a respective way. The university is also a social system, meaning they need to develop some understanding of the university in the first place and they need support for this. That is the challenge. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Developing Jarvis' concept of disjuncture would add to the above view of this university senior management official in an Austrian university that it is not simply about assimilation into the institutional culture—the university institutional culture itself must also change.

A 2006 communication from the Commission, cited in the Council Resolution of November 2007 on modernising universities emphasised 'the importance of increasing lifelong learning opportunities, widening higher education access to non-traditional and adult learners and developing the lifelong learning dimension of universities'. Furthermore, it made explicit:

The need for universities to have sufficient autonomy, better governance and accountability in their structures to face new societal needs and to enable them to increase and diversify their sources of public and private funding in order to reduce the funding gap with the European Union's main competitors.

In reconciling this balance between the need for giving increased force to the imperative of widening access to education for marginalised groups, on the one hand, and university autonomy, on the other hand, the discourse tends to focus on *incentives* for institutions to improve access. A Commission staff working document (2009) gives an account of various plans and incentives to encourage higher education institutions to open up to lifelong learners based on evidence from countries set out in national reports that informed this Commission document. Part of this incentivisation process clearly needs to address the systemic gaps across educational institutions in a wide range of countries in relation to a clearly articulated commitment to access to education for marginalised groups in their mission statements, strategic plans and institutional structures to implement and review such plans.

7.2   Development of Outreach Institutional Strategies That Go Beyond Mere Information-Based Models (Structural Indicator)

The European Council conclusions on investing in education and training (2013) accentuate the need for 'providing information on access to lifelong learning services'. Similarly, the European Commission (2006) gives emphasis to an information-based approach to reaching those traditionally excluded and alienated from the educational system:

> More information about the advantages of attending higher education is essential, notably for people who do not attempt to enter higher education because they are unaware or unconvinced of the opportunities it affords. (Lee and Miller 2005; Studley 2003; Botelho et al. 2001) (p. 26)

This point is not without validity as, for example, according to the National Adult Learning Survey (Scotland) (Ormston et al. 2007), learners are more likely to have received information about learning than those with low/no qualifications. A Commission staff working document (2009) reiterates this preoccupation with an informational focus and conceptualises this issue in terms of efficiency and its lack:

> One of the biggest barriers to adults wishing to develop their key competences is information gaps and lack of efficient communication to reach those who are most at risk of social exclusion (in particular low qualified people) and being unemployed. (p. 81)

However, the limitations of such information-based approaches need to be more fully recognised with regard to the target group of those experiencing socio-economic marginalisation. The Council Recommendation (April 2013) on the Youth Guarantee appears to broaden this approach slightly through recognition of the need for 'effective outreach' and 'awareness', when recommending that EU Member States 'develop effective outreach strategies towards young people, including information and awareness campaigns…'.

The weaknesses of informational-type approaches have already been recognised in psychology internationally with regard to drug prevention strategies (Morgan 2001). Information about different drugs by public authorities tends to have the unintended effect of promoting these drugs rather than promoting avoidance of substance use. It is the construction of an abstract audience in informational approaches which is being increasingly challenged. The notion of an abstract other or abstract audience has been criticised by Gilligan's (1982, 1990) research in developmental psychology.[1] While discussing Gilligan's (1982) challenge to abstraction of the logic of justice in moral reasoning, Benhabib (1987) states:

---

[1] Similarly in social psychology and in postmodern psychology, Gergen's (1994) emphasis on clarifying the communicative goals of argument is also to some degree a contextualising of the abstract audience:

'Is argument being carried out so as to sharpen and elaborate opposing positions, yield victory to one side or another, locate areas of compromise, entertain, develop public support, or for other

In assuming the standpoint ['of the generalised other'], we abstract from the individuality and concrete identity of the other. We assume that…what constitutes his or her moral dignity is not what differentiates us from each other, but rather what we…have in common. (p. 87)

Habermas (1987) traces the construction of the autonomous subject, the abstract individual, to the emergence of modernity. Other well-known challenges to the construction of an abstract subjective individual include Heidegger's (1927) conception of *Dasein*, Derrida's (1981) attempts to deconstruct subjectivity and Levinas' (1991 [1969]) conception of the 'face' of the other. These are all attempts to challenge the assumed primacy of an abstract self-contained subject underpinning construction of an impersonal other.

Contextual relational dimensions to communication in reaching those from marginalised groups is a dimension that needs much more understanding in outreach strategies for access. This contextual and often interpersonal relational dimension challenges the relevance and efficacy of informational approaches that abstract from the individual to whom communication is being made. This is evident, for example, from the following Norwegian example:

Asked whether parents with immigrant background were not reached, our informant replied, *No, it was too difficult, because it had to be a person from the local environment which could, who knew different places and who was engaged, quite simply.* (Stensen and Ure 2010)

My informant had an immigrant background and her experiences and knowledge was crucial for how they decided to recruit participants to the project. She knew where to reach them and how to move forward. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

Similarly, the Belgian national report highlights the severe limitations to an informational approach to an abstract other:

The Sociale School Heverlee Centrum voor Volwassenenonderwijs vzw (SSH-CVO) also uses printed press (programme brochure, local newspaper, flyers, adverts, documents, etc.) and online tools (such as a website) to increase the access to their educational provision. Although this type of advertisement reaches the most people, a recent evaluation research by the SSH-CVO has shown the effects of this strategy are rather minimal. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

This Belgian national report continues with a related point from an interviewee:

Poor people have the feeling they belong to a different class, a different culture. They have a different way of handling written and printed information. It is hard to acculturate those people into a culture of learning that we are used to. They have a different language, they learn in different ways, etc. I would call it 'survival learning' – learning the things one needs in order to survive well. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

It cannot be assumed that institutions are even willing or aware of the need to develop an outreach dimension targeting underrepresented groups. This seems to be especially the case from the following Austrian and Bulgarian examples:

---

purposes?…by articulating the relational goals, interlocutors may wish to open alternatives to traditional practices of contentiousness'. (p. 63)

The institution doesn't explicitly build bridges to underrepresented communities; however the interviewee from management level considers enhanced attempts in informing students as an implicit measure to promote access. The institution recently got very active in organising orientation events, implementing information facilities and in participating at education fairs…The interviewee from operational level again claimed that building bridges to underrepresented communities is not the mission of universities, *That never occurred to me, that it is the mission to approach all groups of society. That is not its mission. Scientific education doesn't have this mission.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

   Disadvantaged groups obtain comprehensive information about policies of admission. There are no special strategies for reaching these groups. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

This lack of awareness or willingness on the part of the third-level institution to seek out students from traditionally underrepresented groups is a clear barrier to access and development of an appropriate outreach strategy.

Some of the interviewees' accounts across different countries recognise the limitations of informational approaches reliant on a logic of abstraction that is not tailored to the needs and experiences of the traditionally marginalised groups. Thus, for example, in the Belgian national report:

A lot of the promotion to open access for adults at risk is done through word-of-mouth-advertisement. According to both interviewees this is by far the most effective form of widening access. The organisation tries to cultivate this type of advertisement through different strategies:

- Community leaders and key figures in a community can take on the role of 'key influencers'. The SSH-CVO tries to give them incentives to do so;
- Participants and former participants are just as important in the process of widening access. They tell others about their learning experiences or someone in their community will hear about the courses, etc. Both strategies take limited budget but have unlimited potential. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

This abstraction of the audience for communication of information in traditional information-reliant approaches to promotion of education needs further critique. The very notion of an abstract impersonal other is a distinct socio-historical construct emanating from ancient Rome. As Hegel (1830–1831) noted, 'these two elements, which constitute Rome – political universality on the one hand, and the abstract freedom of the individual on the other – appear in the first instance, in the form of subjectivity' (p. 279). In Hegel's (1830–1831) words, the abstract Roman state and political constitution:

on the other side creates a personality [of citizenship] in opposition to that universality - the inherent freedom of the *abstract* ego, which must be distinguished from individual idiosyncrasy. (p. 279)[2]

The Roman abstract subject (abstract other) as indifferent to individuality contrasts with the ancient Greek emphasis on individuality.

In the tradition of narrative, cultural psychology (Bruner 1992; Bruner and Amsterdam 2000), there is a need to move beyond processing of information to construction of meaning and relationships for these target groups in relation

---

[2] Hegel (1830–1831) continues with regard to Rome: 'For Personality constitutes the fundamental condition of legal Right: it appears chiefly in the category of Property, but it is indifferent to the concrete characteristics of the living spirit with whom individuality is concerned' (p. 279).

to educational institutions. The approach needs to be interpersonal, relational, contextual and pragmatic (see also Downes 2004a). It must engage with the narratives and meaning world of the individuals being reached out to. In the context of initial assessment of adult learners with low literacy levels, a review of international literature emphasised the importance of interpersonal, nonthreatening dimensions to an engagement process with the learner (Carrigan and Downes 2009).

Outreach needs to be distinguished not only from information-based approaches but also from a particular variant of an informational approach, namely, a top-down PR-type approach employed in a Russian example:

> Are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in a) designing, b) implementing outreach approaches to reach those most excluded from education?
>
> *No. And I don't really see how this can be possible. People who design outreach strategies are the employers of the Committee, those who work here officially. I don't think we will be inviting other people to increase our outreach work just because they belong to the category we want to reach. We prefer to work with professional PR specialists who know how to attract people to our programmes. Besides, we cannot say people aren't addressing us. Our Committee has a large advertising campaign which provides that we're known in the city and people come to us if they want to be helped.* (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

It is not mere information gaps that are lacking, but rather gaps in strategies and modes of communicating.

It is evident that Belgium (Flanders) has realised the importance of going beyond mere information approaches in outreach to facilitate access to education for marginalised groups, perhaps more than many other countries based on the national reports:

> Another important outreach strategy is working together intensely with so-called community leaders (a person who plays a key role in organising or running activities for the community and who is well known and respected in that locality). As the community leaders are already engaged in processes of community building, they have the power and the role to enhance the participation of others in the community. That is why finding those key persons is an essential task of the organisational staff (tutors and educational experts). Citizenne does not simply use the community leaders as a means to attract new target groups. The organisation also trains and coaches them to be organisors and tutors themselves. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

The Belgian national report continues:

> *Simply sending or mailing flyers and brochures to potential participants may be counterproductive. It is better to hand it to them… For some groups, like immigrants, calling them by phone or texting a message by mobile phone (not more than one or a few hours before the activity takes place) is one of the most effective communication strategies.* (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

An important example from the Scottish national report of outreach as networking with NGOs and representatives of traditionally marginalised groups is as follows:

> Apart from provision for marginalised learners… Community and Learning Development (CLD) 1 had targeted specific groups in the community through a particular programme:
> *Yes, we have an organisation in [the local authority] which is essentially the body which works with ethnic minorities and Travellers and so on, and we have a very close working relationship with them to try to develop a whole range of programmes for young people and for adults.* (Weedon et al. 2010)

While much of this networking is in the context of non-formal education outreach, at least some of it is potentially transferable to third-level formal education, whereby universities could form close links with NGOs representing marginalised groups.

The Irish national report highlights examples of university outreach to both schools and community groups:

> The Senior Access Manager explained that, *there's a very strong outreach element and it was the initial element of the Access Programmes.* The Senior Management Official commented, *I think a lot of their outreach work is far more important than access programmes…and it's how it's done too, that it's done sensitively and it's taking on the views of the community.* (Dooley et al. 2010)
>
> The Senior Access Manager explained that, *the model is essentially based on very strong school based linkages and links with community groups, partnerships, through developing outreach activities that take place in-house in…[University B] and also take place locally.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

This promotion through word of mouth is also key according to a non-formal education interviewee in Estonia and a school representative in Russia:

> The participants help to expand the range of target groups: *Each participant is promoting the courses. They talk to their friends and more people learn about us.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)
>
> *There are also different ways of how students get to know about the [Secondary] School [for adults]. As far as adults are concerned, this is jungle telegraph that helps the best. Sometimes a student enters the School and then insists on his/her spouse to join the classes as well.* (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

Broader third-level outreach strategies illustrated in the Scottish national report also include sustained engagement with schools with students at risk of early school leaving, as well as taster third-level courses for secondary students:

> College A also worked with local schools specifically targeting groups of school pupils who were likely to become part of the MCMC group, *we are reaching out to them in 3rd year at a point when they might fall out of the system* (Executive Director, College A). These children were identified by school guidance staff as those who maybe don't want to stay at school but were still within compulsory school age. The college was also committed to targeting people who had recently become unemployed and needed to retrain. (Weedon et al. 2010)

An outreach approach from universities to schools is also evident in Bulgaria, Estonia and Austria, though with little evidence of a focus on more socio-economically excluded groups.

Cooperation agreements between universities and schools operate in Estonia:

> [The University] organises courses, summer schools and workshops for upper secondary students: *We have signed cooperation agreements with 17 schools. Faculties and institutes introduce learning opportunities. Our students also take part in these events.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

Such cooperation agreements are also a feature of the Hungarian system, to facilitate an opening into the third level for schools with high numbers of students without a tradition of third-level education:

> *Basically, it is these three institutes, we made a cooperative agreement with them, so this is not a simple relationship, but it is based on a continuous cooperation, and the advantage that our students have it that they are prioritised in these schools [over other applicants].* (Balogh et al. 2010)

There is a need to extend such cooperation agreements and visits to schools and areas with traditionally high levels of underrepresentation at university. There is no evidence in the Estonian and Austrian national reports, in contrast to the Hungarian national report, that the university outreach to schools encompasses a socio-economic disadvantage dimension. The comment in relation to such groups in the Estonian report indicates a formalistic and passive outreach approach:

No admission limits have been set forth for adults and disadvantaged groups. All applicants are welcome. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

A further concern with such school outreach approach in Estonia is that the reliance on students and graduates to spread the word through the schools they have attended merely perpetuates the systemic exclusion of those students with low social capital from schools where there have not been many attending university:

We disseminate information in counties. We used to do this more often but now people already know us. Our students and graduates also spread the word. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

Representatives of faculties also go to schools to introduce their faculty: *The schools are not always interested – their schedules are very tight and it is difficult to find time. Our students who go to their former schools are good ambassadors.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

In other words, inequality of access to university will be perpetuated by a 'former student's approach' to word-of-mouth promotion for schools, areas and communities without a tradition of attending university. The Scottish national report provides the important example of community-based outreach strategies which provide taster programmes in community settings that may be less threatening and also more convenient for those who have had negative experiences of the school system:

College A's distribution strategy had opened up campuses in local communities targeting areas where the population come from a less advantaged socio-economic background. The college provided taster programmes in the community in order to engage with the community and get the public to make the first steps and come through the barrier in their local community rather than going straight into a main college campus. (Weedon et al. 2010)

Classes were located in a wide range of locations through the local authority for example, in schools, in the local colleges, libraries, community centres and miners' clubs. The aim was to get the provision into the communities. (Weedon et al. 2010)

This community outreach approach fosters trust and cultural relevance and invites significant expansion in the future if the European Commission supports it within a framework of developing community lifelong learning centres at local level across Europe (Downes 2011).

Other outreach approaches based on making the educational institution culturally relevant, socially meaningful and engaged with marginalised groups' narratives include the following examples from Slovenia and Belgium:

Peoples' universities were among the first which embraced the idea of Lifelong Learning Week and formed in the very first years of the festival the majority of organisations participating in the event. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

Open School has a tradition in reaching out to other non-profit organisations, associations and communities (e.g. organising courses in community centres). According to the interviewees, it is important – in any outreach project – to make sure that the theme and content of courses are linked to what the target group is really interested in: health, food,

budgeting and money, etc. Another key aspect is the use of the key biographic moments and lived experiences of the participants in the learning process. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

Festivals are an innovative outreach strategy going well beyond mere informational approaches that can foster that sense of assumed connection between an educational institution and a target group that has traditionally been detached from such institution.

An Austrian attempt to broaden its outreach strategy appears to have been less successful:

According to an internal [university] research, just 8 percent of the students visited this educational fair before they started to study. Thus, more promotion in schools should be done: *Well, pupils often do not understand why they should go to this fair, only already motivated pupils go there. People from disadvantaged groups don't go there, they rather see it as a day they can take off (…) And the teachers do not push them to go there, either, they see no reason for that. So that does not work as it should.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

A Lithuanian example recognises the limitations of mere informational approaches but also shares the concerns with the Austrian example about an 'open door'–type fair:

Open door days are organised but their problem is that they are not so popular anymore. The information is spread through other different channels. We have many agreements with other schools, and they don't need to go here as it if was some guided tour…. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

There may be a range of reasons for this lack of success in reaching the aimed-for groups. The strength of the Slovenian festival approach is that it requires the target group to be actively involved in the design of the project and not simply be a passive consumer of it, as in the Austrian and Lithuanian examples. Constructivist principles of active learning are well recognised in lifelong learning but also need to be applied to outreach strategies. The Austrian and Lithuanian examples offer little indication that the students were involved in the organisation and design at the fair. They were not active participants but rather constructed as observers.

A key systems level feature that appears largely lacking in current outreach strategies for marginalised groups at the third level is feedback from the target groups with regard to the strengths and weaknesses of the institutions' outreach strategy. Thus, for example, the Slovenian national report observes:

Students give no specific feedback on outreach strategies, availability of relevant information to underrepresented risk groups, access supports and entry process. Institution collects a more general form of feedback that is more focused on courses, and more general study and students matters. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

An obvious key barrier to any outreach strategy is raised in the Slovenian national report, namely, that any sophisticated outreach strategy is still reliant on the need for the course to be affordable. Financial barriers mediate against the success of reaching traditionally hard-to-reach groups:

We have also tried a painting workshop just within the Lifelong Learning Week and the first visit was free of charge. The participation was good. When at the end of the day we asked

whether they were prepared to participate, they were, very much and gladly. When we sent out the invitations and also presented how it would look concerning the fee, participation was no more. Here the matter finishes. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

The financial barrier is not only on the side of the learner. Ebner (2011) observes that a financial commitment is needed on the side of the university to engage in more personalised forms of outreach to those experiencing marginalisation.

A community outreach approach is strengthened if the educational opportunities are available for marginalised groups in their local areas:

> According to the interviewees, it is critical to ensure various learning opportunities as close as possible to the adults. Both interviewees accentuate that one cannot expect all participants to come into a classroom. The educational activities should be 'home delivered'. Therefore the organisation makes efforts in providing education within the communities, decentralised all over Brussels (in mosques, sports clubs, pubs, etc.). (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

This feature of diverse, decentralised locations for both providing and promoting education for traditionally underrepresented groups is a potentially exciting innovation ripe for further expansion elsewhere. It is also of importance for marginalised communities which may be divided due to intra- and intercommunity tensions, as well as crime, where there may be no neutral location in the area for different groups and individuals to access. This has been observed in an Irish context where community services, such as a sports hall, were only accessed by individuals from particular streets of an area, and not by others. This was due to its physical location in a place that was not perceived as either 'neutral' or 'belonging' to people from parts of the area (Downes and Maunsell 2007). A focus on physical space must be combined with one on relational space at a community level to overcome or at least take cognisance of diametric splits within local communities (Downes 2009).

It is important from a systems theory perspective to emphasise that outreach approaches be sustained rather than once-off events. There may be a need for ongoing support and encouragement to overcome entrenched cultural barriers to accessing higher education. Psychological barriers of lack of confidence, fear of failure and even fear of success (Horner 1972; Ivers and Downes 2012) will only be overcome through sustained systemic outreach supports and institutional supports.

A European Commission staff working document (2009) emphasises that:

> Increasing aspiration and tackling cultural barriers are key to attracting and retaining lifelong learners, particularly those from non-traditional or disadvantaged groups. However, country reports provide little insight into non-financial support mechanisms pursued to engage with non-traditional learners, although some countries do make reference to the need to include advice, mentoring and help for students to adjust to new environments and increase retention rates. (p. 133)

This highlights the need for a wider vision of outreach and of development of institutional cultures and supports—as well as for examples of strategic approaches to overcoming cultural barriers. Some examples of this have emerged from this current cross-national research.

It is evident that there is a need in some countries for more institutional awareness and willingness to engage in outreach to traditionally marginalised groups. For those with such willingness, there is increasing recognition of the severe limitations of generic information-based approaches for an 'abstract other' to engage with this target group of non-traditional students. These limitations are not only due to literacy concerns with reading such information. This has led to increased awareness of the importance of fostering strategies 'by way of mouth' in the local communities and to engage with local community organisations and schools.

Institutions in some countries which have gone beyond information-reliant approaches designed for an 'abstract other' to interpersonal approaches have adopted a former students promotion approach which may lead to indirect discrimination against those schools, areas and communities where there are few former students who have attended university. Similarly, cooperation agreements between schools and universities need to take place with schools with high proportions of students experiencing social exclusion and with low traditions of obtaining third-level education. There is increasing recognition of the limitations of open doors days in reaching marginalised groups, though examples of festivals where such groups are active in organising community events linked with educational institutions offer a way forward for outreach through their features of cultural relevance and constructivist active learning approaches to outreach.

Decentralised community-based locations for learning, such as community lifelong learning centres, provide examples of progressive outreach strategies for reaching marginalised communities and individuals. These appear prevalent especially in Belgium (Flanders) and Scotland, and to some extent Ireland, and require sustained systemic support by the European Commission for expansion of community lifelong learning centres across Europe. Opportunities also exist for universities to formally link with community-based NGOs and projects to maximise their outreach potential. Another innovative development requiring expansion is a further decentralisation of location for provision and promotion of education to other communal spaces such as cafes, pubs, theatres, churches, mosques, sports clubs, libraries, etc.

Many university outreach strategies are characterised not only by a lack of active participation by the target groups in the design of such strategies but also by a lack of feedback from these groups in relation to the success or otherwise of such outreach strategies. The experiences of non-traditional learners must be documented and engaged with for strategic reform of university outreach strategies. These experiences and feedback must be examined at both a departmental and wider institutional level for outreach strategies in relation to access. Psychological barriers to accessing outreach services and supports must be anticipated for some students and require sustained systemic supports rather than once-off promotional interventions to help overcome such barriers.

7.3   Availability of School and University Institutions Free of Charge During Summertime and Evenings for Community Groups from Marginalised Areas (Structural Indicator)

The Slovenian national report provides an example where an educational institution makes its rooms available free of charge for community groups:

Institution's building is available for evening and summer events for many associations. Especially in the summer time, they can use it in the evenings for their meetings, lectures etc. *Yes, they also use it. Various societies use lecture rooms, above all as a place for their meetings.* (Ivančič et al. 2010)

This availability is particularly during the evening and summertime:

Institution is open regarding availability for evening and summer events for the local community and/or target groups. There is no problem to give other profit or non-profit organisations rooms, when they are free. They do that free of charge, they do not demand any money for that. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

The Irish national report provides another example of this:

In relation to the extent that the university institution's building is available for evening and summer events for the access service and the local community the Senior Access Manager explained that, *we're able to avail of all the facilities on campus and to share those with our affiliate groups. There are also schemes for some local schools and centres…to utilise some of the facilities here…Things aren't kind of as open and readily available and for use as you would like, there are lots of constraints. Firstly many of the buildings are overused and overstretched here anyway.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

Setting this in context, the Senior Access Manager continued:

in some ways they're hard pressed to even accommodate the immediate needs of the college community, so I recognise that that is an issue, allowing for it to be an absolutely open campus to the public but I think there is a genuine effort through the establishment of a community liaison officer who links in with many of the community groups in the direct area around…[University B] and represents their views and opinions and issues and brings them back into the internal audience on campus. (Dooley et al. 2010)

A different Irish university similarly gives recognition to this dimension of community engagement through provision of campus rooms for local community groups:

When questioned around the extent to which University A buildings are available for evening and summer events for the local community, the Senior Access Official explains that there are, *no difficulties there, we organise booking the rooms and all of that kind of thing. We try and if we have something we have it…[on campus], we may start off having an event off campus. The community feel at home, being able to access the university. Through the outreach Programmes…that has helped to consolidate that and encourage people into… [the university] as well.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

The Education Ministry official in Austria is enthusiastic about developing this issue in relation to schools opening up their premises:

What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to use of the school building after school hours for adult education courses? *This is a really important issue for us. It is easier with the federal schools which are administrated directly by the federal government. As owners, we have direct ways to act. This is where we have the distinct appeal to the directors. Their infrastructure is suitable for adults, with tables of the right height and IT work stations, etc. The elementary schools aren't really useful although they are being used partially. There we would have the infrastructure and we cannot progress because the commitment is based on individuals. They say we don't profit from this. On the contrary, I'm at a disadvantage because I have maintenance/cleaning costs. The personnel stops cleaning at 5 pm, the people arrive at 6 pm and the next day, the school is dirty…People working as school caretakers, for example, say: 'this is not in my contract…'* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

A range of common systemic hurdles need to be overcome, such as having a caretaker and insurance:

It is a responsibility jungle in the federal government, just not possible to establish clear rules. I also see that especially with the vocational schools there is an interest both from the federal provinces and the government, to use the infrastructure, which in parts is really excellent, after hours, both in the evenings, on Saturdays, etc. Because it really is an economic madness to have these schools empty. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

The argument for the availability of the school site is not simply an economic or efficiency one. It is also a community development one, where the school is a part of and 'focal point' (Irish Statutory Committee on Educational Disadvantage 2005; Downes et al. 2006) for the local community. It is an argument for access to education, as opening the doors of the school to different social groups and ages can help break down cultural barriers to education at a community level. Opening the school doors to the community can foster enhanced trust and provide potentially positive experiences of an education and school environment for parents and adults who have been previously alienated from the school system.

The Austrian national report offers further example of this progressive practice:

Here we have strong cooperation. It is also foreseen in the ownership structure, that all of the 4 municipalities, where the locations are based, obtain ownership. Therefore also the cooperation between the corresponding communities, the mayors and the city halls are very strong. There is a very intensive exchange, different cultural events are offered like expeditions and balls. Open days are organised, where the inclusion of the community is focused. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

This availability may be facilitated by the relatively strong local municipality structure in Austria.

The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research official views the issue of making the school premises available for adult classes as solely a matter for the local governments, as though national government has no role:

This depends on local governments as they are they own the schools. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The Estonian national report continues on this issue:

What about the connection of formal education with non-formal education. Vocational schools are doing well, they are offering various courses. In secondary schools the situation

is not so good. What is holding them back from opening their doors to evening courses? *I do not know. I think it depends on their willingness to do that.*

   And what does their willingness depend on? *I do not know. Both vocational schools and universities are willing to offer evening and weekend courses. Probably local governments, the owners of secondary schools, are not considering it important enough to put some pressure on schools.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The Lithuanian national report refers to an ad hoc practice of making the State university building available during the summer to community groups. It recognises that development is needed on this issue in a more systemic fashion:

Regarding the practical use of [State] university building, it is being used in summer though the process could be even better elaborated. According to interviews it is obvious that there is no systematic use of the building. Some small groups coming for language courses are using the building in summer. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

In Bulgaria, this issue is constructed in terms of institutional autonomy, and availability of university premises to community groups is only if it is paid for:

The College establishes contacts with disadvantaged groups in order to improve their access to higher education by: …*organising visits to different schools and discussions with students. […] The college's buildings may be rented to members of the local community for different social events.* (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

   There is no ban or any limiting mode for the use of university premises by the community or certain social groups for holding evening or summer events, the main requirement being not to breach the University autonomy Act. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

This requirement of payment appears to occur even for State-funded universities in Bulgaria.

A number of other practical obstacles to lifelong learning taking place in a school building after school hours emerge from the Hungarian national report:

The most important problem arising from sharing the buildings is the shortage of classrooms and offices. The adults' school needs more rooms for special activities such as arts, but the number of rooms is barely enough for the ordinary courses. Another disadvantage of the common propriety is the issue of responsibility in case of damages, it is difficult to decide who is to blame and who should repair them. Furthermore, as the principal users of the buildings are the other two schools, classrooms and corridors are decorated according to their needs thus, adults learn in an environment which was developed by and for school-children. Last, but not least, in the primary school furniture is made for small children, and, being too small for adults, are unhealthy for the students. (Balogh et al. 2010)

The following example from Estonia illustrates a potential benefit and synergy which can take place where the school site is being shared with adults in the evening:

Formerly, such schools were called 'evening schools' because courses were offered on evenings; now they are called 'adult secondary schools'. For most of its 60 years of existence the school had its own building. 10 years ago the town government decided to give the building to an Estonian secondary school for the use of its primary pupils. Since then the two schools have shared the building…If an institution of higher education comes to introduce itself to the students of the daytime secondary school, the class teachers of the adult secondary school try to attend in order to inform their own students. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

However, obviously in this specific example, the ideal would be to include the adults directly in the higher education outreach strategy.

The benefits of making State-funded educational institutions, whether schools or universities, available in the evenings and summers for lifelong learning courses (both formal and informal) are both from an economic efficiency and from a community development perspective. While there is evidence of this practice taking place in an ad hoc manner across a number of educational institutions and countries, there is little evidence currently of national level leadership to progress this issue. The EU Commission Staff Working Paper on early school leaving (2010) recognises that some schools 'seek to maintain the motivation of all people to engage in learning by offering various activities, opening up schools to local community' (p. 23). It is clear that further EU-level leadership on this issue is needed.

The obstacles to such a practice appear to be the need for a caretaker on the premises and insurance issues, as well as in at least some institutions a conception of territoriality. Some attitudinal resistance in educational institutions towards opening access to the school or university building is manifested through an argument for institutional autonomy. A way to overcome such an argument is to recognise firstly that these institutions usually receive state funding, and many are in state ownership. Secondly, incentives could be provided to institutions to facilitate such opening of access, including through performance agreements between Education Ministries, on the one hand, and universities and schools, on the other hand. It is imperative also to emphasise that school-based adult education may not be suitable for many adults with unhappy experiences of school themselves (Maunsell 2011). They may perceive adult education as being merely more school and its physical location as intimidating and demotivating.

7.4 Outreach Strategy to Communicate with Spokespersons, Opinion Makers and Community Leaders in Socio-economically Marginalised or Ethnic Minority Communities (Structural Indicator)

An emerging dimension to good practice in relation to access is university communication, as well as other educational institutions' communication, with spokespersons, opinion makers and community leaders in socio-economically marginalised or ethnic minority communities. The Norwegian national report observes from one educational institution that:

> The communities are approached by building on existing networks and associations as well as making use of spokespersons and opinion makers within the communities. Students with a corresponding ethnic background are engaged as role models, communicating in their familiar language at meetings with the target groups. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

This is a strong feature of practice already highlighted in the Belgian (Flanders) national report, with reference to the non-formal education sector:

> the organisation offers them challenges and perspectives in their role as community leader and gives them the responsibility to design educational programmes for their community.

Some of them make a long-term commitment (at a high level) to the organisation; others chose only to make short-term commitments. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

The Belgian national report continues on this theme:

It should not go unnoticed that some volunteers and community leaders are also rewarded (according to the Belgian law on volunteering). They receive 25 euro for occasional activities and 110 euro for other activities, according to the amount of responsibility they take. This is an extra motivational element which has a particularly great impact on the participation of some specific target groups. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

The absence of—and need for—such consultation with community leaders is evident in the Estonian national report in relation to local leaders from the Russian-speaking community:

Although students at secondary and vocational schools in which the language of instruction is Russian are required to sit a state exam in Estonian, their knowledge of Estonian is not sufficient to study at university in Estonia. Russians are also less informed about learning opportunities. The heads of Russian schools lack adequate information about: which public universities offer courses in Russian together with additional language course to help students learn Estonian; the fact that universities offer Estonian courses for a certain period before the start of studies or in parallel with them. Russian secondary students are also interested in preparatory courses provided in Russian. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The importance of the need for dialogue between such community leaders and the educational institution is highlighted from the following example in the Hungarian national report concerning an institution and students from the Roma minority:

initiatives were taken to involve disadvantaged groups in the [adult secondary school] education, but both of them failed. A cooperation agreement with the Roma minority would have given Roma students the opportunity to be offered a scholarship for studying at the school. However, the programme could not be implemented because the Roma minority did not accept the person responsible for issuing the scholarships. (Balogh et al. 2010)

Tett et al.'s (2001) discussion of collaboration between schools and community agencies in tackling social exclusion contrasts collaboration with simply 'contracting out' interventions and describes collaboration in terms of to 'develop, manage, deliver, fund and evaluate' activities. Tett et al.'s (2001) distinction between consultation as 'contracting out' and as collaboration is also important in this context of access to education. Moreover, it is important to envisage such consultation with community leaders as also reaching into collaborative relations with organisations they may belong to.

7.5   Formal Links Between Universities and Non-governmental Organisations Representing Marginalised Groups (Structural Indicator)

A logical expansion of a systems theory approach emphasising the need for bridges between subsystems and to foster transition between subsystems is the need for formal links between universities and NGOs representing marginalised groups.

This opportunity is only touched upon in some national reports. The Norwegian national report raises this linkage in the context of people with disabilities and their representative NGOs:

> The informant said that recruitment had increased for groups with reading and writing disorders, and added that she believed that this was a result of the university's increased effort for helping these students. Further on, she said that the university stayed in touch with many of the organisations for persons with disabilities, like the Association for Dyslexics, the Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted, and the Association for deaf and people with hearing disorders. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

In contrast, the Bulgarian national report observes that 'no interaction is evident between the NGO sector and the formal education system' (Boyadjieva et al. 2010). However, a Bulgarian institutional interviewee recognises the need for such interaction:

> *There should be more aggressive policy, targeted towards these groups i.e. they should organise on purpose. To help disadvantaged people to overcome the barrier of integrating with the other students, this is the greatest responsibility of the NGOs. In other words, to reduce the stress these people experience being disadvantaged. The organisation of courses can help overcome this psychological problem. Why not have courses for plumbers for the minority groups?* (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

Another example of the potential of such external links for universities to embrace is provided in the English national report:

> The university has also worked to *help communities embrace technology, so one example of the work that [we] did was to link steel communities, former steel communities, where people, adults, men usually, have been made redundant because of the decline in manufacturing and steel, and actually got them together on a project to learn them how to use technology and then get them to produce materials about their working life in the steel industry and get them to talk to other communities. This has sparked the development of online communities and sparked an interest in some historical aspects of the region, of industrial archaeology, where they never would have been engaged with that.* (Engel et al. 2010)

Though this is currently an underdeveloped strategy across institutions and countries, there is enormous potential for facilitating improved opportunities for access to education if formal links were established between universities and NGOs representing marginalised groups. Mindful of Wolf and Cumming (2000) contention that assumptions made on behalf of minority groups can be both wrong and patronising, these links could help break down cultural and psychological barriers, as well as inform members of these groups of the opportunities for a cohort of these groups to learn together in an educational institution. Such links would also offer the benefit of a support structure already being in place for the individual students through the NGO, as well as furnishing opportunities for dialogue between the NGO and the education institution on the learning needs and wider needs of the individual learner. Formal links would also offer the chance for the NGO to participate with the university in strategic policy design to meet the access and participation needs of their joint target group (see also Mulkerrins 2007 on the challenges of altering educational institutional policy to give expression to community voices). The NGO would also be in a good position to provide feedback to the university on the success or otherwise of implementation of access and participation strategies in practice.

7.6   Outreach Strategy to Engage Young Immigrants and Young Members of a Target Group: Cohort Effect as a Positive Potential (Structural Indicator)

The following innovative example from the Norwegian national report focuses on the benefits of a cohort effect regarding promotion of access to education, with a specific targeting based on youth and ethnicity. This targeting of young immigrants and young members of a target group treats a cohort effect as a positive potential for maximising access to education:

> *Immigrants' perception of higher education* should be changed. Hence, the solution has been to target specific nationalities, namely young immigrants, their parents and even the community they form part of. The latter point is illustrated by differences between immigrant communities in their propensity to start up higher education studies. In this regard, our informant reports that ethnic communities that are unified, such as Indians, Tamils and Vietnamese, more easily develop a culture emphasising the value of educational skills, while such attitudes are less easily nurtured in, e.g., the more fragmented Somalian community. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

In contrast, an example of a cohort effect among young people which has negative consequences is provided in the Russian national report:

> As far as teenage criminals are concerned, 47 % has never worked or studied and more than 70 % do not have the education appropriate to their age. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

It is important to recognise that a cohort effect is rarely neutral or non-existent (Erikson 1968). Rather, it is better conceived as a vital potential to be built upon and channelled in constructive supportive directions (see also Greene 2003 on cohort particularity in developmental psychology).

A focus on cohort effects in relation to access would also give priority to social dimensions to engagement with the educational institution. This is highlighted in the English national report:

> Another priority need is to expand the extent to which students have the opportunity to meet and interact with other students in the university. Although there are opportunities to join the student union and other social activities, interview participants highlighted the need for more creative approaches to community-building among students, particularly the part-time, mature students at the university. (Engel et al. 2010)

Peer support and mentoring for students from traditionally underrepresented cohorts is a large-scale feature of the following Irish university:

> the Senior Access Official states, *every student in…[University A] on an access programme gets involved in shadowing and given that we have between 450 to 500 we request it. We don't demand it, we don't have to. They all get involved and that's it. It happens twice, on 2 separate days and basically it's very, very successful. The students that come into the service, meet with them first, they describe what's expected of them. We provide an evaluation at the end as well.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

The potential importance of a cohort effect for traditionally marginalised groups implies a broadening beyond an exclusively individualist focus for access to education strategies. Adoption of a relational focus as part of a cohort effect gives expression

to a paradigm of lifelong learning that goes beyond the individual. This broader paradigm is recognised by the Delors report (1996) where one of the four pillars of learning involves learning to live together, to develop an understanding of interdependence. Similarly, longstanding adult education traditions such as the humanism of Lindemann (1926/1989) and the community development focus of Freire (1972) recognise this need to develop an engagement with lifelong learning at a cohort, group or community level. The cohesiveness of the peer group has been emphasised in developmental psychology particularly for young people (Erikson 1968), as it has also been in criminology (e.g., Sutherland 1939). This potential cohesiveness of groups of young people, whether by ethnicity, social class or region, needs to be built upon as a positive potential to maximise their engagement in lifelong learning, whether at formal or non-formal community levels.

7.7 An Access Strategy of Third-Level Institutions Which Engages with Primary and Secondary Students Experiencing Socio-economic Marginalisation (Structural Indicator)

Aspirations to complete secondary school and go on to the third level are frequently formed already at primary school level (Downes 2004a, b). It is important that individuals without a family tradition of third-level education and communities with low levels of participation in higher education are targeted at an early stage to foster aspirations to attend third-level education. Morgan and Slowey (2009) emphasise the need for a comprehensive approach to access to education, including to higher education, that addresses inequalities at post-primary, primary and preschool levels.

The Scottish national report provides one of the rare examples of a strategic approach to access to education which engages with younger learners, including those at the primary school level:

> The college was heavily engaged with local schools with many children from 3rd and 4th year of secondary schools (15 to 16 years of age) coming in through the 'skills for work' programme. Children as young as primary 5 (aged 9) were brought into the college as they were seen as a *'long-term investment' for the college*. (Vice Principal, College A)
>
> Members of staff had a big involvement with schools: *We teach in schools, we run special projects for primary school kids so the kids in school are aware of us from a young age, they are aware of the college and what it does and when it comes time for them to leave school, college is seen as an opportunity for them. (Executive Director, College A)* (Weedon et al. 2010)

Another example of this strategic approach to access for primary school students targeting schools with traditionally low representation of students in higher education is provided in the Irish national report:

> The Senior Access Official went on to describe some of the outreach activities of the University A access service, *the primary school programme and the secondary school*

programme, they run…in around 90 schools between the two at this stage. We run a variety of programmes at different levels in different schools. At primary school levels in particular, the primary schools would be very vocal, this will work for us but this won't. We run different programmes in different schools…we don't run all of the programmes in all of the schools. A lot of the programmes are around having fun. We do have a programme which concentrates on transition from primary into secondary school. Things like visiting campus, organising tours of campus, organising events on campus, would be run both by access and student recruitment…. (Dooley et al. 2010)

A comprehensive access strategy which tackles deeply ingrained cultural barriers to participation in third-level education, and education generally, requires engagement with cohorts of learners in primary school classes. With the exceptions of Scotland and Ireland, this important strategic feature of an access strategy for socio-economically excluded groups, including for some ethnic minority groups, appears to be completely absent from the practices of participating European countries. There is no evidence that it is taking place or planned to take place, based on the national reports for this comparative study.

7.8   Preparatory Admission Courses (Structural Indicator)

In Estonia, one of the adult education school interviewees has highlighted that Russian speakers from that school have a strong interest in receiving preparatory admission classes for higher education:

Preparatory courses for access to higher education would be useful in particular for students whose mother tongue is Russian. There is interest in such courses but neither students nor teachers are aware of such courses. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

Taking into account the background and modest financial means of the students they need preparatory courses that are provided free of charge or lower fee depending on their economic situation … changes are needed not only at the level of schools but in society as a whole. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The Estonian national report observes a tradition of preparatory classes in a university, though classes requiring payment:

The University has offered preparatory courses for more than 50 years. The courses are offered by the Open University. The courses are offered for a fee and focus on subjects of state examinations: physics, maths, chemistry, mother tongue (essay writing). (Tamm and Saar 2010)

A key issue also raised in the Bulgarian report is the need for State funding for such preparatory classes:

The University does not organise preparatory classes for disadvantaged groups.

This is a good idea, but for this purpose universities should be funded by the state or donor organisations by a competition, quota or other indicator. This is not possible for now. The universities themselves have no sufficient funds for this activity. And there is no guarantee that if they conduct such activity they can reap its fruit. There is no way to commit people to being students at only one institution. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

The English national report observes a discrepancy between the level of the educational institution and its willingness to organise preparatory classes, as well as highlighting the benefits of shorter preparatory courses:

94 % of ISCED 4 level institutions organise preparatory programmes to facilitate increased access for traditional underrepresented groups, though only 27 % of ISCED 5 level institutions do so. The college senior representative stated, *we're looking at some short courses… we're trying to develop a curriculum really this year to look at perhaps shorter courses that run more frequently through the year. The September start is a bit of a put off. We've always had multi-entry and some programmes are what we would call roll on, roll off which are kind of again harder to manage but we do have some of those in the college. But I think now we're looking at a shorter 6 week programme for people.* (Engel et al. 2010)

In the English context, these preparatory courses are explicitly recognised as having an access dimension for non-traditional students:

A senior representative stated, *the university does run some foundation courses with Further Education colleges particularly in the science area. Here in the Institute of Lifelong Learning, we do run a number of preparing to study type courses, a lot of our institute courses are open to people with no traditional academic qualifications, so they are designed for people to come on to them when they haven't actually had an academic qualification background.* (Engel et al. 2010)

A different university is described in the English national report in relation to summertime preparatory courses for university, across a wide range of subjects:

The University offers Summer University short-courses. These courses are designed and aimed towards individuals who return to study after a break from education. The aim is to boost confidence and develop the necessary skills for future courses at University A. Each of the Summer University courses carries recognised University A credits and a University Certificate of Continuing Education is awarded after 20 Summer credits and these credits towards other University qualifications. A wide range of courses are available, including Business, Employment and Learning Skills, Mathematics, Languages, English, Art, Computing, Education, History, Media, Performing Arts, Science, Social Sciences, among others.

This interviewed lecturer recognises that:

Summer University *is looked at as a big widening participation initiative.* The Summer University courses *are great for employed people because they tend to be short snap courses over a couple of days, which a lot of employers can see their way to letting them come to that.* These courses are also of interest to non-traditional adult learners, as the courses offer *quick short sharp skills that they can pick up and maybe build on to something else, because they carry credits, but they're all free…*She went on to state that *it's a bit of a talent spotting exercise and actually the confidence that a couple of summer courses gives people, allows them to go on to part and full-time HE courses.* (Engel et al. 2010)

An innovative dimension to preparatory courses explicated in the English national report is a 'passport' type of approach:

University A offers a Passport Scheme to young students who are at school or college and considering higher education. It aims to help students make a successful transition to higher education. *It's support for first generation university families where in addition to their own school or college, they have access to the university and evenings at the university, they can*

make up one-to-one advice and guidance interviews with our staff here at the university (Senior). The university also offers an Adult Passport Scheme to target potential students, who require assistance in making the transition to higher education. The Adult Passport programme allows adults to sample from university life, aiming to support and encourage successful transition into higher education. (Engel et al. 2010)

The Hungarian national report makes explicit another rationale for preparatory courses, namely, that they can help overcome difficulties with literacy that may be quite common:

These preparatory courses do not appear in the curriculum, because they cannot, but we were facing a remarkable drop-out rate, and so we have to do it. The management has just decided to insert them [preparatory courses] in the specializations with the highest drop-out rates. (Balogh et al. 2010)

As many students have literacy and writing difficulties and type-writing deficiencies, catch-up courses are now organised both centrally and by the students themselves. (Balogh et al. 2010)

The following example of university development of preparatory admission courses in an Irish context emphasises the key role of parental involvement in such courses, in order to help overcome cultural barriers towards higher education:

We involve parents in every way that we possibly can at a pre-entry level. Once the students come into the university after the access summer school where the students are given an award and the parents are all there, the schools love it, the students love it and the parents love it. We would have a big event called the Achievement Award. Fill out the…hall twice per year. Target programmes for ethnic minorities. (Dooley et al. 2010)

Echoed by the Irish Higher Education Authority (HEA 2010) report's recognition of the importance of academic preparedness prior to entry and adequate learning supports on entry to higher education, a different example of preparatory courses observed in the Irish national report accentuates the importance of such pre-entry courses:

It is compulsory for incoming Access students to attend this Summer School. The aim is to prepare students socially and academically for undergraduate life. It familiarises them with the campus and staff particularly those in the Access Service. Students are divided broadly into groups according to their subject area i.e. Humanities, Science, Computers & Engineering and Business. They work on projects, which they present to the whole group. 2nd or 3rd year students from the same programmes lead the groups. There is drama, sports, study skills and social events throughout the week. (Dooley et al. 2010)

A university senior management interviewee in the Bulgarian report raises objections to preparatory classes which single out individuals or groups:

The university does not organise preparatory classes for representatives of disadvantaged groups: *I do not agree that there should be preparatory classes for ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups in general. This would contribute for their separation instead of their integration.* (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

This tension could be resolved by making such classes optional rather than mandatory. However, the issue of being stigmatised and labelled as 'disadvantaged' has been raised as a concern in the Irish context (Spring 2007; Downes and Gilligan 2007).

The Austrian national report provides an example of transition courses for a university of applied sciences:

Transition courses have already been offered from the beginning (1994) and have been extended within the last three years. They mainly address people who have not obtained an upper secondary school leaving exam, but who completed an apprenticeship or a medium VET school, which in Austria does not provide general access to higher education. After this transition course it is made possible for the student to enrol every degree course that they want within the offers of the concerned University of Applied Sciences. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

However, the wider university sector does not seem to have developed such preparatory courses in the Austrian context:

There is nothing done at local level or within communities. The interviewee from operational level just gave a vague listing of course offers within the university, which can be considered as preparation for different stages. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Similarly, the Slovenian national report reveals a dearth of preparatory courses for university:

They don't have any preparatory or foundation courses. They only have differential exams for those students that are not fulfilling the enrolment requirements or those coming from other institutions of higher university education where the programme was somewhat different. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

7.9   Challenge to Institutional Staff Attitudes

A strongly related issue to the diversity or otherwise of education institutional staff is the theme of the importance of institutional staff attitudes to the access students' experience of the university environment. As the Bulgarian national report highlights:

The main challenge of having students from different social backgrounds is related to the need for acquiring intercultural competence of the lecturers themselves. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

A later example of this will also be seen to be evident regarding accounts of some prison officers' resistant attitudes to prisoners' learning. This can be interpreted as not being simply specific to prison contexts but as an illustration of the need for institutional awareness of developing processes for systematically working with its staff on supportive attitudes to diversity, as a dimension of an institutional mainstreaming strategy for access.

This institutional mainstreaming of access appears to have taken place in the Irish context. The Irish national report provides the example of a Senior Management Official in the university stating, *we also recognise that there is no resistance in… [University B] now to access students at any level.* Elsewhere this interviewee states:

In relation to access there is *very strong embedding and involvement, I don't think there is an academic staff member in…[University B] that doesn't know about access…, I think that's a very good achievement. That's not to say that they all agree with it. Every discussion*

we have a school [department] level, we have at faculty level, it's very much part of our fabric. (Dooley et al. 2010)

For the Access Plan for the university, the official stated that *everything that we have in our plan, a lot of it is not about resourcing it…it's about cultural change, it's about mindset.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

The Access Official talked about the process of changing attitudes to access in the university:

There have been points of resistance along the way as will be [the case]…with any change process in institutions, people's level of understanding of why people might not reach their full potential…they may think that closely relates to IQ or lack of ability rather than their… socio-cultural background. I think that for the most part… the perception towards non-traditional students would be positive and has been very supportive. Where there have been arguments against them we've heard a few of them and they tended to be several years ago and really the actual progress of the students through the college and their success has alleviated a lot of the concern…People's prejudices have been mitigated by their actual experience of the students…A lot of the obstacles have been overcome. (Dooley et al. 2010)

This attitudinal change has its structural counterpoint in the university, namely, a mainstreaming of access issues throughout the different levels of the university.

The issue of staff attitudes being at times negative and even discriminatory towards different ethnic groups emerges from the following detailed account in the Hungarian national report. The first institutional interviewee expresses a positive institutional attitude:

Concerning the outreach to disadvantaged groups, the two interviewees' opinions were remarkably different. According to the vice-college rector for education: *there are regions nearby, where there are quite some schools which have a lot of Roma students, and an effort is made, especially in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Knowledge Technology in case of Roma students, so we try to attract and recruit them, because it would be very important, please don't misunderstand me, that children are more open for instructions, the education for work and for learning from teachers of the same background, especially if he/she is an example of having lived under the same circumstances but now he/she is here, he/she teaches and enjoys it.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

Although the institute cannot recruit Roma students one by one, they deliberately organise road-shows in schools where there are a lot of Roma, and *especially in areas where the number of Roma students are very high, they [Roma students] ask us a lot of questions.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

The second interviewee represents the issue in terms of deficits of the Roma community rather than focusing on a range of supports that could be put in place to maximise their success at the third level:

On the other hand, the student centre leader has a completely different opinion on the issue: *... my problem is that everybody is concerned about this, it's not this that we should be concerned about, that the disadvantaged are taken to third level education, this is not a solution. The solution would be to raise the disadvantaged situation, and this cannot be raised by taking the children of disadvantaged families to third level education, where they start their studies with a remarkable handicap and not because of financial problems, but mostly because – I don't think this would be a preconception – because of a lower quality of general education and they come from such a background that they simply can't compete with the others. They face a lot of failures and it's only a waste of money that is spent on this. … They don't have a chance, they usually don't have a library at home that could help*

them, parents are not socialised to appreciate and support that the child attends a third level institute even at the age of 20-22, instead of working and giving the money to the family. (Balogh et al. 2010)

One Hungarian interviewee emphasises the importance of a positive staff institutional culture:

According to the vice-college rector for education, employees in the institute try to do everything for Roma students: …*they [Roma students] feel a mentality in the institute that they are not afraid to go and seek for help.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

This contrasts with the second interviewee:

On the other hand, the leader of the student centre who coordinates student offices and services says that: … *those who create tension, they belong to one ethnic group that can easily be recognised,*[3] *they are strongly underrepresented in the third level education. They are not accepted and I think that it's completely their fault.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

The Hungarian national report comments on the attitude of the second interviewee:

This makes one think that an open and tolerant mentality as described by the vice-college rector is only part of the characteristics of the institute, and Roma students might have serious difficulties in getting support (especially because the second interviewee is one of the main coordinators of student services). (Balogh et al. 2010)

Savage (2003) argues that 'the unacknowledged normality of the middle-class needs to be carefully unpicked and exposed' (p. 536). An institutional culture tends to contain unstated assumptions and patterns of interaction and behaviour which may filter out those from marginalised backgrounds. This hidden and sometime overt institutional culture may be termed the institution's 'social imaginary' to adapt Taylor (2007), its 'mental atmosphere' to adapt Russell (1946), its 'horizon' of meaning to adapt Heidegger (1927). It is this background atmosphere or horizon which needs to be opened so that there is a plurality of background horizons for meaning to be produced.

A practical example of a pathway towards a positive staff institutional culture for access students is provided in the English national report. This involves common meals between staff and students at an English third-level formal education institution:

The college staff considers promotion of social networks as one of their strengths. *The refectory really is at the heart of the college, so you can't come into reception without seeing it and bumping into people, and I just think that creates a whole kind of tolerance and acceptance and let's all live together really, like in society and as we should.* (Engel et al. 2010)

The eating environment challenges a static hierarchical systemic institutional culture and is an interesting example of promoting an inclusive 'organic' institutional culture between staff and students that could be replicated elsewhere.

The two guiding principles in this chapter could be characterised as ones of proactive outreach and dynamic 'inreach' on behalf of a third-level institution for socio-economically excluded groups. Both principles presuppose systemic institutional change. This institutional change is to meet target groups where they are at, on their own physical and psychological terrain, and to ensure that university and other

---

[3] He refers to the Roma (Balogh et al. 2010).

third-level institutions provide a terrain and space to allow for expression of diverse identities, including identities of those experiencing socio-economic exclusion.

Summary of Higher Education: Micro-Mesosystem   Some national reports highlight how particular third-level educational institutions place access central to their ethos, strategies and structures; a common thread across a number of other national reports is the need for a national system of *external* review of educational institutions' performance regarding access to motivate reform. Institutional strategies must also encompass change to the institutional culture itself through proactive outreach and dynamic 'inreach' for socio-economically excluded groups. In reconciling a balance between giving increased force to the imperative of widening access to education for marginalised groups, on the one hand, and university autonomy, on the other hand, the discourse tends to focus on *incentives* for institutions to improve access. It cannot be assumed that institutions are willing or aware of the need to develop outreach targeting underrepresented groups.

Some of the interviewees' accounts across different countries recognise the limitations of an informational approach that is neither interpersonal nor tailored to the needs and experiences of the traditionally marginalised groups. Festivals are an innovative outreach strategy beyond mere informational approaches that can foster a sense of assumed connection between an educational institution and a target group that has traditionally been detached from such institution. The strength of the Slovenian festival approach is that it requires the target group to be actively involved in the design of the project and not simply be a passive consumer of it, as in the Austrian and Lithuanian examples. There is an increasing recognition of the limitations of open door days in reaching marginalised groups. It is important from a systems theory perspective that outreach approaches be sustained rather than once-off events. Institutions in some countries have adopted a 'former students' promotion approach which may lead to indirect discrimination against those schools and areas where there are few former students who have attended university. Cooperation agreements need to take place between universities and schools with high proportions of students experiencing social exclusion.

A number of examples are highlighted of universities making their campus facilities available to marginalised groups in the evening and summertime to help break down cultural barriers, though *across national reports*, there is little evidence of national level leadership to progress this issue. Some attitudinal resistance towards opening access to the university building is manifested through an argument for institutional autonomy. Yet these institutions usually receive state funding and many are *in state* ownership; incentives could be provided to facilitate such opening of access, including through performance agreements with Education Ministries. An emerging dimension to good practice in some national reports is university communication with community leaders. A logical expansion of a systems theory approach emphasising the need to foster transition between subsystems is the need for formal links between universities and NGOs representing marginalised groups. This opportunity is only touched upon in some national reports. A comprehensive access strategy, which tackles deeply ingrained cultural barriers to participation in third-level education and education generally, requires engagement with cohorts of

younger learners, even in primary school classes. With the exceptions of Scotland, Norway and Ireland, there is no evidence that this important structural strategic feature is taking place or planned to take place, based on the national reports. A range of preparatory admission courses are observed in a number of reports.

References

Balogh , A., Józan, A., Szöllősi, A., & Róbert, P. (2010). *The institutional aspects of adult education in Hungary.* Budapest: TARKI Social Research Centre. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Benhabib, S. (1987). The generalized and the concrete other. In S. Benhabib & D. Cornell (Eds.), *Feminism as critique* (pp. 77–96). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Botelho, A., Costa Pinto, L., Portela, M., & Silva, A. (2001). *The determinants of success in university entrance* (Working Papers, No 13). Braga: Núcleo de Investigaçãoem.

Boyadjieva, P., Milenkova, V., Gornev, G., Petkova, K., & Nenkova, D. (2010). *The role of Bulgarian educational institutions for the promotion of access of adults to formal education.* Sofia: Institute of Sociology. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Bruner, J. (1992). *Acts of meaning: Four lectures on mind and culture.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. S., & Amsterdam, A. (2000). *Minding the law.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Carrigan, J., & Downes, P. (with Byrne, I.). (2009). *Is there more than what's the score? Exploring needs and skills checking for literacy as part of a holistic initial assessment process in a lifelong learning society.* Dublin: Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College.

Commission Staff Working Document. {SEC(2006) 1096}. Accompanying document to the communication to the Commission {COM (2006) 481 final}. *Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems.*

Commission Staff Working Document. {SEC(2009)1616}. *Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Indicators and benchmarks 2009.*

Commission Staff Working Paper. {SEC (2010)}. *Reducing early school leaving. Accompanying document to the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving.*

Communication from the Commission. (2006). *Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: Education, research, innovation.* COM(2006) 208.

Council Conclusions on investing in education and training – A response to Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes and the 2013 Annual Growth Survey (15 February 2013).

Delors, J. (1996). *Learning: The treasure within: Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st century.* Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Publishing.

Derrida, J. (1981). Deconstruction and the other. In R. Kearney (Ed.), *States of mind: Dialogues with contemporary thinkers in the European mind.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.

Dooley, C., Downes, P., Maunsell, C., & McLoughlin, V. (2010). *Promoting social inclusion: The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Ireland.* National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Downes, P. (2004a). *Psychological support services for Ballyfermot: Present and future.* Commissioned research report. Ballyfermot, Dublin: URBAN.

Downes, P. (2004b). *Voices of children*: *St. Raphael's Primary School, Ballyfermot.* Commissioned research report. Ballyfermot, Dublin: URBAN.

Downes, P. (2009). Prevention of bullying at a systemic level in schools: Movement from cognitive and spatial narratives of diametric opposition to concentric relation. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M.

Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of school bullying: An international perspective* (pp. 517–533). New York: Routledge.

Downes, P. (2011). *Community based lifelong learning centres: Developing a European strategy informed by international evidence and research.* Research paper for European Commission, NESET (Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training).

Downes, P., & Gilligan, A. L. (2007). Beyond disadvantage: Some conclusions. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 463–491). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Downes, P., & Maunsell, C. (2007). *Count us in: Tackling early school leaving in South West Inner City Dublin. An integrated response*. Dublin: South Inner City Community Development Association (SICCDA) & South Inner City Drugs Task Force.

Downes, P., Maunsell, C., & Ivers, J. (2006). *A holistic approach to early school leaving and school retention in Blanchardstown current issues and future steps for services and schools*. Dublin: Blanchardstown Area Partnership.

Ebner, G. (2011, February 8). Respondent to presentation. Maunsell, C., & Downes, P. (2011). LLL2010 Subproject 5. *Lifelong learning for all? Policies and practices towards underrepresented and socially excluded groups.* LLL2010 conference d*o three sides always make a triangle? Policy, institutions and learners in lifelong formal learning*. University of Leuven, Brussels.

Educational Disadvantage Committee. (2005). *Moving beyond educational disadvantage 2002–2005*. Dublin: DES.

Engel, L., Holford, J., & Mleczko, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education.* Nottingham: University of Nottingham. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. London: Faber & Faber.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Penguin.

Gergen, K. J. (1994). The limits of pure critique. In H. W. Simons & M. Billig (Eds.), *After postmodernism: Reconstructing ideology critique*. London: Sage.

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Gilligan, C. (1990). Preface. In C. Gilligan, N. P. Lyons, & T. J. Hanmer (Eds.), *Making connections*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Greene, S. (2003). *Psychological development of girls and women: Rethinking change in time*. New York: Routledge.

Habermas, J. (1987). *The philosophical discourse of modernity: Twelve lectures* (F. Lawrence, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hegel, G. W. F. (1830/1831). *The philosophy of history*. New York: Dover Publications (1956).

Heidegger, M. (1927). *Being and time* (J. MacQuarrie & E. Robinson, Trans., 1962). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Higher Education Authority Ireland. (2010). *A study of progression in Irish Higher Education*. Dublin: HEA.

Horner, M. S. (1972). Toward an understanding of achievement-related conflicts in women. *Journal of Social Issues, 28*, 157–176.

Ivančič, A., Mohorčič Špolar, V. A., & Radovan, M. (2010). *The case of Slovenia. Access of adults to formal and non-formal education – Policies and priorities.* Ljubljana: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Ivers, J., & Downes, P. (2012). A phenomenological reinterpretation of Horner's fear of success in terms of social class. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 27*, 369–388.

Jarvis, P. (2007). *Globalisation, lifelong learning and the learning society: Sociological perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Kozlovskiy, V., Khokhlova, A., & Veits, M. (2010). *The role of Russian educational institutions in the promotion of access for adults to formal education.* St Petersburg: Department of Sociology, Saint Petersburg State University. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Lee, A. T., & Miller, P. W. (2005). Participation in higher education: Equity and access? *The Economic Record, 81*(253), 152–165.

Levinas, E. (1991). *Otherwise than being or beyond essence* (A. Lingis, Trans.). Dordrecht/Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Lindemann, E. (1926/1989). *The meaning of education.* Oklahoma: Norman.

Maunsell, C. (2011, February 8). *Lifelong learning for all? Policies and practices towards under-represented and socially excluded groups.* Presentation at LLL 2010 conference. *Do three sides always make a triangle? Policy, institutions and learners in lifelong formal learning.* Brussels: University of Leuven.

Morgan, M. (2001). *Drug use prevention: Overview of research*. Dublin: National Advisory Committee on Drugs.

Morgan, M., & Slowey, M. (2009). Higher education in the broader landscape: Widening the perspective on equity and access in Ireland. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 15*(2), 204–218.

Mulkerrins, D. (2007). The transformational potential of the Home School Community Liaison Scheme. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 133–143). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Ormston, R., Dobbie, F., Cleghorn, N., & Davidson, A. (2007). *National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) 2005: Scotland report*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Social Research.

Rammel, S., & Gottwald, R. (2010). *Social inclusion in formal and non formal adult education: Findings from Austrian institutions and government representatives.* Krems: Danube University. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Russell, B. (1946). *History of western philosophy and its connection with political and social circumstances from the earliest times to the present*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Savage, M. (2003). Review: A new class paradigm? *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 24*(4), 535–541.

Spring, N. (2007). Tracing the language of educational disadvantage. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 3–10). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Stensen, O.-A., Ure, O.-B. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Norway.* Oslo: Fafo – Institute for Labour and Social Research. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Studley, R. (2003). *Inequality, student achievement, and college admissions: A remedy for under-representation* (No 1001). Berkeley: University of California at Berkeley, Centre for Studies in Higher Education, UC Berkeley.

Sutherland, E. H. (1939). *Principles of criminology* (3rd ed.). Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.

Taljunaite, M., Labanauskas, L., Terepaite-Butviliene, J., & Blazeviviene, L. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education.* Vilnius: Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Social Research Institute. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Tamm, A., & Saar, E. (2010). *LLL2010 Subproject 5 Estonia country report*. Tallinn: Institute of International and Social Studies/Department of Social Stratification.

Taylor, C. (2007). *A secular age*. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Tett, L., Munn, P., Blair, A., Kay, H., Martin, I., Martin, J., & Ranson, S. (2001). Collaboration between schools and community education agencies in tackling social exclusion. *Research Papers in Education, 16*, 3–21.

Vermeersch, L., & Vandenbrouke, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Belgium's Flemish Community* Leuven: KatholiekeUniversiteit. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Weedon, E., Riddell, S., Purves, R., & Ahlgren, L. (2010). *Social inclusion and adult participation in lifelong learning: Officials', managers' and teachers' perspectives.* Edinburgh: University of Scotland. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Wolf, A., & Cumming, J. (2000). The inside story: The reality of developing an assessment instrument. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 26*, 211–229.

Chapter 8
Non-formal Education: Indicators at Macro-Exo Levels

8.1 Introduction: Non-formal Education as a Key Path to Overcoming Fear of Failure in Marginalised Groups

For those traditionally alienated from the formal school system, the non-formal educational sector can serve as a key bridge towards social inclusion. Its climate tends to be more inviting, informal and flexible for learners who are often extremely intimidated by the thought of 'going back' for more education after usually negative experiences of schooling from the past. The EU Commission (2001) recognises that 'Community and voluntary groups have unique opportunities to deliver targeted learning, to promote learning amongst (potential) learners and to articulate their needs and interests' (p. 11).

A key issue raised by international research is the need for a non-threatening atmosphere to overcome the fear of failure. A plethora of educational theorists and educational psychologists recognise the danger of labelling learners as 'failures' (e.g. Glasser 1969; Warnock 1977; Handy and Aitken 1990; Kellaghan et al. 1995; MacDevitt 1998; Kelly 1999; Downes 2003a; Jimerson 1999; Ferguson et al. 2001). Development of a failure identity is demotivating for learners and contributes to the alienation of learners from the formal education system. For many the formal system appears daunting and is associated with their previous negative experiences of education. There is a need here also to recognise that many potential learners have had extremely negative experiences of school (Downes and Maunsell 2007) and that highlighting the benefits of learning for this group needs to clearly distinguish lifelong learning activities from their past school environment. Against this backdrop, the non-formal education system may offer a more non-threatening pathway back into the education system. It is a key bridge potentially for access to learning for adults from traditionally excluded groups.

The non-threatening environment of non-formal education offers an opportunity for learners to develop their sense of self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) describes self-esteem as feeling that you are 'good enough'. Self-esteem is positively associated with

academic achievement (Purkey 1970; Brookover et al. 1964; Hay et al. 1997). The words of Handy and Aitken (1990) would predict alienation and loss of identity for the less academic students without a bridge between the formal and non-formal system:

> the loss of identity and sense of anomie of many students [occurs] in an organisation where such academic values are overemphasised and other experiences and achievements are under-expressed. (p. 28)

The non-formal system offers diverse pathways for recognition of the learner's contribution. MacDevitt (1998) highlights that one direction for educational reform in a European context is 'the recognition of achievement for all' (p. 47) (see also Kelly 1999, p. 141).

A focus on achievement would require a focus on developing primarily the strengths of the learner. Furthermore, non-formal education classes are less concerned with assessment processes, which is an important feature, given that there is evidence from numerous sources indicating considerable anxiety about assessment among both learners and tutors (Merrifield et al. 2001; Watson et al. 2001; Campbell 2006, Looney 2008; Carrigan and Downes 2009). In the Canadian context, Campbell (2006) recommends that:

> Students who are emergent readers and writers should not be subjected to formal, standardised tests during intake assessments, as these are reminiscent of their early school experiences. (p. 65)

The non-formal education setting allows for less hierarchical student-teacher relations and a democratic climate emphasised in international research as being vital for motivation and learning.

A key opportunity provided by non-formal education is with regard to appreciation of the individual's previous life experience, for example, as part of personal development dimensions to education. Banks (1994) argues that insufficient attention to personal development is an important contributory factor to alienation in learning contexts. Glasser (1969) refers to the 'emotional bridge to relevance' in education. The non-formal education sector can provide paths into emotionally relevant education and also culturally relevant education. Personal development classes, with an emotional bridge to relevance, are particularly suited to engaging with an individual's life experience and to constructivist methods of active learning (see also von Glaserfeld 1995).

A further feature of non-formal education is its potential appreciation of wide ranges of intelligence. This echoes Gardner's (1993) examination of multiple types of intelligence in educational psychology, which proposes numerous different types of intelligence, e.g., linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic and personal. It offers a wide range of opportunities for success for the adult learner, a factor of vital importance for access in bringing people back into education who were previously alienated from the 'system'.

The non-formal education sector may offer a particular opportunity for outreach initiatives to engage many groups traditionally excluded from the mainstream education system. One of the key dimensions of the right to health indicators noted by

the UN Special Rapporteur is that the community is consulted and participates in policy decisions that affect them with regard to health issues:

> 25. in general terms a human rights-based approach requires that special attention be given to disadvantaged individuals and communities; it requires the active and informed participation of individuals and communities in policy decisions that affect them; and it requires effective, transparent and accessible monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The combined effect of these - and other features of a human rights-based approach - is to empower disadvantaged individuals and communities.

These features are also elements of good practice for outreach contexts in education.

As a key bridge to access education in the formal sector, classes in the non-formal setting with emphasis on themes of personal development and community development offer an opportunity for the adult learner to gain increased confidence academically and socially—and can be a key space for nurturing motivation to continue education into the formal educational setting. However, a French review of recognition of non-formal and informal learning shows that people with low or no qualifications are less aware of this possibility than people with higher qualifications (Besson 2008, p. 15).

It is absolutely essential for access issues to include the non-formal sector, though this does not preclude some flexibility on how this would be interpreted in a country with a very undeveloped non-formal sector. Improving access must involve a comparative focus on the gaps, as well as strengths, in the non-formal sector as a bridge for potentially excluded groups. Thus, the non-formal system can play a key role for access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, through helping to overcome fear of failure, providing opportunities for recognition of wider dimensions for a person's success in education, offering outreach initiatives and education relevant to a person's emotional development, as well as culturally relevant themes offering opportunity for active citizenship and community development. Pervading all of these aspects is the recognition that a person's life experience is a starting point for learning to go beyond 'deficit' models of learning and experience.

8.2   The Need for a National and Regional Strategy for Non-formal Education: To Relate But Not Reduce Non-formal Education to the Formal System (Structural Indicator)

It is apparent that there is a severe lack of strategic direction at national level in many countries regarding non-formal education. The Hungarian national report provides the following account:

> The interviewees [from a non-formal education institution in Hungary] have no information about the national or the regional strategy in Hungary to develop the non-formal education

sector. According to the manager, stable and continuous financial support would be necessary for the non-formal sector too. The mentor emphasises that more connection and cooperation would be important between the formal and non-formal sector, and also between the different non-formal organisations, because only these cooperations could provide solutions for the complex problems of the disadvantaged groups. (Balogh et al. 2010)

In Hungary, the non-formal education sector is under the remit of the Ministry of Affairs and Labour. However, according to a senior government official, '*This Ministry mainly supports formal trainings*' (Balogh et al. 2010).

A policy vacuum at a strategic level in relation to non-formal education is evident from the Bulgarian national report:

According to the respondent, there is no strategy for development of the non-formal sector at national or regional level. This personal opinion of the respondent may be counted as an expert opinion, because she has long years of practical experience in the non-governmental sector with different kinds and types of NGOs—charitable and tourist organisations. In the respondent's view, the main priority of a future strategy should be partnership relations between various stakeholders and a serious emphasis on practical training in a real-life environment of trainees. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

Similarly, in Russia, strategic direction for non-formal education is singularly defined by its absence:

The interviewees are not aware of any comprehensive national or regional strategy in Russia to develop the non-formal education sector. All the initiatives in the field of non-formal education are developed by the Centre either independently or with the assistance of foreign partners. They consider non-formal educational offers for disadvantaged groups as very promising since they are more short-term and practically oriented. However, they admit that the majority of people in Russia still have more trust in formal educational institutions and programmes. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

The Russian national report concludes that:

non-formal education is most often financed by the private sectors…there's no department that would be responsible specifically for funding the non-formal sector of education. The representative of the Committee couldn't say which department is in charge of non-formal organisations, if there's any at all…During the interview, it was noted that all informants have quite a vague idea of what non-formal education is. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

A further problem in relation to lack of strategic direction for non-formal education in the Russian context is a lack of information on this sector at national level:

Unfortunately, there are no official statistics on non-formal education, so we cannot provide any information on the number of non-formal education institutions in Russia and their students. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

This response from the Austrian Education Ministry official illustrates the low priority given to non-formal education in Austria:

Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations? *Responsibility, probably nobody (laughing), and everybody is doing a little…From a political point of view it is the Ministries of Education, Economics and Social Affairs. I would say that the real existing responsibility lies within this triangle. But non-formal education is something that's being treated with a little negligence, we know that when we look at Scandinavia or the Anglo-Saxon area…*

> *This is probably owing to the strong focus on formal vocational training and the strong orientation towards job profiles in Austria….* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Across a range of these national reports, it emerges that non-formal education is frequently merely a bungalow annex to the citadel of formal education.

Somewhat in contrast, the Scottish national report points to a strategic focus on non-formal education:

> At the non-formal level of educational provision social inclusion has also been addressed through the development of local authority community learning and development. Here the emphasis is on building community capacity and to engage with those that the formal education system may not have adequately provided for. (Wallace 2008; Weedon et al. 2010)
>
> There are a range of other policies and strategies which focus more specifically on particular areas—the main areas are:
>
> - Community Learning and Development
> - Adult literacy and numeracy
> - More Choices More Chances—provision for 16–19 year olds who are not in education, employment or training
> - Widening access to further and higher education
>
> Implementation of the initiatives linked to these policies and strategies are spread across learning providers in both the formal and non-formal setting. (Weedon et al. 2010)

In a similar vein, the Irish Government White Paper on Lifelong Learning sets out a strategic vision which encompasses non-formal education:

> The national strategy to develop the non-formal education sector in Ireland was set out in the 'White Paper, Learning for Life', published in 2000 by the Department of Education and Science. This document includes aspects of further and third-level education, continuing education and training, community education, and other systematic deliberate learning by adults, both formal and informal (2000:12). This gave a new recognition to community education in Ireland by setting out that 'community education, particularly in the form of community-based women's groups has been one of the most dynamic and distinctive elements of the adult education sector in recent years. Its self-directed, learner-centred character and its capacity to reach marginalised women in disadvantaged communities are particularly noteworthy'. (DES 2000, p. 16; Dooley et al. 2010)

Underpinning the overall framework of lifelong learning are six areas of priority in the Department of Education and Science (2000):

- Consciousness Raising: to realise full potential; self-discovery; personal and collective development
- Citizenship: to grow in self-confidence, social awareness and social responsibility and to take a proactive role in shaping the overall direction at societal and community decision-making
- Cohesion: to enhance social capital and empower those particularly disadvantaged
- Competitiveness: the role in providing a skilled workforce
- Cultural Development: the role of adult education in enriching the cultural fabric of society
- Community Development: the role of adult education in the development of community with a collective sense of purpose

In the words of Maunsell et al. (2008), 'Rather than being merely a tag on to the economic rationale for lifelong learning, the White Paper prioritises the issue of social cohesion through personal, community and cultural development' (p. 1).

The non-formal education sector is also particularly well-developed in parts of Belgium. The Belgian (Flanders) national report provides the following account:

> At this moment 128 socio-cultural organisations are offered government funding by the Flemish Community (FOV 2008). These non-profit organisations all mainly rely on those state subsidies…Still, most of the organisations in socio-cultural adult work are independent from government. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)
>
> Over the last six months of the year 2005 more than 2,200 non-formal educational programmes were offered by over 200 different organisations. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

However, Vandenbroucke (2011, personal communication) observes, 'While these courses are large in scale, they are only those offered in Brussels. Thus, caution must be taken in relation to assumptions that non-formal education is well-developed in other parts of Belgium'.

According to the Belgian (Flanders) national report, there are four types of socio-cultural organisations:

> Associations *(Verenigingen)*: associations are networks of local divisions, departments or groups ran by volunteers (along the lines of informal social networks)…These include cultural, leisure, educational and community-based activities.
>
> Training-plus-centres *(Vormingplus-centra)*. Since 2003 thirteen regional folk-highschools are being recognised and subsidised by the Flemish public authorities…They organise a wide range of activities themselves: courses, workshops, lectures, excursions, expositions, etc.
>
> Specialised training institutions (*Landelijke vormingsinstellingen*)…Unlike the Training-plus-centres, they are specialised in one or several specific target groups (adults with a disability, union members, etc.) or themes (arts education, social service, personality and relationships, nature and environment, etc.). They organise their activities all throughout Flanders and Brussels. The do not work for a specific region.
>
> Movements (*Bewegingen*). Like the specialised training institutions, the movements are specialised in one or a few specific themes. In order to support social change, the movements organise activities to inform and sensitise people and try to involve them in social action. The term 'movements' refers to the so-called 'social movements' and 'new social movements' as a kind of group action with a specific social or political agenda. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

This extensive development of the non-formal education sector is combined with a targeted approach towards socio-economically excluded groups, according to interviewees in the Belgian national report. Most activities in socio-cultural adult work are free of charge, which helps them to attract socio-economically marginalised groups (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010).

While non-formal adult education institutions do make some significant efforts to attract socio-economically at risk groups, this is somewhat in contrast with the official centres for adult education which are classified as being in the formal education sector. It is evident that where a well-developed non-formal sector exists, such as in parts of Belgium, this may be correlated with a well-developed social inclusion and access strategy in this sector, but this correlation cannot necessarily be assumed.

Moreover, even if there is such a correlation, this does not seem to imply a similar strategy for the formal education sector, as evinced by the official centres for adult education in Belgium (Flanders).

The Bulgarian national report does highlight a tendency towards a focus on socio-economic marginalisation, at least to some degree, in aspects of non-formal education:

> One of the largest networks of NGOs, which provide educational services in Bulgaria, is the Federation for science communication. The main office of the Federation is situated in Sofia. It has about 25 regional offices which are placed in big administrative towns or in towns in *industrial regions with high unemployment*. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)
>
> although at the level of its overall strategy the Federation does not identify itself as targeted at concrete socially disadvantaged groups it in fact provides education and training mainly for unemployed people. By participating in European projects together with other NGOs the Federation sometimes trains social groups such as prisoners but this activity is not integrated in its mission and strategy. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

Limitations from the perspective of socio-economic exclusion are that the federation does not provide literacy courses and that its approach to overcoming poverty and social exclusion through non-formal education is rather ad hoc:

> Policy for supporting socially disadvantaged groups is listed in our statute but we do not do this in a systematic fashion. This is done mainly in cases when it coincides with the aims of a concrete project or when we can advise people to attend certain courses. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

There is not a strong bridge between the non-formal education sector in Estonia and socio-economically excluded groups as is evident from this interviewee from the non-formal sector:

> *It is more difficult to attract people who do not cope with life so well, for example those with a low income. Those who are disadvantaged do not come to us and we cannot find them either. This is a major problem. (….) Those people often lack motivation. However, there are some who have heard about the courses. Some are school drop-outs….* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

Non-formal education appears to receive strong commitment in practice in Lithuania. The Lithuanian national report highlights its legislative basis:

> Non-formal adult education is regulated by the Law on Non-formal Adult Education (1998, May 30, No.VIII-822) which commits the providers of non-formal adult education and their social partners 'to provide assistance in implementing the inborn right of a person to lifelong development of his/her personality'. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

This provides scope for lifelong learning goals as personal fulfilment and not simply in vocational terms. The Lithuanian national report explicates the main objectives of non-formal adult education:

- To encourage people to satisfy their self-education needs and to satisfy their cultural interests
- To develop people's competences and creativity
- To help people to become active members of democratic society

- To enable to acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills for people's professional activities, and to establish the conditions for developing qualifications. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

There is both data available on participation in non-formal education and evidence of high rates of participation in non-formal education in Lithuania:

> Data of Lithuanian Statistics Department shows that in 2006 about 500 000 people aged 25–64 participated in some form of non-formal education. Non-formal education services are provided by about 3000 state-owned or private institutions, including those whose main area of activities is not education. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

However, the Lithuanian national report highlights the need for fresh strategic direction at national level in relation to non-formal education:

> Lithuania has Education Strategy, but non-formal education is not emphasised. Only the references to the existing Law on Non-Formal Education are given. In expert opinion the latter is: *[…] is quite outdated, it was adopted in 1998. […]*. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

It similarly uncovers the need for regional strategic direction in relation to non-formal education, which is currently lacking in Lithuania:

> Each region of Lithuania has its own Development Plan, however, non-formal education is not mentioned in these plans: *First of all, we should separate this area from formal education system, and promote educational activities which introduced the essence of non-formal education to the general public, and the benefits of it, including regional authorities, employers, educational institutions, consulting and non-governmental organisations etc*. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

The Lithuanian national report explicitly recognises the role European policy can offer in providing strategic direction for the non-formal education sector (Taljunaite et al. 2010). It is notable that the weaknesses highlighted in the Lithuanian national report relate to strategic and structural reform to give better expression to non-formal education:

> *there is no non-formal education system strategy, there is no funding and quality assurance system, no monitoring mechanisms as well as no recognition of competences of non-formal learning*. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

The lack of a driving force at national level, whether for strategy or funding, was recognised in the Lithuanian national report:

> In response to the question which state institution is responsible for financing organisations of non-formal education, a Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science official gave the following answer: *The Ministry of Education and Science, not directly, not for financing……that's a good question….. You know—how to say—as the non-formal education is not financed from MES, so it is municipalities, municipalities, non-formal education belongs to municipalities*. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

In Estonia the main organisation to deal with the development of non-formal education is the Non-formal Education Association:

> *A number of unique education centres have emerged and they are doing wonderful job. They have to fight for their survival. It is not easy to get funding for their courses. They have to work hard and compete with open universities.* This opinion is based on the experience of other institutions. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

Significantly, the Estonian lifelong learning strategy does encompass at least some conception of non-formal education:

> Recently a strategy for lifelong learning was adopted in Estonia. A part of the strategy concerned non-formal education. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The Development Plan for Estonian Adult Education 2009–2013 includes a chapter dedicated to non-formal and informal education (p. 22). However, there are no regional networks of non-formal education providers, neither is there a relevant strategy in place, according to a non-formal education organisation interviewee:

> *It would be useful. Currently everybody acts on their own. The need for training should be investigated in connection with the Rural Development Plan* (Tamm and Saar 2010).
>   A comprehensive strategy would have a great impact on non-formal education. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

According to an Estonian university interviewee, there is much room for a more proactive role at national level for the Education Ministry in relation to non-formal education:

> Non-formal education is developed by universities themselves based on their own visions or feedback received from employers. *The Ministry of Education and Research should take on the coordination of the provision of non-formal education*. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

A barrier to such a role is finance according to the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research which makes the following comment on investment in the non-formal education sector in Estonia:

> How would you compare the status and development of the non-formal education sector compared with 5 years ago? Has it expanded or increased over the last 5 years? *Unfortunately the simple answer is we practically do not have any budgetary means to fund education outside the state commissioned education except some mobility grants. The investments have also been miniscule so far.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

A policy vacuum and lack of national strategic direction and priority to non-formal education leads not only to its lack of development. It also leads to its potential colonisation by the formal education sector. This phenomenon of colonisation of the non-formal education sector by the formal education sector is an implication of the following account from the English national report:

> With the emphasis on accreditation and credit frameworks growing apace in recent years, much provision which was formerly non-formal has either disappeared or become part of the formal system. Thus, for example, for most of the twentieth century most 'pre-1992' universities offered a range of 'extra-mural' classes for adults, chiefly in the humanities. Although Oxford and Cambridge still make some offering of this kind, almost all other universities confine their programmes to credit-bearing courses, typically forming part of studies leading to a degree. (Jones et al. 2010; Engel et al. 2010)

Such colonisation is also an issue emerging from the Slovenian national report:

> *We take very good care to offer only those programmes which are not offered by schools in our area. As soon as it happens that the school is offering a programme we absolutely have no chance to carry the same programme out because we can't be competitive concerning the price knowing the school has all the material costs covered, has a building … We might have been more flexible and quicker in non-formal learning but since schools are facing*

lower enrolments they have become very flexible, they offer classes from flower arranging to cookery, really everything. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

The following attempt to resist such colonisation is highlighted in the Austrian national report:

When a university, a university of applied sciences or a (name of a big national educational supplier in the non-formal sector) is doing it, it suddenly has another value, even if it is not necessarily better. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Similarly, a Belgian national report interviewee refers to the need for a reciprocal two-way process between the non-formal and formal education providers, in order to avoid a situation where the non-formal is merely instrumental to and colonised by the formal:

Building bridges for learners to the formal education system, should not be one-way traffic, the interviewees indicate. Non-formal educational institutions should facilitate outreach events from formal educational institutions (e.g. organised visits for learners), but this should also be the case the other way around. Adults participating in formal adult education do not always have information on or access to the non-formal educational sector. It is important that institutions promote that link too. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

A major development at EU level is the ETU 2020 commitment and the recognition that the EU Council (2009/C 119/02) agrees that:

1. In the period up to 2020, the primary goal of European cooperation should be to support the further development of education and training systems in the Member States which are aimed at ensuring:

   (a) The personal, social and professional fulfillment of all citizens
   (b) Sustainable economic prosperity and employability, whilst promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue

The question arises as to the extent to which this lifelong learning approach encompassing active citizenship, personal fulfilment and social cohesion is given manifestation in the structures and strategies of Member States, with respect to formal and non-formal education. It is evident that much is needed to be done to translate this EU Council commitment into policy and practice across Member States, in relation to both their national strategies and priorities, as well as their structures for implementation of such priorities regarding non-formal education.

Finance is frequently raised as a major barrier to a progressive strategy at national level for non-formal education. While the Scottish national report locates funding for non-formal education as being channelled through local authorities both independently and by national government, the precarious situation of non-formal education institutions is emphasised by interviewees in the Estonian national report:

There is no support system for non-profit associations. It is difficult to survive. We can pay the teachers and the training manager but we cannot pay for managing the organisation. We are in a very difficult situation if we cannot get support from local governments. We work without any pay. The Estonian Non-formal Education Association has dealt with these problems. Some day maybe the government will support us too.... In other countries centres like ours get support from the government. When the economic situation improves the local governments will support us more. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

It is clear the EU has been a major source of funding for development of the non-formal education sector in Estonia:

> In 2007 and 2008, three programmes were prepared for the development of adult education and training; the programmes which are financed from the European Social Fund are the following: Vocational training of adults in vocational educational institutions and development actions; Adult education in non-formal educational centres; Popularisation of adult education. (Tamm and Saar 2010)
>
> Within the programmes, at least 73 000 people are expected to participate in courses provided by vocational educational institutions and non-formal education centres (folk universities). Participation is free and courses are available in all counties. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

An appeal for strategic evaluation and intervention at EU level for non-formal education is made by the following interviewee in the Hungarian national report:

> according to the manager, a special EU monitoring system would be useful. Meetings and discussion-possibilities for the representatives of the non-formal organisation were provided by a monitoring system earlier, but there is no opportunity to bring on special problems recently, thus every organisation is having to face professional and financial problems alone. (Balogh et al. 2010)

The Russian national report observes the rapid growth of the non-formal education sector:

> Speaking of the status of non-formal education, the informants admit that it has remarkably grown over the last five years. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

A clear need for a more strategic relation between the non-formal and formal education sector also arises in the Slovenian national report:

> Since validation and recognition of non-formal and informal education in formal education is not yet implemented in practice, non-formal education, no matter how far it is formalised and standardised, does not count towards formal education (Šlander and Hvala Kamenšček 2007). From this point of view non-formal programmes may represent an important way for improving and upgrading knowledge and skills and obtaining new competences but they do not deliver higher social status. However, this may represent a competitive advantage when competing in the labour market. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

This systemic level focus on transition and connection between the non-formal and formal education sector, without colonisation of the non-formal, requires interrogation of the distinctive features of the non-formal education sector which need to be retained in any such connection and interaction. The Belgian national report sets out the following distinctive features of non-formal education from the perspective of participants:

> According to the interviewees, what adults look for in non-formal adult education institutions is somewhat different and in some cases exactly the opposite of what they experienced in a traditional schooling context or a classroom environment. Both interviewees tend to look upon this as a strength of non-formal adult education rather than as a weakness. It seems therefore important not to formalise the activities any further and offer more courses and classes, but to focus on the real-life effects and benefits of the work. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

Vandenbroucke (2011, personal communication) highlights that '*In terms of institutions the differences between formal and non-formal are: the hierarchy in the system, certificates or not, subsidised by the ministry of education*'.

The flexibility of the non-formal education sector is a prevalent theme in the Belgian and Hungarian national reports:

> Clearly, non-formal adult education can take place in various societal domains: culture, work, welfare, social work, etc. In all these domains, non-formal education can have various meanings. There is not really a fixed structure in non-formal adult education. It occurs in different locations and using a wide range of media, products and processes…*The non-formal adult education sector is rather diffuse…It is not a matter of trying to be another educational institution but being one that is also concerned with education in the broadest sense of the word, including culture, leisure, social change, etc.* (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)
>
> According to the manager, the biggest opportunity for the programme and the non-formal education sector lies in their professional flexibility. These organisations have the possibility to specialise themselves for the required developmental areas. (Balogh et al. 2010)

Yet it is clear that this flexibility is a double-edged sword, as it may contribute to a loss of identity also for the non-formal sector.

A strong feature of the identity of non-formal education in Scotland and Ireland (Bane 2007; Higgins 2007; Waters 2007) is its commitment to active citizenship through community development:

> The term 'adult education' has in the past been used mainly for learning provided in the community through what is now termed 'Community Learning and Development' (Wallace 2008). The non-formal provision is mainly non-accredited. (Weedon et al. 2010)

The Irish national report cites the perspective of one of its national organisations:

> Strengths of non-formal education are the extensive personal outreach to and development of contact with those in the community who might benefit from participation, and who may be quite alienated from education for a variety of reasons; non-threatening approaches are used to build trust often over a considerable period before the learner may decide to first come into a group and the fact that learners are encouraged back no matter how often they may leave a programme or miss sessions. (AONTAS 2004, p. 23; Dooley et al. 2010)

According to the Estonian national report, a practical approach and more open learning environment are what differentiate non-formal education from formal education in their country:

> *It seems that adult learners are better motivated and more aware of what they want. They can relate the skills and knowledge to those acquired earlier. The atmosphere is more relaxed. They do not have to prove themselves. When I went back to school as an adult I discovered that my attitude was completely different. It is inspiring to know that you can learn and are not rejected. Life changes and we change with it and we can keep pace with those changes. This is what I like about non-formal learning.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

Accounts of increasing partnership and interrelation between non-formal education and formal education providers are highlighted in the Scottish and Belgian (Flanders) national reports:

> A further development that is evidenced is that boundaries between institutions, possibly with the exception of the elite university are becoming more blurred. Colleges deliver higher education courses and have links with universities for students to move on to higher

level study after completing the initial part of a degree at college. Colleges also have links to non-formal organisations, through being in partnerships with their local CLD [Community and Learning Development] and also through delivering courses jointly with CLD. In some cases CLD courses are delivered in colleges by CLD staff. Prison education straddles the non-formal–formal divide as there are opportunities for literacies learning as well as certificated courses … from the college. (Weedon et al. 2010)

The interviewed senior manager comes to the conclusion that there is a strong cross-fertilisation between formal and non-formal adult education in Flanders and Brussels. This is also the case for Citizenne. In a lot of projects, institutions for formal education (offering mainly classroom activities) and institutions for non-formal education (offering mainly out-of-school activities supporting basic skills, etc.) work together. Bridging non-formal and formal adult education however, should not imply that non-formal education should always lead to access to formal education. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

As in any partnership, there is a degree of tension needed in order to retain identity:

Citizenne is no 'supplier' or 'deliverer' of underrepresented or high-risk groups to the formal educational sector, although some of those formal educational institutions look at it that way. (Vermeersch and Vandenbrouke 2010)

According to the Russian national report, there is tension but little partnership *between non-formal and formal education institutions:*

Non-formal education exists parallel to the system of formal education. The system of formal education in Russia is rather closed and monopolistic. There are no mechanisms of recognition of prior non-formal learning or a bridge between the formal and non-formal education. This is a major obstacle on the way of development of the adult education in Russia. The problem is largely complicated with the fact that the system of formal education is extremely rigid and reluctant to establish any kind of connections with the system of non-formal education and letting it get installed into the educational ladder. Formal education representatives see the system of non-formal education as a competitor at the education services market. Therefore, to them any cooperation seems unacceptable and senseless. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

A clear disjunction between the non-formal and formal systems is also manifested in the following interviewees' perspectives in Estonian national report:

It is difficult to assess whether and how the [non-formal education] courses are linked to formal adult education. (Tamm and Saar 2010)
   Hard to say… we do not stay in touch with former participants…. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The Estonian example illustrates a disjunction at least at the level of communication between non-formal and formal education settings. However, cooperation with institutions offering formal adult education does occur and brings lessons for change to the formal system:

I have worked with school teachers for a long time. At first they are very matter of fact: 'We do not have time for games; let's do it and we are finished…'. But the more they work with us the more relaxed they become. Life goes on and teachers have to learn to involve participants more. Sometimes they doubt whether this is possible. Teachers have been acting within boundaries for a very long time but these boundaries are starting to crumble. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The convergence of attitudes and teaching methods encourages further cooperation between formal educational schools and informal education providers and will hopefully help to change the attitude of teachers towards informal education and encourage them to use more diverse teaching methods. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

However, with this convergence of teaching styles and approaches may come a loss of identity for the non-formal sector.

What emerges from this review of national reports is that there is a need for a much more accentuated strategic focus at national and regional levels on promotion of non-formal education generally and specifically for targeting socio-economically excluded groups for participation in non-formal education. A corollary of such a strategic commitment is the provision of distinct funding strands for non-formal education, in conjunction with European structural funds. A recurrent theme in the national reports is the danger of colonisation of non-formal education sector by the formal sector, with a strong degree of mistrust between both sectors. It is apparent that different criteria for quality, distinctive to the non-formal sector, need to be developed.

The twin concerns of the need for processes of validation of the work in the non-formal sector on the one hand and the danger of 'colonisation' of the non-formal education sector by the formal education sector on the other hand were explicitly recognised in some national reports and at the LLL2010 consortium meeting in Bulgaria, Sofia (June 2010). Against this backdrop, there is a need for any validation process to be different from that of the formal education sector, to give expression to the difference of the non-formal sector in a range of ways. The flexibility and relationality of the non-formal sector must not be lost through reducing it to the Procrustean bed of the formal education sector. An important step in reconciling these concerns is to identify a range of different criteria for validation of courses in the non-formal sector, criteria which would help maintain a difference from the formal sector.

One obvious starting point for the development of such agreed criteria is the European Quality Mark framework developed as part of the RECALL project. The EQM process is a transparent assessment process where the learning provider gets the opportunity to review its own processes by using a set of indicators that are based on standards commonly agreed by eight organisations from eight European countries. It is important to emphasise that there may be more than one kind of quality focus depending on the different kinds of goals for projects within the non-formal education sector. Furthermore, and most importantly, direct social inclusion goals for reaching some of the most marginalised groups in the non-formal sector would need to be expressly factored into any quality review criteria or indicators for the non-formal sector. It is evident that further EU wide consultation is required on this across the non-formal sector representatives of each country.

A related issue emerging from this cross-national review of the non-formal education sector, together with the formal educational sector, is that there is an obvious need for systematic integration of four core lifelong learning goals pervading European Commission and Council documents—social inclusion/cohesion, active citizenship, employment, personal fulfilment—into Member States' respective policies, structures and practices for lifelong learning. It is abundantly clear that current policies, strategies, structures, practices and funding for lifelong learning, whether in the formal or non-formal education sectors, do not yet amount to a systematic inclusion of these key dimensions across the various domains engaged in lifelong learning and access—though some countries have clearly made much more progress in doing this than others.

8.3   The Need for Agreed, Non-reductionist, Accountability Processes in the Non-formal Sector: Due to Less Accountability Provided by Non-formal Educational Institutions in a Climate of Increasing Need for Accountability (Structural Indicator)

The Norwegian national report raises an important issue regarding both the need for accountability in the non-formal education sector and the difficulty in providing such accountability:

recent development within the educational sector and perhaps the society in general, implying that institutions and organisations become more and more accountable for their output, e.g. how many students pass their exams on schedule, how many degrees (or ECTS points) they are able to produce each year. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

It is evident that any such accountability for non-formal education must be distinguished from that of the formal education sector:

The point made by our informant is that it is hard, if not impossible, to hold study associations accountable for many of their activities in the same way as other institutions and organisations, e.g. universities. Despite this, the political climate is more or less demanding this from them and the situation is frustrating for the study associations. Our informant pointed out that higher esteem among public authorities and people in general was one of the main challenges for Folkeuniversitetet in the coming years. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

Accountability is also a concern in relation to non-formal education in Bulgaria:

From formal education perspective: *It is very important to set standards for the validation of the transition from non-formal education, as conversely there is a risk of decreasing the quality of higher education.* (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

The theme of a distinctive approach to accountability was also highlighted for the non-formal education sector by an interviewee in the Scottish national report:

He concluded by stressing the potential role of the voluntary sector but stressed that there should be less power vested in formal institutions [to evaluate it] but without losing the accountability provided by the formal sector: *.. so I do think there is potential for the voluntary third sector, independent sector, however you wish to describe [them] because they are all different, to grow and deliver lifelong learning much more effectively. I would take much more of it away from the power of the institutions, but I might leave the accountability with the institution, because I think it could be good at that, if they understood what's going on better (Learning Connections interviewee).* (Weedon et al. 2010)

As the Scottish national report observes, such accountability is not simply to be reducible to a measurable outcomes focus:

This interviewee felt that CLDs had to be more active in promoting its influence but that one of its problems was that the government focused on measurable outcomes which were not relevant to CLD learners: *The importance of CLD has to be more explicit in its influence … we need to spread that message about the kind of learning opportunities that we provide and create and the outcomes that that can deliver, because people are obsessed with - they are not obsessed with outcomes: if they were obsessed with outcomes I would not have a problem, but they are obsessed with outcome measures. You know, say, for example, I take*

this from Curriculum for Excellence: 'We want to create more confident individuals and more responsible citizens.' That's absolutely wonderful … And then they will say, 'And the measure of that is whether they get more Standard Grades or not.' To me, that is a madness, there is a disconnection (CLD 1 manager). (Weedon et al. 2010)

The issue raised in this Scottish interview with regard to the limitations of outcome measures is an important one. There are a range of concerns with a purely outcomes-driven agenda, especially in contexts of the area of socio-economic exclusion. These are highlighted by Downes (2007), generally, but with relevance to non-formal education contexts:

> There is a temptation to select those with more stable background conditions in order to improve the chances of causal impact of the intervention. In other words, those who are most at risk, those with multiple disadvantages, are most likely to be filtered out of an evaluation according to…outcomes criteria. Those most at risk are likely to be subjected to a range of interacting background conditions which may hinder and neutralise the effect of the potentially causal dimension for change that the intervention seeks to provide (see also Rook 1984, 1992 on depressed people being more likely to drive away potential social supports). Thus, gains according to…outcomes may be largely a function of the selection/filtering process of potential participants in the intervention where the most marginalised become further excluded…programmes reliant on outcomes gains for funding may begin to eschew intervening with those where change may be most slow though they may need the support most. (p. 61)

It is important to emphasise that a search for accountability in the non-formal sector needs to eschew the narrowing which may occur in any kind of 'testing' type focus, which often occurs in the formal education sector—and which may disproportionately impact on those experiencing social and economic marginalisation. Field et al.'s (2007) OECD report highlights the dangers of 'teaching to the tests' (p. 129). Moreover, Booher-Jennings (2005) and Gillborn and Youdell (2000) highlight the filtering process involved in 'educational triage' in US and UK contexts, respectively, where preoccupation with test scores tended to result in a diversion of resources away from those viewed as least likely to pass and towards those on the threshold of passing the test.

The Russian thinker Alexander Herzen's critique of instrumentalism in the nineteenth century asks if the purpose of youth is old age. Jarvis (2008, p. 75) offers a critique of instrumental rationality as leading to uniformity in education. There is a need to recognise that instrumentalism requires some challenge also in the context of access to education, for whatever age group. Motivation for learning concerning those from traditionally marginalised groups goes beyond simply instrumental learning to include the social and personal developmental features of such learning (see also Slowey 1988). The danger especially arises for non-formal education that a drive for measurable outcomes will lead to an instrumentalism that will endanger a more relational, interpersonal approach, sensitive to individual differences and centred on the needs of the learner.

Especially in the non-formal education sector, there is a need to start from where the learner is at—and an outcomes' focus as a dimension of accountability tends to impose an agenda on the learner that is not necessarily shared with and owned by

the learner. Moreover, the learner's pace may not fit within the limits of the outcome time frame. Commitment to generic outcomes may be in tension with the disparate starting points of the range of individuals involved in the particular non-formal education classes (Downes 2007). Kelly (1999) criticises educational models predominantly based on education as transmission of knowledge and curriculum as content (see also Hunting 2000, p. 245, and Downes 2003b for a critique of curriculum as content in the context of Estonia and Latvia). Accountability in the non-formal education sector must not be reduced to a subject-centred version of accountability that undermines a learner-centred vision.

8.4 Funded Strategies to Develop Local Community Lifelong Learning Centres (Structural Indicator)

Community lifelong learning centres give effect to a systems theory focus not only in relation to transition for the individual but also regarding a promotion of growth rather than emphasis on deficits and through a focus on the strengths of the local community. The Lisbon European Council conclusions (paragraph 26) propose turning schools and training centres into multi-purpose local learning centres, all linked to the Internet and accessible to people of all ages. This is a major challenge for all EU Member States. The OECD (2007, p. 75) highlights that Finland has over 260 adult education centres, which have evolved from adult vocational training to offer wider learning opportunities for the entire adult population. They also illustrate the key role of municipal authorities in Sweden and Spain (as well as Spanish regional governments) in providing adult education centres. The bridge between these centres and the formal educational system is illustrated by the research of Nicaise et al. (2005) which observes that at least 28 % of all young people admitted into tertiary education in Sweden had passed through municipal adult education or liberal adult education. Thus, community learning centres offer a potentially key pathway and bridge in providing outreach to marginalised communities and also connection over time between the non-formal and formal system. The EU Commission Staff Working Document on early school leaving (2010) observes that:

> The importance of non-formal and also non-academic education for reducing ESL is uncontested; after-school activities need to find the right balance between supporting homework and bringing learning into spaces such as sports and community centres. (p. 28)

Community-based lifelong learning centres bring education into the centre of a local area, as is highlighted in the Scottish national report:

> The location of classes were *'where they are needed'*, a range of different premises were used and crèches were sometimes provided though the interviewees also noted that there was more nursery provision now through the education system. *We run these where it meets the needs of local people. So it could be in a church hall. It could be in a community centre. Anywhere that suits the needs.* (Weedon et al. 2010)

The Scottish national report also emphasises that learners experiencing social exclusion may be much more at ease taking classes in such community-based environments:

there were community groups and community-based adult learning courses where the college staff would go out into the community and deliver courses in order to try and get people back into education. Near the end of these courses all of the student will come into the college because they were seen as college students. These courses were considered very successful in bringing in disadvantaged groups of learners who were more comfortable in a community setting:

We do a lot of European Social Fund classes that target people who are less likely to come into education and in my department the community classes are the way forward I think in terms of getting people into education (Department Head, College B). (Weedon et al. 2010)

The Bulgarian national report also provides evidence for the key role of community-based learning centres, for personal fulfilment and active citizenship objectives, including for formal education:

The Community centres *(chitalishta)* play a crucial role in relation to the personal and citizenship perspectives on LLL. Being unique traditional self-managed units in Bulgaria, they function as 'training fields' for acquiring skills for managing collective activities. In the smaller towns they are the only organisations that provide access to libraries, internet and other types of information. Given their multitude (there are 3,450 *chitalishta* listed in the register of the Ministry of Culture), location and institutional sustainability, they may be regarded as a unique national resource for the implementation of various educational initiatives, including LLL. Some community centres (*chitalishta*) conduct qualification courses for adults following curricula with internationally recognised certificates. In recent years, the modern information and communication technologies have been introduced and utilised in the community centres. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

These Bulgarian examples resonate with Connolly's (2009) suggestion that community education builds the 'community capital', which is a combination of cultural and social capital, the intellectual, educational, social relationships, collective resources for the entire community to build up and foster a community spirit and activism. This builds up communities in sustainable ways by linking education theory with practice, local issues with the global issues and the personal with social advocacy.

The Irish national report emphasises the important role of *An Cosán* which is the largest independent community-based education centre in Ireland:

They run programmes specifically for young women in the area who are lone parents and early school leavers. *An Cosán* caters for ethnic minorities who need to improve their English language skills, confidence or parenting skills. Parents, particularly fathers and their children come to some classes together…They target community workers and leaders in the local community in order to support them and provide them with a qualification in the area. They cater for older people in the local area and provide support and advice for grandparents who help to rear their grandchildren. *The model that we have in An Cosán, which is that very holistic approach, supports people from whatever point they enter, particularly to build in their self-confidence both within their personal life but also as being lifelong learners.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

This community centre adopts both a lifelong and life-wide focus.

The strategic theme of personal and social fulfilment pervades this community-based approach, with a combination also of formal and non-formal education courses:

> The CEO explains, *our personal development programme has been extraordinary, probably one of the most successful classes run here… impacts on their own personal confidence, sense of self, the ability to find their voice, the ability to want more for themselves.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

Significantly, there is a clear focus on progression for learners:

> There is the option of progression through levels of courses for participants. The starting point is courses on Personal Development, Communication Skills, Basic Literacy and Numeracy. Another series of courses reflect the needs of the local community for training in leadership e.g. training for community drug workers and community development. These courses have been developed at the behest of local community groups. (Dooley et al. 2010)

One of this project's interviewees for the Irish national report advocated the need for stronger connections and cooperation between the non-formal and formal education sector, including with their own community-based organisation:

> The CEO talked about her experience of working with the formal education sector:
> *I've been very involved in this with three different formal educational institutes…the commitment to working with disadvantage is limited in the formal education sector…the commitment to working with our sector, I don't see that formalised, I don't see that supported…in order to get colleges…to work with us…you have to show them very clearly what's in it for them. It's a lot of work for the person who is working in the non-formal sector to support the student to put together a portfolio or identify pieces of work that will match learning outcomes for a particular programme or so… I think a lot of work needs to be done around that.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

It is evident that the community-based location and proximity is an advantage in being able to engage with hard to reach groups who have tended to be alienated from the formal system:

> In relation to reaching potential adult participants, the Manager…explains that when recruiting participants they: *go around the schools, talk to different women's groups…we used to have a mini bus, letting people know that we have a big registration day on…trying to make an event out of it…turning up a local community events, to let people know we're here and what we're doing…being part of a lot of networks of local community organisations…*the CEO explained that, *our focus is to work with the most disadvantaged.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

An interesting example of how the non-formal community education sector can make the environment less hierarchical and a more organic system is provided in this project, namely, that board members also attend the classes with the learners:

> The Director explained, *our community project members, the steering committee members, all go to the classes, so there's constant feedback between the classes because the community people who are the leaders, are members of the classes.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

The English national report offers this perspective on non-formal education and community-based learning associations:

> Other than through the direct provision of training for its employees, the government's funding for non-formal education in England is limited to a range of relatively small, targeted, and generally transient programmes in areas such as community regeneration…One example is the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF): 'the principal funding mechanism deployed to drive forward the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR) at the local level' in England's 88 most deprived local authorities, aiming to 'improve services and narrow the gap between deprived areas and the rest'. During 2001-2006, £1.875bn was allocated to eligible LSPs, and a further £1.05bn was made available in 2006-2008 (Cowen et al. 2008, p. 13). An officially-sponsored evaluation of the programme found the NRF had 'achieved a range of positive achievements', but that its 'cumulative impact and effectiveness' had 'not been maximised' for a number of reasons, including:
>
> – 'evidence use in the planning of programmes and interventions' had 'not been embedded', so that 'the level of sophistication in targeting NRF was often poor',
> – interventions had been 'inadequately evaluated, or not at all, meaning there has been a limited understanding of what does and does not work',
> – 'data on performance, outcomes and impacts' had 'not been collected in a robust fashion, resulting in an inconsistent understanding of progress, with the issue of impact a particular concern' (Cowen et al. 2008, p. 68). Whilst this is only one example, these are problems not untypical of such programmes. (Engel et al. 2010)

This issue of evaluation of the benefits of community-based programmes requires cognisance of the need for a wider focus on structural and process indicators and not simply on outcome indicators, as highlighted by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health (2005, 2006) (see also Mulkerrins 2007; Downes 2007, 2008).

According to the Slovenian national report, relations between local municipalities and community-based education centres, such as the people's university in Slovenia, reveal an institutional resistance at municipality level to community-based non-formal education:

> Though the people's university would like to have a clearly defined role in the community by the municipality which is its founder, this is not the case. It seems that the community, or at least the mayor and his council, as was added off the record, do not really know what to do with it. Therefore they do not seek its help either in fostering community leaders or planning further educational development. *No, no, this is not there. They even don't think of this, even if we had frequently drawn attention to the matter, that if they needed anything we were there.* (Ivančič et al. 2010)

Libraries are considered as a source of community-based learning in Austria:

> We don't have these learning centres, such as there are in Great Britain, but these modern adult education centres and such, partly also other education institutions. Very important also are the libraries that consider themselves more and more as *learning rooms.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

From the following account of a senior government official from the Hungarian Ministry of Affairs and Labour, it is evident that there are not community learning centres with a wider focus on lifelong learning than simply the vocational one found in the Hungarian regional employment centres:

> In Hungary the issue of adult education exists at two levels at present: at the level of training institutions and at government level. There are nine regional training centres at the regional

level. Among other tasks they are responsible for the training of disadvantaged groups, and in connection with this they have a very close, day-to-day cooperation with the Regional Employment Centres …

But besides this, institutions responsible for the adult education exist neither on regional nor on county or municipal level. Namely, the adult education is essentially market-based. Regional governing level is missing from the adult education. So essentially communication exists only between the local and government level? *Yes, that's right.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

The Estonian national report highlights the diversity of the learner population engaging with non-formal education centres based in the local community:

Non-formal education centres provide versatile and quality training in increasing volumes. Training is available to everybody, including risk groups (people with special needs, people without qualification, non-Estonians, people who have passed middle age), and people living in rural areas. Compared to 2004, the share of people learning at government-supported non-formal training centres will increase by 30 % by 2008. Free elementary computer and Internet training is provided. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

According to Tamm (August 2010, personal communication), '*they are community based liberal adult education centres, non-formal educational organisations*'. The Estonian national report also acknowledges the important point that community or local lifelong learning centres would be part of a wider regional strategy for lifelong learning and access to education (Tamm and Saar 2010).

The Irish national report provides an example of a community-based project in the Limerick region:

A good strong committee, an interest in the people… it needs to be run locally, by local people who know the needs of the people, because you cannot have someone, with no disrespect to anyone, coming out of a university and coming in and telling a community what they need…local knowledge, local people running it, support from the statutory bodies, support if you're working out of a building like we are…most people are lucky enough now to have their own community halls. (Dooley et al. 2010)

An important point raised here is the greater credibility and trust with the community that the community education project would have compared with the university sector. This community education project director explained how progression has also been established between personal fulfilment dimensions and movement into formal education and employment:

We had over a period of years, a programme called SPACE which involved young girls who are mothers who had dropped out of school, they came together to look at what their aspirations were and how they might fulfil them and they identified their learning needs. In relation to the success of this programme, the Director of KCP explained that the participants *through this project moved into education and employment.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

However, a cautionary note is added that the accreditation dimension to formal education can serve as a major psychological barrier for many of those previously alienated from the education system:

The Participant/ Board Member, set out one of the difficulties with accredited courses, *we are recognised … accredited. A lot of the times if you introduce FETAC [accreditation] people don't want to know about it. It's bad memories from their own childhoods, from their own school days and so they're not inclined to want to go and do academic type of stuff.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

It is notable that this community education centre adopts the feature of a life-wide perspective:

> In the words of the Director of KCP, *the adults who come here want to be here, they don't have to be here…the kids that come to the after-school programme, they want to be here, they don't have to be here…that's a big difference between the formal education and the non-formal one.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

This life-wide education feature for families with little tradition of engaging in education beyond primary and early secondary is described as a ripple effect benefiting not only the adults but also the children:

> In the community education sector the Director believes that, *when people get involved in education…they're usually highly motivated, because they have lost out themselves, and they bring all that learning and motivation back into their families…it has a huge ripple effect.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

With the current recession, it is an additional concern that children and young people with little family history of participation in higher education will be disproportionately affected by a fatalism about the benefits of education:

> The Director went on to explain that cutbacks in the area of education are, *major… there are cutbacks within schools, that's major…a major worry I have is that children who are not high achievers will say to themselves, sure there's no point in me working hard, there's 10,000 people unemployed locally.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

Community-based lifelong learning centres, with a life-wide dimension, can serve a key role as a counterbalance to such fatalism, through instilling an interest and motivation in learning by means of personally, emotionally and culturally relevant course materials. It is evident that while there are a range of examples of local community-based lifelong learning centres as part of non-formal education across a number of participating countries, there is a clear need for a more strategic approach to develop such centres to be led at EU Commission level (see also Downes 2011a, 2013a, b). There is evidently a need for a distinct funding strand to be developed at EU level, in conjunction with commitments from national states, a strand purely focusing on establishing such community-based local learning centres.

Less in evidence from the national reports, with the exception of Ireland, are examples of community-based lifelong learning centres which engage with the vision of lifelong learning as being from the cradle to the grave, as is the EU Commission definition. In other words, a missed opportunity currently exists to engage with whole communities of non-traditional learners from an early age and as parents. An example of such a life-wide, community-based lifelong learning centre model to engage ethnic minorities and those traditionally underrepresented in higher education is available from Kosovo. The Balkan Sunflowers' four community learning centres in Fushë Kosova, Grăcanica, Plemetina and Shtime respectively support the development of over 600 children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Their project work involves a school preparatory programme for ages 5–7 and a language club for ages 7–9. For adults, in 2009–2010, women's literacy programmes were initiated in two centres. A parenting life skills programme has also been developed, which is in addition to the regular meetings with parents and home visits. Each community receives at least 4 programmes

during the year inviting parents to participate in parenting skills exchanges. These discussions employ audiovisual materials around questions of children support: role models, discipline, supporting school attendance, nutrition, hygiene, care, attention and neglect, etc. Tutors and facilitators undergo a 2-week training across all four centres.

According to figures from Balkan Sunflowers NGO in Fushë Kosova, early school leaving rates over the 2 years of the learning centre operation decreased dramatically, from 120 in 2007–2008 to 14 in 2009–2010. Primary school enrollment has more than tripled in Grăcanica since the centre's opening in 2004 from 25 to 85 children. None of the children attending Grăcanica Learning Centre dropped out of primary school in 2012,[1] while only one child in Plemetina dropped out of school the previous year. 75 % of all registered Roma children in Plemetina attend the learning centre, while girls' school attendance has increased, and there are currently 58 girls in primary school (Downes 2011b). EU Commission level commitment to the establishment of such community-based lifelong and life-wide learning centres would resonate not only with an access to lifelong learning strategic priority but also with EU2020 targets to reduce early school leaving to 10 % across the EU and with targets in literacy and numeracy.

8.5   Non-formal Education as a Key Bridge to Ethnic Minorities, Immigrants and Those Experiencing Social Exclusion

Community-based lifelong learning centres offer one key example of an outreach location for non-formal education to reach socially excluded, ethnic minorities, as part of a wider strategy of developing non-formal education for engaging ethnic minorities and those experiencing social exclusion. The need for an educational focus on ethnic diversity emerges from the Lithuanian national report:

> The student population at colleges and universities in Lithuania is not diverse. The xenophobia and ethnic intolerance rates are still high, despite the fact that in some 10 years the situation was much worse. Lithuania struggles to become an open and diverse society, but in education this is slowed down by the small number of study programmes offered in English or other foreign languages. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

Non-formal education is a bridge to civil society, what Berger and Neuhaus (1977) describe as a mediating structure. It can serve as a nonthreatening mode of participation for different groups in society. Some fear and ethnic tensions are referred to explicitly in the Russian national report:

> Many representatives of disadvantaged groups (ethnic minorities, people with a disability) mention *the lack of social integration and toleration as well as current social conflicts in the Russian society* as important barriers in their educational career. The informant from the ethnic minority refers to the threat she feels from the neo-Nazi youth gangs that are now

---

[1] In 2010, seven Roma girls graduated from King Milutin primary school in Grăcanica. In contrast, over the previous 25 years, not even seven girls in total have graduated.

acting in big Russian cities and complains about everyday racism of the city-dwellers. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010, italics in original)

This is not to argue for non-formal education as the sole dimension to ethnic integration but it is one rich with potential for development. Slowey's (1987) characterisation of distinctive features of non-formal education is also pertinent in this context. She observes that non-formal education tends to offer frequently dense geographical networks, curricula and attendance options suited to learners' needs, lower psychological barriers for nontraditional learners and faculties consisting mainly of practitioners.

The Austrian national report emphasises the distinctive role of non-formal education in meeting the needs of the individual learner, a key issue for basic education and beyond:

According to the [non-formal education] interviewee, the basic education offered with its individual approach is particularly helpful in giving adults with low levels of prior education confidence to continue with education. There is always an extremely heterogenous group of participants within these courses, which requires individual adaptation of the contents to the regarded participants. This entails a different way of teaching, which also aims to ensure understanding. *People just notice, that everything is adapted very individually to them and that this is a different form of learning than they might have experienced at school … fear of contact is reduced. We make it possible that everybody can notice directly an increase of learning outcome.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

A sharp contrast between a non-formal education approach and formal education is drawn by an interviewee in the Austrian national report:

The interviewee thinks that non-formal education institutes deal with the participants in a different way than schools of the formal education sector do. In the non-formal education sector individual learning and the progress of each individual person is in the focus: *I think, we perhaps deal differently (than formal institutions) with our learners, we have people coming to us who have made negative experiences with school, they sweat a lot when only coming to our information evening. I think we are different due to individualised learning we practise also in groups, also there we can afford to do so due to the small size, we have the learners at the centre of what we are doing and we do not need to get things (contents of learning) through.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

A barrier to a social inclusion focus and strategic role for non-formal education in relation to ethnic groups who may have low participation in education is that in some countries the non-formal education is largely a private sector phenomenon:

…The adult education is a market-based sector. According to my knowledge, in other European countries, adult education sector is not privatised as much as in Hungary. (Balogh et al. 2010)

This important point regarding privatisation of the non-formal education sector raises the issue of the need for strategic State investment in non-formal education in Hungary. This is also a prevalent theme in the Lithuanian national report where the need for a social inclusion focus to be given expression through the non-formal education sector is highlighted:

However, the promotion activities [of the non-formal education institution] are not targeted at social exclusion groups. The proposals might be addressed to organisations which bring

together such people but social responsibility is not stressed in these proposals. Social exclusion groups are sometimes involved in international and local projects, but the marketing strategy usually aims at business and company trainings. The models of good practice of working with risk groups do not exist. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

The Estonian national report highlights the following areas where non-formal education topics can be targeted to ethnic minority groups:

Russians are either referred to us by their employers or find the information elsewhere. They are more interested in courses on welding. Welding is an area where there are traditionally more Russians. Motoring is less popular. There are Russians in formal education learning the profession of a car mechanic but very few participate in continuing training. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

However, these subjects could also be provided by formal education providers; the dividing line between formal and non-formal education varies across countries. In the context of Estonia, Tamm (August 2010, personal communication) gives the following overview of the inclusion of Russian speakers, while noting that it is not a distinct focus within the Estonian National development plan for adult education for 2009–2013:

The Russian Speakers are a target group if they have alienated from learning and need help in order to create interest in learning or in order to continue their studies. [They are] Not [targeted] separately in this [Lifelong Learning Strategy] document. [A] Foundation and strategies for Russian speakers is mentioned in documents, The Integration and Migration Foundation Our People (MISA). The foundation carries out the activities of the integration plan with the aim of ensuring that the people who live in Estonia share the same values and form an active part of civic society, and that national minorities have the chance to preserve their languages and cultures. The foundation is guided by development plans in the fulfillment of its objectives as set out in its articles of association. The activities of the foundation have been based on the Estonian Integration Plan 2008-2010 (DP 2008-2013) since 2008.

Non-formal education can potentially play a key role in educational and cultural integration between Russian speakers and ethnic Estonians, going beyond the previously narrower focus predominantly on language integration (Downes 2003a, 2007; Amnesty International 2006) of the earlier integration document:

Similarly to the NP 2000-2007, the goals of Development Plan [DP] 2008-2013 have been divided in three: Educational and cultural integration, Social and economic integration, Legal and political integration.

    The basis for the foundation's activities between 2000 and 2007 was the national programme 'Integration in Estonian society 2000–2007' (NP 2000–2007). The foundation was responsible for the sub-programmes of the NP along with the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior. DP 2008-2013 has been prepared and the role given to the foundation therein is that of the actual performer of activities and it also includes a forecast of the cost of activities, the financer and performance indicators. For this purpose, the units of the Foundation and ministries developed the measures of the Operational Programme of the DP 2008-2010; and the Foundation also increased its knowledge about the requirements and/or possibilities of integration and successful solutions and included associated groups in the process of preparing DP 2008-2013. The Foundation initiates and supports projects/activities that promote integration in Estonian society and coordinates the efficient use of different resources in this area. (2006)

The flexibility provided for in the non-formal sector offers a potential to reach groups at the margins of society. This has been a feature of the earlier Latvian integration programme which offered a strong focus on festivals and the arts to bring Russian speakers and ethnic Latvians together in civil society (Downes 2003a).

A pervasive theme in this chapter has been the need to adopt a national and regional strategic approach to develop the non-formal education sector that allows it to retain its identity rather than be simply assimilated to formal education. This need exists not only for cognisance of its distinctive strategic role but also for its accountability processes. A key message is that flexibility and scrutiny are required to coexist and be reconciled with each other. Flexibility that is a hallmark of non-formal education is pivotal for a friendly environment to meet vulnerable groups where they are at; it is an environment that serves as a mediating structure for marginalised individuals and groups to help bridge their relations to the State and system. This role of non-formal education, especially community-based lifelong learning centres as a cultural bridge, including to ethnic minorities and immigrants, gives expression to a systemic focus that is sensitive to issues of transition between subsystems.

Summary on Non-formal Education: Macro-Exosystem For those traditionally alienated from the formal education system, the non-formal educational sector can serve as a key bridge towards social inclusion. Its climate tends to be more inviting, informal and flexible for learners who are often intimidated by the thought of 'going back' for more education after usually negative experiences of schooling; non-formal education classes are less concerned with assessment processes.

Emerging from this review of national reports is the need for a much more accentuated strategic focus at national and regional levels on promotion of non-formal education generally and specifically for targeting socio-economically excluded groups for participation in non-formal education. A corollary of such a strategic commitment is the provision of distinct funding strands for non-formal education, in conjunction with European structural funds. The question arises as to the extent to which the lifelong learning approach in EU Council Recommendation (2009/C 119/02) encompassing active citizenship, personal fulfilment and social cohesion is given manifestation in the structures and strategies of Member States, with respect to non-formal (and formal) education. It is evident that much is needed to be done to translate this EU Council commitment into policy and practice across Member States, in relation to both their national strategies and priorities, as well as their structures for implementation of such priorities regarding non-formal education. In some countries, the non-formal education is largely a private sector phenomenon. Finance is frequently raised as a major barrier to a progressive strategy at national level for non-formal education.

The danger of 'colonisation' of the non-formal education sector by formal education was highlighted in some national reports. There is a need for any validation process of the work in the non-formal sector to be different from that of the formal education sector. The flexibility and relationality of the non-formal sector must not be lost through reducing it to the formal education sector. Accountability in the non-formal education sector must not be reduced to a subject-centred version of accountability that undermines a learner-centred vision.

Community lifelong learning centres give effect to a systems theory focus not only in relation to transition for the individual but also regarding a promotion of growth

rather than emphasis on deficits and through a focus on the strengths of the local community. Observed advantages of such centres include: a key role as a counterbalance to fatalism, through instilling an interest and motivation in learning by means of personally, emotionally and culturally relevant course materials; a potential ripple effect on motivation across generations; focus on progression for learners to jointly combine non-formal and formal education in the one location; and an outreach bridge to ethnic minorities and socially excluded communities. Also the community-based location and proximity is an advantage in being able to engage with hard to reach groups alienated from the formal system. It is evident that while there are a range of examples of local community-based lifelong learning centres as part of non-formal education across a number of countries, there is a clear need for a more strategic approach to develop such centres to be led at EU Commission level.

Less in evidence from the national reports, with the exception of Ireland, are examples of community-based lifelong learning centres which engage with the vision of lifelong learning as being from the cradle to the grave, as is the EU Commission definition. A missed opportunity currently exists to engage with whole communities of non-traditional learners from an early age and as parents.

References

Amnesty International. (2006). *Estonia: Linguistic minorities in Estonia: Discrimination must end*. Stockholm: Amnesty International.

AONTAS. (2004). *Community education 2004*. Dublin: AONTAS.

Balogh, A., Józan, A., Szöllősi, A., & Róbert, P. (2010). *The institutional aspects of adult education in Hungary*. Budapest: TARKI Social Research Centre. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Bane, L. (2007). A seagull's view—Adult and community education. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 124–132). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Banks, J. (1994). *The prevention of school failure and marginalisation among young people: A study prepared for the European Commission*. Unpublished.

Berger, P. L., & Neuhaus, R. J. (1977). *To empower people: The role of mediating structures in public policy*. Washington: American Enterprise Institute.

Besson, E. (2008). *Valoriser l'acquis de l'expérience: une évaluation du dispositif de VAE*. Paris: Secrétariat d'État chargée de la prospective, de l'évaluation des politiques publiques et du développement de l'économie numérique.

Booher-Jennings, J. (2005). Below the bubble: 'Educational Triage' and the Texas Accountability System. *American Educational Research Journal, 42*, 231–268.

Boyadjieva, P., Milenkova, V., Gornev, G., Petkova, K., & Nenkova, D. (2010). *The role of Bulgarian educational institutions for the promotion of access of adults to formal education*. Sofia: Institute of Sociology. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Brookover, W., Thomas, S., & Paterson, A. (1964). Self-concept of ability and school achievement. *Sociology of Education, 37*, 271–278.

Campbell, P. (2006). *Student assessment in adult basic education: A Canadian snapshot*. Winnipeg: Centre for Education and Work.

Carrigan, J., & Downes, P. (with Byrne, I.) (2009). *Is there more than what's the score? Exploring needs and skills checking for literacy as part of a holistic initial assessment process in a lifelong learning society*. Dublin: Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College.

Commission Staff Working Paper. {SEC (2010)}. *Reducing early school leaving. Accompanying document to the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving*.

Communication from the Commission. {COM(2001) 678 final}. *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality*.

Connolly, B. (2009, September 24). The role of community-based access in delivering lifelong learning presentation in Pobal event on *Community based access as a route to further and higher education*.

Cowen, G., Wilton, M., Russell, G., & Stowe, P. (2008). *Impacts and outcomes of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund*. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.

Department of Education and Science. (2000). *Learning for life: White paper on adult education*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Dooley, C., Downes, P., Maunsell, C., & McLoughlin, V. (2010). *Promoting social inclusion: The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Ireland.* National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Downes, P. (2003a). *Living with heroin: HIV, identity and social exclusion among the Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia and Latvia.* English version. Tallinn: Legal Information Centre for Human Rights.

Downes, P. (2003b). The relevance of early Heidegger's radical conception of transcendence to choice, freedom and technology. In M. J. Breen & E. Conway (Eds.), *Technology & transcendence* (pp. 160–173). Dublin: Columba Press.

Downes, P. (2007). Why SMART outcomes ain't always so smart…. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 57–69). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Downes, P. (2008). The international right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health: A key legal framework for human trafficking? In P. Downes, A. Zule-Lapimaa, L. Ivanchenko, & S. Blumberg (Eds.), *Not one victim more: Human trafficking in the Baltic States* (pp. 278–289). Tallinn: Living for Tomorrow.

Downes, P. (2011a). *Community based lifelong learning centres: Developing a European strategy informed by international evidence and research.* Research paper for European Commission, NESET (Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training).

Downes, P. (2011b). *Promotion of access to and participation in higher education and the teaching profession for non-majority ethnic groups in Kosovo: Opportunities, barriers and future horizons*. Commissioned research report for OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), UN Mission in Kosovo.

Downes, P. (2013a, November 14). *Giving early school leavers fresh opportunities: Prevention and second chance measures.* Keynote presentation at the European Commission's, European Social Fund (ESF) Conference, *Tackling youth unemployment in Europe: Building a better future for young people*, for the Lithuanian EU Presidency, Vilnius.

Downes, P. (2013b, November 18). *A holistic approach to early school leaving prevention in Europe: Key strategic priorities for system level development.* Keynote address, European Network of Education Councils (EUNEC) conference on *Early school leaving*, in conjunction with the European Commission and the Lithuanian Government (Ministry of Education and Science) in the context of its EU Presidency. Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas), Vilnius.

Downes, P., & Maunsell, C. (2007). *Count us in: Tackling early school leaving in South West Inner City Dublin. An integrated response*. Dublin: South Inner City Community Development Association (SICCDA) & South Inner City Drugs Task Force.

Engel, L., Holford, J., & Mleczko, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education.* Nottingham: University of Nottingham. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

EU Council. (2009/C 119/02). Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020').

Ferguson, P., Jimerson, S., & Dalton, M. J. (2001). Sorting out successful failures: Exploratory analyses of factors associated with academic and behavioral outcomes of retained students. *Psychology in the Schools, 38*, 327–341.

Field, S., Kuczera, M., & Pont, B. (2007). *No more failures: Ten steps to equity in education*. Paris: OECD.

FOV. (2008). *Boekstaven 2008*. Brussels: FOV.

Gardner, H. (1993). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (2nd ed.). London: Fontana Press.

Gillborn, D., & Youdell, D. (2000). *Rationing education: Policy, practice, reform and equity*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Glasser, W. (1969). *Schools without failure*. New York/London: Harper & Row.

Handy, C., & Aitken, R. (1990). *Understanding schools as organizations*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Hay, I., Ashman, A., & van Kraayenoord, C. (1997). Investigating the influence of achievement on self-concept using an intra-class design and a comparison of PASS and the SDQ-1 self-concept tests. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 67*, 311–321.

Higgins, A. (2007). My kids, your kids, our kids! In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 114–123). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Hunting, R. P. (2000). Themes and issues in mathematics teacher education. In L. P. Steffe & P. W. Thompson (Eds.), *Radical constructivism in action*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Ivančič, A., Mohorčič Špolar, V. A., & Radovan, M. (2010). *The case of Slovenia. Access of adults to formal and non-formal education—Policies and priorities*. Ljubljana: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Jarvis, P. (2008). *Democracy, lifelong learning and the learning society: Active citizenship in a late modern age*. London: Routledge.

Jimerson, S. (1999). On the failure of failure: Examining the association of early grade retention and late adolescent education and employment outcomes. *Journal of School Psychology, 37*, 243–272.

Jones, B., Moseley, R., & Thomas, G. (Eds.). (2010). *University continuing education 1981–2006: Twenty five turbulent years*. Leicester: NIACE.

Kellaghan, T., Weir, S., O'hUallachain, S., & Morgan, M. (1995). *Educational disadvantage in Ireland*. Dublin: Department of Education/Combat Poverty Agency/Education Research Centre.

Kelly, A. V. (1999). *The curriculum: Theory and practice*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Kozlovskiy, V., Khokhlova, A., & Veits, M. (2010). *The role of Russian educational institutions in the promotion of access for adults to formal education*. St Petersburg: Department of Sociology, Saint Petersburg State University. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Looney, J. (2008). *Teaching, learning and assessment for adults, improving foundation skills*. Brussels: OECD.

MacDevitt, D. (1998). Measures to combat early school leaving in EU countries. In S. Boldt, B. Devine, D. MacDevitt, & M. Morgan (Eds.), *Educational disadvantage and early school leaving* (pp. 41–77). Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency.

Maunsell, C., Downes, P., & McLoughlin, V. (2008). *National report on lifelong learning in Ireland. LLL2010: Sub-project 1: Towards a lifelong learning society in Europe—The contribution of the education system*. Dublin: Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College.

Merrifield, J., Coleman, U., & McDonagh, O. (2001). *Issues and opportunities in assessment*. Published for National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).

Mulkerrins, D. (2007). The transformational potential of the Home School Community Liaison Scheme. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 133–143). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Nicaise, I., Esping-Andersen, G., Pont, B., & Tunstall, P. (2005). *Equity in education thematic review: Sweden country note*. Paris: OECD.

Purkey, I. W. (1970). Self-perceptions of pupils in an experimental elementary school. *Elementary School Journal, 71*, 166–171.

Rammel, S., & Gottwald, R. (2010). *Social inclusion in formal and non formal adult education: Findings from Austrian institutions and government representatives*. Krems: Danube University.

National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage
Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Rook, K. (1984). The negative side of social interaction. *Journal of Personality and Social
Psychology, 46*, 1097–1118.

Rook, K. (1992). Detrimental aspects of social relationships: Taking stock of an emerging litera-
ture. In H. O. Veiel & U. Baumann (Eds.), *The meaning and measurement of social support*
(pp. 157–169). New York: Hemisphere.

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton: Princeton University
Press.

Šlander, V., & Hvala Kamenšček, P. (Eds.). (2007). *Priznavanje neformalnega in priložnostnega
učenja: aktivnost OECD 2006–2006: nacionalno poročilo za Slovenijo (Validation and recog-
nition of nonformal learning: Activity OECD 2006–2007: National report for Slovenia)*.
Ljubljana: Centre RS zapoklicnoizobraževanje.

Slowey, M. (1987). Adults in higher education: The situation in the United Kingdom. In H.
Schütze, M. Slowey, A. Wagner, & P. Paquet (Eds.), *Adults in higher education: Policies and
practice in Great Britain and North America* (pp. 7–20). Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell
International.

Slowey, M. (1988). Adult students—The new mission for higher education. *Higher Education
Quarterly, 42*(4), 301–316.

Stensen, O.-A., & Ure, O.-B. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in
Norway*. Oslo: Fafo—Institute for Labour and Social Research. National report for compara-
tive report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's
College, Dublin.

Taljunaite, M., Labanauskas, L., Terepaite-Butviliene, J., & Blazeviviene, L. (2010). *The access of
adults to formal and non-formal adult education*. Vilnius: Lithuanian Social Research Centre,
Social Research Institute. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010,
Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Tamm, A., & Saar, E. (2010). *LLL2010 Subproject 5 Estonia country report*. Tallinn: Institute of
International and Social Studies/Department of Social Stratification.

United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2005, February 25). *Commission on human rights,
economic, social and cultural rights*. Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right
of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Paul Hunt, Mission
to Romania.

United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2006, March 3). *Commission on human rights,
economic, social and cultural rights*. Report of the special Rapporteur on the right of everyone
to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Paul Hunt.

Vermeersch, L., & Vandenbrouke, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal educa-
tion in Belgium's Flemish Community* Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit. National report for
comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's
College, Dublin.

Von Glaserfeld, E. (1995). *Radical constructivism: A way of knowing and learning*. London:
Falmer Press.

Wallace, D. (2008). Community education and community learning and development. In T. G. K.
Bryce & W. M. Humes (Eds.), *Scottish education 3rd edition: Beyond devolution*. Edinburgh:
Edinburgh University Press.

Warnock, M. (1977). *Schools of thought*. London: Faber.

Waters, L. (2007). Community education: A view from the margins. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan
(Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 158–170). Dublin: Institute of Public
Administration.

Watson, M., Nicholson, L., & Sharplin, E. (2001). *Vocational education and training literacy and
numeracy: Review of research*. Melbourne/Adelaide: Australian National Training Authority/
National Centre for Vocational Educational Research.

Weedon, E., Riddell, S., Purves, R., & Ahlgren, L. (2010). *Social inclusion and adult participation
in lifelong learning: Officials', managers' and teachers' perspectives*. Edinburgh: University
of Scotland. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational
Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Chapter 9
Non-formal Education: Indicators at Micro-Meso Levels

Key issues explored in this chapter pertain to strategic priorities for lifelong learning and adult education identified in a range of European Commission and Council documents, discussed in Chap. 2, with regard to active citizenship, social inclusion, employment and personal fulfilment. The themes of community leadership and the role of the arts in non-formal education engage directly with the strategic goal of active citizenship. The arts also embrace a focus on personal fulfilment and social inclusion. The issue of pathways from non-formal education to formal education encompasses strategic goals of both social inclusion and employment. Other themes that are interrogated include staff continuity and development in the non-formal education sector and recognition of prior learning. These point to the need for strategic commitment to the development of non-formal education through a combination of investment and valuing of its contribution, whether at EU, national, regional or local levels.

9.1 A Strategy to Develop Community Leaders (Structural Indicator)

A systems theory focus reveals the need to build on strengths for promotion of growth rather than simply seeking to overcome deficits. This strengths-based approach invites consideration of strategies to develop community leaders for groups traditionally marginalised from the educational system.

This issue of promoting community leaders in communities experiencing high levels of disadvantage is an area ripe for further development in the area of lifelong learning to foster access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups. It is a strong feature of the Irish national report (Dooley et al. 2010) with an example provided by the *An Cosán* Community Lifelong Learning project.

> The Manager explains that it has been a *fantastic success and achievement…it is a Degree in Leadership and Community Development and is specifically developed for individuals*

from the community, who are either working in a paid or voluntary capacity in a leadership role and it is about developing their capacity for leadership within their community and also encouraging reflective practice. In the course, they look at the knowledge and skills that they already have and that they need to develop …all of the assignments are practically based, looking at what is going on in their community, matching policies to practice that they see in their community. (Dooley et al. 2010)

The English national report also raises this theme:

I think a lot of the more community adult education needs to get into, or be stronger within the sort of cross-departmental localised agendas around health, older people, community safety, economic regeneration…enhance and develop and enrich you know, radicalise to an extent those agendas. (Engel et al. 2010)

The following Estonian example illustrates the difficulty of the lack of time for practical realistic expression of active citizenship in adult students, due to other commitments:

Active citizens: How to be a good citizen and an active member of society is taught in civic study classes; these topics are also discussed during class teacher hours. It is difficult to organise specific activities because it is hard to find time that suits everyone. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

However, it is important to emphasise that active citizenship needs practical, action-based expression to gain meaning in a cultural context and that this needs to be made available in diverse ways in practice to foster this key dimension to lifelong learning, recognised by the European Commission.

A Hungarian example of community leadership and active citizenship is as follows:

The college has a strong relationship with Eger and its students and teachers participate in many of the town's events as organisers. They run a blood-giving centre, collect clothes, books, toys, contribute to the organisation of the youth festival and to the maintenance of the local hospital, etc. Thus, there is a great emphasis on active citizenship in the institute. (Balogh et al. 2010)

However, the following response from a Hungarian Ministry of Affairs and Labour official illustrates the limited conception of community leadership and lack of community leadership strategy in principle and in practice in Hungary:

Is there any national level strategy or support to provide for training/education of a) community leaders… in areas which experience most social deprivation and marginalisation? *I earlier mentioned the IT trainings organised for Roma minority self-government representatives. In addition, in the development programme for disadvantaged there is a section which ensures the effectiveness of the trainings related to office work improvement of Roma minority self-governments (for example: how to handle the computer, how to write applications, manager-training, etc…).* (Balogh et al. 2010)

Similarly, according to the Russian national report, there is a clear lack of strategy at national and regional levels to promote community development and leadership dimensions to lifelong learning:

Informants… said there was no national level strategy or support to provide for training/ education of a) community leaders, b) teachers, in areas which experience most social deprivation and marginalisation. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

Strategic initiatives at European Commission level can provide an important system level support for the development of community leaders in both non-formal and formal education sectors across Europe.

9.2   National Strategies for Lifelong Learning to Include the Arts as a Key Bridge into Societal and Systemic Participation via Non-formal Education (Structural Indicator)

It is evident from a number of national reports that the arts offer a key bridge into societal and systemic participation via non-formal education—and that they are a strong feature of non-formal education across many countries. The Lithuanian national report highlights the following example:

> The school has arts, carpentry, drama and music classes. Some of these subjects are compulsory for all students (or they have to choose one of them, depending on what class they study). There are also extra-curricular classes in arts, drama and music. In distance learning classes the students can choose music, photography, arts or design classes. The school has one person employed not as a teacher but as event organiser, who in collaboration with teachers and students is responsible for all events at school. *Some students are responsible for the equipment, some are singing, others will be dancing. All the school, all classes are involved into this production.* (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

Collaborative engagement in festivals, arts and sports was a theme emerging also from the Russian national report in relation to non-formal education (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010), while, in addition to festivals, theatre and drama are observed in the Slovenian national report as being a key local community interest given expression through non-formal education:

> We noticed that here in our area, hobby theatre is very much alive. Also, smaller villages have plays, but above all they lack knowledge how to promote themselves, and the matter stops, because this is not there. With a successful role in one of such plays… I think that brings many other things with it. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

This strong presence of the arts in non-formal education is also evident in the Belgian (Flanders) national report:

> The art and cultural heritage sector: Non-formal education in this sector is organised by arts institutions and individual artists, museums, music groups, theatres and music groups. They offer several cultural activities aiming at the general development of cultural competencies. (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

It is further recognised in the Bulgarian national report that the arts are a major cross-cultural resource for engaging those who may previously have been on the margins of society:

> An opportunity for social interaction and for promotion of mutual support among all students, as well as an example of a good practice, is the Annual Spring International Art Festival. Students from disadvantaged groups participate in it. The possibilities are limitless. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

However, they may be somewhat limited in availability in Bulgaria:

> Courses related to art: theatre, creative writing, music, visual arts, are *not* provided by Vocational Training Centre. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

In the Scottish national report, a strategic approach to the arts in a particular city envisages it as one of the five priority sections:

> CLD 2 was situated in a large city and it was divided into five sections each serving a local community within the city. It provided learning and development within the following areas: adult learning; youth and children; support to voluntary organisations; literacy and numeracy and the arts. (Weedon et al. 2010)

However, the fact that courses in non-formal education regarding the arts require a fee, according to the following Scottish national report example, is an obvious barrier to targeting people experiencing social marginalisation for participation in arts-based non-formal education:

> The Adult learning section had a wide range courses in different subject areas available during the day, evening and weekends in different locations throughout the city. This included arts and crafts, computers, languages, history, yoga and badminton. There was a fee for these courses but the level depends on an individual's economic circumstance. Most of these classes were non-certificate; however, there were a small number of accredited courses. (Weedon et al. 2010)

Though there is provision to adjust the fee depending on economic circumstances, the need for an individual to reveal their lack of economic means prior to entry may itself be a deterrent to participation.

Recognition of the importance of educational *content* in relation to lifelong learning is for the purpose of foregrounding issues of personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social cohesion and literacy, dimensions which at times are neglected by a more vocational focus to lifelong learning (Holford et al. 2008). It is imperative to state also that all of these goals can be mutually complementary, so that, for example, soft skills in relation to personal growth, confidence building and fulfilment can also transfer to employment contexts, including for learners who have been marginalised from the system in the past. Holding in consideration the importance of course content imports an awareness that for traditionally marginalised groups of potential students, the content of any given course may be key to their motivation and engagement. Lifelong learning needs to resist an agenda of simply 'processing' learners into a matrix of technocratic course content (Downes 1993). A discourse on teaching methodologies or on economic or sociological dimensions to lifelong learning may overlook the need to go beyond such functionalist perspectives—to ensure that a policy focus on the educational content of a course does not become obscured when seeking to engage those previously alienated from education.

Against this backdrop of the key role of the arts in engaging with traditionally marginalised individuals and groups, it is of particular concern that a recent Commission staff working document (2009) concludes in relation to the Cultural Awareness and Expression dimension of the eight key competences for education across Member States of the EU that:

> Although part of the traditional subject curriculum in schools (art, music), this competence does not appear to be a significant strategic priority for most countries. The potential of

culture to provide a methodology of work in other areas of the curriculum, and in personal and social development, could be better exploited. (p. 101)

It is apparent that the widespread engagement of non-formal education with the arts is responding to a range of needs across different communities and countries. Yet this broad participation in the arts in non-formal education appears to largely take place in a policy vacuum at EU and some national levels. A more strategic approach is needed not only for the arts and non-formal education but also for a systemic connection and engagement with socio-economically excluded individuals and communities through the arts in non-formal education.

A focus on the arts to engage prisoners, especially those with low levels of motivation, offers another avenue for a social inclusion focus. The arts currently are somewhat peripheral in prisons and need to become more central. In the words of a discussion document for the DG, EAC, *Pathways to Inclusion* Conference (2010):

A high proportion of the EU projects under discussion at this conference relate to the arts. They generally validate the principles referred to above, and the perception long held in many places that creative activities can greatly help imprisoned people and life generally within prisons. However, it is notable that in some prison systems the arts or creative activities play only a marginal role (compared, for example, to vocational education). Elsewhere, they may have a significant place within regimes but they are still confined to evenings or weekends, and not generally regarded as part of the main prison day. (Conference Paper 5, p. 10)

Benefits of the arts in engaging those who may be most difficult to reach include that there is less fear of failure as there tends not to be a convergent 'right' answer in the arts, more embodied types of learning can be pursued, which tends to motivate male students more (Byrne 2007), and more culture-relevant materials are taught (Downes 2010).

9.3 Non-formal as a Path to Formal Education (Structural Indicator)

The key role of non-formal education in breaking down barriers to education and fear of failure in learners who have had previously alienating experiences from the formal education system emerges in the Norwegian national report:

A Spanish class or cooking class could be one way of breaking the resistance towards learning… The point is that we offer persons to choose their own courses. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

The non-formal education pathway may be a key mediating structure and pathway into subsequent formal education:

Our interviewees were eager to point out that learners may start out with non-formal courses but as they become more confident with learning environments separated from their daily life, they gradually build up courage to enrol in formal education. By offering formal and non-formal training, FU is able to cater for both needs, possibly in the same learning institution. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

A point raised in the Slovenian national report is that the mere fact of participation in a course is a key issue, with the particular content of the course being a somewhat

subsidiary consideration. When asked which classes are particularly helpful in giving adults with low levels of prior education confidence to either continue in education or contribute to their local community, the opinion was—every programme can do this:

> I think that every programme gives one confidence, also when he participates in formal education. We notice that they participate more in other things as well. … We thought that we had to proceed from what is already here, in the local area. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

This example illustrates the key community development principle of starting where the learner is at and based on what are their current interests.

Personal fulfilment and development are viewed not as a distinct goal of itself—unlike its importance for the EU Council Recommendations (2009)—but are only treated as being instrumental to employment goals, according to this Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs official interviewed in the Estonian national report:

> Coming back to non-formal education, are you planning to provide personal development courses for the unemployed or for the long-term unemployed? *Some people may need this kind of training. I wouldn't rule it out. It depends on what kind of problem the unemployed person has, what prevents him/her from getting a job.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The Scottish national report provided this explicit example of an attempt to provide a strategic link between non-formal and formal education:

> Another initiative to engage with potentially disadvantaged learners was the schools' activity programmes. These allowed young learners who are at risk of not engaging with learning or entering the labour market to come in to the college for a few days and do a programme of activities that included a variety of different subjects in order to give them an insight into college life. This was designed to give them an idea of the variety that was on offer and it was hoped it would make them think about what they were going to do in the following year. In addition to this, there were community groups and community-based adult learning courses where the college staff would go out into the community and deliver courses in order to try and get people back into education. Near the end of these courses all of the students will come into the college because they were seen as college students. (Weedon et al. 2010)

The report continues:

> These courses were considered very successful in bringing in disadvantaged groups of learners who were more comfortable in a community setting: *We do a lot of ESF classes that target people who are less likely to come into education and in my department the community classes are the way forward I think in terms of getting people into education (Department Head, College B).* (Weedon et al. 2010)

It is clear that part of a more strategic focus at national level across countries with regard to bridges between non-formal and formal education would overcome typical system level problems of transition between both sectors. There is a significant amount of potential to develop these links in a much more strategically focused fashion across European countries. The Scottish report directly addresses the issue of transition from non-formal to formal education, thereby illustrating that there is much work needing to be done in developing and sustaining such key systemic links:

> Transition:
> - from colleges to certain universities was seen to work well but could be expanded;
> - into elite universities was considered a challenge;

- from non-formal courses to formal courses was described as mainly 'ad hoc' and as requiring further work, especially in the development of longitudinal tracking;
- from prison education to education in the community was identified as problematic. (Weedon et al. 2010)

A systems theory framework for access to lifelong learning requires that such transition issues between subsystems be more firmly addressed by policymakers.

9.4   Staff Continuity and Development in Non-formal Education (Structural Indicator)

The difficulty of long-term budgeting in the non-formal education sector impacts upon staff contracts and continuity, as highlighted in direct fashion by the following interviewee in the Slovenian national report:

All teachers are of course on the contracts …Nobody on long-term employment? … Nobody! I don't dare do this. I dare not take chances. Because the tender is in autumn… for the programme where the calculation shows that the costs will not be met, we don't deliver it, it is crossed out…And then we sign contracts. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

The Slovenian national report conveys the insecurity of employment in the non-formal education sector, with consequent impact upon morale and strategic development:

The Respondent 2 has expressed her fear of losing her job though she is employed by a long-term contract (indefinite time) but because of changed conditions her field of work is ever changing which gives rise to insecurity and fright. Under such conditions it is also difficult to find staff though they are annually collaborating with 120–150 teachers. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

In contrast, the Belgian national report points to an example of tutors on long-term contracts in non-formal education:

Training-plus Centres usually have a small staff. All tutors and organisers of the educational programmes (nine in total) have regular longterm contracts. These are not fixed term employment contracts. The rates of pay are, according to the interviewed senior manager, rather high compared to other non-formal educational institutions. Though they are not high compared to the wages within the formal educational sector. The working conditions in the non-formal educational sector are being described by the senior manager as heavy. (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

An interviewee from a formal educational context of vocational education for adults in Estonia eloquently describes the benefits of at least some staff continuity in their school:

More experienced teachers are mentors to young teachers. We are trying to keep good teachers whose experience is priceless. As they say: if you have only young employees it is a comedy, if you have only old people it is a tragedy… Young and old together make a symphony. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

These benefits would also apply to the non-formal education sector, even if continuity in this sector is frequently more difficult to attain.

Whole school approaches for teaching staff at adult education schools and community lifelong learning centres are an important dimension of professional development which is contingent upon staff continuity in the non-formal education sector. This feature of a whole school approach is observed in Estonia:

> Teachers also work in think tanks to discuss issues related to the school—what needs to be changed, what kind of events should be organised, etc. The school's development plan was also prepared in cooperation with teachers. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

It is important for the non-formal education sector in general which may be characterised by staff on short-term contracts and with high staff turnover to build a strategic approach to learning and shared methodologies of teaching, wherever possible.[1]

The Norwegian national report emphasises the following context of particular need for continuity in non-formal education:

> importance for staff continuity is especially strong for immigrants and language learning: *When the teacher is sick, they have to cope with new teachers. Within a short time span they may have three substitute teachers. I recognise the participants place from when I attended the Norwegian courses, I got used to how the teacher spoke, but suddenly there is a new teacher with a new dialect and then it all stops. And after two days an additional substitute teacher arrives and he does not know the progression we have been following. In the end it all becomes very frustrating.* (Stensen and Ure 2010)

Beyond language teaching, the need for staff continuity and professional development is particularly acute when they are working with vulnerable groups requiring sustained, ongoing interaction and support in order to build trust and motivation to participate in education.

9.5   Pathways to Overcome Process Difficulties Regarding Recognition of Prior Learning

Though the issue of recognition of prior learning is being examined here under the heading of non-formal education, it is a dimension that necessarily involves interaction between formal and non-formal education systems. Thus, examples of interviewee perspectives are provided here from both non-formal and formal education sectors. While some European countries have well-developed systems of recognition of prior learning, such as France,[2] Norway and Portugal (Field et al. 2007, p. 75), many of the countries surveyed for current research purposes in a European context revealed difficulties regarding recognition of prior learning. This theme emerged, for example, in the Slovenian national report:

---

[1] See also Downes (2006) in the Irish context, on a strategic approach, including staff continuity, in the related non-formal education sector of community after-school clubs and extracurricular activities in schools.

[2] For example, an OECD (2007) report notes that in France in 2005, 21,379 people sought recognition of prior experience and 88 % of them were successful (p. 75).

They are much more reserved with recognising non-formal knowledge, because no standardised certificates are available: *we cannot approve some certificate that we don't know. We don't know how it was achieved.* (Ivančič et al. 2010)

   Non-formal education is very difficult to recognise. Because we don't have the basis. In the written order of recognition we have to say where recognition comes from. … We have tried something but only in National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and it moves very slowly. It is a tough nut to crack. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

The concern was also raised by what would be displaced through a formalising of a system of recognition of prior learning:

Nevertheless, then this non-formality is lost, isn't it? Then all these endeavours for the final paper … all the same at the end there will be enumeration—what have you learnt, out of this how much in the formal system this … it gets lost somehow. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

Obstacles to recognition of prior learning highlighted in the Bulgarian national report referred to the issue of the varying levels of quality across institutions:

The main obstacle to the establishment of a mechanism for recognition of prior non-formal education and professional experience is the discrepancy of criteria at the institutional level: *…people attend different courses at different places, but the quality of the trainings is not always good.* (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

This issue of quality of educational institutions, particularly in the private sector, is also a central and legitimate concern in Estonia. A Ministry of Education and Research official in Estonia raises the concern that weak, frequently private, educational institutions make it difficult to ascertain quality in relation to recognition of prior learning:

One thing that we do not yet have in Estonia is the recognition of earlier studies and work experience in admitting students (it is done in several Nordic countries). In Estonia earlier studies can be used (for obtaining credit points) only after being admitted. It is not permitted to use earlier studies in admission. I am one person who is against it. The reason is that our higher education network is very weak. Weak educational institutions are obviously interested in attracting more students and may therefore give up quality standards. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

An attempt is being made to address this issue of regulation of institutional quality in Estonia:

This year we will introduce the so-called transfer marking in higher education. This means that all acting institutions of higher education are subjected to quality control. Those that pass the control will have the right to award diplomas/degrees recognised by the state and they will have that right either for a specified term or without a term. *This way we can separate the wheat from the chaff and then it is time to talk about giving more rights and setting more lenient formal acquirements in admitting students. You must look at the bigger picture.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

A different narrative regarding quality concerns is expressed by a university interviewee in the Austrian national report—quality is construed in terms of scientificity or its absence:

The universities, particularly those in middle European or in the German speaking areas, have a clear expectation of scientificness and of scientific performances. Informal Learning, which is brought in from different areas of experiences, is not necessarily recognised as sufficiently scientific…. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Significantly, there is a clear lack of criteria and institutional pathways for recognition of prior learning in Bulgaria:

> There are no institutionalised mechanisms for recognising of previous non-formal learning… There's a lack of procedure, lack of established ways in which this can happen, there are no procedures, no rules, there is nothing in this direction. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

In Lithuania, a major barrier to recognition of prior learning is the absence of a legal framework for such recognition (Taljunaite et al. 2010). It does appear that a willingness to engage with recognition of prior learning exists at the level of the educational institution, according to the responses of the interviewees in the Lithuanian national report:

> It is five years already that we plan to prepare guidelines for the college on how to recognise non-formal learning. We would be able to do this very quickly, but there's no legal framework that would allow to do it. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)
>
> The teacher suggested institutionalising the process of prior learning recognition: We should establish a centre in the college or to make this the function of the career centre. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

According to an Education and Culture Ministry official in Hungary, obstacles to recognition of prior learning are more at the institutional than national level, though costs are also an obstacle at national level:

> An independent examination centre would have been a general solution, but general solutions can be diluted much more easily, on the other hand they are much costlier…The other possibility is to make the formal institution system more interested somehow which is currently interested in not to realise this. (Balogh et al. 2010)

Costs issues were also mentioned in the Austrian national report as an institutional obstacle to recognition of prior learning:

> One of the obstacles I mentioned is certainly the fact that the institutions rather prefer to stick to their core tasks owing to the limited budget, which in turn causes a lack of staff. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Other interviewees in the Hungarian national report emphasise contextual and even personality-related dimensions to the operationalisation of recognition of prior learning:

> *Recognition of prior learning is not centralised and depends strongly on the professor of the course: some teachers are very open to this* (like the interviewee who is the head of the department). (Balogh et al. 2010)

An important issue raised in the Hungarian report is the need to communicate opportunities to the students themselves in relation to recognition of prior learning. In a fast-changing environment in this area, particularly in a Central and Eastern European context, consequences of reforms to provide opportunities for recognition of prior learning require an outreach strategy and an appropriate communication strategy to reach those who could potentially benefit from such recognition of prior learning.

There is a need not simply for criteria for recognition of prior learning but also for an identifiable and accessible section in the institution to offer guidance to potential students on this issue. This occurs in Belgium (Flanders):

Like many other colleges for higher education, Hogent has a centre for study advice and coaching and a centre for students. The first one offers advice on the students' learning path (certificates, credits, exams, validation of prior learning, fulltime or part-time studying, etc.) and offers support during the learning process (tutoring, coaching, individual course units, etc.). (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

The Estonian national report highlights the difficulties at the level of the relations between the non-formal and formal education institutions themselves:

Unfortunately cooperation between formal and non-formal educational institutions has been limited. In particular this applies to recognitions of previous studies and work experience (VÕTA): *Unfortunately knowledge acquired in informal education is not recognised by formal education. I think that the VÕTA concept is not working… Efforts have been made but it does not seem to function properly. Non-formal education is seen as a hobby club—it is not taken very seriously ….* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

An interviewee in Estonia suggests that employers may be more willing to recognise prior learning than formal educational institutions:

All participants receive a certificate specifying the hours and content of their studies.
   The certificate specifies the school, Number of education licence, course, topics, duration, financing. I do not know if anyone has used our certificate and if it has been of any help. It seems that it may help to find a job but otherwise…. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

In the Estonian context, it is important to emphasise that many non-formal education courses are run by formal educational institutions. Relations between non-formal and formal education institutions may also be competitive ones. As the Estonian national report states:

The university competes with other higher educational institutions but this is not considered to be a problem.
   Some other universities offer similar courses. I don't perceive any competition. Some of them offer very good courses. If the topics of courses coincide with the specifics of the university then I don't see any problems…. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

There is no suggestion given here that formal educational institutions will resist recognition of prior learning from non-formal education institutions due to a dimension of competition between them. However, given local and institutional contextual variance on this issue, not only in Estonia, it is clear that national regulation is required to ensure that formal educational institutions which also operate in the running of non-formal education courses cannot use this as leverage against other competitors in the non-formal education sector. The need to address this issue arises a fortiori in the context of the current economic recession.

The Estonian national report addresses the related issue of potential financial exploitation of recognition of prior learning by the formal education sector:

Does it mean that everything depends on the teaching staff of a particular educational institution? Some people have said that one obstacle is competition, the fact that universities want money for credit points awarded? What is the ministry's opinion?

> *This is definitely one of the aspects that hinder the implementation of the changes. We have no quick and perfect solution to the problems related to implementing VÕTA. In the end it is the university who is responsible for the quality of the diplomas/degrees it awards. Nobody is going to relieve the universities from this responsibility. That's why the rules must be such as to enable the university to award diplomas/degrees.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

A different obstacle highlighted in the Scottish context is that of time delay for recognition of prior learning:

> A different view on the value of accreditation of prior learning and prior experiential learning was expressed by the manager from the voluntary organisation, she saw it as problematic because of it *taking longer than doing a course.* (Weedon et al. 2010)

Institutional resistance was also, for example, a pervasive theme in the Austrian national report:

> Some groups of now established people who have themselves acquired access to tertiary level education via formal channels are basically very guarded when it comes to accepting other forms of access. Guarded owing to fearing the lack of quality management, but it is also partly a psychological reaction…especially as regards access to tertiary education greater reservation can be noted compared to other issues. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)
>
> What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State? *We probably have to start from two ends: One is the social question, a question of broad acceptance. But you also have to start with the institutions; here the tertiary sector will be challenged especially. There is a certain elitist awareness and they are more geared towards exclusion.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

What is construed as elitism from one perspective is interpreted by others as a concern with quality of the non-formal or private educational sector. National frameworks to address quality concerns in the non-formal and private educational sectors in particular would create the necessary background context to remove a 'concern with quality' argument from institutions resisting recognition of prior learning. Such institutions in the formal sector would thereby be left with no 'excuse' for their 'psychological reaction' (Rammel and Gottwald 2010) to resist a recognition of prior learning agenda to increase access and diversity of its student population.

> From the perspective of a non-formal education interviewee in Austria: *There is still a strong mistrust from side of the schools e.g. toward adult education institutes. However, it also improved a little bit. I think that with a common framework and an adequate control, a good basis of trust can be created.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Some developments have been observed in Austria for recognition of prior learning, due to a European level influence in this area, as well as greater openness from universities of applied sciences:

> The interviewee from operational level has positive experiences with using the 'Europass', a kind of standardised balance sheet that makes competences visible and comparable on European level. Every participant of a preparation course for lower secondary school certification (*Hauptschulabschluss*) is working on this document in the course of his/her stay together with a social pedagogue. (Rammel and Gottwald)

Generally, universities of applied sciences are found to be better adapted in recognising prior learning than universities. At a different part of the interview, the [non-formal education] interviewee from operational level noted, that participants of the programme 'women in technics' would favor going to universities of advanced studies over universities. This also gives evidence of the better prospective, that they find there, to complete their studies. Universities of applied sciences are better adjusted to adult education and extra-occupational students. (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

However, despite these 'international level' influences, the Austrian system stands out as being particularly underdeveloped in relation to recognition of prior learning:

The interviewee from operational level sees the main obstacle in the lack of permeability in Austria: *Actually there is no permeability in the Austrian education system. It is very marginal. Everything is built up on formal school leaving certificates and all education or competences that are gained outside formal certification, is not relevant yet, respectively only partly. What we accept is, if they do a single course somewhere else. That is something which we are doing now for maybe one year (…) however, it is looked very carefully, where this course is offered and what is standing behind. Thus, it is still a far way till we get there, reaching so far, that if they are coming from an university of applied sciences, they have such barriers, that further studying on the university is practically impossible.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

Another country which requires serious reforms to facilitate recognition of prior learning is Russia. As the Russian national report highlights:

The mechanism of recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience by the formal sector does not exist in Russia as such. The system of formal education recognises only prior formal educational experience. At least, in order to enrol into any educational institution one should present a certificate or a diploma demonstrating completion of a previous step of the educational ladder. However, it can be a diploma of both state and private institution. What is important for the recognition is that a diploma or certificate should be of a state standard, i.e., given by a licensed and certified educational institution. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

Clear pathways for reform in this area are highlighted in the Russian national report:

Government interviews show that in order to start the process of creating mechanisms for recognition of prior learning and experience by formal education institutions there should be undertaken a range of measures on the part of the governmental policy that would include the following:

- Understanding the concept and the peculiarities of the formal education by the officials involved into the sphere of adult and lifelong learning
- Establishing standards for formal education, according to which non-formal education institutions and their programmes could be regularly assessed
- Encouraging cooperation between the formal and non-formal education systems. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

The Russian national report concludes:

The education services market is mostly determined by the formal education institutions, whose education and diplomas are more popular among potential learners and employers. However, the formal education system has a range of disadvantages such as conservativeness, rigidness to innovations, lack of financing, obsolete methodologies and the staff that has not been retrained for a long time by now. Non-formal education is

more innovative, flexible, and adaptive to the needs of learners and labor market but is often unable to provide graduates with a state standard diploma and qualified education. Therefore, the dialogue between the two systems is necessary for enhancement of educational opportunities of the Russian population. The establishment of the bridge between them should be encouraged by the government with corresponding legislative basis. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

Some of the obstacles referred to for other countries seem to have been overcome in the context of Belgium (Flanders):

During the intake procedure (a new participant entering a programme for the first time) OpenSchool explicitly takes into account the non-formal learning experiences and the work experiences of the participant, not just the certificates and diplomas. *We always screen and assess the competencies and knowledge people have. This is done by means of a test and an intake interview. Our centre is free in organising these the way it wants.* (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

However, even in Belgium there is a need for development in this area according to the following suggestions emerging from its national report:

According to the interviewees, there are a few elements hindering the establishment of a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning from the point of view of non-formal educational institutions:

- The recognition of prior learning should not mean that all participants should (be able to) obtain a specific certificate or diploma for each non-formal educational activity they attend. The mechanism of the recognition of prior learning could however exert pressure on non-formal educational institutions to start 'formalising' their activities and courses (by means of planning the learning process in advance, assessment, handing out certificates, etc.). Still, argues one of the interviewees, *we must realise that one can never grasp in a certificate the real learning efforts and outcomes of socio-cultural work for adults.*
- Secondly, recognising the effects of prior learning is easy and possible when we are talking about classes and traditional courses for adults followed by some kind of assessment. This is not the case when the educational context is less planned and structured and the objectives are being negotiated with the learners and there is an opportunity to set and share learning goals during the activity.
- Thirdly, the recognition of prior learning needs to be done more planned and transparent in the sector of socio-cultural work (and the non-formal educational sector as a whole) than it is done now. (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

A number of these observed obstacles operate at the macro- and exosystemic level. These include absence of a legal framework and national guidelines, the need for regulatory frameworks for quality of non-formal and private educational sectors to address frequently expressed quality concerns and the need to regulate competition between formal institutions and non-formal sector regarding non-formal education courses and to regulate potential financial incentives of formal sector to resist recognition of prior learning. Obstacles to recognition of prior learning highlighted at the micro-meso level include: institutional attitudinal resistance, lack of communication to students of opportunities for recognition of prior learning, costs of processing recognition of prior learning and delays in doing so and lack of both criteria and institutional pathways for recognition of prior learning. A further concern that is pertinent to different systemic levels is that the distinctive features of

non-formal education will be lost by a formalisation and regulation process for recognition of prior learning.

It cannot be presumed that the need to overcome this system level caesura between European policy and national institutional level practice will be met through the dissemination of the European Guidelines on the validation of informal and non-formal learning, published by Cedefop in July 2009, subsequent to the majority of the interviews for this report. Information alone is not enough; this is especially evident given the degree of resistance to such validation expressed by institutional leaders across diverse countries and institutional contexts, particularly in the formal education sector. This system level problem applies a fortiori, given the frequent lack of strategic vision articulated at national level, as well as at institutional level—across most countries examined in this report—regarding coherent development of the non-formal education sector.

An important related point emphasised by Slowey (1988) is that recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning needs to extend to the teaching methods of those in third-level institutions, so that they can build upon this prior experience of adults in the learning situation. While Abrahamsson et al. (1988) observed little evidence of academics adapting their teaching methodologies to meet the needs of mature students, in the context of Sweden some time ago, it is strongly arguable that this issue also needs to be confronted in a range of participating countries where recognition of non-formal and informal learning is still only at an early stage. A further issue which arises is in relation to extreme discrepancies in quality across non-formal and also private educational institutions. This is also hindering institutional willingness to engage in recognition of prior learning and may be a particular issue in at least some Central and Eastern European countries in particular and including Austria and Russia.

In many European countries, non-formal education can be characterised as being a sleeping giant for engaging marginalised groups. Building on the scope for strategic development of community lifelong learning centres, including bridges to ethnic minorities and immigrants, already observed in the previous chapter at a macro-exosystemic strategic level, non-formal education offers enormous potential for advancing key lifelong learning goals of active citizenship, social inclusion and personal fulfilment, as well as for fostering soft skills and helping overcome psychological and cultural barriers to employment. Yet this enormous potential will not be advanced without strategic commitment and sectoral investment, as well as the valuing of its work, not only at national level but also by other formal educational institutions through recognition of prior learning. It is clear that systemic change is needed to give effect to this potential while retaining the distinctive flexibility and strengths of non-formal education.

Summary on Non-formal Education: Micro-Mesosystem A systems theory focus reveals the need to build on strengths for the promotion of growth rather than simply seeking to overcome deficits. This strengths-based approach invites consideration of strategies to develop community leaders for groups traditionally marginalised from the educational system. With only limited examples evident in

the national reports, this issue of promoting community leaders in communities experiencing high levels of social marginalisation is an area needing significant further development for lifelong learning, to foster access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups.

It is evident from a number of national reports that the arts offer a key bridge into societal and systemic participation via non-formal education—and that they are a strong feature of non-formal education across many countries. This includes examples of collaborative engagement in festivals, theatre and drama as key local community interest given expression through non-formal education. Benefits of the arts in engaging those who may be most difficult to reach include that there is less fear of failure as there tends not to be a convergent 'right' answer in the arts, more embodied types of learning can be pursued and more culture-relevant materials can be taught.

As observed in a number of national reports, non-formal education may be a key mediating structure and pathway into subsequent formal education. There is a significant amount of potential to develop these structured links in a much more strategically focused fashion across European countries. The difficulty of long-term budgeting in the non-formal education sector impacts upon staff contracts and continuity in some countries more than others. Observed benefits of staff continuity include that more experienced teachers are mentors to young teachers, it is especially needed for immigrants and language learning both in terms of understanding dialects and fostering relations of trust, as well as for whole staff approaches to development of their teaching approaches. Beyond language teaching, the need for staff continuity and professional development is particularly acute when they are working with vulnerable groups requiring sustained, ongoing interaction and support in order to build trust and motivation to participate in education.

A number of observed obstacles to recognition of prior learning include absence of a legal framework and national guidelines in some countries, the need to regulate competition between formal institutions and the non-formal sector regarding non-formal education courses and to regulate potential financial incentives for the formal sector to resist recognition of prior learning. Obstacles to recognition of prior learning also highlighted include: institutional attitudinal resistance, lack of communication to students of opportunities for recognition of prior learning, costs of processing recognition of prior learning and delays in doing so and lack of both criteria and institutional pathways for recognition of prior learning. A further concern is that the distinctive features of non-formal education will be lost by a formalisation and regulation process for recognition of prior learning. Another issue is perceptions of extreme discrepancies in quality across non-formal and also private educational institutions. This is hindering institutional willingness to engage in recognition of prior learning and may be a particular issue in at least some Central and Eastern European countries in particular and including Austria and Russia.

References

Abrahamsson, K., Rubenson, K., & Slowey, M. (1988). *Adults in the academy: International trends in adult and higher education*. Stockholm: Swedish National Board of Education.

Balogh, A., Józan, A., Szöllősi, A., & Róbert, P. (2010). *The institutional aspects of adult education in Hungary*. Budapest: TARKI Social Research Centre. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Boyadjieva, P., Milenkova, V., Gornev, G., Petkova, K., & Nenkova, D. (2010). *The role of Bulgarian educational institutions for the promotion of access of adults to formal education*. Sofia: Institute of Sociology. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Byrne, M. (2007). Health for all. In P. Downes & A. L. Gilligan (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 343–354). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

CEDEFOP. (2009). *European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Commission Staff Working Document {SEC(2009)1616} *Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Indicators and benchmarks 2009*.

EU Council (2009/C 119/02) Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020').

Dooley, C., Downes, P., Maunsell, C., & McLoughlin, V. (2010). *Promoting social inclusion: The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Ireland*. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Downes, T. (1993). *Pedagogy of the processed*. MA thesis, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth.

Downes, P. (2006). *QDOSS: An agenda for development*. Dublin: QDOSS (Quality Development of Out of School Services).

Downes, P. (2010, March 23). *Needs, policies and practice for system level intervention: Key issues for the next era in moving beyond educational disadvantage*. Presentation at the *Mapping the Landscape* conference, National Education Welfare Board, Kilmainham, Dublin.

Education and Culture DG. (2010). Pathways to inclusion—Strengthening European cooperation in prison education and training. *Discussion document for the conference workshops: Introductory notes and key questions* (Conference Paper 5). Brussels: EACDG.

Engel, L., Holford, J., & Mleczko, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non- formal adult education*. Nottingham: University of Nottingham. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Field, S., Kuczera, M., & Pont, B. (2007). No more failures: Ten steps to equity in education. Paris: OECD.

Holford, J., Riddell, S., Weedon, E., Litjens, J., & Hannan, G. (2008). *Patterns of lifelong learning: Policy and practice in an expanding Europe*. Vienna: LIT Verlag.

Ivančič, A., Mohorčič Špolar, V. A., & Radovan, M. (2010). *The case of Slovenia. Access of adults to formal and non-formal education—Policies and priorities*. Ljubljana: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Kozlovskiy, V., Khokhlova, A., & Veits, M. (2010). *The role of Russian educational institutions in the promotion of access for adults to formal education*. St Petersburg: Department of Sociology, Saint Petersburg State University. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Rammel, S., & Gottwald, R. (2010). *Social inclusion in formal and non formal adult education: Findings from Austrian institutions and government representatives*. Krems: Danube University. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Slowey, M. (1988). Adult students—The new mission for higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly, 42*(4), 301–316.

Stensen, O.-A., & Ure, O.-B. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Norway.* Oslo: Fafo—Institute for Labour and Social Research. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Taljunaite, M., Labanauskas, L., Terepaite-Butviliene, J., & Blazeviviene, L. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education.* Vilnius: Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Social Research Institute. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Tamm, A., & Saar, E. (2010). *LLL2010 Subproject 5 Estonia country report*. Tallinn: Institute of International and Social Studies/Department of Social Stratification.

Vermeersch, L., & Vandenbrouke, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Belgium's Flemish Community.* Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Weedon, E., Riddell, S., Purves, R., & Ahlgren, L. (2010). *Social Inclusion and Adult Participation in Lifelong Learning: officials', managers' and teachers' perspectives.* Edinburgh: University of Scotland. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Chapter 10
Prison Education: Indicators at Macro-Exo Levels

10.1 Introduction: Prison Education as a Domain of Lifelong Learning

The Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Recommendation Rec (2006) 2 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the European Prison Rules, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 January 2006 at the 952nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, includes the following, of particular relevance to lifelong learning in prison:

28.1 Every prison shall seek to provide all prisoners with access to educational programmes which are as comprehensive as possible and which meet their individual needs while taking into account their aspirations.

28.2 Priority shall be given to prisoners with literacy and numeracy needs and those who lack basic or vocational education.

28.3 Particular attention shall be paid to the education of young prisoners and those with special needs.

28.4 Education shall have no less a status than work within the prison regime and prisoners shall not be disadvantaged financially or otherwise by taking part in education.

28.5 Every institution shall have a library for the use of all prisoners, adequately stocked with a wide range of both recreational and educational resources, books and other media.

28.6 Wherever possible, the prison library should be organised in co-operation with community library services.

Other key aspects of these rules, with respect to lifelong learning in prison, are as follows:

Education of sentenced prisoners

106.1 A systematic programme of education, including skills training, with the objective of improving prisoners' overall level of education as well as their prospects of leading a responsible and crime-free life, shall be a key part of regimes for sentenced prisoners.

106.2 All sentenced prisoners shall be encouraged to take part in educational and training programmes.

106.3 Educational programmes for sentenced prisoners shall be tailored to the projected length of their stay in prison.

38.1 Special arrangements shall be made to meet the needs of prisoners who belong to ethnic or linguistic minorities.

The question remains as to the extent of nation states' commitments to these rules. The Council of Europe reports provide a system for monitoring of nation states' adherence to human rights, including the rights of all prisoners to access to education.

Hawley (2010) notes that the total EU prison population was 627,455 in 2009, which includes almost 150,000 in pre-trial/remand imprisonment, a group for whom it is particularly difficult to provide meaningful education and training opportunities. It is notable that the Commission's 2001 Communication *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* stressed the importance of lifelong learning for all European citizens, as its 2007 Communication *Action Plan on Adult Learning: It is always a good time to learn* reiterates. The scope of the vision of these documents must thereby embrace prisoners' education. A Commission staff working document (2009) highlights that measures to develop key competences in education for offenders in custody were reported in a few countries, named as Cyprus, France, Italy, Latvia, Portugal and England. It referred to the English example of providing a new core curriculum for offenders. As noted earlier, the Appendix to the *Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning* (2011) invites EU Member States to focus on 'Addressing the learning needs of…people in specific situations of exclusion from learning, such as those in…prisons, and providing them with adequate guidance support'. This is the first EU Council Resolution in the area of lifelong learning to explicitly embrace prisoners within its scope of relevant target groups.

Hawley (2010) also highlights key features of a rights-based approach to prisoner education under international and EU law. At European level, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms states that 'No person shall be denied the right to education' (Art. 2)3. A Council of Europe Report (1990) emphasised that:

> The education of prisoners must in its philosophy, methods and content be brought as close as possible to the best adult education in the society outside. (p. 14)

More recently, the Lisbon Treaty recognised the rights of EU citizens through the enforcement of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Article 18 of the Charter recognises that '*everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training*'. Nevertheless, Hawley (2010) observes in an EU context that 'offenders face considerable barriers in accessing their right to education' (p. 5).

10.2   A National Strategy of Education for Prisoners (Structural Indicator)

A comprehensive lifelong learning strategy at national level must embrace access to lifelong learning not only for socially excluded groups in general, but also the significant group of those in prison, many of whom experience social marginalisation. It is evident from a number of national reports that prison education is

outside the Pale of strategic focus and intervention at national level in some countries. For example, the Slovenian national report recognises that:

> There are no special national policy papers on adult education in prisons while there are separate (national) strategies defining goals and measures related to specific target groups, e.g. Roma. (Ivančič et al. 2010)

Despite the fact that Council of Europe rules on prison education originate from 1990, it is only in recent years, according to the Belgian (Flanders) national report, that a focus has occurred at national level on prison education:

> Up to a few years ago, policy makers in Belgium paid little attention to adult education in prison. The national policy documents from before the turn of the millennium were focused on issues like labour in prison, release on parole, etc. In case norms did regulate aspects of the regime in prison (including education) they did not do so in a directive way. Sometimes adult education was referred to in official letters from ministers or their administration or in the rules and regulations made by the prisons themselves. (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)
>
> One of the most important policy documents on access to adult education in prisons in the Flemish Community of Belgium is, at this moment, the 'Strategic Plan on social help and services to inmates' (*Het strategisch plan hulp- en dienstverlening aan gedetineerden*) (2000). Its main objective is to improve close cooperation between different services funded by the Flemish Government in order to offer detainees quality social aid, education, vocational training, sports and leisure activities. At this moment, the plan has been implemented in eight prisons. In the near future this will be the case in all Flemish prisons. The plan has been evaluated for the first time in 2008. (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

The Belgian national report cites national commentators on tensions between national and regional levels in relation to the implementation of prison education:

> *There is a lot of tension between those different policy making authorities and this is certainly reflected in the Belgian prison system. Because different authorities are responsible, actions and policy making sometimes misses coherence.* (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

Recent reforms in relation to prison education also appear to be taking place in Lithuania. As a Lithuanian Education Ministry official states:

> *Government decision on convicts' education development is being arranged right now. There is a concrete decision being arranged to expand opportunities for them, so that they could learn in prison.* (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

Significantly, there is some legislative basis for prison education in Lithuania, according to the Lithuanian national report source:

> According to the interviewee, the time of participation of prisoners in the education is regulated by law and funding is provided with regard to the number of teaching hours. The law allows not more than one teaching (advice) hour per week on all subjects that a particular prisoner chooses to study. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

However, making prison education a funding priority appears to be a difficulty in Lithuania, thereby illustrating that it is not adopting a rights-based approach to education in prison:

> *Again, the participation in the prison workshops is very clearly defined in the plan of education, and is it … in practice, I can say… it depends on how much financial resources we have to pay the teachers …Prisoners receive only a limited, very limited, number of teacher consultations… the funding is limited and inadequate….* (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

Prison education in Hungary 'belongs to competence of Ministry of Affairs and Labour' (Balogh et al. 2010). This would prima facie appear to narrow its scope. The Estonian national report locates funding and national policy, by way of contrast with Hungary, in its Education Ministry (Tamm and Saar 2010).

A corollary of an adequate national strategy is that sufficient funding is allocated for the implementation of that strategy, so that it is not solely existing on paper:

> *Both [Hungarian prison institution] interviewees assume that the number of educational programmes and funding sources have declined in the last two years.* Senior manager: *There has not been significant development on this field in the last years. The education can't be successful without available funding sources. I think, we fulfil the elemental education, but I don't think that the overall education would be a great success in this prison. We have worked out a lot of useful programmes, there are clubs and trainings, but I miss a structured and expedient system. We can work out personal developmental plan for every prisoner involved, but there are not available educational programmes for realisation. Thus, we can't provide adequate programmes for the prisoners; we just try to insert them into the existing educational programmes and we try to motivate them.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

A concern emerging from the Austrian report is that in contrast to the impetus for recent reforms to prison education, for example, in Belgium and Lithuania, there appears to be little appetite for further engagement with prison education at a national level in Austria. For example, the Education Ministry official in Austria gave the following response:

> Are there specific plans to improve access to education for adults in prisons in your country? Please specify. *No.*
>   What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to developing prison education? *In terms of cooperation with the different authorities concerned with this issue, like mentioned in other questions about obstacles, the problems are similar.* (Rammel and Gottwald 2010)

This situation in Austria contrasts also with that of Denmark. The Discussion Document for the Conference *Pathways to Inclusion* observes, 'Most prison schools in Denmark have been granted the status of 'local adult education centres''(DG, EAC 2010, p. 40).

In stark contrast to Austria, a strategic approach to prison education is evident in the Bulgarian national report:

> An organised process of general and vocational training of prisoners is carried out in the Bulgarian prisons. Most of the prisoners are illiterate, with low educational level and lack of professional qualification. Schools in prison are opened and closed by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) upon the proposal of the Ministry of Justice. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

The Bulgarian national report provides clear evidence not only of availability of prison education but also successful graduation by prisoner students from education courses across a range of prisons:

> At the present moment there are six schools that operate in the Bulgarian prisons:
>   *Evening vocational school at the prison for women and girls in Sliven.*
>   The school offers education to students from 1st to 12th grades, and students from grades 5 to receive also vocational training in clothes production. During the last five years the average annual number of students attending the school was 80–90. During the academic 2006–2007. 112 students attended the school and 56 have successfully graduated.

Evening vocational school at the prison for repeat offenders in Lovetch.
The school offers education to students from grades 1 to 12, and students from grades 5 to receive also vocational training in mechanical engineering and construction. Over the past five years the average annual number of students was between 90 and 100. During the academic 2006–2007 year 100 students attended the school and 53 successfully graduated from it. The percentage of prisoners attending the Lovetch prison school is higher than that in other prisons.

The evening vocational training school at the prison for first time offenders in Stara Zagora. The school offers education to students from grades 1 to 12, and after they complete fifth grade the students receive also vocational training in construction, mechanical engineering and furniture production. Over the past five years the average annual number of the students was between 300 and 330. During the academic 2006–2007 year 271 students attended the school and 199 have successfully graduated from it.

Secondary school with professional qualification profile at the prison for repeat offenders in Vratsa. The school offers education to students from grades 1 to 12, and after they complete fifth grade students receive also vocational training in furniture production. Over the past five years the average annual number of the students was between 110 and 130. During the academic 2006–2007 year 109 students attended the school and 76 have successfully graduated from it.

Middle school with vocational training at the prison in Sofia (Kazichene prison dormitory). The school offers education to students from grades 1 to 8, and after they complete fifth grade the students receive also vocational training in metallurgy. Over the past five years, the average annual number of the students was between 60 and 70. During the academic 2006–2007 year 63 students attended the school and 36 have successfully graduated from it.

Secondary comprehensive school 'St. St. Cyril and Methodius' at the reformatory school for juvenile delinquents in Boychinovtsi. The school offers education to students from grades 1 to 12. Over the past five years the average annual number of the students was between 80 and 100. During the academic 2006–2007 year 83 students attended the school and 40 have successfully graduated from it. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

These Bulgarian examples foreground the real benefits of prison education in practice once a country commits at national level to prison education.

It is notable that more than one interviewee working in an Irish prison highlights a distinct lack of political will and dearth of interest in prison education at national level:

The tutor asserts, *to be honest with you, I think the primary obstacle is that the prison service doesn't really value education. They just think, oh, it's a good activity, keeps them quiet, takes them off the landing.* (Dooley et al. 2010)
The Senior Official in the Prison explained that there are political obstacles to improving education for prisoners, *well my experience, I can only tell you what my experience is…I have never met any Minister or opposition person that was interested in the welfare of the prisoner, absolutely none, they have far and only interest in exploiting any weaknesses in the system like giving out about the high recidivist rate or the lack of this or that or the victims or sentencing or whatever it would be.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

This latter interviewee suggests that neither international pressure nor economic arguments for the benefits of lifelong learning in prison would shift the system level inertia and disinterest in relation to education in Irish prisons:

The interviewer enquired that, if the Irish government were seen to be violating a range of international rights across a whole range of UN conventions and Council of Europe resolutions, would the Senior Manager think they would act? *Generally speaking, no, that's*

honest now. The difficulty of a lot of these things is, it's a one day wonder, not even a nine day wonder…You get a big headline somewhere…and the next day it's gone, by a week's time it's dead in the water again and it won't surface for two or three years, nobody follows it up and then you get a new minister, a new regime and it goes back on the agenda again. When asked if the economic argument would have an impact on increasing participation of prisoners in education, the Senior Manager stated, *No it's never, ever a factor…I would argue with anybody that you could put up all the evidence in the world to say, for instance that if you had occupied prisoners in …[the prison] all the time and they were all occupied doing something that in itself would reduce the dependency on drugs and behaviour. You might as well be talking to the wind, there's no recognition given for that at all.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

Despite the pessimism in relation to national level interest in prison education, this interviewee does acknowledge system level progress in the related area of prison health care in an Irish context:

What I would be saying or conceding or acknowledging would be that over the last five, six, seven years in particular of all the areas that we have made the most progress would be in health care…Far more progress in health care than in any other area from recruitment of nurse managers, complex managers, recruitment of more doctors and more doctor hours. Psychiatric services would be greater resourced now… the recruitment of addiction counsellors, the recruitment of additional nurses, all that sort of stuff. Now the tendering out of pharmacy services to a pharmacy service that is brought in to distribute the drugs, methadone and all drugs. We would have made quite significant progress in relation to, our policy of treating people who need hospital treatment and specialised treatment in the community and it has worked very well. (Dooley et al. 2010)

This gives some grounds for hope for the future regarding system level reform in relation to prioritisation of lifelong learning in Irish prisons.

The English national report provides an example of a national strategy for prison education:

In 2005 the Government published a Green Paper titled *Reducing Re-Offending through Skills and Employment* where the national strategy was outlined: "Key proposals [of this strategy] include a stronger focus on jobs, with more relevant skills training, led by employer needs; a new 'employability contract' for offenders, with incentives for participation; and a 'campus' model for learning to ensure continuity of education from prisons into the community" (HM Government, 2005:5). (Engel et al. 2010)

Goals of prison education are defined as to:

– develop a learning and skills service as an integral part of the offender management process, to provide offenders with skills for life and improves their employability,
– use sentences to improve employment opportunities—i.e., arrange Fresh start interviews and job searches, and set Education, Training and Employment Activity Requirements as part of the new sentencing framework,
– develop strategies nationally, regionally and locally for engaging employers in providing jobs for ex-offenders,
– put employability and employment at the heart of supervision in the community for every unemployed offender. (Engel et al. 2010)

While a national strategic approach to access to lifelong learning in prison is to be welcomed in this English example, it nevertheless remains a concern that the goal of employment subordinates other legitimate goals of lifelong learning—such as active citizenship, social cohesion and personal fulfilment. An EU Commission

conception of access to lifelong learning operates with a broader lens and includes all citizens and therefore encompasses prisoners and prison education within its ambit of relevance.

10.3   Opportunities for Distance Education and Web-Based Learning in Prison (Structural Indicator)

According to the Russian national report, distance education is a feature of some Russian prisons:

> Some prisons provide higher correspondent and distant education for prisoners willing to obtain higher education degree. In the Russian Penitentiary system there are 8 institutions of higher education that has 7 branches through the country, including the Academy of Law, 74 educational centres, and an institute for advanced training. In recent years, this tendency has become quite widespread and adopted by a number of prisons across the territory of the Russian Federation. It can be partially explained with the fact that the government has started to promote the policy of transforming penitentiary institutions into centres of social rehabilitation. Therefore, the system of flexible educational training for prisoners is being elaborated and maintained, including distant and correspondent modes of learning. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

An example of an extensive distance education network is described in the Russian national report, with availability to prisoners who can pay a reduced rate to participate in such distance education:

> Modern Humanitarian Academy (MHA) is a private licensed and accredited educational institution providing distant education of all levels, starting from primary and secondary professional education to higher professional education (BA, MA, specialist degree) and postgraduate programmes. The Academy is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the biggest educational network embracing 14 % of the planet. The Academy students number 13 % of all Russian students today. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)
>
> Education at MHA is paid but the prisoners pay a reduced fee, which can be decreased to 70 % of the standard price. The educational programmes can be paid either by the families of prisoners or by prisoners themselves (in that case tuition fee is extracted from the prisoners' salaries). Since MHA is not a state educational institution, the state doesn't provide any financial support for prisoners in terms of scholarships, student loans, free reeducation or free education. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

The Russian national report highlights that this distance education approach in prison has received European awards. The Russian national report however adds a cautionary note about the pervasiveness of distance education across prisons in Russia:

> However, the listed examples embrace a very small amount of prisoners in Russia so far. Most prisons are still either poorly or entirely not equipped for supporting distant education. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

The Scottish national report also provides an illustration of distance learning in prisons:

> *… most of the prison learning centres have a session on the timetable for distance learning students, where they can come along and access a pc, there is a member of staff there if… and if they can't help them with the subject, perhaps some of the technicalities or often they*

will give them support with essay writing and things like that. They also have, not the OU [Open University] distance learning, but the college distance learning, they would have telephone tutorial support, that happens sort of reasonably regularly (Prison education college manager). (Weedon et al. 2010)

Youth prisons are described in the Hungarian national report as receiving distance education, though with a recognition that high turnover limits the opportunities for learning:

Another disadvantaged group supported by the [digital] institute is prisoners: Education in a youth-prison was launched immediately after the foundation of the school, with the contribution of *Földes Ferenc* Secondary School teachers who went to the prison to give lessons. This cooperation between the institute and the prison has been successful since the beginning, even if providing education to prisoners is quite difficult. Young prisoners might spend only a short time in the same prison and thus class headcount often falls down from 15 at the beginning to 2 at the end of the year, which then causes financial problems. Prisoners' motivation and performance varies from rather poor to very high: some of them are almost illiterate, but others continue their studies in the institute even after their release, and continue to enter third level education. (Balogh et al. 2010)

The Estonian national report observes that security reasons are the biggest obstacle to distance learning and web-based learning in prison:

Computers and the Internet are not permitted for security reasons. Materials and assignments are sent by mail. (Tamm and Saar 2010)
     Distance learning opportunities are still not offered. Prisoners should be able to attend distance courses but how to organise this? (Tamm and Saar 2010)

Security concerns were also raised regarding the Internet in prison, in the Hungarian national report.

According to interviewees in the Lithuanian national report, there is recognition that there is a need for change to a system which prevents use of the Internet for educational purposes:

The [prison management] interviewees think that the procedures should be changed. One of the possible solutions would be allowing to use the internet for educational purposes in this prison *perhaps it could be some way that the prisoners would be able to access filtered Internet, which could provide educational material … Yes, at least to filtered Internet and the material for reading ….* (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

However, computer facilities in prison described in the Belgian national report also refer to the excision of Internet access from such facilities.

The Irish national report also highlights security concerns with access to the Internet:

The main obstacle to distance education is security in the prison, the tutor expresses views on this issue, *I personally think there shouldn't be any obstacles because…it's a literacy… digitally literacy…it's essential…I think it's just a psychological thing in the Irish Prison Service's head…It's up and running in other countries…security overrides everything but personally I don't think it should.* (Dooley et al. 2010)
     When asked about the obstacles to distance education, the Senior Manager explained that there are *huge difficulties in Ireland, in Irish prisons and I am sure in other prisons, huge difficulties have surfaced. Up to very short time ago prisoners had access to computers and some had access in their own cells for learning purposes, Open University, that sort of stuff. The recent trends as you saw coming in the gate where there is a huge emphasis put*

upon, to a degree, almost an obsession, put on security has meant that a lot of technology the prisoners had, including computers, have been withdrawn.

The senior manager elaborates on this:

you can push security, you can justify withdrawing everything, including fresh air almost on the basis of security. So in terms of technology to facilitate distance learning, by and large that's not on anymore. We do have some facilities in classrooms now under supervision and we do have facilities in the library, under supervision where they can access, but in their cells, very, very limited. (Dooley et al. 2010)

It appears that security reasons are a pervasive barrier to distance education and web-based learning in at least a number of European countries. While reasons for limiting prisoners' communication with the world outside prison are obvious, it must be technologically possible to devise programmes to allow for limited external communication and access to key aspects of the Web for prisoners' distance education. This technological development needs to be instantiated as a matter of priority across prisons in the EU—what is being presented as a technological problem is de facto more a lack of political will to access the appropriate technology for this limited external communication. The European Commission has a role to play here in encouraging tenders to develop appropriate technology to facilitate lifelong learning in prison through distance education and web-based learning.

Hawley (2010) observes that there are a wide range of European Commission–funded projects which have taken place related to this issue. She also highlights the need to resolve this issue of security concerns as a barrier to education in prison. Resolution of this conflict needs Commission leadership not only with regard to cross-national sharing of good practice and innovative approaches on this theme. It requires an evaluative framework of indicators to ensure that good practice in implementing access to technology in prison for educational purposes can not only be shared but *required* of Member States. Supposed technological difficulties in providing restricted access simply must not be used as a veil to hide behind the implementation of the right to access to education in prison.

10.4 An Education Strategy for High-Security Prisons (Structural Indicator)

A coherent strategic approach to lifelong learning in prison at national and prison institutional level must also encompass high-security prisons. A significant and notable contrast between policies for high-security prisons in relation to lifelong learning is evident between the Lithuanian, Irish and Bulgarian national reports on the one hand and the English national report on the other hand. The Lithuanian national report provides the example of how high-security prison is a barrier to lifelong learning:

In theory, life-long learning and rehabilitation goals are provisioned in Lukiskes Prison strategic action plan for 2008–2010, but the possibilities and conditions for prisoners'

education are restricted by other regulations, i.e., the highest level of prison security restricts education possibilities. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

Despite a progressive approach to prison education in other kinds of prisons in Bulgaria, there is a similar barrier to education, as in Lithuania, for those in high-security prisons:

Those who have life sentences cannot participate in the educational process, as well as those who are under strict confinement until their status is changed. (Boyadjieva et al. 2010)

Yet the English national report provides the following account of a high-security prison with a proportion of prisoners with long or lifetime sentences:

The education provided helps to break down the sentence for the individual, *education helps to keep people focused, so you might have somebody who has got a very long sentence who might be able to work on their education in small bites, so instead of saying I'm going to do a minimum of 14 years, they could be looking at completing a literacy courses now and they might aim to do a GCSE* [Graduate Certificate of Secondary Education] *and then possible an OU* [Open University] *course, it helps to break down the sentence into more manageable chunks and so it gives somebody some sort of hope really* (Senior manager). (Engel et al. 2010)

It is the very longevity of the prison sentence in the English high-security prison that is interpreted as being a particular opportunity to engage in lifelong learning. Across national reports, there would appear to be a general policy vacuum at national level in relation to lifelong learning for high-security prisons in particular. The English prison example provided here offers a progressive way forward for the engagement of high-security prisoners with lifelong learning.

This English approach is clearly in contrast with the security-dominated approach in the following Irish prison example:

The tutor on obstacles to implementation and expansion of education in prison stated, *so much segregation…almost 100 guys on 23 hour lock up, which means they're only let out of their cell for 1 hour a day…for exercise, because legally they have to do that …all to do with the gangland stuff that happening, so it's for their own protection, or for somebody else's protection. They can't come to school. In the last year or two… this is a new problem. They can't get up to school cause they can't mix so we do go down to where they are…very limited…what we're doing is kind of skeletal and it's just a presence really… no real learning going on as such.* Protection prisoners are locked up for 23 hours each day. (Dooley et al. 2010)

10.5   Overcoming Ambivalence from Prison Officers in Some Countries to Prisoner Learning

A notable issue of prison officer ambivalence to prisoner learning is raised in the Norwegian national report:

The informant argued that when the prisoners educated themselves, they became too knowledgeable for the prison system, i.e. they became better educated than the prison officers, *Culturally speaking, they become far more knowledgeable than the prison officers.*

> *One does not even need higher education to become a prison officer. So they become more knowledgeable than the prison officer, perhaps they are at the outset, but they become even more knowledgeable than the prison officer.* (Stensen and Ure 2010)

A historico-cultural change in prison institutional culture in Belgium (Flanders) is observed in their national report:

> *Today, the prison guards and officers are usually very cooperative when it comes to organising educational activities. This was not always the case. In the beginning, some warders saw it as a burden or an unnecessary work load. Some of them even discouraged the prisoners to enrol. They said to prisoners: you do not need an education. The mentality has changed strongly over the last 15 years. Prisoners and staff members today realise the huge importance of prison education. It is important for the detainee and for his individual future, but also for society. To put it simply: broadening the mind of the prisoner reduces the chances of recidivists.* (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

This account resonates with the research of Lin (2000) on the implementation of rehabilitation programmes in prisons which indicated how each prison's unique history influenced the ways in which its programmes were understood by staff and inmates. Lin emphasised how implementation failure was correlated with a basic misunderstanding between policy makers and implementing agents.

Estonia provides an interesting example of an approach to preventing prison officer resistance to prisoners' learning through involving them centrally in the delivery of some of the key programmes:

> Prisoners also participate in a social programme intended to develop their social skills. The programme includes 9 topics: family relations, anger management, replacement of aggressiveness, fighting addiction and other issues of coping with life. At the end of the programme prisoners receive a certificate. Programme leaders are the prison officers. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

A professional development dimension and incentive for prison officers in other countries than Estonia could include their involvement in the development and/or delivery of the courses. This would both serve as a preventative measure against prison officer resistance to prisoner learning and help foster good relations between both groups. It would also help mainstream the role of education in the prison institutional culture.

This Estonian example resonates strongly with the *Discussion Document for the Pathways to Inclusion conference* (DG, EAC 2010) which similarly envisaged active engagement of prison officers in course delivery:

> How can we raise the level of commitment of prison governors and prison officers to supporting education in prisons? Involving prison officers in joint delivery of courses e.g. pre-release courses, soft skill courses, gym instruction etc. (p. 47)

For this to become more widespread, an incentivisation and accountability process is required at both European and national levels for prison officers and prison authorities to participate.

Issues raised in this chapter pertain not simply to the need for increased political will regarding access to education for prisoners. They are also a matter of legal obligation to give effect to prisoners' rights to access education under the Council

of Europe, European Prison Rules. It is of concern that a number of issues are being represented, in some contexts, as being basically security issues, such as access to education in high-security prisons and access to web-based learning, which are in reality issues more of lack of political will in some countries to instantiate a decision-making that gives sufficient weight and substantial effect to the right of prisoners to access education. An emphasis on the development and realisation of national strategies for prison education and for professional development of prison officers additionally raises questions of political will, as well as of the implementation of legal obligations. The European Commission and Council of Ministers, as well as the Council of Europe, have arguably a vital role to play in developing review processes, including key structural indicators for progress in this area, to ensure that access to education for prisoners is consistently manifested at systemic levels across Europe.

Summary on Prison Education: Macro-Exosystem The Council of Europe, European Prison Rules, states that '28.1 *Every prison shall seek to provide all prisoners with access to educational programmes which are as comprehensive as possible and which meet their individual needs while taking into account their aspirations*'. A comprehensive lifelong learning strategy at national level must embrace access to lifelong learning not only for socially excluded groups in general, but also the significant group of those in prison, many of whom experience social marginalisation.

It is evident from a number of national reports that prison education is completely lacking in strategic focus and intervention at national level in some countries. A concern emerging from the Austrian report is that in contrast to the impetus for recent reforms to prison education, for example, in Belgium (Flanders), Estonia and Lithuania, there appears to be little appetite for further engagement with prison education at a national level in Austria. The Bulgarian national report provides clear evidence not only of availability of prison education but also successful graduation by prisoner students from education courses across a range of prisons. The Estonian national report provides an interesting approach to preventing prison officer resistance to prisoners' learning through involving them centrally in the delivery of some of the key programmes. While a national strategic approach to access to lifelong learning in prison is evident in the English national report, it nevertheless remains a concern that the goal of employment subordinates other legitimate goals of lifelong learning, such as active citizenship, social cohesion and personal fulfilment. An EU Commission conception of access to lifelong learning operates with a broader lens and includes all citizens and therefore encompasses prisoners and prison education.

While a number of national reports illustrate the presence of web-based education in prisons, it appears that security reasons are a pervasive barrier to distance education and web-based learning in at least a number of European countries. Though reasons for limiting prisoners' communication with the world outside prison are obvious, it must be technologically possible to devise programmes to allow for limited external communication and access to key aspects of the web for prisoners' education. This technological development needs to be instantiated as a matter of priority across prisons in the EU—what is being presented as a technological

problem is more a lack of political will to access the appropriate technology for this limited external communication. The European Commission has a role to play here in encouraging tenders to develop appropriate technology to facilitate lifelong learning in prison through web-based learning.

A coherent strategic approach to lifelong learning in prison at national and prison institutional level must also encompass high-security prisons. A significant contrast concerning policy for high-security prisons in relation to lifelong learning is evident between the Lithuanian, Irish and Bulgarian national reports on the one hand and the English national report on the other. It is the very longevity of the prison sentence in the English high-security prison that is interpreted as a particular opportunity to engage in lifelong learning. It is of concern that a number of issues are being represented, in some contexts, as being basically security issues, such as access to education in high-security prisons and access to web-based learning, which are in reality issues more of lack of political will in some countries to instantiate a decision-making that gives sufficient weight and substantial effect to the right of prisoners to access education.

References

Balogh , A., Józan, A., Szöllősi, A., & Róbert, P. (2010). *The institutional aspects of adult education in Hungary.* Budapest: TARKI Social Research Centre. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Boyadjieva, P., Milenkova, V., Gornev, G., Petkova, K., & Nenkova, D. (2010). *The role of Bulgarian educational institutions for the promotion of access of adults to formal education.* Sofia: Institute of Sociology. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Commission Staff Working Document. {SEC(2009)1616}. *Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Indicators and benchmarks 2009.*

Communication from the Commission. {COM(2001) 678 final}. *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality.*

Council of Europe. (1990). *Education in prison.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Council of Europe. (2006). *Recommendation Rec (2006)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the European Prison Rules.*

Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning (2011/C 372/01).

Dooley, C., Downes, P., Maunsell, C., & McLoughlin, V. (2010). *Promoting social inclusion: The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Ireland.* National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Education and Culture DG. (2010). Pathways to inclusion—Strengthening European cooperation in prison education and training. *Discussion document for the conference workshops: Introductory notes and key questions* (Conference Paper 5). Brussels: EACDG.

Engel, L., Holford, J., & Mleczko, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education.* Nottingham: University of Nottingham. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Hawley, J. (2010). Pathways to inclusion—Strengthening European cooperation in prison education and training. *Prison education—Context, trends and policy issues: Background paper* (Conference Paper 1). Brussels: Education and Culture DG.

Ivančič, A., Mohorčič Špolar, V. A., & Radovan, M. (2010). *The case of Slovenia. Access of adults to formal and non-formal education—Policies and priorities.* Ljubljana: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Kozlovskiy, V., Khokhlova, A., & Veits, M. (2010). *The role of Russian educational institutions in the promotion of access for adults to formal education.* St Petersburg: Department of Sociology, Saint Petersburg State University. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Lin, A. C. (2000). *Reform in the making: The implementation of social policy in prison*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Rammel, S., & Gottwald, R. (2010). *Social inclusion in formal and non formal adult education: Findings from Austrian institutions and government representatives.* Krems: Danube University. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Stensen, O.-A., & Ure, O.-B. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Norway.* Oslo: Fafo—Institute for Labour and Social Research. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Taljunaite, M., Labanauskas, L., Terepaite-Butviliene, J., & Blazeviviene, L. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education.* Vilnius: Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Social Research Institute. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Tamm, A., & Saar, E. (2010). *LLL2010 Subproject 5 Estonia country report*. Tallinn: Institute of International and Social Studies/Department of Social Stratification.

Vermeersch, L., & Vandenbrouke, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Belgium's Flemish Community* Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Weedon, E., Riddell, S., Purves, R., & Ahlgren, L. (2010). *Social inclusion and adult participation in lifelong learning: Officials', managers' and teachers' perspectives.* Edinburgh: University of Scotland. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Chapter 11
Prison Education: Indicators at Micro-Meso Levels

A number of issues raised in this chapter are basically matters of good educational practice, such as individual educational plans (IEPs) for prisoners, holistic initial assessment, professional development of prison teachers and availability of relevant resource materials for prison education, as well as recognition of respect for prisoners as learners through a principle of normality in prisons. All of this operates against the backdrop of a rights-based approach, through the Council of Europe, European Prison Rules highlighted in the last chapter. Other emerging themes, discussed as structural indicators at the micro-meso level for prison institutions, include a pervasive concern with practical barriers blocking access to education in prison. These include sufficient space in prison for education, facility for prisoner exchange based on educational reasons, including bridges to external education institutions, as well as other systemic obstacles observed in specific contexts. Renewal of strategic commitment to the importance of prison education, at Commission, national and local prison institutional levels would involve serious addressing of these practical barriers to prisoners' rights to access education.

11.1 Establishment and Implementation of a Principle of Normality in Prisons (Structural Indicator)

An important principle is established in Norwegian prisons according to its national report, this is the principle of normality:

> Prisoners in Norway maintain the same rights to education as citizens outside the prison. This is called the principle of normality. As a consequence, the municipality has established a division for public adult education within the prison. The division is therefore autonomous with regard to the prison system. This autonomy is among many things reflected in the way the employees dress (which is casual clothes and not prison officer uniforms), the way they interact with the prisoners and their responsibility with regard to security. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

A related issue is that in Norway a rights-based approach to education exists, including for prisoners. The national report observes however that there are barriers to implementation of this right to education in a prison context:

> Despite the fact that prisoners have the same rights to education as every other Norwegian citizen, one of our informants said that for the time being the school only had space for 85 students. The reason for this was lack of economic resources, but our informant said that they were applying for more money so that they could make way for 100 new students. We do not know why they lack the economic resources to offer education to all 392 prisoners, but as the quotation from the Norwegian Correctional Services above demonstrates, it is 'in principle' that the prisoners have the same rights, and perhaps not always in reality. (Stensen and Ure 2010)

The Estonian national report provides an account of what appear de facto to be an application of a comparable principle of normality to the particular prison, though without the rights-based dimension offered to citizens in Norway:

> Teaching methods are those used in adult education. Prisoners sit state examinations equally to students in ordinary schools. This is real learning not a pastime activity. It provides an opportunity to continue education after release. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

It is important that any key principle of normality would recognise that positive discrimination is also a possibility given the frequent backgrounds of social marginalisation in the prison population. A life normalisation principle is not different from recognition of distinct needs and vulnerabilities in much of the prison population; it requires and implies the need for positive discrimination in the area of prison education.

The benefits of such a systemic change informed by a basic principle of normality (and EU funds to provide supports) appear evident from the Estonian national report:

> Five years ago it seemed that prison education was stuck in a stagnant state. Now things are changing constantly—learning culture, etc. The system has improved significantly. The changes have had a great impact on both the quality of education and the learning environment. (Tamm and Saar 2010)
>
> The changes in the learning environment, teachers' attitudes and teaching methods have had a noticeable impact on the prisoners' attitudes to learning. *The first year was a breaking point—we came with new ideas and practices; we were enthusiastic and that was catching. The prison psychologist said at the graduation ceremony: 'The people who sit here are not convicts; they are students.'* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The words of this Estonian national report interviewee are somewhat apt in this context:

> *Learning also changes the prisoners' behaviour.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

This applies not as a deterministic and universal rule. However, learning is a key condition for such behavioural change among many prisoners.

The need for supports regarding the psycho-social and emotional problems of some prisoners is another dimension to a positive discrimination principle to operate within a broader principle of normalisation. As the Norwegian report highlights:

> The prison has a section for sick prisoners and a health section, and one informant added that: *Many of the inmates have mental problems, and many become mentally ill from serving their sentence.* (Stensen and Ure 2010)

In the Irish context, Seymour and Costello (2005) have also highlighted the extreme number of people in Irish prisons with backgrounds of psychiatric disorders and homelessness. This wider issue of mental health supports for prisoners also needs to be addressed.

Severe scepticism is evident from the following Irish prison management interviewee regarding any kind of prison mission statement, whether committing to a principle of normality or otherwise:

> When questioned about the prison mission statement and whether it refers to lifelong learning or rehabilitation goals, the Senior Manager stated, *well now it doesn't mention lifelong learning at all* and went on to give his views on it: *the vision statement for the prison service is something like it would help people to prepare people for their release to live law abiding life styles, but I wouldn't pay any attention to vision statements [or strategic plans] because they are rubbish, in terms of meaningfulness. They don't mean nothing. Our numbers here in the last six months just simply highlight the lunacy and the cosmetic foundation and the shallowness of that mission statement. I suppose I would argue very strongly that unless you show basic human respect for the individual first by providing civil and humane facilities like toilets, beds, clothing, food, very basic stuff. Unless you do that first there is no use pretending to the prisoner who was lying on the floor for the last month that we have your welfare at heart when he knows physically that I am fucking in bits down here. So I would argue that the Irish prison service vision statement is just a cosmetic exercise in having a vision or a statement or whatever.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

This highlights the need for stronger processes of scrutiny of prison education and prison conditions at EU level, in addition to Council of Europe monitoring procedures.

11.2   Individual Education Plans for Prisoners (Structural Indicator)

According to this Scottish national report example, once a learner in prison started on a course, an individual learning plan is produced:

> *They have a learning plan which is drawn up when they first enrol. Contractually there is a review of that plan every six months, providing they are still there. In addition to that, as a college, we are actually introducing a three monthly progress report, that the member of staff teaching that individual will do on things like motivation, attendance, progression, achievement and things like that … The learning plans will vary quite dramatically with the prisoner. Often the prisoner actually doesn't know what he is coming in to do. We will advise and sometimes actually for the poorer ones attending for two months… two months is… an achievement* (Prison education college manager). (Weedon et al. 2010)

An individual education plan for a prisoner is also adopted in Hungary, according to this account of a prison from the Hungarian national report:

> There is not any procedure for identifying specific learning difficulties, however individual developmental educational programmes are provided by mentors for every participant. (Balogh et al. 2010)

However, it is not clear the extent to which this is a pervasive feature of the Hungarian prison system. It is important to emphasise that an individual education

plan needs to be a democratic process operating against a backdrop of good relations between the prisoner and the tutor:

> …opinion sharing with the participant, shared learning goals built upon the participant's life experiences. The most important principles are as follows: Manager: *Personality-focused attitude is the most important. Our educational method is built upon the client's personality, knowledge and learning tempo. At the beginning we offer them methods, and they choose the best liked one. The partnership is a base feature: we learn a lot from the clients, because they have widespread life-experience, thus we respect them.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

A perceived barrier to implementation of individual education plans for prisoners that is noted in the Hungarian national report is the lack of accurate information on a prisoner's previous educational background:

> There is no correct information available on the educational levels of the prisoners in most cases, because the prisoners have no grade card (they have lost it or they have never got it). Often the prisoners give false information concerning their educational level, because they are not motivated in participating in educational programmes provided by the prison. (Balogh et al. 2010)

It is evident that an individual education plan is not yet a systemic feature of the prison system in Belgium (Flanders), though this prison management interviewee is strongly of the opinion of the need for such a plan:

> *My dream is an individual 'detention plan' for every detainee in Flanders. In this plan the detainee, the prison governor, the Flemish Community and the court of law specify what the prisoner will do during his time of sentence. This plan includes adult education. If all prisoners have such a plan, a more coherent provision of educational opportunities spread over all prisons will follow logically.* (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

A collaborative approach does however exist across the prison in Belgium, when engaging with the individual prisoner's educational needs; this is a key prerequisite for a process of developing an individual education plan:

> Adult education in the *Oudenaarde* penitentiary is supported in many ways. The education coordinator, the prison governor and prison staff, the psycho-social aid team, etc. all work together to help the detainees in their educational process. (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

An optimal development would be to follow this psychosocial needs logic to furnish an integrated individual health and education plan for each prisoner.

A collaborative process across those working in the prison occurs in this Estonian prison example:

> Risk assessment is carried out by a committee consisting of a social worker, psychologist and the prison's security officer. Taking into account the background of the prisoner and the results of the interview it is decided whether it is necessary to acquire/continue education, learn a vocation, learn Estonian, etc. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

It would seem to be only a small further step for the implementation of an individual education plan, in dialogue with the learner, given this collaborative process regarding the educational needs of the prisoner is already in place in this Estonian example.

> The choice of education or course depends on the results of risk assessment carried out for each prisoner since 2007. *A development plan is prepared for each prisoner based on the*

results of individual risk assessment: the behaviour of the person before his imprisonment, potential risks during imprisonment and after release; how and where to manage risks (…) *If low educational level is a risk factor the person must be persuaded to study. If there is the risk that the person would not find a job because he doesn't speak Estonian then we offer language courses. So that they could cope better after being released.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

It is important to emphasise that the learner in prison needs to be actively involved in the design of the plan and to take ownership over the plans' goals. Any individual plan which renders the prisoner passive in this planning process—through a plan which is prepared for the individual and not in conjunction with him or her—is highly unlikely to succeed. The very logic of an individual education plan approach in educational psychology is that it is based on a constructivist approach where the individual is an active learner.

A different concern emerging from the Lithuanian national report is the dearth of opportunity for access to higher education in prison which would be a substantive systemic weakness, even if an individual education plan approach were adopted:

Speaking about the higher education in prison, according to the interviewees there are practically no opportunities. (Taljunaite et al. 2010)

A key rationale underpinning an individual education plan is that it is based on the educational needs of the individual learner in prison. This rationale presupposes potential access to educational opportunities to meet these learning needs. This would need to include higher education, as well as other avenues of progression, and thus requires systemic reform in the context of prisons in Lithuania.

An issue emerging from the Bulgarian national report is that while individual educational plans are well recognised for working with individuals experiencing social exclusion, there is little evidence that this approach has been developed for working also in prison education (Boyadjieva et al. 2010). Application of individual education plans to the prison context is a logical corollary of commitment to a principle of normality in prisons, as applied to lifelong learning in prison.

11.3   Initial Assessment Approaches for Prisoners (Structural Indicator)

It is important to recognise that any approach to initial assessment of prisoners in relation to their literacy skills upon entry to prison must be part of a wider relational strategy to engage prisoners in education. This dialogical approach rather than a social control approach to referral and initial assessment is highlighted in the Scottish national report:

From the outset there's a first night in custody. And there are peer support workers who are prisoners who have been trained. And they go and speak to the guys, see they are settled in. They go with referral forms and they can refer to a lot of different things. They can just make them aware of what's available. Help for various things, bereavement. They can just say 'these are available do you want any referrals'. And I get a lot of referrals from them.

Because if there's anything comes up, if there's a form to be filled out and maybe one prisoner will say to the other 'I've difficulty with this' they could then say 'you could have a chat with K, you could, you know, it's confidential, it's one to one'. When men are convicted there's a week induction at the prison. And that week gives all the agencies, housing, Job centre plus, various employment, the Samaritans that runs within the prison, somebody from [the] College goes in and they talk about again what services are available… [the] College also do an assessment (Prison education literacy tutor). (Weedon et al. 2010)

It is notable that prison staff, in this Scottish example, receive training in raising awareness about literacy needs in a sensitive fashion:

If the issue of reading or writing comes up, they will say 'do you want a chat with K, it's just a, you don't have to sign up for anything, do you want a chat'. And quite a few of the staff in the prison have taken part in Clan training, awareness raising training (Prison education literacy tutor). (Weedon et al. 2010)

A concern is raised by interviewees in the Scottish national report regarding imposition of initial assessments on incoming prisoners:

The main concern of the literacy tutor was that prisoners were not targeted by prison officers as requiring literacy tuition and told that they had to do it. She felt this was likely to be counterproductive. One final source of referrals she identified was other prisoners—word of mouth. (Weedon et al. 2010)

This emphasis on dialogue, invitation and explanation rather than an imposed test appears to occur in practice in this Scottish example:

According to the review of offender learning, (Scottish Government 2009) all sentenced offenders should undergo a Core Screen which is carried out by a prison officer. This screening session was intended to identify immediate needs to ensure referral to the relevant provider. *Every prisoner who is admitted and goes through induction should be introduced to somebody from education at induction, and at that point they are also invited to do the diagnosis.* (Weedon et al. 2010)

There is a real concern about the process of engaging prisoners in initial assessment tests for literacy:

She noted that there was some disquiet about doing a diagnostic test at that stage; however, that was the only opportunity for them to engage directly with incoming offenders. (Weedon et al. 2010)

The need for such an initial assessment process regarding literacy, given the background educational profile of prisoners, is a strong theme in the Scottish national report:

A report for the Prison Reform Trust suggested that around 20–30 % of the prison population have learning difficulties or disabilities (Talbot 2008). According to one of the prison interviewees there was a *concentration of people in prison with the same sort of needs.* There were a range of mechanisms for identifying those that may benefit from participation in learning which started on entry and continued after a prisoner had been convicted. During this period other agencies were also involved. College staff could offer assessment of learning needs and, if a prisoner was considered in need of literacy tuition, he was referred to the literacy tutor. (Weedon et al. 2010)

A prison manager similarly emphasised the high amount of early school leavers in prison in Scotland:

> She supported this view by giving an account of a typical prisoner: *I would suggest that the average prisoner will come to us having stopped schooling round about first or second year [aged 12–13]. Will perhaps either not have worked or worked in very casual jobs with a raft of sort of social issues between them. But in terms of their education, I don't know how many times I have filled in learning plans, left school first year, second year, that is so, so common (Prison education college manager).* (Weedon et al. 2010)

The Russian national report also highlights the need for an initial assessment of educational levels:

> The principal explains that even though most students bring their certificates or grade report cards to prison, the school still finds it necessary to conduct entry tests in order to define the level of education of every prisoner involved in the system of education at the colony. First, some prisoners do not have any documents that could prove they have completed any grades so far. Secondly, if there is more than one class of one level, it's better to divide students based on their actual knowledge but not only their certificates, considering many of them were received a while ago. In that case, a stronger student can study together and weaker ones can reiterate material they have missed or forgotten. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

The Irish national report highlights a reluctance to engage in compulsory initial assessment:

> Literacy is a strong element of the prison education service curriculum since the early 1980s. In relation to identifying prisoners with literacy problems, the tutor firstly explained that they *don't have initial assessment, until they come to the school* because they are *against… blanket testing…I think it goes against the ethos of adult education… but when they do present themselves, there is.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

A wider process of formal induction is sought by the Prison Senior Manager, though highlighting that it is currently not in place in any systemic fashion in Irish prisons:

> In relation to initial assessment of prisoners, the Senior Manager explained that … *in any of the prisons in Ireland at the moment there is no such thing as any type of formal structured induction at all so prisoners come in the gate and they could be here for one month or twenty months or forty months and they are interviewed alright when they come in and they, in relation to a sort of induction interview but there's no such thing as people going through a sort of a process of induction where their health, their education, their interests are monitored.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

The Lithuanian national report illustrates a number of obstacles to initial assessment of prisoners, including sheer numbers of prisoners (though this is decreasing somewhat), overcrowded prisons and public attitudes towards prisoners (Taljunaite et al. 2010). Yet it is noted that literacy is a real problem among prisoners in Lithuania and needs to be addressed as part of a holistic strategy (Taljunaite et al. 2010).

It is important that any system of initial assessment be carried out in a climate of dialogue, invitation and explanation rather than one of social control which would be counterproductive for those with low levels of basic education. Carrigan and Downes' (2009) international review of initial assessment instruments and research

Table 11.1 Four dimensions to a high-quality initial needs and skills check

1. An initial semi-structured interview involving self-assessment
2. A piece of writing on a theme of relevance and interest chosen by the learner to be examined according to simple and transparent standardised criteria
3. A short tool with a menu of options for examining literacy with thematic content which can be chosen by the learner from a range of possibilities and which have been proofed for cultural sensitivity and social class bias
4. Development of an individual education plan in dialogue with the learner, where the learner retains ownership over all of the needs and skills check information and is assured from the outset that the results are not being used in an exclusionary way

on their use pertained to the context of adult learners with low literacy skills. This has direct application to the prison context. The following issues were highlighted in this report:

> Any process of devising and employing appropriate tools for learning needs to include scope for the learner to construct meaning rather than simply process decontextualised information. The language being used needs to be meaningful to the life and culture of the learner and the process requires one where the learner is in control of and has scope for choice within the features of the needs and skills identification process. Adult education is traditionally committed to principles of active learning and these also need to be applied to the learner's active learning regarding their own learning needs. These issues rule out the use of multiple choice testing in any form of this needs and skills identification process. (Carrigan and Downes 2009, p. 63)

Sticht (1999) advocates avoiding using a standardised test with learners when they first begin a programme due to the fact that adult learners may be nervous and frightened and therefore their abilities may be underestimated. There is a widely held view in the international literature that norm referenced assessment in general has negative educational and social effects (Ecclestone 2005). Examination of a learner's needs according to criterion-based approaches and in relation to their previous learning offers a more practical direction for providing them with supports (Carrigan and Downes 2009).

Carrigan and Downes's (2009) review concludes with a recommendation of four dimensions for initial assessment of adult learners regarding basic literacy skills, based on international and Irish research (Table 11.1). These dimensions have direct application to a holistic initial assessment process for prisoners' educational needs (Carrigan and Downes 2009, p. 69)

11.4 Sufficient Space in Prison for Education (Structural Indicator)

A pervasive theme in national reports is prison overcrowding as a barrier to education. This is especially emphasised in the Irish national report, where overcrowding has in effect severely limited availability of space and motivation for education

(Dooley et al. 2010). The Belgian (Flanders) national report recognises this problem but also illustrates how it has been partly overcome in a particular prison:

> Due to the early 20th century infrastructure and the overcrowding, there is not much place… to organise education and create a classroom environment…still, over the years, several (smaller) classrooms and one (bigger) polyvalent room were built and renovated in the prison building. Because of the success of the Education Project…an extra classroom was built in the chapel last year. (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

The Hungarian national report emphasises not only prison overcrowding, despite recent improvements, but also observes that prison classes are in a separate space of the prison:

> Senior manager: *The number of the prisoners has decreased from 18000 to 14900 in our country in the last few years, and new prisons have been established, but the prisons are still overcrowded.* (Balogh et al. 2010)
>
> The prison classes take place in the separate site of the building. The library and the office of the organisers are in this site too. There are about 10,000 books in the library (mainly old books …). The librarian is a prisoner, too. The formal education programmes take place in the 3 class-rooms (calm environment, benches for 30–35 persons, board, projector). The non-formal education programmes take place mainly in the library (personal trainings and small group trainings), and sometimes in the class-rooms. (Balogh et al. 2010)

An innovative approach to educational delivery is highlighted for more than one prison in the English national report. This approach is of using the prison wings themselves as sites for education and not simply to have a separate education section. This may help in relation not only to working within limitations of space in prison but also may have a range of positive knock-on consequences regarding the pervasiveness of education in the prison institutional culture:

> The wing-based delivery of education … has been successful in expanding access to educational opportunities. Wing-based education intends to allow for greater flexibility in providing adult education in prison. Wing-based education allows for the provision of education to extend beyond the physical structure of the education department into the residential units at the prison in order to better integrate education into the organisation of the prison… The senior management representative explained, *education was always something that went on in that building over there or in those rooms, by delivering on the wings, people see it now as part and parcel of every day activity.* (Engel et al. 2010)

According to the prison management, wing-based delivery of education:

> *engages more prisoners because they feel…more comfortable in their own surroundings that they're moving across [and] it also raises the profile of learning and skills with the officers on the wings because they're involved in making sure men attend…certainly in Ofsted reports, that's been looked on very favorably.* (Engel et al. 2010)

This issue is further explored in the English national report:

> The wing-based delivery of education in and of itself has a number of perceived strengths and weaknesses. Among the strengths is the flexibility it allows individuals in terms of their access to education. It has been successful in allowing vulnerable prisoners access to education. The wing-based education *is flexible and adaptable…most of our tutors on the wing will teach literacy and numeracy and drug awareness and alcohol awareness up to level 2* (Manager of the education department). It has also promoted education within the prison

and officers on each of the wings, and increased engagement of prisoners, due to prisoners' likelihood to feel comfortable. The manager of the education department stated, *the acceptance of the lads that education is part and parcel of life is facilitated by wing education*.

Another perceived strength, linked with wing-based delivery, is the prisoner peer-mentoring scheme, a one-to-one mentoring service. To be a peer mentor:

> *you've got to be at least working towards a level two qualification or at a level two qualification, apply for it. You've got to pass a security thing to say that you're eligible to work with other men* (Manager of education department). This has been successful in providing men support networks within their residential wing…each wing of the prison has its own courses, allowing for education to be better integrated into the life of the prison and all prisoners have greater access to educational opportunities. One of the wings is specifically for vulnerable prisoners, who have the same access to education as other prisoners through the education department directly on their wing…

Although wing-based education facilitates access:

> *it's not always the best environment because there will be other people there doing other things…there's limited space on a wing because when the wings were originally built, they were built as accommodation wings, so there's limited space for resources* (Manager of the education department). However, the staff feel that the strengths of increasing access to education that wing-based delivery allows far outweighs the weaknesses related to lack of space and resources. (Engel et al. 2010)

It is important to emphasise that wing-based delivery is *not* replacing a separate educational site in prison but is complementary to it. The Hungarian national report recognises the central importance of a separate educational site:

> According to the organiser, this prison has an advantage over the other prisons by having a separate site for culture and classrooms. However, according to the senior manager, more rooms would be necessary for providing sufficient educational programmes. (Balogh et al. 2010)

Yet a wing-based delivery approach in the English prisons is a *both/and* model with a separate additional educational site in the prison. It must be additional rather than a device to improve education statistics on behalf of the prison or as a window dressing gesture to prevent prisoners taking court cases for access to education.

A different prison in England also adopts an additional wing-based approach to education with specific benefits for peer mentoring of prisoners with low literacy:

> *…one teacher is responsible for prisoner mentors and they go through a structured reading scheme on the wings…it has to be done every day for 20 minutes to half an hour, so somebody is supposed to sit down with their mentee every day and just go through a section of the book each day* (Senior manger). This form of peer mentoring is *done on a more formal basis, mentors are identified on all of the wings or within classes and they then will be given mentees who they will help with reading…[the] scheme has provided incredibly successful in getting people started to read. And it only works if it's done on a regular basis which is why the mentors are so important because if they are on the same wing, in an evening, they can do half an hour* [of reading] (Tutor). This has been highly successful in engaging individuals who are reluctant to engage in literacy or other education classes and in getting individuals to work together: *it encourages people who possibly don't want to [engage]. We get a lot of people who have literacy problems, who don't want to really expose themselves*

*in a classroom situation, so we have people who really have the serious problems who don't
really want to attend, so we have to think of other ways of actually improving their literacy
while they're here* (Senior manager). In addition, the prison staff report that informal peer
mentoring often occurs inside and outside the classroom (Tutor). (Engel et al. 2010)

It is evident that this approach offers much potential for replication and amplifi-
cation elsewhere. It deserves investigation at a systemic level nationally and at EU
level to explore the feasibility of implementing such wing-based education across a
wide range of prisons. A related avenue here, which is ripe for development, is for
integration of the arts into the wings of the prison, as part of an educational focus,
to bring the arts away from the periphery and to ensure that its motivational oppor-
tunities are activated for learners in prison.

The Irish national report does acknowledge, however, some difficulties to such
prison wing-based learning, namely, security-related issues:

When asked if there are practices of peer mentoring in education in prison, the tutor said,
*yes, the Toe by Toe…literacy programme…some guys are trained up to do teaching with
some of the other guys…The idea is that it would happen down in the landing and in the
cell…very small scale. Sometimes officers not very happy to have two prisoners in the cell
together, suspicious of their motives, doesn't happen in the school, as it's our attempt to
bring education down the landing…it's big in the UK as well, up and running in the UK for
a long time.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

An Irish Report on an Inspection of Mountjoy Prison by the Inspector of Prisons
Judge Reilly (2009) expands on this security point:

The gangs in the prison must be kept apart to prevent violence and this causes great logistical
difficulties for management. (2009, p. 12)

However, this is not an insurmountable barrier to prison wing learning, but rather
a *caveat* as to its implementation due to interpersonal and intergroup factors in a
given prison.

Whereas Downes (2003) highlighted a range of concerns with prison conditions
in Estonia, especially for Russian-speaking prisoners, the Estonian national report
argues that there has been significant improvement in facilities, space and also atti-
tudes and ethos regarding prisons in Estonia:

The new prison which is under construction will have a separate educational centre. This
gives the prison an opportunity to offer more hobby activities. Currently extracurricular
activities are organised by prison officers. Schools (both general educational institutions
and vocational educational institutions) should cooperate more with prison workers in this
field. Compared with four years ago, the prison system has evolved significantly: attitudes
have changed towards learning, organisation of learning, cooperation of prison officers and
teachers. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

EU funds clearly seem to have been an engine for reform of prisons, including
prison education, in Estonia:

The prison has classrooms. *First we got some start-up money from EU to furnish
classrooms—desks, teaching materials. Everything is nice and clean. Nothing has been
vandalised.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

The theme of not only adequate space but good living conditions in prison is prioritised by interviewees in the Russian national report:

> *The head of the colony…does so much in order to make this colony comfortable and clean, so that the prisoners would live in favorable conditions but not in barracks as they used to, those conditions were simply inhuman. Everyone wants to live in good conditions and be surrounded by nice things. And he or she becomes better because of it.* Thus, the interviewees explain, good living conditions allow prisoners to concentrate on their studies and work. Then, as the principal of the [prison] school notes, the school at the colony is one of the best prison schools in the city—it has been winning the award of the best school in a prison institution among all prisons of St. Petersburg and Leningradkaya Oblast' for several years by now. It regularly wins other city contests involving prison education among prison institutions as well. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

In contrast, Irish prison conditions, at least in the prison examined for the Irish national report, are undoubtedly detrimental to an atmosphere of learning in prison.

11.5 Professional Development Support and Resource Materials for Teachers in Prisons (Structural Indicator)

It is notable that there is little evidence of professional development and support for teachers working in prisons across the national reports. One partial exception to this general trend is the Russian national report, where a significant enthusiasm was found among teachers in prison for extra professional development opportunities and resources:

> Most teachers said they would like to use some professional sources and materials that are particularly aimed at work with prisoners. They asked whether the [research] outcome… somehow presupposed any recommendations for teachers working in prisons with adult learners who have gaps and education and whose motivation is quite low. One of the teachers said she would really love to use some colleagues' experience in work with her students because many of them are depressed, closed, passive and sometimes aggressive and she doesn't always know how to encourage them to study. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

The interviews with the teachers revealed:

> they would really like to improve their work but they don't know how since they use quite old ways of teaching and no teacher-training courses are available for them. They are ordinary secondary school teachers who have never had any tutoring related to teaching in prison. They elaborated their ways of working with prisoners solely based on their own experience. *Well, I first came here 8 years ago. I didn't understand anything. Well, I knew it was compensatory education and I was working with these kids the same way I would work with any kids in any city school. In two years I would learn something, in three years, I would learn even more about working in prison. And now we actually make our own textbooks… this knowledge, it only comes with time.* (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

This feature of the teachers developing their own specifically tailored resource materials for working with prisoners is an innovative example to be built upon elsewhere.

The career development of those teaching staff in prisons needs to be addressed in national prison strategies for lifelong learning, as is highlighted in the following extract from the Russian national report:

> Among obstacles that prevent development of prison education, the informants list lack of human resources. For teachers, work in prison is not very rewarding; attracting good and qualified teachers to prisons is quite difficult since they are not offered any benefits for working in more difficult conditions than ordinary school teachers. (Kozlovskiy et al. 2010)

Veits and Khokhlova (2011, personal communication) add that 'Even though a proclaimed governmental policy with regard to prison education is aimed at transformation of prisons into rehabilitation centres, in practice little is done in order to attract qualified staff into prisons. On the contrary, the new reforms brought to removal any bonuses for teachers working in prisons'. They suggest that '*those who teach there do that because they cannot find any better teaching positions either due to their age or qualification*'. If this is the case, it is thus imperative to develop more proactive incentives for teaching in prison.

It is notable that a principle of whole school collaboration is extended in an important fashion in Estonia to teachers working in prison:

> Teachers are instructed before starting working in prison. The school has organised meetings and exchanges of practices and experience. Teachers from different prisons are in contact with each other; they attend seminars and information days organised by different ministries. *Each institution is different. We can learn from each other. We have visited Viru, Tartu and Murru prisons. The Ministry of Justice is planning a seminar for teachers. The Ministry of Education and Research organised an information day. We have also attended international conferences.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

This key movement away from an individualist focus approach of the isolated teacher or tutor in prison to a collaborative approach is particularly important in a prison education context which may bring its own specific requirements. Development of good practice in the prison education sector requires such collaboration across tutors, as in the Estonian example.

11.6 Prisoner Exchange Based on Educational Reasons, Including Bridges to External Education Institutions (Structural Indicator)

A systemic focus implies the need to examine scope for improving communication and connections between prisons in a given country. This cross-prison institutional interaction is important in order to facilitate prisoner exchange based on educational reasons. Such an exchange takes place in the following example from the Belgian (Flanders) national report:

> First of all, if the inmate that wants to enrol for a course is imprisoned in some other prison, there has to be an agreement between that prison and the *Oudenaarde* penitentiary to exchange prisoners. Secondly, the candidate must write a letter with his motivation for

wanting to take the course. This letter is screened by the education coordinator. By means of this screening procedure, the prison verifies if no other motives play a role in the request for transfer. Besides that, data is gathered on what might be described as the educational history of the prisoner and his mother tongue. Finally, if the prisoner is given access to the Education Project in the *Oudenaarde* penal institution he enters into a study agreement. (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

An example from Hungary is not so much one of prisoners changing prisons but rather of prisoners changing environment to engage with the outside world through exam contexts:

The second school leaving exams are taken at an external educational institution (*Belvárosi Tanoda Alapítvány Gimnázium és Szakközépiskola*—Downtown School Foundation Secondary School and Technical College). The prisoners are transported into that external institution by the staff of the prison, and they take part in the exam wearing prisoner's clothing and under police supervision. However the manager emphasises: *According to our experience the exam at an external institution is a very important step of the re-socialisation. These young people got into a special subculture of the prison. The rules of this world differ from the conventions of the normal society, and usually these people sink into this world. However when they get to a civil institution, they meet peer-groups, and they communicate with civil young people and teachers.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

This is a logical application of the principle of normality and is a step forward that needs to be taken at systemic levels across countries. Across national reports there is little evidence of a system level practice of prisoner exchange for educational reasons, either with or without consideration of a bridge to external institutions. If lifelong learning is mainstreamed into the prison management strategic goals and into prison institutional culture, then this practice of prisoner exchange for educational reasons, already occurring in Belgium, could have much wider application.

11.7   Overcoming Practical Problems to Allow the Prisoner to Study in Prison and at Third Level

A range of practical difficulties manifest themselves in the implementation of prison education, according to different national reports. Most of these systemic obstacles could be overcome with a commitment to the strategic importance of lifelong learning in prison, at EU, national and prison institutional levels.

The Norwegian national report raises the issue of not simply early release of prisoners affecting learning opportunities but also prison transfer:

At this point the teacher had expected that the prisoner would get admission for joining the visits at the companies. But since he had been transferred to another prison, the rules were different, and he could not complete his education. Our informant said *It is always the prison that owns the prisoner.* (Stensen and Ure 2010)

This obstacle can clearly be overcome through an integrated education opportunities approach across prisons and between prisons and the local educational

institutions. The Belgian national report also raises the issue of prisoner release time for those in pre-trial custody.

A less intractable barrier here which exists in Belgium is the questionable policy disincentive to learning which involves a loss of income for prisoners who choose to use their time for education rather than work in prison:

> Nearly all educational opportunities within the prison walls are free of charge. This however, does not mean there is no financial cost involved. For instance, prisoners that normally spend their time at a workplace, lose a part of their income when they opt for study instead of work. This loss of income is obviously a barrier to adult education for some prisoners. That is also the reason why many prisoners take courses on top of their jobs in prison. (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

Many other countries do not require prisoners to lose income when participating in education, and this simple policy reversal in the Belgian prison context would help remove this particular barrier to lifelong learning in prison. It is notable that this practice in the Belgian prison is prima facie in violation of the European Prison Rules (28.4, 2006), '*Education shall have no less a status than work within the prison regime and prisoners shall not be disadvantaged financially or otherwise by taking part in education'.*

Further investigation is required across countries to examine whether even if there is formal equality between those in prisons attending education rather than work through a 'baseline' payment that is technically the same, that indirect discrimination occurs, i.e., discrimination by impact, upon those who choose education in prison rather than work, where those doing work receive additional payments. Such a discrimination by impact would disadvantage financially those taking part in education and render education as having a lesser status than work in prison, contrary to the European Prison Rules.

A financial barrier is also evident to accessing higher education in prison in Estonia, as is evident from the Estonian national report:

> Prisoners, like all other learners, receive general and vocational education free of charge; higher education is provided for a fee. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

This policy will inevitably serve as a disincentive to prisoner participation in higher education. In contrast, the Irish national report observes that:

> All educational courses offered in prison are free of charge and participation in education is voluntary. Third level prison students are funded by the Irish Prison Service. (Dooley et al. 2010)

However, despite a formal situation in Irish prisons that education receives the same pay as work, it appears that in practice, there are both a perception among prisoners and a reality in the prison that work can provide more pay as it is for longer hours than education:

> The tutor described a practice, which discourages prisoners from engaging in education stating, *in fact there are issues that some prisoners if they work or do other things, they get paid extra and to do education you don't get paid extra…a thing we're annoyed about that there isn't comparable remuneration for attending school as there is for trades or some of the other things.* (Dooley et al. 2010)

An obvious barrier to prison education in a Lithuanian example is the lack of time given for the classes (Taljunaite et al. 2010).

A division of labour between education providers and prison authorities can lead to a lack of both strategic integration and concrete cooperation for the development of prison education. In the words of the Scottish national report:

> There is also a lack of coordination between the three different educational providers: prison staff, college staff and literacy and numeracy tutor which, in the view of the prison inspectors, could have a detrimental effect on provision. (Weedon et al. 2010)

In contrast to Scotland, in the Estonian prison example, it is perceived that there is strong cooperation across staff:

> The school cooperates with prison staff—education coordinators and social officers—to discuss organisation of studies, any problems with learners, etc. (Tamm and Saar 2010)

Rather than simply focusing on obstacles to prison education, the Estonian example illustrates important incentives to engaging in learning:

> An additional incentive is an opportunity to live in a separate section of prison where learners have a little more freedom—extra time outside cells. Learning as activity and established daily routine are also great motivators. *The school is a piece of open society. Relations are different. Topics are different. You are not a prisoner, you are a student.* (Tamm and Saar 2010)

Prison doors being locked so that prisoners could not access education classes at particular times was previously highlighted as a barrier to lifelong learning in prison in an Irish prison context (Oates 2007; Maunsell et al. 2008). The Irish Inspector of Prisons reports that:

> I observed on numerous occasions that prisoners scheduled to attend classes did not reach the school on time and were in some instances over an hour late for class. (2009, p. 15) (Dooley et al. 2010)

Attitudinal barriers are perceived in the Hungarian national report, specifically with regard to universities and engagement of prisoners in lifelong learning:

> Manager: *Diminishing prejudice would be very important. People have no realistic knowledge about this group. Furthermore, as I see, universities are very rigid…Our clients need individual schedule, because they are older than the other students and come from a special milieu.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

Attitudinal barriers were also highlighted at different levels in the Scottish national report. These include attitudes of prison authorities:

> She also felt that education was not fully valued within the prison service, for example when it came to judging whether prisoners should be moved on or considered for parole. *We don't feel that education is rated highly enough in the pecking order for prisoners, particularly when it comes to moving on and parole board …. The emphasis is put on prison programmes, now your prison programmes are things like your anger management, your drug addiction programmes, and alcohol, and to be fair I am not [against that]… cause alcohol etc, anger, is the root of a lot of the issues and the problems, but there are other things that contribute to the development of the individual in prison, and education can be a very powerful part of that, and there is definitely not as much [emphasis on that] ….* (Prison education college manager) (Weedon et al. 2010)

The Scottish national report also highlights attitudinal barriers among the general public, and more specifically the media, to lifelong learning approaches in prison:

> Prison culture created a problem in that education could sometimes be seen as a soft option for prisoners and that they were indulged. The media, she felt, were quick to act on stories which presented prison education as an indulgence, *[The prison] did a project with Historic Scotland, and it was a fantastic project where people came in and they did Scots history. They did Mary Queen of Scots and all this kind of stuff, and they also brought in outfits so that the women were able to… and they thoroughly enjoyed it and so much came out of that. They wrote lots of things and all the rest of it, and the Daily Record got hold of the story and absolutely trashed it about the women dressing up and dancing and singing. So that is a very real factor because it does impact on the decisions that are made* (Prison education college manager). (Weedon et al. 2010)

The practical problem of finding teaching staff is an issue in some countries. This practical issue is related largely to salary rates for teaching in prison.

Whereas most countries conceive of prison education more broadly than in purely vocational terms, the narrower vision of lifelong learning in prison in England and Scotland as being more particularly vocational may lead to problems of prioritisation of education against the backdrop of the current recession. This is highlighted by interviewees in the English national report:

> The Senior manager and the manager of the education department believe that the prison sector will be affected by the recession in a number of ways. During a recession, it is also reported to be more difficult to successfully integrate former prisoners into the job market. (Engel et al. 2010)
>
> With the recession, she stated, *it takes some of the priority away from education as a means of rehabilitating people when they leave.* (Engel et al. 2010)

However, EU Commission frameworks of lifelong learning prioritise wider goals than purely employment and prison education needs to be developed and implemented through cognisance of these wider goals.

A major problem is the perennial one of prisoners discontinuing their education upon release. Hawley (2010) highlights a report on Nordic Prisons by Eikeland et al. (2009) which notes that 'it is paradoxical that prisoners considered a short sentence as an impediment to getting started with studies, particularly for prisoners whose lack of education or interrupted education have paved the way into a life of crime' (p 201). A proposal adverted to in the Norwegian national report offers a way forward in surmounting this particular barrier to prisoner motivation and actual practice of lifelong learning in prison:

> One informant said that in the future he believed that: *Modulated courses are the offers of education one should go in for in the future. Two-thirds of the inmates serve sentences that are less than four months, given this one should arrange for short courses that provides course certificates one may use on later occasions.* (Stensen and Ure 2010)

This is consistent with the behavioural psychology insight that feedback for progress must be direct and not displaced into the long term. Shorter, more focused intensive courses may operate better in serving the needs of those in the prison population who may become due for release.

11.8 Peer Effects on Motivation to Learn in Prison

The Belgian national report gives a notable emphasis to the impact of peer effects on motivation to learn in prison:

> *If some 'informal leaders' among the prisoners agree it is cool to take a course, more prisoners will be motivated to do so. If not, many prisoners won't be firm enough in their belief to oppose to that.* (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)
>
> Students often find a mentor among the other detainees or become a mentor to others. (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

The mediating effect of peers on motivation to learn takes place currently in an informal fashion in the Belgian prison, rather than being treated as a positive potential to be further harnessed in a strategic way:

> The prison staff however does not recruit mentors in an active way. *In the past, prisoners that had succeeded in their formal education were asked to facilitate and support the learning process of other prisoners that just started a course. It was their job to motivate and tutor those other prisoners. The system of mentorship has been put to a stop recently, because there are more classes now and the teachers themselves stand out more as mentors than ever before.* (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

A rationale for the disproportionate impact of peers on other prisoners' behaviour is offered:

> *People being imprisoned for a long time often lose nearly all the friends and social contacts they had when they were free.* (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke 2010)

The role of peer interaction in stimulating motivation to access and participate in lifelong learning is developed in a more structured way in a Scottish prison, as described in the Scottish national report:

> *We have peer tutors in the prisons who are great at trying… they are a bit of an untapped resource, the danger with using the peer tutors is that its not coordinated. There's a good example again in [another prison] where there is a team of peer tutors who are coordinated by a member of staff, and she trains them to be peer tutors and some of them have actually done [an] award as well [however, she has now retired]. And they will work with prisoners who may not want to come to education for a variety of reasons, but also with prisoners who do, who are in education. They will work with ESOL prisoners also but the reason that works is a member of staff coordinates it, and keeps it on track and monitors the progress…* (Prison education college manager). (Weedon et al. 2010)

From the Scottish experience, continuity is an issue in developing such peer mentoring:

> There had been some attempts at peer mentoring but it has been difficult to establish an effective network in the prison that forms part of the case study. The example from one of the other prisons indicated that it depended on staff continuity which may be problematic in a setting where commercial contracts over a relatively short period of time are used. (Weedon et al. 2010)

Another barrier to peer mentoring in prison, namely, macho cultural attitudes of prisoners, is identified in the Hungarian national report:

> The young prisoners after fulfillment of a 40-hour-long theoretical and 20-hour-long practical training provide peer social support for the others in the prison…The manager

worked out this programme from an English model. Manager: *It is hard to establish such a model in Hungary. Hard to explain this idea to the staff of the prisons, furthermore macho-attitude is typical for the prisoners.* (Balogh et al. 2010)

A significant resource for peer mentoring highlighted in the Hungarian national report is that of former prisoners:

Peer work in prison can involve ex-prisoners to maximise impact…The small group trainings are very popular, because these programmes focus on the special problems of the prisoners and provide practical knowledges. It is particularly incentive for the participants if the trainer is an ex-offender… because he is an authentic ideal person for them. Furthermore, released offenders participated earlier in the programmes of this organisation often provide crime-prevention talking for young persons living in their environment. These civil initiatives are independent from the foundation. (Balogh et al. 2010)

This may help overcome some of the macho cultural attitudes. Though it is now in financial difficulty in Hungary, it offers a promising example for further exploration elsewhere:

There was a peer-mentoring programme for the …prisoners (with participation of about 20 persons) in the last few years. They came back into the prison to motivate and help the prisoners in learning or working, and they gave advice about starting civil life after leaving the prison. (Balogh et al. 2010)

It is important to emphasise that there is a growing recognition of the importance of peer mentoring in education generally, especially in contexts of students at risk of early school leaving (Murphy 2007). This resonates with the influence of Vygotskyan social interaction frameworks in developmental and educational psychology. Moreover, Ivers (2008) highlights the importance of one friend in school in motivating students to complete post-primary education in contexts of socio-economic exclusion. In other words, peer support can counter fatalism (Ivers et al. 2010), namely, the feeling that nothing can be done. Kohn's (1969) sociological focus on conformity among lower socio-economic groups gives expression to a sense of pessimism that change can be for the better. A peer-mentoring approach challenges not only a sense of fatalism but also a resulting conformity that may resist change and therefore avoid engagement with a lifelong learning process which assumes the need for change.

A peer-mentoring focus amounts to recognition of the need for a broader focus beyond simply an individualistic one to develop a strategic vision for cohorts of individuals from similar backgrounds. This post-individualistic focus has a long tradition in adult education (Lindemann 1926/1989) and community development (Freire 1972; Waters 2007). Adult education concerns itself with 'situations not (academic) subjects' as Lindemann (1926/1989) puts it, and peer mentoring engages the learner in prison in a situational dialogue.

Full recognition and implementation of a rights-based approach for prisoners to access education, under the Council of Europe, European Prison Rules, leads logically to the implementation of good educational practice and intolerance of practical obstacles blocking such access, as highlighted in this chapter. This good practice for prison education includes structural indicators regarding individual education plans (IEPs), holistic initial assessment approaches to identify a prisoner's individual learning difficulties, strengths and needs, as well as professional development of

prison teachers and resource materials, building on the issue of professional development also for prison officers, discussed in the previous chapter. A strategic focus on the role of peer supports for education, together with the practice of wing-based prison education, complementary to a dedicated prison educational space, offers promising avenues for progress in mainstreaming education into the wider prison culture as part of a principle of normality.

Summary on Prison Education: Micro-Mesosystem A number of issues raised in the national reports are basically matters of good educational practice, such as individual educational plans (IEPs) for prisoners, holistic initial assessment, professional development of prison teachers and availability of relevant resource materials for prison education, as well as recognition of respect for prisoners as learners through a principle of normality in prisons. All of this operates against the backdrop of a rights-based approach, through the Council of Europe, European Prison Rules highlighted in the last chapter. It is important that any system of initial assessment and IEPs be carried out in a climate of dialogue, invitation and explanation rather than one of social control which would be counterproductive for those with low levels of basic education.

There is little evidence of professional development and support for teachers working in prisons across the national reports. One partial exception is in the Russian national report, where a significant enthusiasm was found among teachers in prison for extra professional development opportunities and resources. A principle of whole school collaboration is extended in an Estonian context to teachers working in prison.

A systemic focus implies the need to improve communication and connections between prisons in a given country. This cross-prison institutional interaction is important in order to facilitate prisoner exchange based on educational reasons. Such an exchange takes place in an example from the Belgian (Flanders) national report. The Norwegian national report raises the issue of not simply early release of prisoners affecting learning opportunities but also prison transfer. Shorter, more focused intensive courses may operate better in serving the needs of those in the prison population who may become due for release. The role of peer interaction in stimulating motivation to access and participate in lifelong learning is developed in a structured way in a Scottish prison context.

A pervasive theme in national reports is prison overcrowding as a barrier to education. An innovative approach to educational delivery is highlighted for more than one prison in the English national report. This approach is of using the prison wings themselves as sites for education and not simply to have a separate education section. This may help in relation not only to working within limitations of space in prison but also may have a range of positive knock-on consequences regarding the pervasiveness of education in the prison institutional culture. It is important to emphasise that wing-based delivery is *not* replacing a separate educational site in prison but is complementary to it.

Difficulties highlighted for prison education include attitudinal barriers of staff and the media and prison doors being locked so that prisoners could not access education classes at particular times. The practical problem of finding teaching staff

is an issue in some countries; this is related largely to salary rates for teaching in prison. Concern must be taken to avoid the questionable policy disincentive to learning involving a loss of income for prisoners who choose to use their time for education rather than work in prison. Such a practice is contrary to the European Prison Rules (28.4, 2006), 'Education shall have no less a status than work within the prison regime and prisoners shall not be disadvantaged financially or otherwise by taking part in education'. Renewal of strategic commitment to the importance of prison education, at Commission, national and local prison institutional levels, would involve serious addressing of these practical barriers to prisoners' rights to access education.

References

Balogh , A., Józan, A., Szöllősi, A., & Róbert, P. (2010). *The institutional aspects of adult education in Hungary.* Budapest: TARKI Social Research Centre. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Boyadjieva, P., Milenkova, V., Gornev, G., Petkova, K., & Nenkova, D. (2010). *The role of Bulgarian educational institutions for the promotion of access of adults to formal education.* Sofia: Institute of Sociology. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Carrigan, J., & Downes, P. (with Byrne, I.). (2009). *Is there more than what's the score? Exploring needs and skills checking for literacy as part of a holistic initial assessment process in a lifelong learning society*. Dublin: Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College.

Council of Europe. (2006). *European prison rules*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Dooley, C., Downes, P., Maunsell, C., & McLoughlin, V. (2010). *Promoting social inclusion: The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Ireland.* National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Downes, P. (2003). *Living with heroin: HIV, identity and social exclusion among the Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia and Latvia. English version*. Tallinn: Legal Information Centre for Human Rights.

Ecclestone, K. (2005). *Understanding assessment and qualifications in post-compulsory education and training* (2nd ed.). Leicester: National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE).

Eikeland, O.-J., Manger, T., & Asbjørnsen, A. (Eds.). (2009). *Education in Nordic Prisons. Prisoners' educational background, preferences and motivation*. Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers.

Engel, L., Holford, J., & Mleczko, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education.* Nottingham: University of Nottingham. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Penguin.

Hawley, J. (2010). Pathways to inclusion—Strengthening European cooperation in prison education and training. *Prison education—Context, trends and policy issues: Background paper* (Conference Paper 1). Brussels: Education and Culture DG.

Ivers, J. (2008). *Fear of success among North Inner City youth*. MA thesis, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Ivers, J., McLoughlin, V., & Downes, P. (2010). *Current steps and future horizons for CASPr: Review of CASPr North-East Inner City After Schools Project*. Dublin: CASPr.

Kohn, M. (1969). *Class and conformity: A study in values*. Homewood: Dorsey Press.

Kozlovskiy, V., Khokhlova, A., & Veits, M. (2010). *The role of Russian educational institutions in the promotion of access for adults to formal education.* St Petersburg: Department of Sociology, Saint Petersburg State University. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Lindemann, E. (1926/1989). *The meaning of education*. Oklahoma: Norman.

Maunsell, C., Downes, P., & McLoughlin, V. (2008). *National report on lifelong learning in Ireland. LLL2010: Sub-project 1: Towards a lifelong learning society in Europe—The contribution of the education system*. Dublin: Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College.

Murphy, Á. (2007). Peer mediation: The power and importance of children's voices. In A. L. Gilligan & P. Downes (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 451–460). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Oates, G. (2007). *Literacy student/prisoners' perspective of a Freirean model of adult education within the Irish prison system*. Unpublished thesis, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St Patrick's College, Dublin.

O'Reilly, M., Inspector of Prisons. (2009). *Standards for the inspection of prisons in Ireland*. Tipperary: Inspector of Prisons.

Scottish Government. (2009). *Progress in adult literacy and numeracy in Scotland, 2008–2009*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Seymour, M., & Costello, L. (2005). *A study of the number, profile and progression routes of homeless persons before the court and in custody*. Dublin: Research report commissioned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

Stensen, O.-A., & Ure, O.-B. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Norway.* Oslo: Fafo—Institute for Labour and Social Research. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Sticht, T. (1999). *Testing and accountability in adult literacy education. Focus on workplace literacy resources for program design, assessment, testing & evaluation*. El Cajon: Applied Behavioral & Cognitive Sciences.

Talbot, J. (2008). *Prisoners' voices: Experiences of the criminal justice system by prisoners with learning disabilities and difficulties*. London: Prison Reform Trust.

Taljunaite, M., Labanauskas, L., Terepaite-Butviliene, J., & Blazeviviene, L. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal adult education.* Vilnius: Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Social Research Institute. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Tamm, A., & Saar, E. (2010). LLL2010 Subproject 5 Estonia country report. Tallinn: Institute of International and Social Studies/Department of Social Stratification.

Vermeersch, L., & Vandenbrouke, A. (2010). *The access of adults to formal and non-formal education in Belgium's Flemish Community* Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Waters, L. (2007). Community education: A view from the margins. In A. L. Gilligan & P. Downes (Eds.), *Beyond educational disadvantage* (pp. 158–170). Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Weedon, E., Riddell, S., Purves, R., & Ahlgren, L. (2010). *Social inclusion and adult participation in lifelong learning: Officials', managers' and teachers' perspectives.* Edinburgh: University of Scotland. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Chapter 12
Conclusion

12.1 Developing a European Union Agenda of Structural Indicators for Access to Higher Education and Lifelong Learning for Socio-economically Excluded Groups

This review of educational institutions, strategies, policies and practice in twelve European countries concerning access to education for socio-economically excluded groups highlights the need for a more rigorous monitoring and review of countries' approaches to promotion of access to higher education and lifelong learning. A framework of structural indicators has been argued to be a key dimension to such a monitoring and evaluation process. The focus with structural indicators is on relatively enduring features (structures/mechanisms/guiding principles) of a system, features that are, however, potentially malleable. Without such a framework for transparency in relation to policy, structures and practice at national, regional and institutional levels, it is difficult to apprehend how the wide range of systemic obstacles to access manifested across these European countries in this book will be overcome. While it is acknowledged that such indicators are not a sufficient condition to open doors for access to higher education and lifelong learning for socio-economically marginalised groups in Europe, nevertheless such an agenda of indicators is a key condition for this opening to come to pass.

There is enormous flexibility in the potential use of structural indicators, whether at European Commission, UN or OECD levels. The main focus for current purposes has been on the development of such indicators at European Commission level. One possibility is the acceptance of a cluster of core structural indicators for access to education for marginalised groups, combined with optional indicators that may be more pertinent for specific regions. Core and optional indicators could also be supplemented by a country-specific focus on additional structural indicators regarding enablers for system reform regarding a specific issue that is especially problematic or a distinctive strength of a national educational system. This flexibility regarding the scope, as well as systemic level (international, national, regional, institutional) at which structural indicators can be used, meets concerns with developing a

framework to embrace cultural differences and national specificity, while also maintaining international comparison.[1] Structural indicators are not quantitative statistical data, yet can be vital for policy interventions, once framed with sufficiently tight, specific wording as potentially verifiable yes/no questions. Flexibility regarding scope and use is to be combined with a concrete specificity regarding the wording of an individual structural indicator to maximise transparency and to ensure States can be held to account for their potentially verifiable factual statements in relation to a given structural indicator. Such concerns with transparency can include different burdens of proof to be imposed upon a State or institution in their production of evidence to verify a claim regarding presence of a particular structural indicator in their system. Structural indicators hold a focus throughout on problems and solutions at system level to scrutinise potential for improvement through proportionate measures for legitimate aims.

Further benefits of European level structural indicators, as benchmarks of progress of Nation States in relation of access of marginalised groups to lifelong learning, have been highlighted in earlier chapters. These bear reiteration:

- The indicators can offer transparent criteria for establishing a State's and university institution's progress in this area over time.
- They offer a framework for ongoing review and dialogue both within a State and across States.
- They allow for what is called in another educational context ipsative assessment (Kelly 1999); the comparison point for progress is the State's and a given university's previous performance in relation to these indicators.
- Clear targets for progress can be established based on the indicators.
- The indicators can distinguish State and university effort in improving access from actual outcomes; they can offer an incentive for governments to invest in the area of access to higher education and lifelong learning.
- The indicators, as a cluster, provide a systemic level focus for change rather than reducing change to one simplistic magic bullet cause.
- They can include dimensions of progress for comparison within and between education institutions concerned with increasing access for marginalised groups.
- They can bring greater unity to an area recognised as fragmented at national levels.
- As potentially verifiable factual accounts but not quantitative statistical data, they are much less expensive to observe than outcome and process indicators, and thus, there can be more of them employed to scrutinise change in a system.
- The indicators provide recognition of diverse starting points of some countries relative to others.

---

[1] See also Chap. 4, for an explanation and summary of key interpretative principles underpinning the proposed European and international system review of structural indicators for access to education. These interpretative principles are: common though differentiated responsibility, progressive realisation, action guiding principles, beyond minimum core indicators, legitimate aim and proportionate measures, local context sensitivity, community development, a margin of appreciation, a community of interpretation and an authoritative body for implementation.

Analysis through the lens of structural indicators goes beyond a discourse reliant on sharing models of good practice to seek to identify key structural conditions for good practice rather than seeking to blithely transfer a good practice from one complex context to another. It offers a distinctive focus on availability of services and supports for strategic purposes at system level. Structural indicators offer a *via media* between a quantitative/qualitative focus; these background, enduring—yet potentially malleable—structural features of education systems are frequently silent conditions sustaining system functioning that require further amplification for scrutiny.

Once one accepts that access to higher education and lifelong learning for socio-economically excluded groups is a major policy priority, the basic argument against developing such a set of structural indicators is one of administrative inconvenience. The argument can be made that there is some risk of cluttering the policy landscape, and institutional and programme managers with even further requirements for data collection and analysis, in a period when public finances are under massive pressure and numerous complaints are heard about the cost of ever-increasing bureaucratic requirements. However, as has been seen, administrative inconvenience and system inertia is not tethered to enormous financial investment as structural indicators are not expensive to monitor, unlike quantitative statistical outcome and process indicators.

Establishing a substantial, clearly defined set of structural indicators of the range and scope proposed (macro-exo, meso-micro) would be a substantial enterprise that would require clear lines of communication between a defined part of the Commission in its Directorate-General, Education and Culture and a designated section in each Member State's Education Ministry. As the focus is on structural indicators rather than quantitative indicators, the key responsibility would lie with a policy-oriented section/unit in national Education Ministries more than necessarily being tasks directed by national educational statistical services. Such social inclusion policy units already exist in a number of countries' Education Ministries, while the process of dialogue between the European Commission and national Education Ministries is improving through the country-specific review focus on EU2020 headline targets in education, such as for early school leaving prevention. In education systems with a strong regional or municipal focus, there would additionally need to be a process of engagement to develop such indicators (internationally comparable, national and regional structural indicators). It is important also to be cognisant of the purpose of these indicators with regard to system level transparency and scrutiny; this can only be achieved through sufficiently tightly focused and worded questions as structural indicators (see also illustrated examples in Appendix B). It is also to be acknowledged that the structural indicators will only be as good as the policy and practice understandings that inform their use. In other words, the indicators need to be practical, relevant, useful and informed by evidence of good practice, as well as informed by evidence of the need to overcome bad or limited examples of systemic practice. A further risk with structural indicators is that the policy reform areas chosen for attention through structural indicators may displace focus from other policy areas and system contexts in need of reform. Thus, the structural indicators, as means rather than as ends for policy reform and system change, need to be employed judiciously and incisively.

Table 12.1 Access to higher education: Key recommended structural indicators for higher education in Europe

Access to higher education for socio-economically marginalised groups: Structural indicators at macro-exo levels
A central driving committee at state level for access to higher education and lifelong learning for marginalised groups—including clear funding sources
Clarification of the criteria to ascertain socio-economic exclusion given the observed tendency, especially in Central and Eastern European countries, for targeting to occur for more easily identifiable target groups like those with a disability or from an ethnic minority—in contrast with groups experiencing socio-economic exclusion
The need for a formal obligation on institutions from the State to improve access and for incentives for third-level institutions such as differentiated funding from the State based on implementation of access goals
State-led incentives to different faculties and departments within third-level institutions to increase access: A faculty and departmental level focus to increase access
An access strategy for the so-called 'elite' universities
Representation of target groups, including ethnic minorities in the decision-making structures and processes at national level regarding access to education
A system of reserved places or equivalent approach to increase participation of underrepresented groups at third level
A coherent support strategy for access to third-level education for orphans and young people in care
Access to higher education for socio-economically marginalised groups: Structural indicators at micro-meso levels
Education institutional strategies for access for groups experiencing socio-economic exclusion
Development of outreach institutional strategies that go beyond mere information-based models
Availability of school and university institutions free of charge during summertime and evenings for community groups from marginalised areas
Outreach strategy to communicate with spokespersons, opinion makers and community leaders in socio-economically marginalised or ethnic minority communities
Formal links between universities and non-governmental organisations representing marginalised groups
Outreach strategy to engage young immigrants and young members of a target group
An access strategy of third-level institutions which engages with primary and secondary students experiencing socio-economic marginalisation
Preparatory admission courses

It is recommended that the EU Commission consider leading a process, in dialogue with EU Member States, for the development of agreed structural indicators for access to lifelong learning and social inclusion—for higher education, non-formal education and prison education. These proposed European level indicators would also require a country-specific review process to examine their implementation and development across European countries. Based on this qualitative research across 12 European countries in relation to access to education for socio-economically excluded groups—research consisting of 192 interviews in total with senior management of education institutions and government officials—the following tables summarise key recommended structural indicators for the review process in these areas (Tables 12.1, 12.2, and 12.3).

Table 12.2 Access to non-formal education: Key recommended structural indicators for non-formal education in Europe

Non-formal education: Structural indicators at macro-exo levels	The need for a national and regional strategy for non-formal education—to relate but not reduce non-formal education to the formal system
	The need for agreed, nonreductionist, accountability processes in the non-formal sector
	Funded strategies to develop local community lifelong learning centres
Non-formal education: Structural indicators at micro-meso levels	A strategy to develop community leaders
	National strategies for lifelong learning to include the arts as a key bridge into societal and systemic participation via non-formal education
	Non-formal as a path to formal education
	Staff continuity and development in non-formal education

Table 12.3 Access to education for prisoners: Key recommended structural indicators for prisons in Europe

Prison education: Structural indicators at macro-exo levels	A national strategy of education for prisoners
	Opportunities for distance education and web-based learning in prison
	An education strategy for high-security prisons
Prison education: Structural indicators at micro-meso levels	Establishment and implementation of a principle of normality in prisons
	Individual education plans for prisoners
	Initial assessment approaches for prisoners
	Sufficient space in prison for education
	Professional development support and resource materials for teachers in prisons
	Prisoner exchange based on educational reasons, including bridges to external education institutions

A number of such structural indicators and issues are also relevant to a systemic strategy for engaging long-term unemployed people as part of 'effective outreach strategies' (Council Recommendation, April 2013) for the Youth Guarantee (Downes 2013c). These would include, for instance, an outreach strategy to communicate with spokespersons, opinion makers and community leaders in socio-economically marginalised or ethnic minority communities, going beyond information-based models—and located in community-based lifelong learning centres (offering co-location for non-formal and formal education), while also encompassing a focus on developing community leaders.

A logical part of a holistic systemic focus is to interrogate enduring, yet malleable, structural features of an educational system, with a view to examining reform. As part of substantive review processes, this structural focus needs to be undertaken systematically through structural indicators rather than merely thematically. As factually verifiable policy levers for system reform, a structural indicators lens operates at a

range of prevention levels (universal, selected and indicated) and also at a promotion of change level. This paradigm shift to include structural indicators is akin to the well-recognised shift in public health discourse from an exclusively disease prevention focus to a health promotion one. Interrogation of key structural enabling or blocking conditions for development of policy goals throughout a system involves a holistic understanding of causality and system change that does not simply foreground one or two simplistic causes for reform but rather a cluster of action guiding supportive conditions to enable change through a cluster of structural indicators.

There is a further need to recognise that the function of a range of access indicators is compensatory—and that prevention is better than cure (through compensatory approaches in relation to access). In other words, an extended prevention focus would direct attention and intervention to (a) relative poverty differences, (b) relative difference in school performance across different socio-economic groups, (c) degree of spatial segregation in a country along social class-based lines. All of these are pivotal background factors affecting access to education for traditionally marginalised groups. For this reason, it is essential to also keep these outcome indicators—(a), (b) and (c)—firmly monitored in interpreting a state's progress towards access to education for socio-economically excluded groups and individuals. This requires development also of another key additional structural indicator for access to higher education:

– *A grant system for traditionally underrepresented groups that provides a satisfactory income and which includes free third-level fees for such traditionally excluded groups*

Lewin (2007)[2] offers some further cautionary notes in relation to targets and indicators in the context of access to education mainly in the contexts of Africa and Asia which also require acknowledgment in a European context. These include the dangers that governments' choosing between indicators for prioritising may be somewhat arbitrary; paradoxically, incentives may penalise the successful and reward 'the laggards' (p. 595) so that 'if the price of success is the withdrawal of subsidy and additional support to achieve the target, it may be more attractive to fall short' (p. 595); there may be trade-offs between targets and interest groups may be threatened by resource allocation implications of specific targets; target setting needs to be more joined up in relation to different system characteristics, including, for example, primary and secondary education and third-level education. The need for a systems level focus to promote dialogue at and between all the different relevant levels of an educational system in relation to indicators and targets is a clear implication of Lewin's (2007) point regarding the 'problematic' relationships between target setters and target getters:

> Too frequently they are different groups of actors with different pathways of accountability to different masters. Targets set by others without ownership by those in a position to act are unlikely to deliver benefits and target may lack credibility and commitment. If target setters have not had experience of target getting they may set unrealistic targets. (p. 596)

---

[2] In his Presidential Address to the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE) annual meeting, 'Diversity and Inclusion', Queen's University, Belfast, 8–10 September 2006.

In other words, a constructivist approach to learning, where the learner is involved in choosing learning goals related to his/her own experience, is not simply to be confined to the classroom or lecture hall but is a national-, regional-, local-, community-[3] and institution-wide learning process in relation to targets and indicators.

The point raised in the Slovenian national report that 'A corollary of a commitment to lifelong learning is a strategy to prevent alienation of students from the school system' (Ivančič et al. 2010) highlights the systemic interrelation between access to higher education, lifelong learning and prevention of early school leaving. Thus, it is essential that structural and outcome indicators for access to education are indelibly intertwined with a comparable system of indicators and a review and monitoring process for indicators in relation to prevention of early school leaving at a European level (see also Downes 2013b).

As discussed in the earlier sections of this book, there is also a key strategic need for the European Union to lead the development of an accessibility index internationally, building further on existing indices, to monitor the performance of universities internationally; this index would include a focus on the performance of the so-called 'elite' universities in relation to access for marginalised groups. Other process themes emerging from the book include the need for the European Commission to engage with national governments to clarify how the distinct though related lifelong learning goals of social inclusion/cohesion, active citizenship, employment and personal fulfilment are to be given systemic expression strategically through structures at national and regional levels. There is also an imperative to further lead dialogue on the development of transparent criteria for recognition of prior learning in relation to access to the formal higher education system in order to tackle the obstacles to recognition of prior learning currently experienced in a number of countries. Other emerging themes from this book include the need for a clarification of how to prevent disincentives for prisoners to engaging in education so that they do not experience discrimination by impact financially and regarding status of education in prison compared with work, as mandated by the European Prison Rules.

A differentiated approach to the proposed structural indicators for the EU context would also need to recognise the need for more dialogue with countries from Southern Europe to establish other indicators for access—it was noted at the outset that a limitation of the current research is that, with the exception of Slovenia, no Southern European countries were included. Sultana (2001) develops an argument for a Mediterranean regional space which would require a specific contextual focus beyond presumably what has emerged as indicators in the current research. Sultana (2001) makes the following cogent argument that:

> Practically all the states bordering on the basin share a common political history of domination and economic peripheralisation. All the states of the Mediterranean – with the exception of France and Turkey – have only recently emerged from decades – and in some cases, centuries – of either colonial domination, or dictatorial rule…The tardy establishment of

---

[3] It is worth highlighting that Freirean models of community development, so influential in the theory and practice of much adult education, both historically and currently, are in many ways similarly interpretable as constructivist learning principles applied not only in the classroom situation but also at a community level.

democratic government in Portugal (1974), Spain (1975) and Greece (1974) means that in these countries as well, memories of totalitarian regimes are still fresh, as are those of Albania (1990), Croatia (1990), Slovenia (1991), Macedonia (1991) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992). (p. 21)

However, much of this political and economic history is also resonant with countries from Central and Eastern Europe which have been centrally included in this current research. In relation to the structural indicators for access to education proposed in this book, it is important also to recognise that through practical experience and systematic research, it is to be expected that the envisaged structural indicator frameworks will evolve over time.

Another issue raised by Rajamani (2006) with relevance by analogy to the development of structural indicators of access to education for socio-economically excluded groups is whether a differentiated approach would occur for 'central' features (p. 93) of such indicators. This raises the question as to whether States and the European Commission could agree to certain central indicators that all would aspire to make progress on collectively, whereas other ones would be more for the direct priority of each country based on their current situation. The advantages of this is it would bring increased focus to system level reform; the counterargument against it is that it invites relegation of the other indicators to being peripheral with the consequent danger of a trade-off between indicators (already noted by Lewin 2007), where some would be relegated somewhat for the development of others. It would seem that the counterargument has such force that the indicators need to be adopted as a cluster, without an EU level prioritising of core indicators over what would inevitably then be perceived as other more peripheral ones; a systems level focus would eschew such an attempt at 'magic bullet' structural indicators without giving recognition to the need for a holistic, systemic strategic approach to increasing access to education for traditionally marginalised groups.

It is evident that the indicators are not to be weighted exactly equally and that some aspects are absolutely crucial to have in place, whereas others complement these foundational ones. A weakness in the systems theory framework is that it does not indicate through its focus on different levels which levels, or dimensions of levels, might be most essential. While recognising that there is a need to go beyond a simple relativism of indicators, it is recommended that each Member State would commit to their key priorities in relation to the indicators to be implemented as a matter of urgency in the short term. This would be influenced also by which key indicators are already in place in their system of indicators, with a view to progressive realisation of all the cluster of structural indicators over a period of time. Rutter's (1985) work in developmental psychology emphasises the role of interaction effects between protective factors, as well as between risk factors. The synergistic interaction effects in promoting access to education need further examination in the lived experiences of the students accessing education.

A Commission staff working document (2009) states:

Countries are currently at very different levels of development regarding participation in adult learning as well as policies on the quality, financing and the development of the sector. However, what characterises the sector across the whole Europe is not only its diversity but also the lack of participation especially among those who most need it (low qualified, drop outs, disadvantaged, etc.). (p. 79)

It is imperative that this changes. Adoption of a framework of structural indicators for access to education for socio-economically excluded groups in European society can offer a window of accountability for policy makers and institutions. It can provide a step forward beyond mere words to action at various levels. It can move beyond discourse and sophistry in seeking to ensure that access to education is also for the socio-economically excluded. To adapt Thrasymachus' words on justice in Plato, it must ensure that participation in and access to education is not merely the will of the 'stronger' in society.

12.2   Developing a Conceptual Framework to Move from Blocked Systems of Exclusion Towards Systems of Inclusion for Access to Higher Education and Lifelong Learning: From Diametric to Concentric Systems of Relation

A systems theory level focus on access to education interrogates disconnections and discontinuities across different dimensions of a purportedly common system and society at national levels. This comparative report examining such systems across 12 European countries regarding access to education has identified a range of systemic features where there are disconnections or assumptions of separation between key system elements—and which require system level intervention to challenge such assumptions of separation which are detrimental to the implementation of a strategic focus on access to education for socio-economically excluded groups.

A starting point for understanding background systems of relation mediating between realms of the ideal and real has been Bronfenbrenner's (1979) conception of the 'ecological environment…topologically as a nested arrangement of concentric structures, each contained within the next' (p. 22). Yet this systemic understanding has been identified as being a fundamentally static one, even when time was added as a later appendage to his framework, as the chronosystem. Moreover, this concentric structured system offers limited understanding of system blockage and inertia. In contrast, Foucault's earlier work took displacement, alienation or blockage in systemic structures of relation as a starting point. He treated these as a fundamental 'structure of exclusion' (Foucault 1972, p. 522) in his account of European historical understanding of 'madness'. While much of Foucault's subsequent work concentrated on *discourses* of exclusion rather than systemic *structures* of exclusion (Downes 2012), it is this earlier search of Foucault for a fundamental structure of exclusion that is important for developing a systemic understanding to embrace a focus on system level blockage and displacement; it is with a view to fashioning a more dynamic understanding of systemic structures of relation than that proffered by Bronfenbrenner's hypostatized Russian doll model. In other words, Foucault's structure of exclusion interrogates *diametric* structures to a system, in contrast to Bronfenbrenner's background understanding of *concentric* systemic structures. Foucault's 'structure of exclusion' amounted to interrogation of diametric spatial

Fig. 12.1 Diametric dualism
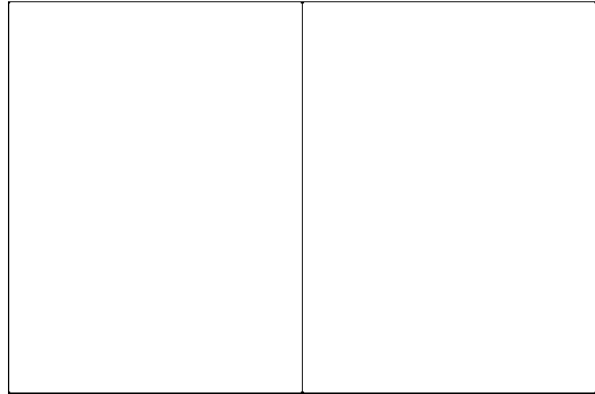
Fig. 12.2 Concentric dualism
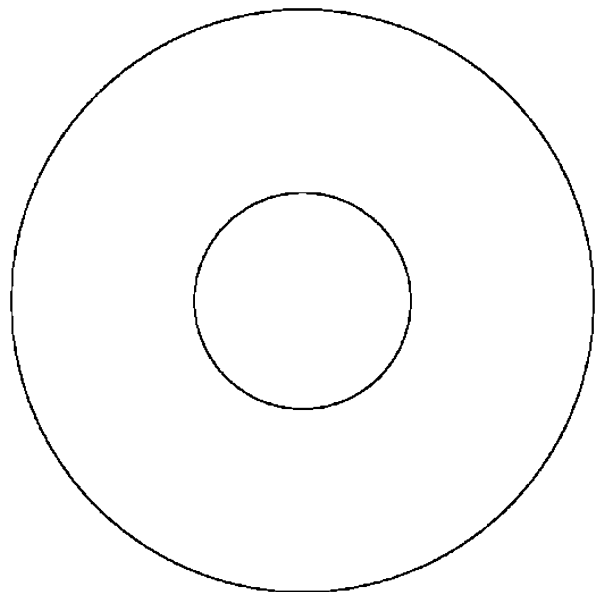
structures of assumed separation, with wider systemic application than the distinct context Foucault explored (Downes 2012). Regarding educational contexts, suspension and expulsion practices in school also exemplify a diametric structured approach to systems of exclusion (Downes 2013a).

A diametric spatial structure is one where a circle is split in half by a line which is its diameter or where a square or rectangle is similarly divided into two equal halves (see Fig. 12.1). In a concentric spatial structure, one circle is inscribed in another larger circle (or square); in pure form, the circles share a common central point (see Fig. 12.2).

It is these systemic contrasts between concentric and diametric structures as spaces of relation that are arguably fundamental for the development of more inclusive systems for access to education to go beyond systems that foster structures and relations of exclusion. Heidegger (1927) offers contrasts between two kinds of spaces or structures of relation that resonate with this basic tension between the contrasting systemic frameworks of Bronfenbrenner and Foucault. For Heidegger (1927), 'There is no such thing as the 'side-by-side-ness' of an entity called 'Dasein' with another entity called 'world'' (p. 81). Diametric space is where both parts are 'side-by-side' (Downes 2009, 2012). Heidegger (1927) seeks to go beyond Cartesian separation between self and world—beyond a diametric split structure of relation between self and world. In contrast to diametric structured space as side-by-sideness, Heidegger (1927) interrogates a different spatial relation of dwelling 'alongside'. It is arguable that concentric space expresses a 'being-alongside' model of relatedness, where one pole dwells within and alongside the other, surrounded and in assumed connection (Downes 2012). It is this *movement between* contrasting spaces of diametric 'side-by-side' and concentric 'alongside' structures of relation that offers a perspective on change to blocked systems, once these different kinds of structures are understood systemically.

It was in the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss (1962, 1963, 1973), in his cross-cultural accounts of systems, whether social structures, mythological systems or linguistic systems, where *dynamic* relations of contrast between concentric and diametric structures of relation began to be made more explicit. It is these contrasts that are being argued to offer resonance for social systems pertaining to access to education to foster inclusive systems rather than systems of exclusion.

A conceptual framework for understanding relational systems will be developed by expanding on a particular dimension of the structuralist anthropology of Lévi-Strauss' cross-cultural examination of systems of relation. This reinterpreted structuralist systemic dimension is based on the need for a shift away from diametric spaces of opposition and towards concentric relational spaces (Lévi-Strauss 1962, 1963; Downes 2003, 2009, 2012, 2013a). It will be argued that a pervasive structure exists to exemplify blocked systems—a collapse into diametric exclusion in contrast to more inclusive concentric structures of relation.

12.2.1   Amplifying a Structuralist Framework for Moving from Diametric Oppositional to Concentric Relational Spaces: From Assumed Separation to Assumed Connection in the Communicative Culture

Conquergood (1994) portrays how male teenage street gangs in Chicago divide into diametric structured opposition in their communication, even though there is no tangible reason for the content of these oppositions such as ethnic, socio-economic, racial or regional differences. Based on his 3-year ethnographic fieldwork, he

observes that 'there are hundreds of gangs in Chicago, but all of them align with one of two Nations: People or Folks' (p. 204), emphasising that 'the division between the two Nations, People and Folks, is absolutely arbitrary and constructed' (p. 207). It is this diametric spatial opposition that underpins not only the physical or psychological violence of authoritarian teaching (Downes 2013a) but also a *systemic conception of communicative relations*.

The diametric structure of the group relation portrayed by Conquergood (1994) ignored the contrasting, compensatory structure to diametric opposition observed cross-culturally in social structures and mythological systems by Lévi-Strauss (1962, 1963), namely, concentric structures of relation. The dynamic interplay between diametric and concentric spaces of relation offers a guiding framework for change to interpersonal, cognitive and spatial constructs embedded in systems of relation relevant to access to education. Lévi-Strauss' structuralism echoes that of linguist Saussure in interrogating differential contrasts between terms—such as diametric and concentric structures—rather than seeking meaning in an isolated term.

Though Lévi-Strauss (1962, 1963) did not explicitly highlight this difference, *the inner and outer poles of concentric structures are more fundamentally attached to each other* than diametric structures. Both concentric poles coexist in the same space so that the outer circle overlaps the space of the inner one. The outer circle surrounds and contains the inner circle. The opposite that is within the outer circle or shape cannot detach itself from being within this outer shape. And though the outer circle or shape can move in the direction of greater detachment from the inner circle, it cannot itself fully detach from the inner circle (even if the inner circle becomes an increasingly smaller proportion of the outer). Full detachment could conceivably occur only through destroying the very concentric nature of the whole opposition itself. In contrast, diametric oppositional realms *are both basically detached and can be further smoothly detached* from the other. A concentric relation assumes connection between its parts and any separation is on the basis of assumed connection, whereas diametric opposition assumes separation and any connection between the parts is on the basis of this assumed separation (Downes 2003, 2009, 2012, 2013a). A concentric spatial relation is a structure of inclusion compared to a diametric spatial structure of exclusion.

Concentric states of relation of assumed connection challenge traditional hierarchical relations between student and teacher, as hierarchy and 'otherness' rest on the key condition of a diametric mode of assumed separation. Without the glue of a diametric relational space of assumed separation, a hierarchical relation unravels. The concentric relation of assumed connection between teacher and students challenges a traditional hierarchical relation of assumed separation (Downes 2012, 2013a); it treats diametric assumed separation as a displaced structure from concentric connection. It is important to note that a concentric relation is not a monistic relation of identity so that the teacher would be the 'same' as the students; rather as with the two poles of a concentric relation, allowance is made for a separation though this separation is on the basis of an assumed connection (see also Gilligan 1982). The Japanese concept of *ma* can signify the space between one thing and another and can also be used for understanding of human relationships (Kimura 2005;

Morioka 2007). Concentric and diametric spatial structures invite application to relations between self and other, thereby entwining the spatial and relational, as with the Japanese concept *ma*.

Movement between inclusive concentric structures of relation and diametric structures of exclusion opens up a *spatial systemic movement of possibility*—of change to structures as underpinning systemic conditions. Change can be envisaged where these spaces and structures are treated as contrasting, mutually compensatory systems of relation. As a functional, compensatory interaction between concentric and diametric structures of relation recognised in rudimentary form by Lévi-Strauss' structuralist anthropology, these contrasting modes provide systemic level goals to underpin causal interventions and structural indicators as conditions for access to higher education and lifelong learning. Movement towards concentric modes of systemic relation fluidates inert diametric systemic space. Moreover, as structures of relation, they are prelinguistic and thus are less culturally bound than language-reliant concepts.[4]

12.2.2   Systemic Assumed Separation Between Strategies, Structures and People: Barriers to Developing Concentric Systems of Inclusion

One frequent diametric system level feature of assumed separation which emerges from this 12-country comparative analysis is concerning the disjunction between strategies and structures. There is an evident need to ensure that strategies do not lack structures to implement and review such strategies. Such structures often are required to be established in order to ensure communication with and representation of the target groups for which such strategies are designed. A paradigm shift is ongoing to facilitate a systemic recognition that these groups are not simply objects of social and educational policy but are also active subjects in concentric assumed connection with the design and implementation of such policy.

This system level caesura between strategies and structures evidently occurs across a range of countries regarding national level structures for organisation and implementation of access to higher education and lifelong learning. There is a noticeable chasm between apparent commitments at European Council and Commission strategic level to promotion of and support for non-formal education, for example, and the glaring absence of such national level structures for non-formal education in countries such as Austria, Bulgaria and Hungary. Another such systemic split or assumed separation occurs between a European Council commitment to

---

[4] A feature of postmodern thought is much of its tendency to treat language as the pivotal background system of relation to overcome the respective dichotomies between the ideal and real, subject and object. Interplay between a background context of prelinguistic—concentric and diametric—spatial systems of relation is an argument for a prior set of discourses that in some contexts are arguably not reducible to postmodern cultural relativism (Downes 2012).

promotion of active citizenship and personal fulfilment dimensions to lifelong learning and a systemic diffusion of responsibility in many countries as to who, where and how this strategic commitment is to be given flesh.

Similarly, representation of target groups in national and regional level systemic structures is often at a rudimentary or tokenistic level, with a relational space of assumed separation precluding genuine dialogue with marginalised groups, if dialogue occurs at all. There is a clear sense that national and even regional centres of government wish to retain a sense of power and distance from such groups—a hierarchical systemic relation is typically in operation that is a feature of a diametric system of relations.

A further dimension of a shift to assumed connection for a concentric relational communicative culture is the need for universities to go beyond information-based approaches to engage socio-economically excluded groups—information approaches designed for an abstract other that are in diametric assumed separation from the individuality of the 'other' in marginalised communities.

12.2.3 Systemic Assumed Connection: A Transitions Focus on Developing Concentric Systems of Inclusion

A paradigmatic feature of a systems theory approach is acknowledgement of the need to interrogate transitions across systems; transitions are conceptualised as providing both barriers and opportunities for the learner. This issue also emerges from a systemic focus on access to education for socio-economically excluded groups in this book.

A pervasive theme across many national reports (e.g., Norway, Belgium, Scotland, Hungary, Ireland and Estonia) is the need to go beyond limited models of transmission of information as a strategy to reach traditionally marginalised groups. Such information tends to travel poorly in its transition to the contexts of those experiencing a range of barriers to the education system. The limitations of an informational approach have been stringently criticised in this book. Information cannot replace an outreach strategy that encompasses a realisation of the transitional barriers between individuals and cohorts with low levels of education, on the one hand, and the educational institution, on the other hand. A transition focus anticipates an alienation from and a fear of the educational system and proactively seeks to build systemic links to overcome such diametric assumptions of separation.

A related feature of a transitions focus to give expression to a systems theory framework is also highlighted in a number of national reports. This dimension of a transitional focus is the identification of the key role of community-based lifelong learning centres in engaging with the social, emotional and educational needs of individuals and groups who may have been originally alienated from education. These are exemplified in the Bulgarian, Irish, Scottish and English national reports, as well from examples in Kosovo and Finland. The community-based location operates as a 'mediating structure' (Berger and Neuhaus 1977), as a site of transition

between the individual, community and the 'system'. Once located in a 'neutral' territory of community space amenable to diverse parts of often fractured communities, these community lifelong learning centres offer a physical and relational space of assumed connection with learners, in other words, a concentric inclusive systemic relation.

This focus on physical and relational spaces as being in assumed connection with marginalised groups through promotion of a concentric systemic relation is an important underpinning for university access outreach initiatives that offer university campus facilities free of charge in the evening and summer. This helps break down psychological and cultural barriers as part of a relational process of overcoming diametric split relations between the university institutional culture and the lived worlds of those experiencing social exclusion.

The difficulties for prisoners of transition to society after release are well-recognised and emerge strongly also from national reports. A less identified transitional need, though identified in places in some national reports (e.g., Scotland, Hungary), is that of an individual education plan for a prisoner upon entry to prison. One example of where transition is treated as a positive potentiality, rather than simply as a problem to be overcome, is the practice of allowing prisoners to move prisons based on their educational needs, as is highlighted exclusively in the Belgian national report. This highly progressive practice is a systemic dimension that is only possible in a system that is dynamic rather than an inorganic system that is static, split and inert.

A review of barriers to access to adult learning (Cullen et al. 2000) shows that access to learning opportunities is among the main obstacles (after previous negative learning experience and financing). However, the most vulnerable adults are often reluctant to engage in training because of their distrust of formal schemes or representatives of authority. Indeed, European research projects suggest that an important determinant in the participation and learning of the most vulnerable young people is the trust built up between teachers and the learner (Power 2006; Downes 2011, 2013). This notion of trust or assumed connection between learner and teacher can be extended further to a conception of assumed connection between the individual and the learning institution conceived as a system of relations (Downes 2009). In contrast, in an Australian context, an assumed separation is evident in McIntyre-Mills' (2010) observation of a hesitation in some Aborigines where they avoid 'putting themselves forward' and are 'careful about what they said' (p. 31). Fostering this concentric relation of assumed connection between traditionally excluded groups and universities can provide a cross-generational spillover effect of assumed connection to educational goals and institutions, as Share and Carroll (2013) observe in an Irish context of access students to Trinity College Dublin:

> A ripple effect occurs within families when the first generation of a family participates in third level education. There is a clear indication that those who are parents transmit to their children knowledge about the education system, how to access and succeed within it. They also affirm that their parental involvement in and aspirations for their children's education is high. This indicates the clear benefits for students who are parents and their families in terms of intergenerational social mobility. (p. 8)

It is this issue of intergenerational social mobility that requires a firmer foundation at EU level, given that it serves both social cohesion and employment strategic objectives, allied with key opportunities also for active citizenship and personal fulfilment. This vital social policy objective of intergenerational social mobility becomes arguably even more urgent and necessary against the backdrop of the economic crisis in Europe.

Assumptions of connection treat concentric relational connection as normalcy—connection between students themselves and between teacher and students (Downes 2009). Similarly, the principle of normality in Norwegian prisons provides a concentric relation of assumed connection to the rest of society rather than treating the prison in diametric terms as in assumed separation psychologically from society. This assumed connection is key to construction of the prisoner in more multifaceted dimensions of his/her identity than simply as a prisoner, such as through recognition of his/her identity also as an adult learner.

A different transitional focus to challenge static hierarchy also emerges from a systemic recognition of a two-way flow between non-formal education courses and formal education, rather than merely seeing the former as being instrumental to and colonised by the latter. While issues of transparency and quality may need to be more firmly addressed in many non-formal education sectors in order to give effect to such a dynamic transitional flow between formal and non-formal education, it is important to distinguish such a dynamic transition from a more static transition, as assimilation of the non-formal to the formal education system.

12.2.4 Systemic Assumed Separation Where Parts of an Institution Operate in Parallel Due to Historically Different Goals of These Parts: Barriers to Developing Concentric Systems of Inclusion

An educational institution, such as a university or school, cannot be assumed to be a unitary space. Rather it can be analysed as a series of microspaces with different subcultures, histories and expectations of diverse individuals. This comparative analysis highlights such a systemic feature of assumed separation between diverse systemic parts of the *same* institution. One example of this is where commitment to an access strategy for traditionally underrepresented groups in a university institution is perceived by a number of staff and institutional sections as being peripheral to the 'core' institutional concern with learning. In other words, institutional mainstreaming of an access to education agenda has not occurred in such a university—where access issues are treated as a peripheral feature of the university, as has been frequently highlighted, such as in the national reports of Hungary, Lithuania and Austria.

The prison institutional context offers a prime example of such subsystems operating in parallel, in assumed separation due to historical considerations. Thus,

many national reports observe that the educational dimension and the tutors are not only separate from the general prison management section but that there is minimal scope for communication, never mind representation, between educational providers in prison and the prison 'authorities'. An exception to this pattern appears to be at least some prisons in Estonia where good communication is reported between education providers and prison management. This general division of labour within the prison institutional context serves to render education as peripheral to the strategic priorities of the prison management. A systemic restructuring to connect the educational and the prison management dimensions is a necessary (though not a sufficient) condition to give effect to the strategic priority of lifelong learning in prison.

At a different level within the prison institutional system, a notable challenge has taken place to parallel subsystems and structures through the provision of education, not only in a separate site within the prison, but also in the prison wing itself. This feature of more than one prison in England, highlighted in the English national report, provides a model of a system that goes beyond a diametric system of what Heidegger (1927) terms, 'side-by-sideness' (Downes 2009).

A further example of the need to reconstruct subsystemic relations within an institution to challenge the historically divergent functions of such subsystemic habits and inertia includes the provision of opportunities for adult education classes in the school or university building in the evening, at weekends and during the summer. It is to be recognised that school-based sites of community lifelong learning are but one possible location and are not necessarily suitable for everyone, especially those with a history of alienation from the school system (Maunsell 2011). Nevertheless, the opening of the school institution for lifelong learning in the community offers advantages not only in relation to equity and equality of access to education but also for efficiency in use of resources at local community level. This practice appears to occur in some countries such as Slovenia, Ireland and Austria, according to the national reports, though with some reluctance to do so exhibited in the Bulgarian and Lithuanian national reports.

At a national systemic level, an example is provided by the Austrian national report of a government department with a distinctive historical focus which now encompasses a strategic area that is largely in an assumed separation from this historical focus. The strategic area of non-formal education in Austria is located under the Ministry for Labour rather than a Ministry for Education or for the Arts. This disjunction of ambition between non-formal education and the Ministry priorities is evinced in the Austrian national report interview with the Ministry Senior Official. It is unsurprising that such a split in strategic priorities would take place, given the systemic relation both operate within.

There is a need to shift away from diametric taken for granted assumptions of relation—from diametric horizons of understanding to concentric horizons of understanding for relational spaces in the communicative culture. This proposed theoretical framework of the interplay between diametric and concentric systems is arguably a more dynamic one than Bronfenbrenner's (1979) understanding, in developmental psychology, of concentric nested systems affecting child, family and

school. Bronfenbrenner (1995) recognised that a key limitation of his systemic framework of concentric nested systems was that they were basically static and without a dimension of change in time. Yet Bronfenbrenner's (1995) subsequent attempted temporal dynamism fails to envisage movement within and from the concentric structures themselves. In contrast, the dynamic, mutually compensatory interaction between concentric and diametric spatial systems, via an amplification of Lévi-Strauss' structuralism, offers distinctive pathways as clear directions for movement; it also furnishes criteria for dynamism and change to assist system level reform. Within this interaction, diametric space can be treated as a displaced, blocked, broken form of concentric spatial relation and communication (Downes 2012). Combining structural indicators with a framework of dynamic structures of diametric and concentric systems offers a theory of action for systemic change and reform. Structural features of education systems require translation into structural indicators for system level scrutiny and review, with a goal of moving towards more concentric, inclusive systems for promotion of access to education and lifelong learning for people experiencing social marginalisation across society.

12.2.5 Mirror Image Inversion as a Diametric Systemic Structural Relation: Beyond Diametric Mirror Image Inversions in the Relational Space of the Powerful (Teacher) Versus Powerless (Student), Active (Teacher) Versus Passive (Student)

Resonant with Freud's pervasive concerns with mirror image reversals between being active/passive, good/bad, powerful/powerless, life/death and love/hate (Downes 2012), Lévi-Strauss (1973) explicitly relates diametric structures to mirror image inversions between both diametric poles. He describes 'symmetrical inversions' (p. 247) in Mandan and Hidatsa myths:

> these myths are diametrically opposed … In the Mandan version … two earth women who are not sisters go to heaven to become sisters-in-law by marrying celestial brothers. One who belongs to the Mandan tribe, separates from an ogre, Sun, with the help of a string which enables her to come back down to her village. In revenge, Sun places his legitimate son at the head of the enemies of the Mandan, upon whom he declares war. In the Hidatsa version … everything is exactly reversed. Two celestial brothers come down to earth to be conceived by human beings and born as children. Sun's sister, an ogress, is joined with an earthborn character by means of a string. She makes him her adopted son and puts him at the head of the enemies of the Hidatsa. (Lévi-Strauss 1973, p. 250)

Echoing a view of diametric symmetry as 'transformations which sometimes result in the meaning being turned inside out' (p. 260), Lévi-Strauss (1973) invokes descriptions of mythological communicative systems framed by an understanding of their relation as involving a mirror image. A mirror image is not an identical one but a left-right inversion. Plane, line and point symmetry all accommodate a view of symmetry as reversal or inversion, as in diametric space.

While the metaphor of a 'glass ceiling' is often used to characterise barriers to access, this image of a mirror can also be amplified to offer a structural dimension to systemic oppositions in education. A key feature of mirror image symmetry is that one side is an inversion of the other (Lévi-Strauss 1973; Downes 2003, 2012). A noticeable feature of the relation between formal and non-formal education systems across different national reports is that such a diametric mirror image relation exists. These inversions include staff continuity in formal education compared with lack of continuity in the non-formal education system. Similarly, professional development opportunities for staff occur much more in the formal sector and are largely nonexistent in the non-formal education sector. Other diametric polarities include the presence/absence of a curriculum, presence/absence of exams, presence/absence of a career structure and opportunities for promotion, monitoring/lack of scrutiny of quality of the courses. This diametric relation of inversion between formal and non-formal education is exemplified in the very language used to describe non-formal education, while extending much further into substantive features of their mutual relation.

The movement towards recognition of prior learning represents a challenge to such a diametric mirror image relation between formal and non-formal education. A challenge for the non-formal sector, in particular, is to reconstruct the relation to the formal education sector through adopting dimensions of formal education (e.g., monitoring of quality, professional development and career structure), without becoming colonised by and reduced to the formal education sector. This amounts to a systemic shift in the relation between the formal and non-formal education sectors to being one of concentric assumed connection 'alongside' rather than diametric split inversion 'side-by-side'.

Another systemic danger of a mirror image relation of inversion is that between the so-called 'elite' universities and other higher education universities and colleges, where some of the 'elite' universities seek to remove themselves from concern with issues of accessibility, affordability and diversity. This is particularly emphasised in the English and Scottish national reports. Such a diametric division between research intensive universities and more community-oriented universities leads to a reinforcement of societal divisions, particularly with regard to access to positions of power in society. It gives expression to traditions such as the 'town and gown' role of universities feeding the cultural and political elites in the USA (Schuetze 2011). The development of a university accessibility index, as a dimension of quality, at the European level, would offer one step towards challenging such diametric mirror image systemic divisions.

Again a diametric mirror image inversion is to be challenged as underlying stark contrasts between a focus on inputs and outcomes. The current fashion for interrogating outputs of a system through outcome indicators needs stronger apprehension not only of systemic complexity of relations between inputs and outputs (Rachlin 1984), but also of the need not to splice these levels apart in diametric fashion. A focus on structural indicators can facilitate a questioning of the assumed connections between inputs at a structural level and subsequent outcomes—where structural system supports are key conditions for outcomes and can give meaning to explain changes in outcomes.

A different mirror image inversion, which requires challenge at a systemic level, is that of a perceived normality-otherness opposition within a university institutional culture. Such a normality-otherness opposition—where the institutionalised normality tends to be a middleclass one—is increasingly being recognised as untenable and in need of challenge in a university institutional culture committed to mainstreaming access issues and to promoting increased access and participation of traditionally underrepresented groups.

The notion of a society diametrically split into different social groups in a mirror image relation to each other invites a focus not only on relative inequality. It also invites a chronosystemic focus on historical changes that exacerbate such inequality. Influential economist Galbraith's (1993) *The Culture of Contentment* offers a salutary warning that social unrest tends to take place not so much when people are unhappy with their own situation, but when they see their children having less hope of progress and a worse quality of life than they themselves have had.

This point serves as an important backdrop to analysis of the potential impact of the current macrosystemic economic crisis on access to education for the rising generations in particular. It also invites implicit modification of Rawls' (1971) conception of the need to give individuals a 'minimum stake' in society, as part of a modern-day social contract. This minimum stake is to ensure societal stability and assent to a social contract in modern society. The relational dimension invoked by Galbraith invites the implication that a quasi-Rawlsian minimum stake in society is not simply an objective standard of living in society; it also can be extended to include a subjective and relational dimension as a minimum stake, to influence acceptance of the legitimacy of a societal contract. The relational minimum stake is mediated through the reference point of what the individual has experienced before and what they expect of their children's future, for example, regarding access to educational opportunities.

At a fundamental level, a strategic policy direction needs to be found for Europe. Is it to move towards relational spaces of diametric relations across a society of atoms bouncing off each other in assumed separation with radically separate boundaries of noninteraction between social classes? Is it to move with the excesses of neo-liberalism into mirror image inversions of hierarchies between the powerful and powerless, the knowledgeable and those cut off from access to knowledge and thus from power? Or will there be a strategic commitment to a society rooted in concentric structures of relation, of assumed connection between self and other, that, nevertheless, respects individual differentiation? Is there to be a fundamentally connective, interactive and mobile European society in social class terms with regard to access to education? A concentric mode of relation is one where the individual is in dynamic interaction and assumed connection with background relations of community (Downes 2009) rather than radically spliced apart from neighbourhood and community. Without this commitment to developing inclusive systems of education, the appalling spectre of a diametric society across Europe becomes fashioned.

Summary Without a framework for transparency based on structural indicators in relation to policy, structures and practice at national, regional and institutional levels, it is difficult to apprehend how the wide range of systemic obstacles to access manifested across these European countries in this book will be overcome. While it is acknowledged that such indicators are not a sufficient condition to open doors for access to higher education and lifelong learning for socio-economically marginalised groups in Europe, nevertheless such an agenda of indicators is a key condition for this opening to come to pass.

Once one accepts that access to higher education and lifelong learning for socio-economically excluded groups is a major policy priority, the basic argument against developing such a set of structural indicators is one of administrative inconvenience. It is important to emphasise that structural indicators are not expensive to monitor, unlike quantitative statistical outcome and process indicators. Establishing a substantial, clearly defined set of structural indicators of the range and scope proposed (macro-exo, meso-micro) would be a substantial enterprise that would require clear lines of communication between a defined part of the EU Commission in its Directorate-General, Education and Culture and a designated section in each Member State's Education Ministry. As the focus is on structural indicators rather than quantitative indicators, the key responsibility would lie with a policy-oriented section/unit in national Education Ministries. It is recommended that the EU Commission consider leading a process, in dialogue with EU Member States, for the development of agreed structural indicators for access to lifelong learning and social inclusion—for higher education, non-formal education and prison education.

The clusters of proposed European level structural indicators, extracted from problematic system blockages to access and good practice highlighted in the 12 national reports, would also require a country-specific review process to examine their implementation and development across European countries. As factually verifiable policy levers for system reform, a structural indicators lens operates at a range of prevention levels (universal, selected and indicated) and also at a promotion of change level. This paradigm shift to include structural indicators is akin to the well-recognised shift in public health discourse from an exclusively disease prevention focus to a health promotion one. It is important to note that the function of access structural indicators is compensatory; an extended prevention focus would also need to monitor and challenge (a) relative poverty differences, (b) relative difference in school performance across different socio-economic groups and (c) degree of spatial segregation in a country along social class–based lines.

Foucault (1972) focused on displacement, alienation or blockage in a systemic 'structure of exclusion'. This interrogates *diametric* structures to a system (Downes 2012), in contrast to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) background understanding of *concentric* static systemic structures. It is these *dynamic* systemic contrasts between concentric and diametric structures as spaces of relation that are arguably a new fundamental framework for development of more inclusive systems for access to education to go beyond blocked systems that foster structures and relations of exclusion. Many of the proposed structural indicators, focusing on bridges, transitions, outreach, mediating structures and strategic integration with structures, are promoting concentric

relational systems of assumed connection and challenge to blocked diametric systems based on splits in communication, assumed separation and mirror image inverted symmetries (Lévi-Strauss 1963).

References

Berger, P. L., & Neuhaus, R. J. (1977). *To empower people: The role of mediating structures in public policy*. Washington: American Enterprise Institute.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: A future perspective. In P. Moen, G. Elder, K. Luscher, & U. Bronfenbrenner (Eds.), *Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development* (pp. 619–647). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Commission Staff Working Document. {SEC(2009)1616}. *Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Indicators and benchmarks 2009.*

Conquergood, D. (1994). For the nation: How street gangs problematize patriotism. In H. W. Simons & M. Billig (Eds.), *After postmodernism: Reconstructing ideology critique*. London: Sage.

Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 *on establishing a Youth Guarantee* (2013/C 120/01).

Cullen, J., Batterbury, S., Foresti, M., Lyons, C., & Stern, E. (2000). *Informal learning and widening participation*. London: The Tavistock Institute.

Downes, P. (2003). Cross-cultural structures of concentric and diametric dualism in Levi-Strauss' structural anthropology: Structures of relation underlying the self and ego relation? *Journal of Analytical Psychology, 48*, 47–81.

Downes, P. (2009). Prevention of bullying at a systemic level in schools: Movement from cognitive and spatial narratives of diametric opposition to concentric relation. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of school bullying: An international perspective* (pp. 517–533). New York: Routledge.

Downes, P. (2011). The neglected shadow: Some European perspectives on emotional supports for early school leaving prevention. *International Journal of Emotional Education, 3*(2), 3–39.

Downes, P. (2012). *The primordial dance: Diametric and concentric spaces in the unconscious world*. Oxford/Bern: Peter Lang.

Downes, P. (2013a). Developing a framework and agenda for students' voices in the school system across Europe: From diametric to concentric relational spaces for early school leaving prevention. *European Journal of Education, 48*(3), 346–362.

Downes, P. (2013b, January 28–29). *Developing multi-agency and cross-sector synergies in and around education.* Invited Presentation for 5th meeting of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (EAC), Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving, Brussels.

Downes, P. (2013c, November 14). *Giving early school leavers fresh opportunities: Prevention and second chance measures.* Keynote presentation at the European Commission's, European Social Fund (ESF) Conference, *Tackling Youth Unemployment in Europe: Building a Better Future for Young People*, for the Lithuanian EU Presidency, Vilnius.

Foucault, M. (1972). *History of madness* (J. Khalfa, Ed.). London/New York: Routledge, 2006.

Galbraith, J. K. (1993). *The culture of contentment*. New York: Mariner Books.

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Heidegger, M. (1927). *Being and time* (J. MacQuarrie & E. Robinson, Trans., 1962). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Ivančič, A., Mohorčič Špolar, V. A., & Radovan, M. (2010). *The case of Slovenia. Access of adults to formal and non-formal education – Policies and priorities*. Ljubljana: Slovenian Institute for

Adult Education. National report for comparative report of Subproject 5 of LLL2010, Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin.

Kelly, A. V. (1999). *The curriculum: Theory and practice*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Kimura, B. (2005). *Kankeitositenojiko* [The self as relationships]. Tokyo: Misuzusyobo.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1962). *The savage mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1963). *Structural anthropology* (Vol. 1, C. Jacobsen & B. Grundfest Schoepf, Trans.). Allen Lane: The Penguin Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1973). *Structural anthropology* (Vol. 2, M. Layton, Trans., 1977). Allen Lane: Penguin Books.

Lewin, K. (2007). Presidential address to the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE) annual meeting, 'Diversity and Inclusion', Queen's University, Belfast, 8–10 September 2006.

Maunsell, C. (2011, February 8). *Lifelong learning for all? Policies and practices towards under-represented and socially excluded groups*. Presentation at LLL 2010 Conference. *Do three sides always make a triangle? Policy, institutions and learners in lifelong formal learning*. University of Leuven, Brussels.

McIntyre-Mills, J. (2010). Participatory design for democracy and wellbeing: Narrowing the gap between service outcomes and perceived needs. *Systemic Practice Action Research, 23*, 21–45.

Morioka, M. (2007). Commentary: Constructing creative appropriations. *Culture & Psychology, 13*, 189–196.

Power, S. (2006). *Policy-relevant review of FP4 and FP5 research projects in the field of Education*. Brussels: DG-Research of the European Commission.

Rachlin, H. (1984). Mental yes. Private no. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 7*, 566–567.

Rajamani, L. (2006). *Differential treatment in international environmental law* (Oxford Monographs in International Law). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.

Rutter, M. (1985). Resilience in the face of adversity: Protective factors and resistance to psychiatric disorder. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 147*, 598–611.

Schuetze, H. G. (2011, March 4). *Regional engagement and service mission of universities: North American perspectives*. Presentation at Higher Education in challenging times: Questioning the unquestioned, Dublin City University.

Share, M., & Carroll, C. (2013). *Ripples of hope: The family and community impact of Trinity College Dublin access graduates*. Dublin: Children's Research Centre, Trinity College.

Sultana, R. G. (Ed.). (2001). *Challenge and change in the Euro-Mediterranean region: Case studies in educational innovation*. New York: Peter Lang.

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary of Key Terms

Structural indicators	Generally framed as potentially verifiable yes/no answers, they address whether or not key structures, mechanisms or principles are in place in a system. As relatively enduring features or key conditions of a system, they are, however, potentially malleable. They offer a scrutiny of State or institutional effort.
Process indicators	Measure programmes, activities and interventions. They measure State or institutional effort and focus on degree, intensity and quality, as information for programme improvement.
Outcome indicators	Usually a quantitative measure of the broader results achieved through the provision of goods and services. They will often be used in conjunction with benchmarks or targets to measure change over time.
Microsystem	Relations in the immediate setting in which the individual is immersed
Mesosystem	Involves interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates: for a child, home, school neighbourhood and peer group, and for an adult, family, work and social life (Bronfenbrenner 1979)
Exosystem	Involves one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect or are affected by what happens in the setting containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner 1979)
Macrosystem	Generalised patterns involving relations and structures in wider society
Chronosystem	Involves interacting elements over *time* across systems and subsystems, such as the developing person, the nature of the environment and their proximal processes of interaction (Bronfenbrenner 1995)
Formal education	Intentional from the learner's point of view. It leads to certification which may lead to the next educational level.

(continued)

(continued)

Non-formal education	It does not directly involve certification or assessment. Organised and sustained educational activities which may take place both within and outside educational institutions and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life-skills, work-skills and general culture. Non-formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the 'ladder' system and may have a differing duration (UNESCO 1997)
Informal education/ learning	Intentional, but less organised with less structure and may include, for example, learning events (activities) that occur in the family, in the work place and in the daily life of every person, on a self-directed, family-directed or socially directed basis (UNESCO 1997)
Social marginalisation/ socio-economic exclusion	A combination of lack of economic resources, social isolation and limited access to social and civil rights; it is a relative concept within any particular society. The process by which certain vulnerable groups may be prevented from participating fully in social, political and economic life in a community. This occurs when the necessary intersectoral policies and support mechanisms are not in place to enable their full participation (WHO Regional Office for Europe 1993).
Progressive realisation	The international right to health principle that all States are expected to be doing better in 5 years time than what they are doing today; it demands indicators and benchmarks to monitor progress. This principle is applied to access to education in Europe without necessarily being a rights-based approach.
Common yet differentiated responsibility	Derived by analogy from international environmental law to recognise that some states are in a stronger position in terms of resources to underwrite the practical demands of compliance with their international commitments—potentially commitments through structural indicators regarding access to education, without necessarily involving a rights-based approach.
Concentric structure of relation	A structure where, one circle is inscribed in another larger circle (or square) that fully surrounds it; in pure form, the circles share a common central point
Diametric structure of relation	A structure where a circle is split in half by a line which is its diameter or where a square or rectangle is similarly divided into two equal halves
Associations of concentric relation	Assumed connection between its poles (Downes 2003, 2012)
Associations of diametric relation	Assumed separation between its poles (Downes 2003, 2012) and mirror image inverted symmetry (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 1973)
Principle of normality in prison	Prisoners maintain the same rights to education as individuals outside the prison
Social inclusion	When people can participate fully in economic, social and civil life, when their access to income and other resources (personal, family, social and cultural) is sufficient to enable them to enjoy a standard of living and quality of life that is regarded as acceptable by the society in which they live and when they are able to fully access their fundamental rights (European Commission 2001)

Appendix B: Illustrative Examples of a Structural Indicators Matrix Tool for Access to Education for Socio-economically Marginalised Groups: Higher Education, Non-formal Education and Prison Education

Introducing Structural Indicators[1]

Structural indicators (SIs): yes and no questions, something that can be changed (laws, spaces, roles and responsibilities, key guiding principles, potentially malleable dimensions to a university/third-level or non-formal education institution).

SIs can operate flexibly at different levels of a system and at different levels of concreteness and abstraction (i.e., physical spaces and designated jobs, guiding principles for action/strategy etc.).

SIs could be set up as physical structures, roles, as structures in an organisation or as enduring key principles structurally underpinning an intervention or strategy.

Using SIs will help to understand if necessary key structures and mechanisms are in place to really promote access to education for marginalised groups.

SIs are key conditions as enablers for system success, enduring features of a system that are malleable, thus going beyond the traditional qualitative/quantitative distinction.

Goals of SIs are both for comparison of an education institution's/national strategy's own progress over time (i.e., compared with itself) and for comparison with other education institutions/national strategies.

SIs shared by all EU Member States are complementary with (a) other country-specific structural indicators and (b) shared and country-specific outcome indicators for access to education and relative poverty.

Access to Higher Education for Socio-economically Marginalised Groups: Illustrative Structural Indicators at National Levels

A State-led central driving committee at national level for access to higher education for socio-economically marginalised groups YES OR NO

A State-led central driving committee at national level for access to lifelong learning for socio-economically marginalised groups YES OR NO

Transparent national criteria for identifying socio-economically excluded/ marginalised groups YES OR NO

---

[1] The introduction to structural indicators here is adapted from SIM (Structural Indicators Matrix) tool for family support employed by PREVENT, URBACT across ten European cities through their municipalities (Downes and Hagglund 2013).

A formal State obligation on third-level educational institutions to improve access for socio-economically excluded/marginalised groups YES OR NO

State incentives for third-level institutions/universities to improve access for socio-economically excluded/marginalised groups, such as differentiated funding from the State based on implementation of access goals YES OR NO

State-led incentives to different faculties/departments within third-level institutions to increase access YES OR NO

State-led access strategy for the so-called 'elite' universities for access to higher education for socio-economically marginalised groups YES OR NO

Representation of target groups, including ethnic minorities, in the decision-making structures at national level regarding access to education for socio-economically marginalised groups YES OR NO

A State-led system of reserved places at national level or equivalent approach to increase participation of underrepresented groups at third level YES OR NO

A specific national support strategy for access to third-level education for orphans and young people in care YES OR NO

A State-led grant system for third-level education for socio-economically marginalised groups that provides a satisfactory income YES OR NO

Free third-level fees for such socio-economically marginalised groups YES OR NO

Access to Higher Education for Socio-economically Marginalised Groups: Illustrative Structural Indicators at Third-Level Education/University Institution Level

Transparent written institutional strategies for access to the university/third-level educational institution for groups experiencing socio-economic exclusion YES OR NO

Specific outreach strategies to engage underrepresented students (due to socio-economic marginalisation) implemented by third-level education institutions that go beyond mere information-based models YES OR NO

Availability of specific campus resources of university institutions (e.g., rooms, sports facilities, theatre) free of charge during summertime for community groups from marginalised areas YES OR NO

Availability of specific campus resources of university institutions (e.g. rooms, sports facilities, theatre) free of charge during evenings for community groups from marginalised areas YES OR NO

Outreach strategy developed by the university institution to communicate with spokespersons, opinion makers and community leaders in socio-economically marginalised or ethnic minority communities YES OR NO

Outreach strategy implemented by the university institution to communicate with spokespersons, opinion makers and community leaders in socio-economically marginalised or ethnic minority communities YES OR NO

Formal links between universities and non-governmental organisations representing socio-economically marginalised groups YES OR NO

Outreach strategy developed by the university institution to engage young immigrants and young members of a target group based on socio-economic exclusion YES OR NO

Outreach strategy implemented by the university institution to engage young immigrants and young members of a target group based on socio-economic exclusion YES OR NO

An access strategy of third-level institutions which engages with secondary school students experiencing socio-economic marginalisation YES OR NO

An access strategy of third-level institutions which engages with primary school students experiencing socio-economic marginalisation YES OR NO

Preparatory classes prior to third-level/university entry, to facilitate such increased entry for students experiencing socio-economic marginalisation—classes organised by the third-level/university institution YES OR NO

Access to Non-formal Education for Socio-economically Marginalised Groups: Illustrative Structural Indicators

A national strategy for non-formal education with a focus on engaging socio-economically marginalised groups YES OR NO

A regional strategy for non-formal education with a focus on engaging socio-economically marginalised groups YES OR NO

Accountability processes in the non-formal education sector that are distinctive and do not reduce it to the formal education sector YES OR NO

National strategy to develop local community lifelong learning centres, with a focus on areas of social exclusion YES OR NO

National strategic funding strand to develop local community lifelong learning centres, with a focus on areas of social exclusion YES OR NO

A national strategy to develop community leaders, with a focus on areas of social exclusion YES OR NO

A local/regional strategy to develop community leaders, with a focus on areas of social exclusion YES OR NO

National strategy for lifelong learning and non-formal education to include a focus on the role of the arts for engaging socio-economically marginalised groups YES OR NO

Local/regional strategy for lifelong learning and non-formal education to include a focus on the role of the arts for engaging socio-economically marginalised groups YES OR NO

A strategic focus on bridges between non-formal and formal education YES OR NO

A strategic focus on staff professional development in non-formal education YES OR NO

A strategic focus on staff continuity and retention in non-formal education, for maintaining stable connection with learners from backgrounds of socio-economic marginalisation YES OR NO

Prison Education: Illustrative Structural Indicators

A national strategy of access to education for prisoners YES OR NO

Opportunities for distance education and web-based learning in prison available to all prisoners (including appropriate technology to limit web access where appropriate) YES OR NO

An education strategy for high-security prisons YES OR NO

National strategic commitment to a principle of normality in prisons with regard to education (i.e., prisoners maintain the same rights to education as individuals outside the prison) YES OR NO

Implementation of a principle of normality in a prison institution YES OR NO

Learner-centred education in prison YES OR NO

Individual education plans for prisoners in a specific prison institution YES OR NO

Holistic initial assessment approaches for prisoners available in a specific prison institution (with the consent of the prisoner) YES OR NO

Sufficient space in a specific prison institution for education YES OR NO

Professional development support for teachers in a specific prison institution YES OR NO

Resource materials available for teachers in a specific prison institution YES OR NO

Prisoner movement across prisons based on educational reasons (including for bridges to external education institutions) YES OR NO

References

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: A future perspective. In P. Moen, G. Elder, K. Luscher, & U. Bronfenbrenner (Eds.), *Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development* (pp. 619–647). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Communication from the Commission. {COM(2001) 678 final}. *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality*.

Downes, P. (2003). *Living with heroin: HIV, identity and social exclusion among the Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia and Latvia*. English version. Tallinn: Legal Information Centre for Human Rights.

Downes, P. (2012). *The primordial dance: Diametric and concentric spaces in the unconscious world*. Oxford/Bern: Peter Lang.

Downes, P., & Hagglund, U. (2013). *PREVENT's core structural indicators across different system levels – Including municipality level and individual project level.* Structural Indicators Matrix (SIM) Tool for PREVENT, URBACT project across 10 European cities.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1963). *Structural anthropology* (Vol. 1, C. Jacobsen & B. Grundfest Schoepf, Trans.). Allen Lane: The Penguin Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1973). *Structural anthropology* (Vol. 2, M. Layton, Trans., 1977). Allen Lane: Penguin Books.

UNESCO. (1997). *Educating for a sustainable future: A transdisciplinary vision for concerted action*. Paris: UNESCO.

World Health Organisation. (1993). *Health for all targets: The health policy for Europe*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Biopic

Dr. Paul Downes is the Director of the Educational Disadvantage Centre, Senior Lecturer in Education (Psychology), St. Patrick's College, Dublin City University, Ireland. He has been involved in various expert advisory roles for the European Commission in the areas of social inequalities, lifelong learning, second chance education and early school leaving and is a Member of the Commission's Network of Experts on the Social Aspects of Education and Training (NESET). Dr. Downes has been a Visiting Research Fellow at University of Cambridge, Lauterpacht Centre for International Law (2011) and a Member of the Irish Senate and Parliament Expert Advisory Group on early school leaving (2010). His PhD, law and psychology degrees are from Trinity College Dublin. Published internationally in areas of psychology, education, law, philosophy and social policy, he is a Thematic Expert for the EU Urbact, PREVENT project and an Expert Advisor to University of Malta's access initiative.

Index