Rethinking Learning
Transversal competences in the spotlight

14 May 2013, Vilnius

General Report
The European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL) brings together 33 European organisations working in education and training. Together, they cover all sectors of education and training including networks for higher education, vocational education and training, adult education and popular education. Currently these networks represent more than 45,000 educational institutions (schools, universities, adult education and youth centres, etc.) or associations (involving students, teachers and trainers, parents, HRD professionals, etc.) covering all sectors of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Their members reach out to several millions of beneficiaries.

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Editor in chief: Audrey Frith  
Publication coordinator: Noé Viedma  
Design and illustrations: Audrey Frith and Katrin Lennartz  
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**Contact**

EUCIS-LLL Secretariat  
Rue des Deux Eglises, 39 - 1000 Brussels - Belgium  
info@eucis-lll.eu - www.eucis-lll.eu

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Last November 2012, the European Commission launched a Communication on “Rethinking Education: investing in skills for better economic and social outcomes”, which reflects the political necessity to give a new conceptual framework to upcoming key challenges in education and training. The Communication aims, among others, at delivering the right skills for employment and calls on Member States to further develop transversal skills, and particularly entrepreneurship, digital skills and language learning. EUCIS-LLL welcomes the invitation sent to educational actors to rethink education in a partnership approach. In a very complex and ever-changing environment, Europeans must not only have and update specific job-related skills but also possess the transversal competences that will enable them to manage change and become lifelong learners.

The aim of EUCIS-LLL Annual Conference 2013 “Rethinking Learning: Transversal competences in the spotlight” was to create a debate around the concept and role of transversal competences in the framework of the European strategy on “Rethinking Education”. Contributing every day through grassroots initiatives to equip people with the right competences to become fulfilled, active and employed citizens, civil society can participate in the debate by providing innovative approaches and concrete practices.

Around 120 participants from various sectors of education and training attended the conference to share their experiences and worked on policy recommendations in order to provide specific insights on the role and place of transversal competences in the Rethinking Education strategy. During the conference participants worked more specifically on four topics: civic education in the framework of the European Year 2013 of Citizens, digital competences, entrepreneurship skills and the learning to learn competence. They exchanged on what is currently done in educational institutions and what could be done in order to better deliver and assess transversal competences. In view of the upcoming Lithuanian EU Presidency this event gave a great opportunity to push forward some key messages from civil society representatives from all around Europe.

Gina EBNER, President of EUCIS-LLL, welcomed participants and reminded them that this conference is a great opportunity to break down barriers between countries and education and training sectors providing a rich diversity of inputs on the role and place of transversal competences in education and training systems. It is the right moment to formulate policy recommendations, including for the upcoming Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Genoveita KRASAKUSKIE, Lithuanian Vice-Minister of Education and Science, underlined that the development of transversal skills such as critical thinking is essential in times when the biggest challenge for the Ministry is youth unemployment (31,7% in the 3rd quarter 2011). Entrepreneurship skills are especially important, not only in higher education but also in schools. According to the Eurobarometer 2012, only 30% of respondents think it is possible to create a business, 37% in Lithuania. This debate is part of a broader reflection on the improvement of our education systems where quality and access, among other key challenges, should be discussed. Civil society has an essential role to play there as an incubator for successful projects and initiatives. EUCIS-LLL conference is in that sense a perfect illustration of the partnership approach required to tackle these issues, as mutual understanding is a prerequisite to a productive work and a fruitful exchange of ideas.

Valdas JANKAUSKAS, Director of the Lithuanian Children & Youth Centre and Board member of the European Association of Institutions of Non-formal Education of Children and Youth (EAIYC), welcomed participants and stated that the Centre is very glad to co-organise this conference. In his opinion, transversal competences are a crucial topic as well as participation in education. Peer learning is the best way to learn from the achievements of other European partners. It is crucial to work together across sectors and across countries as human relations and emotions are key elements in this process.
Helmut Vogt presented the platform’s position on the Commission’s Communication “Rethinking Education: Investing in Education for better socio-economic outcomes”. EUCIS-LLL, as much as it welcomed the Communication and agrees that it is timely to reflect upon how education and training systems can contribute to economic recovery, regrets the very narrow approach taken in the document, focusing on formal education, and suggests some key notions that should also be part of the reflection - among other things, the need to consider education as a public good, to put an emphasis on a learning outcomes approach, to invest more in education and training and to build solid partnerships with civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

Pierre Mairesse precised that “Rethinking Education” was not an academic exercise but a political one to define priorities in the context of the European growth and jobs strategy (EU2020). The Communication gives a new impulse to what has been undertaken so far by the EU to tackle the current challenges and notably the 23% rate of youth unemployment across the EU. Even though anticipating the skills needed in the future is hazardous, the fact that we have today 700 000 vacant jobs in the field of ICT in the EU proves that skills mismatches are real. Yet the Commission also understands that education is not only about employability and has been notably working with the Council of Europe and Eurydice on education as a human right and citizenship education. However the priority remains growth and jobs and the new Communication gives concrete directions to Member States: for instance in the field of VET with a new Alliance for apprenticeships or in the field of entrepreneurship skills (18 June).

In this respect, EUCIS-LLL’s position has already been presented to key EU institutions and two policy debates were held in the European Parliament on partnerships (7 May) and entrepreneurship skills (18 June).

Another very important element of the Communication is partnerships – first between education and businesses because of current political priorities. This has been worrying for the universities’ autonomy but they know very well how to protect themselves; the real challenge is rather how to build better links between both worlds, and this is especially important in terms of funding. In this perspective, partnerships are essential given all the reforms that we plan to implement in the future, in all education sectors.

As for partnerships with civil society, EUCIS-LLL member organisations cover all sectors, target populations and thematic issues; interrupting the Commission’s cooperation with the Platform would be non-sense and DG EAC may have recently given the false impression that it intended to do so. However the next funding programme 2014-2020 is the opportunity to rethink this cooperation, under Key Action 2 “Partnerships” and Key Action 3 “Support for policy reform”. The Commission expects European organisations and platforms to provide good knowledge about what happens on the field, to support the Commission with the Country-Specific Recommendations. Another thing the Commission is interested in is how we can inform and raise awareness on EU policies. This is a call for further collaboration; this is about how EUCIS-LLL can help the Commission.

EUCIS-LLL POSITION ON RETHINKING EDUCATION, HELMUT VOGT, EUCIS-LLL VICE-PRESIDENT

Pierre Mairesse, Director of Directorate A «Europe 2020», DG EAC, European Commission

Rethinking Education: investing in education for better socio-economic outcomes, Pierre Mairesse, Director of Directorate A «Europe 2020», DG EAC, European Commission

Rethinking Learning

Keynote Speeches
A critical approach to “Rethinking Education” and the need to develop citizenship skills

Alistair Ross, Jean Monnet ad personam Professor of Citizenship Education in Europe & Emeritus Professor at the London Metropolitan University (UK)

Alistair Ross stated that the Commission’s Communication was setting a neoliberal agenda for education and training, reducing them explicitly to growth drivers. He presented an Aristotle theory on three possible visions of education: an utilitarian perspective (“things useful in life”), a way to support personal development (“virtue”) or a way to support the transmission of culture (“exceptional accomplishments”). To his mind, the Commission seems to have solved this dilemma today by the instrumentalisation of education as the solution for employment and competitive knowledge societies, as recommended by the Lisbon strategy. More and more, educational and economic performances are linked, as shown for instance by the PISA survey results. Between education and GDP is also weak. Competitiveness is also embedded into the look people take at education: a zero-sum game where every selection of one is the rejection of many and where the system creates the inequalities – which is again well illustrated with the PISA statistics on migrants. Meritocracy has become a central value that makes those who “succeed less” responsible for the disadvantages they suffer. That is why for instance vocational education is so much devalued. Many other life skills than those matching labour market needs should be considered as important; besides foundation skills: personal health, relationships, moral and social values, active citizenship... in a word, lifelong learning skills. The financial crisis of 2008 shows that competences such as ethics and morality should be better embedded in our culture.

Mr Ross presented the outcomes of his research on how European young people from the new EU Member States are constructing their identities – via more than 150 focus groups in 15 countries involving 960 individuals. He found out that young people mostly perceive their countries in terms of language and culture; the political dimension is considered when it comes to compare their country with others such as Russia (i.e. in respect of human rights). As for their European identity, most of them are aware of their European rights, of the opportunities to move abroad and are willing to benefit from them. They are in this way very different from their parents and grandparents. Citizenship education should not be about imposing them a vision but rather reflect their preoccupations. Very few said they could talk of those issues at school. If Mr Ross had one recommendation, it would be for all teachers, in every class, to spend the first fifteen minutes of the day discussing the two main items on the news with their students.

Open discussion

One participant outlined the key role played by parents and the fact that they should be part of this partnership approach. The difficulty to work with social partners, apart from maybe the VET sector, was highlighted as an obstacle to partnerships.

Mr Mairesse underlined that the issue of funding education has been a taboo for a long time and remains quite sensitive, especially because it is a trans-sectoral challenge. The Commission is not proposing a model; it is rather inviting Member States and especially Budget Ministries to initiate a deeper reflection on issues such as cost sharing.

The audience wondered why non-formal education was such a low priority in the new Communication and Mr Mairesse repeated that even though it is not the main focus, the Commission is convinced that this is of crucial importance. Yet more efforts are needed to properly implement the 2012 Council Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning in all Member States.

Someone also mentioned the gap that exists between the EU and its citizens and the role played by European organisations and platforms in informing and involving them. Mr Mairesse outlined the importance for instance for the European Commission to receive feedback on what is going on in the countries by civil society.

Professor Ross also mentioned the importance of civil dialogue; it comes indeed to give opportunities to talk. Mr Ross also reminded the need for the Commission to collect more data on what happens in Member States. The audience underlined that information from governments was often subjective and dependent on the intention behind their reports; and that civil society should be part of the process. Mr Mairesse explained that DG Education and Culture had recently set up “Country Desk Officers” Units in charge of collecting national information in order to broaden channels of information. Civil society is another channel in that respect.
Active Citizenship in education & training: the missing links

A contribution to the European Year of Citizens 2013

Facilitator: Georg PIRKER, Secretary General of the Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe (DARE)
Rapporteur: Anne-Charlotte ORIOL, Coordinator of the European Year of Citizens Alliance 2013 (EYCA2013)

Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship is one of the four priorities of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training for 2010-2020. The European Year of Citizens 2013 is a timely opportunity to reflect upon European citizenship. This is particularly important in the perspective of the 2014 European Parliament’s elections. Many studies demonstrate that learning is the main driver in fostering civic participation and the preferred vehicle for creating awareness, knowledge and understanding of European citizenship. Everyone should be able to understand how the EU functions as a political system. This could be done for example by working on common guidelines to develop modules on European civic education and by offering quality initial and continuing training to teachers and educators. Many civil society organisations in Europe aim to foster active citizenship and citizens’ emancipation and development through the diverse activities they propose – for example citizenship through sports and culture. Learning by doing is indeed a very effective way of developing civic and social competences but also the appetite for learning. Sports gatherings, for example, attract young people from different social backgrounds; a great potential can be achieved when these events are linked with the use of non-formal learning methods. There is a need to share these practices across the different sectors. European and national associations play a key role in supporting peer-learning activities. However, if a lot of work is done, systematic action from national and European authorities is clearly needed. Because European citizenship needs to be learned and lived, community programmes supporting learning mobility are for example a crucial tool to make it happen.

/// Key Messages

Active Citizenship and its role in the “World Class Education”

The group underlined that in many aspects - as regards human rights education, democratic values and tolerance - Europe already offers high quality standards at a global scale. From civil society perspective, “world class education” primarily means a qualitative education for all.

Active Citizenship and Employability

Active citizenship education provides competences valuable in the society but also in the learners’ professional life. Two sets of recommendations were identified:

1. Recognising and validating volunteering (and mobility) experiences:
   - Employers should cooperate closer with organised civil society in order to raise awareness and change mindsets on the benefits of civic participation. Partnerships should also be aimed at developing social responsibility in the business sector.
   - Learning providers should help learners to translate their experience into learning outcomes and to understand the value of their action (i.e. portfolio).
   - Policy makers should take more into account the needs of learners and employers and the articulation between the two. They should develop validation of skills and competences frameworks in order to boost civic participation, social inclusion as well as employability.

2. Changing the perception of active citizenship experiences:
   - Employers should promote and implement corporate volunteering practices (e.g. flexible working hours schedules, etc.).
   - Learning providers, and especially schools, should give more opportunities to learners for out-of-school activities and recognise them.
   - Policy makers should promote and encourage active citizenship and volunteering at all ages.

Curricula, formal education and adequate space for active citizenship

- All citizens should have the opportunity to take part and shape the design of active citizenship programmes;
- Active citizenship learning should be completely active, participative, using good methodologies developed in formal learning and non-formal education;
- A wider involvement and tighter cooperation with the community around learning providers is needed (e.g. involving NGOs into school activities).

Role and value of civil society in EU2020

Civil society was identified as the needed “critical friend” of the «EU2020» Strategy and in order to play this role policy makers should develop a framework for structured and transparent dialogue and consultation with civil society organisations (at the regional, national and European level). They should ensure long-term and sustainable partnerships between organised civil society and EU Institutions.
"PUPILS’ PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOLS: A LEARNING PATHWAY INTO CITIZENSHIP"
BY DR BRIGITTE HAIDER, EPA

The “SchülerInnenMitGestaltung” (Pupils’ participation) offers empowerment training for pupils aged 10-14 to prepare them for active participation in daily school life and beyond (in community life primarily for leisure activities). The project is implemented by parents, teachers and “leisure pedagogues” and provides different approaches of “learning”, complementary to classroom type schooling. For instance, workshops are based on games, role-play and teamwork; teachers are facilitators but not leaders. Overall, training focuses on pupils’ rights (i.e. right to elect their representatives and active participation) whilst providing pupils with hints on a wide range of topics (e.g. how to speak in front of an audience; how to organise an event or project; etc.), enabling them to have a glance beyond school (participation in the community, in other associations, etc.). Among the benefits of the pupils taking part in this experience, we can note: expertise of school setting, political consciousness, culture of agreement, training of key competences of LLL and project management.

The European Parents’ Association (EPA) works in partnership both to represent and give to parents a powerful voice in the development of education policies and decisions at European level.

"TEACHING CIVIC EDUCATION IN ESTONIA"
BY MARE OJA, EUROCLIO

In Estonia civic education is featured from the 1st grade (7 year-old) to high school (19 year-old) and is taught in different subjects, including a wide range of topics ranging from the function of the state and democracy, citizens’ rights and responsibilities to personal and social issues such as planning expenses, sustainable consumption, information on professions and companies, media analysis and critical thinking, the challenges and opportunities of a multicultural society, etc. Innovative active learning methodologies are applied, including the provision of good practical teaching material and support, and several partners are involved in the implementation of civic education (i.e. several ministries and public agencies, human right associations, foundations, etc.). The factors ensuring the success of civic education in Estonia are seen to be:

- Cooperation of different institutions and organisations;
- Supporting practical skills and mutual understanding;
- Launching competitions to motivate learning (e.g.: Online Olympiads of civic education);
- School projects to show how to change real life;
- Implementation of civic education through different subjects;
- Good practical teaching material and support.

The European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO) seeks to enhance the quality of history and citizenship education through capacity building for educators and producing innovative teaching tools.

"OED NETWORK - EUROPEAN NETWORK ON OUTREACH EMPOWERMENT DIVERSITY"
BY RICARDA MOTSCHILNIG, EAEA

OED - www.oed-network.eu - is a Grundtvig network bringing together 17 organisations from 14 countries and aiming at tackling the need for outreach to marginalised groups, especially migrants and ethnic minorities, developing more diversity in adult education, and especially the inclusion of learners’ voices, and for the empowerment of its learners to become active European citizens. It will indeed improve approaches in reaching out to disadvantaged groups, promote diversity in organisations, improve teaching methodology, promote active citizenship by participatory strategies and support the development of better policies aimed at integration and lifelong learning.

The milestones for this three-year project are:

- Analysis of good practice examples that tackle the overlap of social inclusion and active citizenship and develop outreach and empowerment strategies for marginalized groups;
- Develop teaching methodology guidelines for diverse groups;
- Deliver policy recommendations that will tackle the integration of marginalized groups and their empowerment and participation in lifelong learning.

The network will have an impact on the participating institutions, teachers, trainers and (managing) staff in adult education, learners, especially from disadvantaged groups, other stakeholders in lifelong learning and policy makers.

The European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO) seeks to enhance the quality of history and citizenship education through capacity building for educators and producing innovative teaching tools.
The new Communication “Rethinking Education: investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes” states that the development of entrepreneurial skills is a top priority for our education and training systems. It shall contribute to deliver the right skills for the labour market. The definition of entrepreneurship education adopted at European level stresses that this concept is much wider than just training on how to start a business. Entrepreneurship is firstly a mindset. A range of measures has already been adopted at the national and European level in order to build a stronger culture of entrepreneurship, particularly targeting young people. The important role of education and training in promoting more entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviours is particularly recognised. However developments and ambitions are very different from one country to another – from helping young people to set up their own companies to enabling them to better manage their professional but also social and personal life. Many reports highlight the benefits of entrepreneurship education however, today, access to programmes and activities remains unequal across countries and sectors. What can we learn from current practices across Europe? How to teach/learn entrepreneurship? Entrepreneurship “mindset” is also acquired outside the formal system notably through volunteering experiences within non-governmental organisations. How to better promote the recognition and validation of entrepreneurial learning in an informal or non-formal learning environment? Entrepreneurship education also implies developing partnerships between educational institutions and local communities, third sector organisations and companies. How to further promote and strengthen partnerships among relevant educational stakeholders at all levels? What should be role of the EU in supporting these developments? How could we, educational stakeholders, contribute to the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action plan?

/// Key Messages

1. Cross-sectoral partnerships (education institutions, business, policy-makers, civil society):
   - Create “common principles” and understanding of entrepreneurship, for instance around the concept of socially responsible entrepreneur;
   - Encourage educational institutions to provide courses on entrepreneurial skills and promote further links with the labour market, providing incentives to get business involved in entrepreneurship education;
   - Introduce entrepreneurial education at an early educational stage;
   - Create a label for social & sustainable enterprises, using public and private partnerships.
   - Favour communication, trust and policy dialogue between the different stakeholders involved;
   - Put in place flexible collaboration in education (e.g. business driven trainings vs. curricula);
   - Promote teacher’s training on entrepreneurial skills / entrepreneurial mindset, for instance by encouraging them to do short-work placements in order to have a real exchange with the business world; especially when it comes to the use of ICT tools;
   - Raising awareness of funding schemes for starting a company at all administrative levels and mostly at regional and local level.

2. Validation and recognition of entrepreneurial skills
   - Establish common definitions and assessment methods of entrepreneurship skills (i.e. intrapreneurship & entrepreneurship skills);
   - Train learners on recognising / analysing their own non-formal learning and professional experiences in order to translate them into skills (i.e. self skills recognition);
   - Validate prior learning experiences by providing learners the possibility to certificate them, especially when starting degree studies at the University;
   - Educational institutions should implement a combination of formal and non-formal learning opportunities for getting the entrepreneurial skills;
   - Set up a tracking system / platform allowing entrepreneurs to show their professional experience;
   - Promote regional / sectoral validation of entrepreneurial skills, sharing the same standards of validation (e.g. entrepreneurial passports / such as the ECVET passport transferring the learning outcomes into ECTS), in the framework of the Council recommendation which encourages Member States to set up validation systems of non-formal learning outcomes by 2018.
The Entrepreneurship Module eligible for Certification (CEM) gives upper secondary vocational education institutes in the Netherlands the option to add entrepreneurship to existing vocational training courses. The module sets out the basis concerning what people should know and be able to do in order to start up their own business. It consists of seven work processes, elaborated in competences, knowledge and skills, that bring about attributes such as individual responsibility, innovative abilities, effective work, social skills and commercial mindset. Since 2011, the Entrepreneurship Module is embedded in the national qualification structure in upper secondary vocational education.

KHC has also developed a platform on entrepreneurship education, which offers educational projects and programmes that stimulate an entrepreneurial attitude, starting with primary education up to University College. According to KHC, as early as primary education, attention must be given to stimulating creativity, to provide the courage to enter into something new and to taking responsibility for actions and choices made. These differ from simulation games to starting a real business, in which pupils and students experience at various degrees what it is like to start and run their own business. This way they find out what challenges entrepreneurship can offer.

The Centre of Expertise on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market for the Trade Sector (KCH, The Netherlands) has developed this module in partnership with Dutch Chamber of Commerce. KCH is a member of EVTA, the European Vocational Training Association.

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions can flexibly act on the adult population, simultaneously a population with higher chances to succeed in entrepreneurial activities. Cross Border Virtual Incubator (CBVI) intends to reach (adult) workers/learners to promote flexible entrepreneurship, incubation and enterprise with the infusion of new tools and technologies. It has the objective to demonstrate experiments with social and learner-centric entrepreneurship environments for the acceleration of new starters and cross border knowledge exchange. CBVI effectuates far-reaching pilots on (networked) business planning and successive field-oriented coaching of new entrepreneurs by universities, multipliers and SMEs. It takes full advantage of Web 2.0 technologies and utilises multi-level (open) services to exploit the social and technological connectivity of individuals.

CBVI uses existing student training materials such as the ones developed by Cross Border Virtual Mobility (CSVM) and Cross Border Virtual Entrepreneurship (CBVE), two projects which have been successful in their approach to improve university-business convergence. On the strategic level, CBVI aims to systematically improve discussion and cooperation between higher education institutions (both education and research-based) and regional stakeholders in order to optimise the opportunities for entrepreneurship and the design of the associated entrepreneurship ecosystem. It also aims to support business planning and tenant incubation, utilising social and professional media and networking as a contributor to entrepreneurial success. On the operational level, CBVI intends to demonstrate that start-ups can utilise more contemporary open tools, technologies and services, in order to decrease the financial threshold of enterprise creation.

European Association of Distance Learning Universities (EADTU) is Europe’s institutional network for open and flexible higher education.

Bellacopria is a regional network created in 2008 to link local initiatives of education to cooperative values and principles in 8 main cities of the Emilia-Romagna region. It addresses upper secondary schools to sensitize young generations about cooperative values such as mutuality and solidarity. It organises a contest about the creation of virtual cooperative enterprises addressing upper secondary schools. Each class or group of students develops its own business idea, taking care of all entrepreneurial aspects through the creation of a simplified business plan. Students are not only supported by their teachers but by tutors and experts coming from the cooperative world, whom present and coach students on the cooperative business model, principle and values.

By working in a team students learn to valorise their own ideas and to apply a democratic approach in decision-making. The most innovative business ideas are finely selected and awarded according to criteria such as economical, environmental and social sustainability. The project represents a fruitful exchange between formal learning and working experiences.

CONTACT-2103 is an International non-governmental organisation created by youth organisations to achieve a common and coordinated policy at the European level.
Digital competences: enhancing inclusion

Facilitator: Dr. Andras Szucs, Secretary General of the European Distance and e-Learning Network (EDEN)
Rapporteur: Georges Van Steene, European Training and Development Federation (ETDF)

ICT has the potential to make lifelong learning a reality by allowing people to access and share knowledge everywhere and by offering new forms of learning. The new Communication from the European Commission “Rethinking Education” puts a new emphasis on digital competences and more particularly on the potential of Open Educational Resources (OERs). OERs are teaching and learning materials that are freely available online for everyone to use, whether you are an instructor, student or self-learner. Examples of OER include full courses, lectures, homework assignments, quizzes, classroom activities, pedagogical materials, games and many more resources contained in digital media collections from around the world. Teachers, trainers and educators have a key role in developing such learning material. However, major barriers exist such as language or copyrights that seriously limit the development of OERs. It also raises important challenges such as the quality of the learning material and the possible validation and assessment of the learning outcomes of these activities. ICT and OERs are a powerful tool to develop many transversal competences, support the cultural shift to learner-centred systems and broaden the access to learning via distance learning or e-learning. But in reality we see that not everyone benefits from these new possibilities. In 2010 only 39% of Europeans used the Internet for any training and education related activity with huge disparities across the countries. We know the main barriers to access to ICT are technologic but also linked to attitudes, interests and abilities. In this context there is a huge potential of progress. We need coherent and targeted strategies in lifelong learning: developing digital competences in education and training across all ages and in all areas of life – be it in formal, non-formal and informal learning. It is also about developing learning to learn competences and the appetite for learning. This is a prerequisite if we want to reach the ambitious goals of the Digital Agenda and of the Europe 2020 strategy.

/// Key Messages

- Explore and promote the use of Open Education Resources (OER) for social inclusion, addressing the specific barriers and needs of the target groups;
- Promote flexible learning solutions (e.g. tailor-made learning for individuals and groups, OER in all EU languages, etc.);
- Exploit existing communities of practices across Europe at all professional levels;
- Promote the exchange of good practices and peer-learning at the EU level, especially when it comes to OER and its potential to foster social cohesion notably in higher education;
- Ensure a regular policy dialogue with professional organisations;
- Launch awareness raising campaigns to promote digital competences at the national level;
- Encourage digital platforms which support the development of “Wiki-tools” (e.g. “Historiana” project by EUROCLIO);
- Invest in basic digital skills training, especially when it comes to disadvantaged groups (e.g. low-skilled adults) far from the formal education system;
- Promote continuous digital training and support for teachers and trainers;
- Develop impact assessment indicators on digital competences, methodology and practice.

“G8WAY: Web 2.0 ENHANCED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS TO MANAGE EDUCATIONAL TRANSITION”
by Thomas Fischer, MENON Network

The G8WAY - Web 2.0 Enhanced Gateway To Educational Transition – project investigated how social software and web 2.0 applications can be used to support young people before, within and beyond educational transitions. It particularly developed a web 2.0 enhanced learning environment based on three scenarios representing different user types within a targeted demographic, attitude and/or behaviour set. These learning environments aim at enabling learners to reflect and develop creativity potentials and transitional skills in the light of self and others’ learning experiences, made visible through a variety of media sets and Personal Learning Environment (PLE) applications designed to meet the requirements of transition envisaged and mapped into one single pedagogy framework.

A major characteristic of European societies is the rapidly growing differentiation of educational, vocational and occupational opportunities, pathways and biographies. As a consequence there is a wider recognition of the importance of providing support to young people on their way into employment and increasing interest in the potential of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), nowadays Learning 2.0 to provide support for the challenges of transition. In order to better understand these processes and experiences a story-telling approach has been applied in order to develop transition scenarios and so-called ‘personas’ of learners. G8WAY focused on two transition scenarios, which are: school to work and Higher Education (HE) to work. An additional horizontal scenario tested the latter ones in an intergenerational learning setting.

MENON is a European research and innovation network, working to foster and smoothen innovation processes in areas such as education and lifelong learning, knowledge society and social inclusion.
The project “Chinese for Europeans” is a first step into this language for students, tourists, business people and children. It provides free and easily accessible training modules containing materials at A1 level (according to the Common European Framework for Languages) and translated into 23 official EU languages. It particularly offers innovative ICT material and methodologies (e.g. multimedia based learning, online support, downloadable mobile applications, etc.) that suits the particular individual or group learning styles (i.e. tailor-made learning). An important feature for all learners is “Things to know before you go”, which provides useful and useable information for tourists, students and business people. This guide provides learners with a more nuanced vision of China, going further than the stereotypes and fostering mutual understanding.

The International Language Association (ICC) groups professionals from all areas of language education and intercultural communication.

EUROVERSITY: A NETWORK FOR LEARNING IN VIRTUAL WORLD

EUROVERSITY network brings together for the first time a range of public and private institutions from across Europe who have experience in the use and development of online virtual platforms for education across a range of disciplines (i.e. language education, cultural studies, literature, economics, religious studies, media studies, intercultural communication, digital design, computer science and software engineering, science including physics) and contexts (lower and higher education, educational and business). It aims to create an intellectual and material repository across Europe for learning and thinking about learning at all ages and in varied contexts, promoting the conducting of joint courses among network partners and sharing of resources.

EUROVERSITY leads us into the virtual world of learning. Virtual worlds are virtual settings in which individuals live through their avatar. They can work, play and even meet friends or start a relationship. The goal is to reach a population that might feel reticence to attend classes in a traditional setting, as they are protected by anonymity, they can freely attend class, leave them at any moment, experience, try and fail without pressure. It also aims at making provision for learners with special needs by helping to promote their integration into mainstream education and training. For instance, for those little or inexperienced in virtual world learning and teaching, EUROVERSITY provides a guidance for the creation, delivery and evaluation of learning experiences provided within online virtual platforms.

The European Distance and E-Learning Network (EDEN) exists to share knowledge and improve understanding amongst professionals in distance and e-learning and to promote policy and practice across the whole of Europe and beyond.

The CARER+ project aims to support the development of digital competences and digitally-supported professional skills for care workers, with a particular focus on applying these skills and competences to enhance the quality of care provided for care recipients, by developing a set of learning paths and educational resources for mobile and work based learning, that respond to major challenges to their professionalization: isolation, access to technology, flexibility of study modes, lack of support and motivation, formal accreditation, recognition of prior experience, and scalability.

Recent research has shown that a large segment of the growing number of older people in Europe can be encouraged to use online services, and that modern ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) and AAL (Ambient Assisted Living) technologies can radically improve their quality of life by supporting ageing well in the community and at home. The key mediator between these ICT-based opportunities and their integration into older people’s lives stands in the available human resource represented by the domiciliary care working sector and the set of competences they possess.

The International Language Association (ICC) groups professionals from all areas of language education and intercultural communication.
Learning to learn and the joy of learning

Facilitator: Dr. Andrea Waxenegger, President of the European Universities Continuing Education Network (EUCEN)
Rapporteur: Johannes Theiner, President of the European Parents’ Association (EPA)

Learning to learn has been the centre of growing educational interest for more than a decade. Indeed, one of the basic competences for success in the knowledge society is the ability to learn. With increasingly rapid changes in the work place, in part due to changing technology and as a result of changing societal needs in the context of globalization, citizens must learn to learn in order to be able to maintain their full and continued participation in employment and society. This is particularly important as our societies are ageing. In this context learning to learn is a quintessential tool for lifelong learning. The teaching profession has been recognized as one of the eight key competences within the European Key Competences framework for lifelong learning. Re-search on how learning takes place has shown that the best learning occurs when students are engaged in active learning – when they are doing things instead of sitting passively and listen-
ing. This questions the role of learners and educators/teachers in the learning process. How is this key competence translated in practice? The need to develop this competence is particularly relevant for learners with educational or social disadvantages. Innovative methods such as personal learning plans and inquiry-based learning can be especially useful for those whose previ-ous experiences in school have been unsuccess-
ful or negative. How to better mainstream those initiatives across levels and sectors of education and training? The question of the motivation and pleasure of learning is also at the core of this debate. A number of European research projects have been undertaken to explore the concept “learning to learn” and how to meas-
ure it. Outcomes include the need to further work on the definition of the concept and on how this concept can be made operational.

/// Key messages

What could be done to better deliver and assess learning to learn (L2L)?

- Endorse Lifelong Learning as a right;
- Keep on referring to and promote the 2006 European key competences framework where a clear definition of learning to learn is provided
- Focus on the L2L development at all education levels, from early childhood education to adult education
- Acknowledge that learning to learn is mostly about the learner’s autonomy and focus on the way to develop it via innovative learning settings
- Promote the recognition of acquired L2L competences at EU level in order to foster and validate mobility experiences;
- Establish a platform of exchanges of good/bad practices at all levels (EU, national, regional & local).

- Set up indicators to measure progress in the L2L competence acquisition
- Ensure teachers’ professional continuous development by, for instance, setting up non-formal learning structures for teachers’ education or enable exchanges between experienced and new teachers (the experienced ones not always being the most competent ones!); also train other educators to be facilitators of the L2L process
- Promote learners’ participation and assessment of their own learning, fostering their autonomy;
- Bridge the gap between various actors - non-formal and formal learning, businesses, universities and communities

/// Case Studies

“L2L - Learning2Learn project”
by Laimonas Ragauskas, UNIQUE Network

Learning 2 Learn project aimed at developing, implementing and analysing innovative ap-proaches in the field of non-formal adult educa-
tion in order to develop this competence ena-
bling learners to plan, organise, implement and assess their own learning, in particular in view of self-directed learning. The project particularly developed a handbook for facilitators, in order to inform and inspire facilitators of learning to introduce the educational methodologies and approaches developed during the project into their own practice, and a set of recommenda-
tions referring to aspects that support the deve-
lopment of learning competence and foster learn-
ing to learn.

The project considers learning to learn as the most crucial key competence for lifelong learning and, therefore, aims to support educational staff to acquire and develop competences and metho-
dologies needed for implementing this kind of learning. Learning to learn is predominantly un-
derstood as a method-in-action: people have to engage in the activity itself – learning – to learn about it.

UNIQUE - United for Innovation and Quality in Education – is a European network composed of prac-titioners of non-formal education/learning and youth work that defined itself as a “Learning Com-munity of practice”.

Working group 4
“JUMP! Job University Matching Project” by Mirela Mazali, EUCA

JUMP is a three-year integrative programme targeted at university students meant to complement the education received in Universities. It is a modular programme that includes three types of activities: interdisciplinary courses, specific activities related to the field of study of each student and coaching. JUMP trainers are professionals of the business and consultancy world, international law firms, academics and education specialists and they use the participatory approach of the case method, integrating theoretical academic knowledge with work-related competences. Thanks to JUMP, university students develop the soft skills required for a complete personal development and for the professional environment.

EucA, the European University College Association, promotes the excellence of university halls of residence in order to promote cultural exchanges between European students and so to encourage active citizenship among our young people.

“THE THINKING APPROACH TO LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING” by Aleksander Sokol, TA Group

Thinking Approach (TA) to language teaching aims at an integrated development of both language and thinking skills of learners. The TA project is concerned with the development of educational technologies necessary for this kind of teaching and mechanisms of implementing these technologies with various groups of learners. The learning process is student-centred and real-life tasks are used as much as possible. All technologies have high integration potential, thus it is possible to bring them to a classroom with little or no adaptation. In addition to the specific technologies already developed, the TA website offers a variety of games, numerous practical materials, background reading, teachers’ and students’ forums and activities which are focused on the development of students’ imagination and thinking skills. At present, there are six technologies developed under the Thinking Approach: the Text Technology (motivating texts for different age groups and systems of tasks to them), the Creative Grammar Technology (systems of tasks which develop students’ awareness and systematic vision of grammar), the Self-Study Technology (techniques and tools for life-long and independent learning), the Film Technology (systems of tasks for work with films), the Research Technology (systems of tasks designed to enable students to learn to conduct successful research projects) and the Yes-No Technology (use of yes-no games in teaching students language and thinking).

TA Group is an educational company that provides services in the field of development of thinking skills of various groups of learners.

Policy Feedback

Joke van der Leeuw-Roord, EUCIS-LLL Vice-President, concluded that “competences” was a rather confusing notion; yet the more important thing is to put it on the political agenda than to try to define it. If she had to give a definition, the concept should be much broader than a solution to the current skills mismatch, and in that sense the new Communication is highly political; entrepreneurship skills for instance are about risk-taking, communication, openness, leadership, intercultural competences, etc. These are skills for life. Other key societal issues than employment are to be taken into account, such as social inclusion and some elements are there in relation to digital inclusion. Related challenges include the recognition of those competences outside formal learning, the capacity of our systems to assess them and the lack of teacher training to do so. Active citizenship is a very important challenge and this issue attracted the biggest group of participants. It reflects the need to do more. Some feel that teachers are not skilled enough to teach transversal competences such as learning to learn but the big problem is that it is often not a question of choice. They are many barriers and sometimes little opportunities to get continuing training or to participate in peer learning activities within European organisations for example. To tackle all those challenges, civil society has a high added value and a genuine civil dialogue should be implemented with all stakeholders beyond having an annual European Education, Training and Youth Forum. Partnerships are a strong element in Erasmus for all; we need a platform such as EUCIS-LLL to talk with people from other sectors and levels. Events such as this one aim to spread new ideas and possibility transfer some positive experiences with other actors in lifelong learning.
Edita TAMOŠIŪNAITĖ, Lithuanian Vice-Minister of Education and Science, found the theme of the conference very important on the eve of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU, as it is about active citizenship, human rights and tolerance. The conference is the perfect place to disseminate the good practices that will help addressing challenges that concern us all such as youth unemployment, VET and employment. The Ministry hoped that the day was rich in exchange of ideas and assured that it would leave an indelible print in Vilnius.

Klavdija CERNILOGAR, Policy Officer on “Skills and qualifications strategies”, DG Education and Culture, European Commission, remarked that the first challenge to address when speaking about competences or employability was to reach a common understanding. In times of changing paradigms towards learning outcomes, what we need from citizens is attitudes, and this can be achieved by introducing practical experiences in curricula. Our students have a diploma but no clue about practice. Then comes the challenge of the recognition of those competences (how to bring them to the same language) and assessing skills acquired in non-formal learning pathways is still very much a process in many Member States. The 2012 Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning is a good step towards this recognition.

This is the chance for civil society to step in. The Commission is also working on a new Communication on “Opening up Education”, as new learning vectors such as open educational resources are major steps forward to broaden access to education. She concluded by saying that the various goals of education are not incompatible.

Pavel TRANTINA, Vice-President of Group III “Various interests” in the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), quoted Seneca, taken up by Comenius: “Life is long if we know how to use it”. He focused on non-formal education and regretted that the Commission decided to tackle it apart from the “Rethinking Education” Communication; this is clearly a missed opportunity. Education policies have to be holistic and Jacques Delors had understood this when describing the four pillars of education (i.e. Learning to know, to do, to live together, to be). The EESC is now preparing its opinion on “Rethinking Education”. The accompanying staff working document on the assessment of key competences is of particular importance relating to this conference as current assessment systems are still very much focusing on formal education and European and national qualifications frameworks are not well implemented. Employers are not encouraged to look beyond candidates’ CV. The need for better recognition and validation of competences gained in non-formal settings, also known as the Strasbourg process (2013 Council of Europe resolution), will most certainly be mentioned in the EESC report.

The competences tackled by the conference are very important. Mr Trantina appreciates that digital skills are so high in the EU political agenda. Active citizenship cannot be taught but must be experienced, and cooperation between schools and non-formal learning organisations should be increased. The work of the new Alliance for Volunteering is valuable in this sense. As for entrepreneurship skills, it is still hard to make people understand that business is not evil and that more correlations should be established with education (see the study on the impact of non-formal education in youth organisations on young people’s employability edited by the European Youth Forum). To conclude, Mr Trantina highlighted that the only thing that businesses ask schools for that matter in the Czech Republic is to teach children how to learn, because they can teach them everything else.

Open discussion with the audience

The audience warned that we should be careful that the competence approach does not get lost in the change of paradigm towards learning outcomes. The audience also pointed out that Rethinking Education should also be about rethinking democracy and that there is a need to talk about democracy in schools and among young people. Individuals need to understand how the system works and should be able to change it. Ms Cernilogar wished that the “Rethinking Education” Communication was seen as a way to address some problems and not always as a missed opportunity to tackle others. It is only one element within the Education and Training work programme that is much broader and tackles active citizenship as one of its 4 strategic priorities. However we cannot ignore the crisis which explains the focus taken in the communication. Other participants outlined the need to recognise non-formal education and its added value.
EUCIS-LLL Platform
39 rue des Deux Églises
B-1000 Brussels
Contact: info@eucis-lll.eu
More info: www.eucis-lll.eu