EMBEDDING THE LLL CONTRIBUTION FOR SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT INTO UNIVERSITY STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES

APL = Accreditation of Prior Learning

B-M-D = Bachelor-Master-Doctorate

CE = Continuing Education

CET = Continuing Education and Training

CPD = Continuing Professional Development

EAPRIL = European Association for Practitioner Research on Improving Learning

EC = European Commission

ECTS = European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

ESREA = European Society for Research on the Education of Adults

EUA = European University Association

EUCEN = European University Continuing Education Network

HE = Higher Education

HEIs = Higher Education Institutions

LLL = Lifelong Learning

LLLU = Lifelong Learning University

MOOC = Massive Open Online Courses

NGOs = Non-governmental Organisations

OPL = Open and Distance Learning

PA = Public Administration

RPL = Recognition of Prior Learning

RUIAP = Italian University Lifelong Learning Network (Rete Universitaria Italiana per l'Apprendimento Permanente)

SD = Social Dimension

SME = Small and Medium Enterprise

UCE = University Continuing Education

ULLL = University Lifelong Learning

VAE = Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience

VET = Vocational Education and Training

VPL = Validation of Prior Learning

VNIL/VNFIL = Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning

2

Useful links to related documents

COMMIT Executive Summary http://commit.eucen.eu/sites/default/files/COMMIT_ExecutiveSummary.pdf

COMMIT Policy Reminders http://commit.eucen.eu/about

Strategy Process Tool http://commit.eucen.eu/sites/default/files/COMMIT_Tools1.pdf

Strategy Content Tool http://commit.eucen.eu/sites/default/files/COMMIT_Tools2_0.pdf

Benchmarking Tool http://commit.eucen.eu/sites/default/files/COMMIT_Tools3_0.pdf

Monitoring Attainment Tool http://commit.eucen.eu/sites/default/files/COMMIT_Tools4_MonitoringAttainment.pdf

COMMIT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

4

INTRODUCTION

In the framework of the Bologna process, the Ministers responsible for Higher education agreed in the London Communiqué (2007) on a common definition for the objective of the social dimension: "the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations". While there have been various projects concerning the social dimension in Higher Education, less has been done so far concerning the **access**, **retention** and **attainment** of adults in Higher Education. EU 2020 and the data published by Eurostat set out the scale of the task to be achieved in a relatively short period of time and provides important analysis to frame this work.

Background evidence in the field has been collected in previous projects undertaken by **eucen**, partners and members: BeFlex, BeFlex Plus, ALLUME, and COMPASS are the most directly relevant. In addition, the work done by DIE on Opening Higher Education to Adults, 'HEAD' has confirmed the knowledge of this field. COMMIT also built in the experience and results of other recently/currently funded relevant projects e.g. Comparative research (527209-LLP-1-2012-1-RO-ERASMUS-ESIN), and PL4SD relating to national policies (527458-LLP-1-2012-1-AT-ERASMUS-ESIN).

The COMMIT project has tried to make a significant contribution to the work already done by developing and testing a new and innovative tool to address the need for data which will enable effective monitoring of participation and attainment strategies. By doing this, COMMIT has aimed to increase commitment to the social dimension of higher education (HE) and support strategies for increasing attainment.

The Technical Report of COMMIT is the result of the transversal analysis done on the collection of data from the tools and the visit reports filled in by partners. Besides presenting the project, its specific objectives and the Tools developed and used by the partnership, the report offers a comprehensive and detailed overview of the data collected and of the findings.

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1. Approach

COMMIT built on the work of a previous project – ALLUME[1], which developed a set of self-evaluation tools for universities to review their strategy for implementation of a comprehensive and coherent LLL university.

In the first project phase, the 3 self-evaluation tools developed in ALLUME were reviewed and adapted to take on board a wider concept of the social dimension, with clearer definitions of participants in HE and attainment levels. New features were added to include clearer descriptions of under-represented and non-traditional groups, as well as relevant qualitative indicators of their participation. The review and development of each tool was led by one of the members of the project Management Team, in consultation with the rest of the partners: P2-BE reviewed the Strategy Process Tool, P3-FI reviewed the Strategy Content Tool, P5-PT reviewed the Benchmarking Tool.

In addition to revising and adapting the pre-existing tools, a new Tool for Monitoring Attainment was developed by P4-FR), and its feasibility assessed through piloting with all the partner institutions.

P6-DE) led the review of the visit templates developed in ALLUME, including aspects emerging from the capacity building activity organised by COMMIT in May 2014. This activity was organised following the recommendations made by those COMMIT partners who had taken part in ALLUME. The main purpose of the training activity was to make sure that all partners had a clear idea of the use of the tools and the scope of the visits before the visits could take place, so that they could brief their colleagues in their own institution, prepare the self-evaluation effectively and organise the people and documents for the visits they would receive and carry out.

The involvement of experts from other related EU projects contributed to enhance the quality of the training activities. An expert in university management was also actively involved in the training event. In addition to this, an external evaluator was sub-contracted to take part to the training event, guaranteeing an element of externality and objectivity to the project and providing the partnership with useful insights.

In the following phase of the project, a total of 12 visits took place. Partners P2-BE-P13-HU visited a partner different from the one who visited them, with P1 joining one visit as observer. The visits focussed on the discussion of 2 out of the 4 self-evaluation tools, completed by the host partner institution, and were based on the principle of collaborative and collective learning between visitor and visited institution, involving different representatives of the visited universities in order to initiate and foster an organisational learning. A total number of 172 individuals were involved in the visits, which makes an average of 14 people per institution. At the end of each visit, a report was prepared in partnership between the visitor and the visited, summarising the discussion, so that the transversal analysis could be undertaken.

In the subsequent phase, the consortium was divided in 2 groups to carry out the transversal analyses of the visit reports and of the tools filled in by partners:

– Group A led by P4-FR, with P6-DE, P9-IT, P10-GR, P12-ES and P13-HU, analysed the results of using the new monitoring attainment tool as reported in the visits and produce a feasibility report

– Group B led by P2-BE and P1-BE, with P3-FI, P5-PT, P7-IE, P8-TR and P11-RO, analysed the results of the first three tools.

6

---

[1] http://allume.eucen.eu/

The draft reports were then discussed and amended as thought necessary during a validation meeting organised in November 2015. After the validation stage, the reports were finalised to produce the final products:

– An executive summary

– A policy paper including recommendations

– A technical report covering the methodology and results of the data collection and analysis

In the following phase of project valorisation and exploitation, 12 national active learning events will be organised, one in each of the partner universities, with the participation of around 10 other universities and representatives from the relevant ministry and a European event with an active learning approach. The tools and project results will be hosted in the Moodle platform of **eucen** in a friendly-to-use format.

Connection to previous work developed by ALLUME

COMMIT consortium was made up of two groups:

– 6 partners connected to a previous project – ALLUME: these partners, familiar with the ALLUME products, were also aware of the challenges encountered during the peer-to-peer visits undertaken in 2010-2011 and therefore in a position to recommend real identified improvements

– 7 new partners that were not connected to ALLUME. these new partners did not have a pre-conception of the tools and thus acted as testers of what was to represent a new product for them

To enable a better coordination and harmonization of the project activities and results, a Management Team (MT) was established, with the responsibility to draft, consult and finalise the tools and the transversal analysis reports on the outcomes of the activities. The Management Team took care of the academic content of the project and supervised the collective learning process. Since the different perspectives of partners were identified as a useful resource for the consortium, the Management Team was composed by 5 partners from the ALLUME project, 1 tester university from the ALLUME project and 1 new partner that was not familiar with the ALLUME work and could bring that particular perspective to the group. Each member of the MT has taken overall responsibility for an aspect of the project work.

Overall, COMMIT work approach was based on social learning and learning from experience of self and others. All project processes were based on a combination of individual and mutual learning, collective and team learning, as well as organisational learning.

1.2. Products

COMMIT produced:

– Four self-assessment Tools (available in electronic format, in EN and FR):

• The Strategy Process Tool

• The Strategy Content Tool

• The Benchmarking Tool

• The Monitoring Attainment Tool

- A "Visit Kit", consisting in a set of documents to be used by partners when organising the peer-learning visits (available in electronic format, in EN and FR). The 'Visit Kit' includes:

  • Welcome

  • Short Info Sheet

  • Fact Sheet

  • Template Agenda

  • Step by Step Procedure

  • Host Report Form

  • Visitor Report Form

- An Executive Summary, summarising the project outcomes and achievements (available in electronic and paper format, in EN and FR)

- Recommendations and Policy paper (available in electronic and paper format, in EN and FR)

- A Technical Report (available in electronic format, in EN), as the result of the transversal analysis done on the collection of data from the tools and the visit reports filled in by partners.

The last three documents reflect on the methods, process and lessons learned, the experience gained by the partners at individual and institutional level, the policy lessons, as well as the analysis and results of the project work.

1.3. Strengths of the project

Although there have been various projects concerning the social dimension in Higher Education in the past few years, less has been done concerning the issues of access, retention and attainment of adults in Higher Education. COMMIT tried to address these specific aspects of the social dimension, by adapting and enhancing the tools and approaches developed by a previous European project – ALLUME and transferring them to new countries.

The innovative aspect of COMMIT lied in its approach based on social learning, on learning from experience of self and others, including from mistakes and failures. This approach required trust and confidence and is, at the same time, about individual learning, mutual, collective and team learning, and organisational learning.

The promotion of peer learning was built on the idea that the difference of cultural, political, historical and institutional structures brings a richness of experience and allows for stimulating exchanges to take place. The learning process is at its best when shared internationally and fed back into a national and institutional process. COMMIT facilitated this virtuous circle through the European partnership.

On one hand, the experience of the partners who participated in the previous project – ALLUME – offered a solid basis for moving forward in the process. On the other hand, the new partners in new countries brought new contexts, principles, practice and experience, challenging the existing responses to the challenges of 2020. In addition to bringing together a range of different institutional and national expertise, the project was also fed by actors from other European projects and national and European networks who contributed to the learning process within the project and also feed that back into other communities of practice.

1.4. Project partners

COMMIT partnership included 5 countries with a good track record of attainment – Belgium, Finland, France, Spain, Ireland – and 7 countries that have more work to do in this regard – Romania, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal and Turkey. The partnership included 6 partners who were involved in the ALLUME project (5 as full partners and 1 as testing university) to provide continuity with the previous project experience, and 7 new partners. All partners were at different stages of developing the social dimension of Higher Education, so that a valuable exchange was possible, each partner having something to teach and to learn, promoting commitment by all. Apart from **eucen**, 10 partners within the consortium were currently actors in their respective national network for ULLL (P2-BE, P3-FI, P4-FR, P5-PT, P6-DE, P7-IE, P8-TR, P9-IT, P12-ES, P13-HU), and all partners acted as multipliers at national level through formal and informal professional networks.

A number of considerations were taken into account when selecting the COMMIT project partners, with the objective to ensure a balanced variety of partners that would allow the consortium to achieve and fulfil all the planned work:

Territory

The partnership comprised 13 strong institutions from 12 different European countries, representing thus a broad coverage of Southern, Northern, Western and Eastern Europe.

Expertise

The partnership demonstrated a wealth of experience and knowledge in the HE sector with their different learning cultures, traditions and education systems. The project was coordinated by **eucen**, which counts with 182 members from 34 different countries. **eucen** has coordinated multinational European projects for over 20 years and disposes of ample experience in connecting key stakeholders form all educational areas and sectors to contribute to the further development of LLL policies and practices.

National Attainment Record

According to the Eurostat data in 2011, the partnership combined 5 countries with a good track record of attainment (BE, FI, FR, ES and IE) and 7 countries with more work to do to reach the targets (RO, DE, GR, HU, IT, PT and TR).

Development of Social Dimension of HE at National level

The selected partners were at different stages of developing the social dimension of HE, some more experienced, others less. But all were working on this topic in a different cultural context. All the partners visited another partner and were visited. The peer-to-peer learning visits were key learning events to acquire knowledge about what is happening in other countries in the EU.

2. TOOLS

2.1. Objectives of the tools

COMMIT developed four self-evaluation tools aimed to help universities address and assess their approach to the social dimension and its implementation.

COMMIT revised and adapted the 3 self-evaluation tools developed by the ALLUME project in order to take on board a clearer definition and understanding of the concept of social dimension. New features were added to include indicators of culture, as well as a clearer description of under-represented and non-traditional groups and relevance qualitative indicators of their participation. The process led to the development of 3 revised tools:

1. **Tool 1 – Strategy Process Tool:** the tool uses the strategy-as-practice approach developed by Wittington and invites universities to analyse in detail their way of "doing strategy", taking into consideration the social dimension aspects. It has a strong organisational focus and helps universities to identify key internal and external actors, steps in making a strategy, methods, and communication issues. The tool aims at supporting a collaborative work within HEIs in order to define for the first time a Lifelong Learning / Social Dimension strategy or review and revise an existing one.

2. **Tool 2 – Strategy Content Tool:** the tool assists universities in developing a strategic overview of their current strategy related to LLL and the social dimension, mission, vision and goals. It invites universities to select key priorities for the future and to work in detail on them, leading to a revision of their current strategy and to the formulation of an action plan. It is meant to promote discussion about the need to place emphasis on the social dimension of LLL in HEIs.

3. **Tool 3 – Benchmarking/Charter Tool:** the tool aims to benchmark universities against the 10 commitments contained in the European Universities' Charter on LLL but also against a set of social dimension indicators. It invites universities to assess their performance against these indicators and to define their objectives. It intends to provide HEIs with an insight into their performance in Lifelong Learning and their third mission – Social Dimension. It was designed with the intention of fostering awareness of the LLL-SD commitments, to allow ranking purposes and in-depth analysis.

In addition to the revision and adaptation of the 3 tools developed by the ALLUME project, COMMIT developed a fourth, new tool:

4. **Tool 4 – Monitoring Attainment Tool:** the tool is specifically designed to monitor attainment. The use of this new tool has been the object of a separate feasibility study.

2.2. Structure of the tools

Each tool contains an introduction and an explication of their rationale. A short description of the tool is then provided, of its main structure and division into different sections. A table of contents delineates the sections and the objectives envisaged in each section, along with the type of activity that respondents will need to perform to achieve the expected goals and take the most out of the tool use.

Depending on the specific aspect to be assessed, the tools include a set of open questions to be addressed in order to carry out the self-analysis process, as well as more specific key questions where respondents need to grade the different items or tick the appropriate ones.

The tools are very comprehensive and can be used in different environments and in different ways, depending on what the respondents aim to find out or achieve. In general, a list of different actions are required or recommended, among which: answering questionnaires, establishing key priorities, performing a SWOT-analysis, plotting and visual understanding of the results, reflecting on a set of additional questions, and others.

2.3. Methodology

The tools can be filled in on an individual or collective basis. In case they are filled in collectively, it is advisable to proceed by focus groups: the group discusses the questions and summarizes their answers before completing all the items of the tools questionnaires. This particular procedure involves 3 steps:

1. Collective discussion of the answers

2. Summarization of the answers collected by the focus group

3. Production of a final document

In general, given that LLL strategy and the social dimension involve a major cultural and organisational change for universities, it is always recommended to engage several people around the process in order to get a collective view of the reasons behind the existing processes and develop a common understanding and vision of LLL and SD within university.

The goals of the tools are twofold: on the one hand, they aim to involve people within universities and help them to start reflecting on the content of their Lifelong Learning strategy, on the other hand they aim to collect information on the Lifelong Learning strategy of the universities concerned.

2.4. Strategy Process (tool 1):

According to the main conclusions of the ALLUME project, not only is the content of the LLL strategy important, but the process of doing it is also crucial. This is aligned with the strategy-as-practice approach proposed by Whittington (1996, 2002), viewing strategy as something that is *done* within an organisation – and not something an organisation *has*.

The Strategy Process Tool is based on five key questions:

1. Why does the process of LLLU/Social Dimension strategizing begin? What are the external and internal drivers of change?

2. Who are the people involved in LLLU/Social Dimension strategizing? Who are the internal actors? What are their roles: are they doers, influential people, researchers, decision makers? Who are the external actors? What are their roles?

3. How is the process of LLLU/Social Dimension strategizing done and organised? Is it a formal or informal process? What is its level of development?

4. What are the tools and techniques used for LLLU/Social Dimension strategizing?

5. How are the products of LLLU/Social Dimension strategizing communicated?

The tool could be applied at any stage of a strategy process, usually made up of the following phases: strategic analysis, strategic plan, development, implementation and monitoring phases0F[2].

The objective of the self-analysis strategizing tool is to highlight five permanent guiding principles during the process. These five principles are represented in figure 1 below.
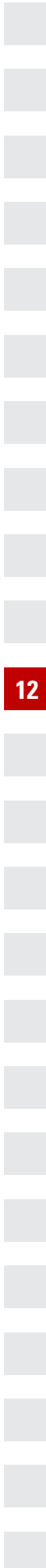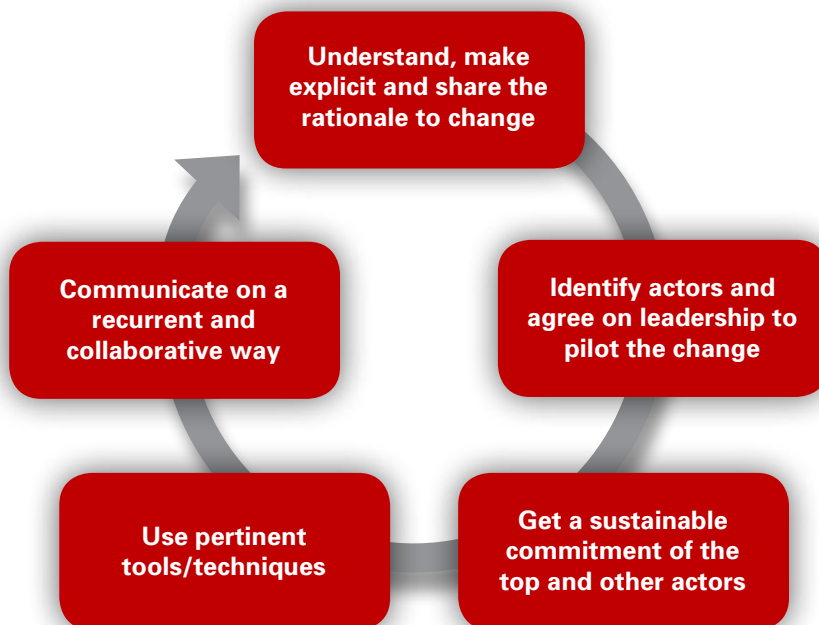
Figure 1. Five principles in the LLLU/Social Dimension strategy process [inspired from de Viron & Davies, 2015]

The Strategy Process Tool allows respondents to familiarize with a strategic approach to university lifelong learning and the university social dimension, by offering various possibilities to initiate and deploy a strategy process regarding lifelong learning and social engagement within the institution. It aims at supporting a collaborative work in order to define for the first time a LLL/SD strategy or to review or revise an existing one. In this sense, the tool supports a potentially recurrent and collaborative work of reflexion about LLL and Social engagement. It also helps to include newcomers in the strategy work.

For the reasons above, the ideal way of using the tool is one which involves a range of diverse actors in LLL and SD reflection. Throughout this process, a collective exercise can be carried out to develop a common understanding and vision of LLL and SD within university, identifying the needs and expectations of the environment and the capabilities and aspirations of the university.

2.5. Strategy Content (tool 2):

The Strategy Content Tool works on identifying and evaluating the institution's current LLL-strategy. Once the status quo of the current strategy has been mapped, it invites the user to review this strategy and to formulate three priorities for the medium term, which will be analysed in more detail and for which an Action Plan will be produced.

A new section has been added to enhance the ALLUME strategy content tool. It deals with lifelong learning and social engagement as a part of the university mission. The section looks especially at how lifelong learning and social dimension agenda are integrated into university structures and practices. This section can be used independently or as a next step after the lifelong learning strategy analysis.

---

[2] The phases - analysis of the context and the internal situation, design of objectives and action plans, operational development, implementation and monitoring of the action plans - are the ones commonly agreed in any change process even if specific content or boundaries vary in the literature (Johnson et al 2011).

The Strategy Content Tool allows to:

- document the strategic positioning of ULLL in the institution concerned

- identify LLL priorities defining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the three priorities

- position the social dimension of LLL/social engagement within the strategies and practices of research, education and support activities in the institution. Understanding the various approaches which can be chosen, when wanting to promote LLL in the university

- better understand the social dimension of LLL/social engagement in the university, including its links to the strategies and organisation of the institution, its relation to the key processes, its internal and external relations as well as interactions, its evaluation.

2.6. Benchmarking Tool (tool 3):

The Benchmarking Tool (also referred to as the Charter Tool) intends to provide HEIs with an insight into their performance in lifelong learning and the third mission – the Social Dimension. It was designed with the intention of fostering awareness of the LLL-SD commitments, to allow ranking purposes and in-depth analysis. In the remit of the COMMIT project, it also aimed to promote the success of the partners' visits.

Through the Benchmarking Tool, HEIs are invited to reflect on their activities and to match them against the 10 Commitments of the European Charter on LLL. The Charter is presented next to the tool, as well as a definition of LLL, and every commitment is accompanied by illustrations of how it has been put into practice in HEIs. The direct interaction of LLL with the Social Dimension of the commitments is also emphasised, and can be further accessed via an exemplary matrix.

An overall picture, in the institution concerned, can be produced by the responses to a questionnaire (Annex) directed to each of the 10 commitments, where every respondent can express his/her perceptions towards the commitments.

2.7. Monitoring Attainment (tool 4):

In 1996, the European Commission and the European Parliament adopted a revision of the document, initially designed in 1961 and called "The European Social Charter" [1] that has been ratified by Member States. This Charter includes 31 rights and principles that must be implemented by each of them to achieve the minimum level of social responsibility. Higher Education has a specific responsibility in this field and one could have expected that the Bologna process, initiated in 1999, would have included these aspects. Unfortunately we had to wait until 2007 and the "London Communiqué" [3] to have a clearer definition of what these responsibilities are, from the point of view of the HE Ministries:

"We share the societal aspiration that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations. We reaffirm the importance of students being able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. We therefore continue our efforts to provide adequate student services, create more flexible learning pathways into and within higher education, and to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity."

The Council of the European Union delivered specific conclusions on the social dimension (SD) of higher education in a communication published in May 2013 [2]. This document focuses on all aspects of SD including LLL. We note specifically these two affirmations:

13

> " While the challenges facing Europe today cannot be resolved by education and training alone, it is critical both in economic and social terms **to equip people with the high-level skills and competences** that Europe needs, including by striving to secure **more equitable access to, participation in** and **completion** of higher education. There are still too many capable individuals who do not participate in higher education for **social, cultural or economic reasons** or due to **insufficient systems of support and guidance.** "

> " In parallel with efforts to improve skills through vocational education and training, high-quality higher education and lifelong learning also have a crucial role to play in **enhancing employability and increasing competitiveness**, while at the same time promoting **the personal and professional development of students and graduates, and stimulating social solidarity and civic engagement.** "

The EC proposed ten recommendations to bring Higher Education in a better position towards SD. The tenth one focuses specifically on the necessity of benchmarking and collecting quantitative data on all aspects of social engagement: " [the EC invites the Member States to] *Engage in the systematic collection of relevant comparable data - while making optimum use of existing resources - in order to enhance the evidence base for policy development and to enable the effective monitoring of national objectives on access, participation and completion rates among under-represented and disadvantaged groups in higher education.* "

This is why the COMMIT project decided to describe and define more clearly what is involved in the social dimension of HE, promoting strategies for a more comprehensive approach to LLL and to monitoring not just participation but also attainment levels.

The Monitoring Attainment Tool includes two main sections: the first section is composed of a set of open questions, the second section is composed of a more detailed set of questions.

For the second section, a reduced set of selected indicators enable the monitoring of the achievement of learners entering and passing through the arrangements of HEIs for LLL, with a specific vision of social dimension. These indicators are not necessarily available in all countries or institutions and this is, in itself, an indicator of the strategy of the country or institution towards the social dimension of HE. Focusing on lifelong learning and adults in HE, it is clear in this tool that adult learners cannot be treated as a homogenous group and that different criteria exist to define "what is an adult in HE" according to the country.

– A first set of questions concerns the arrangements that are (or not) offered by the institution for individuals and citizens. These arrangements include funding questions and cannot ignore the country policies to foster greater equality in higher education, and specifically for adults.[3]

– A second set of questions is designed to try to monitor the reality of each of these arrangements, in terms of the level of activity (quantitative per year) or usefulness (permanent or ad hoc arrangements)

– A third set of questions is designed to try to monitor the reality of the arrangements made at a collective level. This could be with communities, authorities, public agencies, or others.

The questionnaires are based on the criteria used for the analysis of the participation of adults in Higher Education conducted in the HEAD project in 2013[4] and several other documents coming from the EC (e.g. and other organisations).[5]

---

[3] 2011 Eurydice: Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe. Funding and the Social Dimension. Brussels http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/131en.pdf

[4] 2014, Developing the Adult Learning Sector*: opening higher education to adults,* Contract *EAC 2012-0074 Final Report* http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2013/adult-opening_en.pdf

[5] 2014, Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI), Higher Education in the World 5, Knowledge, Engagement and Higher Education: Contributing to Social Change, Palgrave Macmillan, March 2014, 368 pages

3. SWOT ANALYSIS OF TOOLS 1, 2 and 3

The present SWOT ANALYSIS is intended as the base material to create the promotion strategy of the tools use addressed to any university interested to evaluate/assess and develop its Social Dimension.

The reports on the use of the tools provided by COMMIT partners, and especially the comments made by partners before and after using them in the peer learning visits, show that the tools are powerful instruments to work with at institutional level.

Considering that some of the institutional representatives and university decision makers will be likely to change after next academic elections, the results and experience drawn from the tools' use can be useful to identify the situation at the end of the current academic mandate. Changes in the university strategy can therefore be approached in the managerial plan of the future leadership.

From the experiences reported by COMMIT partners, it is important, from the beginning of the process, to establish and appoint the members of the working team who will work on each tool. Providing them with the appropriate material to read, prior to the first meeting, is fundamental. The leading person of all working teams should be familiar with working with/addressing the concepts and terms of LLL and Social Dimension and if possible with working with similar working instruments.

The factors reported by COMMIT partners under **Weaknesses** are thought to depend on how clear the process of working with the tools is and thus depend on a thorough explanation of the terms used. The role of the person appointed as expert to train new users of the TOOLS is therefore fundamental. Bearing in mind this, the identified weaknesses can be easily eliminated.

These factors can be mostly eliminated. Factors reported under **Threats** mirror a subjective approach to the tool and show how the tool use changes depending on how each university establishes the institutional level of representation in the working groups and on the final answers given to each question when different opinions are provided.

The experiences reported from the use of Tools 1, 2 and 3 resulted in the SWOT analysis below, accompanied by excerpts taken from the Visitor and Host Reports and followed by suggestions on how to address the use of all tools in general.

Since the analysis of the Tool4 has been carried out separately, the SWOT analysis of this Tool can be found within the Chapter 8 of this Report, at Section 8.2.

15

Topic assessed: Strategy Process (tool 1)	
Helpfulness of the tool to analyse LLL and SD	**Harmfulness of the tool to analyse LLL and SD**

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal Factors	Factors considered under strengths: – Develops awareness on the necessity to include and create a strategy on SD (if it does not exist) in the university mission and strategic plan or to further develop it (if it already exists); – Facilitates communication between internal and external drivers on developing the SD further; – Provides opportunity for a mutual understanding of decision makers; – Proves useful in identifying and solving other similar aspects within the university life;	Factors considered under weaknesses: – For those universities who are not familiar with a strategized SD, the tool may seem too long and detailed; – Without a previous document to define and provide working examples on SD, the answers may be inadequate;
	Opportunities offered by the tool	**Threats for using the tool**
External Factors	Factors considered under opportunities offered by the tool: – Triggers the discussion on broader subjects and in depth reflections over the SD in universities; – Provides a solid framework to update the existing strategy or to create one tailored to the national/regional benefits, given the existing legal, economic and social perspective; – Helps to develop initiatives and to alter decision makers' attitudes towards the medium to long-term benefits of the university;	Factors considered under threats for using the tool: – The tool focuses on the evaluation of stakeholders with less regard to the regulatory and organisational environment; – When separated from tool 2, it can lead to inconclusive answers;

16

Excerpts from the Visitor and Host Reports

Sample Excerpts that relate to the "STRENGHTS" of Tool 1

– *From our point of view, the tools (1 to 3) have been very useful and work well to organize the discussion and mutual understanding of the challenges, in spite of the short time we have.* (P4-FR, Visitor Report, on Tool 1 and 3)

– *Both Tool 1 and Tool 3 were considered to be of real help and, at the same time, they proved useful in solving other adjacent aspects within the university life. The team spent a long time trying to draw the appropriate spider diagram that explains the real situation.* (P10-GR, Visitor Report, Tool 1 and 3)

Sample Excerpts that relate to the "WEAKNESSES" of Tool 1

– *The tools (except tool 3) could be improved by being shorter, less detailed, and having more space for comments. Some of the items were still not understandable or applicable.* (P6-DE, Host Report, on Tool 1)

Sample Excerpts that relate to the "OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE TOOL" of Tool 1

– *The tool is useful for all universities. The CRUI (Conference of Italian University Rectors) has recently sent a questionnaire to all the universities concerning their involvement in LLL. So the tools used in COMMIT project could be useful also for this purpose.* (P4-FR, Visitor Report, on Tool 1 and 3).

– *Both Tool 1 and Tool 2 were considered to be the focus of the discussions. At the same time, they just triggered discussion on broader subjects and in depth reflections over the correlations between what seems fit for the university to develop and the European context of globalization, economic crisis, the motivation to become an adult student, cost-effective supporting services, internationalization and research in SD development of HEIs.* (P11-RO, Visitor Report, Tool 1).

Sample Excerpts that relate to the "THREATS OFFERED BY THE TOOL" of Tool 1

– *The tools rely too much on the evaluation of stakeholders and neglect the regulatory and organisational environment and most relevant documents in support. The visitors should be able to consider also databases and official documents of the visited university, in addition to analysing the tools and meeting with the stakeholders.* (P4-FR, Visitor Report, on Tool 1 and 3).

Topic assessed: Strategy Content (tool 2)	
Helpfulness of the tool to analyse LLL and SD	**Harmfulness of the tool to analyse LLL and SD**
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Factors considered under strengths: – Identifies the 3 strategic priorities of each university concerning its SD, reasoning them based on an individual SWOT analysis; – Provides the structure for planning the participation of the host university for the incoming visitors; – Facilitates better communication between university units regarding SD strategy and consequent actions; – Triggers strong awareness about the related issues; – Helps to improve a ULLL based orientation	Factors considered under weaknesses: – Some considered the length of the tool as an issue. Because of the length of the tools it was difficult to get individual written replies. – Content of the tool – there are overlapping parts and the tools should be edited to eliminate them. – People tend to think to the questions embedded in the tools at two different levels: at their organisational unit and at the university level. So they are confused about how to fill in the forms. – Different use of terminology, lack of understanding due to different connotations in each country
Opportunities offered by the tool	**Threats for using the tool**
Factors considered under opportunities offered by the tool: – The tool offered a starting point for those who want to evaluate their institution's current LLL-strategy and the ways to establish connections between LLL and SD. This was new to many stakeholders. – The tool proved valuable for bringing together people and making them discuss over the issues of LLL and SD, although it was difficult at the initial stages of the discussion, given also the presence of an external "evaluator"; – The tool helps to develop an awareness of the importance to develop SD based on a proper strategy.	Factors considered under threats for using the tool: – Some universities do not have an existing strategy yet. Therefore, in these universities addressing the questions and using the tools is problematic from the university perspective rather than from the departmental or individual one. – As mentioned in the weaknesses part, language differences represent a weakness but also a threat since people may attribute different meanings in addressing to LLL and SD. Therefore, they provide answers for the tool based on what they consider as related and relevant.

Internal Factors (row label for Strengths/Weaknesses)
External Factors (row label for Opportunities/Threats)

Sample Excerpts that relate to the "STRENGHTS" of the Tool 2

– *The broad framework of Tools 2 and 3 provided the structure for the meetings and interviews.* (P7-IE, Visitor Report)

– *The tools (2 to 3) have been very useful and work well to organise the discussion and mutual understanding of the challenge.* (P9-IT, Visitor Report)

17

– *Once we had the experience of working with the tools for our own university, discussions about SD based on these tools is fruitful and develop a very concrete insight on "Ifs" and "Whats".* (P11-RO, Visitor Report)

– *The chosen tools work very well in an environment and institutional frame to improve a lifelong learning oriented services and other education and research based work framed into collaborative, community-driven approaches.* (P13-HU, Visitor Report)

Sample Excerpts that relate to the "WEAKNESSES" of the Tool 2

– *Most people found them time consuming. Also, some of those without specific knowledge of the topics, found them overlapping and somewhat confusing.* (P7-IE, Visitor Report)

– *Part of the difficulty was due to the fact that people tended to think about the questions involved in the tools at two levels: at their unit of the organisation and at the university level. The participants had confusion about how to fill in the tools* (P8-TR, Visitor Report)

– *The tools are heavy and unexpected. An on-line version of the tools would favour the answering process. Most people in my University, to whom I sent tools 2 and 3 did not give written feed-back on them, due to lack of time to fully get into them. Although later it was possible to obtain reactions, even if only on tool 2.* (P5-PT, Host Report)

– *The Tools are lengthier than necessary… There is a need for thorough editing across all 4 Tools as there is a good deal of repetition.* (P7-IE, Host Report)

18

Sample Excerpts that relate to the "OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE TOOL" of the Tool 2

– *The tools were used during the visit more as a starting point for making connections between LL and SD, which many stakeholders had not previously seen.* (P7-IE, Visitor Report)

– *The participants had confusion about how to fill in the tools, but when as a group we came together we went over the parts that they had trouble to fill in. Therefore, at the end everyone involved in the visit were content with the way they filled in the tools and the meeting together to discuss over the questions helped a lot.* (P8-TR, Visitor Report)

– *I personally consider working with these tools, institutionally speaking, uncomfortable but meaningful. It develops a true awareness of the importance to actually develop SD based on a proper strategy instead of just doing random activities with some social impact.* (P11-RO, Visitor Report)

– *The final discussion on Tool2 and, also, revisiting the minutes and other notes of the visit helped the visitor build up a specific view on the development of ULLL at URV with a scope on social dimension. The situation is the URV will be able to teach us on social dimension according to its programmes, amongst other collaborative frames, at its Lifelong Learning Centre (LLLC) and its Service Learning initiative.* (P13-HU, Visitor Report)

Sample Excerpts that relate to the "THREATS OFFERED BY THE TOOL" of the Tool 2

– *During the visit it was agreed that it is not easy to work with the tools when there is no existing strategy yet. E.g. for URV it is difficult to analyse the Social Dimension in LLL Strategy because it is not yet included.* (P12-ES, Host Report)

– *The tools work probably well with the participants and universities familiar with the concepts of lifelong learning and social dimension but there might be some challenges with the others.* (P3-FI, Visitor Report)

– The main challenge of the tools might be that there really are 4 different tools plus the "tool 5", matrix. There is lot of material with quite many overlapping issues and it takes time to digest everything. Thus, if the hosting university is a bit uncertain on the issue it might be difficult to choose the best tool and on the other hand use them all effectively and look for interlinks between the tools. The main concern refers to amount of time required to conduct the self-analysis when we know the limited timeframes of the key people. (P3-FI, visitor)

Topic assessed: Benchmarking Tool (tool 3)	
Helpfulness of the tool to analyse LLL and SD	**Harmfulness of the tool to analyse LLL and SD**
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Factors considered under strengths: – Defines/Selects a working group of internal and external actors to be involved in the evaluation, for which it facilitates communication; – Ranks the 10 commandments as they work at present; – Provides insight for what needs to be done in developing the SD at the institutional level; – Spider diagram to immediately develop an awareness of the limitations of the SD;	Factors considered under weaknesses: – Extra explanation is needed about how to fill in the tool; – For some participants it was perceived as being too long; – When used outside the project consortium, it is important that the responsible person deals with the organisation of the working group ;
Opportunities offered by the tool	**Threats for using the tool**
Factors considered under opportunities offered by the tool: – The tool could be used by all universities since it reflects already similar interests of university; – It develops the internal visibility (within the university community) on all actions related to SD; – It can trigger an action plan for promoting externally the ULLL activities in a more structured way; – It can lead to new initiatives in developing SD at the institutional level; – It can lead to the development of new consortia between universities, including authority bodies and NGO's	Factors considered under threats for using the tool: – Working with the tool as individuals can make it impossible to accurately aggregate the answers at the institutional level; – Working with less relevant stakeholders may lead to inaccurate ranking required for the spider diagram

Internal Factors (row label for Strengths/Weaknesses)
External Factors (row label for Opportunities/Threats)

19

Sample Excerpts that relate to the "STRENGHTS" of the Tool 3

– From our point of view, the tools (1 to 3) have been very useful and work well to organize the discussion and mutual understanding of the challenges, in spite of the short time we have. (P4-FR, Visitor Report, on Tool 1 and 3).

– From our point of view, the tools (2 to 3) have been very useful and work well to organise the discussion and mutual understanding of the challenge. (P9-IT, Visitor Report, Tool 3).

– Both Tool 1 and Tool 3 were considered to be of real help and, at the same time, they proved useful in solving other adjacent aspects within the university life. The team spent a long time trying to draw the appropriate spider diagram that explains the real situation. (P11-RO, Visitor Report, Tool 1 and 3).

– During the visit, tool 3 was used successfully as a guide for discussion. During this extensive discussion, we observed three things:

- *A global under-estimation of the actions developed by DCU and the results; in one word DCU people have been too modest!*

- *A difficulty to integrate different points of view or actions for each dimension; tool 3 was, before the visit, filled by a group quite diverse regarding roles and responsibilities: averaged results were reported in the tool. It would be worthwhile to provide, for each dimension, strong and weak points illustrated by concrete actions/plans/projects in order to have a better view.*

- *A misunderstanding of question 10, DCU as a Lifelong Learning organisation.*

Within tool 3, the sections on spider diagram and priorities are particularly useful to support the discussion. (P2-BE, Visitor Report, Tool 3).

Sample Excerpts that relate to the "WEAKNESSES" of the Tool 3

– *The hosts observed that the main challenges of the visit process were related to the arrangement of the agenda and the explanation of how to fill in Tool 1 and Tool 3.* (P4-FR, Visitor Report, Tool 1 & 3).

– *Depending on the state of development of SD and ULLL within an institution, the effort can be too much. For our University it was crucial to explain first what ULLL is and what we mean by SD. Less time working on the tools and more time for shaping the construct of ULLL and SD and then develop suiting projects and partnerships could improve the visits.* (P6-DE, Host Report, Tool 1 and 3).

– *The tools are heavy and unexpected. An on-line version of the tools would favour the answering process. Most people in my University, to whom I sent tools 2 and 3 did not give written feed-back on them, due to lack of time to fully get into them. Although later it was possible to obtain reactions, even if only on tool 2.* (P5-PT, Host Report, Tool 3).

– *The main challenge in using the tools was that for some participants the ideas of lifelong learning and social dimension were quite new and that is why discussion required a lot of additional questions and examples before going to define questions. That excludes the faculty group that really knew LLL and SD and the specific topics of the Charter.* (P3-FI, Visitor Report, Tool 3).

Sample Excerpts that relate to the "OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE TOOL" of the Tool 3

– *The tool is useful for all universities. The CRUI (Conference of Italian University Rectors) has recently sent a questionnaire to all the universities on their involvement in LLL. So the tools used in COMMIT project could be useful also for this purpose.* (P4-FR, Visitor Report, on Tool 1 and 3).

Sample Excerpts that relate to the "THREATS OFFERED BY THE TOOL" of the Tool 3

– *The tools rely too much on the evaluation of stakeholders and neglect the regulatory and organisational environment and most relevant documents in support. The visitors should be able to consider also data bases and official documents of the visited University, in addition to analysing the tools and meeting with the stakeholders.* (P4-FR, Visitor Report, on Tool 1 and 3).

Suggestions Related with the Development of Tools in General

As evident from the feedback reports, the tools are considered very powerful in defining or developing/updating the strategy regarding the SD in universities. They also provide the visibility on what is already work-in-progress in each university.

20

In order to develop a pro-active attitude towards SD within the entire academic community, the use of these tools should be extended to more stakeholders and feedback reports written to gather the necessary documents for the later update of the strategy by the decision makers.

These are some suggestions and comments for the future use of the tools:

- There is a need for thorough editing across all four Tools as there is a good deal of repetition.

- There is a need for consistency across the Tools in the rankings used (e.g. some are on a scale of 1-4. Some 1-7 etc.).

- Part of the terminology needs to be re-examined (e.g.: will any university claim to have 'totally achieved' any strategic objective?).

- Best practices on strategic approach to the SD and on implementation actions of the strategy could be included in a separate document/material and provided to those who need working examples before deciding to make changes in the structure of the university units.

- Although the tools are filled in before the visit takes place, during the visit, when discussions are open to more participants and with the external point of view of the expert visitor, the answers in the tools can be re-assessed and finalized with a fresh perspective.

- Given the previous suggestion, it is essential to carefully plan the groups that will discuss the tools during the visits.

- The tools already filled in by all partners could be examples for other universities, before they could use them the first time.

- Some of the partners suggested that tool 1 and 2 can be joined in one tool, since decision makers at the university levels are mainly involved in both the strategy process and strategy content.

- The updating of the strategy and action plan for implementing SD in universities should be based on the use of these tools every 2 years (immediately after the management elections, at mid-term and at the end of the mandate).

21

4. FINDINGS

The transversal analyses presented in this report will focus on the strategic content of lifelong learning and its social dimension in higher education institutions, the state-of-art of lifelong learning in relation to the EUA LLL charter and the indications of social dimension in higher education institutions.

It is important to notice that the source material used in the COMMIT transversal analysis consists of the information given by the twelve COMMIT project university partners to the four self-assessment tools and in the visit reports. This prompts a series of warnings concerning the data collection process.

First of all, the data translate the self-representation of each university situation.

Secondly (and consequently), the 'data collectors' are different from one university to another. Some collections have been made collectively while others are the result of a one-by-one approach.

Thirdly, the data shows results of a specific moment in time, giving a "snapshot" of the LLL/SD strategizing process in the twelve partner universities in a specific period, without considering the later evolution of this process.

Lastly, the nature of the collected material is not identical from one tool to another. Some tools are essentially quantitative while others mix qualitative and quantitative data. The analysis had therefore to be adapted to each tool in order to take into account these differences of nature.

Notwithstanding the warnings above, the data collected present very positive features: they ensure a wide geographical and institution-type coverage, and they constitute an authentic evidence of the present state of ULLL and SD in HEIs as well as a clear indication of the great variance between institutions.

22

4.1. Overview of the 12 cases (universities description)

Partner	Year of foundation	ULLL embedded in university strategy	Start of LLL strategy or first action	Start of SD strategy or first action
P2-BE	1425	YES	1999	1975
P3-FI	1920	YES	1996	2010
P4-FR	1971	YES	1973	1973
P5-PT	1973	YES	1986	2005
P6-DE	1829	NO	2009	2016
P7-IE	1980	YES	1982	2005
P8-TR	1863	NO	2010	2010
P9-IT	1481	Upcoming	1999	2013
P10-GR	1964	YES	1970	1997
P11-RO	1937	YES	1950	1990
P12-ES	1991	YES	2001	2012
P13-HU	1367	N/A	2003	2013

Partner	Number of students in B-M-D	Number of students in non-B-M-D	Kind of degrees offered (if possible include EQF)
P2-BE	B (12.935) M (12.535) D (1969)	3660	Bachelor (120 ECTS, EQF 6) Masters (60 to 240 ECTS, EQF 7) Doctorates (4 years, EQF 8) Other non-degree programs (certificates…)
P3-FI	20111	Open university: 7483 Continuing Education and Training: 8443	Bachelors, Masters, Doctorates
P4-FR	B = 8399 M = 3400 D = 592 Total : 12 391	6054 (2014-2015)	4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 (EQF)
P5-PT	14280	About 1800	Bachelors, Masters, Doctorates - In some Engineering fields, the UA offers integrated 1st and 2nd cycle programmes called Integrated Masters.
P6-DE	B= 14.641 M= 7.008 D= 1.687	718 (+ about 1.000 so called guest students per semester, who are not enrolled in a course)	B.A., B.Sc., Lehramt (state-certified exams), M.A., M.Sc., Doctorate
P7-IE	10,486 (8334-1505-620)	1532	5-8 (or 6-10 on the NQF – Irish National Qualifications Framework)
P8-TR	Number of students in 2011-2012 Undergraduates in Faculties and Schools: 7.468 Graduate students in Institutes: 3.132 School of Foreign Lang., English Prep.: 2.614 (Facts and Figures: Bo aziçi University 2012, 2013)	6000	Pre-bachelor's Bachelor's Master's PhD
P9-IT	B - Lauree M - Lauree magistrali D - Dottorati L+LM+CU+ DOTTORATO 35.047 (a.a. 2012/13)	Specializzazione + perfezionamento + altri percorsi formativi +(Italian) master (a.a. 2012/13) = 3.469	Laurea (L); (EQF 6) Laurea magistrale (LM); (EQF 7) Diploma di specializzazione (DS); (EQF 8) Dottorato di ricerca (DR); (EQF 8) Master universitari di primo e di secondo livello (EQF 7 or 8) Corsi di formazione e perfezionamento (not included in EQF) Altri percorsi formativi (not included in EQF)
P10-GR	B=12.000 M=1,300 students full-time study to a Master's degree D=2,217 students at Doctoral level	N/A	Diploma = four years Master' s Degree = 1-2 years Doctorate = 3-8 years

Partner	Number of students in B-M-D	Number of students in non-B-M-D	Kind of degrees offered (if possible include EQF)
P11-RO	B + M = 13159; D = 547	44 (27 at the Department of Teacher Education and Training [DPPD] and 17 at Architecture)	6, 7 and 8
P12-ES	13.874 (course 2013-2014)	Students in continuous training: 3816	Bachelor (EQF 6) Master (EQF 7) Doctorate (EQF8)
P13-HU	19 746 (11 344 + 7 463 + 939)	2073	HE/C-VET (FOkSZ)/EQF Level5 – BA/BSc/EQF Level6 – MA/MSc/EQF Level7 – PhD/EQF Level8. Hungary introduced the three cycle degree structure in 2006 (BA/BSc, MA/MSc, and PhD/DLA). There are a few fields of tertiary education (e.g. law and medical studies) where undivided long programmes remain the standard form of study (10 to 12 semesters) leading to a first degree which is however equivalent to an MA/MSc degree.

Partner	Fee per semester for B-M-D programs	Fee per semester for "continuing education/ lifelong learning programs" (non-B-M-D)	Access processes: taking into account informal learning and experience
P2-BE	835 euros / year	From 200 euros to 4500	UCL has a complete system of learning from experience validation (VAE) since a few years and obtained new European funds in order to consolidate it.
P3-FI	None	Each CET program is priced individually. Open university charges 8-10 €/ study credit	Examination to degree programmes.
P4-FR	B: 184€ p/year M:256€ p/year D: 391€ p/year	The fees are established on a real cost basis, depending of the service delivered	Access: Baccalaureate; DAEU: Special access diploma for adult which can replace Baccalaureate; VAP: recognition of prior learning for access (1985 decree); VAE: VNIL for the delivery of diplomas or part of diplomas.
P5-PT	B,M: 1067,85€ per year D: 2000€ to 2750€/Year depending on the scientific area	Fees calculated according to the course profile, scientific area and market. Always lees than or equal to M and B fees.	National Contest for HE Access, Local Contest, 7 different special regimes and 6 different special Contests that account for special situation (family or academic background, sport activity, for instance) of prospective students, Re-entering, Change of Course and Course Transfer
P6-DE	None	Depends on programme	Formal access procedures only
P7-IE	B: from 1,375€/semester plus 43€ student levy per year M/D: from 1975€ FT & 1147.50€ PT (for Irish and EU students)	B: 850€ M/D: modular fees (from 1885€)	DCU pioneered the first Access and outreach programme in Ireland targeted at developing pathways for students from disadvantaged backgrounds ('first generation') to gain entry to university. In 2014, approx. 240 students avail of this alternative admission route. Adults over the age of 23 are entitled to apply for admission based on prior work and other relevant experience. In relation to informal learning, a draft RPL policy was developed by the Recognition of Prior Learning Working Group (RPL WG) and circulated to Faculties and other relevant parties in September 2010. The RPL WG agreed DCU should have a university wide policy. All programme/awards which permit entry through RPL will be identified.
P8-TR	Students do not pay any fees if they do not exceed the official time duration of their programs. If they exceed it, then they have to pay fees. The fees change from program to program, and level. International students and foreign students pay fees regardless of the official time duration of their programs.	For Certificate Programs of 100 hrs, minimum 3000TL & maximum 5000TL. For Summer School (summer-term semester) students pay application fees, add/ drop fees, and tuition fees per credit.	Mainly formal. At BULLC (Bo aziçi University Lifelong Learning Centre, BÜYEM) people from all strata of society would attend courses and certificate programs. Depending on the program characteristics, requirements for admission change however minimum high school diploma is required and also interview is needed.

Partner	Fee per semester for B-M-D programs	Fee per semester for "continuing education/ lifelong learning programs" (non-B-M-D)	Access processes: taking into account informal learning and experience
P9-IT	B-M (L+LM): semester 459€ II semester 967€ D (DR): I semester 461€ II semester 394€	DS: I semester 461€ II semester 637€ Master: I semester 2.246€ II semester 495€ Corsi di pefezionamento: I semester 1.187€ II semester 597€	Law 240/2010, art. 2, paragraph 2 limits recognition to 12 credits: "Recognition must be made only on the basis of the skills demonstrated by each student. Excluded forms of recognition attributed collectively". A strong movement for the amendment of this rule is in place, because since 2012 have been in force national law providing for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in all curricula.
P10-GR	Tuition is generally free of charge but there are some exceptions, mainly in the case of certain post-graduate programmes and studies at the Hellenic Open University	Depends on each Program (fees vary)	Yes in some programs
P11-RO	NA, the fees are fixed per academic year and vary from faculty to faculty. Thus, the maximum is 890 euros per academic year, while the minimum is 450 euros per academic year.	For DPPD = 550 euros per academic year For Architecture = 400 euros per academic year	Not legalized.
P12-ES	Bachelor: €800 – €1300 approx. Master: €1500 approx. Doctorate: €550 per year	Average of €70 per credit	Access to B-M-D is mainly centralised and strongly regulated; Universities thus have small autonomy to decide on such issues. By law, the maximum amount of credits from informal learning or professional experience that can be recognised in a Bachelor's or Master's degree is 15% of the programme.
P13-HU	400 – 3 400 EUR - Fees may vary according to academic discipline and level of study programme. Fees are determined by faculties referring to their autonomous activities in education, training and research	350-1000 EUR	There is no functioning VPL/RLP system be used in Hungarian higher education, therefore, VPL is only narrowly used in the aspect of former HE studies being entered into Faculty level of VPL process so as to transfer former grades/credits into current studies, according to law.

26

5. TRANSVERSAL ANALYSIS OF TOOL 1: STRATEGY PROCESS

This first transversal analysis aims to identify and highlight experiences, differences and similarities in the universities' strategizing concerning the implementation of lifelong learning (LLL) and social dimension (SD) from twelve European countries. Indeed, as a main conclusion of the ALLUME project (2011), not only the content of strategy is important (see next transversal analysis), but the way to elaborate this strategy is also crucial. The analysis of Tool 1 – a Tool that has a strong internal organisation focus (ALLUME, 2011b) - focuses on the 'strategizing process' (Whittington, 2003) and the ways of developing strategy about LLL and SD.

Concerning this first analysis, we wanted to observe and record, through 12 experiences, the varied processes of strategizing in order to create typologies of the eventual universities profiles. Furthermore, we aimed at evaluating and improving Tool 1 in order to help universities that want to implement or to reinforce a LLL/SD strategy.

The analysis had to take into account the nature of the collected data, based on self-reported answers to the tools questions with no external review. Moreover, there has been no clear identification of the actors that have been completing the tools: from one university to another, this varies from a teacher, a researcher or an administrator. The tools have been completed by either a single person or by focus-groups. Therefore, we propose to consider each university data set as a 'case' instead of a 'case study' as referred in a case study research approach (Yin, 1989).

We present the transversal analysis through matrices regarding the tool's main questions for each of the partner universities.

Depending on the question, answers present a scale ranging from:

– 0 to 1: 0 means 'non-existing' and 1 signifies 'existing'
– 0 to 3: 0 means 'absent' or 'very low' and 3 signifies 'highly present'
– 3 to 3: -3 means 'highly negative impact, 0 signifies 'no impact' and 3 signifies 'highly positive impact'

In this way, by putting the items in rows and universities in columns, the similarities and divergences between the different processes of strategizing and between the different universities are highlighted.

In a first analysis step, each category (the different steps of a change process) has been analysed independently (intra-category) in order to observe the most relevant items.

In a second step, the data has been gathered together in spider diagrams (inter-category) in order to have a visual representation of the strategizing process in each university and to try to define eventual LLL-process profiles.

5.1. Strategy process: intra-category analysis

Why? Drivers

Why does the process of LLLU/Social Dimension strategizing begin? What are the external and internal drivers of change?

– *External drivers*

On a scale from -3 to 3, note how much these drivers have influenced and may still influence your university for the implementation of LLL or SD.

External drivers	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL	Total '+'	Total '-'
European Legislation	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	3	3	3	2	3	**24**	24	0
National legislation	1	3	3	2	1	1	3	2	3	1	-1	3	**22**	23	-1
National Public finance	1	3	2	-3	0	-3	3	0	3	1	-3	-2	**2**	13	-11
Economy	1	2	1	-3	0	-3	1	1	2	1	-2	0	**1**	9	-8
Duty to support the development of society	3	2	2	3	2	1	3	2	3	2	3	2	**28**	28	0
Labour market	2	2	3	-3	0		1	2	1	1	3	2	**14**	17	-3
Problem of funding	1	2	1	-3	0	-2	0	2	0	-2	1	3	**3**	10	-7
Demography	1	1	2	3	3	2	1	1	1	-1	1	0	**15**	16	-1
TOTAL	**11**	**16**	**15**	**-1**	**8**	**-3**	**13**	**13**	**16**	**6**	**4**	**11**	109		
Total '+'	11	16	15	11	8	5	13	13	16	9	10	13		140	
Total '-'	0	0	0	-12	0	-8	0	0	0	-3	-6	-2			-31

Table 1 - External Drivers

Figure 2 shows that the most important external drivers with positive influence for the 12 universities (P2-BE – P13-HU) are the **duty to support social development**, and the **European legislation.** The two next important drivers are **national legislation** and **demography**, even if one partner considers that they may have a negative influence. Other drivers as **labour market**, **problem of funding** or **national public finance** or **economic situation** are considered as less important but also as having positive or negative influence.

Some other examples of external drivers are mentioned by the partner universities: regional councils, non-profit organisations, needs of business.

Figure 2. **Influence of the external drivers**
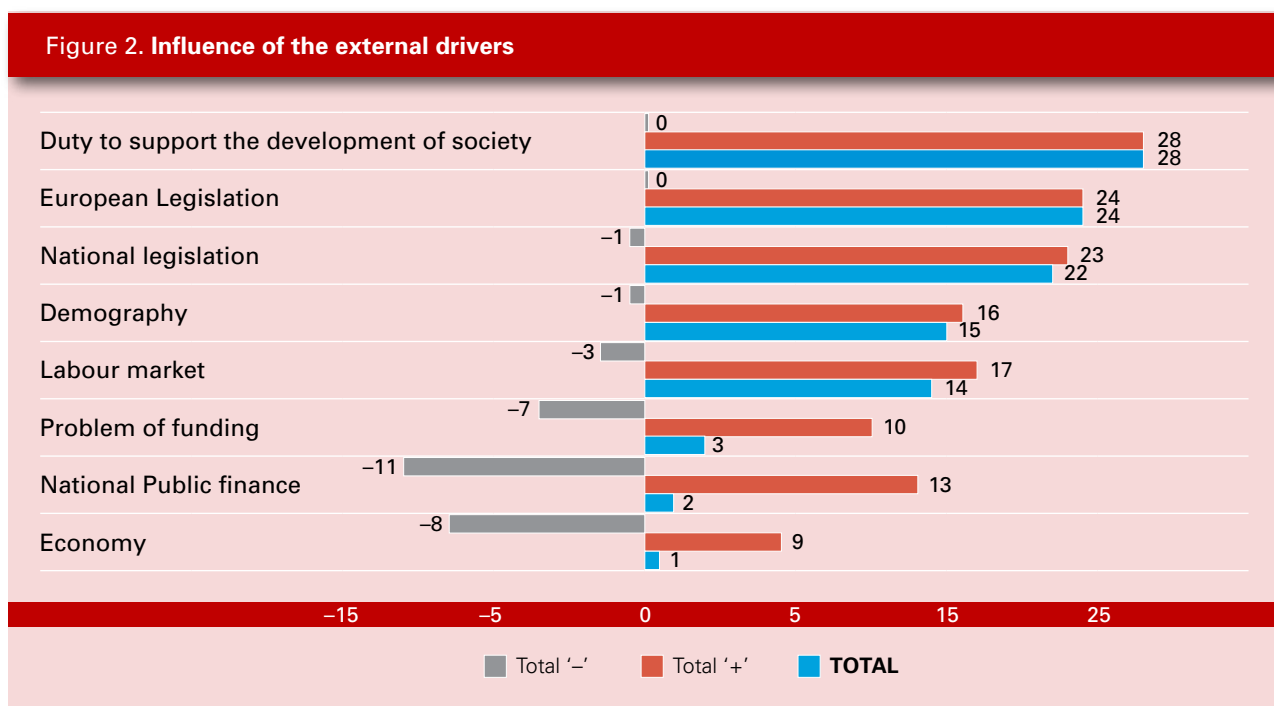
The most negative impact comes from the **national public finance**, the **economy** and the **problem of funding,** external drivers that also have the largest variation across the universities (Figure 3). For example, the **national public finance** can influence very positively some universities (+3 for P3-FI, P8-TR and P10-GR) while it influences very negatively some others (-3 for P5-PT, P7-IE, P12-ES). These variations are probably representative of the double interpretation that the respondents can have of the question: for instance, the national public finance can be considered very stimulating because lifelong learning university provisions will bring more finance to the university while, at the same time, it may be considered very negatively because these public finances are maybe very limited. These parameters are considered by universities as opportunities (challenges) or, on the contrary, as constraints or limitations.

Figure 3. **The most contrasting external drivers**
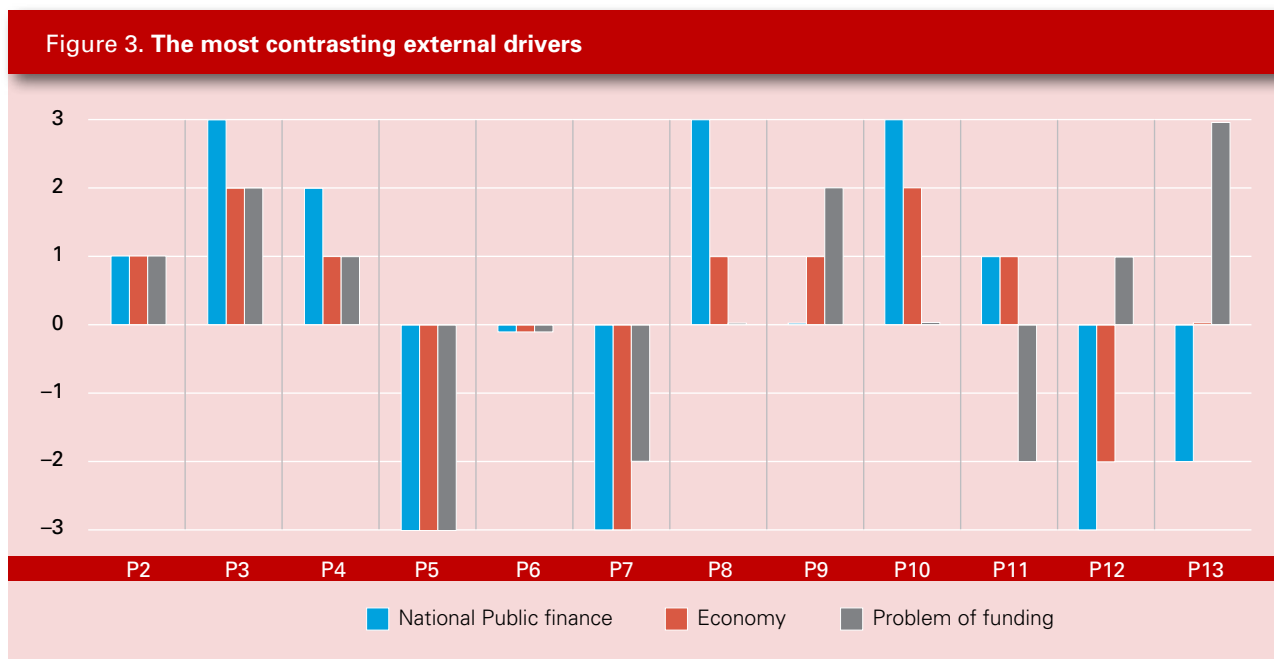
Furthermore, we can observe that most of the universities (10 out of 12) consider to be positively driven by external factors to implement a LLL strategic plan. The most positively influenced universities are P3-FI, P10-GR and P4-FR. Between those 10 universities, 7 feel only positive impacts and no negative impact (P2-BE, P3-FI, P4-FR, P6-DE, P8-TR, P9-IT, and P10-GR). The 2 universities feeling a global negative impact from external drivers are P7-IE and P5-PT.

The overall picture of all partner HEIs is that external drivers seem to have a positive influence on them and the most negative influences (**national public finance; economy; funding**) come from drivers that may also be considered positively in certain universities.

Few universities mention other external incentives to implement a LLL strategy, such as a regional council strategy for LLL and socio economic needs (P4-FR), support of **eucen** and non-profit organisation (P6-DE) and needs of business (P9-IT). Those factors could obviously be linked with labour market/economy, European framework or regional Legislation, but they illustrate more precisely the role of European and regional legal issues and European networks like **eucen**. We point out also the impact of European Commission upon the achievement of a national LLL strategy, mentioned by P13-HU.

29

– *Internal drivers*

On a scale from -3 to 3, note how much these drivers have influenced and may still influence your university for the implementation of LLL or SD.

Internal drivers	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL	Total '+'	Total '-'
Previous experience in LLL	3	1	2	0	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	1	**24**	24	0
Previous experience of LLL contribute to SD	0	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	0	0	1	**17**	17	0
Culture of LLL within university	3	2	2	2	0	0	2	0	1	1	3	1	**17**	17	0
Culture of SD within university	0	2	2	2	0	3	2	0	3	0	0	1	**15**	15	0
Necessity/demand for LLL programs	2	1	2	3	2	1	2	2	3	1	3	1	**23**	23	0
Necessity/demand for SD	0	1	2	3	2	2	0	3	2	0	1	0	**16**	16	0
University structure	1	0	1	3	2	0	1	2	1	1	1	-1	**12**	13	-1
Desire to improve access to university	1	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	3	1	1	2	**22**	22	0
Desire to make people aware university offers these programs	1	3	2	3	3	0	2	0	3	1	1	2	**21**	21	0
Change in internal organisation or a structural change	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	2	**8**	8	0
Budget available to invest	0	0	0	-3	1	-3	0	0	-1	0	-1	-2	**-9**	1	-10
Staff devoted to these tasks	2	2	2	3	3	-2	2	1	2	0	2	-2	**15**	19	-4
TOTAL	**13**	**15**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**8**	**16**	**14**	**25**	**7**	**14**	**6**	**181**		
TOTAL of '+'	**13**	**15**	**20**	**24**	**22**	**13**	**16**	**14**	**26**	**7**	**15**	**11**		196	
TOTAL of '-'	**0**	**0**	**0**	**-3**	**0**	**-5**	**0**	**0**	**-1**	**0**	**-1**	**-5**			-15

Table 2. Internal Drivers

According to Table 2 - Internal Drivers, the most important internal drivers for the 12 universities are the **previous experience in LLL**, the **necessity/demand for LLL programs**, the **desire to improve access to university** and the **desire to make people aware of the fact that the university offers these programs**. The most negative impact comes from the **budget availability**, the **staff devoted to these tasks** and, finally, the **university structure**.

We can also observe that all the universities feel a positive influence from the internal drivers; 7 universities identify only positive drivers and feel no negative internal impact. The most positively and internally influenced universities to initiate LLL/SD strategizing are P10-GR, P6-DE, P5-PT and P4-FR.

The overall picture of all partner HEIs (Figure 4) is that internal drivers have a positive influence on them and the most negative influences (**budget available; staff devoted to these tasks; university structure**) are very limited.

Figure 4. **Global distribution of internal drivers influencing LLL /SD strategizing**

Driver	Total '−'	Total '+'	TOTAL
Necessity/demand for LLL programs	0	23	23
Desire to improve access to university	0	22	22
Desire to make people aware university…	0	21	21
Previous experience of LLL contribute to SD	0	17	17
Culture of LLL within university	0	17	17
Necessity/demand for SD	0	16	16
Culture of SD within university	0	15	15
Staff devoted to these tasks	−4	19	15
University structure	−1	13	12
Change in internal organization or a…	0	8	8
Budget available to invest	−10	1	−9

■ Total '−' ■ Total '+' ■ **TOTAL**

It is worth highlighting a structural change in P9-IT, where a position of 'LLL delegate of the Rector' has been created and the university statute changed in order to confer teaching and research functions to the faculties and departments that 'promotes bonding with the needs of businesses and institutions'.

Some universities mention other internal incentives: the support of the successive university directions (P4-FR) and internal institutions (P5-PT).

Those results reinforce an ALLUME recommendation regarding the support of the Rector's office. "We have to recommend to universities to secure the commitment of senior managers, vice rectors (…) in order to obtain a sustainable development. (…) making the commitments binding and identifying a shared vision of the future." (ALLUME, 2011a, p.28).

– *Comparison and synthesis*

In order to estimate if universities perceive more drivers or more obstacles to develop a LLL strategizing process, we simply added the grades gained for <u>external and internal drivers</u> (Figure 5). We conclude that overall universities perceive drivers positively.

Figure 5. **Global, external and internal influence on LLL strategizing process**
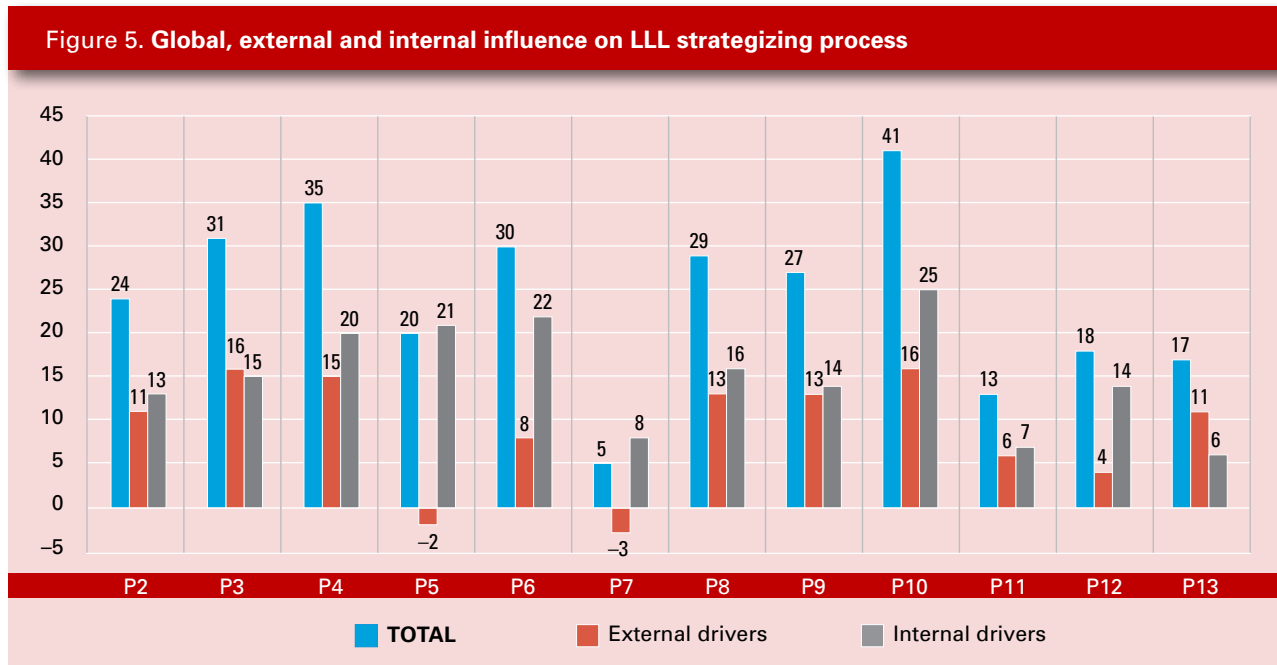
The universities mention that they get <u>more internal incentives than external ones</u> and there are more external resistances to the LLL/SD strategizing process than internal resistances (principally the **budget availability**). The external resistances (the **national public finance**, the **problem of funding** and the **economy**) are the most contrasted items (Figure 3) and seem to explain why some universities feel a global negative external influence while others feel a positive influence. So, these items are decisive for the perception of the global external influence.

Comparing the situation of the 12 universities, it appears that the <u>universities most stimulated by external or internal drivers</u> are P10-GR, P4-FR and P3-FI and <u>the less stimulated</u> are P7-IE, P11-RO and P13-HU.

32

Who? Actors

Who are the people involved in LLLU/Social Dimension strategizing? Who are the internal actors? What are their roles: are they doers, influential people, researchers, decision makers? Who are the external actors? What are their roles?

– ***Internal actors***

Note on a scale from 0 to 3 how much these actors have influenced and may still influence your university for the development of the LLL/SD strategy.

Internal actors (doers)	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL
Responsible person of specific LLL structure	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	0	3	3	2	28
Responsible person of specific SD structure	0	0	0	2	1	3	1	1,5	2	0	1	2	13,5
Project managers	0	2	2	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	10
Teachers	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	0	16
Specific units created for strategizing	2	2	0	3	1	0	2	0	3	0	2	2	15
Researchers in LLL	3	1	0	3	1	2	0	1	2	0	0	3	16
Researchers in SD	0	1	0	3	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	11
Researchers in other topics	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	2	3	1	1	1	14
TOTAL	**7**	**11**	**8**	**19**	**11**	**14**	**5**	**10,5**	**12**	**6**	**7**	**13**	**123,5**

Internal actors (decision makers)	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL
Rector	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	32
Vice Rector in charge of LLL or SD	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	35
Teaching council	1	2	2	2	0	0	3	1	2	1	2	0	16
Lifelong Learning council	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	8
Social council	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3
Head of specific LLL/SD unit	2	3	3	3	2	3	1	3	3	0	3	3	29
Administration	1	2	1	2	0	0	1	1	3	1	0	1	13
Outreach council or unit	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	5
Other	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
TOTAL	**10**	**13**	**15**	**16**	**9**	**9**	**11**	**12**	**16**	**11**	**13**	**9**	**144**

Table 3. Internal actors

The most active doers in LLL strategizing (Figure 6) are the **responsible person of specific LLL structures**, the **teachers and researchers in LLL**. Other actors are mentioned by few universities: independent people such as consultants and professors.

Figure 6. **Influence of the internal doers**

Internal doer	Value
Responsible person of specific LLL structure	28
Teachers	16
Researchers in LLL	16
Specific units created for strategizing?	15
Researchers in other topics	14
Responsible person of specific SD structure	13,5
Researchers in SD	11
Project managers	10
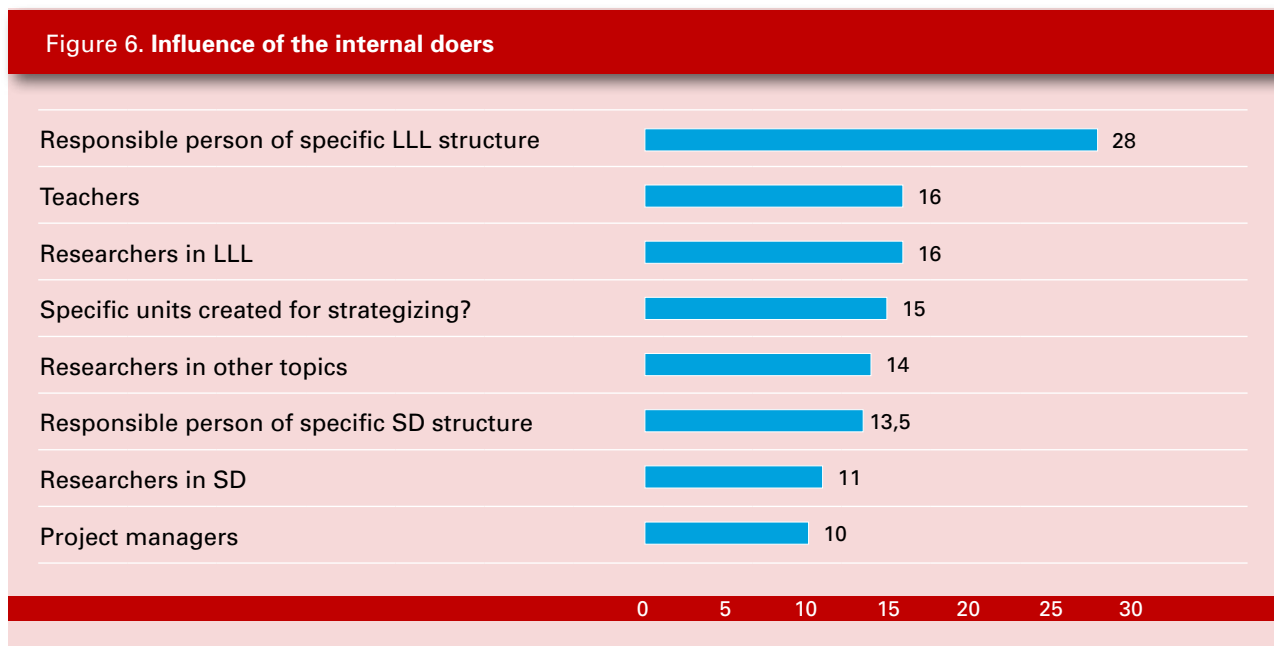
Concerning the decision makers (Figure 7), the **vice rector in charge of LLL**, the **rector** and the **head of specific LLL/SD department** are the three most influential actors in LLL strategizing.

Figure 7. **Influence of internal decision makers**

Internal decision maker	Value
Vice Rector in charge of LLL or SD	35
Rector	32
Head of specific LLL/SD unit	29
Administration	13
Teaching council	16
Lifelong Learning council	8
Outreach council or unit	5
Other	3
Social council	3
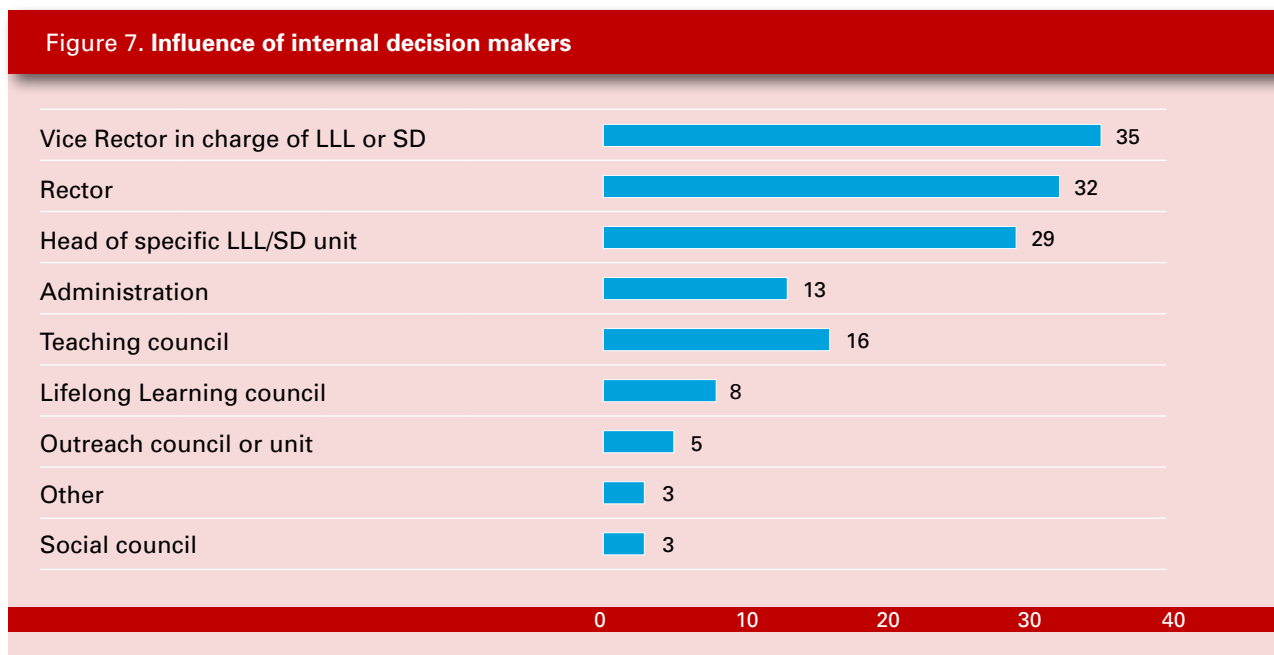
The highest levels of hierarchy seem to be well informed about the strategizing process and are considered as having an influential role. We need to point out that the influence of decision makers (rector, vice-rector in charge of LLL or SD, head of LLL or SD unit) on strategizing is slightly higher than that of the doers. The influence of researchers in LLL or SD is present but rather weak (Table 3). In addition to this, the number of researchers in LLL or SD (43 identified researchers on LLL or SD for 12 universities - Table 4) seems very low in relation to the other results.

Regarding the results per university, some consider that many doers influence their LLL/SD strategizing (19 for P5-PT and 14 for P7-IE) while for other universities (5 for P8-TR and P12-ES, 6 for P11-RO) only a few do. Regarding the decision makers, the gap between universities is significantly lower (16 for P5-PT and P10-GR and 8 for P12-ES). Interestingly, the decision makers are proportionally more involved than the doers.

Approximately, how many internal actors (Full Time Equivalent) are involved in your University LLL/SD strategizing?

How many internal actors involved?	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL
Doers-practitioners	23	20	20	10	10	20	3	10	3	50	3	20	192
Doers-researchers	2	5	1	4	5	10	0	10	1	10	1	5	54
Decision makers	1,5	5	5	4	1	3	2	2	7	5	3	3	41,5
TOTAL	**26,5**	**30**	**26**	**18**	**16**	**33**	**5**	**22**	**11**	**65**	**7**	**28**	**287,5**

Table 4. Number of internal actors

The number of people involved in LLL/SD strategizing varies a lot: from 5 people (P8-TR) to 65 (P11-RO). On average, the number of people seems to be between 20 and 30 (P2-BE, P3-FI, P4-FR, P9-IT, P13-HU).

From table 4, it appears that the number of doers involved in LLL/SD strategizing is quite higher than the number of decision makers (roughly 4 times). This result and the percentage of doers/decision makers involved in strategizing for each university suggest that even if the influence of decision makers is higher than the one of doers in strategizing, a bottom-up (or middle-bottom-up) approach is more likely than a top-down one.

According to ALLUME (2011a) a bottom-up approach consists of development by some practitioners who would like to insert LLL as a catalyst within the university, considering it as their mission, with or without an official support of the leadership. A middle – bottom – top approach consists of decisions coming from a faculty's dean or a LLL director to implement LLL University principles within their spheres of influence, acting as a pioneer unit.

– ***External actors***

Note, on a scale from 0 to 3, how much these external actors influence the LLL strategy of your university.

External actors (influential people)	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL
Private enterprise	2	1	2	2	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	14
Public administration	1	2	2	2	0	1	3	2	2	0	2	1	18
Specific ministry	2	1	3	3	2	3	3	0	3	2	0	3	25
Government – national or regional authorities	1	1	3	2	2	2	3	1	3	0	1	3	22
Other stakeholders	2	1	0	3	0	1	0	2		0	2	0	11
TOTAL	**8**	**6**	**10**	**12**	**4**	**8**	**9**	**6**	**9**	**3**	**7**	**8**	**90**

External actors (researchers)	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL
Other national universities	1	1	2	3	1	2	1	3	3	1	0	2	20
International universities	1	1	2	3	2	2	1	3	3	1	1	3	23
Specific research units created at national or regional level	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	7
Other	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	7
TOTAL	**4**	**3**	**5**	**7**	**5**	**6**	**3**	**7**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**5**	**57**

Table 5. External actors

The most influential external actors (Figure 8) are a **specific ministry** and the **Government** (national or regional). In terms of researchers, **other universities** (national or international) are the most influential actors (specifically international universities). Some other external actors are mentioned: non-governmental organisations, professional associations and 'third sector' for the influential people and research and practitioners groups (European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA), European University Association (EUA), European Association for Practitioner Research on Improving Learning (EAPRIL), European universities on Continuing Education Network (**eucen**)) or scientific poles concerning the researchers.

Figure 8. **Influence of external actors (influential people and researchers)**
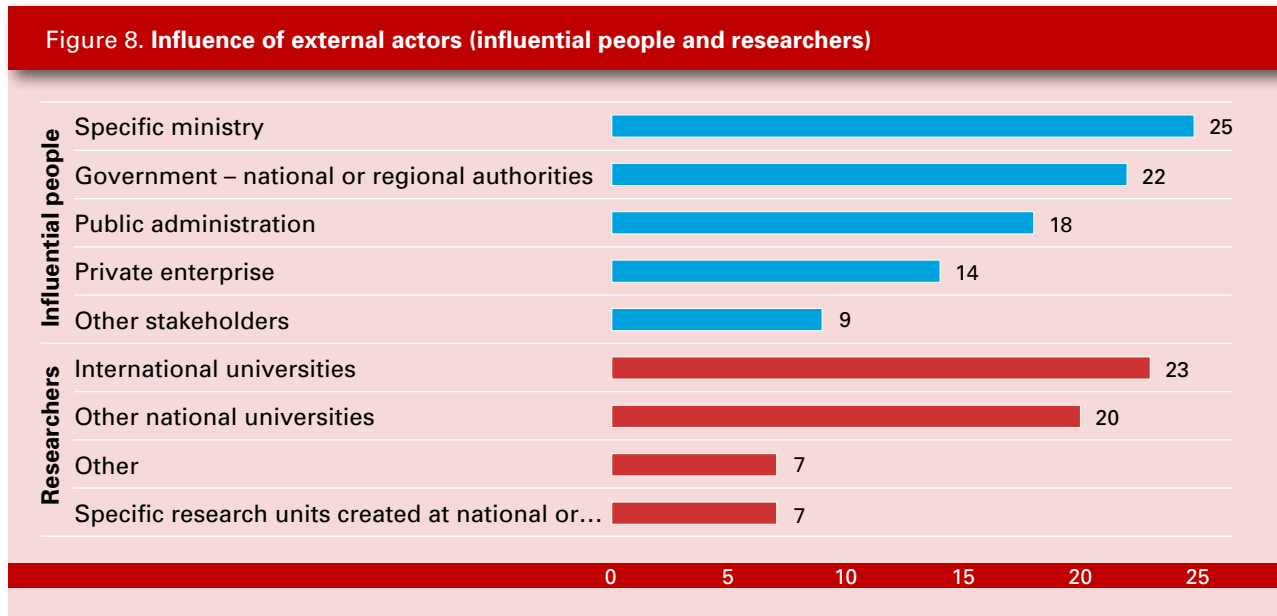
Moreover, universities highlight the role of external actors such as research groups (e.g., ESREA or EAPRIL-P2-BE), European practitioners associations (e.g., **eucen** - P2-BE, P6-DE, P9-IT), national LLL universities networks (P13-HU) and international networks (e.g., RUIAP - P9-IT). For instance, P4-FR points out that participation in European project has a great influence.

– *Comparison of internal and external actors*

The collected data do not really allow to compare the influence of internal and external actors but a common result to be highlighted is the low influence and presence of researchers in LLL and SD. Internally, the highest levels of hierarchy have more influence than the researchers or the teachers and, externally, specific research units are quite rare.

How? Processes

How is the process of LLLU/Social Dimension strategizing done and organized? Is it a formal or informal process? What is its level of development?
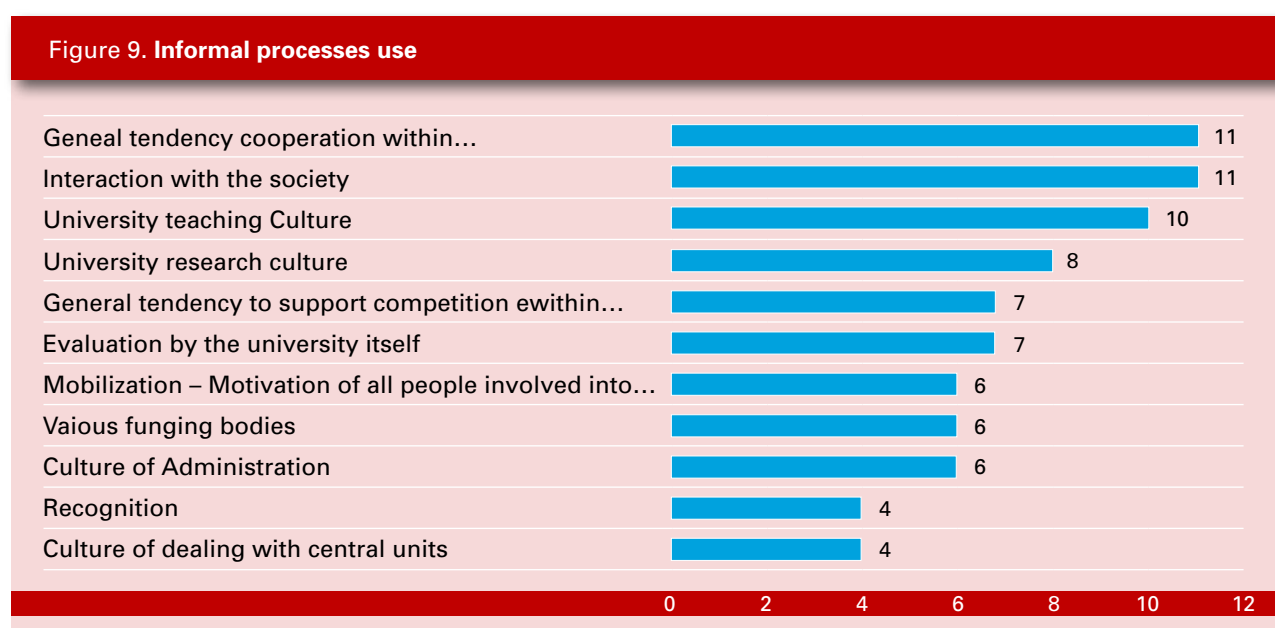
– ***Informal processes***

What are the informal processes used to develop the LLL/SD strategy?

*Scale: **0 = non used process; 1 = used process***

Informal processes	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL
University teaching Culture	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	10
University research culture	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	8
Culture of Administration	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	6
Culture of dealing with central units	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	4
Mobilization – Motivation of all people involved into the strategizing	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	6
Recognition	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
General tendency to support cooperation within university	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	11
General tendency to support competition within university	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	7
Interaction with the society	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	11
Various funding bodies	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	6
Evaluation by the university itself	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	7
TOTAL	**9**	**7**	**9**	**5**	**9**	**5**	**8**	**6**	**5**	**8**	**4**	**5**	**80**

Table 6. Informal processes

The most important informal elements (Table 6) playing a role during the strategizing process within universities are the **general tendency to support cooperation within university**, the **interaction with society** and the **university teaching culture.** (Figure 9).

Figure 9. **Informal processes use**

Geneal tendency cooperation within…	11
Interaction with the society	11
University teaching Culture	10
University research culture	8
General tendency to support competition ewithin…	7
Evaluation by the university itself	7
Mobilization – Motivation of all people involved into…	6
Vaious funging bodies	6
Culture of Administration	6
Recognition	4
Culture of dealing with central units	4

A surprising result is the relatively average score of the research culture for research based institutions. The less pronounced processes are the **culture of dealing with central units**, the **recognition** (of all kind of learners and staff of their work) and the **culture of Administration**. Some universities indicate up to 9 informal processes supporting LLL/SD development and 1 university (P12-ES) identifies only 2 informal processes. On average, universities use 6 informal processes (out of 11 proposed processes).
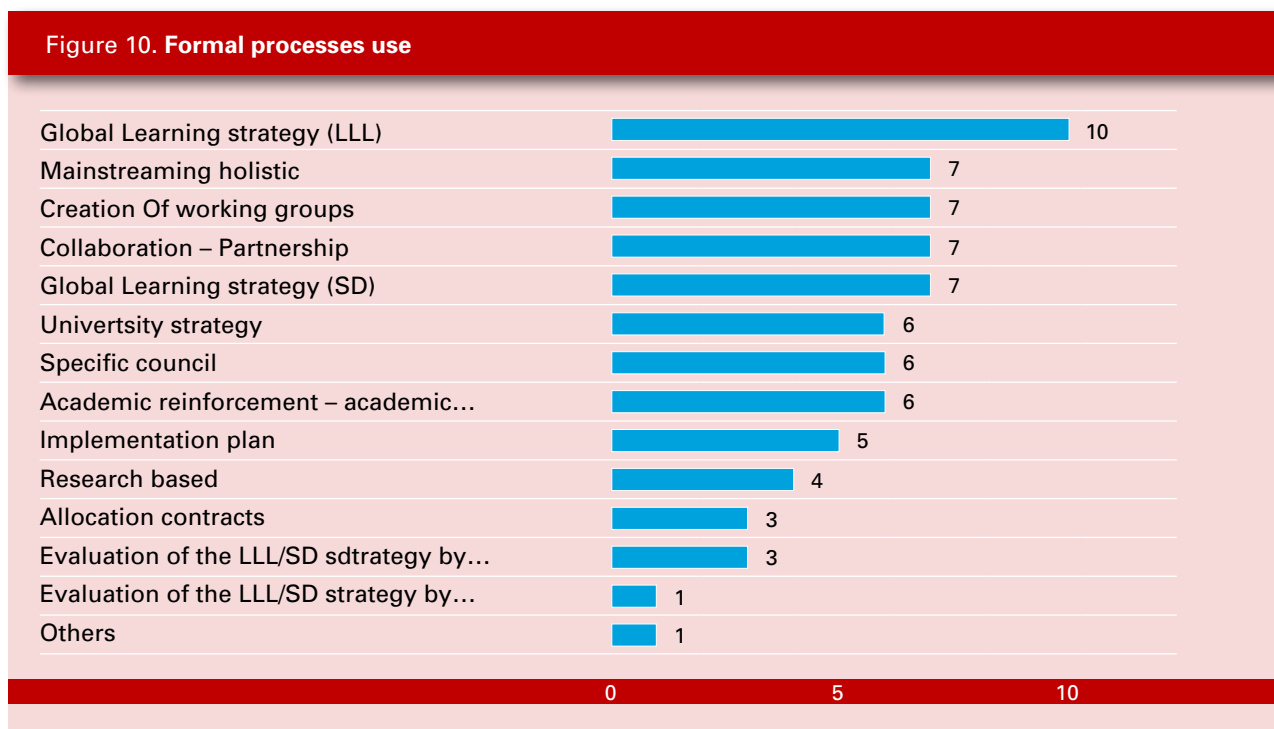
– *Formal processes*

What are the formal processes used to develop the LLL/SD strategy?

Formal processes	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL
Research based	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
University strategy	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	6
Mainstreaming holistic	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	7
Global Learning strategy (LLL)	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	10
Global Learning strategy (SD)	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	7
Creation of working groups	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	7
Collaboration – Partnership	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	7
Specific council	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	6
Allocation contracts	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Implementation plan	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	5
Academic reinforcement – academic staff involvement	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	6
Evaluation of the LLL/SD strategy by external institutions	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Evaluation of the LLL/SD strategy by external private structures	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	**3**	**10**	**7**	**6**	**5**	**7**	**5**	**0**	**10**	**4**	**8**	**8**	**73**

Table 7. Formal processes

The **global learning strategy (LLL)** is the most used formal process (Figure 10). Table 7 shows that, in 10 universities out of 12, a LLL-strategizing process is formally organized and, in 6 universities, this process is apparently connected to the university strategy process.

Figure 10. **Formal processes use**

Process	Value
Global Learning strategy (LLL)	10
Mainstreaming holistic	7
Creation Of working groups	7
Collaboration – Partnership	7
Global Learning strategy (SD)	7
Univertsity strategy	6
Specific council	6
Academic reinforcement – academic…	6
Implementation plan	5
Research based	4
Allocation contracts	3
Evaluation of the LLL/SD sdtrategy by…	3
Evaluation of the LLL/SD strategy by…	1
Others	1

The less used are the **evaluation of the LLL/SD strategy by external private structures** or **external institutions**. However, even if an external evaluation is not used, it appears that the most used formal processes are collaborative ones: 'Holistic mainstream', 'creation of working groups', 'collaboration and partnerships' are mentioned in 7 universities. As for the informal processes, a great disparity is observed between universities concerning the number of processes used: from 0 processes (P9-IT) to 10 processes (P3-FI, P10-GR). On average, universities use 6 formal processes (out of the 14 proposed processes).

Rather surprisingly for universities – as research based institutions - we observe a very low score for a formal 'research based' approach. This reinforces the finding made on informal process. Does that mean that the research-based approach or culture is not really applicable or not convenient for the development of new activities like LLL or SD? This question deserves to be studied in more detail and depth.

It is worthwhile to mention that, after the data collection period, a global university strategizing process including learning and LLL was initiated in P2-BE and that a vice-rector in charge of LLL was nominated in P9-IT. These two institutional changes could probably impact the look and feel of P2-BE and P9-IT on figure 10, where informal processes are currently dominant.

39

– *Comparison on formal and informal process*

Informal processes are more used by the partner universities (Figure 11) than formal processes (proportionally, 59% against 41%).

Figure 11. **Informal and formal processes per university**
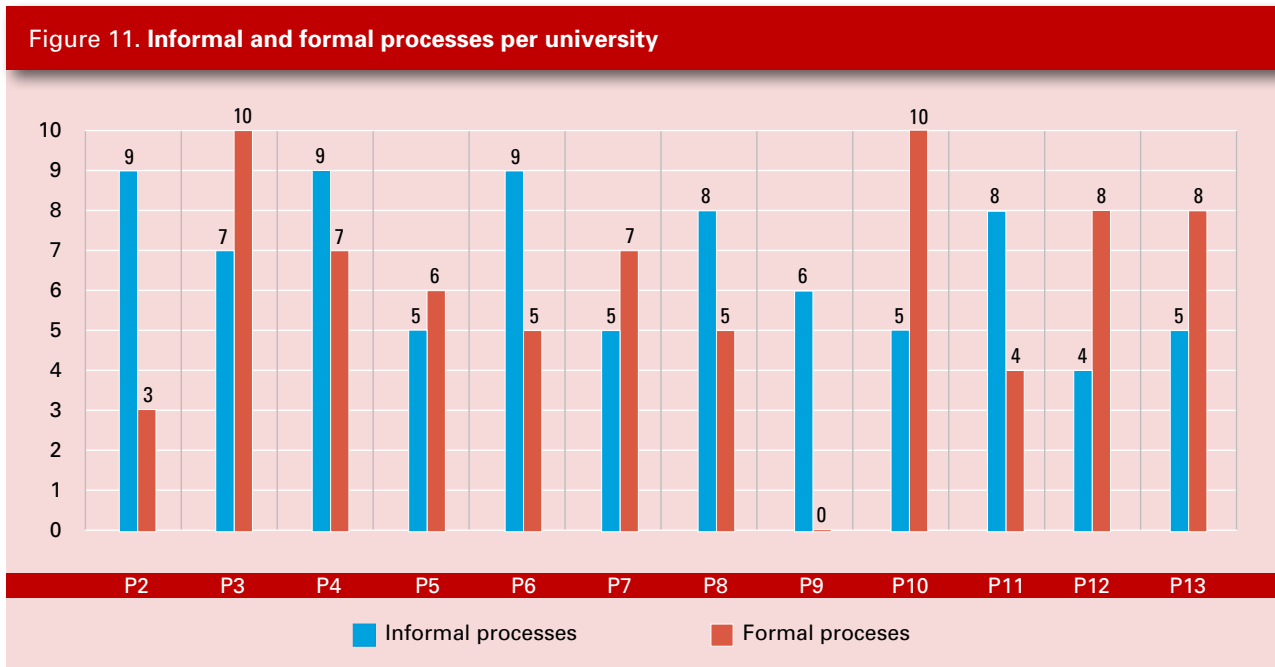
Even if the difference of intensity is not so high, it is insightful to realize the status of the LLL/SD strategizing process in the universities; a lot of work is done informally but it is not always recognized as officially known (explicit) and formal. It is coherent with the results concerning the drivers (3.1.) and the actors (3.2.). Furthermore, the highest levels of hierarchy are well informed about the LLL/SD strategizing process but almost all the universities face a problem of funding and resources allocation which echoes and is reflected by the number of researchers in LLL/SD for instance.

The data therefore indicate a possible relation between the informal approach commonly adopted by the partners and the bottom-up (or middle-bottom-up) approach identified previously.
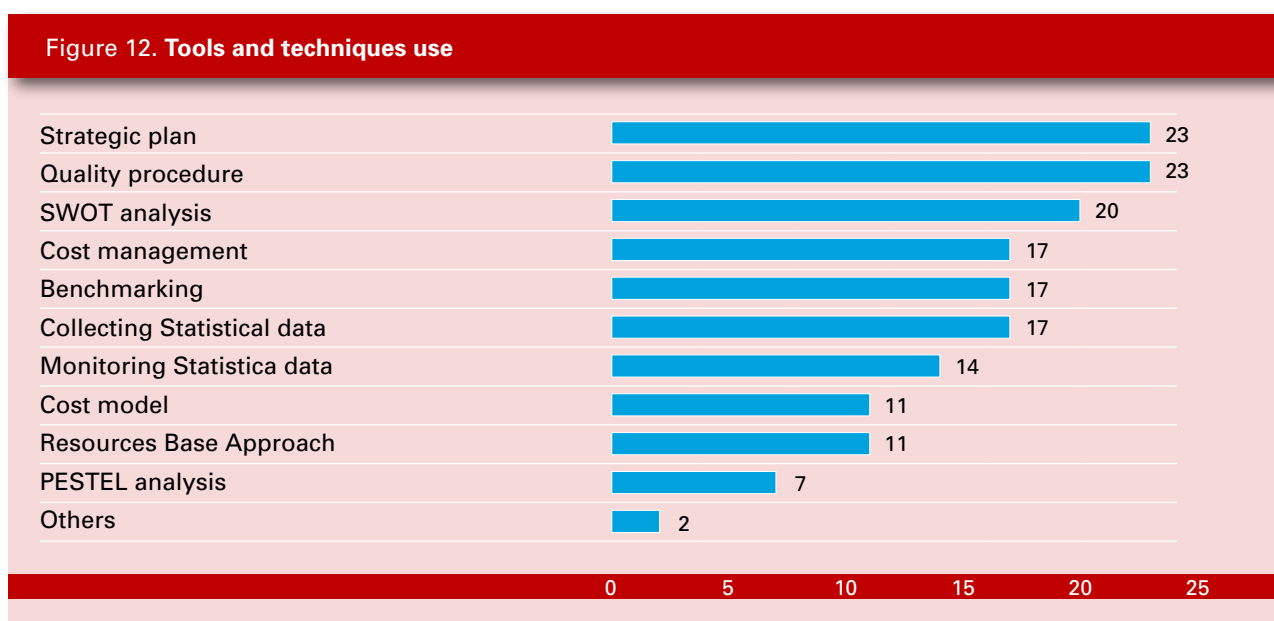
How? Tools and techniques

What are the tools and techniques used for LLLU/Social Dimension strategizing?

*On a scale from 0 to 3, note how much these tools and techniques are used to define the LLL/SD strategy.*

Tools and techniques	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL
Strategic plan	0	2	0	1	3	3	3	0	3	2	3	3	23
SWOT analysis	2	2	3	0	0	3	3	0	3	0	3	1	20
PESTEL analysis	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	7
Resources Based Approach	3	1	0	3	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	11
Benchmarking	2	1	3	0	2	2	1	0	3	0	2	1	17
Cost management	3	0	0	2	3	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	17
Cost model	1	0	0	3	2	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	11
Collecting Statistical data	0	2	3	3	0	2	2	0	2	1	2	0	17
Monitoring Statistical data	0	2	0	3	2	2	2	0	2	1	0	0	14
Quality procedure	3	3	1	3	2	3	2	0	2	1	3	0	23
Others	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
TOTAL	**16**	**13**	**10**	**18**	**17**	**21**	**17**	**0**	**25**	**5**	**15**	**5**	**162**

Table 8. Tools and techniques

The most used tools (Figure 12) are the **strategic plan**, the **quality procedure** and the **SWOT analysis**. The literature suggests that the strategic plan is the most popular one among universities (Holdaway and Meekison, 1990, cited by Kadir, 2012; Buckland, 2009). A large majority of universities uses a 'quality procedure' (10 universities out of 12) and/or a 'strategic plan' (9 universities out of 12, but we know that P2-BE is currently developing a 'strategic plan' including LLL objectives and action plan).

Figure 12. **Tools and techniques use**

Strategic plan	23
Quality procedure	23
SWOT analysis	20
Cost management	17
Benchmarking	17
Collecting Statistical data	17
Monitoring Statistica data	14
Cost model	11
Resources Base Approach	11
PESTEL analysis	7
Others	2

Some universities (Figure 13) use no tool (P9-IT[6]), while others use up to 10 tools and more intensively (P10-GR). On average, <u>universities use 6 different tools</u> (Figure 13). We notice that each university (except P9-IT) uses at least one of the tools proposed.

Figure 13. Number of tools and techniques used per university

Figure 14. Tools' use intensity
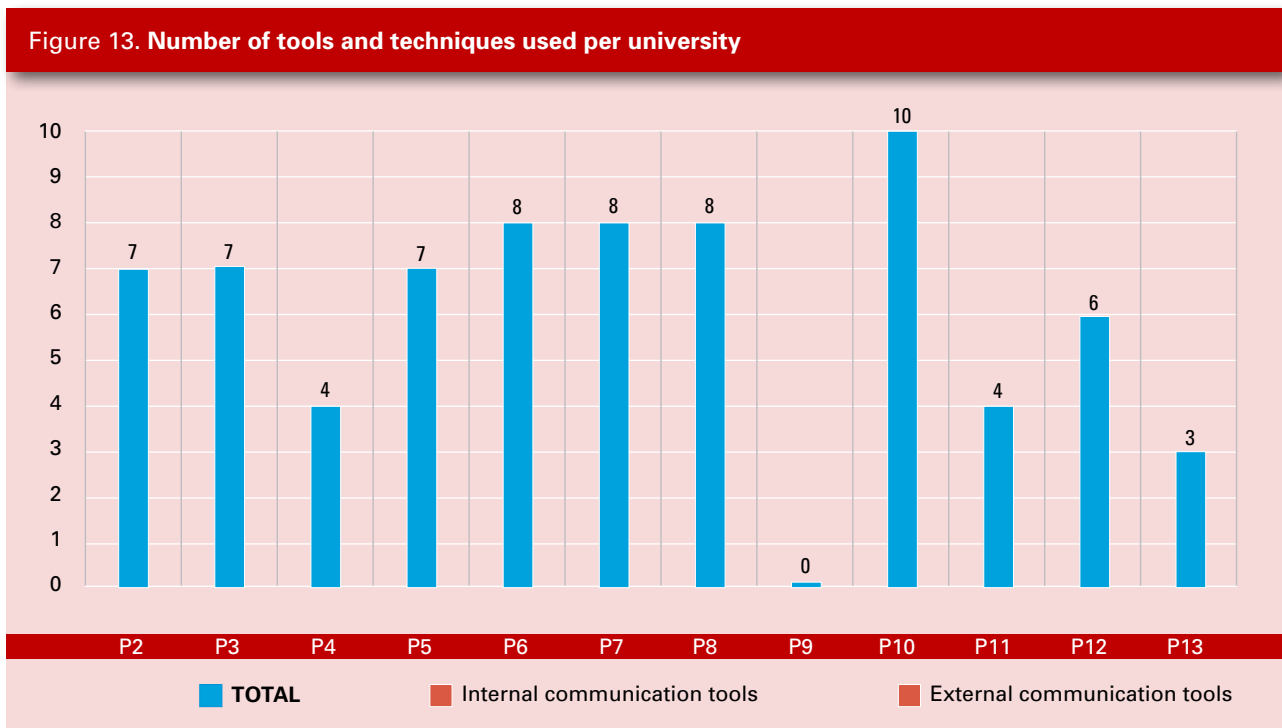
The intensity of the tools' use (Figure 14) varies from a university to another. For instance, P10-GR uses tools up to 5 times more intensively than P11-RO or P13-HU.

---
[6] Institutional changes ongoing (nomination of a LLL vice rector).

How? Communication

How are the products of LLLU/Social Dimension strategizing communicated?

– *People*

For each of the following internal and external persons, note on a scale from 0 to 3 how intensively they are informed of the Lifelong Learning/Social Dimension strategizing process.

Internally, to whom?	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL
Deans and Departments heads	1	2	3	3	1	3	3	0	1	3	3	1	24
Teachers	0	1	1	1	2	1	3	0	2	2	3	0	16
Researchers	0	1	1	1	1	0	3	0	2	0	3	2	14
Students	0	1	1	1	3	2	3	0	2	1	2	0	16
All University members	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	0	2	1	3	0	17
Trade Union	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	5
Alumni Organisation	2	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	11
Other	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
TOTAL	**7**	**8**	**8**	**8**	**13**	**10**	**15**	**0**	**12**	**8**	**16**	**3**	**108**

Externally, to whom?	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL
Policy Makers	1	2	2	0	1	3	3	0	2	1	0	3	18
Other Universities	0	1	1	1	3	2	0	0	2	0	2	2	14
Enterprises	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	11
Social Associations	3	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	10
Social Partners	3	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	2	14
Press	3	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	14
Scientific Publications	0	1	1	3	2	1	0	0	2	2	0	2	14
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	5
TOTAL	**13**	**9**	**11**	**5**	**10**	**10**	**6**	**0**	**15**	**4**	**8**	**9**	**100**

Table 9. Communication (People)

The most well informed people (Figure 15) within universities are **deans and department heads**, **all university members** and the **students**.

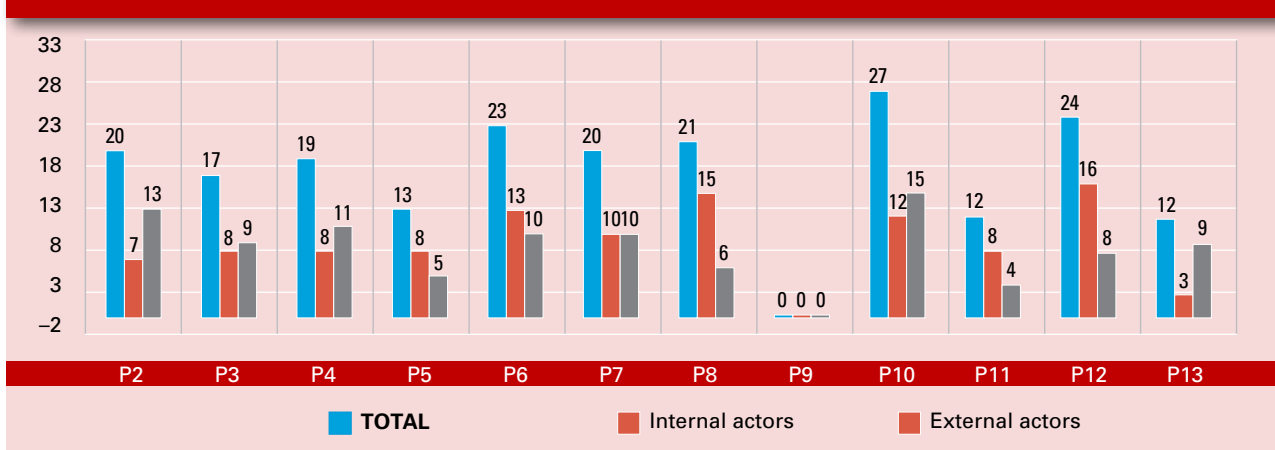Figure 15. **Internal and external actors informed about LLL/SD strategizing**

		Value
Internal communication	Deans and Departments heads	24
	All University members	17
	Students	16
	Teachers	16
	Researchers	14
	Alumni Organisation	11
	Trade Union	5
	Other	5
External communication	Policy Makers	18
	Social Partners	14
	Press	14
	Scientific Publications	14
	Other Universities	14
	Enterprises	11
	Social Associations	10
	Other	5
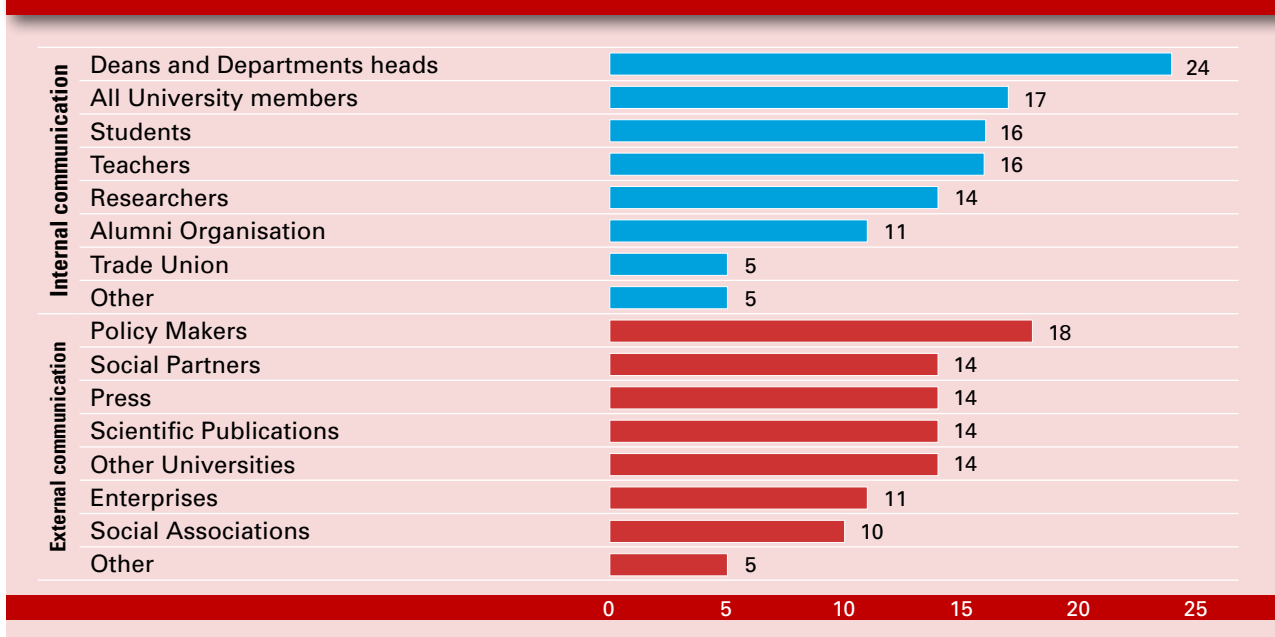
We observe that the highest levels of faculties and departments - what we could name the 'LLL/SD offer providers' lines are very well informed. This finding might strengthen the hypothesis of a middle-bottom-up approach of strategizing.

Externally, the most intensively informed people are the **policy makers** (Figure 15). The less external people informed are **social associations**, **enterprises** and **other universities**. In terms of communication targets, there are a little bit more internal communication targets (52%) than external ones (48%).

Regarding the global picture of communication targets, we observe a large diversity (Figure 16): the intensity varies from 0 (P9-IT) to 27 (P10-GR) – the average being 17 – and differences in communication between internal and external actors are also important. While P10-GR informs numerous internal and external targets, some universities (P12-ES) inform considerably more internal targets than external ones or vice versa (P13-HU). Overall, communication seems quite underused by the universities; the total scores do not reach half of the possible maximum.

Figure 16. **Communication to internal and external actors**

	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
TOTAL	20	17	19	13	23	20	21	0	27	12	24	12
Internal actors	7	8	8	8	13	10	15	0	12	8	16	3
External actors	13	9	11	5	10	10	6	0	15	4	8	9

44

– *Communication tools*

For each of the following tools, note on a scale from 0 to 3 how intensively they are used internally and externally to communicate about the Lifelong Learning/Social Dimension strategizing process.

Internally, how?	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL
Meeting (specific)	3	1	3	1	2	1	3	0	3	1	3	2	23
Internal Newsletter	0	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	11
Intranet	3	3	2	2	2	0	3	0	3	1	3	0	22
Other	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	5
TOTAL	**8**	**7**	**6**	**3**	**6**	**1**	**6**	**0**	**9**	**2**	**11**	**2**	**61**

Externally, how?	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	TOTAL
University communication paper	2	3	2	2	3	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	17
University Web Site	3	3	2	3	3	1	3	0	3	2	3	2	28
Round table Consultation	1	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	12
Events, conference	1	1	2	2	2	3	0	0	2	1	0	3	17
TOTAL	**7**	**9**	**8**	**8**	**9**	**6**	**3**	**0**	**9**	**3**	**4**	**8**	**74**

Table 10. Communication (Tools)

Internally, the most intensively used tools (Figure 17) are **meetings** and the **intranet**. The less intensively used tool is the **newsletter**. Externally, the most used tool is the **university website** and the less used is the **round table consultation**. The data show a similarity of tools used internally and externally, namely a combination of quite collaborative and interactive communication methods (meetings, round tables) and structured communication ways (intranet, website).

Figure 17. **Internal and external communication tools use**
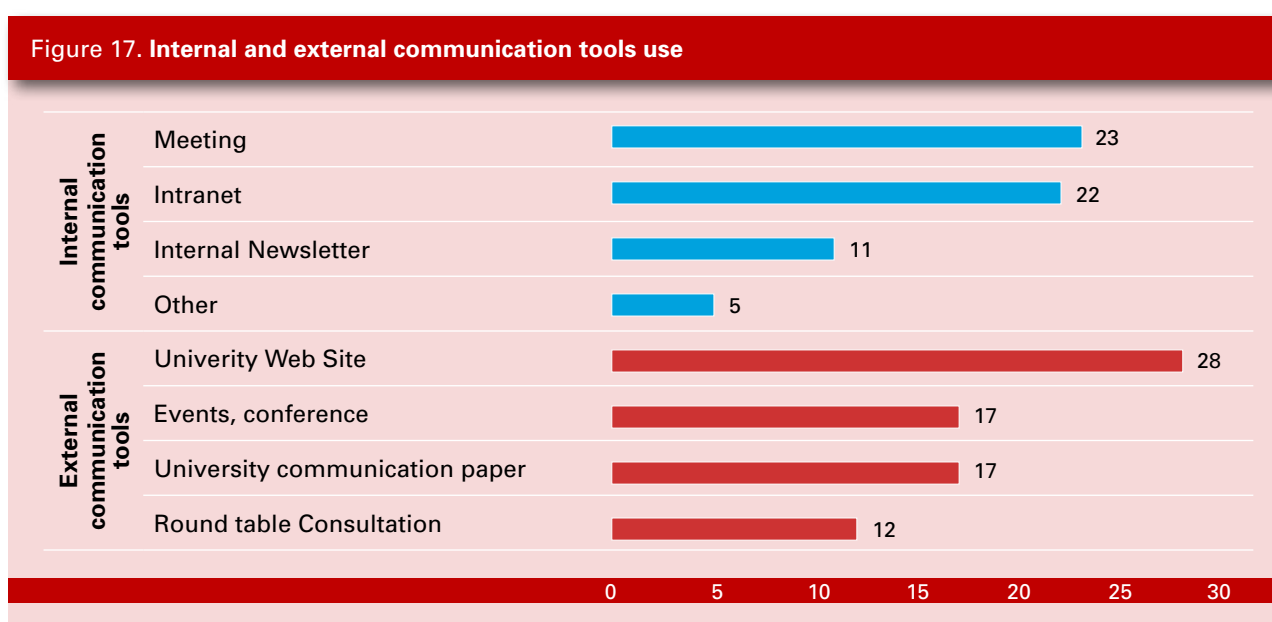
Again, we observe a large diversity between the use of internal and external tools (Figure 18): some universities do use intensively a lot of internal and external tools (P3-FI) or do not use any tool (P9-IT), while others do use intensively a lot of internal tools but only a few external ones (P12-ES). Some others, instead, use a few internal ones but many external ones (P13-HU). Overall, if we compare the use of internal and external communication tools, we observe that the external ones are a little bit more used.

Figure 18. **Internal and external communication tools per university**
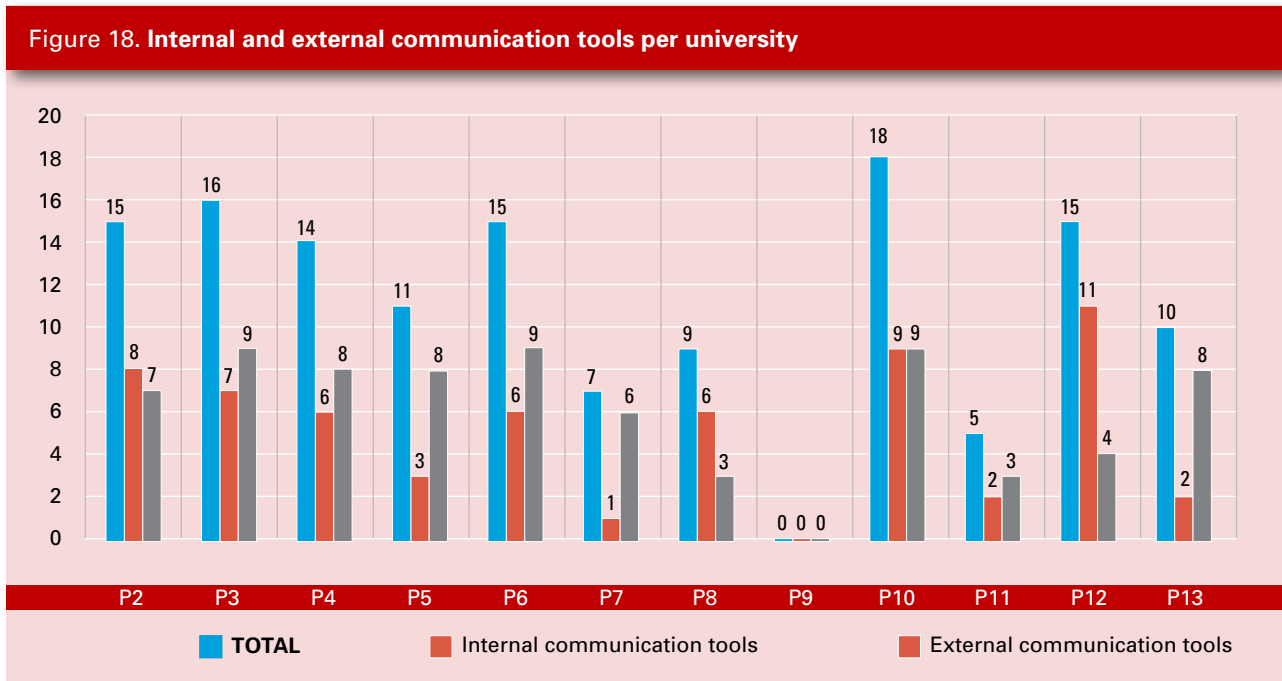
   – **Comparison and synthesis**

In terms of communication, there is no evident link between the number of people informed about the LLL/SD strategizing process and the intensity of the use of communication tools. Some universities may inform many internal actors but use more external communication tools (P6-DE) and vice-versa.

5.2. Strategy process: inter-category analysis and university profiles

When analysing the results of the evolution of the strategy process for LLL/SD – *Why? Who? How? Tools, Communication* (Johnson et al., 2011), the transversal analysis shows a great disparity between the different universities - partners of COMMIT project - and does not allow to draw some general conclusions about universities' strategizing process.

However, at this stage, it would be of great benefit to lead intercategorial analyses in order to answer the following questions: do some universities, led by numerous drivers, have more internal actors dedicated to the strategizing process and more communication tools than universities led only by a few of drivers or is this relation not proportional? Does the number of internal actors influence the degree of formality of the strategizing? So, a further analysis step has to be done that will help us observe the possible complementarity of treatment of several of these phases of strategizing by the universities.

To complete this analysis, two more analytic steps have been done. First, the results of the self-assessment tools have been transformed in percentages and an intercategorial analysis has been led. Secondly, the data collected has been transformed in 12 spider diagrams, in order to obtain a visual representation of each partner university. In this way, the last analysis step will assist in the attempt to define university profiles in relation to their strategy process for LLL/SD.

Inter-category analysis – data pre-processing

As mentioned above, the results of the self-assessment Tool 1 have been transformed into percentages in order to attempt an intercategorial analysis concerning the different phases of a change process. For methodological reasons, the categories presenting an answer scale going from 0 to 3 ('internal and external actors', 'communication' (people and tools), 'tools and techniques') have been selected while the others have been excluded from this analysis because of their different answer scale (-3 to +3 for the 'drivers' and 0 or 1 for the 'processes').

Several intercategorial analyses were led but no clear findings have been identified. Several categories were compared (the influence of internal actors and the use of 'tools and techniques' or internal communication tools; the influence of external actors and the use of external communication tools; the number of communication targets and the use of communication tools ; the influence of internal and external actors with the number of communication targets) and no clear correlations between the categories are emerging, that is to say that universities having a score higher than the average for one category do not react clearly the same way for another category it is compared with.

To go beyond these results, a last analysis step is to gather the data collected for each university in an individual visual graph, which is the spider diagram.

University profiles – data pre-processing

This last analysis step is based on spider-diagrams that are a visual representation of each partner university in order to observe if university profiles concerning a strategy process for LLL/SD may emerge. The objective of this spider representation is to find out similarities or dissimilarities in the spider shape and to link these similarities or differences with external and objective factors as the university experience in LLL or SD activities on one side and the intensity of drivers for LLL/SD development on the other.

The grades presented in the spider diagrams are the results of the transformation of the scores mentioned by each university in two steps.[7]

Firstly, the scores have been transformed in percentages from the maximal possible grade. For example, concerning the influence of the internal actors (Table 3), P2-BE mentioned an influence of 17 (doers and decision makers) on 51 (17 different actors proposed in the table multiplied by 3 (maximum possible of the scale of influence). The result is reported on a scale of 100 and then rounded off. The calculation is presented like this (for the internal actors of P2-BE): (17/51)*100 = 33). This calculation has been made for all the steps of the tool (Who, How, etc.).

Secondly, it was decided to present 'relative values' instead of these percentages. By relative values, we mean that the maximum grade obtained by a university for a specific category (actors, communication, tools, etc.) is considered as the maximum reachable grade for all universities. For example, on its spider diagram, P5-PT has a grade of 10 to 10 concerning the actors because it is the university that has obtained the highest score for this category. The percentages of all the other universities have been relativized in this way.

In order to propose a more complete university profile, two additional pieces of information are added next to the spider diagrams. Firstly, two dates are mentioned: the start of LLL strategizing or first action and the start of the social dimension strategizing or first action. This information, which was not collected in the tool answers but during the analysis step, may be insightful to analyse the global view of the strategizing process offered by the spider diagram. Secondly, the grade concerning the drivers is not integrated in the spider diagram or reported on a scale of 10 because of its more distinctive and explanatory character (the grade obtained by each university for its drivers is probably a decisive factor concerning all the other grades of tool 1) and because of its dual impact (positive, having a fostering effect or negative, acting as a barrier or obstacle). The grade of each university is mentioned between the lowest grade obtained by a university (P7-IE=5) and the maximum obtained by a university (P10-GR=41).

---

[7] Two main categories have been excluded from the diagrams because of the type of answers they suggest: most of the categories were expecting answers going from 0 to 3, when the influence of the drivers could be estimated from -3 to +3 and the processes were described as absent (0) or present (1).

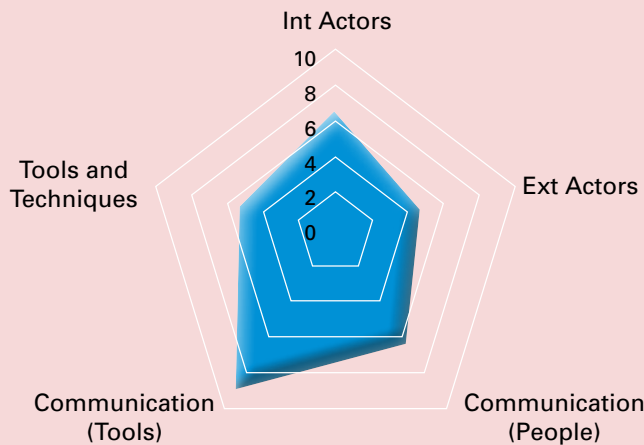**Start of LLL strategizing or first action: 1999. Start of SD strategizing of first action: 1975**

P2
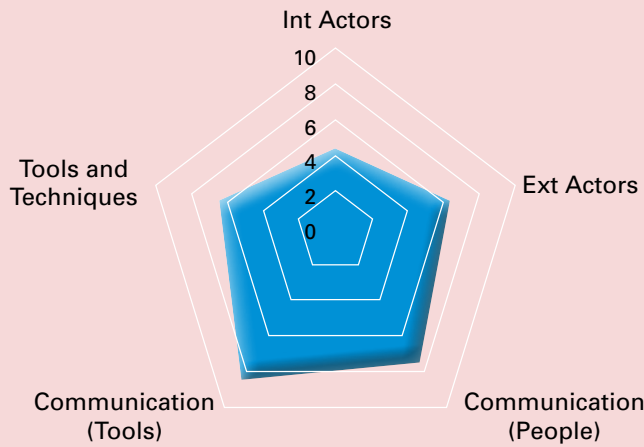
Why min 5 / P2 = 24 / max. 41

Start of LLL strategizing or first action: 1996. Start of SD strategizing of first action: 2010
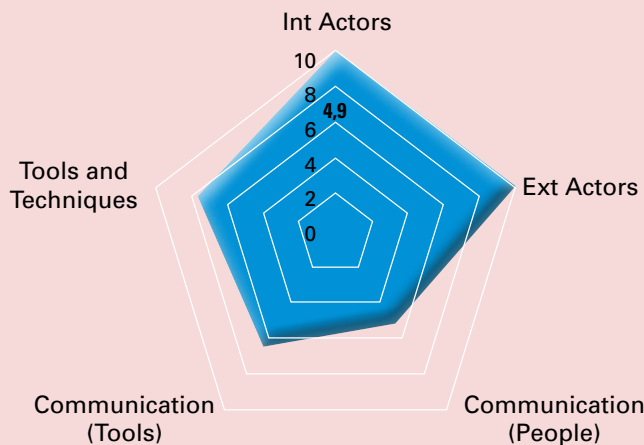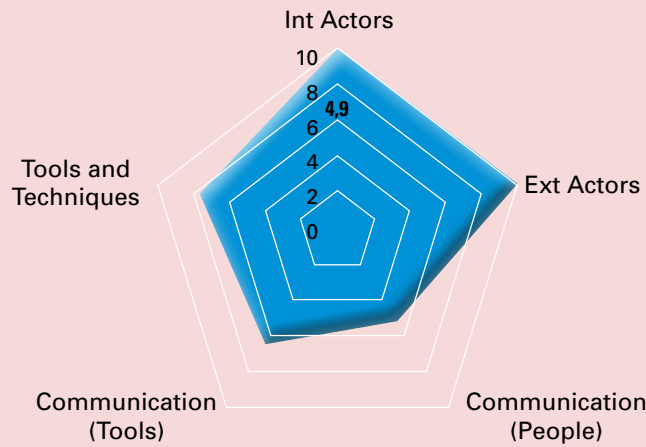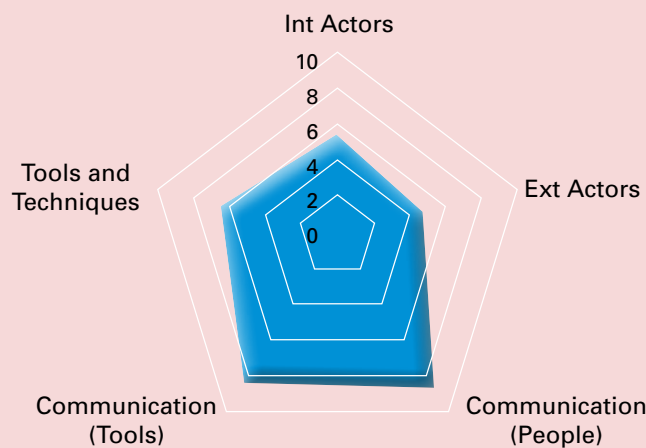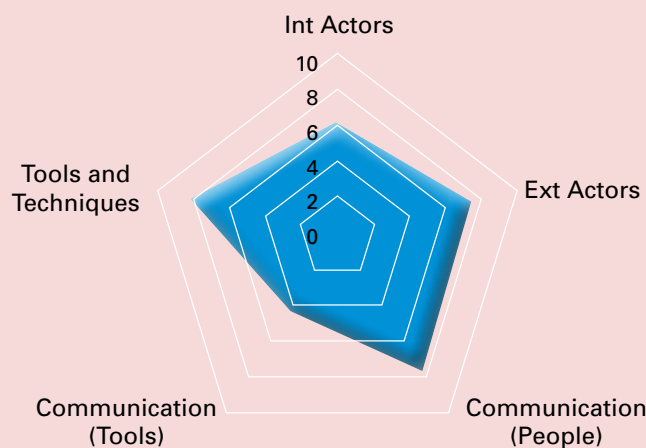
P3

Why min 5 / P3 = 31 / max. 41

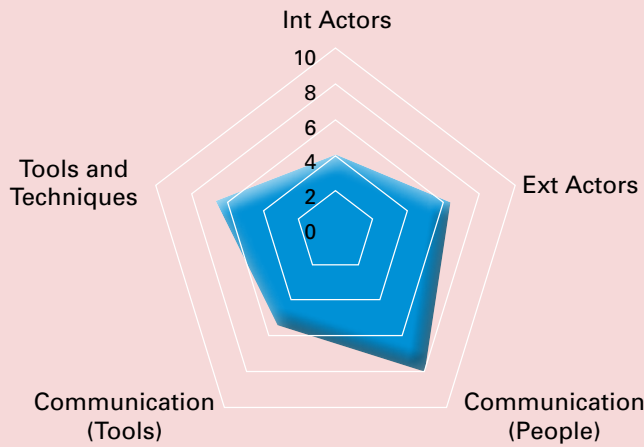**Start of LLL strategizing or first action: 1973. Start of SD strategizing of first action: 1973**
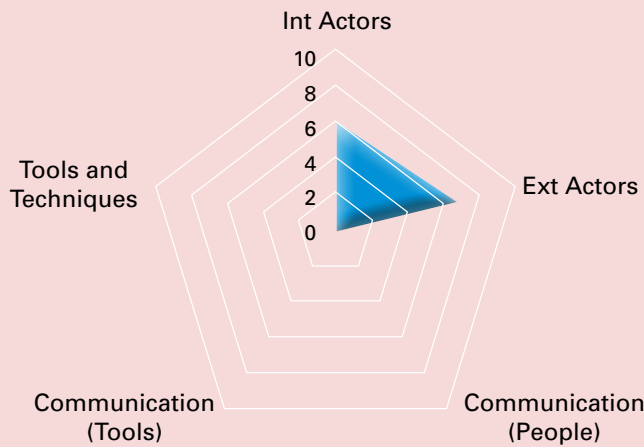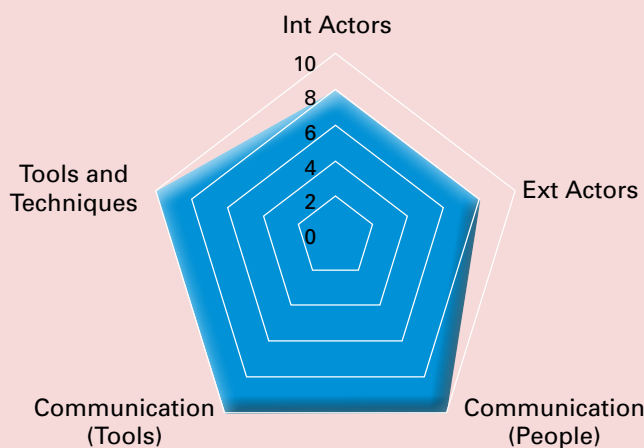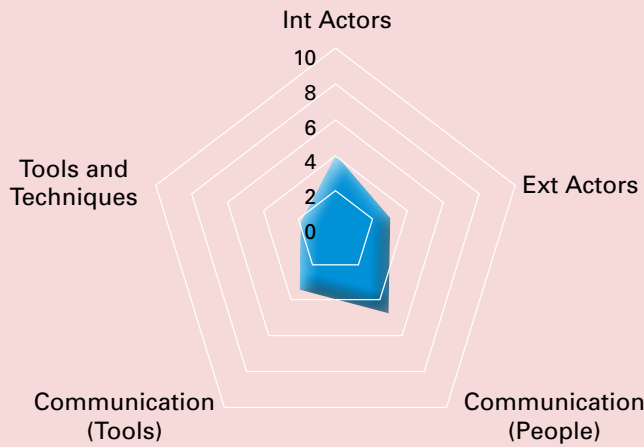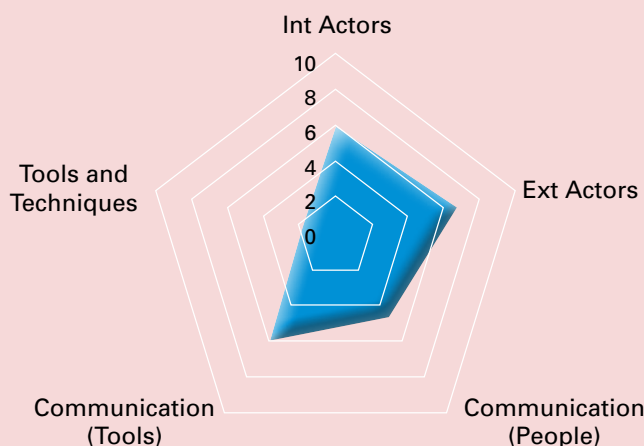
P4

Why min 5 / P4 = 35 / max. 41

EMBEDDING THE LLL CONTRIBUTION FOR SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT INTO UNIVERSITY STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES

Start of LLL strategizing or first action: 1986. Start of SD strategizing of first action: 2005

P5

Radar chart P5 with axes: Int Actors (10, 8, 4,9, 6, 4, 2, 0), Ext Actors, Communication (People), Communication (Tools), Tools and Techniques

Why min 5 / P5 = 20 / max. 41

Start of LLL strategizing or first action: 2009. Start of SD strategizing of first action: 2016

P6

Radar chart P6 with axes: Int Actors (10, 8, 6, 4, 2, 0), Ext Actors, Communication (People), Communication (Tools), Tools and Techniques

Why min 5 / P6 = 30 / max. 41

Start of LLL strategizing or first action: 1 982. Start of SD strategizing of first action: 2005

P7

Radar chart P7 with axes: Int Actors (10, 8, 6, 4, 2, 0), Ext Actors, Communication (People), Communication (Tools), Tools and Techniques

Why min 5 / P7 = 5 / max. 41

49

Start of LLL strategizing or first action: 2010. Start of SD strategizing of first action: 2010

P8

Int Actors
10
8
6
4
2
0

Tools and Techniques

Ext Actors

Communication (Tools)

Communication (People)

Why min 5 / P8 = 29 / max. 41

Start of LLL strategizing or first action: 1999. Start of SD strategizing of first action: 2013

P9

Int Actors
10
8
6
4
2
0

Tools and Techniques

Ext Actors

Communication (Tools)

Communication (People)

Why min 5 / P9 = 27 / max. 41

Start of LLL strategizing or first action: 1999. Start of SD strategizing of first action: 2013

P10

Int Actors
10
8
6
4
2
0

Tools and Techniques

Ext Actors

Communication (Tools)

Communication (People)

Why min 5 / P10 = 41 / max. 41

EMBEDDING THE LLL CONTRIBUTION FOR SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT INTO UNIVERSITY STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES

Start of LLL strategizing or first action: 1950. Start of SD strategizing of first action: 1990

P11

Why min 5 / P11 = 13 / max. 41

Start of LLL strategizing or first action: 2001. Start of SD strategizing of first action: 2012

P12
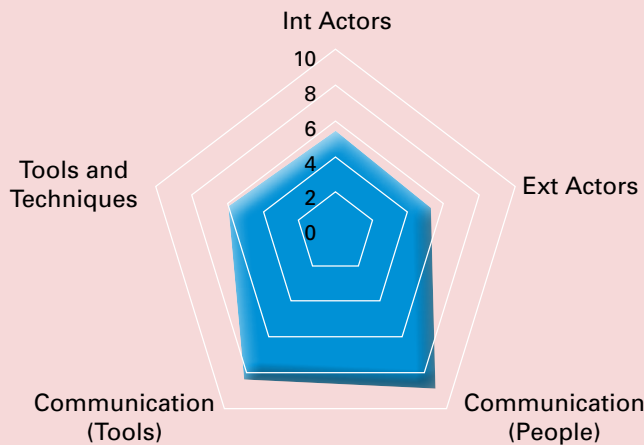
Why min 5 / P12 = 18 / max. 41

Start of LLL strategizing or first action: 2003. Start of SD strategizing of first action: 2013

P13

Why min 5 / P13 = 17 / max. 41

EMBEDDING THE LLL CONTRIBUTION FOR SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT INTO UNIVERSITY STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES

First of all, we need to remind that these spider diagrams have to be considered snapshots based on data collected during 2014. They do not translate the evolution of the strategizing process in each of the 12 partner university but the state of this process at a particular time.

The spider diagrams reveal very different shapes but seem guided by a first distinctive point: the extension of the process. Some universities present a **limited process extension** (P9-IT, P11-RO, P13-HU), while others reveal an **extended process** (P5-PT, P10-GR).

Concerning the universities presenting a **limited process extension** and regarding the start of LLL strategizing, we distinguish two profiles: universities presenting an (a) **emerging process** (P9-IT, P13-HU) and universities presenting a more (b) **established process** (P11-RO).

Concerning universities with an **extended process**, one shows (c) **high scores on almost all dimensions** (P10-GR) while others present (d) **high scores on one or two dimensions and average scores on the other dimensions** (P2-BE, P3-FI, P4-FR, P5-PT, P6-DE, P7-IE, P8-TR, P12-ES).

Concerning the first profile (c), the start of the LLL strategizing process may be an explanation of the high scores shown by P10-GR (1970).

Concerning the second profile (d), P2-BE, P6-DE and P12-ES reveal a similar shape presenting high scores on the communication items (tools and people). Neither the start of the strategizing process (1999, 2009, 2001) or the influence of the drivers (24, 30, 18) are relevant to explain this similar profile but this profile reveals the importance of communication for some universities.

For the other universities presenting this profile (d), no regular shapes are identified but some elements are observed: there is no specific link between the importance of the (internal and external) actors and communication. For instance, P5-PT has declared an important influence coming from the actors while communication is not very extended. On the contrary, universities may present high communication scores when they do not declare high influence coming from the actors (P2-BE, P3-FI, P6-DE, P10-GR, P12-ES).

More globally, these spider diagrams show that a process such as LLL strategizing is profoundly singular from a university to another and that many factors (start date, drivers, actors, etc.) may intervene and influence the process. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that a process is progressive by nature and that the spider diagrams presented in this analysis have to be considered as "snapshots" of the process at a particular moment, at a specific stage of a global evolution. Universities could complete the tools every year to observe the evolution of their own LLL strategizing process.

5.3. Theoretical settings – food for thought

Tool 1 is dedicated to the process of implementation of a LLL-SD strategy. The analysis of this process highlights the functioning of university organisations more than the problem of LLL and SD. So, in order to refine our analysis of the data collected, it seems relevant to attend to theoretical elements about <u>organisations</u> and about <u>strategy</u> in HE organisations, to see how a transversal problem like LLL or SD (which implies multiple missions of university, several faculties, and various types of actors) can be treated. Therefore, some major reflections stemming from sociology of organisations firstly and from management secondly, will allow us to interpret the data collected through the COMMIT project.

A university: three organisational point of views

Sociology of organisations refers generally to three major North American studies in order to describe the organisational logics which characterize universities. All 'form themselves around the question of the autonomy of the professionals and, corollary, around the weakness of the university organisation'. (Dahan, 2015, p. 17).

52

Several studies have described the university as an 'organized anarchy' (Cohen et. al., 1972; Cohen and March, 1974; Olsen, 1976; Elwood and Leyden, 2000 - (cited in Kadir, 2012): namely, an organisation characterized by the absence of objectives shared by all, a low material and technological process of production, the low supervision of the tasks and finally by the fact that the members participate in an irregular way in the various decision-making processes concerning the organisation. From then on, the decision-making rarely results from a linear or rational process but results rather 'from the unpredictable meeting between flows of problems, solutions, participants and occasions of choice' (Dahan, 2015, p. 12[8]) called 'garbage-can theory' (1972).

The hierarchy is weakly operational and the organisation is set back compared with its members who are placed in strategic position: we do not ask them to subscribe to a common project and they act alone, without direct control over the tasks which they make. 'It is not 'the organisation', as homogeneous entity endowed with a clear identity, which shows itself in the decision-making (for example by means of a hierarchy which indicates the strategic subjects, or which manages the debates, or still which pushes a solution rather than another), but a series of phenomena escaping widely any global university level strategy' (*ibid.*).

This low presence of the organisation, which would engender a wide autonomy of the professionals, is put in perspective by Friedberg and Musselin (1989). Indeed, these authors consider that a university is not anarchy as Cohen et al. suggest but rather that certain processes of decision-making are regulated by two principles: 'In the first place, everything is made to avoid any qualitative evaluation of the activities of research and teaching within the university, and secondly, the actors lean on criteria of impersonal, explicit and stable choices' (Musselin, 1996, p. 67). However, even if a certain regulation is perceptible, the decision-making principles put forward by Musselin and Friedberg protect the autonomy of the professionals in the driving of their activities by avoiding the creation of links of dependence between them.

The concept of the 'organized anarchy', as well as the critique that has been made to it, underline in a rather convincing way how the professionals succeed in maintaining at a distance any intervention of the organisation in the tasks they carry out. We will find this same narrative in the concept of the weakly interdependent system developed by Karl Weick.

Indeed, Weick (1976) joins this analysis of the university by considering educational organisations (e.g. schools and universities) as loosely coupled systems because of the disconnection between the hierarchical level from the 'technical' activity structure (teaching and research assured by the professors) and because this activity itself is disconnected from its effects (on the students). The advantages of this way of functioning are the facility of adapting to the local needs, the possibility of change without disturbance of the set (group), but it involves a limited hierarchical line. Consequently, neither the hierarchical constraints nor the technical arguments can carry the decisions concerning the organisation because of their limited legitimacy.

In a research on UK universities' strategy, Buckland describes loose-coupling organisations as ones which operate 'without fixed 'machine' relationships of their constituent parts and where actions and processes across and within the organisation may change, progress (or decline), without overt initiative or control from other, loose-coupled parts' (Buckland, 2009, p. 527).

Finally, Mintzberg (1982), trying to establish different organisational configurations, will call an educational organisation a 'professional bureaucracy' because of the two different - but complementary - organisational logics that universities rest on: the bureaucratic and the professional logics (Bidwell, 1965). On one hand, the bureaucratic rules are numerous in a university (division of work between operators, standardised skills and roles attributed to the different actors, hierarchical relations between people…) in order to allow to manage on a very large scale, and by minimizing the local costs of coordination, the services offered by the education systems. But these bureaucratic rules will concern the operators only to a limited extent. In effect, beyond these rules, the professional logic – requiring highly qualified 'operators' – grants a large autonomy to these

[8] Translation by the authors

actors in order to let them exert their profession confronted to very changing realities (both for teaching and research). Therefore, professionals are quite resistant to regulation because that makes them programmable and thus reduce their autonomy.

It seems to us that these three different theoretical frames are enlightening to understand the difficulties to implement a strategizing process in a university. Indeed, trying to have a global strategy at university level, while the hierarchical line is very weak and while the operators are professionals benefiting from a wide autonomy, may represent a real challenge.

Strategy and strategizing within Universities

The current results are put into perspective with previous research results on strategy approach and processes within universities.

A first characteristic is the dominance of **strategic plan** in the methods used by universities, as mentioned by Thomas, (1980) (cited in Kadir (2012)). We observe the same result in this project. Moreover, as mentioned by Holdaway and Meekison (1990), strategy planning within universities requires a **collective approach** or collective development due to multiple constituents and expectations from governments, from customs, from environment and due to a very well-defined legal contexts. What we observe here for LLL strategizing, is the involvement of a large wide diversity of internal university members who actively act in the process or who influence it as shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7. Moreover, this process is also influenced by external people amongst whom dominant ones are specific ministers, government, national or regional authorities. University staff involvement in strategy planning is highlighted by Kadir (2012).

A second characteristic is the global approach for doing strategy within a university. A top-down approach was mainly observed by Thomas (1980) in a first study, but in more recent studies, Kadir (2012) mentions bottom-up or middle-bottom-up approaches. What we observe in this project (Figure 4), is that a **middle-bottom-up approach** is more likely than a top-down one. This result is aligned with *ALLUME* (2011a) results and conclusions. It means that there is a decision of faculty's deans or LLL director to implement LLL/SD strategy principles in collaboration with teachers or researchers, and then those actors support and promote the principles to the Rector's office or presidency.

A third characteristic is the importance of strategy communication. Fumasoli and Lepori (2011) conclude that **effective** communication is necessary in order to strike a balance between central power and the academics. In this project we observed a quite intense communication activity regarding the number of internal targets (especially the highest levels of faculties and departments) and the external targets, and regarding the diversity of communication tools used.

A fourth characteristic is the unicity of LLL/SD strategy process within each university, due to the **specificity of its environment and its culture**. The need for universities to understand their unique cultures and characteristics to develop strategic plan is highlighted by Elwood and Leyden (2000). Moreover, they outline the importance of a supportive strategy culture in HEI (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). Higher Education Institutions need to understand that 'this supportive strategy culture includes treating strategic planning as a norm rather than a necessity during crisis; linkages with external enterprises; effective leadership; involvement of faculty members in the strategy agenda; support for innovation; and delegation of clear responsibility of desired outcomes' (Kadir, 2012, p.30., presenting Elwood and Leyden (2000) work). Those observations are in line with the results of this project.

Finally, we observe **a very low influence of a formal 'research based' approach** in the LLL strategizing and this missing link between strategic planning and the research is also highlighted by Pidcoks (2001) when looking at universities strategy process in general.

6. TRANSVERSAL ANALYSIS OF TOOL 2: STRATEGY CONTENT TOOL

The focus of this report is the strategic content of lifelong learning and its social dimension in higher education institutions. It is the second part of the COMMIT project transversal analysis.

The transversal analysis report makes use of the materials provided by the COMMIT partner institutions and linked to the visits done by other partners. The information used is collected from the universities that made use of the 'Strategy Content Tool' of COMMIT, also referred to as 'Tool 2'. The tool is a modified version of the strategy tool prepared in the ALLUME project with the addition of a sub-tool focusing on the links between social dimension and lifelong learning as well as their occurrence in the structures and strategic processes of the institutions.

In total, the strategy content tool was used by twelve universities, seven of which also used the sub-tool for social dimension **(in bold)**:

- **P5-PT**
- P8-TR
- **P4-FR**
- **P2-BE**
- P7-IE
- P9-IT
- **P10-GR**
- **P11-RO**
- **P13-HU**
- P12-ES
- P6-DE
- **P3-FI**

The report of the strategic content of lifelong learning and social dimension is made up of two parts: the first nine chapters analyse the strategic status, practices and priorities of lifelong learning using the information provided in the answers to the original content tool. The final three chapters deal with the contribution of lifelong learning to the social engagement of universities using the materials collected through the additional sub-tool. It is important to understand the focussed essence of the materials: in this part of the report, the 'social dimension' is discussed especially in relation to the LLL and institutional strategies. You can read the main findings of 'social dimension' of the COMMIT project in part 4 of the report.

Senior adviser Kari Seppälä from the University of Turku wrote the chapters 6.1.1 to 6.2.2. Assistant professor Tamer Atabarut, who is the Managing Director of the Lifelong Learning Centre of the University of Bo aziçi in Turkey, wrote chapter 6.2.3.

6.1. The strategic content of University lifelong learning

6.1.1. Vision of University lifelong learning

Based on the reports of the COMMIT visits, the general definition of University lifelong learning from the BeFlex project is still valid and up-to-date:

> *ULLL is the provision by Higher Education Institutions of learning opportunities, services and research for: the personal and professional development of a wide range of individuals - lifelong and lifewide; and the social, cultural and economic development of communities and the region. It is at university level and research-based; it focuses primarily on the needs of the learners; and it is often developed and/or provided in collaboration with stakeholders and external actors.* **Agreement number 2006/0073-001-001, Socrates)**

The number of reports related to the theme of strategic content does not give ground to statistical analysis, but the experience of the COMMIT partnership gives clear evidence of certain features of the state-of-the-art of ULLL in 2015:

The strategies and ULLL

- The universities may be active in producing various services of LLL, although no official policies or strategies are in place.

- Launching an independent lifelong learning strategy or including the vision, mission and principles of LLL into the general policy statements of the institution will enhance progress.

- The trends in society, work-life and economy have an essential and concrete effect on the development of ULLL. Typical drivers of change have been the increase of social and professional mobility and the rising volume of knowledge production. The mastery of the interface with society is essential for ULLL success.

- The European agenda and discussion of lifelong learning have promoted the progress in various countries. Participating in European networks and projects have been concrete forms of practical international cooperation to support LLL at the home ground.

LLL within the university

- Linkage to research is an essential feature of lifelong learning at the academic level. It can take many forms e.g. making use of research results, researchers as teachers and using research methods as a part of the learning process.

- Lifelong learning and social engagement are usually considered as principles of action that are intertwined with the activities of the fundamental missions of the university rather than a separate 'third mission'. On the other hand, in many universities, the offer for adults is an independent whole of activities and services.

- As to the degree studies, lifelong learning is present both in open access, open and flexible organisation and implementation of studies and work-life relevance of studies for better employability as well as a success base for permanent expertise. Part of the universities offer degree programmes specifically designed for mature students and professionals.

- Client-oriented, flexible and cost-effective student and administrative services are an inherent part of contemporary ULLL.

LLL for various audiences

- The focus of ULLL is typically both at the level of individual students, companies as well as regional, national and international stakeholders.

56

- ULLL covers the general lifelong viewpoint of degree studies and separate offer of adult education e.g. in continuous education.

- ULLL serves both the individual needs in their professional and personal life as well as the needs of society, especially economy.

- Lifelong learning does not only concern external stakeholders, it is also necessary for the faculty and the whole personnel of the university.

- The socio-cultural and economic development of the region are seen as relevant roles for the university, realized typically in collaboration with various stakeholders.

Some examples of visions of lifelong learning

The University of Ioannina makes it concrete:

- *Professional Development*

- *Socio-cultural and economic development of the region*

- *Collaboration with stakeholders*

The vision of the University of Iasi in Romania carries the tradition of a technical university:

"TUIASI is contributing to the welfare of our society using its most efficient tools, student-focused education, training and research. TUIASI provides programs of continuous training of the labour force. The University also offers extensively consultancy and expertise to business operators in order to solve and assist with specific technical and scientific problems."

The University of Turku has included lifelong learning in its main strategy:

Education at the University of Turku is based on scientific research and lifelong learning. The vision of the University for 2016: The University is an open, motivating, interactive and international environment for research, learning and working, attracting both staff and students. The needs of lifelong learning are taken into account in addition to undergraduate and postgraduate education. Administrative services are customer-oriented, flexible and cost-effective.

6.1.2. Mission of the university towards ULLL

In the COMMIT visit reports we can find examples of clear and structured definitions of lifelong learning visions and missions that are based on developed strategic practices. It is not rare, however, that the features and elements of LLL that are described in the visions and missions tend to overlap and intermingle. This can be an indication of the condition of lifelong learning in the institutions but also of different approaches to strategic documentation and argumentation. The analysis of the responses to the questions about the mission of the university to lifelong learning gives proof of both general common qualities in all universities, features that are typical for certain types or groups of universities and also some characteristics that are special for individual institutions.

University missions on lifelong learning take shape in various formulations and documentations. If the mission is defined in the university-level statutes they tend to be general and the lifelong learning element is embedded in the mission statements concerning research and education. Often the more specialised or concrete LLL mission formulations are written in lower-level documents, e.g. in a charter for social engagement, the

statutes of the UCE department or mid-term contracts for the independent institutions. In these cases they may include descriptions of the way the mission is implemented in the university. In the partnership we can also find universities where the mission found its documentation only as an answer to the COMMIT exercise as it had not been provided explicitly earlier.

External pressures have enhanced the strategic formulations in many universities. They may have come from the regional stakeholders and the growing interaction with companies and lifelong learners. National authorities have produced reports to enhance the interaction between the higher education institutions and their region. In some cases the legislation has been a key driver to encourage the universities to take ownership of their lifelong learning and social engagement. In some universities, the fact of taking part in European cooperation and the European lifelong learning agenda as such have had an effect. Even though the lifelong learning community in universities had in general expected a stronger impact from the Charter of European universities lifelong learning on the European level, it was an important support for development in some countries and universities.

Societal and individual missions

The mission statements typically cover both societal and individual pursuits. The main societal seams are social, economic and cultural. One university is in generally not only limited to one of them but aims to serve various audiences in various circumstances. The individual learner is at the core of the lifelong learning mission, but it is usual to justify the efforts with the needs of the companies and other organisations, the region as well as work-life and economy in general. We can see the emphasis on social and economic spheres in the current offer but in the mission statements the cultural thread is often documented too. Sometimes it is sharpened by the critical role of the university as the reciprocal agency of thinking with a special interrelationship with the financial and political sphere.

Individual values are part of the ground where the missions grow. The student-centred approach is at the heart of the idea of lifelong learning. The universities want to respect diversity and to offer equal opportunities for multi-fold groups of students. Access to university studies is not enough, but equal opportunities also cover real possibility for successful studies. The general idea is to offer high-quality teaching but also wide support for students in terms of guidance, housing, financial conditions etc.

The ideal is to *"develop creative, analytical, enterprising and socially-responsible citizens"(Dublin City University).* Various audiences demand various approaches and services. One grouping rests upon the individual goals, essentially professional, social and cultural. Secondly, the experience of academic studies differs from the non-experienced, both young and old, to experts with experience both from academic learning and knowledge-intensive work-life. For them, returning to university may mean updating, specialisation or broadening know-how, each requiring different kind of offers. For many participants, registration to studies stems from social responsibilities, and active citizenship. Some students aim to a certificate or degree, for others the relevance comes from a sheer will to acquire new skills and knowledge. The types of use of learning outcomes are similarly diverse.

Certain approaches and audiences have become almost necessities in the discussion of lifelong learning, and they appear in the majority of ULLL strategy statements. These include:

Approaches

- making use of digital learning environments
- recognition of prior learning
- modularised programs

Audiences

- widening access
- age-friendly university
- special minority groups such as immigrants

58

The general university missions to produce new knowledge, to build capacity for work and to enhance critical thinking carry the lifelong learning ethos. Through their lifelong learning offer, the universities both pay back for the resources received from society and strengthen their scientific and academic role in society. In addition to the dissemination of knowledge, the universities strive to raise the scientific, cultural and professional capacity of the whole nation.

As parts of the international academic community, the universities are also responsive to the international pressures and current global problems. Embedded in the universities that fundamentally search for the new, the lifelong learning mission is rooted into the future. The function is not only to react to the present-day needs and expectations but also to be proactive in relation to the foreseeable developments. For many universities, offering a wide selection of courses is not enough, but they also want to regenerate the methods and practices of LLL. Even more, some institutions see the role of their university as an active participant, even leader in the discussion and debate of future options.

Where appropriately implemented, the vision and mission formulations have a great effect on the demands for both the internal structures and processes as well as the external networks and practices of the universities. Diverse solutions are made for the realisation of the LLL principle in degree studies and offering learning opportunities as special service. In the next chapters we take a closer look on the principles and execution of the strategic formulations.

Some examples of formulations concerning the mission

P13-HU mission is to reach both for the individuals and the region:

> *The mission of the university towards ULLL is to open the university to lifelong learners with quality services and, simultaneously, participate in the learning city-region developments of the City of Pécs with distinguished stakeholder groups, so as to raise participation and performance of adult and lifelong learners.*

P12-ES documents its approach through audiences and functions:

- *To develop and provide comprehensive and high quality lifelong learning opportunities, services and research to people and organisations for:*

  – *the personal and professional development of citizens and professionals throughout their lives;*

  – *the social, cultural and economic development of the community;*

  – *the promotion of innovation and knowledge transfer in companies and throughout the region.*

In Ireland, the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 has a strong focus on social engagement:

- *'Engagement with the wider community must become more firmly embedded in the mission of higher education institutions. Higher education institutions need to become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve.'*

P7-IE is a forerunner by its mission:

> *"To transform lives and societies through education, research and innovation*

- *by developing creative, analytical, enterprising and socially-responsible citizens,*

- *by creating and translating knowledge to address major global challenges,*

- *by leading public debate and providing critical analysis on areas of societal importance*

- *by engaging with enterprise for the benefit of our students, our region and the wider economy."*

Also P4-FR includes statements with a clear focus on the social dimension:

- *To fight against discrimination, for the reduction of social and cultural inequalities and to the achievement of equality between men and women by ensuring all those who have the will and the ability access to the highest forms of culture and research. To this end, it contributes to the improvement of student living conditions, promote a sense of belonging to the community of students of their establishment, strengthening social cohesion and the development of individual or collective initiatives for the solidarity and animation of student life;*

- *To build an inclusive society. To this end, it takes care to encourage the inclusion of individuals without distinction of origin, social background and health condition.*

6.1.3. Implementation of LLL strategies

It is self-evident that designing the vision and mission for any activity is not enough to make a change. The COMMIT universities have been active in launching out implementation plans. During the visits, the hosts and the visitor discussed the developments. The picture is very rich in institutional variations and details. The universities are able to report concrete results in producing courses and developing the lifelong learning structures and practices. At the same time, a lot of work remains to be done: there seem to be plenty of both internal and external obstacles for the execution of the carefully designed action plans. Struggle for efficiency, assurance of quality and enhancing client satisfaction are never-ending stories.

Education offer and access

All the COMMIT universities have been able to launch an offer of lifelong learning opportunities. Often, the best results have been reached by the faculties and institutions that originally have the strongest links to the professional world. Teacher training and education of engineers are common examples. Success is also reported in the production of online programs.

University lifelong learning is not only about launching new programs but also about the regeneration of existing e.g. degree studies. *"Another goal of the strategy was to strengthen the relations between the B-M-D programmes and LLL. First steps to analyse the structure of Master's Degrees have been taken to promote the organisation in competence modules. A lifelong learning programme has also been designed for doctorate students." (P12-ES)*

Recognition of prior learning is high up in the European agenda of lifelong learning, and many universities and their networks have been active in promoting the principle and practices. Regardless of the European and national investments and decisive diligence, the outcomes have not been equivalent to the expectations. This may be due to different axioms of academic teaching and learning but also sheer resistance against anticipated reforms in authority doctrines.

The expansion of the educational offer has not been very carefully examined, especially scientific research of academic lifelong learning has been limited. It is also evident that coherent data collection is insufficient both at the institutional, national and European level.

Widening access has been one of the key tendencies of lifelong learning all around Europe. Political ambitions and access programs have made a change in some universities and "*cycles of exclusion have been broken and have helped realise the potential of many who otherwise would never have benefited from a university education". (P7-IE).*

60

Organisation

Structures of lifelong learning differ remarkably. Some universities mention the foundation of a LLL unit as a significant milestone. At the same time, we know that there are many views of the most functional structural arrangements. Finland is an example of a country where a part of the universities have mainstreamed LLL after quite some success of independent units for adult education and social engagement activities.

'The first strategy implemented at UCL concerns organisation through the adoption of a highly 'decentralized organisational model' that confers large autonomy to the different faculties to imagine and organize their training programs and the possibility for them to find help in a special unit called "University continuous training unit"'. 'At the faculty level, the strategies differ depending on demands or requests they receive from the external environment (evolution of legal or professional context, alumni needs, …) , depending on their diversification capabilities or objectives (in relation with their research activities) and depending finally, on their vision of their duty towards the society (assistance for some societal issues, for example).' (P2-BE)

Quality and staff development

While opening the university studies to new audiences it is fundamental to keep to the high quality of education. Quality assurance procedures for lifelong learning are taken into use in part of the universities. They may be LLL-specific or follow the general quality guidelines. *"The second strategy concerns quality: the COFC has set up an "agreement procedure" that gives, to the different faculties and program organizers, the quality indications expected for any new program created." (P2-BE)*

P12-ES has defined specific quality assurance processes for lifelong learning as part of the Internal Quality Assurance System, implemented quality indicators for lifelong learning and increased the external accreditation of national and international quality standards in the lifelong learning programmes and services.

Quality enhancement is not only about quality assurance through guidelines and quality handbooks. Respectively, it is not about sticking in a rigid way to the academic formalities but ensuring the excellence of teaching and support. *"DCU is committed to ensuring an excellent learning environment for our students and staff. This entails a constant exploration of developments in pedagogy, learning innovation and technology-enhanced learning (TEL). DCU will actively embrace 'the future of learning' by pioneering research and implementation in TEL and by providing a 'state-of-the-art' infrastructure to support this." (P7-IE)* The ULLL mission demands both the mobilisation of potential resources including experts in the university and the improvement of faculty pedagogical skills. This demands improving the lifelong learning commitment of the faculty, also through concrete incentives.

Region and networks

Success in making use of lifelong learning to support social engagement typically demands active cooperation with distinct stakeholders. Effective partnerships are integral especially in the construction of learning environments that support non-traditional learners. *"First and foremost, DCU is committed to active and positive engagement with its community, which not only includes our current staff and students but also our alumni, our retired staff, our trustees and supporters. Both DCU's track record to date and its future successful development are highly dependent on establishing synergistic relationships across all elements of the 'DCU family'." (P7-IE) "In Master and Postgraduate Courses very important is the co-design of courses with businesses, their participation in the teaching and the attention given to the placement output." (P9-IT)*

The ULLL mission statements often emphasize the advancement of the economic, social and cultural well-being of the region. Here, bridging the internal networks of the university and the external connections to work-life and third sector are of utmost importance. Even after lengthy collaboration, the external stakeholders have great difficulties in finding appropriate expertise in the multifaceted hierarchies of the universities.

61

The COMMIT universities share the attitude that developing lifelong learning with the alumni is one of the substantive bedrocks of companionships. For many universities, it seems to be a possibility rather than a success story. In general, the lifelong learning experts in the COMMIT universities want to be more involved and actively participate in the networks and organisations of their contexts.

6.1.4. Goals of University Lifelong Learning

All the COMMIT universities are able to describe their main goals of lifelong learning at the institutional level. The stage of formality varies whereas a part of the formulations are officially approved either in the university decision-making bodies or in the faculties or independent units. The answers demonstrate that in some universities the goal definition is more informal but still thorough and purposeful. The reports from the COMMIT visits do not incorporate the faculty-level goals but it is easy to conclude that, as the status of LLL differs exceedingly between faculties, so do the goals and objectives. As an example of a need to clarify and structure the ULLL offer and practices, the P12-ES aims *"to elaborate an annual plan for all lifelong learning activities in conjunction with the Third Mission Commission"*. The statement includes the important connection between lifelong learning and other elements of social engagement.

Education and audiences

The simple but important goal of organizing more courses for more students is present in many universities. Usually this also means searching for new audiences. An example comes *from P6-DE: "To provide academic knowledge to a broader student body"*. Key concepts are opening access, widening participation, non-traditional learners. But also the post-experience education for graduates is essential, like for *P9-IT: "Even the training of professionals is an important goal that concerns not only medicine, but also architecture and other departments."*

New forms of delivery make use of modularization of programs, which is also relevant to ensure accessibility. Naturally, e-learning and digital education are in the agenda of the majority of higher education institutions. Both modularization and virtual learning environments demand advanced systems and practices of guidance: *"Develop more flexible progression processes to facilitate students in navigating and customising their pathways through our degree programmes (P7-IE)." "More guidance is given to potential students for more knowledgeable choices of study fields by recruiting a university level guidance and counselling professional (P3-FI)."*

The need to reorient the career paths of professional students is a reality in many countries: *"To extend the course offer for professional reconversion" (P11-RO).* At the same time, the operational environment is challenging for ULLL as well: *"At university level, UCL has to stay present in a competitive environment where many education actors are present" (P2-BE).* The aim of growing numbers and proportion of mature students is shared in many universities.

It is not only about education – two viewpoints

Building up the educational offer and assuring its quality is necessary in bringing about real lifelong learning universities, but it is certainly not sufficient. The universities are active in making learning possible through diverse support services like guidance, grant systems, housing, health care etc. It is evident that universities cannot be responsible for the whole array of necessary functions and resources but they are in any event the expert actors, while the other relevant stakeholders adapt their amenities to catch up the lifelong learning demands. One of the important associates is the student union: *"Continue to develop initiatives that enrich the lives of our student body. These will include enhancing our high-quality student support services, supporting a vibrant Clubs and Societies culture and deepening a symbiotic partnership with DCU Students' Union (P7-IE)."* The organisation of networks to defend the interests of adult learners has been especially challenging.

While concretely a tool to be used in professional and other fields of life, for many individuals lifelong learning is a value in itself. For universities, lifelong learning may be an element in the value system, but it seems to have lost some of its force as an independent driver. Instead, lifelong learning shows to be essential as one thread of the social engagement of the higher education institutions. ULLL alone may not be as hot a political concept as it was at the time of EUA ULLL Charter, but it certainly contributes to progress in the contexts of regional development, innovation systems, solving wicked problems etc. The COMMIT visit reports give examples of the ULLL socio-economic connections:

- *"To establish platforms of knowledge transfer through the formation of learning city-region developments" (P13-HU)*

- *"UCL wants to stay in contact with the professional world because research and teaching are and have to stay related to the economic, scientific and social phenomena of society." (P2-BE)*

- *"To focus the research transfer on the development of society needs" (P11-RO)*

- *"(DCU) Aims to be a driver of social and economic development of our locality through active partnership with local authorities, enterprises and community organisations." "(P7-IE) Aims to perform a major review of processes employed in universities renowned for innovation worldwide with a view to adopting best practices at DCU." (P7-IE)*

Capacity building

To be able to fulfil the lifelong learning mission, the universities need to build capacity in terms of internal and external resources. Within the university, it is important to increase the commitment of academia into lifelong learning. This commitment is not the self-explanatory main driver of university development or number one priority as compared to research or traditional education. It is intrinsic that the cooperation with society is two-way at all the levels: on one hand the institution needs to be sensitive to external expectations, on the other it has the role of contributing to its environment.

- *"Involve both Academia and external actors" (P5-PT)*

- *External visibility and participation to partnership or decisional authorities (P2-BE)*

Several COMMIT universities raise the issue of staff development, pedagogic regeneration and new demands of learning culture and environments. The requirements for success in teaching and learning are divergent with the new audiences and learner-centred practices. On the other hand, the need to bring closer together the development of traditional degree studies and the lifelong learning offer is generally witnessed. Both the practitioners and lifelong learners would remarkably benefit from closer links to research. The training of trainers extends to the partners in cooperation outside the institution. Examples of formulation in COMMIT universities:

- *"Becoming a learning institution and increasing employee satisfaction." (P8-TR)*

- *"To strengthen the relations between the B-M-D programmes and LLL." To boost the international profile of lifelong learning." (P12-ES)*

- *"The University recognises its responsibility in training internationally competitive experts in a range of fields. It also reacts to the needs of society by creating new combinations of expertise across the traditional discipline boundaries." (P3-FI)*

- *"Research on education for adult and LLL organisation." (P4-FR)*

63

Structures and arrangements

As mentioned earlier, high-quality lifelong learning demands proper operational preconditions and functional support services. Organising the structures and procedures may take various forms but the higher education institutions need to be clear about their internal ULLL roles and responsibilities as well as principles and practices. In modern universities, lifelong learning cannot succeed outside the confirmed quality assurance systems. This is especially important because of the new audiences and renewed learning environments. The prolonged period of difficulties in the economy has changed substantially the financial context of lifelong learning and social engagement. The universities have faced the question of the real essence of LLL: how much is it about offering possibilities for lifelong learners and client organisations, how much a mechanism for income generation. At the grassroots, the concrete facilities matter.

- *"Even if it is not the first goal, we have to deal with the budget constraints. So, for both University and faculties, ULLL is viewed as a way to increase the budget. Nevertheless, the social responsibility, supported by our organisation, which is a part of the "public service", is also a strong "engine" to develop the commitment in LLL." (P4-FR)*

- *"To reinforce the quality assurance strategy related to lifelong learning." "To create a new structure to manage the entire postgraduate studies and lifelong learning programmes." (P12-ES)*

- *"Aim to provide the DCU community with the best possible education and research environment, including learning spaces, library, and laboratories." (P7-IE)*

64

6.1.5. Three lifelong learning priorities

In the table in the next page you can see the priorities that the universities have selected to enhance their lifelong learning. Some general overarching themes exist although each defined priority is embedded in the institutional context with its own special emphasis. Also, each defined goal tends to have connections to other themes. Furthermore, the grouping could be made from many other perspectives. The perspective chosen here aims to be literal to the collected data and reflects the perspective of lifelong learning contributing to the social dimension of higher education institutions. In order to make the themes visible, the priorities are marked by different colours in the table.

The content and characteristics of the priorities are discussed in more detail in the next four chapters of strengths, weaknesses, options and threats. Here below are only the first comments:

New audiences

The interest in wider access is necessarily not only about large volumes but also about new groups of learners. The priority may be general but it is more typical that a special interest lies in the non-traditional groups. Achieving the old age cohorts, immigrants, unemployed, socially excluded etc. is at the heart of social dimension.

Wider educational offer

Respectively, reaching for adequate supply of education consists of both a sufficient volume but also diverse selection of programs in line with the university's profile and mission. The growth can take place at various levels, simply organising new courses and programs, attracting new institutions and faculties into cooperation, but also launching a totally new format like the specialisation studies in Finland. It is founded on new legislation and based on cooperation of higher education institutions and work-life.

Quality of learning experience

Quality enhancement in ULLL sets the sight on quality of service as in any other service production but particularly on its essence as academic research-based activity. The COMMIT universities are active in seeking possibilities for research and development projects that would benefit lifelong learning both at national and international level. Serious efforts are made to make concrete the ideals of 'learning institutions', 'learner-centred pedagogics' and 'learning regions'. Web-based learning, guidance in all its forms and recognition of prior learning remain in the agenda of gradually regenerating the university traditions.

Social engagement

New audiences create the core of social engagement in many universities. In more general terms, the social dimension is present in the conventions of interaction with society. Consideration of external expectations and needs is integral to the development of work-life relevant education and (especially applied) research that is valuable for society. The COMMIT universities clearly see 'social engagement' as activities to support the disadvantaged or underprivileged cohorts but also more generally as cooperation and coexistence with their operational environment. It is essential however that social engagement takes place in the limits of the university profile and strategies, taking into account the missions and services of other public, private and third-sector actors.

P5-PT	P8-TR	P4-FR
• Consolidate new access pathways	• Improving the social service contribution	• Modularisation of all our programs to ensure accessibility
• Diversify of LLL offer	• Developing a "green" and sustainable campus	• Quality in all its aspects
• Implement research based recommendations for students' success	• Becoming a learning institution and increasing employee satisfaction	• External visibility and participation to partnership or decisional authorities.
P7-IE	**P9-IT**	**P10-GR**
• Expand intergenerational learning and opportunities for older adults	• Social dimension	• Research programs
• Opportunities for non-traditional learners	• Placement	• More Greek language courses
• More flexible progression processes to facilitate student pathways through the degree programmes	• Change teaching	• Entrepreneurship courses in more Departments
P11-RO	**P2-BE**	**P13-HU**
• Support the participation in international projects that develop training of academics to design web based learning materials in their field of study	• Increase the implication of each faculty in continuing education and communicate internally on lifelong education as a priority element at UCL	• Develop the skills of lifelong learners in order to achieve social mobility;
• Widening the student recruitment among adult population	• Communicate more externally about ULLL	• Promote quality teaching and learning;
• Increase the link between TUIASI and students in secondary education	• Identify more systematically the learning needs of society	• Provide specific platforms in learning city-region model so as to collect and share of good practices of learner-centred educational programmes both in formal and in non-formal environment
P6-DE	**P12-ES**	**P3-FI**
• Let more non-traditional students engage in academic learning	• To meet the LLL needs of individuals, communities and organisations	• Broadened study fields and competency-based curricula
• Establish a system for RPL	• To encourage a more diversified student population	• Specialisation studies
• Help university with drop-out rates/help students to have good learning experiences	• To strengthen the relations between the B-M-D programmes and LLL	• Recognition of prior learning

6.1.6. Strengths of the top-priorities for LLL

After naming the three priorities for lifelong learning, the COMMIT universities were asked to analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for each priority. This exercise produced carefully contemplated and relevant information about the conceptions of capacity and context for each priority independently and for lifelong learning in the institution in general.

The conventional approach[9] of swot-analysis considers 'strengths' and 'weaknesses' as internal factors and 'threats' and 'opportunities' as external ones to the organisation. In their reports, however, a part of the COMMIT partners gave their answers in line with the common language meaning, where the split between the internal and external elements does not follow the swot-analysis structure precisely. Also, the networked essence of the delivery of lifelong learning offer obscures the division into 'internal' and 'external'. In the following chapters, the results of the swot-analysis are analysed under the heading where they were reported independent of their occurrence inside or outside the institution. We chose this style of reporting so as to be loyal to the authentic data reported by the project partners, even though it is not totally in line with the original swot-approach.

In this chapter, the strengths of the entirety of ULLL are covered. The strengths can be classified into four main categories: internal excellence and support of the university, external influence, lifelong learning practice itself and structural clarity. Typically, success in lifelong learning is considered to increase on the basis of fruitful cooperation between the higher education institution and its environment.

High-quality research and faculty

As a part of the university, lifelong learning can reach the level that the expertise of its faculty can offer. The essence of research-based learning underlines the significance of both the general level of research but also the pedagogic excellence of the academic staff and their ability to work in the external context. The demand to support surviving in the complex work-life and society calls for versatile knowledge in various fields. Tradition to cross the borders of scientific "tribes and territories" and the organisational culture are also relevant, not to mention the concrete facilities.

Academic expertise that is combined with activity outside the institution is especially valuable. Also the methods of working between the knowledge production and its use were mentioned. In addition to the general knowledge-base for the production of education, some universities highlight the benefits from research and development projects that deal with relevant themes of lifelong learning.

- *"The interdisciplinary nature of education and research activities, and its departmental based structure. Several research projects (ongoing and submitted) whose objectives are the characterisation of non-traditional students and the identification of recommendations to gear the change towards success."* (P5-PT)

- *"A strong cultural climate and internalised values."* (P8-TR)

- *"Staff engaged in many regional or national networks, workgroups or councils."* (P4-FR)

- *"Bridging scientific research with knowledge transfer and related actions."* (P13-HU)

Support from leadership

The most significant strength that many COMMIT universities documented was maybe the support from university leadership. Launching activities that are traditionally not considered as number one priorities can benefit from an explicit support from the rector. On the other hand, persistent endeavours to promote lifelong learning may be frustrated because a new Rector's office puts the emphasis on other issues. Especially in the institutions where the faculties have extensive autonomy, it is important to win the support from the deans. Examples of emphasizing the necessity of support are many: "*A real political will*", "*Commitment from institutional leadership*", "*The constant support of the rector*", "*LL Commitment of the new Rector's team*", "*ULLL commitment of the respective Deans.*"

---

[9] See for instance Johnson, G., Whittington, R., Scholes, K., (2011), Exploring *Strategy*, Ninth edition, Prentice Hall, p106.

Capacity to find support from external sources

Without intervention from external stakeholders, many universities would have great problems in opening their lifelong learning offer. Traditional academic values and higher education institution priorities often give too little room for regenerating the missions. During times of economic challenges and concrete financial cutbacks, the problem degenerates, unless the university is considered as an actor worth additional resources to contribute solving the (wicked) problems.

At the bottom of the external pressure is the demand for opportunities for learning post experience, for career advancement, at old age, to reach competitive edge etc. It is important that each sector finds stakeholders to bring the message to the university decision-makers. There is a risk that the activities of social dimension lose against other more well-paying sectors. Policy making is often a mechanism to speak for audiences whose voice may otherwise be lost. Legal regulations and political programs have shown to be concrete drivers of change.

To win the confidence and support from external stakeholders, universities need to show that their offer is appropriate and worthwhile. Practitioners of lifelong learning have way back learnt to listen to the demands of learners and client organisations. Often, the programs and courses are designed together with the clients; this is particularly the case for in-house training.

- *"An explicit demand by many students and users." "Established relationships with companies and institutions in the area." (P9-IT)*

- *"Concentrated actions for platform developments with stakeholders having local and regional background and potential." (P13-HU)*

- *"Most of our LLL courses are developed in partnership with companies and public institutions, at local, regional and national level." (P12-ES)*

ULLL practices and organisation

The experience and expertise of staff as such, as well as credible references, are central success factors also in lifelong learning. Examples of this kinds of strengths in COMMIT universities:

- *"A pro-active attitude to answer to all kind of demand" (P4-FR)*

- *"Opportunities of cross-fertilisation throughout faculties" (P2-BE)*

- *"Citizenship University addresses the needs of +55 learners." (P12-ES)*

- *"The program to help students with disabilities" (P12-ES)*

- *"Competency-based curricula is being developed and good practices emerge in faculty level." (P3-FI)*

As a relatively new approach in higher education, ULLL has sometimes faced difficulties in positioning itself into the university structures. Attaining the institutionalization phase gives a solid background for future development. References to formal structures and procedures included organisational and quality assurance elements. A clear organisational structure may have centralized or decentralized features; in the COMMIT materials the benefits from specialised units were frequent. While documenting the necessity of organisational regularity, the need for flexibility in implementation was also seen as valuable.

Examples of quality assurance and specialised units:

- *"There are already administrative and academic procedures approved in order to support the integration of non-traditional students." (P5-PT)*

- *"(We) have standards for adult learners & University teachers." (P6-DE)*

- *"University level policies and process descriptions." (P3-FI)*

- *"Well developed and efficient quality system." (P2-BE)*

- *"A professional organisation and a complete set of services offered." (P4-FR)*

6.1.7. Weaknesses of the top-priorities for LLL

Educational offer and institutional arrangements

Often the universities are able to organize courses and programs only in part of the fields represented in the institution. Usually, some educational fields have closer links to professional networks and practices than others and have better starting points for lifelong learning. Teacher training and engineer education are typical examples. Obviously, there are also institution-specific reasons for limited participation of certain faculties and departments. Achieving the international market is often limited because of language barriers. (In this chapter, it is better not to refer to any individual university, but the formulations below are direct quotations from COMMIT institutional reports.)

- *Only few courses are offered and not in all Departments.*

- *Only few LLL courses are internationalised.*

Lifelong learning suffers from insufficient institutional support in terms of structures and procedures. The systems of higher education are typically constructed in line with the needs and assumptions of traditional degree studies. It is not rare that lifelong learning has to adapt to the effective arrangements. Several COMMIT universities reported problems of impractical uniformity. Also the strong emphasis on high-quality research may take room from development of teaching. Especially the in-depth regeneration of teaching and learning seems to be challenging, like in the case of recognition of prior learning. Likewise, lifelong learning data collection and statistics are sometimes inadequate.

- *Undergraduate (Bachelors) administrative and academic systems all geared towards full-time students.*

- *The selection of teachers, their careers and bonus systems do not take into account most of the teaching.*

- *Lack of clear strategy at institution level concerning quality.*

- *The teaching and the third mission are not considered to be part of the evaluation of ANVUR (National Agency of Evaluation) No RPL-system. Criteria are needed/not in place.*

- *Statistic data is not collected in Finland about RPL accreditation.*

69

Difficulty to change – difficulty to recruit experts

At the bottom is the lack of suitable experts. The academic know-how available in the university does not necessarily match with the needs of the learners (or companies, or the region). The branch of science may simply not be present in the institution or is directed into different research themes. Sometimes the nature of research is more basic than applied, sometimes the pedagogic skills of academic staff are not generally sufficient, sometimes teaching for the new audiences does not tempt the professors accustomed to working with traditional full-time students. Sometimes the demands of diverse student population, new learning environments or work-based approaches are deemed too challenging. To make teaching in lifelong learning inviting demands both structural and cultural regeneration. The COMMIT universities report about difficulties in recruiting teaching and administrative staff because of insufficient incentive systems.

- *Professionals are lacking*

- *Few professors are involved*

- *Motivation loss due to low salaries*

- *Teachers are not prepared to deal with a diverse student population*

- *Many teachers have no contact with the labour market*

The COMMIT materials give the impression that institutional uniformity and subsequent rigidity are in connection with a more general predisposition to keep to the current procedures and practices. Whereas universities are at the cutting edge of producing new knowledge, they tend to be far slower in rebuilding their education. Effective and high-quality implementation of the lifelong agenda also requires reformative assumptions of the organisation culture and according actions. The pieces of documentation about the weaknesses speak for themselves:

70

- *Rigidity of people, processes, curricula.*

- *Conservatism of many teachers and Central Administration.*

- *Historical difficulties in disseminating results within the university.*

- *Difficulties in the Courses of Study to organize them in terms of learning outcomes.*

- *Most programmes are still theory and system oriented, opposite to focus on practice and problems.*

- *Deficient initial academic preparation of these students that compromise their success, therefore compromising the consolidation of new pathways, due to dropout.*

- *The university regulations are extremely restrictive and do not allow the recognition of prior learning, especially the training received in non-official programs or from work experience, and most of the lifelong learning courses (more adapted to adult learners needs) have no fully academic recognition.*

- *Young teachers' inability to address adult students, to build a learning environment different from regular student age.*

- *Limited efforts for partnership-based formation of programme, teaching methods, etc.*

- *Limited interest in quality orientations towards the improvement of teaching practices, curriculum development and methodologies being used/ referring to effective learning.*

- *Limited experience in working together with stakeholders on quality developments in teaching for lifelong learners.*

Resources and priorities

It is naturally no surprise that the universities identify resources and finances as one of the main problems of widening their offer and developing their services. The question is not the insufficiency of funding alone, but the challenge is far more complicated. The difficulty lies basically in the resources and priorities of higher education. Universities in many countries have come across severe cutbacks of funding in recent years.

Any teacher/researcher has to prioritize using one's time. As lifelong learning tends to come after research and traditional full-time education in the priorities, the reduced resources give little room for new initiatives. The "joy of learning" and functional benefits from the experience of working with adult students and post-experience education are not enough. Incentive systems need to be developed. It is about salary systems, career paths, staff development etc.

As a big proportion of lifelong learning offer rests upon the income from external sources, the sufficiency of public funding is not the only issue. At the same time, the conditions for competition in the training market should be reasonable. As to the social dimension, the participation of many students is dependent on scholarships, study grants and additional subsidies. The present situation is far from acceptable in many countries. Examples of financial issues:

- *Financial constraints.*

- *Short-term funding.*

- *Overload of teachers' teaching hours that limits their time to develop and implement new training activities.*

- *Resource direction towards work with schools and young people leaves little scope to address adult learners.*

- *The number and budget of scholarships is still very poor.*

6.1.8. Threats for the top-priorities for LLL

Insufficient influence of the contextual changes on university culture and practices

The university with its research activities and teaching expertise is the foundation of the activity in focus, the bedrock that gives <u>academic</u> lifelong learning the main feature of its essence: connection to research. At the same time, the universities are not complete or perfect, their excellence does not cover inclusively all faculties and institutions in a manner that would measure up with demands of the present-day society and working life. The COMMIT universities are fairly self-critical while they report about weighty deficiencies in their institutions and their interaction with society. Thus, the threats of ULLL are not purely external but built in the culture and structures of the universities with complex mechanisms.

We come across findings that are similar to the ones present in the previous chapter, about the weaknesses of the ULLL preconditions and activity. The recurring occurrence in the COMMIT materials about threats demonstrate unavoidably that the universities themselves are one of the elementary hindrances for progress. Here the fundamental challenge is the university's capacity and responsiveness to take into consideration and adapt to the changes in its context. (Again, even though we shall not refer to any individual university, the formulations below are direct quotations from COMMIT institutional reports. The COMMIT evidence is in line with the general experience in various European universities, although variations are noteworthy.) The self-criticism does not only focus on the entirety of the university but it reaches the activities and operation of ULLL itself. The references to the organisational culture were frequent:

- *Teachers' culture and resistance to change.*

- *Teachers are not prepared to deal with a diverse student population.*

- *Institutional/organisational orientations to dominate instead of learner-centred approaches.*

- *The lack of problem-based focus in curriculum development.*

- *Closed approaches and elitist views.*

- *Inequality at the practical level due to different attitudes.*

- *The only threat is to fail …*

- *The exhaustion of the people invested in this long-term work.*

The cultural assumptions also affect the structural arrangements. It is important to take note that the expectations about mainstreaming vs. specialisation and centralization vs. decentralization differ significantly. Where one university desires more freedom and flexibility for ULLL, the other wishes for steering and conformity, both understandable perspectives depending on the situation. Both non- or over-regulation may be a threat. The need for more steering showed up for example concerning management structure, quality assurance and recognition of prior learning.

- *The new organisation of study (constraints or limits for adult and mature students).*

- *Top-down approaches to dominate actions from HE-perspectives.*

- *Less autonomy, more cooperation needed.*

- *The fact of not having a common management structure may threaten the links between B-M-D and LLL studies.*

- *The complexity of the quality procedures.*

- *No RPL-system.*

Audience, markets and political context

Education markets are wide but also most competitive. The competition presents itself at several levels: between universities, with other educational organisations both public and private and with in-house training of the clients. At the level of individual students, education competes with manifold ways of using time. In relation to the general picture in Europe, the COMMIT universities experience or anticipate problems with the growing rivalry for students comparatively less. Possibly, competition is seen as a natural characteristic of the context. The University of Bo aziçi is a special case where the student numbers are surprisingly growing.

The inclusiveness of learning in any sphere of life makes people and organisations search for new ways of constructing learning environments. The higher education institutions do not have a monopoly on the ownership of learning environments but they need to adapt to participate in cooperation with other owners of learning environments. The progress of information technology brings constantly on new possibilities for learning. One university's opportunity is a threat for another. Massive open online courses are a topical example of this: while they offer interesting possibilities for large, rich universities with global reputation, they may be a threat for more regional small universities. On the other hand, they may benefit from appropriate use of the MOOC offer.

- *Competition between universities.*

- *… competition (private centre that helps students in their studies)*

- *MOOC.*

- *Unexpected student increase due to the decision HEC.*

The legal and political context impacts heavily on ULLL. Public interest and wide demand for learning put pressure on higher education institutions to widen their offer. The importance of the political steering on universities has been evidenced in many countries. In one sense, the political support for lifelong learning is a counterforce for the traditional, even conservative values in some universities. One thread in recent trends is the tendency to merge universities, construct alliances and further their cooperation. Facing these reforms, the ULLL activities may find themselves weak. Similarly, small universities with strong emphasis on social engagement and lifelong learning suspect difficulties in maintaining their high profile.

- *The policy of central government.*

- *No legal framework for recognition of prior or informal learning.*

- *(…) is a peripheral university and can lost visibility (and potential influence) in the new (regional) structure.*

- *The new structure from 2013 decree (… and its monitoring role).*

Finances and incentives

While the European economic problems reflect on public funding and fall upon higher education institutions, activities in the margins of universities are at great risk. In many institutions, ULLL is not too high in the priority lists. If the volume of offers and established practices are reasonably safe, the reforms tend to be postponed or totally called off. The more troublesome and the more challenged the reformations are, the more likely is their defeat against the functions of the academic heartland.

- *Funding.*

- *Lack of funding.*

- *National and regional economic crisis.*

- *(…) will cause costs.*

- *The public budgets for universities have been reduced, and this may affect directly widening participation strategies. For example, the envisaged plan to create a portfolio to recognise prior learning has been already discarded due to economic constraints.*

The problems of finances do not only concern deficient appropriations. One of the typical problems is the impossibility to assure long-term funding. The COMMIT universities reported both about existing and missing arrangements as threats. Policies or programs that are basically positive for lifelong learning may suffer from rigid or complicated conditions. Recently, the demand to return profit through adult and continuing education has become ever more frequent. In this case, the financial logic acts against lifelong learning aims. Even though the university had tolerable resources, ULLL implementation demands incentives that attract teaching staff and make studying possible for students.

- *Funding is not on a stable ground.*

- *National policies lacking financial backup.*

- *Pressure to generate income distorting principal aims.*

- *Lack of incentives to develop part-time routes combined with pressures on the university to deliver 'more with less'.*

73

- *Funding and financial conditions of academics to participate in trainings beyond the project target group that can be restricted to several people.*

- *Individuals may not be able to face the cost of a training provision which is actually needed for their professional development.*

6.1.9. Opportunities for the top-priorities for LLL

Offer, methods and arrangements

Opportunities for lifelong learning also stem from the capacity and arrangements inside the university, although they are not documented so often as the possibilities outside the institution. Faculty expertise as the main resource of LLL opens the doors for the most potential initiatives and developments. Often, the full capacity of the faculty is not in use for lifelong learning; through more flexibility and incentives this resource would be most beneficial for new learning prospects. Here, the support of the university leadership is again essential. Also sheer increase and diversity of offered courses would benefit the function of lifelong learning.

- *"Academics and staff contribution" (P10-GR)*

- *"Have more diversity in our programmes" (P6-DE)*

- *"Promotion of dissemination events streamlined by the Rector's office, with actual implementation of already existing recommendations from finished projects" (P6-DE)*

New lifelong learning-based pedagogic approaches offer a possibility for advancement in case the culture of traditional forms of education can be transformed. The launch and establishment of them demand both expert capacity and time. Not only technological but also social and various research-and work-based methods weigh. While the heterogeneous student groups are a threat for some traditionalists, they are an opportunity for courageous teachers who dare rebuild their instruction. Once again, the whole university benefits, when the process can cross the borders of B-M-D programs and lifelong learning.

- *"The development of work-based learning at high level (Bachelor, Master...)" (P4-FR)*

- *"Flexible ways of working with atypical, non-traditional learners/students" (P13-HU)*

- *"The further planning and implementation of e-learning and blended learning programmes focusing on methodological developments in teaching and learning" (P13-HU)*

- *"The training needs of new professional profiles and new learning demands due to the evolution of society may require further collaboration between B-M-D programmes and LLL." (P12-ES)*

- *"Staff is already aware of RPL and good practices are developed. More and more adult students with learning from experience enrol in the studies"." (P3-FI)*

The COMMIT materials do not demonstrate that the modification of internal structures would mean especially great potential for lifelong learning. We can find sporadic examples of both centralizing and decentralizing tendencies. The former example of the general trend of enlarging the units aims for shared expertise and clear missions, whereas the latter obviously involves a wider resource base.

- *"The fostering of articulation between the two University's units that are related to LLL, combining academic certification with professional development" (P5-PT)*

- *"Decentralised set of provision" (P13-HU)*

74

Audiences and demand

As stated before, the universities are prepared to increase, widen and diversify their offer for various audiences following the main ideas of lifelong learning. The COMMIT answers substantiate that their operational environment offers them the possibility to make it a reality. In addition to the general adult audience, several specific target groups were referred to including individual learners, organisations and emerging fields of operation.

- *"Interest from adult community in tailored pathways - especially the recently retired (many of whom did not have the opportunity previously)" (P7-IE)*

- *"Italy is a country of old people. Liguria is a region of old people (28%> 64 years old)" (P9-IT)*

- *"International educational platforms dedicated to specific engineering areas." (P11-RO)*

- *"Request from the unemployed people for professional reconversion." (P11-RO)*

- *"Increased interest of secondary education students to become TUIASI students at the faculties that have organized activities and developed a bonding with them." (P11-RO)*

- *"Needs of retraining in new competences demanded for emerging professions." (P12-ES)*

The fact that a relevant part of the lifelong learning offer needs to be built on external funding makes higher education look outside the institutions. Partnerships, networks and cooperation projects are on one hand everyday reality for ULLL practitioners but on the other also a world of possibilities for evolution. Co-planning, co-design and co-implementation the offer with clients are intrinsic in any postmodern service business and particular success factors of ULLL.

- *"Opportunities to establish national and international partnerships and collaboration" (P8-TR)*

- *"Create real and active partnerships" (P6-DE)*

The opportunities are also constructed on the basis of determined development work and plausible references. At the same time, previous affluence will not guarantee success in changing markets. Potential markets are both private and public, regional, national and international. Importantly, the prospects are often connected to reforms and major programs that aggregate the stakeholders in the relevant context. Problems and challenges of individuals and society are frequent drivers of regeneration and learning. As to the social dimension, it is once again relevant that the underprivileged audiences have their say in the development of courses, programs and their delivery.

- *"To build on existing strong community connections" (P7-IE)*

- *"UCL has a leading position in FWB: a dominant market position?" (P2-BE)*

- *"The Southern Catalonia knowledge region project and the impulse of technological centres; the University commitment to act as a knowledge boost for the region." (P12-ES)*

- *"Economic crisis and retraining affects the adult age" (P9-IT)*

Regulations

The revision of regulations affects the higher education institutions both directly and by way of the context and markets. The universities have gone through fundamental reforms all over Europe in recent years. The European and national qualification frameworks have generated a new configuration also for academic education. Funding schemes, total cost models, study grants, taxation and various other financial statutes have a fundamental influence on ULLL preconditions. Although recent trends tend to emphasize the economic drivers in proportion to educational values, the COMMIT universities consider the recent reforms in the statutes as mostly favourable for ULLL. Especially France and Finland seem to be active in emphasizing the cooperation between universities and their collaboration with working life.

- *"New status with a new higher education law" (P8-TR)*

- *"The new law organising CPD with a specific focus on quality." (P4-FR)*

- *"The new law organising CPD (March 2014) and creation the "Personal training account" for all with a focus on "skills blocs"" (P4-FR)*

- *"The new organisational level introduced by law 2013 for HE, called "ComUE" for Community of Universities and institutions, who has a mission to coordinate HE at regional level and could give it visibility and better governance." (P4-FR)*

- *"The new law organising CPD (March 2014) and its new governance, including 'higher Education' representatives in different councils and so, opens opportunities to work with decisional authorities and social partners (Employers and employees unions)"*

(P4-FR)

- *"National Directory of skills" (P9-IT)*

- *"National legislation on certification of skills and recognition of prior learning" (P9-IT)*

- *"Specialisation studies model is based on solid cooperation between working life organisations and universities. This may open new threads also for other ULLL partnerships." (P3-FI)*

6.2. The social dimension of University lifelong learning in its strategic context

In the previous chapters, the focus has been on lifelong learning and its strategic realization. The rest of the COMMIT content tool report deals with how lifelong learning principle and activities are adapted to the strategic structures and processes of the institution with the emphasis on social dimension. We shall start with the understanding of social engagement, its status and participation of various internal actors as well as basics of follow-up. Secondly, we shall discuss the occurrence of the lifelong learning and social dimension in the activities of the universities. To conclude, the arrangements of cooperation with the internal and external stakeholders are discussed.

(In these chapters we find it again appropriate not to refer to any individual university, but the formulations below are direct quotations from COMMIT institutional reports.)

6.2.1. Content, strategy and organisation of social engagement

Concepts and relevance

It was evident from the beginning of the COMMIT project that the meaning of the concepts of 'social dimension' and 'social engagement' are far from explicit and established. Within the COMMIT project analyses, reports and discussions, the multiformity, obscurity and even contradictory nature were verified. For some institutions, the concepts 'social dimension' and 'social engagement' refer only to missions and functions by which the university is aiming to support the disadvantaged groups of society, including the disabled or unemployed audiences, families of limited means, underdeveloped areas etc. For others they cover all forms of action where the faculty, departments and units are involved with the society, e.g. continuous professional education, technology transfer, the role in the innovation system etc.

In the COMMIT project, we chose to operate with the general understanding of the concepts, thus giving space to the manifold views and contexts. The data in the COMMIT content tool reports gives information about the various conceptions and impressions. It is nevertheless not sufficient to recapitulate a universal "European" definition for these complicated concepts. Instead, we hope to add our contribution to the construction of knowledge that is either way a result from cooperation of a wide consortium of experienced practitioners.

In these chapters, these two key concepts are used as synonyms with the tentative presumption that 'social dimension' refers often to the narrow content whereas 'social engagement' covers the whole spectrum of interaction with society. In addition, 'social dimension' seems to underline the responsibility of the higher education institutions, their role as public actors and their influence on society, whereas 'social engagement' consists of functions where the university has an active role in a network of public, private and third sector actors. In this framework, university itself seems to be regarded as an operator that may be public or private by nature.

The COMMIT partnership consists of basically two kinds of institutions. There are some universities where social engagement is highly regarded and relatively explicitly recorded in the strategic documentations at the institutional level. They also tend to see the social dimension as one of the qualities that will attract students and stakeholders. In these universities, the mainstreaming of social engagement may obscure its properties and it is e.g. difficult to assess its activities and success separately.

- *My University has in its statutes, in its organisation but also in its day-to-day activities, a real social engagement. SE is access (free, diverse, no discrimination, etc.), success for all, it is also to contribute the growth of knowledge, to the economy, taking into account social, environmental and cultural needs and sustainable development. SE is also applied to the management of the human resources and working conditions… SE is integrated in most tasks and dimensions of our activity and this could be a problem because we rarely take the time (and nobody feels justifiable) to make a real assessment of this dimension.*

- *The mission 'Service to Society' is profoundly imbricated and inseparable from the Research and Education missions. It considers that a university has to be the closest possible of the social realities of society and so develops contacts with members of civil society to identify social phenomenon and needs. These contacts will engender research questions that will also influence the teaching contents. Therefore, the 'Service to Society Council' sustained during the last years, several continuing education programs because those projects were at the frontier between the education mission and the service to society one.*

- *Social dimension is maybe not yet an attraction factor but the University has taken serious steps towards more active role in this agenda. It is well stated in the University strategy and is integrated in all activities covering research and education of the university. Social dimension is well represented for example in the … School of Economics, at the departments of geography and information technology and in some independent units.*

In the majority of institutions the regulations, definitions and argumentation are not as distinct and established. They may still be sensitive for their social responsibilities and actively engaging with their context. Also these universities are able to identify successful units and most important stakeholders, but the intensity typically fluctuates between the faculties and also in time. It is not uncommon that the permanence of involvement is endangered because of the reliance on individual members of faculty.

- *Social Engagement is manifested in many activities of individual groups without being fully aggregated in an institutional strategy.*

- *Holistic views needed.*

Formal and informal status

The social engagement is written into some university laws. The law reforms may be significant drivers of change, an example from Finland makes it concrete: the University Law 2009 required for the first time that the universities promote lifelong learning while fulfilling their missions. This was a concrete driver for the university rectors to reformulate university strategies and to draft implementation plans. Here you can read two viewpoints on the legal basis. The first one makes a clear distinction between the economic and social contexts of lifelong learning. The second one brings the statutes to grassroots reality and reminds of the benefits that a university can gain by being responsive to the demands of the context:

- *The law (Article L123-2 of Education Code) says that "HE contributes:*

  – *In the regional and national growth within the framework of the planning, in the economic growth and in the realisation of an employment policy taking into account the current needs and their predictable evolution.*

  – *In the reduction of the social or cultural inequalities and in the realisation of the equality between men and women by assuring to those who have the will and the capacity the access to the highest forms of the culture and the research;"*

- *According to the university law, universities have to practice education and research with a social dimension. One can ask how integrated this is in practice. There are the two missions, research and education, and the third mission is integrated in them. It is also an ideological discourse that may be difficult to put into practice. Someone could also argue that it is not really a dialogue between society and university, university should utilize more the society in curricula planning, education etc. University is giving open lecturers for general public and organises events, but external experts could be used more in university functions. A general director of a large company is the chair of the university board.*

As probably most European universities, the great majority of COMMIT partners describe the status of social engagement as secondary to research and education, even though it had a foundation in the institutional strategy. Still, the status can be highly valued especially in the universities, the role of which in the regional development is essential. Also, the universities highlight the entanglement of the "three missions". You can find the concept of 'the third mission' in some of the reports, while a part of the partners rather talk about "three missions" or see social engagement as a comprehensive principle in the implementation of the fundamental missions of research and education.

The status of the social dimension is estimated e.g. on the basis of the legal foundations, strategic documentation, structural choices, changes in responsibilities and features of academic culture. Discussing the theme in the specialised national LLL networks is not a surprise but frequent occurrence in the agenda of the rectors' council is impressive. Respectively, occurrence in the incentive mechanisms would be effective but this seems to rarely be the case.

One special resolution that seems to interest the practitioners of lifelong learning is the definition of roles in the Rector's office. In the COMMIT partnership we can find universities, where the previous vice-rector office for social engagement was abolished or converted, which has unsettled those responsible for these functions. A senior colleague has worded it in a pessimistic way: "It takes fifteen years to build a lifelong learning university and a replacement of the rector to break it."

- *Social engagement does not have a status as strong as research and education, although it is written in the strategy documents of the university.*

- *The strategy document included in our "quinquennial contract" agreed with Ministry for 2012-2017 includes: "For the next years, it will be a question (…) of holding completely its role of university of "proximity", accessible to the largest number of people (…).*

- *Because of the renewal of the Rector Office staff, the strategic importance of the Service to Society is not communicated for the moment but a recent striking fact consists in the abandonment of the Vice-Rector office of Service to Society and the dispersal of this mission into all the other vice-rector offices.*

- *Lifelong Learning is a key issue debated in the (national) Rectors' Conference and particularly in conferences of the Universities LLL Network.*

Actors

Usually the responsible for social engagement is not an individual unit. The organisation is a mixture of a small centralized unit within or outside university administration and a network of experts, both as regards content, methods or branches of society. The social engagement specialists are relatively few, whereas a large proportion of the faculty may participate into the activities with varying work load. Often the rector has appointed a working group or even a council to be in charge of the functions.

- *The groups of staff that work in social engagement are spread in the academia, and they operate on this function on a voluntary basis. There are no named responsible people, documents and steering groups for social engagement.*

- *The academic staff members who are developing activities with a social dimension are many and they operate only on a volunteer basis. There are no specific departments other than learning centres very focused on education.*

- *Organisational developments balanced by flexible reflections to social demands and economic/ political realities.*

- *Administrative and teaching staff but not well organized.*

The same universities that have documented the SE strategy most explicitly also have the most structured arrangements for the organisation and staff:

- *There is not a specific organisation in charge of all SE aspect:*
  - *For students and users: the central office for Education and Student Life (8 people), the council in charge of academic affairs and its Vice rectors, a central service for counselling and orientation, UCE centre for adults.*
  - *For staff: a social service with a Vice rector.*
  - *For external relationship: UCE centre, Economic office, Cultural office…*

- *There is one project leader for the Service to Society, depending of the Rector, a special counsellor for 'Sustainable Development', a 'Council for the Service to Society' with professors, administrative staff, that will probably be transformed this year in a 'Sustainable Development Council' and several vice-rectors have responsibilities in terms of 'Service to Society' (Vice-Rector of regional affairs, Vice-Rector for international affairs, Vice-Rector for Research…). This work is under process with several themes considered (sustainable development, spin-offs, relevance of the degrees on the employment market…) especially as the international university rankings pay attention to these indicators.*

- *Vice rector for education is in charge, deans in the faculties, a coordinator for third mission/social dimension, development manager for constructing strategy and statistics, experts in open university, continuing education and training and teachers/researchers in the departments. The level of activity varies from the faculty to another and from teacher to teacher.*

Indicators

In an earlier chapter we referred to the significance of an incentive system to encourage participation in activities that are socially relevant. The incentives should be aimed at both faculty members as personal benefits and at departments and units as positive sanctions for active participation. Where the incentive systems are too demanding to implement, a natural step for progress is the implementation of indicators of performance.

Appropriate data collection lays the foundation for construction of indicators that may later be used in the processes of resource allocation. The creation of potential indicators is fairly easy although the complexity of social engagement makes it more demanding than, for example, in research or degree education. The crucial stage is the selection of the most functional indicators for that certain mission in the certain institution. At the same time, the national and potentially wider contexts may demand a different selection.

The assessment of the COMMIT universities provides a picture of a wide range of situations. Some institutions report that they have no indicators for social dimension, and only few inform about a wider set. Most universities are somewhere in the process of developing a set of indicators, maybe put into operation some explicit ones where the parties can agree on the relevance, where the information can be collected with low costs and where the meaning of the value is shared. As before, the universities with the most advanced strategic formulations that have the most established organisational structures tend to be the ones that are most active in designing indicators.

- *My University does not have specific indicators measuring activities of social dimension of the faculties/departments.*

- *(My University) does not have/provide specific indicators measuring activities with a clear social dimension within faculties or departments.*

- *There has been a steady progress and at the moment the strategy level looks good and there are some really active departments. There has been a special working group for social interaction where the group is supporting the strategy and action plan for social interaction. The group got the message through quite well but now the task is to open the contacts to the external world more. Units report their social interaction activities but the main challenge is the lack of incentives.*

- *The three missions of the university (Research, Education, and Service to Society) are important … in order to increase its attractiveness. The Service to Society is therefore integrated into the two other missions to ensure its presence at several levels of university. To stimulate this mission with the academics, some indicators have been integrated into the promotion reports.*

80

- *The working group of the university has developed a matrix of quantitative and qualitative indicators and proposed it to Ministry of Education and Culture. The indicators have been tested but they are not officially used yet. Mainly the indicators measure quantitative issues, such as age and gender, educational background. More detailed indicators are collected for research e.g. on background of students parent educational level, family economy, etc. but not on official level for entry. The social dimension of the university can be estimated on the basis of finance from external sources.*

- *Yes, we have many indicators concerning SE.*

6.2.2. Lifelong learning and social dimension in the key activities of universities

In this chapter, we shall take a look at the activities of higher education institutions and concentrate on how lifelong learning and social dimension have grown into the entirety of actions of the COMMIT universities. We shall first deal with student recruitment, then go to the educational offer, continue with the themes of counselling and guidance and end up with references to research.

Student recruitment and admission

Occurrence of a widening participation agenda varies in an interesting way. There are institutions where access is not considered relevant (yet) and that have no agenda. In some universities the agenda is under preparation, some have launched it earlier for social reasons but also as a tool to enhance student recruitment in general. We can also find universities where widening participation is so essential for the university that an agenda does not exist as a separate document but the institution is constructed on the fundamental idea of social inclusion. It may also be the case that a part of the universities or national governments consider the participation sufficient although obvious problems of equity exist.

	No agenda (or not ready)	**Agenda**
Access not considered relevant	Widening participation is not a topic in Finland due to free entry and free of charge studies. Social benefits are available for all students. Degree education is open to everyone but this opportunity is not widely used: In the University some 40 % are adult students with already some other higher education degree. Also, the tendency in the open university is the same: students already have a good educational background when they enter the studies. Immigrants receive language training and employability training at the Brahea Centre, where education is provided with external funding. The University has a strategy for disabled people in terms on how to facilitate learning and move obstacles, but no special entry is given to any special group ... Open university provides degree studies to everybody interested … Data about students from non-traditional backgrounds is not collected. (P3-FI).	-
Access important	No, we have not a widening participation agenda because we are already completely open to all types of students (By law and by conviction) E.g.: RPL, Foreign students… and very low fees. (P4-FR) TUIASI is going to develop a wider participation agenda. Adult student recruiting actions occur mostly in master programs for both employed and unemployed people. (P11-RO) "Not yet" (P10-GR*)*	Degree education is open to non-traditional student body. University does have a widening participation agenda. Student recruiting actions occur mostly for International students and migrants, although employees, disadvantaged or disabled people, foreigners, and elderly people groups can be identified. (P5-PT)

Opening access is naturally not enough. Support services are organised to support the learning process and a successful path to working life after studies. One condition for institutional success is cooperation in the hierarchical complex institutions, especially between faculties and specialised service units. Furthermore, widening access is not the only challenge; often pressure on the most popular studies brings on problems to other faculties that were not expected.

- *Students' support services have been developed in order to keep up with demand and specific needs. (P5-PT)*

- *Organised by the faculties and, also, to Career Centre of the University of Pécs, called KÖSZI (P13-HU)*

- *There is a structural problem in Sciences education, as a large quantity of students taking the study place are actually in a "course" of entering to medicine (60-70 % of the annual intake to medicine already have a study place in chemistry, mathematics, physics). In Finland there is not officially a part-time student status, but majority of students are working part-time to pay for their living costs. (P3-FI)*

The case of P2-BE gives a useful picture of challenges, developments and solutions:

Beyond the traditional degree student body, UCL incorporates two more specific student publics: adult students and international students. The adult public could be composed of two groups: professional people looking for continuing training (CPD, continuing Professional Development in diverse fields) and adults looking for Master degree (diploma).

For the first group, UCL doesn't put in place concrete actions – at university level - in order to make this population grow (some other Belgian universities develop, for example, actions with employment agencies to promote their adult programs) but is directly in contact with employers' federations in order to identify precisely the education needs of their employees and to promote their programs. But some faculties or some certificates are in closer relationships with un-employed or disadvantaged people.

On the other hand, there is a clearer strategy to recruit international students (+/- 6000 of the 30.000 students) coming from Europe because those students have subventions from their country of origin to study. Often, this public is composed of adult learners with professional experience so they also belong to the first specific student body. (Vice-rector for Students and IUFC Director)

Degree education is accessible for people beyond the traditional student body through two types of education programs:

- *Firstly, whoever the person (foreigner, adult, disabled people…) wanting to study at university is, he/she may integrate in a bachelor or master program (if he has a bachelor degree). Special services are offered to these students at the "student help service" (Service d aide aux étudiants). (P2-BE)*

- *Secondly, several degree programs are proposed on adapted schedule in order to let professional people start university studies and obtain a university degree. (P2-BE)*

Many programs (especially the degree adult programs) use a "small group-teaching method" in order to give a personal and more specific guidance to the students and to maximize exchanges between them. (Vice-Rector for students).

Education provision

New learning environments have grown to be a commonplace in academic adult learning. It is not rare that adult education has been showing the way for traditional degree studies in universities. On the other hand, higher education institutions are not everywhere the most advanced developers of pedagogics, whereas vocational schools and private companies have taken full use of new possibilities. The COMMIT universities give evidence of active involvement in the use of new technological solutions and pedagogical approaches.

- *Modern teaching methods, learning environments, web-based learning etc. within degree education are used so as to widen participation and/or flexibility of studies. (P5-PT)*

- *We have started an active program to develop pedagogical diversification and incentive actions for the teachers. (P4-FR)*

- *Modern teaching methods, web-based educational materials within degree education are used to attract students in engineering and widen participation of adult population. (P11-RO)*

- *Educational provision is designated to the Faculties which regularly report back to the Senate of the University about the success of their services and academic programmes from post-secondary HE-based VET trainings to doctorate level (P13-HU)*

- *E-learning is widely used for the studies. Also traditional degree studies benefit more and more from these e-learning platforms. (P3-FI)*

The selection of COMMIT universities may give a too positive picture about recognition of prior learning compared to average higher education institutions around Europe. This is because many partners are members of the **eucen** network, which has been a forerunner in the promotion and development of RPL. Important steps have been taken but at the same time it is important to emphasize that a long way remains to go. Especially the accreditation of prior experiential learning tends to be a difficult step forward. The COMMIT statements about the demanding academic culture in the previous chapters certainly describe one of the explanations for the current state of play.

The example of using RPL as a tool to advance studies is three-fold: fundamentally, it is functional to give the learners the possibility to study efficiently and use RPL both for fast progress but also for widening the studies while there is no need for repetition. On the other hand, it may give the critics material for suspicions about decreased quality of learning. Finally, it shows how economic arguments can make a change where educational argumentation failed.

One of the challenges is to launch institution-wide principles and practices of recognition. This would be important to guarantee equity, transparency and fair procedures. The differences between faculties are so essential that often the faculty level practices are the possible ones. The question is both about the scientific differences between the faculties but also about structural variety. In traditional multi-field universities both the number of faculties and differences between their policy-making powers make the task more difficult. Faculties with strong departments tend to have difficulties in finding even faculty-wide solutions.

- *University has active RPL Regulations, and non-formal and informal learning is used during the studies for accreditation. (P5-PT)*

- *RPL, VNIL are fully implemented and active since more than 17 years (Access, credits, and diplomas) (P4-FR)*

- *Non-formal learning is validated for foreign languages. (P10-GR)*

83

- *(For the second group – non-traditional students,) the Validation of non-Formal and Informal Learning system (VAE) is probably the most relevant action in order to facilitate student admission to UCL. It allows – a priori - any experienced people to be admitted in a master program. (P2-BE)*

- *UCL has a complete system for VNFIL (VAE, validation of non-formal and informal learning) since a few years and obtained new European funds in order to consolidate it. This public is composed of students having a quite long professional career and one objective for UCL will be to invest in new ways of welcoming this public. (P2-BE)*

- *The University has an RPL policy and faculty-level practices. RPL is highlighted in the university strategy as means for LLL. No data is collected on accreditation based on RPL in Finland. The reasoning for RPL is to graduate more quickly, and that is an issue as Finland has fairly high age for first year students. Also, due to the cumulative amount of students who wait to get enrolled in the universities, there is a strong demand to graduate efficiently. So, there is no data but experience has shown that formal learning is recognized quite well although there is still some work to be done with the in-formal and non-formal learning. Teachers state that there are no reliable methods. (P3-FI)*

Solutions for opening access for wider audiences vary in the COMMIT universities. Some have an independent unit, some have had separate faculties for this activity and some have mainstreamed the activities in traditional faculties. We have two examples that may indicate a trend towards "traditional" arrangements: the adult education oriented faculties have been merged to other faculties in Université Catholique de Louvain and the possibilities of structural development are under inspection in the University of Turku where there is a long successful tradition of an independent unit. Both of these cases fit into the trend of enlarging the faculties and units within the university. The UBO's case, on the other hand, is an example of the trend to enhance cooperation between educational institutions.

- *No Open University/flexible studies service are in use. (P5-PT)*

- *We are involved in the Brittany open campus (UebC@mpus) https://numerique.ueb.eu/ and will thereby hope to be efficient in the next future thanks to this important tool. (P4-FR)*

- *Though no Open University/ studies based on e-learning or blended learning are in operation. (P11-RO)*

- *In the past, UCL had two 'open faculties' (Politics, Economics and Sociology Open Faculty (FOPES) and education sciences Open Faculty for Adults (FOPA)), but they are now integrated into two traditional faculties (Politics, Economics and Sociology Faculty and Faculty for Psychology and Education Sciences). (P2-BE)*

- *Yes, we have (an independent unit). Open University studies are the same as degree studies, only provided in a more flexible way by using e-learning and other blended learning. (P3-FI)*

Guidance and counselling

Guidance and counselling have become extremely important while reforms of higher education are implemented. There is hardly a theme that would not be linked to guidance in some way. Often the problem is the lack of insufficient guidance or too diffuse arrangements of guidance, where many actors are responsible for various elements of this quintessential function and the students have difficulties in finding the accurate door. On the other hand, the concept of a one entrance system can only be an ideal, because of both the wide expertise needed in term of content and the diverse needs of various student groups.

Especially the new audiences are a challenge for universities. The sheer fact that they have the most diverse social, economic and educational backgrounds makes a great difference compared to the guidance of more

homogenous student cohorts coming from upper secondary schools. While lifelong learning brings a great variety or learners to the higher education institutions, it is important to emphasize that this group is not as a homogenous group underdeveloped in terms of learning capacity or learning skills. As an experienced chair of a board of a centre for adult education said: "It is interesting that the students coming from Open University courses to degree studies include both the best and the not so skilful students."

Launching new environments, using new technologies and recognition of prior learning bring new challenges to guidance. It is a commonplace that emphasizing the role and responsibility of the learner will not free the teacher from responsibility, but changes her into a facilitator of learning. Without going into detail here, we want to stress that in the recognition of prior learning, the role of a broker between the applicant and the professor has shown to be fundamental.

The COMMIT universities report about implementation of guidance where both mainstreamed and specialised approaches are present. While all share the interest to enhance lifelong learning, they consider supporting various types of learners as a key function. Current arrangements are often under analysis or reformulation, which underlines the relevance of high-quality structures and processes. There are, however, differences between the coverage, transparency and comprehensiveness of the systems. The quotations below should be regarded as viewpoints over the guidance and counselling, not descriptions of the entirety of arrangements.

- *Counselling needs in learners based on their life situation, family situations, career management, employability, mobility or other social reason, are at present being in the sphere of Course Directors and tutors. Lifelong learning guidance services are about to be established. (P5-PT)*

- *Counselling services, although not provided through a specific office in the university, are included in the tutoring carried out by teachers designated to each group of students within a specific educational program. Guidance of students focused on LLL at the institution level will be on the future agenda of TUIASI to be initiated. (P11-RO)*

- *There are Regular 'Student support' services and mentoring offered ... There are events for freshmen (first Year students), in all departments and some bridge courses on ICT are offered from the 'Laboratory of New Technologies and Distance learning' in School of Education. Additionally, there are programs for employees to update their knowledge (P10-GR)*

- *The UCL website is a central platform to obtain information and help about the VNFIL (VAE) system (*http://www.uclouvain.be/vae.html*, 17/02/15), that provides the information leaflet, the admission case, check-lists, contact persons, etc. On the web-site of each faculty, the future student will find specific information about his education program, the specific contact persons, etc. (P2-BE)*

- *Guidance and counselling is mainly provided by the career centre of the University of Pécs, called KÖSZI (P13-HU)*

- *A new counsellor has been recruited to provide general information on studies to those interested in making an application to the university. The recently re-structured, more general bachelor studies probably bring about demand for more guidance at the transition to master studies. Many of these needs are addressed by the guidance given by Open University. Immigrants in need for language training often ask guidance from education coordinators at the Brahea Centre. (P3-FI)*

The commitment to enhance the social dimension in the whole university lays ground for a carefully organised and wide offer of services in P4-FR:

- *We offer complete services to non-traditional students. (P4-FR)*

85

- *Due to the specificity of CE in France (see Q2), the University of Bretagne Occidentale have created a specific office for all the processes around the welcoming (reception), the information, the orientation and the guidance of adults coming back to university. (P4-FR)*

- *The missions of these specific office can be summed up in two important main lines:*

  - *To welcome and to guide the public of adults who want to take up studies at university or undertake a validation procedure*

  - *To organize the procedure of validation and training (RPL). (P4-FR)*

- *This office identifies guidance and counselling needs in learners based on their life situation, family situations, career management, employability, mobility or other social reasons. Finally, we also have a "skills assessment centre" inside the university, opened to all (including external community). (P4-FR)*

- *The office also organises, every two weeks, a public event to receive all questions and people. (P4-FR)*

Research

The COMMIT universities' reports on research of social engagement are relatively limited. There are some universities that are fairly active in the actual research activities on the social dimension, but the importance of using research as a tool to develop lifelong learning and social engagement is widely shared. These themes occur as foci of research but typically not as a separate LLL or SE research agenda. Limited enquiries are carried out so as to develop the quality of the offer. We can also read examples of functions where focused pieces of exploration take place connected to regional, national or international development projects. Thus, the model of the knowledge triangle keeps on gradually progressing, but a widely recognized breakthrough is still to be expected.

- *Research is underway in projects that aim to characterise different groups of students, and identify recommendations that can be made to university management in order to contribute to the social engagement at my university. There is no strategy on this subject. Research is being carried out by multidisciplinary teams, in which every team member is integrated in a Research centre, but the umbrella under which they work are LLL offices: UNAVE and Uinfoc. (P5-PT)*

- *We have not research activities directly connected with SE of the university, but regularly, some research labs organise research actions or activity based on these actions (LABERS, CREAD, others) (P4-FR)*

- *Since TUIASI is a technical university, the social dimension of research is developed in projects that aim to solve community problems with social engagement (environmental, landslide, earthquake and flooding protection). Many research contracts are oriented to renewable energies, health assistance by applied informatics, recycling waste materials, all of them having a strong social dimension in their outcomes. (P11-RO)*

- *LLL is a key research issue/theme for the Faculty of Adult Ed. and HRD and its LLL Research Centre. (P13-HU)*

- *Research centre for sociology of education, Centre for lifelong learning and education have these topics and the results of research are used. University also collects information on graduate employability which is fed into the faculty and department level. (P3-FI)*

It is typical that the link to research is constructed as dissemination of the outcomes of the academic work.

- *Another research project is ongoing, sponsored by the Pro-rector, "To think and share quality practices in HE", which is promoting a dissemination event at the University, as an effort to open/popularize research results to the wide audience and surrounding society. (P5-PT)*

- *University has taken serious steps to popularize research results. One channel is the website but during a couple of years the University has gone among citizens and organized events like Science Slam, Night of Science and the Week of Science. Children University has been really popular among 7-10 aged. (P3-FI)*

6.2.3. Internal and external stakeholders of social engagement

The final chapter of this part of the COMMIT report gives you the chance to look at the role of internal and external interactions linked to the social dimension of universities. The chapter was produced by Assistant Professor Tamer Atabarut who is the Managing Director of the Lifelong Learning Centre of the Boğaziçi University in Turkey. The author spotlights certain features of stakeholder relationships in the spheres of lifelong learning and social dimension. The focus of the chapter was chosen on the basis of the reports by partner universities. As to internal stakeholders, especially the activities of staff development and evaluation are brought to the front. As to the external stakeholders, the types and practices of external cooperation are dealt with."

INTERNAL RELATIONS & EVALUATION

Due to globalisation, technological development and demographic factors, more autonomy and more skills are required in all areas of life. There is an increasing need to recognise and encourage cultural and social diversity.

Current University lifelong learning (ULLL) should be positioned as customer-oriented, flexible and cost-effective. Under the circumstances, the services to be offered for lifelong learners should be well prepared, target-focused and of good quality. Nevertheless, the expectations can be fulfilled via a proper administration and qualified personnel.

ULLL refers to the personal needs both in professional and private life and also intervenes the needs of society and the expectations of the labour market. In this context, to govern the internal relations and to promote the staff development gain importance in order to respond to these demands properly.

Since lifelong learning is increasingly becoming a key factor in economic, social and cultural lives, it is important that more systematic knowledge of the activities is developed. Therefore, the evaluation of training and its consequences is an essential feature of University lifelong learning. Information is needed not only for assessing the activity and its consequences but also for developing a framework for evaluating alternative approaches to the provision of ULLL opportunities and for promoting the participation of different social groups. Universities have been conducting projects to collect valid data, statistics and information about the state and development of ULLL, due to the growing demand for information from decision-makers, sponsors and NGOs.

If the feedback from both the graduates and their employers is systematically collected and monitored, it can be used in many forms, such as for the revision or improvement of curricula or the modification of the way of teaching for better employment and other global needs. On the other hand, specific protocols to monitor how the feedback has helped in developing employment and competence acquisition as well as the key processes should be defined and applied.

87

Furthermore, in the light of the key results of the surveys on ULLL and more specifically on social dimension, several policy recommendations can be developed and the national and international knowledge base and the statistical infrastructure of ULLL can be improved.

Considering the reports of the COMMIT visits, the issue of universities' staff development universities, especially when it comes to the social dimension and the evaluation process, can be summarised as follows.

Staff development

- In general, staff training is provided by the university services, but the specific theme of social engagement in staff training is limited. Even though a part of the universities have been providing specific training activities for staff on social dimension and collaboration with society (practices, methods, contracts etc.), some of them reported no specific staff training on these issues.

- Lifelong learning has not been very clearly conceptualized in most of the universities yet. However, the concept of lifelong learning is now beginning to be embedded in teaching in the universities. The visit reports show that there is still work to do for a clear understanding and thorough implementation of University LLL.

- Social engagement comes to discussion for the faculties, staff and students with e.g. the introduction of competency-based curricula, provision of social dimension and new delivery models such as e-learning.

- During this process, they acknowledge the presence of colleagues or students in class, who are not coming from traditional paths in education, but social dimension still needs time to be welcomed as it deserves.

- The university services for the social dimension show differentiation among the universities. Some of them are not delivering any services, while the others are providing the internal support services on social dimension such as access for disable people, exemption of fees due to social criteria, special reception for adults, etc.

- Except for few universities, specialised internal support services on social dimension issues for staff are not offered.

Evaluation

- Most of the universities collect and monitor feedback from the graduated students and their employers concerning their employment and competences on a specific basis through regular surveys. But the collected data differs from one university to the other.

- It is stated that the results of this feedback is incorporated into curriculum development, teaching, tutoring and/or learning assessment through different methodologies.

- After the feedback is collected, mostly a comprehensive report is prepared, which is discussed with the faculty members, university administration and councils of academic affairs. Then the reflections from different bodies on the learning outcomes are equipped on the curricula of the programs.

- The existence of a specific protocol, to monitor how the feedback has helped in developing employment and competence acquisition, is not reported. However, in some universities the external relations unit of the universities has provided limited feedback on this issue.

88

- Most universities do not collect specific feedback from local employers and authorities concerning the university's commitment and contribution to social engagement. However, a part of the universities that are in good contact with them, get this kind of information informally. Therefore the feedback incorporated with the development of student enrolment and admission, education provision and research is not satisfactory.

- The existence of a specific protocol to monitor how feedback has helped in the key processes is not reported.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS & INTERACTION

The European Universities' Charter on LLL at the European level has been a significant challenge for the development of lifelong learning and social engagement in the universities. Nevertheless, the national and EU legislation has been another key driver to lead the universities to take a more active role in lifelong learning and social engagement. Additionally, growing European collaboration between the universities and other institutions has caused an extra positive impact.

The focus of University lifelong learning (ULLL) includes public at large, private companies, public sector, third sector (NGOs) as well as other regional, national and international stakeholders. Besides the financial interaction of the public universities with the public authorities, the incentive of socio-economic development of the region where the universities are located, has motivated the external relations of the universities with various stakeholders. On the other hand, the demands coming from the external actors have enhanced the strategic relationships in many universities. They may not only come from the regional or national authorities but also from the business sector and individual lifelong learners.

Due to the recent global economic crisis, a certain increase in the unemployment rates (especially for the youngsters) caused another level of collaboration. The development of human capital of lifelong learners becomes particularly important in the light of demographic and economic changes; the transition between university and employment should also be well paved. However, in reality there are still discrepancies in the policies and practices. Therefore, the collaboration should refer to current needs and anticipation of future skills and competences for employability, reduction of youth unemployment, better transitions to labour market, and better opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

Considering the general definition of ULLL, which highlights the interaction and the collaboration with different stakeholders and external actors, and within reference to the reports of the COMMIT visits, the external relations of the universities and their interaction are synthesised as follows.

The stakeholders

- The reports show that the universities deal with a range of different stakeholders. The various stakeholders of the universities can be classified as the general public, public authorities (local, regional and national), private companies and the NGOs.

- The status and level of collaboration with the stakeholders show differences between the universities. Therefore, it is not possible to highlight a universal picture.

Collaboration

- The interaction between the universities and their stakeholders are changing from one institution to the other.

- In public universities there is a direct financial interaction, since the public authorities are the decision-makers on the budget to be allowed to the university. Furthermore, they manage the other finance tools through the calls for tenders concerning training or applied research projects and selection of the providers.

- In some of the universities the stakeholders dynamically participate in the governance of the institution. They are actively involved in research and/or education by means of advisory boards or management boards.

- The stakeholders actively participate to the revision of curricula, determination of skills, orientation for the future, counselling the students and the evaluation of the LLL activities.

- On the other hand, the universities are able to propose actions within the framework of plans proposed by the authorities for unemployed people, or disadvantaged groups (disabilities, minorities, social difficulties).

- One of the universities mentioned that its stakeholders could participate to diploma juries especially the RPL juries.

- In terms of collaboration with the private sector, the dialogue has been strongly focused on better transitions to labour market. Therefore, during the planning of degree or non-degree programs, a collaborative work and mutual understanding become more strategic. Given the diversity among employers and the wide-ranging jobs, it would not be an easy task. It is worth understanding that employers want those skills in their employees to be integrated into the academic experience, but nevertheless, without undermining the academic concerns.

- The universities sometimes collaborate in organizing or delivering courses on specific topics especially with NGOs or sector bodies.

Alumni

- Most of the universities have strong links with their alumni, but in general their role to foster LLL is limited. On the other hand, few of the universities collaborate with their alumni for the dissemination, work experience, employment and societal watch.

90

7. TRANSVERSAL ANALYSIS OF TOOL 3: BENCHMARKING TOOL

The Benchmarking Tool – hereafter called Tool3 - is based on a similar one that was created for ALLUME project. It was modified in order to include the Social Dimension in an explicit way whenever needed/possible, according to the COMMIT project main aim. As in the ALLUME project, the Tool intends to provide HEIs with a perspective of their performance in Lifelong Learning. In the COMMIT project it also aims to provide an insight on HEIs' third mission – Social Dimension (SD) - performance. The modifications were made with the intention of fostering awareness on the SD in the 10 LLL commitments as stated in the European Charter for Lifelong Learning (EU Chart), to allow ranking purposes and in-depth analysis. Under the scope of the COMMIT project it also meant to promote the success of the partners' visits.

All the partners were asked to apply the tool to their HEI prior to the partner's visit. In addition to this, Tool 3 could also be one of the two tools to be used during the same visit. Feedback from the twelve HEIs was received and eight (67%) include the visits contribution to Tool 3. The twelve HEIs partners (P2 to P13) are listed below and those that used Tool3 during the visit are **in bold**.

- ***P2 - BE***
- ***P3 - FI***
- ***P4 - FR***
- *P5 - PT*
- *P6 - DE*
- ***P7 - IE***
- ***P8 - TR***
- ***P9 - IT***
- *P10 - GR*
- ***P11 - RO***
- *P12 - ES*
- ***P13 - HU***

The partners' reports were transversally analysed to give information on the different parts that compose the Tool:

A. Ranking and in depth analysis

B. Status quo & future scenario

C. Importance of the ten Commitments to the Social Dimension

D. Your LLLU strategy Framework for the Social Dimension

E. Problems in implementing your LLL-SD strategy framework

In the next sections the analysis will be sequentially presented. Because it is not the projects' purpose to do any ranking, partners' answers are randomly represented in the Graphics and Tables by letters (A to L) that do not relate to their identification number in the project. In the remainder, references partners are identified by their number in the consortium and their nationality.

In order to ease the reading, the ten Commitments (10C) are reproduced below.

91

The 10 Commitments of EUA LLL Charter[10]

1. Embedding concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in their institutional strategies

2. Providing education and learning to a diversified student population.

3. Adapting study programmes to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners

4. Providing appropriate guidance and counselling services.

5. Recognising prior learning

6. Embracing Lifelong Learning in quality culture

7. Strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation from a Lifelong Learning perspective

8. Consolidating reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students

9. Developing partnerships at the local, regional, national and international level to provide attractive and relevant programmes

10. Acting as role models of lifelong learning institutions

7.1. Ranking and in depth analysis

The following table (Table 11) displays the ranking that each partner attributed to the degree of implementation of each of the 10 Commitments of the EU Chart, in a five levels scale: 0 – not started, to 4 – fully implemented.

| Partner Tool 3	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	$<C_i>$
C1	4	3	4	3	3	3	2.5	2	2	1.7	2	1	**2.6**
C2	4	3	3	2	2	3	2.7	2.5	3	1.4	2	1	**2.5**
C3	2	3	4	2	2	2	2.5	2	2	1.7	1	2	**2.2**
C4	4	2	3	4	2	3	3	3	2	2.7	2	2	**2.7**
C5	4	4	3	0	1	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	**1.7**
C6	2	3	3	3	4	2	1.5	1.9	1	2.9	1	1	**2.2**
C7	2	4	3	3	2	2	1	2.7	2	3	1	1	**2.2**
C8	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	1.4	1	2	**2.1**
C9	3	3	2	3	4	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	**2.6**
C10	3	3	1	3	2	3	2	2	1	0	2	1	**1.9**
$<P_i>$	**3.1**	**3.1**	**2.8**	**2.6**	**2.5**	**2.4**	**2.2**	**2.2**	**1.8**	**1.7**	**1.5**	**1.4**	

Table 11 – Horizontally: the scores and mean value, for each Commitment considering all partners. Vertically: the score and mean value for the 10C' implementation, by partner.

The observation of the table shows that the more uneven ranking distribution between partners occurs in C5 (RPL) – it is the only commitment were extreme values (*fully implemented* and *not at all implemented*) appear with the same frequency.

Ranking of Implementation levels	Frequency	
	(N)	**(%)**
4 - Excellent -*fully implemented*	12	10.0
3 - Good	39	32.5
2 - Fair	46	38.3
1 - Small	21	17.5
0 - No - *not at all implemented*	2	1.7
Total	**120**	**100**

If we take the average of each commitment ranking over the 12 partners, as shown in the graph below, it is possible to conclude that although the majority of the Commitments is more than 50% implemented in the partner HEIs, the **degree of appropriation of the EU Chart still has some way to go before it is really implemented: 8 (80%%) of the 10 Commitments score 50% or more of implementation rate but they are less than 75% implemented. 4 (40%) are between 50% and 63% implemented, and 2 (20%) are less than 50% implemented. The highest score is found in Commitment nº4 (Providing appropriate guidance and counselling services), followed by nº1 (Embedding in the strategy), nº9 (Developing partnerships at the local, regional, national and international level) and º 2 (Providing education to a diversified student population) with marks between 2.5 and 2.7 in a 0 to 4 scale.**

93

Figure 19. **Degree of implementation of each of the 10 Commitments**
(average of each of the 10 Commitments grading by partner)
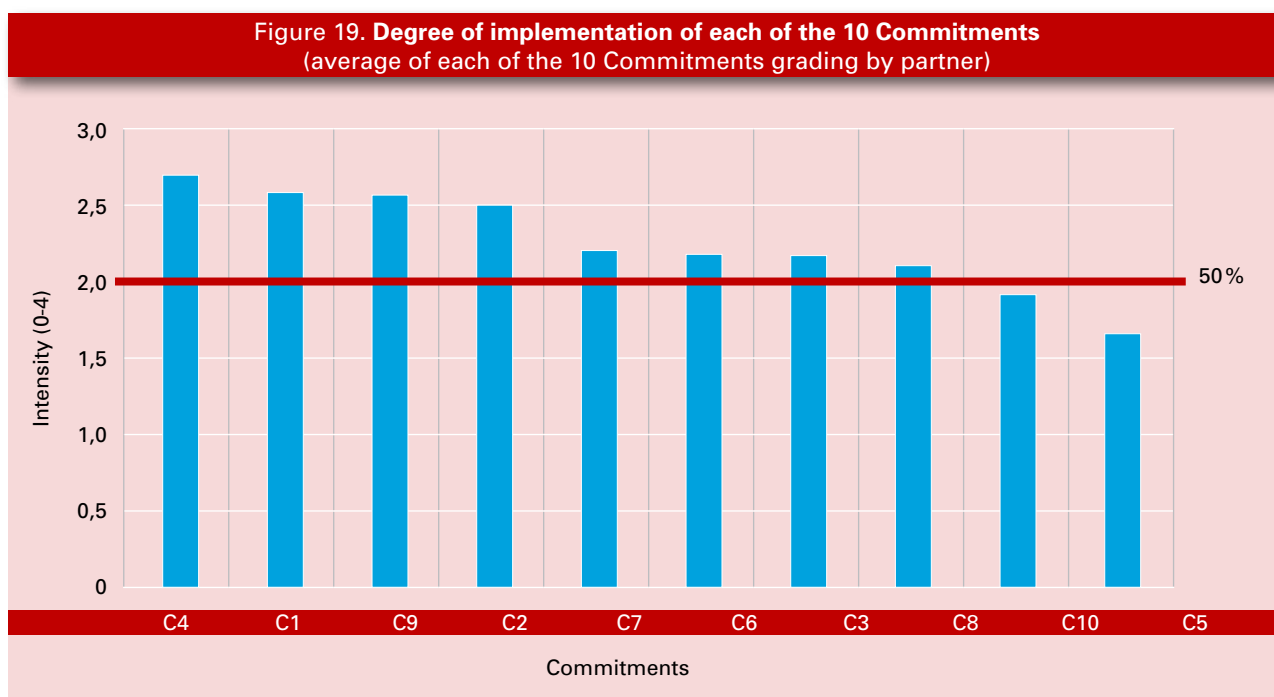
On the other hand, if we analyse the score average of implementation of the 10 Commitments, as a whole, for each partner, the distribution is as seen in the next graphic.

Figure 20. **Distribution of the 10 Commitments average grading by partner**
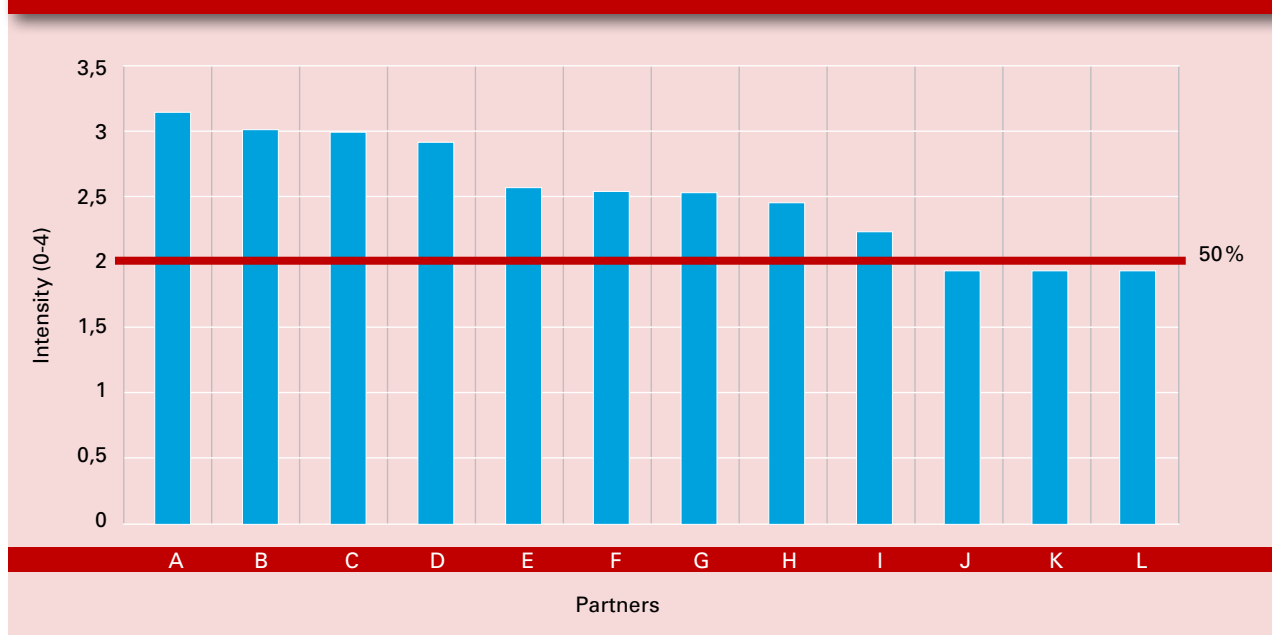
In this visualisation it is still possible to conclude that the majority of the partners (8, 67%) are above 50% of implementation, with 2 (18%) partners in a high level (≥3) of implementation, and 4 (33%) are below 50% of implementation, thus reflecting the different degree of appropriation of each HEI of the EU Chart. This diversity reflects each HEI's identity and particular reality, and this ranking cannot be read as absolute information, as some of the HEI well known for their LLL commitment and practice (for instance, P7-IE), score themselves lower than others that recognize a long way to go (for instance P11-RO). Awareness of the task dimension has this effect.

7.2. In depth analysis of each of the Commitments individually

1. Your university is embedding concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in its institutional strategies.

The average ranking for this Commitment was **2.6**. Two partners did not give any example and one said it is in progress.

LLL, widening access and SD are in the institutional strategies, but it is possible to identify a minority of situations where they are not.

LLL is in the strategy and in the vision of the HEI, even in the law in most countries. In at least one case it is a concept not directly involved in the statements.

- *"The (URV) developed a lifelong learning strategy in 2010-2011, as a result of a strategic planning process within the framework of the SIRUS project of the EUA. Lifelong Learning is therefore fully embedded in its institutional strategies." (P12-ES)*

- *"The following are the vision and mission statements of Bo aziçi University. (...) Therefore, although LLL as a concept is not directly involved in these statements, it is innately there." (P8-TR)*

Widening access is in the strategy and is a long-term goal, often with a dedicated office. In one case is not a main axis in the HEI plan.

- *"The theme of Access features prominently in the DCU strategic plan. DCU pioneered in Ireland the first Access programme aimed at encouraging young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to consider entering higher education. A dedicated Access Office engages in an extensive programme of outreach activities in areas of multiple deprivation and evaluation of 21 years of operation show considerable successful outcomes."* (P7-IE)

- *"Widening access of underrepresented groups is not a main axis in this plan."* (P12-ES)

Social Dimension is in the HEI strategy and incorporated in the vision, but not very high on the agenda. It can be identified with ecology standards. It is a traditional area most of the times regionally applied, with several initiatives aiming at integration and underrepresented/immigrants' groups.

- *"The social dimension is not very high on the HE agenda in Finland. The participation in HE is already quite high, there are no study fees, there is a well-developed financial study support system, and equal opportunities to apply in HE. The group that has been identified are the young people coming from immigrant families. Their participation is lower than their proportion already in secondary education."* (P3-FI)

- *"The theme of Civic Engagement features in the DCU strategic plan and the university has a tradition of working in close partnership with NGOs and public authorities".* (P7-IE)

2. Your university is providing education and learning to a diversified student population.

The average ranking for this Commitment was **2.5**. Two partners did not give any example and one said it is in progress. Most HEI do provide education and learning to a diversified student population. In two universities, it is not possible due to national policy of student's selection and placement, or it is running very slow.

Examples of good practices are:

- Senior Academies, existence of Faculties for Adult Education, dedicated Master Programmes, Open Universities;

- Differentiated leaning approaches (distance, classroom, mixed, after hours, on-site, work-based);

- Gateways to HE for young and adults, for initial, further and Vocational Continuing Education;

- Low tuition fees;

- Research on the impact of the socio-economic background is also referred.

These practices are supported by:

- Data collection (gender, country of origin, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography) on under-represented groups, teachers, immigrants, social workers, people working with immigrants, process consults, and civil servants and with special needs, unemployed people;

- Dedicated offices.

- *"A LLL organic unit (Uinfoc) works in articulation with the Association for Professional Training and research (UNAVE), a spin-off of the University. Students include diversified traditional students that enter University trough the ordinary path – upper secondary school and admission examination for further studies - and non-traditional (NT) students that enter university trough dedicated gateways."* (P5-PT)

95

- *"There are dedicated offices with expertise in assessing and responding to the needs of "non-traditional" students of different kinds. Examples of good practice include: Access Office, Student Support and Development, Disability office, DCU in the community, Intergenerational Learning Programme (ILP), Open Education Unit, International office." (P7-IE)*

- *"We collect data (gender, country of origin, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography) on under-represented groups. We have a main central office to non-traditional students (senior citizens, adult learners, working professionals, etc.), and other smaller offices in some faculties." (P4-FR).*

Obstacles are identified:

- *"We lack a little bit of professionalism for monitoring education and learning societal demands and of specific organisations (enterprises, public administration, associations, etc.) needs as these demands come from our traditional contacts… Since this year, the University has created a specific office dedicated to the partnership with enterprises and institutions which will act as a portal for these aspects." (P12-ES)*

- *"Our University faces the problem of lack of data. We do not collect information on social class, cultural background or social disadvantages, and therefore there are no specific actions designed to diversify student population in this direction." (P12-ES)*

3. Your university is adapting study programs to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners

The average ranking for this Commitment was **2.2**. Two partners did not give any examples and one answered "No" to the commitment.

Adapting study programs – within the integration principle, adults attend the same classes as regular students in traditional grades. Contacts with enterprises and external agencies foster tailor made programs and RPL procedures. Dedicated centres produce tailored solutions and pedagogical innovations (work-based projects and accessibility and b-learning model) and planned study paths for degree-oriented adult students and working skill up-graders.

- *"During the academic years 2012-14 there was a major curriculum reform conducted at the faculties. An important part of it was the development of flexible study paths and processes. The University does not offer any special degree programs for enterprises, but there is a variety of them in continuous education. The Brahea Centre has a wide expertise in training adult learners." (P3-FI)*

- *"The activities of the Lifelong Learning Centre (BULLC) are mainly for the participants over 30 years old. The programs are classified in two categories, open courses for the general public and corporate programs which are "tailor-made" programs for enterprises and other non-academic organisations." (P8-TR)*

Widen participation – an admission procedure fully dedicated to adults and professionals, the expertise in training adults is in a dedicated centre, with Master programmes and Doctoral studies, "Access Diploma" and RPL, easing flexible study pathways and processes and wide extension studies.

- *"Many students on the Masters programmes combine work with study on a part-time basis. Some are offered in "blended mode" making extensive use of e-learning, evening teaching and weekend sessions". (P7-IE)*

- *"French regulations have organised adult participation to higher level Lifelong Learning on the premise of "integration"". (P4-FR)*

Attract returning adults – "tailor–made" programs and "on demand" that combine work with study in a part-time basis, mentoring by former students, evening classes and week-end sessions.

- "*The "on demand short courses", organized by the University and which are pure "adapted study programs". They have concerned more than 4500 people in 2013.*" *(P4-FR)*

- "*The Alumni system is to attract returners as well on the basis of platform building for formerly graduated students.*" *(P13-HU)*

In this Commitment several obstacles were identified:

- More could be done: evening studies and part-time program used as a delivery mode. The learning-centred perspective demands new culture in the university. How is the acquaintance of the teaching stuff with questions arising from the working life environment?

- We can do better: to adapt learning path to the new way of learning and to the constraints of adults (but also students full or part time employed); the design of pathways with a stronger modularization and the use of distance and/or blended learning.

- In contrast, outside the distance learning programme provided through Open Education Unit, the opportunities for part-time study at undergraduate level for adults are very limited.

- We have been hard with us on this point because we think that we can do better, mainly to adapt learning path to the new way of learning and to the constraints of adults (but also students full or part time employed). The main progression we have to do is on the design of the pathways with a stronger modularization and the use of distance and/or blended learning.

- A commitment to the wider use of e-learning can improve learning for adults.

- Distance education and e-learning modes of delivery or even MOOC is in an early stage.

- The adaptability of timetables to working students has become more difficult.

4. Your university is providing appropriate guidance and counselling services

The average ranking for this Commitment was **2.7**. Two partners did not give any examples. One states it is ongoing.

All HEIs have a guidance and/or counselling system win different stages of development. The more developed have dedicated offices and HE centres, and the less developed have tutors and mentors that are organizing themselves to produce a HE service. Several examples of good practices presented.

- "*There are good guidance and counselling services (virtual, phone, face to face) on different levels of organisation (institution, faculties, institutes), which serve both present and future students. The lowest threshold g & c services are provided by the Open University, which anyone interested in the university studies can contact.*" *(P3-FI)*

- "*Due to the specificity of CE in France (see Q2), the P4-FR have created a specific office for all the process around of the welcoming (reception), the information, the orientation and the guidance of the adults coming back to university.*" *(P4-FR)*

- "*The University has got a career guidance centre where not only students, but also young people and potential adult learners, returners, etc. can ask for special work-oriented, employment and studies related guidance.*" *(P13-HU)*

97

- "*Outreach activities in schools; Centre for talented youth; Special orientation for 250 students (2014) coming through the special Access route; Counselling support provide to all student through Student Support and Development (SSD); Special academic support services such as in mathematics and academic writing*". (P7-IE)

Obstacles were identified:

- Some are not specifically aimed to adult learners (P9-IT);

- There is lack of psychological counselling for students when needed. Personal counselling and support are really time consuming. Can everybody while needed get it enough? Counselling for immigrants is insufficient (P3-FI);

- It could be improved during the VAE admission certainly and during the studies an individual guidance (P2-BE).

5. Your university recognises prior learning.

The average ranking for this Commitment was **1.7**. Two partners did not give any examples. One does not have RPL procedures.

In all but one HEI, RPL exists but may be in very limited way. The degree of implementation and practice is diversified either because the regulations are new, or due to the need of mentality change (namely regarding teachers). Regulations themselves can be very restrictive and VNFIL/APL/RPL may not yet been systematically introduced. RPL may have adopted by the force of law, or due to HEI own decision (based on national and EU laws).

- "*The University is also very active in RUIAP to activate a national system of APL and contributes to the organisation of a Master for Tutor about the certification of skills and the recognition of prior learning.*" (P9-IT)

- "*The University of Bretagne Occidentale has fully implemented the procedure and organised a dedicated office with real professional staff (7 people). NFIL (APL/RPL) system started in 1985 by national decree. Accreditation boards are set up in each university.*" (P4-FR)

- "*A big boat turns slowly.*" (P3-FI)

6. Your university is embracing lifelong learning in quality culture.

The average ranking for this Commitment was **2.2**. Three partners did not give any examples. One does not have a quality culture board or office.

Quality culture embracing level ranges from quality-oriented actions and monitoring of courses that try to combine effectiveness and quality to well-developed regulation systems, with students and academics, each course including certification assessment and formative assessment (at program level). A clear division of responsibilities in quality work, hierarchy stratified and with a quality management contact person's network may be found. Also periodically organized global evaluation may be made on three aspects: Research activities, Courses and diplomas, institution (Governance), indicators based, in the HEI where it is fully/totally implemented run by a dedicated HE Quality or Research Office.

- "*There is a clear division of responsibilities in quality work. The Rector is in principle responsible for quality management, but has delegated it to one of the Vice-Rectors. There is a university level steering group for quality management, and a quality manager working under the Rector. The Deans are responsible for QM at faculty level, and the Heads of departments at unit level. There is a network*

98

of quality management contact people covering all units. Quality management is integrated into all everyday work, and, especially, to the annual planning and monitoring system of the university." (P3-FI)

- "*The evaluation is both broad and precise and the experts can do it more or less deeply as one can see by consultation of the reports published since 2007. In 2012, the report for UBO highlights one of its strengths: 'A consequent strengthening of the quality for the LLL and the RPL' and the existence of a good balance between strategic aims and evidence of practical outcomes." (P4-FR)*

Obstacles

- There is a gap between strategic aims and evidence of practical outcomes. Existence of monitoring mechanisms for quality diagnosis is just started.

- Lack of resource and other constraints mean that there can be a disconnection between strategy and practice.

7. Your university is strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation within a perspective of lifelong learning

The average ranking for this Commitment was **2.2**. Three partners did not give any examples.

All partners say yes to the commitment. The strengthening may happen through collaboration with Socialization/Education and Training/Adult Research groups and centres, internal or external to HEI, and often due to the prevailing teacher-researcher career. LLL as line of research is not a fact for some partners, but it is getting stronger. Joint academic and non-academic publications and theses supervision can be found, with the community or with companies. The existence of a Knowledge Transfer Association or Office inside HEI is the link with external actors.

- *Continuing education programs and regional, national and international development projects combine research, teaching and developing although even more could be done to strengthen the trinity.' (P3-FI)*

- *UBO, like all the universities, has implanted a Knowledge Transfer Organisation (KTO) in different "competitiveness clusters". The "competitiveness cluster" is defined as 'an association of companies, research centres and educational institutions, working in partnership (under a common development strategy) created after 2004 by French government. Its role is to generate synergies in the execution of innovative projects in the interest of one or more given markets' through the design of 'cluster based training actions'. (P4-FR)*

- *"The University Research Strategy places emphasis on translational research which has an impact on 'real world' issues. Examples include Community Knowledge Exchange; Age Friendly University (AFU) and the development of interdisciplinary research Hubs and Clusters." (P7-IE)*

- *"Several national and international research projects have been developed on NT students and produced information on the students' profiles, needs and perspectives, as well as recommendations and tools." (P5-PT)*

8. Your university is consolidating reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students.

The average ranking for this Commitment was **2.1**. Three partners did not give any examples.

A SWOT balance is advised due to the different variables of the process. Common actions are: programmes using the ECTS credit system, graduates get automatically and free of charge a diploma supplement, and the

quality management in line with the European standards and guidelines. No-fees and single courses offered, with TIC and new working methods, ODL initiatives and MOOCs.

On the faculty, institute, subject or individual teacher´s level there are sporadic innovative solutions of learning environments.

Intensification of CPD programmes for enterprises and organisations is also indicated. Most initiatives concern no-fee training and education actions, different training typologies and trajectories. A "widening participation" strategy is in place, and while there is an emphasis on learning outcomes and 21st century Graduate attributes, the focus is largely on younger cohorts than adult learners in two axes: Transformation and Engagement.

Campus facilities and events open to the society/public. Various post-secondary programs/degree and single degree modules (credits transfer) attendance or non-degree programmes available.

- *"UBO has developed and offer several facilities for all kind of users, not only regular students such as no-fee single courses, non-university people using the Campus facilities, and events open to the society/public. We offer degrees at all level B, M or D, the possibility of free attendance to regular courses or non-degree programmes (called University diplomas, mainly in medicine)." (P4-FR)*

- *"Big question for the future! <u>Weakness</u>: a global university strategy still under development; scarcity of human resources; lower flexibility for professors (impact of 2013 decree). <u>Threats</u>: uncertainty of the legal context (new decree). <u>Strength</u>: current work on collaborative learning (FDP project); debates on reforms. <u>Opportunities</u>: blended learning including assistance of an expert unit (IPM)". (P2-BE)*

Obstacles identified:

- It demands more interaction between faculties; Brahea Centre and the stakeholders (need for systematic strategy and action plan).

- The practice is still poorly organised on the institutional level.

9. Your university is developing partnerships at local, regional, national and international level, in order to provide attractive and relevant programmes.

The average ranking for this Commitment was **2.6**. Two partners did not give any examples.

This is a very dynamic area. As all partners have activities in this commitment, a summary of the strongest examples of good practices is presented identifying the HEI of reference. Those HEIs that are not explicitly mentioned also have activity in areas covered by the examples. The main practices are highlighted in bold.

On-going (P2-BE): Alumni asking for support in the professional re-integration or conversion; the team in charge of 'internship' develops **partnerships with professionals**; MERFA (Master Européen de Recherche en Formation des Adultes), partnership with CNAM (Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers Paris) and UNIGE (Université de Genève) for the students in option 'Formation Adultes' – Exchange of students and Professors.

External stakeholders participate in the curriculum planning especially in fields that have more professional orientation. There is very active alumni cooperation. Binary HE system, international joint-degrees, mainly on the national level – not so much on local, regional or international level (there are exceptions of course). Universities in Turku and the city of Turku have made an agreement on **joint process for student employment**. Open University offers studies in co-operation with local and regional actors and the Brahea Centre has the experience.

The main characteristic of the French continuing education organisation comes from the separation between the labour world (economic world) and education world, with two different ministries and budgets. Continuing education is mainly under the control of social partners and regions. To exist in this context they have to be recognized by all the stakeholders of the domains. And they are. **Historically actively involved** in national networks, which provides sometimes good opportunities of new partnerships, but more on policy level than LLL activities. They are working specifically to develop the regional partnerships.

P7-IE is **located adjacent to an area of multiple disadvantages** and has a good track record of working in **partnership with community organisations, NGOs, public authorities and employers**. Most undergraduate programmes include a **work-based internship** - ranging from several months to a year, through the work of its Intra Office. All new degree programmes must involve external input from relevant external agencies and most (if not all) research centres will include representative of external stakeholders.

VET programs are developed with sector bodies and those are involved in every step of learning (P4-FR). In the Lifelong Learning Centres (P12-ES), a lot of **courses are developed in partnership with companies and public institutions, at local, regional and national level**, and there is also the offer of a service of tailored-made courses for companies, in order to better meet their training needs. Study Abroad programs have been recently transferred to LLLC.

Curricula (P13-HU, P5-PT) are based on learning outputs designed in cooperation and partnership with professionals, organisations and particular public stakeholders in some cases, **to meet professional needs**. Faculty of Adult Education and HRD and its Institute for Human Resource Management has **a strong work-based learning focus in research, development and innovation.** There are significant partnerships with public and private business in SD programs.

10. Your University is acting as a role model of a lifelong learning institution

The average ranking for this Commitment was **1.9**. Three partners did not give any examples.

While P7-IE is "*a pioneer in many respects in Irish Higher Education*" and P4-FR says "*certainly yes for RPL*", the existence of dedicated structures, namely a Lifelong Learning Centre, are maybe the only action towards this Commitment. The most common reference is that "there is a lot to do". Environmental concerns are included in this role.

However, good practices are put forward: collaborative learning and internal vision in working teams; well-developed opportunities for professional development of the staff. The Academic staff participates widely in different bodies, organisations and networks outside the Academia. There is a system for the participation of retired professors in the academic work, and former students are also involved.

7.3. More examples of good practices by the main respondent

One partner did not provide any example. Four partners provided 4 examples and three provided 3 examples. As the good practices added are very HEI specific, illustrative and some with very rich details, the full transcription follows.

In **P2-BE**:

- *VAE and Theory-Practice articulation – Experience oriented and based learning.*
- *Support of Training Counsellors and the global counselling approach.*
- *Active and Collaborative Pedagogy.*
- *Master thesis process.*

In **P3-FI**:

- *The "Project Aces" functions for companies and businesses: students receive project work from work organisations with authentic, working life relevant assignments, and companies benefit from the expertise of the university and the novel ideas and perspectives of young professionals.*

- *The Open University: It provides adjusted, flexible and accessible units of degree programmes. It serves different student groups and their diverse needs: professional development, self-development, active citizenship, intellectual interaction etc., and it also provides a study path to the degree studies.*

- *Mentoring programme for graduates.*

- *Integration of recognition of prior learning policies and practices, at the university, with outcomes-based curricula development.*

- *Cooperation with the city of Turku, the "Ready, Study, Go Turku" programme to market the city for prospective students.*

In **P4-FR**:

- *We are one of the first universities who have offered a <u>complete RPL procedure for all degrees.</u> Since 2002 and the last law on RPL, UBO has organised more than 1800 juries for the same number of candidates. The other procedure (Validation for Access to the universities) has been applied to 1500 candidates. We have a real professional office for RPL. We are one of the first universities who have offered a complete <u>RPL procedure for doctorates</u>. More than 10 PhDs have been delivered in different speciality since we have started to offer this possibility. It's emblematic of the connection between research and Lifelong learning.*

- *We have developed, in partnership with a university hospital, an innovative multi-professional training centre for medical and paramedical personnel based on simulation tools. This centre combines the use of the most up to date technologies, a completely new pedagogy and a real possibility to train people for Social and behavioural skills. Several hundred of trainees have used this centre this year.*

- *Since ten years, UBO has developed a specific <u>training programme for local elected people</u>. They are 4000 in our territory and this program is designed for "new comers". It is a real success because of the quality, but certainly also because of its independence from political organisations. The programme is composed of tens of modules dedicated to all aspects of the activities in city management. The programme is updated each new election. It represents a strong contribution of the university to the regional development.*

- *The University has implemented a special aspect of our law on RPL (2002) dedicated to the <u>recognition of higher education or training (VES)</u>. With this procedure, we can deliver, using more or less the same process than for VNIL, national diplomas (B, M, and D) to people who have learning in all kind of institutions: private or public, in foreign countries. It is a very flexible way to recognize that one can learn everywhere and in all kinds of system. 126 candidates have benefited from this procedure in 2013.*

- *<u>Apprenticeship:</u> The university centre of CE supports, since 2007, a specific office which support the development of work based learning in HE programmes. Currently, we have 912 students involved in such programmes (220 at Master level (EQF 7), 566 at bachelor level (EQF 6), and 127 at EQF 5 level). Such programme implies strong partnerships with enterprises and their organisations and gives the opportunity for the students to combine learning and remunerated activity. It is a way to widen access to HE.*

In **P5-PT:**

- *Taylor made training courses, ECTS labelled, for groups of underrepresented or non-traditional students to university access.*

- *Articulation between professional training and academic certificated actions.*

- *Direct link between the Rector's office and Uinfoc/UNAVE coordinating board.*

- *Spontaneous interdisciplinary actions are built and take place, respecting the credits of each area of knowledge present.*

- *Openness to put together multidisciplinary research teams on themes that are not directed related with Research Centres/Laboratories core areas of interest, but that relate to SD and LLL.*

In **P6-DE:**

- *ZLW with its divisions; Master: Online**;** Admin staff, Health management; International Affairs – Mentoring, Gender Equality Unit; Language Centre.*

In **P7-IE**:

- *DCU in the community; Age Friendly initiatives - Intergenerational Learning Programme; Ryan Academy; Social Entrepreneurship; Access Office.*

In **P8-TR:**

- *An internal professional development unit with extensive training programs for all administrative staff. Departmental graduates, NGO members and business representatives advisory committee. International accreditation of English Faculty and Psychology Department by ABET.*

In **P9-IT:**

- *Master PerForm, customized training projects for companies and territorial economic realities**;** Courses for employees, particularly for the Public Administration; Continued participation in European calls on LLL: Department of Educational Sciences (prof. Palumbo) and PerForm.*

In **P10-GR**:

- *There are: Greek language courses; Entrepreneurship courses; Research programs; Bridge online courses to students in School of Education for ICT course.*

In **P11-RO:**

- *For any activity performed within the academic and research fields, as well as active recognition in community, TUIASI have a Procedures Manual. The Procedures Manual establishes the framework for all the activities carried out. Procedures Manual web link: http://www.calitate.tuiasi.ro/Manualul procedurilor.htm.*

- *We are active participant in a national project regarding both the training for university professors concerning specific blended activities (DIDATEC) and the training for professors from the pre university level (e-prof).*

- *There are on-going dissertations and diploma projects with joint supervision, at academic and non-academic level.*

In **P12-ES:**

- *Regional and local partnerships of the University with companies and institutions:*

  The URV has in its mission to place knowledge at the service of society so as to contribute to the social and economic development of its environment. To this aim, the University has agreements with several local and regional institutions, such as city councils, regional government, NGOs as well as several private companies, in the fields of training, research and knowledge transfer.

- ***Service Learning:***

Year	2011-12	2012-12	2013-14
Teaching staff	23	40	85
Students	181	265	477
Hours of social action	2.675	30.247	53.445
SL subjects	13	28	49
Social organisations	28	31	79

SL is an educational proposal that combines learning processes and community service in a single project, in which the participants learn while working on real needs and trying to improve their environment. It is a complex activity that links community service to the learning of content, competencies, skills and values through reflexive practice.
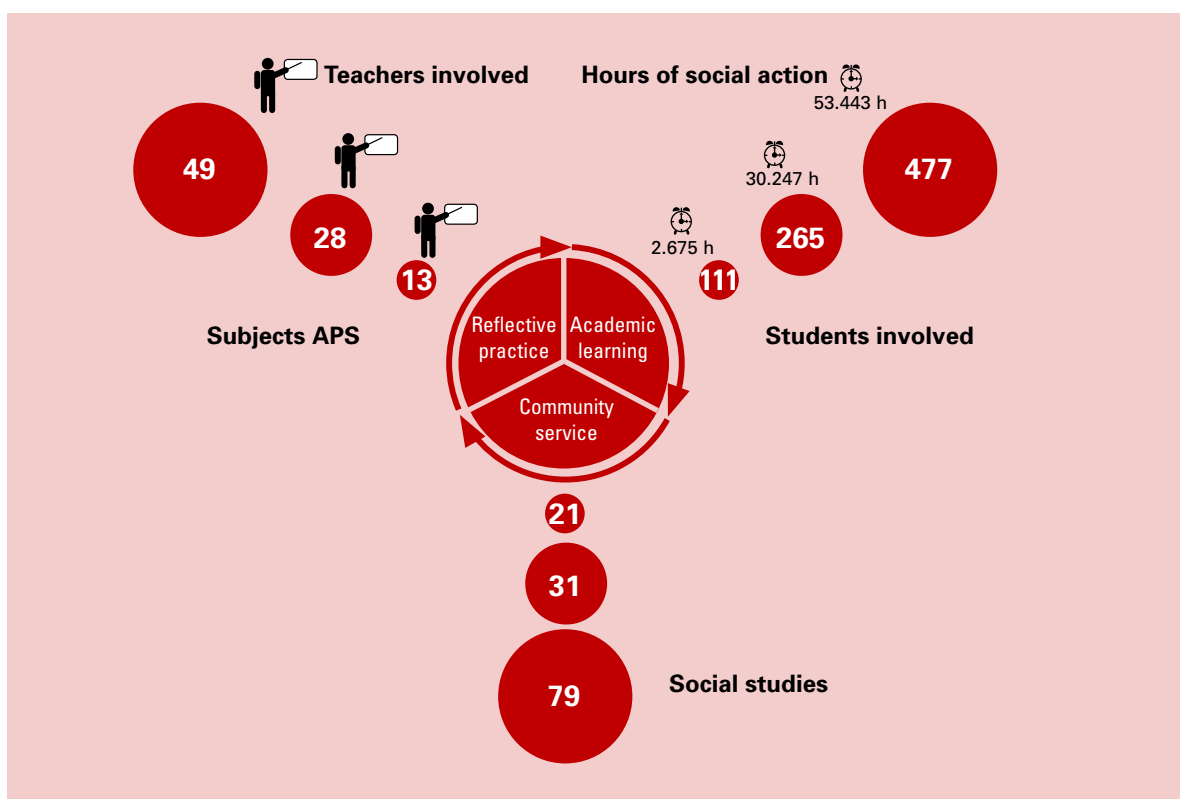
- ***Knowledge Antennas:***

The URV's extended campus (EC) is a strategic project that is part of the university's third mission: that is to say, along with other institutions and the driving forces of regional development, the URV is committed to developing the local region from the more cultural aspects to the socioeconomic ones.

In keeping with its commitment to the territory and in order to bring knowledge closer to people, the project aims to understand the needs of each territory and contribute to their progress by creating a network of knowledge antennas (AC). Each antenna is the responsibility of a professional who is familiar with its surrounding social and economic fabric.

The extended campus project has the full support of the local councils, which provide premises for the University to house the antennas and carry out their activity. There have been 235 activities held in 13 Knowledge Antennas, with a total amount of 10.216 participants.

13 Municipalities

235 | Municipalities
10.216 | Attendees

Cities with antenna

- Salou
- Cambrils
- Amposta
  La Sènica
- Santa Coloma
  de Queralt
- Valls
- Móra d'Ebre
- Torredembarra
- La Pobla
  de Mafumet
- Tortosa
- Tarragona
- Reus
- Vandellòs
  i l'Hospitalet
  de l'Infant

105
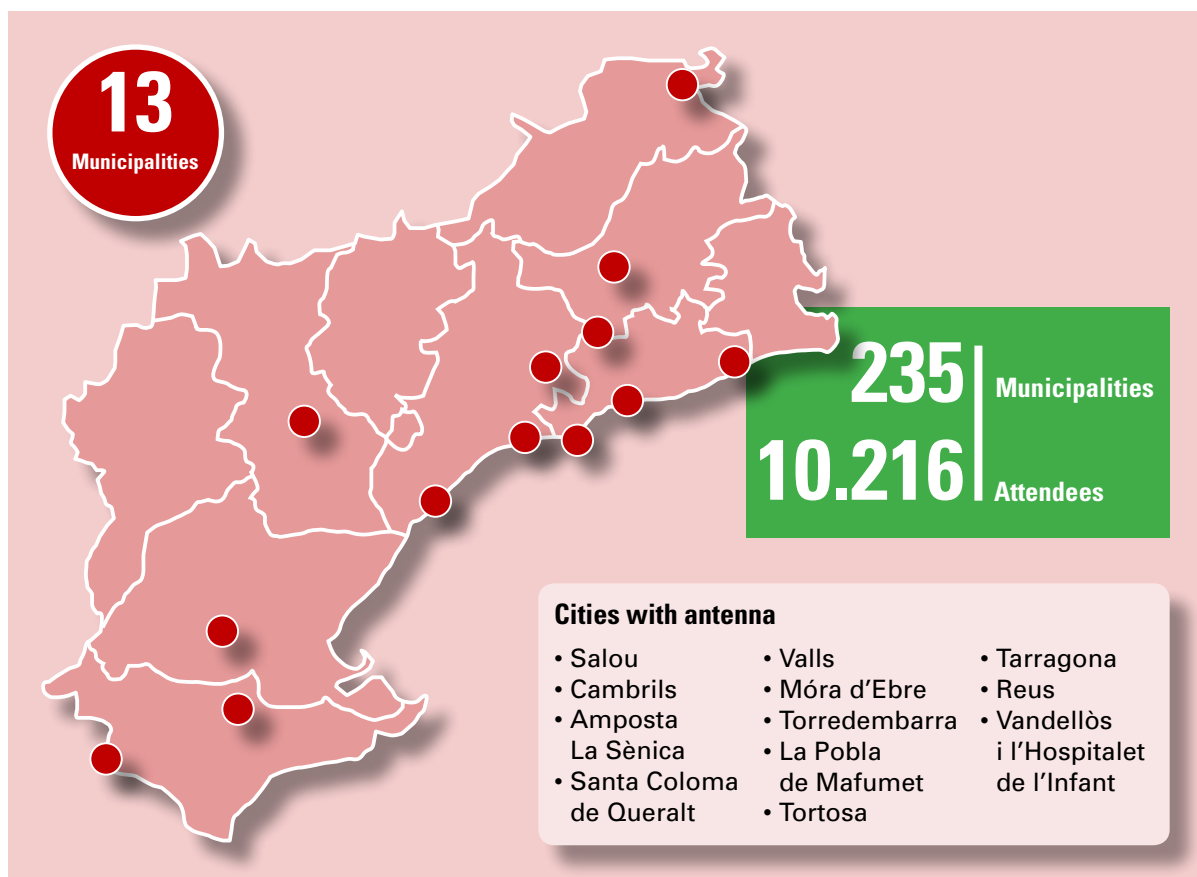
- ***Classes for the elderly:***

  The classes for the elderly are a social project promoted by the main Catalan universities that aims to output the cultural concerns of the elderly. The URV, from its civic engagement policy, is aware of the importance of their relationship with the social environment and therefore it is fully involved with it. It also aims to provide an alternative to leisure time of the main protagonists of this initiative, the elderly, leading them to stay abreast of new knowledge in many different fields, and especially in those in which they show interest. In 2013-14, there were 380 conferences in 20 different towns, with a total amount of 1.500 students.

20 Municipalities

Santa Coloma de Queralt
El Morell
Reus
Valls
Riudoms
Constantí
Flix
Falset
Móra d'Ebre
El Vendrell
Tarragona
Torredembarra
Salou
Vila-seca
Cambrils
Tortosa
Mont-roig del camp
La Sénia
Deltebre
Amposta

In **P13-HU:**

- *Open University lectures (Nyitott Egyetem); Senior Academy; Pécs Learning City-Region Forum; Dancing University (Táncoló Egyetem); Day of Sciences Programme every Fall.*

7.4. Comment on the different ranking from respondents

The respondents' profile is not clear. In some cases it is evident that a group of people answered the tool, in a forum, and in others that the only intervenient was the partner interlocutor. In the majority of cases it is not clear who filled in the tool. Some light may be shed from the visits' reports.

Five (42%) partners did not make any comments. In 3 cases no significant differences were reported or an overall agreement was achieved.

Identified Respondents' profile	N° of respondents
Yourself	4
Decision-maker	3
Researcher	3
Teacher	3
Institutional	4
Student	1
Several not specified profiles	5
Manager	3
Course director	1

"*Lack of internal communication*", "*different knowledge level about centralised (institutional) activities by each respondent as well as different age*" and "*no direct contact with the reality of learners*" were reasons identified for the different rankings given to the same Commitment. Another issue is highlighted by P7-IE, observing that: "*Tool 3 was initially filled-in during a group discussion session several weeks prior to the visit. The group assembled during the visit contained many new people from a wide range of disciplines, from DCU's management structure, academic and administrative staff as well as industry affiliates. Participants were looking at the issues from many different perspectives, and this is reflected in the wide range of ranking within each session and between the sessions.*"

Commitments explicitly identified as being differently perceived by different profile respondents were: C2 (*Providing education to a diversified student population*), C6 (*Embracing LLL in quality culture*) and C7 (*Strengthening the relations between*) in one HEI and C4 (*Providing appropriate guidance and counselling services*) in another.

7.5. *Status quo* & future scenario

In this section partners were asked to produce a Spider diagram (1) and/or a matrix reflecting the *status quo* of their HEI.

Differences in the degree of implementation of the 10 Commitments become more evident, as it can be seen in the radar/spider diagram for each partner, as follows:
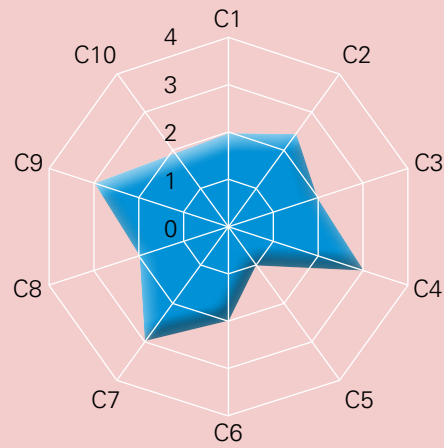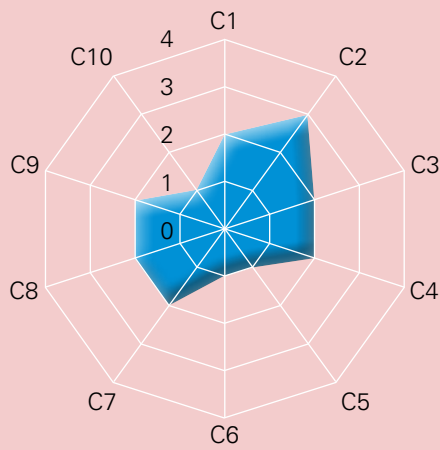

Status quo against the EU Chart

108
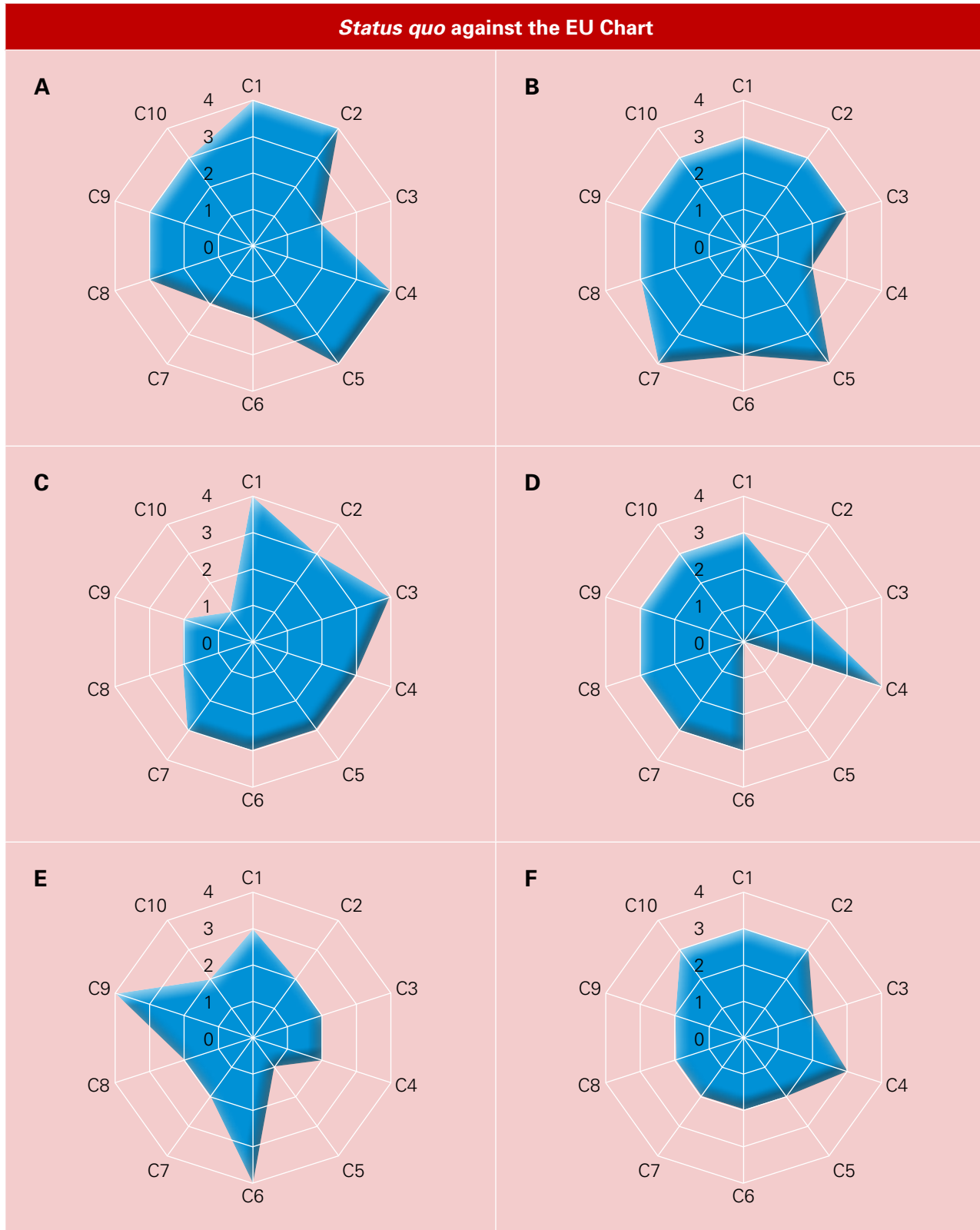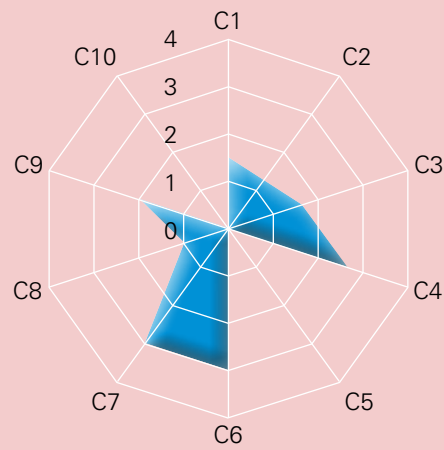
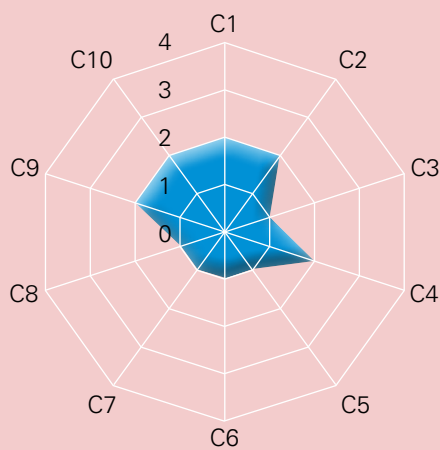## Status quo against the EU Chart

G
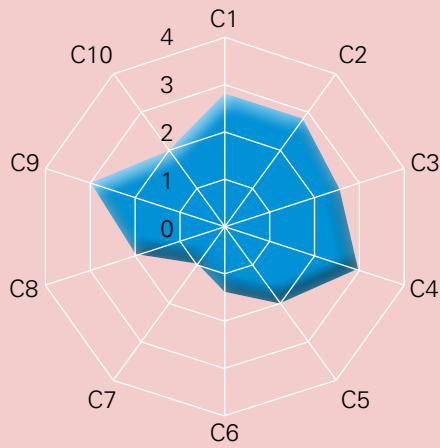
H

I

J

K

L
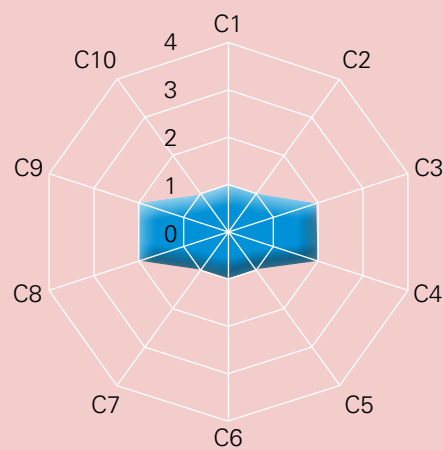
Plotting of all the diagrams into one:
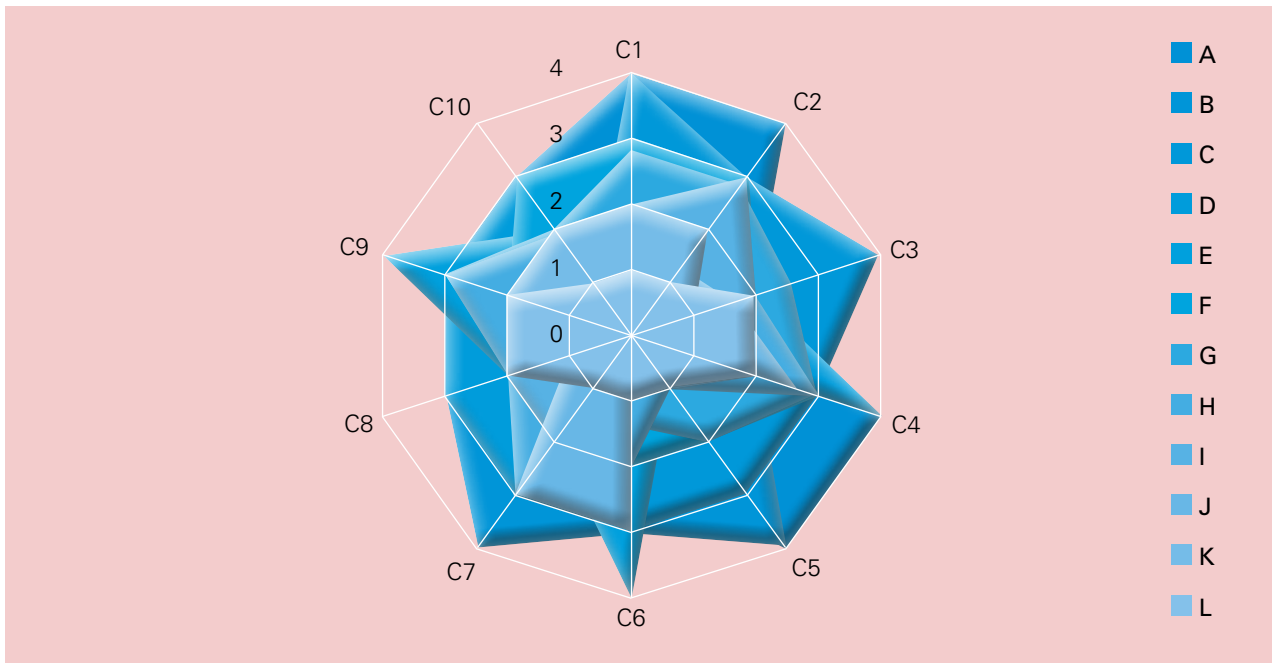
Clearly there is a deficit of implementation mainly of commitments 5 (RPL) and 10 (LLL role model). One has to be aware that the ranking produced, regardless if it is the view of one individual or of a group of people, is always a subjective and relative process: it depends on the expectations, reasoning and optimism/pessimism of the respondents. An example is the set of answers from one of the partners (P7-IE), which provided the scores before and after the visit: the grading produced after the visit is always higher than the one produced before the visit. Also, some partners that provided several and very good practices, tend to score lower in relation to other partners that do not give evidence of the same relative importance.

P7-IE provided radar graphs reflecting the actual minimum and maximum values of the ranking for the 10C according to the different respondents.
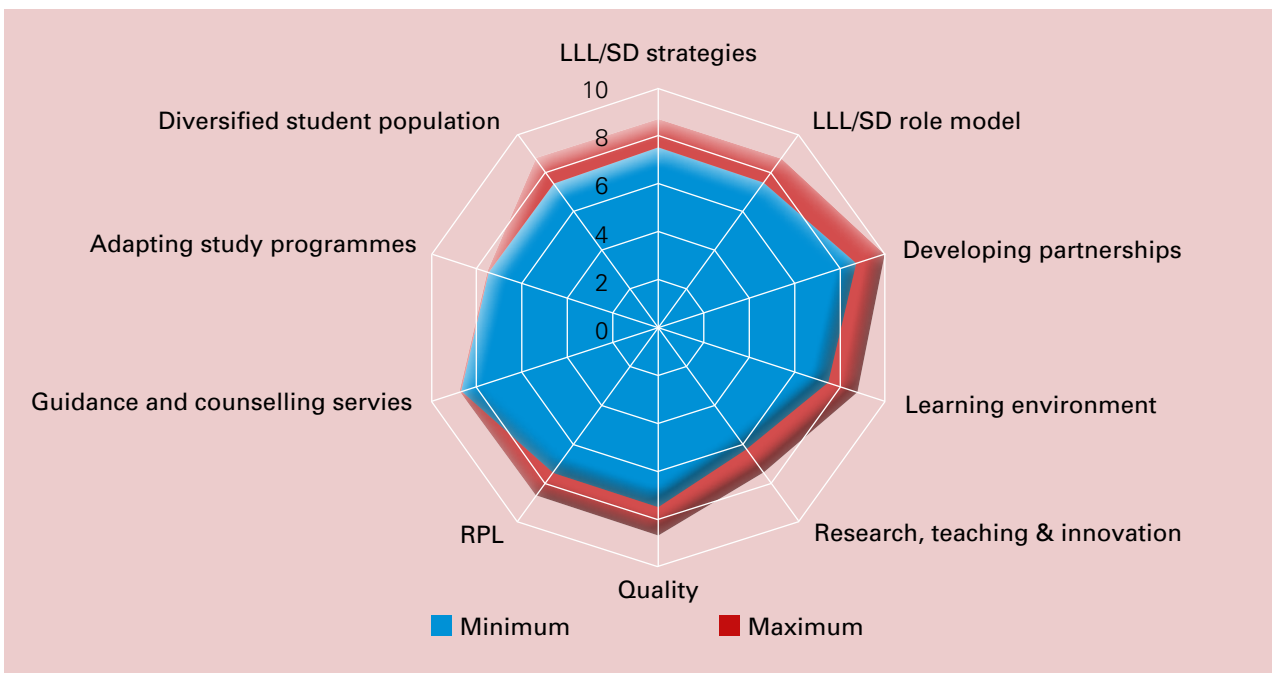
Matrixes were only used by three partners and different information was obtained.

P4-FR

GETTING BETTER	
Area of development	*Quality area*
4. Providing appropriate guidance and counselling services. 9. Developing partnerships at local, regional, national and international level to provide attractive and relevant programmes. 6. Embracing lifelong learning in quality culture.	1. Embedding concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in their institutional strategies. 5. Recognising prior learning. 3. Adapting study programmes to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners. 2. Providing education and learning to a diversified student population.
7. Strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation in a perspective of lifelong learning.	10. Acting as role models of lifelong learning institutions. 8. Consolidating reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students.
Black hole	*Lost opportunities*
GETTING WORSE	

(Left margin: WORKING POORLY; Right margin: WORKING WELL)
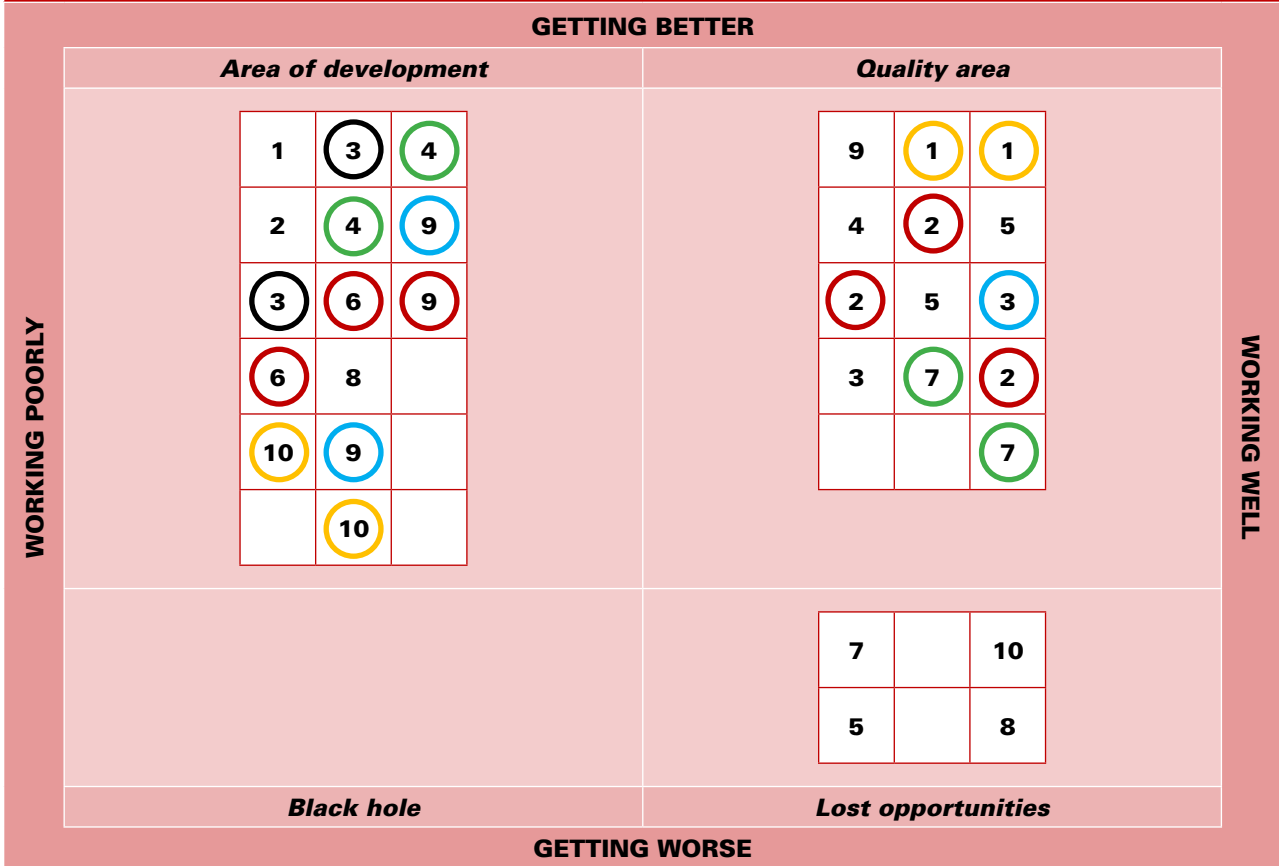
P7-IE

GETTING BETTER	
Area of development	*Quality area*
1. Embedding widening access & LLL in institutional strategies 3. Adapting programmes to widen participation/attract adult learners 6. Embracing lifelong learning in quality culture 10. Role model of a LLL HEI	**9. University partnerships** **4. Appropriate guidance/counselling** 2. Education/ learning to a diversified student population 8. Reforms to promote flexible/ creative learning environment for all students
	7. Strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation within a LLL perspective 5. RPL
Black hole	*Lost opportunities*
GETTING WORSE	

(Left margin: WORKING POORLY; Right margin: WORKING WELL)

Very little information was provided, thus no transversal analysis is possible, but common trends may be identified:

B. Status quo & future scenario

GETTING BETTER

Area of development	*Quality area*

WORKING POORLY / **WORKING WELL**

Area of development grid:
- Row 1: 1, (3), (4)
- Row 2: 2, (4), (9)
- Row 3: (3), (6), (9)
- Row 4: (6), 8
- Row 5: (10), (9)
- Row 6: (10)

Quality area grid:
- Row 1: 9, (1), (1)
- Row 2: 4, (2), 5
- Row 3: (2), 5, (3)
- Row 4: 3, (7), (2)
- Row 5: (7)

Lost opportunities grid:
- Row 1: 7, 10
- Row 2: 5, 8

Black hole	*Lost opportunities*

GETTING WORSE

112

7.6. Importance of the ten Commitments to the Social Dimension

Could you please rank the 10 commitments in order of priority for your institution, in a Social Dimension Perspective?

		COMMITMENTS									
		1st	**2nd**	**3rd**	**4rd**	**5th**	**6th**	**7th**	**8th**	**9th**	**10th**
PARTNERS	**2**	na*	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
	3	7	4	8	9	6	5	3	2	1	10
	4	2	3	4	5	1	9	7	6	10	8
	5	2	3	4	7	8	9	1	5	6	10
	6	10	1	5	9	8	7	2	4	3	6
	7	9	8	2	1	6	4	3	5	10	7
	8	1	10	6	9	2	7	8	4	3	5
	9	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
	10	8	9	1	4	7	6	2	5	3	10
	11	5	8	6	3	9	2	1	4	7	10
	12	1	2	9	3	6	4	8	71	5	10
	13	7	2	8	1	3	4	5	9	6	10

* (na) – no answer

Two partners did not answer. The following table gives the frequency distribution of the priority attributed to each commitment in each of the possible 10 positions.

Commitment / Priority	1st	2nd	3rd	4rd	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
C1	2	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	1
C2	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
C3	1	1	0	3	1	1	0	2	1	0
C4	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0
C5	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	2	1
C6	0	1	1	2	2	1	1	0	2	0
C7	2	2	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
C8	0	1	0	1	3	1	2	0	1	0
C9	1	0	3	1	0	2	1	0	0	2
C10	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	5

The graphs present the frequency distribution of priority of each commitment (in %). Colour intensity decreases with priority.

C1

10# 10%
9# 10%
1# 20%
8# 10%
2# 20%
7# 20%
3# 0%
6# 0%
5# 10%
4# 0%

C2

9# 0%
10# 0%
7# 0%
1# 12%
6# 0%
8# 13%
5# 13%
2# 25%
4# 25%
3# 25%

C3

9# 10%
10# 0%
1# 10%
8# 20%
2# 10%
3# 0%
7# 0%
6# 10%
4# 30%
5# 10%

C4

10# 0%
9# 20%
1# 20%
8# 10%
2# 0%
3# 10%
7# 10%
4# 10%
6# 10%
5# 10%

C5

10# 10%
1# 10%
2# 0%
9# 20%
3# 10%
4# 0%
5# 0%
6# 20%
8# 20%
7# 10%

C6

1# 0%
2# 10%
9# 20%
3# 10%
8# 0%
7# 10%
4# 10%
6# 10%
5# 20%

C7

C8

C9

C10
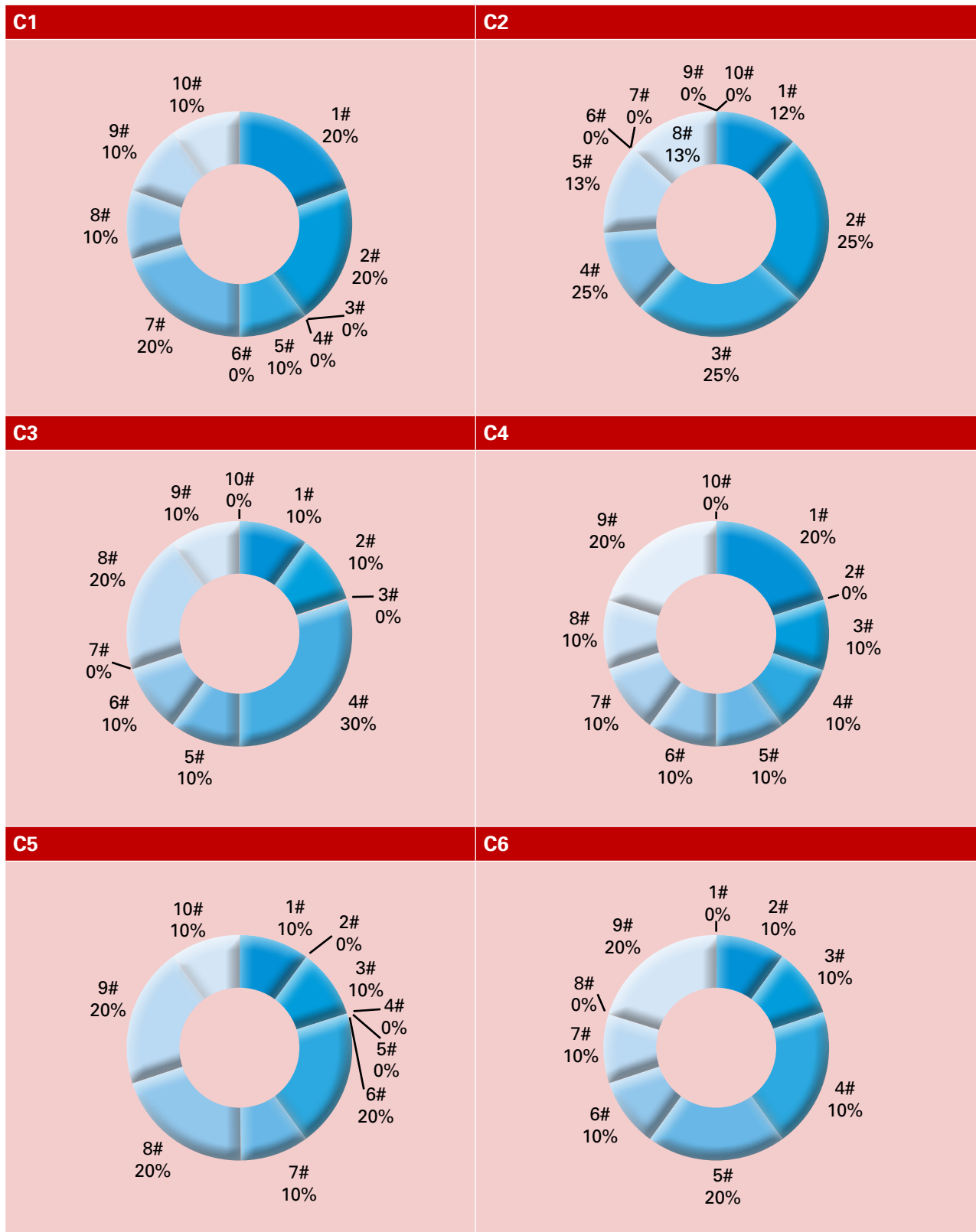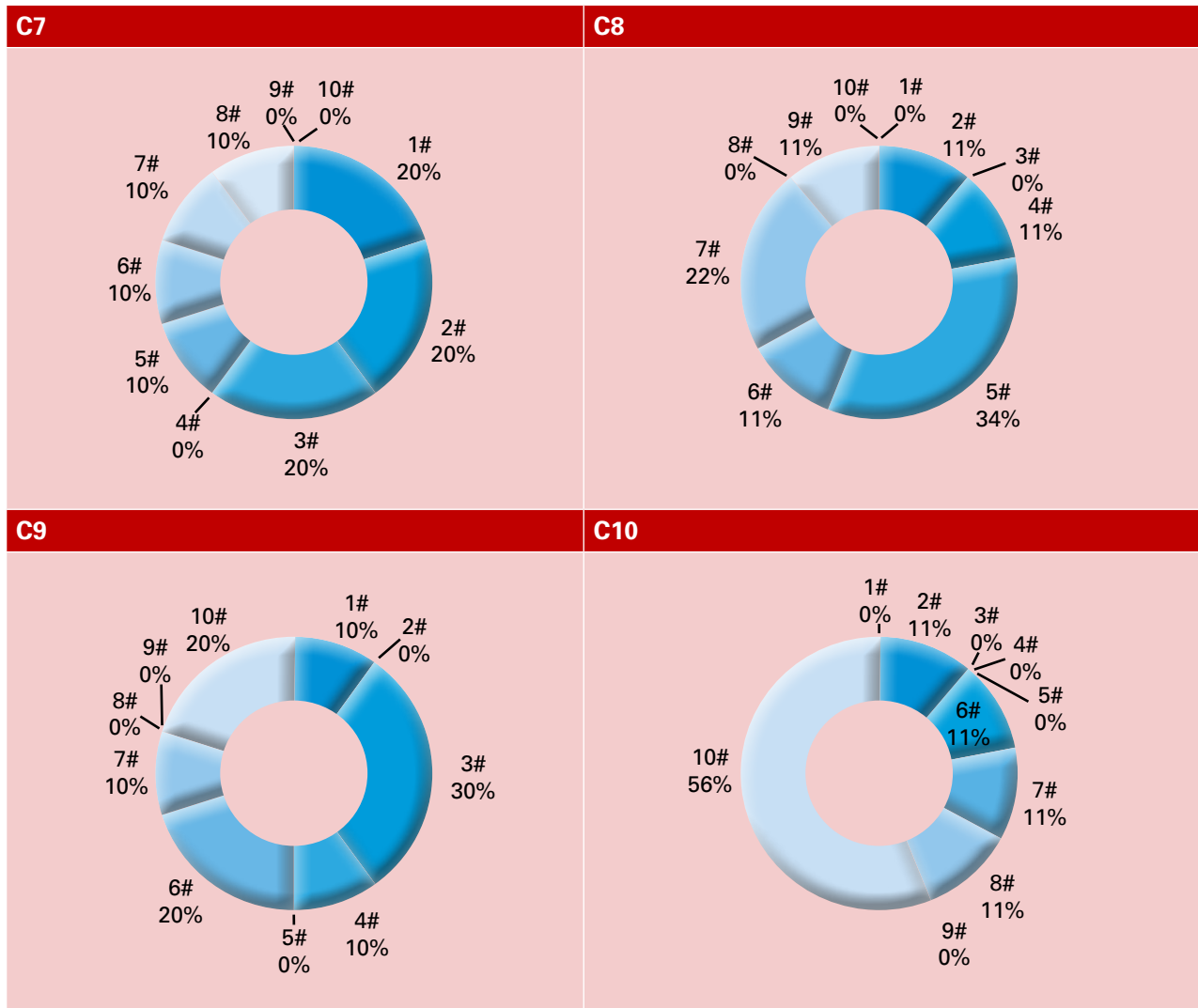
There is quite a large dispersion/diversity on the prioritizing of the 10C between the partners. This definitely evidences the diversity of HEI involved and their individuality. Despite the dispersion, a broader analysis can be performed by taking the value of the priority calculated and weighting the intensity of the choice (frequency) by its position on the 10 possible ranking hypotheses (priority).

Commitment	Weighted priority (0 - 10) $[\Sigma_i (f \times (1/priority_i)]$
7	4.3
1	3.8
4	3.4
2	3.2
3	2.9
9	2.8
5	2.3
6	2.2
8	1.9
10	1.4

C7 and **C1** always appear as the highest priority. Therefore: _Strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation from a Lifelong Learning perspective_ (C7) _and Embedding concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in their institutional strategies_ (C1) are the major aims of this partnership HEIs'.

C4 - _Providing appropriate guidance and counselling services_ and **C2** - _Providing education and learning to a diversified student population_ follow, together with **C3** - _Adapting study programmes to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners_ and **C9** - _Developing partnerships at the local, regional, national and international level to provide attractive and relevant programmes._

C5 - _Recognising prior learning_ and **C6** - _Embracing Lifelong Learning in quality culture_ are in the low priority area.

C8 - _Consolidating reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students_ and **C10** - _Acting as role models of lifelong learning institution_ are the most frequent last priority of partner HEIs.

Histories, tradition, social, demographic, political, financial reasons, among others, determine each HEI priority and the degree of implementation of the 10C. It is remarkable that in spite of this diversity – or because of it – LLL and SD are really being implemented as stated by the answers to the first part of the tool.

7.7. Your LLLU strategy Framework for the Social Dimension

Another Spider diagram (2) was proposed, to visualize the strategy impact on the implementation of the 10C in a SD perspective. Partners' answers were very few, probably due to software compatibility problems.
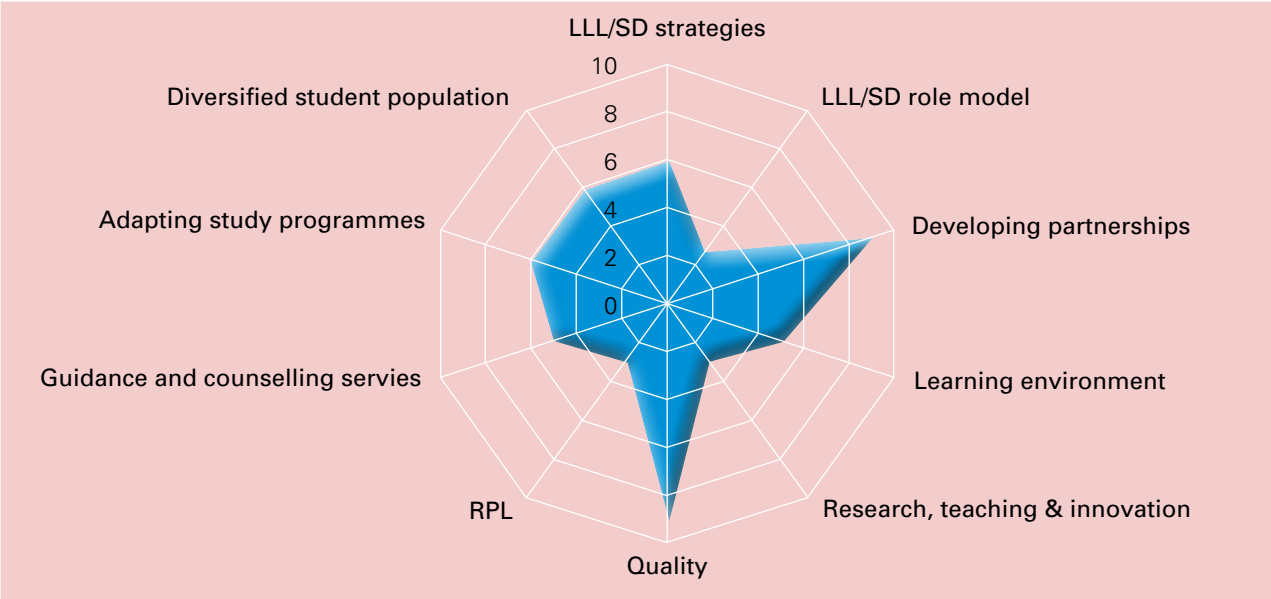
116

P4-FR. Scores for the 10 Commitments
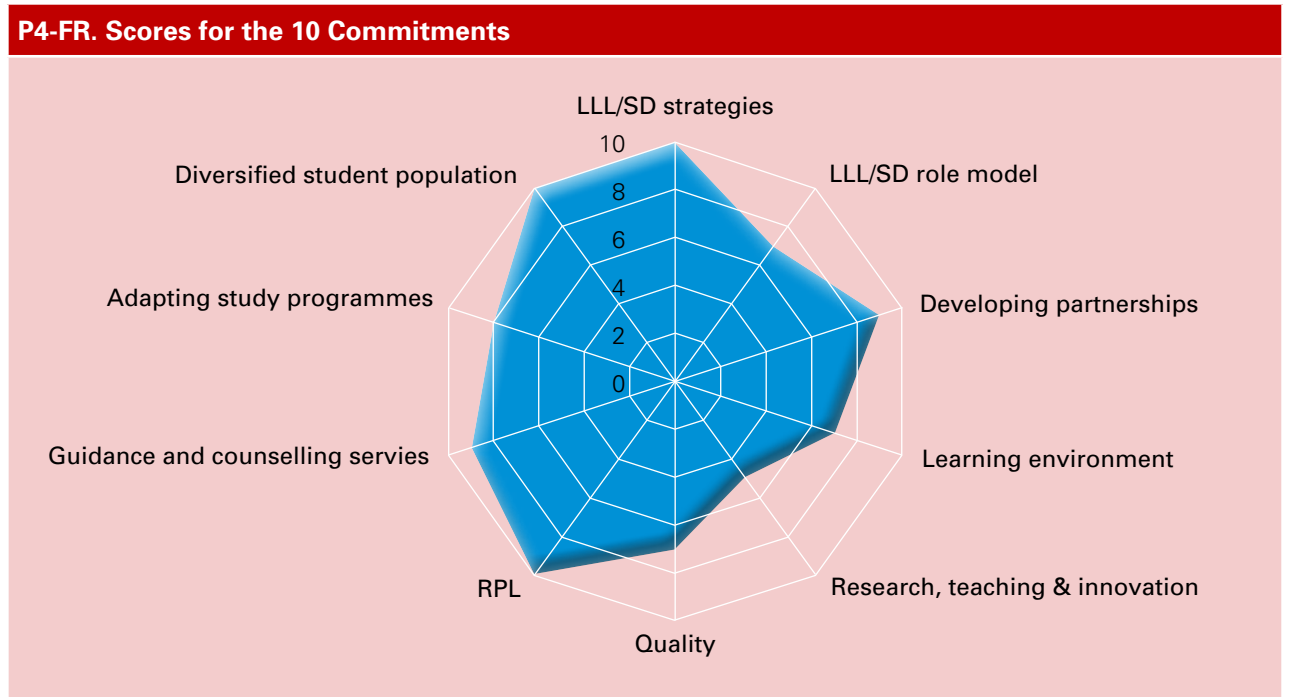
COMMIT

P5-PT. Future scores for the 10 Commitments

Radar chart with axes: LLL/SD strategies, LLL/SD role model, Developing partnerships, Learning environment, Research, teaching & innovation, RPL, Guidance and counselling servies, Adapting study programmes, Diversified student population. Scale 0 to 10.
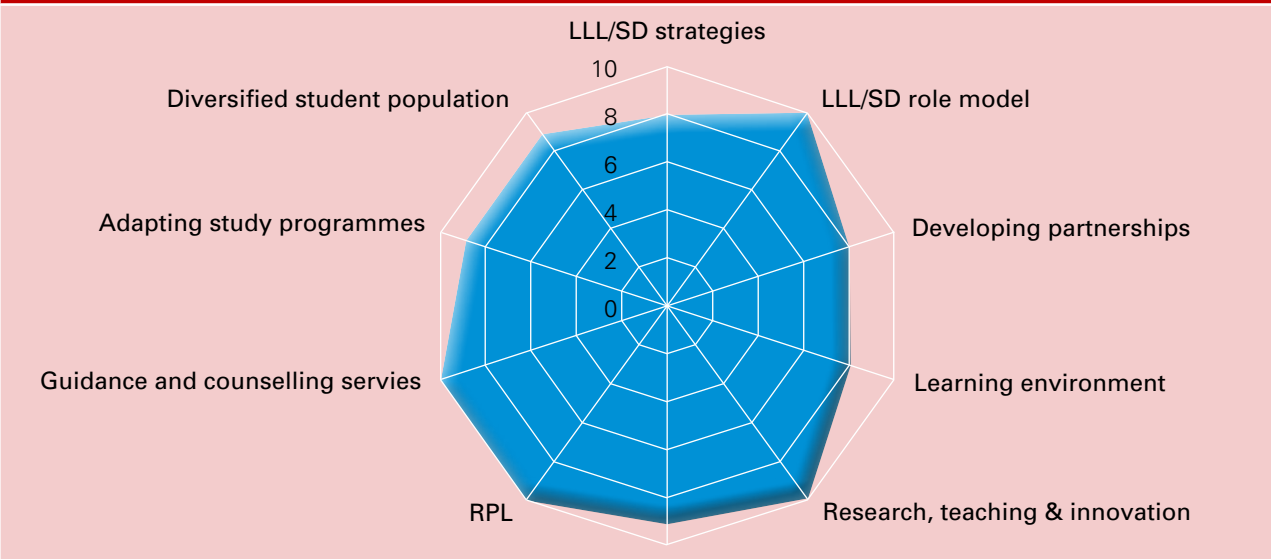
P8-TR. Future scenario for the 10 Commitments

Radar chart with axes: C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10. Scale 0 to 4.

P11-RO. Scores for the 10 Commitments

Radar chart with axes: LLL/SD strategies, LLL/SD role model, Developing partnerships, Learning environment, Research, teaching & innovation, Quality, RPL, Guidance and counselling servies, Adapting study programmes, Diversified student population. Scale 0 to 10.
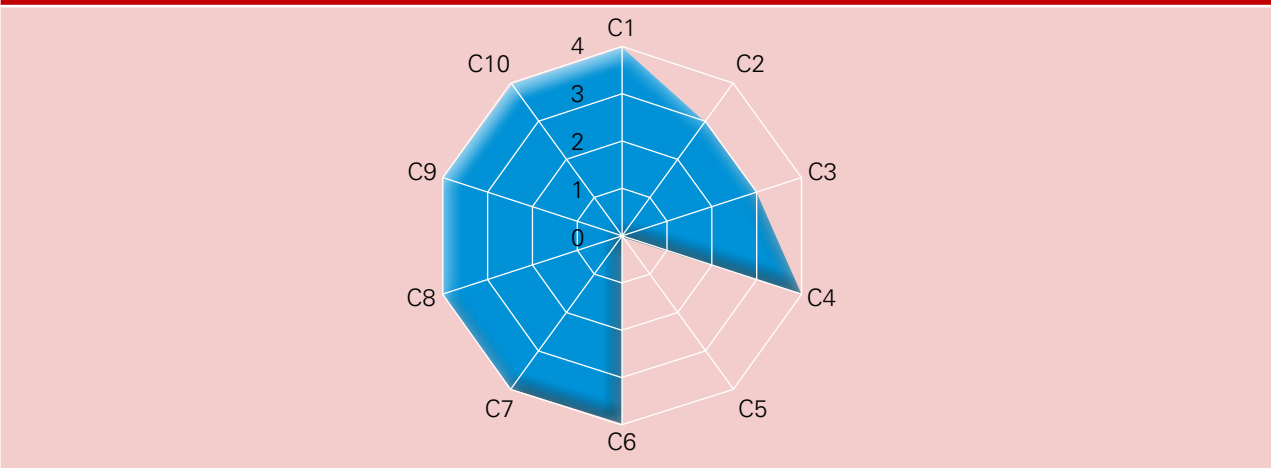
No transversal analysis was made, but common attitudes may be identified: while P4-FR and P5-PT are planning to move forward in several commitments, P8-TR and P12-ES have identified very well some commitments that they intend to develop and others that they do not expect to be likely to move upper in the scale.

7.8. Problems in implementing your LLL-SD strategy framework

What stops you from moving up in the scale?

Two partners did not answer. The topics suggested were:

Things you might consider could include

3 answers were provided: reform of LLL programs, development of ULLL strategy and its connection to mission of the university, and austerity consequences.

Strategy (vision not clear or goals not yet defined)

4 partners marked this topic and 2 explained that, although strategy is very clear, putting strategy into practice would need more cooperation from different participants spread around the university. There is a need to reconsider the presentation of the strategy in LLL and SD of the university.

University Priorities

Innovation and entrepreneurship are seen as measure to keep the social welfare system running and there is not much emphasis on the widening participation as studies are free of charge and social benefits are available for students. Therefore "*the concept of social dimension is used in the strategy as social engagement is seen as a service function*". There is a need to diversification of priorities: Universities priorities are teaching and research. But the 10 C cannot be equally prioritized. Also the economic factor is present and the university priorities are *"not enough clear, mainly because of the budget restrictions and the opportunity to develop a more "business model" for CE to get more incomes. The current direction supports both the necessity of self-founding and social development… it's a challenge for us. We have to focus on the adaptation of programmes, taking the opportunity of the new law of 2014 which create the "personal training account" to modularize the pathways."*. Another identified obstacle is the lack of population that goes against the willingness to attract more NTS.

Organisational barriers

2 partners marked this topic as an obstacle and 5 explained why. These barriers are due to different factors: (1) HR, as communication does not happen or is difficult, and "*changes in the staff members brings different perspectives into highlight*"; "*Generational barriers and much of elitism and academic 'ivory tower'*"; Low ICT skills "*(referring to the use of Open Distance Learning, Intranet, Social Media, etc.)*"; (2) Pedagogical organisation of programmes lacks flexibility and modularisation is not used as frequently as needed. This may be overcome strengthening the "*research valorisation and knowledge transfer*"; (3) Diversified student population, as "*there are structural barriers towards more flexible access*"; (4) Institutional leadership *vs* faculties autonomy.

Staff Attitudes / Internal communication processes

"*Social engagement is seen as a task of a specialised unit.*" The model of professional career management is based on research activities only so teachers are not available/interested even in acquiring the necessary pedagogical skills for adult education. "*Communication has to be enhanced at internal level*" and intra

university interaction is limited. For external communication "*a new office dedicated to external partnership and networking…*"was recently created.

Finance

Only one partner has "*not real budget problems… up to now…*" In the majority of the partners (9; 98.6%) marked "Finance" as an obstacle) "*there is a lack of financing tools*", so it is "*a major problem*". The strategic aims may be funded and embedded in the functionalities of the faculties, departments and external units and priority has to be maintenance and enhancement of quality of provision as in the current economic climate, HEIs have had to endure budget cuts for a number of years.

"*The experience of the university over several decades of supporting the SD through outreach work with schools and communities in disadvantaged areas shows that students from non-traditional backgrounds need support in order for them to succeed (e.g. Access). P7-IE has had to raise additional external funds towards this end. The university would like to expand opportunities to adults to engage in adult learning but currently such students have to pay full-fees; this situation creates a barrier towards their participation.*"

"*When it comes to the ULLL, it is an activity that has to be self-funded and receives no additional funding from university system.*" *(P12-ES)*

Other factors

As for other factors, the lack of "*concern for the necessity to develop ULLL*", legislation that is not SD supportive and no weight on the universities ranking, were the three aspects mentioned.

119

7.9. Transversal Analysis' overview

Tool 3 was used by most of the partners (67%) during the visits. Due to the structure of the Tool the partners' answers were not always in line with expectations, which caused some difficulties in the analysis namely concerning: **(i)** an effective **final version** of Tool 3 fulfilled by the partner; **(ii)** an **individual/ institutional/student level analysis**, as there is no uniformity on the respondents' profiles nor a clear identification of the respondents.

More specifically:

i.   *Moment of partner tool report upload* - there is some difficulty to determine, in some partners, if the version that was uploaded was really the final.

ii. *Different actors' contributions and which* - 5 (41.7%) partners marked the respondent profile on the tool; 9 (75%) presented a summary of the discussion with different non-identified respondents; 1 (8%) presented the answers of each respondent, not identifying them. One case was answered as applied to a Master Degree in Science Education, not to the University (due to similarity of the aims and tools with ALLUME project), but with the perspective of 3 different actors whose profile was indicated. Also it is not clear enough if the answers were gathered collectively or individually, in many cases.

iii. *Implementation level* - One partner did not give a value for the degree of implementation, although they used Tool 3 during the visit and one fulfilled a spider gram where it is possible to read the ranking. One partner used a 10 point scale (although also converted to the 5 levels proposed). Only one partner provided the score attributed before and after the visit, with variation interval.

iv. *Spider Diagram/Grid* - the use of the spider diagram reveals confusing: two partners did not provide any spider diagram; 11 (91.7%) presented a state-of the art spider diagram; 3 (25%) used the matrix and the spider diagrams; 9 (76%) did not use the matrix; 4 (33.3%) gave a future spider diagram, and for the remaining 8 (66.7%) it is not possible to say if they did as, apparently, only the example provided shows in the Tool. There may be problems of software compatibility that represent an obstacle to the upload of the XLS graph into the Word document.

Also, the Tool's length was easily noted, as when moving through each report the "density" of answers decreases, both in content and length. Last sections are often very scarce in information.

The first partner to apply Tool 3 clearly did not understand the tool, its structure or its aim. Nevertheless, the tool was completely answered and the good practices are a reflection of the illustrations provided. This last finding is transversal to 60% of the partners' reports.

A transversal reading of the data allows for the following conclusions: the **appropriation of the EUA LLL Charter by the HEIs has an average value** (over the 12 partners) of **2.3** in a 0 to 4 level scale, ranging from 1.4 to 3.1, with a distribution that is not normal. **Different levels of appropriation of Lifelong Learning can be found,** reflecting different LLL/SD involvement degrees and realities in HEIs that are also geographically disperse in Europe. **Things are moving but at different velocities**.

Since the ten commitments were effectively illustrated with good practices directed towards the Social Dimension (Universities' their mission) it can be said that **although universities are really investing in these strands, there is still a way to go to fully embed them in HEIs daily-life**.

The commitments that show a **higher degree of appropriation** are related to **providing appropriate guidance and counselling services, embedding of LLL in the institutional strategies, developing partnerships at the local, regional, national and international level,** and **providing education and learning to a diversified student population**. In the opposite direction, **acting as a role model** and **RPL** score the **lowest.**

This seems contradictory as one might consider that RPL, as part of the HEIs strategy, would be a key way to diversify the students' population. Instead, in average, HEIs seem to prefer to invest in counselling and guidance. Also, the fact that **acting as a role model** is the last but one commitment appropriated may indicate that **Universities are more concerned with moving on than with the image they transmit to other LLL institutions.**

HEIs are **engaged** in **embracing a quality culture** and **strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation** to **adapt study programmes to widen participation and attract returning adult learners**, to ensure that they are designed to **consolidating reforms to promote creative learning environment for all students.**

Very good examples of good practices are identified and presented, usually originating in the HEIs that score higher while, at the same time, they exhibit a higher notion of the so much more that can be done. A common denominator in the findings is that **HEIs that produce very good practices and evidence wider and longer experience and LLL/SD appropriation are also the same that identify the most pertinent obstacles.**

It is frequently found that obstacles are identified when respondents are looking for examples of good practices. The choice was to compile them aside but within each commitment, as it is not the purpose of the report, but may be basis for recommendations.

There are three main cases that give very good HEI good practices examples: P3-FI, P4-FR and P7-IE. Remarkably in all three cases the scores are not as high as in other HEIs where the implementation degree is obviously lower, and in all their answers the awareness that they "might do better" can be found. A fourth case - P2-BE - reporting not on the HE but on a particular program, meets the standards of the first three. P12-ES presents evidence of high dynamics and pro-activity towards LLL and SD. Three (25%) partners (P6-DE, P11-RO and P10-GD) do not provide examples of good practices, but, on the other hand, the last two are between the few (4; 33%) that effectively identify the profile of the respondents on the tool.

Nevertheless, when each partner's main respondent was asked **to provide other good practices besides the ones illustrated under the 10C umbrella,** they were put forward.

This fact may confirm that the "easy way" – to replicate some illustrations for each commitment when they happen – was followed, as expected, but there are indeed other very good "good practices" and the respondents made the necessary extra effort to meet the demand. **Very interesting examples were produced**, so they were fully transposed and included in the report.

The differences in the 10C' ranking by the different respondents from each partner reflect the cases where discussion happened and the degree of diversity of respondents involved. It is not possible to speak of a statistical correlation, due to sample dimension but, in fact, a convergence of situations can be identified. They were very useful to identify **internal constraints such as lack of internal communication**, as **there is evidence of a different perception of the same commitment by respondents of different profiles.**

The spider diagrams did not prove to be very easy to use probably due to software incompatibilities. It was possible to obtain the *status quo* from the ranking of the commitments by each partner, thus picturing the **very different degrees of appropriation of the 10C**. The grid was only used by 3 partners, with no comments, and it was not used for the future scenario, but even though common trends may be identified in the area of development (commitments 6 (the strongest), 3, 4, 9 and 10 are common) and in the quality area (commitments 2 (the strongest), 1, 3 and 7 are common). So efforts are being made in the **development of a quality culture and the provision of education to a diversified student population is already working well**.

We have **very little information regarding the next move that HEIs intend to take towards a future scenario,** as only four partners gave their perspective. However, two different orientations can be identified in the 4 answers: the two universities that already score higher on the 10C' appropriation intend to equally move forward in different commitments thus acting in a continuum throughout the 10Cs, while the two that score lower in the appropriation are focused in preferentially developing very well defined commitments, in a quantified approach. Again diversity and identity emerge.

Prioritising the 10C on the SD perspective gives a mosaic: only two HEIs attribute the same importance to the same commitments, with the same priority order, and even in this case it happens only for the three first priorities. Two partners did not answer. The "pancake" graph for each commitment may allow to understand the **diversity of priorities towards LLL/SD**, through the different intensity of the colour. Despite the diversity, "*strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation from a Lifelong Learning perspective" is the stronger priority for HEIs when considering a Social Dimension perspective*. Embedding concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in their institutional strategies is the second priority intrinsically linked with guidance and counselling and with the provision of education to a diversified student population. **The two second main priorities are also two of the highest appropriated commitments.**

These **results** are consistent with the answers to part A, and **emphasise the fact that acting as a role model is definitely not a priority for the COMMIT partners' HEIs, nor is RPL**.

It is worth to notice that **developing partnerships at the local, regional, national and international level is a lower priority when SD is concerned**. We have to relate this finding with the fact that **it is one of the highest appropriated commitments**. So maybe it is not a priority associated with the SD because there is the feeling that it is being taken care of. However, **one of the obstacles** to move up on the benchmarking against the EU Chart **is that University priorities are not clear** and the strategy needs further engagement either through clarification of the vision or internal cooperation. This again seems to reflect the HEIs diversity of realities as not only the embedding of concepts associated with LLL and SD in the HEIs' strategy is highly valued and appropriated, as it is an obstacle when not clear. The two realities exist among the partners.

Other obstacles to improvement emphasise those already identified in the answers to the commitments. **Funding is the main problem (67%)** although one partner does not feel it ("*up to now....*"). **Organisational barriers** are present, mainly the **(internal) communication** process and efficiency. Pedagogical organisation and structural barriers (for instance institutional leadership *vs* departments' autonomy) towards more flexible access also exist, and *"**Social engagement is seen as a task of a specialised unit**"* within the University.

7.10. Concluding reflections - "Nourishment for thinking"

The COMMIT partners are 11 comprehensive universities, and 1 technical university, all public (one under private law) and modern universities (3 were established earlier than the XX century)[11]. Only one of these HEIs is located in its country capital. If, due to its dimension and profile, the set cannot be considered an EU representative sample, it however mirrors HEIs existing in Europe.[12]

These Universities already embedded concepts of widening access and LLL in their institutional strategies and are providing appropriate guidance and counselling services to the diversified student population whose education and learning they are providing for. Their programmes are attractive and relevant as they originate in partnerships developed at the local, regional, national and international level. The Social Dimension of LLL is therefore intrinsically embedded in these Universities' practices.

Their main priority is now strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation from a SD Lifelong Learning perspective, enhancing university's essence. At the same time and revealing awareness and consistency of performance, they will continue the LLL institutional strategy of widening access, diversifying the student population they are determined to guide and counsel in their educational and learning trajectory. These priorities result from each HEI own orientations and beliefs. Being a role model is not at all a main concern also in a SD perspective.

Each and every University identifies strengths and weaknesses, obstacles and enablers, to the strategizing process needed. Common factors can be identified, such as funding difficulties, lack of internal communication and the fundamental and determining consequences of the leadership options, as well as other institutionally specific elements. Data from each HEI have significant impact on the overall picture.

Therefore, a (policy) recommendation emerges (again) from these readings: although common directives must exist, each and every HEI voice has to be heard for preserving and respecting universities' identity, since diversity does not prevent the pursuit of common objectives. On the contrary: it fosters success.

---

[11] Based on the fact sheet analysis performed.
[12] European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015. *The European Higher Education Area in 2015: Bologna Process Implementation Report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. ISBN 978-92-9201-851-1. doi:10.2797/99035.

8. Feasibility study of Tool 4 - Monitoring Attainment

8.1. Context and scope of the COMMIT tool 4

The COMMIT project intends to describe and define more clearly what is involved in the social dimension of HE, promoting strategies for a more comprehensive approach to LLL and to monitoring not just participation but also attainment levels.

In a first step, a new tool – Tool 4 – has been designed and tested by all the COMMIT partners starting from July 2014. The second step has led us to produce a feasibility report based on:

– The synthesis of the users' feedback collected in the visit reports (from both experts and visited partners) and the evaluation questionnaire collected during the summer 2015.

– The transversal analysis of the 12 "tool 4 questionnaires" filled by the partners.

This report draws some conclusions on the opportunity of the wider use of Tool 4 at national or European level. It is also an opportunity to correct and improve the tool according to the comments collected.

Although national definitions of underrepresented societal groups vary from country to country, there are important points of convergence in priorities and approaches. It is clear that defining and identifying underrepresented groups is an issue that needs to be examined and understood in relation to each country's specific socio economic and cultural context. COMMIT has involved 5 countries with a good track record of attainment (BE, FI, FR, ES, IE), above the European average according to "Eurostat" [13] data, and 7 countries that have more work to do to reach the 2020 targets – RO, DE, DR, HU, IT, PT and TR.

Universities enrol students with various profiles and must adapt to this diversity, but sometimes have not the organisational or financial means to adapt to this new role. The COMMIT working group has designed this tool because it can provide an insight into different practices used in Universities and could facilitate the exchange of good practices, in addition to represent a tool for self-analysis for Universities that would like to implement the social dimension at different stages: enrolment, during studies, at the end of graduation and after graduation.

How do universities support non-traditional students?

The social dimension includes all provisions needed for granting equal access, progress and completion within higher education. Access to higher education includes opportunities development and implementation of "well-being" conditions for students, establishing schemes aiming to improve the efficiency of academic work for opportunities of student success during studies, with special attention to underprivileged groups, employability of graduates, etc. We need to point out that the Monitoring Attainment Tool does not focus on other types of well-being conditions for students, such as those related to accommodation, catering, etc.

The Monitoring Attainment Tool is based on the pure/narrow/focused concept of social dimension (essentially "underrepresented groups"). This is quite different from the wider concept where the various activities of social engagement are included in the concept (covering many forms of Continuing professional development (CPD), etc.).

In an age where lifelong learning is becoming a necessity to enable not only the workforce to be competitive in a global market, but also personal growth through learning as a basic human need, maintaining traditional approaches to admission, recognition and completion appears to be a high risk strategy. In most places,

---

[13] http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database (Europe 2020 indicators, Headline indicators-Education)

tracking does not include or does not identify lifelong learners. Lifelong learners are included in mainstream tracking; they may not be distinguishable in the data collection. It will thus be sometime difficult to interpret the data with a view to understanding their particular needs and condition.

Methodology

Given the definition of social dimension on which we have agreed[14], the working group has looked for data and indicators to monitor the different facets of SD.

- Access to HE

- Social mobility

- Affordability

- Equality and equity

- Diversity

- Minorities

- Student centred learning

- Accessibility

- Student support services

- Support during the studies and completion rate

Questions included in Tool 4 have been adapted as a result of the analysis and outcomes of the first survey, and the comments made by COMMIT partners during the full partners meeting held in November 2015. P4-FR has then drafted a revised version of Tool 4 based on the feedback received on the use of the draft Tool 4 by the 12 partner universities of COMMIT project.

8.2. SWOT Analysis of tool 4

Strengths

The general impression of the users is "globally positive".

This tool is considered helpful and rich enough to reflect on the social dimension of ULLL.

It "forces" universities to keep track of a number of very important indicators, to measure not only the Social Dimension, but also the development of universities as Higher Education institutions. Here are some impressions:

- The tool provides information for application of new teaching approaches for LLL such as

  - Teaching goals/desired learning outcomes
  - Subject matter/content

---

[14] The Council of the European Union delivered specific conclusions on the social dimension (SD) of higher education in a communication published in May 2013 [2]. This document focuses on all aspects of SD including LLL. We note specifically these two affirmations and we agree that they are relevant with our vision of SD:
"*While the challenges facing Europe today cannot be resolved by education and training alone, it is critical both in economic and social terms **to equip people with the high-level skills and competences** that Europe needs, including by striving to secure **more equitable access to, participation in** and **completion** of higher education. There are still too many capable individuals who do not participate in higher education for **social, cultural or economic reasons** or due to **insufficient systems of support and guidance.** *"
"*In parallel with efforts to improve skills through vocational education and training, high-quality higher education and lifelong learning also have a crucial role to play in **enhancing employability and increasing competitiveness**, while at the same time promoting **the personal and professional development of students and graduates, and stimulating social solidarity and civic engagement.** *"

- Student characteristics, like prior knowledge, motivation, culture, etc.
- Teacher pedagogical expertise,
- Time, room, size of the group,
- Others

- It identifies permanent arrangements of Universities on SD

- The tool provides insights into the financial arrangements that Universities have to take into account for LLL

Weaknesses

- The length of the tool was excessive and there were unclear questions

Opportunities offered by the tool

- The Universities could establish a central SD unit for all their Departments

- The Tool in a revised manner could be used by all Universities

- It can offer opportunities to groups of Universities to present common reports on SD either to the press or on a website, blog, wiki, etc.

- It can lead to an urgent reconsideration of the evaluation of non-formal learning

125

Threats of using the tool

- The replies given, in many cases, do not provide information for the whole institution.

This report reviews the main options for developing a suitable methodology (tool) for identifying and analysing universities' approaches to the implementation of the social dimension in their institutions. It identifies which kind of questions can meaningfully be asked and answered and in particular the potential methodological approaches that might be adopted.

As part of this review, we provide a brief commentary on existing work and what additional research could potentially be added. At the end of the report we propose some options for work, which could be undertaken in future.

The Call asked us to identify whether it was possible to develop a tool for studying social dimension. Our qualified conclusion at this stage is *'yes, this can be done'* but the issue certainly needs further discussion and investigation.

8.3. Main positive finding and issues after the use of the tool

We definitely consider the tool useful to monitor what already exists in the university and to understand the potential achievements of a SD strategizing process. The only doubt is: what will be the use of these data? In the perspective of extending the use of the tool to other universities, is it useful to maintain all the questions? We must justify it.

It is open to debate whether the considerable amount of data collected through the tool is necessary, since not all HEIs collect the whole range of data.

8.4. Specific topics, their difficulties and solutions and options to adapt the tool

The tool has to be customised to each specific situation.

Guidelines (instructions for use) should be provided for Universities to answer the questionnaire.

Please note that various references are made under this heading to the TRACKIT project report which apparently confirms the findings and discusses the difficulties of collecting such data:

European University Association (EUA), 2012, Tracking Learners and Graduates' Progression Paths – TRACKIT, by Gaebel, M., Hauschildt, K., Mühleck, K., and Smidt, H. (Brussels, EUA).

http://www.eua.be/Libraries/Publications_homepage_list/EUA_Trackit_web.sflb.ashx

Another report was also used:

Trends 2015: Learning and teaching in European Universities. EUA publication 2015, Andrée Sursok

http://eua.be/Libraries/higher-education/trends-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=0

Topic	Difficulties/problems/issues	Solutions and improvements of the tool
New version of the tool: Better arrange category of learners who are target groups of social dimension	The categories are very similar	Those categories can be put together to make one category.
Target group of the measure to implement equality in HE	Not precise enough	It was proposed to set up a list of common basic criteria that universities need to comply with when filling in the tool, leaving them free to customise other aspects of the tool.
Kind of students, kind of learners	Categories are very numerous and can be better put in order	Propose a clear and complete list of candidate profiles with a common application form adapted to all universities. Institutions do not collect information on the number of students who are working while studying. Many full time students are *de facto* part time. The definition of part time students vary considerably across Europe. Provide definitions of students with disabilities, mature students, etc., because those definitions vary across Europe. We must add as well international students that come to study through Erasmus programme for example (they have specific needs).
Lifelong learners	Lifelong learners are included in mainstream tracking, they may not be distinguishable in the data collection. It will thus be difficult to interpret the data with a view to understanding their particular needs and condition.	Ask universities directly in the questionnaire if they collect information about lifelong learners separately. Underline that tracking lifelong learners can help to highlight their specific needs and challenges.

Topic	Difficulties/problems/ issues	Solutions and improvements of the tool
Typology of arrangements and support for learners	The typology has to be precise and classified in different categories. The tool looks at a number of dimensions, which might be better organized under separate categories. For each kind of learner, are specific arrangements offered? This question is not precise enough.	The tool looks at a number of dimensions, which might be better organized under separate categories. For instance, one might be *Student Support Services*, and it could include leaflets, reception, disability support, childcare, financial support, etc. Another could specifically address *RPL and VNIL*, but also *access and progression* (which do not seem to be taken into account). The third category could examine *andragogic/pedagogical methods and supports*. Institutions offer a range of services and activities to support entry into the labour market (some of these are centralised and others are faculty based: centralised services and activities (career guidance…) Faculty based services tend to focus on integrating entrepreneurship into curricula and offering external mentoring opportunities. Precise the goal: for each kind of learner, are specific arrangement offered to widen access or to favour equity of access?
New version of the tool Propose to design a LimeSurvey (Free open source software survey tool on the web)	Some universities cannot answer very specific questions because they do not address issues for some target groups and do not implement specific policy towards them.	The first section: defining the monitoring system of the institution can be mandatory to fill in, but the following section can be filled in only if questions are adapted to the case of the University.
Use of the tool	Difficult and not adapted to a variety of situations.	The tool must be customised to each situation. Guidelines (instructions for use) should be provided for universities to answer the questionnaire. A cartography of university social dimension based on the social dimension matrix will be provided. Concrete examples for each situations and concrete measures implemented by COMMIT partners will be provided with the questionnaire.
Data/info collection	Not defined enough. If student success is founded upon good student support, it also requires good data collection in order to understand patterns of student success and how the institutions can address weaknesses in this area.	There is a necessity to limit the scope of the data collection. The tool could suggest a set of minimum data to be collected in order to develop or improve the strategy.
Availability of data	Which kind of data? At which stage of the monitoring?	Specify the different stages when universities monitor social dimension: access to universities (enrolment)/ Retention/ Success.

127

Topic	Difficulties/problems/issues	Solutions and improvements of the tool
Supplementary data	Administrative data are not enough	There is a need of complementary measures such as surveys, questionnaires, etc. There is the need of a question about the methodology used to collect feedback from students (innovative, online survey, role of specific department) 3 types of uses identified: 1. To evaluate the institution and improve some of its aspects (e.g. the study programmes, the learning environment) 2. To evaluate people (academic and administrative staff and students) 3. To improve the interface with society (surveys can help refine student recruitment strategies, adjust curricula to labour market needs and enhance career services) Different kind of surveys can be used: • At entry, on background and expectations of newly enrolled students • Exit survey for dropout students (even if those are not frequent and systematic practice). • After Graduation surveys: strategic purposes (including the improvement of teaching and services), marketing, developing alumni services, communicating with the public (ex: publishing on website), and reporting to government and/or other relevant national/regional authorities • Alumni tracking studies • Surveys on the general student experience Other means to obtain directly feedbacks on social dimension: • Evaluation of teaching Assessment of administrative staff and services • Surveys of postgraduate and doctoral studies • Alumni surveys
Involvement of students in the governance to improve social dimension and to improve their studies conditions	The questionnaire does not include a question about how universities allow their students to get a real input to improve SD.	The question should be: "How do student representatives formally participate in the governance of your institution? (Voting rights, consultative role, membership of committees, or not involved)"
Implementation of social dimension	Some universities do not implement at all social dimension.	The collection of SD real cases should be provided to the universities that will answer the questionnaire, once revised and organized by category.
The area of study	There is an aspect that should be taken into account when comparing different countries: the differences in the size of regions in different countries.	What we mean by region and what structures are equivalent from one country to another may be discussed beforehand.

128

Topic	Difficulties/problems/issues	Solutions and improvements of the tool
Lifelong Learning Strategy	Limited when it comes to the development of a strategy or the planning of future actions. Compared to other categories, lifelong learners seem to be the group with the least support.	Propose study cases by countries. TRACKIT project: "lifelong access to learning for a diverse student body is pivotal. Achieving this goal requires working across all educational levels to ensure a good transition into higher education, offering students a full array of student support services, stressing their engagement via their involvement in governance, volunteer activities in the community, etc., and developing alumni services, including lifelong learning opportunities". "It will be important for governments to review the existing frameworks for lifelong learning and for institutions to re-examine their existing lifelong strategies in order to ensure that they fit the specific demographic and economic situation in each country".
Analyse the data		Add a question on this topic: "Is there a central unit (e.g. - planning department, research unit) which analyses the data collected?"
Students retention	Not much focus on a specific target.	How do universities focus on or analyse people that drop out of their studies? Analyse, during the first year, the student retention and the main reasons for failure and dropout.
Demographic issues	Demographic developments, i.e. immigration and growth of cultural minorities, are intensifying equity issues in some countries that face challenges in making tertiary education accessible to those with immigrant backgrounds or ethnic minorities.	
How European universities are addressing the refugee crisis?		Add a question about refugees and their access to Higher Education.
Purposes of the tool	The benchmarking purpose of the tool is too limited.	Tool 4 must be used as a tool to make stakeholders aware of their situation and force them to think about new paths to follow. They can use the tool as a decision making tool.
Introduction of learning outcomes approach		Add a question about this approach and ask about its effects on courses, learning paths, teaching methods, RPL, examinations.
Purpose of the social dimension monitoring	Purposes are not clear enough	We propose to set a concrete range of goals and each university that will use the tool can choose their case: • Institutional or national quality assurance • Benchmarking performance/ranking • Administrative and statistical purposes • Providing information for current and prospective students and counselling • Allocation of resources to HE institutions (by national bodies) and within HEI (by the institution itself) • Supporting policy planning and the design of HE policy

8.5. In-depth analysis of partners' answers to the first section of the questionnaire

Defining the monitoring system of your institution

The objective of this section is to have a complete view of the monitoring system of the institutions: the type of information collected regularly, the agenda of the monitoring system, the scope, the actors and the purposes of the collect.

7 of the partners out of 12 have filled the questionnaire before the visit and involved other services and department of their Universities in answering the questionnaire. The others have filled it in after the expert visit. Only 2 partners have had a discussion concerning this part of the Tool 4 during the expert visit, as most of the partners have focused on Tool 1 and 3.

All the partners understand globally the questionnaire, but some say that the document needs more clarity and mainly needs specific information from other departments within Universities. 4 partners out of 10 have difficulties to answer, mainly because the data are not collected within their institution. In some institutions, faculties, departments, teachers or student counsellors and tutors have this kind of information but it is for their own use and not systematically collected. One partner who did not have difficulties to answer, underlines that the only obstacle was that the numbers were not available in the same form required by the questionnaire.

All partners think that working on this section has helped them to understand the rest of the questionnaire because this part gives an overview of the data collected at one own institution, so it gives a hint of how the university will perform in the rest of the questionnaire.

Recommendation:

Besides monitoring which data are being collected at the university, the tool could suggest a set of minimum data to be collected in order to develop or improve the strategy. The connection with the SD matrix also has to be considered.

8.6. Transversal Analysis of Section 1

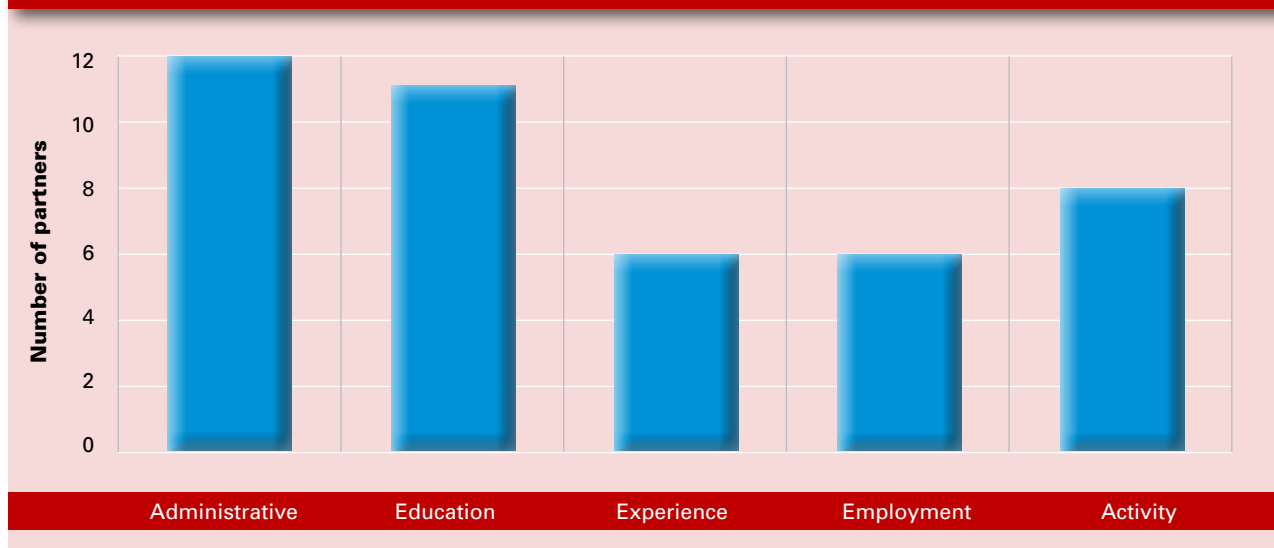*Q 1.1 What information is collected systematically/regularly about LLL?*

The question as such presents some difficulties. First, it is not clear how the terms "regularly" and "systematically" are defined. Secondly, the terms address different dimensions but are used as synonyms. Thirdly, there is a lack of a general agreement about what is meant by LLL. Fourthly, it is difficult to understand how the classification has been established (i.e. what is meant by "activity"). Therefore, the answers are difficult to compare. Our suggestion is to try to use the social dimension matrix for categorisation within this question.

Summary of results:

- All of the partners are collecting administrative data, three of them (P3-FI to P5-PT) also ask for the gender of the participants to their LLL courses / programmes

- All partners are interested in the educational background of their target groups

- Experience is important for P2-BE, P4-FR, P7-IE and P13-HU

- Data concerning the professional life after graduation are only collected by P2-BE, P4-FR, P7-IE and P12-ES

- P3-FI to P5-PT, P7-IE, P9-IT and P11-RO to P13-HU publish the collected data

- Differences observed: some of the universities are collecting data only concerning age, others also concerning gender, educational background and professional life

- Some of the partners aggregate the data, others collect and list them separately.

Figure 21. **Information about LLL**

1.2 What information is collected systematically/regularly about social dimension?

We would again like to emphasize that the exact meaning of "social dimension" is unclear. (For comments on "systematically/regularly" see above.). We found some pieces of information in the answers, which would have to be answered in a separate question, like: "How does the information which is collected differ between the partners?" Otherwise, potential information is lost.

Summary of results:

- The numbers are partly based on the profile of the students (age, place of birth, professional life).

- 3 universities do not collect any information, since entry is not restricted.

For an overview on the type of information collected about the social dimension, we invite you to check the social dimension matrix at Chapter 9.

1.3 At what moment are data collected?

The question does not differentiate between the different categories of data (established in Q1.1). Thus, comparing the results is impossible.

The results are not precise, because sometimes only part of the information is collected. Some of the partners are collecting only the information about lifelong learners, others about the students in regular study programmes, sometimes the data are collected regularly for degree students. There are also some answers like 'sometimes'.

Figure 22. At what moment

Bar chart — Number of partners:
- At entry: 12
- During studies: 11
- At the end: 9
- Later: 9
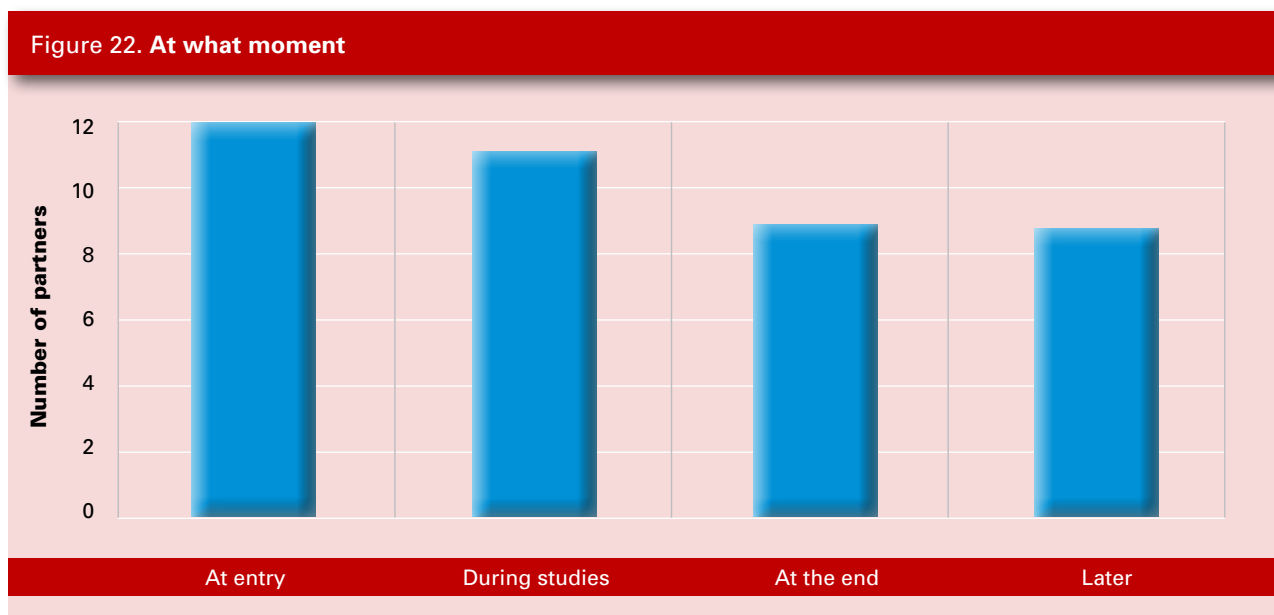
Q 1.3 Is the same information collected about all learners/students?

Summary of results:

- All partners are collecting information about all students; but P3-FI, P10-GR and P12-ES are collecting more data about lifelong learners than about undergraduate students.

- Data are often collected at the beginning without any update during studies.

- Data on employment situation after the studies are assessed occasionally.

- P4-FR and P13-HU are not collecting data about CPD (Continuing professional development).

132

Figure 23. Same Data?

Bar chart — Number of partners:
- Yes: 9
- No: 3
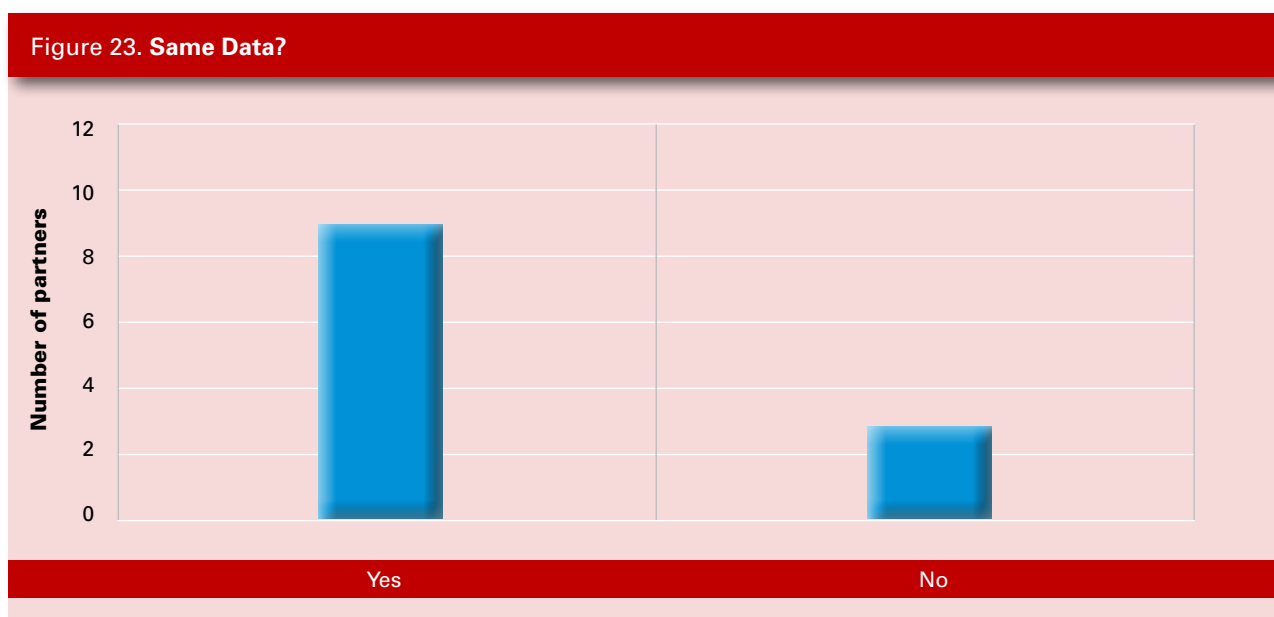
Q 1.4 Who collects this info?

Q4a: Internally (central administration, faculty, LLL unit/centre)

It is unclear what "this info" refers to. In order to receive more specific answers, it would have been better to again relate to the five categories from question one or to the social dimension matrix. The conclusion given in the summary of the first analysis of Tool 4 already includes an interpretation. When information is collected by both the central administration and the LLL unit, it is not possible to conclude that they share the information or even that they collect the same kind of information (one could collect administrative data, the other could collect data on professional experience).

Summary of results:

- P10-IT and P12-ES are the only exceptions since the data are not collected centrally, but by LLL units

- P8-TR has a divided system: depending on the status of the student, data are collected either centrally or by the LLL unit.

Q4b: Externally (ministries, local/regional authorities, stakeholders)

Germany has a federal system. This means that there are ministries at regional level (state ministries) and also ministries at national level. The state ministries have a great autonomy in deciding about the education system, including higher education issues. This is why it is hard for a German partner to answer this question.

Summary of results:

- The only exception is P12-ES: data are collected only regionally, because the entry is supervised at the regional level

- Often data are collected by the ministries (for education, social affairs or employment), which use them for financial or political reasons

- Sometimes there are statistical offices, which are independent from the ministries

- On the regional level the data are (also) collected only by P4 -FR

Q. 1.5 What are the purposes of the various data set?

Q5b Internally – how are the data used?

- P2-BE and P5-PT use the data for financial reasons.

- Some data collected by P2-BE - mainly information regarding the degrees - are requested by the Ministry of Education to determine funding allocations

- Only P3-FI and P12-ES are using them for statistical purposes (concerning disability groups) or for financial management.

- 6 partners are using them to find out more about the students and to adapt their programmes accordingly.

133

Figure 24. **Purposes - Internally**
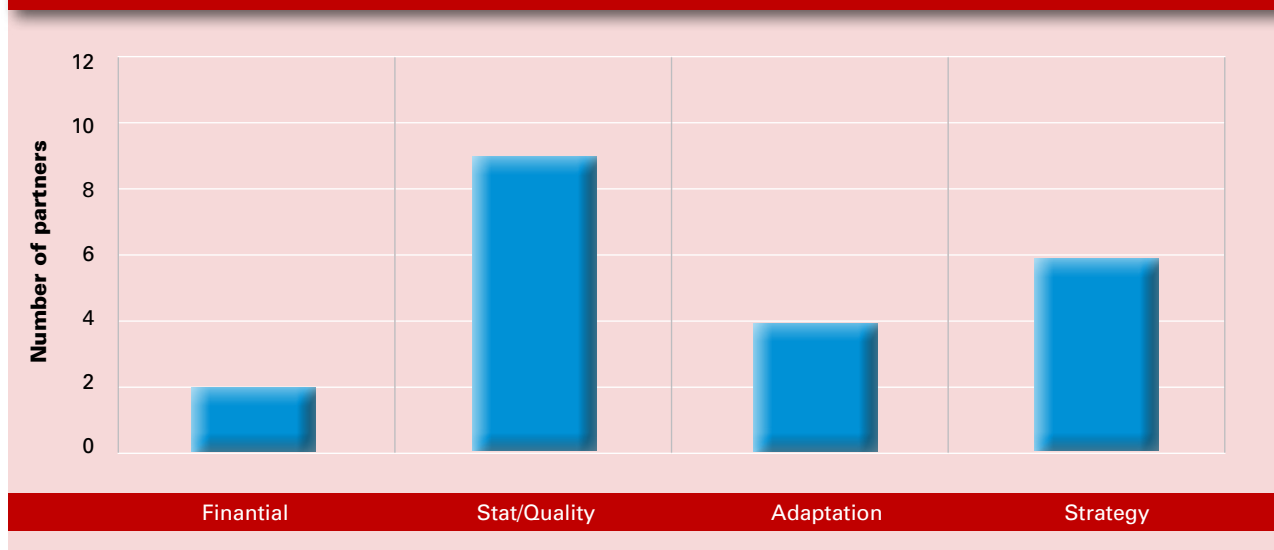
Q5b Externally – how are the data used?

Summary of results:

- P2-BE to P4-FR and P6-DE need the data for distribution of funds between the universities or for the budget etc.

- In 8 universities the data are collected for national studies which are regularly published (concerning equality)

- P9-IT, P4-FR and P13-HU are using the data for the ranking of universities or other institutions offering LLL at national level

- P13-HU are also part of a European comparison

- For P2-BE the data are especially important for the ranking

Figure 25. **Purposes - Externally**

134
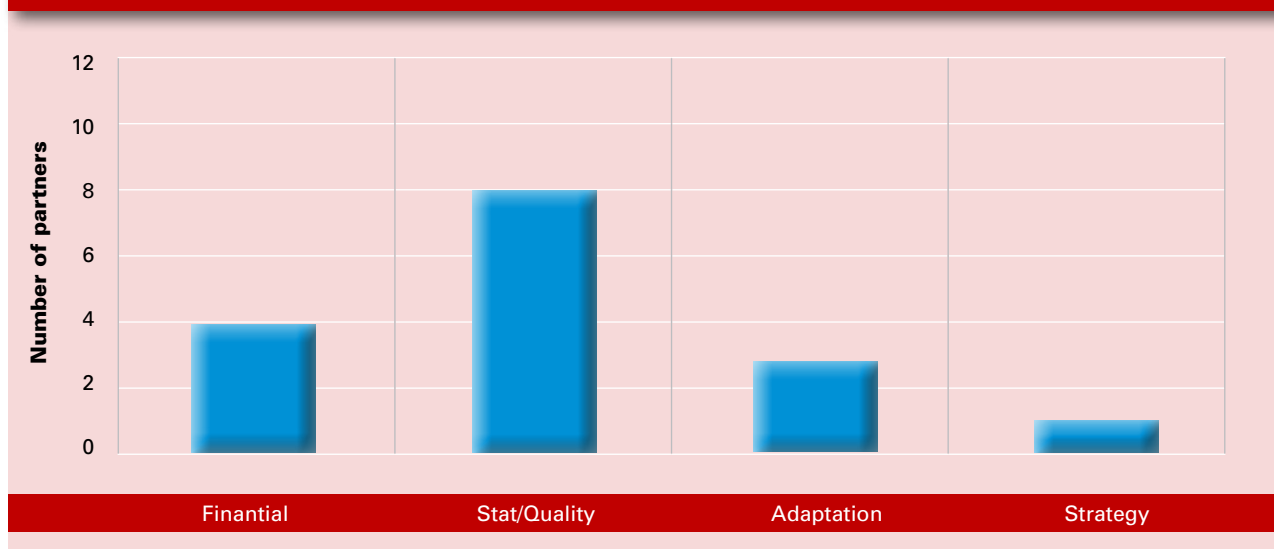
9. Social Dimension Matrix

Social dimension (SD) of University Lifelong Learning (ULLL)

The European Commission decided to put a greater focus on a construct we know from companies, called "Corporate Social Responsibility", meaning a concept and activities that support social, ecological and economical sustainability. Some Universities already adopted this concept, which can be called "University Social Responsibility" and is now becoming important for European knowledge based societies.

For the COMMIT Project, the social dimension of University Lifelong Learning was defined as located on two dimensions: the individual and the collective. The goals on the individual level are to provide a **socially just access, retention and success** for students, lifelong learners and also for university staff. On the collective dimension the goal is to transfer relevant academic knowledge to society and enable groups of people inside and outside university **to build and develop** an ecologically, socially and economically sustainable society.

In the beginning of the project, a top-down approach was chosen to define SD for universities. The first matrix was used to explain the construct to the participating people in the visited universities. This helped partners to design the tool and participants to work with the tools. After the transversal analysis of the tools, plenty of examples form the 12 partner universities were available. Therefore, the SD concept was revised and simplified, taking its current shape:

	Social dimension	Aspects of SD in ULLL	Clusters of Examples
SUSTAINABILITY	**1** **Social Justice** (individual dimension)	1. Access	1a) traditional students and non-traditional students 1b) non-traditional students 1c) VPL/RPL policies and processes
		2. Retention	2a) Academic support for student and staff 2b) guidance and counselling 2c) innovative Teaching and Learning
		3. Success	
	2 **Social Development** (collective dimension)	4. Engagement active citizenship	4a) Outreach activities 4b) Internal (also research) activities 4c) cross institutional activities
		5. Cultural activities	
		6. Social and Regional collaborations	6a) NGO's 6b) Companies (Partnerships)

The clusters of examples emerged from the partners, when they filled in the tools and were grouped and given a title. The collection of examples is in the annex of the technical report.

This revised version of the SD matrix is systemized a little differently than the clusters that emerged through the examples. One difference is that the first cluster "Access Strategies, Initiatives, Services" can be seen as an aspect of the SD. So we used it as one aspect of the matrix and sorted the examples in this cluster differently. We sorted the corresponding examples in "good access for regular / traditional students" and "access for non-traditional students". This is why this first cluster from the examples collection was "transferred" into the theoretical frame.

The same is true for the cluster Local / Regional Collaborations. We think, that this is also an Aspect of the SD-frame and that the examples within this cluster can be sorted into Example-Clusters "Collaboration with NGO's" and "Collaborations with Companies".

The cluster "Social Responsibility / Social Dimension" is the headline for the matrix itself, at least we perceived it as such. We thought that the concrete examples could be sorted into other clusters.

The cluster "Data collection and indicators" does not fit into the matrix at all, because these are examples for research on the SD of ULLL and they can be positioned in any of the dimensions of the matrix. If we collect data e.g. to find out about the success of the students, this is an activity that does not help students to succeed, but it evaluates our activities. So, depending on what is collected, evaluated and researched, the examples could be sorted into one or the other cluster.

The last cluster "partnerships" is divided into two clusters in the matrix 6 a) and b).

This matrix, along with the collected examples in the Annex 2 of this report, can make a contribution to social justice and social development of our societies, and it might help universities to get some ideas and systematise them within the given frame.
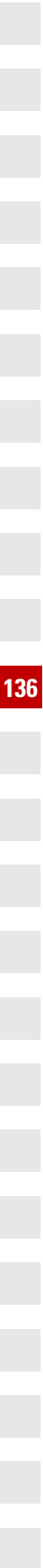
10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdul Kadir, N. (2012). *Strategy management process in higher education: a case study on a Malaysian public university* (Doctoral dissertation, University of East Anglia).

ALLUME (2011a), Pathways and Policies for Lifelong Learning Universities – Recommendations. de Viron, F., Feutrie, M., Filloque, J-M., (2011), Published by **eucen** in December 2011, http://www.eucen.eu

ALLUME (2011b), Tools and Methods, de Viron, F., Feutrie, M., Filloque, J-M., (2011).on line http://www.eucen.eu

Bidwell, C. E. (1965). The School as a Formal Organisation. In J. G. March (Ed.), *The Handbook of Organisation.* Chicago: Rand McNally.

Buckland, R. (2009). Private and Public Sector Models for Strategies in Universities, *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 20, 524–536 (2009)

Cohen, M., & March, J. (1974). *Leadership and Ambiguity.* New York: Mc Graw Hill.

Cohen, M., March, J., & Olsen, J. (1972). A Garbage Can Model of Organisational Choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17 (1), 1-25.

Dahan, A. (2015). Autonomie des universitaires, autonomie des universités. Retour et réflexions sur un concept réifié dans les travaux sur l enseignement supérieur, *Cahier du GIRSEF (UCL)*, 102.

Elwood, L. P. and V. M. Leyden (2000). 'Strategic Planning and Cultural Considerations in Tertiary Education Systems: The Irish case', *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research,* 44**,** pp. 307-323.

Friedberg, E., & Musselin, C. (1989). *En quête d universités.* Paris: L'Harmattan.

Fumasoli, T. and B. Lepori (2011). 'Patterns of strategies in Swiss higher education institutions', *High Educ,* 61**,** pp. 157-178.

Holdaway, E. A. and J. P. Meekison (1990). 'Strategic Planning at a Canadian University', *Long Range Planning,* 23**,** pp. 104-113.

Jarzabkowski, P., Giulietti, M., Oliveira, B., & Amoo, N. (2012). "We Don't Need No Education"—Or Do We? Management Education and Alumni Adoption of Strategy Tools. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 1056492612460588.

Johnson, G., Whittington, R., & Scholes, K. (2011). *Exploring strategy: Text & Case*, Ninth Edition. Prentice Hall.Pearson.

Mintzberg, H. (1982). *Structure et dynamique des organisations*. Paris: Les Editions d'Organisation.

Musselin, C. (1996). Organized anarchies: a reconsideration of research strategies. In M. e. Warglien, *The Logic of Organisational Disorder* (pp. 55-72). Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Olsen, J. (1976). Choice in Organized Anarchy. In J. March, & J. Olsen, *Ambiguity and Choice in Organisations.* Bergen: Universitetforlaget.

Pidcock, S. (2001). 'Strategic Planning in a New University ', *Journal of Further and Higher Education,* 25**,** pp. 67-83.

Thomas, R. (1980). 'Corporate Strategic Planning in a University', *Long Range Planning,* 13**,** pp. 70-78.

Weick, K. (1976). Educational Organisations as Loosely Coupled Systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21, 1-19.

Whittington, R. (2003) 'The work of strategizing and organizing: for a practice perspective', *Strategic Organisation*, 1(1): 117-125

Yin, R. (1989) '*Case study research: Design and methods'* (Rev. Ed.), Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing.

137

11. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 – Table of reference for COMMIT partners

TABLE OF REFERENCE		
Full name	**Acronym**	**Reference in the report**
European University Continuing Education Network	**eucen**	P1-BE
Université Catholique de Louvain	UCL	P2-BE
Turun yliopisto University of Turku	UTU	P3-FI
Université de Bretagne Occidentale	UBO	P4-FR
Universidade de Aveiro	UA	P5-PT
Universität Stuttgart	US	P6-DE
Dublin City University	DCU	P7-IE
Bogaziçi University	BU	P8-TR
University of Genoa	Unige	P9-IT
Panepistimio Ioanninon	UOI	P10-GR
Universitatea Tehnica "Gheorghe Asachi" din Iasi	TUIASI	P11-RO
Universitat Rovira I Virgili	URV	P12-ES
Pécsi Tudományegyetem	PTE	P13-HU

138

ANNEX 2 – Real examples of university social dimension practices

Social justice (individual dimension)

1. Access

1a) Traditional students and non-traditional students

- Free entry and studies free of charges (UTU)

- Access for all with very low fees (UBO)

- Possibility of free attendance to regular courses or non-degree programmes (called University diplomas, mainly in medicine). (UBO)

1b) Non-traditional students

- Access to no-fee single courses, or to Campus facilities for non-university people, or to events open to the society/public. (UBO)

- Dedicated access service for students in particular from under-represented groups (DCU)

- Dedicated Access Office engages in an extensive programme of outreach activities in areas of multiple deprivation (DCU)

- The theme of widening access features prominently in the DCU strategic plan. DCU pioneered in Ireland the first Access programme aimed at encouraging young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to consider entering higher education. (DCU)

- The University has a widening access agenda (UA)

- Free access to courses or other University services offered to externals (UBO)

- Brittany Open Campus (UBO)

- Open University for everyone (UTU)

- Social justice among the university values, implemented through free or very low-fees studies (UTU, UBO)

- External funding to provide language and employability training to migrants. (UTU)

- "Tailor-made" training courses for under-represented categories of students (URV)

- "On demand short courses", organized by the university and which are pure "adapted study programs". They have concerned more than 4500 people in 2013. (UBO)

- Language and employability training for migrants. (UTU)

- Access for non-traditional students through dedicated gateways. (UA)

- Taylor-made training courses, ECTS labelled, for groups of underrepresented or non-traditional students to access university. (URV)

- Classes for the elderly. (URV)

- Administrative and academic procedures approved in order to support the integration of non-traditional students (UA)

- Standards existing for adult learners and University teachers (US)

- One of the university missions is to build an inclusive society. To this end, it aims to encourage the inclusion of individuals without distinction of origin, social background and health condition (BU.

- Dedicated offices for responding to the needs of "non-traditional" students of different kinds: Access Office, Student Support and Development, Disability office, DCU in the community, Intergenerational Learning Programme (ILP), Open Education Unit, International office. (DCU)

- Closer relationships with unemployed or disadvantaged people in some faculties or some certificates (UCL)

- Several national and international research projects have been developed on non-traditional students and produced information on the students' profiles, needs and perspectives, as well as recommendations and tools. (UA)

- Existence of a central office for non-traditional students (senior citizens, adult learners, working professionals, etc.), and other smaller offices in some faculties (UBO)

- Provision of degree studies on adapted schedule for professionals (UCL)

- Identification of educational needs of adult professionals looking for CPD or Master Degrees (UCL)

- No offer of special degree programs for enterprises, but variety of enterprises' attending continuous education courses. (UTU).

- 'Student Help Service' for whoever (foreigner, adult, disabled people, etc.) wants to integrate a bachelor or master program (UCL)

139

1c) VPL/RPL policies and processes

- Complete system for VNFIL (VAE, validation of non-formal and informal learning) since a few years and new European funds obtained in order to consolidate it. The public is composed of students having a quite long professional career and one objective will be to invest in new ways of welcoming this public. (UCL)

- RPL policy and faculty-level practices. RPL is highlighted in the university strategy as means for LLL. (UTU)

- VNIL procedures (several universities)

- Complete RPL procedure (up to doctorate degree) available for all degrees. (UBO)

- Availability of VNIL for foreign languages (UOI)

- VNIL procedures for foreign languages. (UOI)

- Integration of recognition of prior learning policies and practices. (UTU)

- Organisation of a Master for Tutor about the certification of skills and the recognition of prior learning. (Unige)

- Accessibility of information: website as the main portal to obtain information and help about the VNFIL (VAE) system and about each faculty programmes; dedicated staff for guiding candidates. (UCL)

2. Retention

2a) Academic supports for students and staff

- Staff development courses for administrative staff. (US)

- Language courses for international students. (UOI)

- Mentoring programme for graduates. (UTU)

- Special academic support services such as in mathematics and academic writing. (DCU)

- Organisation of a Master to train tutors in the certification of skills and the recognition of prior learning. (Unige)

- Courses for employees, particularly for the Public Administration. (Unige)

- Training of professionals in medicine department, architecture and other departments. (Unige)

- Programs for employees to update their knowledge. (UOI)

- Professional progression is a need many universities try to respond to. (Several universities)

- The University includes a Health management unit; a mentoring unit; a Gender Equality Unit; Language Centre. (US)

2b) Guidance and counselling services

- Counselling services provided by teachers designated to each group of students within a specific educational program. (TUIASI)

- Good guidance and counselling services (virtual, phone, face to face) on different levels of organisation (institution, faculties, institutes), which serve both present and future students. (UTU)

- Career guidance centre open to students, young people, potential adult learners, returners, etc. where people can ask for special work-oriented, employment and studies related guidance. (UP)

- High school students are actively informed about university opportunities. (DCU)

- Personal and specific guidance provided by instructional and training guides and a "small group teaching method". (UCL)

- Specific office for guidance of the adults coming back to university. This "skills assessment centre" is open to all (including external community) and organises each two weeks a public event to receive all questions and people. (UBO)

- Provision of student help services dedicated to under-represented students and non-traditional students of different kind. (Several universities)

- Provision of several guidance and counselling services through a variety of channels. (UTU)

- Counselling service provided by teachers in each educational program. (TUIASI)

- Provision of special work-oriented, employment and studies related guidance. (UP)

- Recruitment of university level guidance and counselling professional. (UTU)

2c) innovative Teaching and Learning

- Online bridge courses on ICT are offered by the 'Laboratory of New Technologies and Distance learning' in School of Education. (UOI)

- Several degree programs proposed on adapted schedule to allow professionals carry out university studies and obtain a university degree. (UCL)

- Modern teaching methods, web-based learning within degree education are used so as to widen participation and/or flexibility of studies. (UA)

- Pedagogical diversification and incentive actions for teachers. (UBO)

- Availability of courses on Open University. (several universities)

- E-learning platforms available also within traditional degree studies. (UTU)

- Possibility of combining work with study on a part-time basis. Some Masters are offered in "blended mode" making extensive use of e-learning, evening teaching and weekend sessions. (DCU)

- Open University offering studies as normal degrees studies, but in blended and e-learning, a possible study path to degree studies. (UTU)

- Offer of courses in "blended mode" making extensive use of e-learning, evening teaching and weekend sessions, to allow for work and study. (DCU)

- Small group-teaching method. (UCL)

- Use of modern teaching methods and web-based learning. (UA).

- Pedagogical diversification and incentive actions for the teachers. (UBO)

- Integration of e-learning and e-learning platforms within traditional degree studies. (UTU)

- Use of most up-to-date methods to train medical personnel in social and behavioural skills. (UBO)

- Innovative multi-professional training centre for medical and paramedical personnel based on simulation tools. This centre combines the use of the most up to date technologies, a completely new pedagogy and a real possibility to train people for Social and behavioural skills. Several hundreds of trainees have used the centre this year.(UBO)

- Outcomes-based curricula. (UTU)

- Access to cluster-based training (UBO)

- Customised training projects within the Master PerForm. (Unige)

- Apprenticeship opportunities, with the opportunity for students to combine learning and remunerated activity. (UBO)

- Invitation of external field experts in the training programs. (UCL)

3. Success

- Creation of a specific office for adults coming back to university, with the mission of welcoming and guiding them and organising the procedure of validation and training (RPL). (UBO

- From 2002 recognition of higher education or training (VES), allowing for the delivery of national diplomas (B, M, D) to people with learning experience in all kind of institutions (private or public, in foreign countries etc.) using more or less the same process than for VNIL. It is a very flexible way to recognize that one can learn everywhere and in all kind of system. 126 candidates have benefited of this procedure in 2013. (UBO)

Social development (collective dimension)

4. Engagement active citizenship

4a) Outreach activities

- DCU in the community; Age Friendly initiatives - Intergenerational Learning Programme; Ryan Academy; Social Entrepreneurship; Access Office. (DCU)

- Outreach activities in schools. (DCU)

- Easier access to research results and university work through dedicated open events. (UTU)

- Active engagement of the community, including current staff and students but also alumni, retired staff, trustees and supporters. (DCU)

- Engagement in community service. (URV)

- Strong focus on social engagement in National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030. DCU is a mission: "To transform lives and societies through education, research and innovation by developing creative, analytical, enterprising and socially-responsible citizens, by creating and translating knowledge to address major global challenges, by leading public debate and providing critical analysis on areas of societal importance and by engaging with enterprise for the benefit of our students, our region and the wider economy." (DCU)

- Social engagement does not have a status as strong as research and education, although it is written in the strategy documents of the university and understood as the third mission of the university. (several universities)

- Steps to popularize research results through events like Science Slam, Night of Science and the Week of Science. (UTU)

- Opening University to children through Children University. (UTU)

- Ongoing research project sponsored by the Pro-rector: "To Think and share quality practices in HE" promoting a dissemination event at the University as an effort to open/popularize research results to the wide audience and surrounding society. (UA)

- Cooperation with the city of Turku in the "Ready, Study, Go Turku" programme, to promote the city to prospective students. (UTU)

- The theme of Civic Engagement features in the DCU strategic plan and the university has a tradition of working in close partnership with NGOs and public authorities. (DCU)

- Day of Sciences Programme, every Fall. (UP)

- SE is also applied to the management of the human resources and working conditions.

- Open University lectures. (UP)

- Senior Academy. (UP)

- Dancing University. (UP)

- Possibility of getting to know better the city/town where the University is based through the "Ready, Study, Go Turku" programme. (UTU)

- Service to Society mission: involvement of members of civil society in the identification of social phenomenon and needs. These contacts will engender research questions that will also influence the teaching contents.

- Study courses that act as a 'social elevator' or prepare citizens to play a more active role at political level or in socially engaged organisations. (UCL)

- Employability of students, social development and active citizenship are among university values. (UTU)

4b) Internal (also research) activities

- Most of LLL courses developed in partnership with companies and public institutions, at local, regional and national level. (URV)

- Specific training programme for local elected people, dedicated to all aspects of the activities in city management. The programme is updated each new election. It is a strong contribution of the university to the regional development. (UBO

143

- Concentrated actions for platform developments with local and regional stakeholders (city councils, regional government, NGOs, private companies). Agreements in the fields of training, research and knowledge transfer. (URV)

- URV's extended campus (EC) is a strategic project that is part of the university's third mission: aimed to develop the local region from the more cultural aspects to the socioeconomic ones. The project foresees the creation of a network of knowledge antennas. Each antenna is the responsibility of a professional who is familiar with its surrounding social and economic fabric. The extended campus project has the full support of the local councils, which provides premises for the University to house the antennas and carry out their activity. There have been 235 activities held in 13 Knowledge Antennas, with a total amount of 10.216 participants. (URV)

- Pécs Learning City-Region Forum. (UP)

- Training programme for "locally elected people". (UBO)

- University mission: to develop and provide high quality LLL opportunities, services and research to people and organisations for the personal and professional development of citizens and professionals throughout their lives; the social, cultural and economic development of the community; the promotion of innovation and knowledge transfer in companies and throughout the region. (URV)

- Internships within relevant organisations and companies to support the professional re-integration or conversion of Alumni. (UCL)

- Offer of entrepreneurship courses. (UOI)

- A LLL organic unit (Uinfoc) works in articulation with the Association for Professional Training and research (UNAVE), a spin-off of the University. (UA)

- Presence of business representatives in CPD courses. (UTU)

- Availability of training and research opportunities developed in partnership with companies and public institutions, at local, regional and national level. (URV)

- Research opportunities on topics related to the social dimension (social development and environmental topics) and which have an impact on the "real world". (TUIASI and DCU)

- Service Learning (SL) is an educational proposal that combines learning processes and community service in a single project, in which the participants learn while working on real needs and trying to improve their environment. It is a complex activity that links community service to the learning of content, competencies, skills and values through reflexive practice. (URV)

- University Research Strategy places emphasis on research which has an impact on "real world" issues. Examples include Community Knowledge Exchange; Age Friendly University (AFU) and the development of interdisciplinary research Hubs and Clusters. (DCU)

- Research is underway in projects that aim to characterize different groups of students, and identify recommendations that can be made to University management, in order to contribute to the social engagement of the university. (UA)

- Open University serves different student groups and their diverse needs: professional development, self-development, active citizenship, intellectual interaction etc. (UTU)

- The social dimension of research is developed in projects that aim to solve community problems with social engagement (environmental, landslide, earthquake and flooding protection). (TUIASI)

- Research contracts are oriented to renewable energies, health assistance by applied informatics, recycling waste materials, all of them having a strong social dimension in their outcomes. (TUIASI)

144

4c) Cross institutional activities

- Different offices in charge of SE aspects. For students and users: the central office for Education and Student Life (8 people), the council in charge of academics affairs and its Vice rectors, a central service for counselling and orientation, UCE centre for adults. For staff: a social service with a Vice rector. For external relationship: UCE centre, Economic office, Cultural office. There is one project leader for the Service to Society, depending on the Rector, a special counsellor for 'Sustainable Development', a 'Council for the Service to Society' with professors, administrative staff, that will probably be transformed this year in a 'Sustainable Development Council' and several vice-rectors have responsibilities in terms of 'Service to Society' (Vice-Rector of regional affairs, Vice-Rector for international affairs, Vice-Rector for Research…) This work is under process with several themes considered (sustainable development, spin-offs, usefulness of the degrees on the employment market, etc.) especially as the international university rankings pay attention to these indicators. Vice rector for education is in charge, deans in the faculties, a coordinator for third mission / social dimension, development manager for constructing strategy and statistics, experts in open university, continuing education and training and teachers / researchers in the departments. The level of activity varies from one faculty to another and from teacher to teacher. (UCL)

- Synergistic relations across all elements of the 'DCU family'. (DCU)

- Classes for the elderly are a social project promoted by the main Catalan universities, to allow the elderly to stay abreast of new knowledge in many different fields, and especially for those in which they show interest. (URV)

- The groups of staff that work on social engagement are spread in the academia, and they operate on this function on a volunteer basis. There are no named responsible people, documents and steering groups for social engagement.

- Symbiotic partnership with DCU Students' Union. (DCU)

- Merger of the adult education oriented faculties with other faculties. (UCL)

- Over the last three decades, UCL created two 'open faculties' (FOPES and FOPA) especially dedicated to active people and proposing interdisciplinary study orientations and adapted teaching schedules. These faculties are now integrated into two traditional faculties (Politics, Economics and Sociology Faculty and Faculty for Psychology and Education Sciences). (UCL)

- Availability of study courses with good professional orientation and that meet professional needs. (UCL, PTE, UA, URV, others)

5. Cultural activities

- Initiatives to support the life of student body. A vibrant Clubs and Societies culture (DCU).

- One of the university mission is to fight discrimination, reduce social and cultural inequalities and achieve gender equality by ensuring that all those who have the will and the ability, can access the highest forms of culture and research. To this end, it contributes to the improvement of student living conditions, promote a sense of belonging to the community of students, strengthening social cohesion and the development of individual or collective initiatives for the solidarity and animation of student life. (UBO)

6. Social and Regional collaborations

6a) NGOs

- Provision of "tailor-made" programs for enterprises and other non-academic organisations. (UBO)

- Agreement between universities in Turku and the city of Turku on joint process for student employment. (UTU)

- Joint process for student employment in place between the local universities and the City. (UTU)

- Availability of VET courses developed in partnership with sector bodies. (UBO)

- Access for students to authentic working life assignments from private companies and business organisations and possibility to benefit from university knowledge and young professionals' contributions for companies. (UTU)

- Attention is given to the placement at the end of the study course within Master and Postgraduate courses. (Unige)

- Partnership with sector bodies for the development of VET programs and involvement in every step of learning process. (UBO)

- Strong work-based learning focus in research, development and innovation and partnerships with public and private business in SD programs. (UA)

- Strong partnerships with enterprises and other organisations to develop Apprenticeship: The university centre of CE supports, since 2007, a specific office which support the development of work based learning in HE programmes. Currently, 912 students involved in such programmes (220 at Master level (EQF 7), 566 at bachelor level (EQF 6), and 127 at EQF 5 level). (UBO)

- DCU is located in an area of multiple disadvantages and has a good track record of working in partnership with community organisations, NGOs, public authorities and employers. Most undergraduate programmes include a work-based internship- ranging from several months to a year, through the work of its Intra Office. All new degree programmes must involve external input from relevant external agencies and most (if not all) research centres will include representative of external stakeholders. (DCU)

- "Project Aces" in partnership with companies and businesses to provide students with authentic, working life relevant assignments and companies to benefit from the expertise of the university and the novel ideas and perspectives of young professionals. (UTU)

- Co-design of master and postgraduate courses with businesses, participation of companies in teaching and attention to the placement output (Unige).

- Regular contacts with employers' federations to identify the education needs of their employees (UCL)

- Creation of a specific office dedicated to monitoring education and learning societal demands and to develop partnerships with specific organisations (UBO)

- Knowledge Transfer Organisation (KTO) implanted in different "competitiveness clusters" defined as "associations of companies, research centres and educational institutions, working in partnership (under a common development strategy)". The system was created after 2004 by French government. The aim is to generate synergies in the execution of innovative projects in the interest of one or more given markets through design "cluster based training actions (UBO)

- French CE historically actively involved in national networks and this provides sometimes good opportunities of new partnerships, but more on policy level than LLL activities (UBO)

146

6b) Companies (Partnerships)

- Partnership with local companies and other territorial economic realities to offer customized training projects. (Unige)

- Partnership with Public Administration to train PA officers. (Unige)

- Partnership with professionals from medicine, architecture and other departments. (Unige)

- Partnership with University hospital. (UBO)

- Partnership with universities for adult students; MERFA (Master Européen de Recherche en Formation des Adultes), partnership with CNAM (Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers Paris) and UNIGE (Université de Genève) for the students in option 'Formation Adultes' – Exchange of students and Professors (UCL)

- Undergraduate programmes including a work-based internship, ranging from several months to one year. (DCU)

- Tailor-made courses for companies, in order to better meet their training needs. (URV)

- Tailor-made programs for enterprises and other non-academic organisations. (UBO)

- Partnerships with companies and public institutions, at local, regional and national to develop courses (URV)

- Cooperation and partnership with professionals, organisations and some public stakeholders to develop curricula that meet professional needs. (UP and UA)

Obstacles to the SD of ULLL observed and mentioned by partner universities

Besides the good practices collected, several obstacles to fulfil the demands of the SD of ULLL were mentioned by the COMMIT partner universities:

- Impossibility to assure long-term funding and instability of funding.

- Overload of teachers' teaching hours, which limits their time to develop and implement new training activities.

- Budget for scholarships is still very poor.

- Lack of incentives.

- University organisational culture: teachers' culture, resistance to change and unpreparedness to deal with a diverse student population are an obstacle.

- Institutional/organisational orientations to dominate instead of learner-centred approaches.

- Closed approaches and elitist views.

- Because of the renewal of the Rector staff, the strategic importance of the Service to Society is not communicated for the moment but a recent striking fact consists in the abandonment by the Vice-Rector's office of the Service to Society and the dispersal of this mission into all the other vice-rector's offices.

147

COMMIT supports universities in the self-assessment of their level of commitment to the social dimension of higher education and promotes their strategies for increasing attainment, embedding the policy and practice of University Lifelong Learning in a strategy of wider social interaction.

Full partners: Coordinators: eucen (BE); Université catholique de Louvain (BE); University of Turku (FI); University of Brest (FR); University of Aveiro (PT); University of Stuttgart (DE); Dublin City University (IE); Bogaziçi University (TR); University of Genoa (IT); University of Ioannina (GR); University of Iaisi (RO); University Rovira i Virgili (ES); University Pecs (HU).

Associate partners: Mykolo Romerio Universiteto (LT); Instituto Politecnico de Leiria (PT); Université Rennes 2 (FR); Dokuz Eylul University (TK); Tallinna Ülikkul, Open University (EE).

eucen *Projects*

www.eucen.eu

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme