

**Development of the social dimension within  
University Lifelong Learning : from concept to  
implementation.**

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**Social dimension – the concept**

- .Slippery – no clear definition
- .Social dimension, social responsibility, social engagement, social cohesion, social .....
- .Bologna Ministers 2001 – only lifelong learning and the importance of social cohesion

## **From 2003 to 2015 Bologna Ministers Meetings**

Increasing repetition and elaboration of key words and phrases:

- .Social cohesion – reducing social and gender inequalities
- .Equally accessible to all and complete without obstacles
- .Measures to help – finance and guidance and counselling
- .Widening access
- .HE population should reflect the diversity in society – widen participation
- .Flexible pathways into and within HE
- .Improving learning environment and removing barriers to study
- .Equity
- .Improve gender balance

## **From LLL to Social dimension**

Bologna Ministers meetings:

- .2001 – all about LLL (plus a quick nod to social cohesion) – LLL an end in itself
- .2009 – 'Widening participation shall also be achieved by LLL' – LLL as a tool – a means to an end
- .2015 – provision 'for different types of learners including lifelong learning' – only ref to LLL and no mention in 12 commitments

## **LLP Guide, General call for proposals 2011-2013, Strategic priorities 2013**

Under 2. ERASMUS - higher education including advanced vocational education and training :

### **2.2 Multilateral projects – first priority : Increasing attainment levels and strengthening the social dimension of HE**

Major objectives are the widening of the participation and raising completion rates of underrepresented groups ... and non-traditional learners ...enhancing LLL via the creation of flexible learning paths, developing ways to increase the social responsibility of HE institutions, and improvement of the gender balance ...

## **LLP Guide, General call for proposals 2011-2013, Strategic priorities 2013**

- .Projects follow from text
- .Suggestion that development of social responsibility involves community outreach activities and community-based access routes
- .Concern about data : need for systems to monitor the development of widening access for underrepresented gorups

SO.....

### **Where are we with the implementation?**

Trends Report EUA 2015:

- .No refs to 'social dimension', 'social responsibility' or 'social engagement'
- .Institutional outreach: 'an area that requires further attention, particularly in adapting LLL opportunities to the specific demographic and economic situation in each country'(p13)
- .'Many countries in Europe have been interested in broadening participation and access' (p57)

Problem of data (p58):

- .'institutions are able to report on the changing size of the student population, it is far more difficult to capture its socio-economic characteristics and how it is changing'
- .'considerable variation' in which characteristics are monitored and at what stage
- .'19 countries could say only that population has increased or decreased in last 10 years
- .'only 2 QA agencies monitor issues related to equity of access

- .Over a quarter of HEIs do not collect data on no. of students who work while studying
- .Definitions of part-time, disability, mature, etc vary a great deal
- .HEIs report an increase in these students but between 20% and 40% say 'information not available' (p62)
- .Diversity often means non EU or other EU countries
- .Less than 50% have targeted strategies to attract students with disabilities, socio-economic disadvantage, mature, part-time

- . A relatively large number of institutions do not have targeted recruitment strategies to widen access
- .Difficulties in targeting some groups (e.g. ethnic minorities) in some countries (p66)
- .Increase in surveys (rather than systematic collection)

## ..... we don't really know

But

- .Strong progression in no. of HEIs with LLL strategies : 39% to 65% 2010-2015
- .Student support services show decrease in drop-out rates
- .Increasing 'life cycle approach' to services :
  - .- before admission: open days, orientation and advice, outreach, bridging courses, special admissions policies
  - .- entry to labour market: careers guidance, work placements, recruitment events, entrepreneurship in curricular, mentoring (p89)

## 4 transition points need attention

- . Getting in - access
- . Getting through - participation
- . Getting out - attainment
- . Getting on – employment
  
- . And data so that we can know if we're getting there