
Maximising Employment Potential: local approaches to lifelong learning



A Fifth Thematic Report of the IDELE Project

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Annex One: Database of Projects

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth thematic report produced in the framework of the IDELE programme, which aims at the *identification, dissemination and exchange on local employment development and good governance*. Previous reports have focused on examining local employment development in the context of particular geographic spaces – urban-industrial areas, large metropolitan cities, rural areas as well as free standing and ex-urban places.¹ This report, the first of 2005, departs from this geographic focus and takes a thematic approach, looking at local employment development from the perspective of lifelong learning. In particular it analyses how local approaches to lifelong learning can maximise employment potential.

The local is increasingly recognised as an important level of governance. According to the European employment guidelines, member states are to implement employment policies effectively at the local level. The 2001 Commission Communication on “Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality” sets out to assist Member States to establish lifelong learning strategies at all levels. This report combines the maxim of the local implicit in both strategies, by investigating the contribution of lifelong learning to local employment development.

The central aim of the report is to provide evidence, based on practical experience, that local-level action on lifelong learning provides added value for employment development. The report draws on the experience of eight good practice case studies from across the European Union (EU). These are used to provide insight into how best to use local partnerships on lifelong learning to develop and maintain employment in a locality, as well as practical advice for both policy-makers and practitioners.

¹ These reports are available from the IDELE website www.ecotec.com/idele.

2.0 LIFELONG LEARNING AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The Changing Context for Lifelong Learning

The history of development shows a sequence where periods of relative stability give way to phases of rapid change and transformation. The end of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st is one of these revolutionary phases. It comes with its own unique set of complex, fast moving demographic, technological, social and economic transitions. In the words of the old Chinese curse we may indeed be said to be “living in interesting times”. This is not least because we continue to witness the same *fin de siecle* - type events that led earlier writers to describe similar periods in history as being characterised by the old certainties breaking down and a process of intensive change being ushered in. Joseph Schumpeter (1939), for example, characterised such an historical stage as a “wave of creative destruction”; and long wave, long-cycle theorists have rolled forward Kondratiev’s (1926) model to see present times as the end of a 50+ year phase of relative stability turning into a phase of experimentation and structural readjustment. More recently, political economists and philosophers have been debating now as a time when one long established regime (Fordism) is being transformed into another (Post Fordism or Flexible Specialisation) or when Simple Modernism is giving way to Post-Modernism or ‘Other Modernisms’ (Beck, 1992; Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994). We are then in a new political economic context – in short, “New Times”. Add into the macro-mix of grand theories the cataclysmic effects of 9/11, the re-emergence of a politics that polarises secularism with fundamentalism, and a private economy that seems unable to detach itself from the future consequences of growing debt, and the sheer instability of our “interesting times” is starkly revealed.

Looked at through the lens of lifelong learning, these changes are having profound effects on the way people live and work and, in particular, on the learning they need to equip themselves with to cope with such a fast moving world. The faster the change the more frequently skills, attitudes and lifestyles need to be re-examined, re-evaluated and re-validated if individuals and social groups are to keep abreast of New Times. It is in the context of this that terms such as “lifelong” learning have come into increasing currency - with the “lifelong” label itself trying to capture a sense of *continuous dynamic learning* over the life stages. As the old sequential perspective of early years education and training; middle years working life and family formation; and later years retirement is recognised as decreasingly relevant, a view of complexity and vastly more transitions over the lifecycle have had to be taken on board. In a context of fast change, “to stand still is to go backwards” is as true for learning as it is for any other aspect of economy or society. In such an increasingly complex and fast-changing world, a genuine ethos of lifelong learning is essential as:

- An instrument of active development and a means of “staying ahead of the game” - for individual people, for social groupings, for localities, for regions and for nations;
- A responsive instrument for dealing with economic and employment shocks, for successfully making the transition from one life stage to another, and for continuing to have access to reasonable life chances by remaining active and employable; and last but not least,

- As a means for empowering people, groups and places in difficulty to improve their situation by using learning to achieve economic inclusion and a degree of voice.

2.2 Lifelong learning in a turbulent world

The, 21st century has in its early years proved to be a crucible of change. Three particular dimensions of change can be observed that in the near to medium future will have a profound impact on European economies:

- Technological changes,
- Demographic changes, and
- Changes in life course transitions.

Technological changes are adding an additional layer of complexity to the economic system to which workers have to respond. The 21st century is seeing technological innovations emerging at an increasing speed. Where they can be effectively harnessed, they can be the source of increased productivity, new products and services and a platform for future economic growth. As the countries of Europe experience *sectoral shift* – the move away from a production-based to a service or knowledge based economy - the ability to use new technologies, as well as to update and adapt knowledge, becomes more important than ever before in what has come to be called the Information Society. These developments are at the heart of the European Union's Lisbon Strategy².

Labour market restructuring is inevitable in the face of these changes and, if both workers and economies are to keep pace, flexibilities of response are vital. It is here that lifelong learning approaches can help across a number of contexts. Being continually open to learning is vital where, for example:

- National/regional markets for labour and goods continually change their form in response to technological change and global competitive pressures;
- Change produces increasing uncertainties for employers and workers in the face of a rolling process of restructuring and sectoral shift, where events are difficult for either party to predict;
- Labour market segmentation becomes extreme and common understanding of the nature of work and types of jobs available breaks down into a myriad of time, wage, gender and geographical flexibilities that cut the labour process into complex micro-segments.

² Add appropriate Lisbon reference

Economic life is certainly changing but profound **demographic changes** are also taking place. The European population is ageing. Life expectancies are increasing as mortality rates fall and people live longer. At the same time, fertility rates are declining. The outcomes vary from country to country but overall:

- The average age of populations is growing;
- The proportion of older people (50+) is rising and there is a declining proportion of population in the active age group (16-65)

These trends are destined to have a variety of far reaching effects. Europe's ageing population will have significant ramifications for pensions, for the state of the public finances and for overall competitiveness. Where people age into poverty it will have a powerful impact on social exclusion. In some cases the potential exists for a real shortfall of available young workers. Fortunately, however, there is also a new cohort to consider: people who are older and healthy and want to continue to learn and be active³. Seen in a positive light, a generally healthier and more active older population can be mobilised to make a substantial contribution to economy and civic society. Lifelong learning (with this time a very clear meaning for "lifelong") is a vital instrument in capturing these positive effects from the demographic inevitabilities.

These sorts of demographic trends have, however, to be viewed through a wider window that takes into account the critical impact of **migration** – both within countries and between them. One of the critical demographic features of the age is the increased *movement of people*. While, once again, there is considerable internal variation in the process, the European population is becoming more mobile, and there is increasing movement into the EU of those seeking work from beyond the existing borders. This is, of course, exactly what the founding principles - free movement of labour and European convergence - would be expected to produce. What has led to a recent acceleration in the process has been the impact of new transport and information technologies (people can both hear about opportunities and get to them more cheaply) and the effective removal of internal border controls (after Schengen) within a large group of Member States. Despite the restrictive protocols placed on migration from the New Member States in the early years of accession, movement from these sources has begun to make a powerful impact across the board. Migration from outside the EU remains a focus for strongly polarised political views but has nevertheless been ever more influential as a counterweight to the ageing process in some of the major cities and growth regions of the EU. These labour migration issues are also overlain by increasing security and stability concerns arising from current global politics.

³ This is a prospect that has provoked a flood of recent policy documents with the phrase "active ageing" in the title or main contents. Translated in some cases as perhaps "the activation of the ageing population" (Kok Report, 2005), the narrow focus is on encouraging older people to work longer by raising the retirement age and removing the incentives to earlier retirement (one of which is, of course, a guaranteed state pension at a reasonable level).

The significance of lifelong learning for a continent increasingly made up of a culturally and ethnically diverse population is obvious. There is simply so much to learn – not least for the newcomers about the indigenous population and the indigenous population about the newcomers – that learning in all its forms has become a huge sector within national and the EU economies. In more narrowly economic terms the success or failure of the free movement of labour depends on how well the supply matches fast moving demand in the marketplace - not simply in terms of numbers available but more vitally in terms of the *bundles of competencies* people bring. Flexibility and adaptability are enshrined in the European Employment Strategy and demand a lifelong learning strategy effectively applied to attach them to increasingly mobile people whose competencies will constantly have to be moulded to fit changing circumstances.

Too many gross generalities can, however, be misleading. We are dealing with a Europe of difference and, though regions and localities all over Europe will feel these pressures, experiences will differ. For example, demographic change at the macro scale will have its most powerful impact in the southern regions of Europe. Between regions in general it is possible also to identify an array of likely demographic outcomes ranging from those experienced by:

- a) *Open and flexible* regions that are demographically young, fit, dynamic, asset rich, credit worthy, with a bias toward high skilled, high achiever people with low claims;

Through to;

- b) *Dependent and risk averse* regions that are demographically old, unhealthy, risk averse, indebted, with a balance toward low skill, low achiever people with high claims on the State.

Where a particular region finds itself, between these extremes, will have a powerful influence on the scale and scope of the lifelong learning and employment challenges to which it must rise. At the most basic level it is important for regions to fully appreciate the population dynamics going on, and for policy to take a clear stance with regard to its objectives, taking into account the needs of existing, arriving, departing and transitory populations as they occupy particular spaces.

Last but not least there is increasing variability and difference *in individual and family lifecycles*. In addition to increasing change in patterns of family formation and domestic circumstances, there is also much more variability in the ‘transition points’ experience by individuals throughout their lives, particularly with regard to education, employment, self employment, retirement and participation on the labour market. This is not just the normal process of coping with ageing, but increasingly of dealing with a shift from those fixed (education, work, family, retirement) life phases discussed earlier to more complex interacting transitions. Some of those that can be observed include the following:

- Spending longer in formal education, often involving periods spent at different institutions, sometimes in different countries, and increasingly involving periods of work experience;
- Connected to this, increased participation in higher and further education is associated in many countries with the need for greater concurrent or future earning power as educational institutions are required to generate more and more of their own income from students;
- Delaying family formation;
- Mixing formal education with family commitments;
- Transiting from education to work and back again more often;
- Increasing self employment, with more official encouragement for entrepreneurialism;
- More ‘mixed careers’, with individuals having a variety of income streams simultaneously, such as through combined part time jobs or combinations of employment and self employment / small business operation;
- Mixing caring and working with formal and informal learning;
- Transiting from work to unemployment/inactivity and back to work more frequently;
- Anticipating retirement by adjusting work patterns;
- Taking longer to transit from work to retirement;
- Mixing retirement with work and with education;

The list is far from exhaustive. Its purpose is to demonstrate the sheer complexity of the education, work, income, family, caring, retirement combinations that confront people in New Times. As the linear lifecycle of the 20th century becomes more fragmented and fluid, it is clear that learning can no longer be, and increasingly is not, an activity that only happens in school and college in the period before work begins. It is a modern imperative that it be pursued throughout the life course.

Figure 1 presents one report’s view of the possible changes in the life course in Britain between 1931 and 2031, although this could just as easily apply throughout the EU. In 1931, a relatively short period of formal education is followed by a long period of full time working life or raising a family, and little or no retirement before death. By 2001 the period in education has increased, with longer periods where learning overlaps with or anticipates employment. The period of full time working and raising a family reduces considerably, with longer, more flexible transition periods before a much longer time in retirement. By 2031, the prognosis is of even greater overlap and variability throughout the lifecycle, with less dominance of particular circumstances at different points.

Significantly, as the time scale lengthens so the choices for older people become more indeterminate between work, semi-retirement, retirement and so on. Lifelong learning will clearly need to become just that!

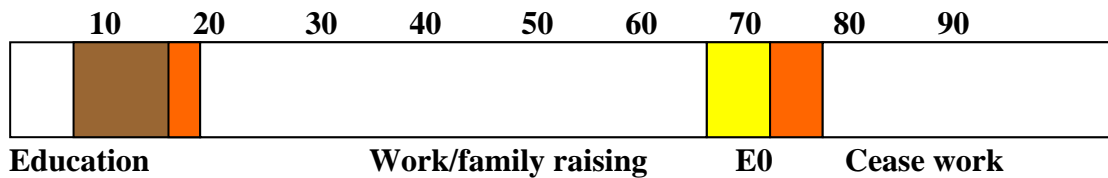
Of course, once again we are the victims of the generalisation needed to make the broad case. It is, however, essential to understand that all the transitions we have been exploring are felt differently by some groups within the population as well as from place to place as we showed

earlier. What is *actually experienced* by people depends very heavily on their socio-economic group or occupation; and their gender, ethnicity, disability status, age and so on. These things are also played out very differently from *locality to locality*.

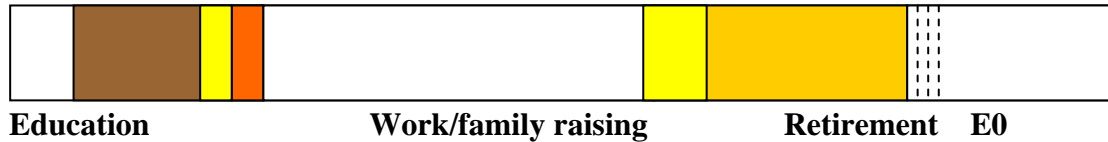
Changing lifecourse in Britain between 1931 and 2031

Years of age

In 1931:



In 2001:



In 2031:

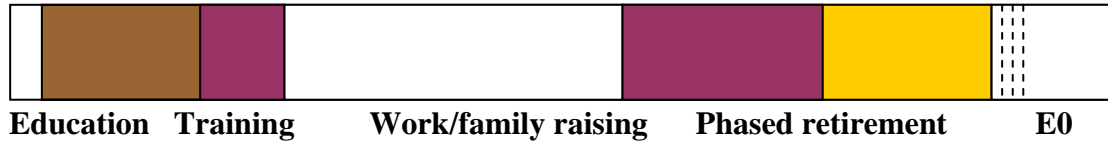


Diagram based on: Warnes T and McInerney B (2004), *The English Regions and Population Ageing*, Report Commissioned by Age Concern England and the English Regions Network, Figure 5, page 18

In sum then, we have identified three key issues related directly to both employment and learning – technological change, demographic change, and lifecycle change, all of which interplay in different ways in relation to the specific circumstances experienced by particular populations at any given time, in particular localities. We now turn to an examination of the EU and National level policy responses to lifelong learning.

2.3 The EU and National Policy Context

At the Lisbon European Council in March 2000, EU heads of government set a mission for the EU to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion

by 2010⁴. A key aim was to provide people of all ages with equal and open access to high-quality learning opportunities, and to a variety of learning experiences, throughout Europe. Lifelong learning is a core element of this strategy, central not only to competitiveness and employability but also to social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development.

This high profile attempt to privilege the knowledge-based economy comes on top of a long-standing recognition in the EU of the importance of lifelong learning in general and of the need constantly to need update skills in the face of technological change and innovation. Following the adoption by the European Commission in November 2001 of the Communication on Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality, lifelong learning has been the guiding principle for the development of education and training policy. The Communication sets out concrete proposals that aim to make lifelong learning a reality for all. Indeed, the Communication stresses the need for Member States to transform formal education and training systems in order to break down barriers between different forms of learning. Since 2000, EU Member States have committed themselves to establishing comprehensive lifelong learning strategies by 2006, while a mid-term analysis of the implementation of lifelong learning strategies in all EU 25 took place in 2003.

In April 2005, the Commission presented its [Integrated Guidelines Package](#) for the years 2005-2008 that will help Member States to establish their new national reform programmes by autumn 2005. The package lays out guidelines on macroeconomic policy and microeconomic reforms as well as eight guidelines for employment policies in order to support the EU [Growth and Jobs Strategy](#). The new set of eight Employment Guidelines also specifically advocates a "lifecycle approach to work" to tackle problems faced by all age groups, while the macro- and micro-economic guidelines focus respectively on fiscal discipline and internal market legislation.

While reviewing the Commission's eight employment guidelines listed below, it becomes apparent that lifelong learning is an important element in virtually all of them as a tool for anticipating and absorbing economic and social change:

- 2) **Guideline 1:** Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.
Under this guideline, access to lifelong learning is a crucial element of quality at work.
- 3) **Guideline 2:** Promote a lifecycle approach to work.
Here, lifelong learning supports participation in employment and longer working lives, as well as keeping those who become unemployed or are absent from the labour market closer to it.
- 4) **Guideline 3:** Ensure inclusive labour markets for job-seekers and disadvantaged people.
A key element related to lifelong learning under this guideline is guidance and training in the context of individualised approaches.

⁴ This has since been reviewed by the Kok Task Force (2005) with the timescale accepted as being far too ambitious.

- 5) **Guideline 4:** Improve matching of labour market needs.
Anticipation of skills needs, transparency of training and learning opportunities throughout Europe can help in this respect.
- 6) **Guideline 5:** Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation.
Lifelong learning under this guideline can support transitions in occupational status and is a means for positive change management.
- 7) **Guideline 6:** Ensure employment-friendly wages and other labour cost developments.
Lifelong learning can be part of employment reward packages.
- 8) **Guideline 7:** Expand and improve investment in human capital
This guideline explicitly states that the EU needs higher and more effective investment in human capital and lifelong learning for the benefit of individuals, enterprises, the economy and society in order to enhance access to employment for all ages, raise productivity levels and quality at work.
- 9) **Guideline 8:** Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements.
Clearly lifelong learning is a key element in the adaptation of education and training systems

The IDELE study of lifelong learning in the context of local employment has a particular role to play in the context of this comprehensively developed perspective by looking at it through a particular window – the **local**. Once again it is a truism that everything happens (lifelong learning included) locally somewhere - but what we are seeking to explore in what follows is what can be done at the *local level of governance* to add value to programmes that are often conceived and managed elsewhere (nationally, regionally or EU).

2.4 The contribution of lifelong learning to local employment development

The turbulent conditions of the 21st century are not only felt nationally and regionally but also, and in many cases most acutely, at the local level. Some will be carried along by these processes and derive benefit from them. Some localities will have their economies swept away by the changes, some will be on the margins and little influenced by them, some will be “surfing the wave” and seeing growth and prosperity. Sensing change locally is, as we have seen in previous IDELE seminars vital if the right strategies are to be put in place to capture the opportunities and evade the threats. Lifelong learning strategies are among the most important that local stakeholders can adopt. What we have tried to show so far is that lifelong learning needs to be:

- Continuous and developmental;
- Dynamic and reflecting change;
- Engaged and empowering;
- Sensitive and inclusive;
- An “antidote” to a traditional “education and vocational training perspective”;
- Appropriate to the context of New Times.

We want also to raise the perception of the importance of the local level in this since macro-scale measures need to be seen as necessary but not sufficient to cope with the far reaching demands that rapid change brings.

2.5 The Case Studies

In all, the experience of 9 case study areas was presented and discussed during the Thessaloniki seminar, and are here used to show specific instances of how lifelong learning interacts at the local level with employment issues. The case studies used were:

- **Tampere (Finland):** a medium sized city aiming to become a leading educational centre in Finland (and Europe) through an intricate partnership of local actors and a lifelong learning strategy covering all groups and ages of learners.
- **Cergy Pontoise (France):** a ‘new’ town near Paris, where attention is paid to making small businesses and their employees aware of training and learning opportunities.
- **Berlin Neukölln (Germany):** covering the most densely populated borough of Berlin, the district of Neukölln faces high unemployment rates, low levels of educational attainment and a mismatch between education and skills needs in an area with a high percentage of ethnic minorities. The Learnshop seeks to develop a learning culture among the local population and to motivate individuals and businesses to participate in lifelong learning.
- **Vorarlberg (Austria):** the *Land of Vorarlberg*, one of the smallest Austrian Länder, counting only 400.000 people promotes lifelong learning initiatives in order to develop employment and better adjust to changes related to a recent flux of immigration to an already diverse area
- **Bilbao (Spain):** initiatives focusing in a county of Bilbao scoring low in respect of workforce skills, educational attainment and unemployment and using the internet and an open shop to involve more people in learning
- **Jönköping (Sweden):** an area heavily dominated by manufacturing SMEs, where adult education and lifelong learning activities have been geared towards the needs of SMEs.
- **Linköping (Sweden):** a university town and a regional centre of commerce with well-educated inhabitants and a long tradition of lifelong learning making Linköping well known for world-class high-tech IT production and increasingly also medical technology.
- **Blackburn (UK):** a slack labour market area with multi-ethnic communities but also high levels of poverty and deprivation, low aspirations across all age groups and low participation in learning across age groups. The local learning strategy aims to raise the profile of learning and inspire citizens who normally would not take part in learning.
- **London Riverside (UK):** a tight labour market area where the aim is to bring new businesses and jobs to the area and to ensure that local people have the education and training support they need. There are specific issues for the area to be addressed, such as manufacturing decline and the need for modernisation as well as securing a step change in the quality of the local environment.

In addition to the above case studies, the Emilia Romagna paradigm of high social capital and a long tradition of learning leading to high levels of economic development was also presented during the seminar in a keynote speech given by Drsa Danielle Mazzonis.

In the following sections we interrogate the experiences of these case studies. In section 3 we look in particular at instances where lifelong learning strategies are being used as a conscious adaptive response to dynamic and threatening change, particularly the consequences of growing global competition. Section 4 changes focus and looks at places where deep rooted problems are being tackled via learning strategies which focus more on social capital building and strengthening community cohesiveness as essential building blocks for local development. In section 5 we examine cases which particularly clearly illustrate the key importance of various tactical approaches to the delivery of learning strategies, in particular partnerships and political networking; institutional learning; and engagement with business. The report concludes by drawing conclusions and lessons.

3.0 MANAGING FAST AND DYNAMIC CHANGE

In New Times changes in the production system are accelerating and becoming more unpredictable. Globalisation means that the production of goods and services is moved easily across borders, not only within the EU but also internationally, increasing competitive pressures on labour not only in manufacturing but also in high-tech sectors such as IT and telecommunications, and in the delivery of services. Increasingly, the developed economies of the European Union are moving away from manufacturing towards a knowledge-based economy that is based on high value added activities and fast changes of demand for goods and services.⁵ More than ever before, the knowledge economy therefore relies on a highly qualified and adaptable workforce. Since the turn of the century, complacent assumptions that the global economy would develop with the Rich nations retaining high value added knowledge based industries whilst the Poor world would provide cheap manufacturing labour have themselves been shown to be erroneous. The development of high tech industry in China and delivery of high level services such as computer programming in India show that the Rich world cannot assume it can easily retain the most value added sectors of the economy. The pressure to develop knowledge based economies in the EU is even more important than previously thought, and is a competitive situation with Global and not just developed world dimensions. In this scenario, lifelong learning strategies at the local level are not only vital to help localities to cope with changes made necessary by the knowledge economy, but also to develop more employment opportunities and enable localities to “stay ahead of the game”.

3.1 Strategies to cope with managing change

Developing local lifelong learning strategies in order to manage change is one way of addressing these trends, with the following potential advantages:

- A local approach can sense gaps better;
- A local approach can manage the complexities in ways that reflect cultural and life course aspirations as well as market forces;
- A local strategy can “map” the age, skills, aspirations, gender complexities into the matrix of needed competencies

Two successful approaches to managing change with strategies that depart from, whilst being based in, the specific social and economic circumstances of a locality are discussed below.

The Finnish town of Tampere has built on an already strong general learning ethos that exists locally to engage specific target groups as well as the population in general in learning activities. The objectives were to develop the town into **the** leading centre for education in Finland, and thus create a positive climate for long-term economic growth in the city. This strategy was implemented with the help of innovative and attractive programmes.

⁵ For more information on the knowledge economy and respective EU policies see the recent report “Preliminary analysis of the contribution of DG Information Society policies and programmes to the Lisbon and sustainable development strategies” by ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd for DG Information Society of the European Commission.

Tampere, Finland

Tampere is the second largest city in Finland and the oldest industrial town in the country, with a population of 200 000. The region of Tampere includes the town of Nokia, giving its name to the mobile phone company. The city views a high local knowledge base and the capacity to capitalise on it as fundamental for surviving in the increasingly competitive global market place. In this context, education overall is seen as key for the economic success of the city, with lifelong learning an integral part of economic development. Hence, one of the key aims of the City strategy is to make Tampere ‘a world class education, research and learning centre’.

In the mid-1990s, the city of Tampere suffered from an unemployment rate of 22.6% due to a period of industrial decline. The city recognised lifelong learning as key for economic success and economic development and a strategy was developed to initially allow for the re-training of older workers. With time this was expanded and became a wider and comprehensive strategy promoting learning in the city covering all population groups including children, adults and older people, as well as minority groups.

Of key importance was the agreement of a clear sighted strategy, agreed to by all key stakeholders amongst public authorities; educational institutions; third sector groups and crucially private sector employers. The objective of becoming a world class centre for education and learning benefited from being:

- Consistent with the existing infrastructure and cultural attitudes, and therefore realistic
- Highly appropriate and in fact necessary to maintain globally recognised brands (primarily Nokia), with strong incentives for private sector employers to work with other partners locally to ensure the availability of necessary skills and knowledge
- Able to draw upon the advantages of an increasingly diverse population from around the world, attracted to the area through the reputation of its global brands
- Quite specific (‘world class’), enabling benchmarking to be undertaken and lessons from elsewhere to be evaluated against local circumstances.

The Thames Gateway, a vast regeneration area to the east of London in the UK, faces the challenge of overcoming a decline in manufacturing while simultaneously needing to address poor educational achievement and low average wages amongst locally resident people. The area is a good example of localised problems existing within a regional context more usually seen as economically buoyant and with labour shortage problems. Here, managing change means attracting and keeping employers in growth sectors in the area while at the same time equipping local people with the necessary skills to take the opportunities available. Here, the lifelong learning strategy is developed and implemented in close collaboration with local government and private partners to achieve these objectives.

London Riverside Ltd.

The Thames Gateway is one of the largest regeneration areas in Europe. There is a decline in manufacturing, particularly vehicle building, with pressure from global companies for the area to demonstrate long term flexibility and competitiveness in order to retain significant local production. London Riverside Ltd is a company based in the Thames Gateway and is responsible for managing regeneration programmes with a value of £155 million (approximately EUR 220 million). The company works to bring new businesses and jobs into the Thames Gateway area and to ensure that local people have the education and training support they need to make the most of existing and new opportunities.

In order to maintain current employers in the area and attract new businesses, the company's programmes and projects combine the physical regeneration of the area with raising skills across the Thames Gateway. A lifelong learning strategy has been developed which is expected to bring about a change of the learning culture in the Thames Gateway and secure the adaptability of the workforce to ever changing skills requirements.

At the core of the strategy has been very close working with the local end of a global vehicle company, with public (including European) programmes used by the project to provide a learning and skills development infrastructure specifically tailored to providing the local workforce with long term skills and flexibilities in new learning needed for developments within the industry. The scale and ambition of London Riverside has enabled it to develop high level business and policy / political partnerships, and broker the significant commitments from both private and public sectors which have proved necessary to retain the critical mass necessary for large scale local production. In particular, a major shift from vehicle assembly to more specialist production of engines has required high levels of capital investment, and was in large part secured on the back of a learning and skills development programme of sufficient scale and quality to allow the introduction of new production techniques and working practices demanded by technological change.

The initiative has also however sought to ensure long term prospects for the local labour force by emphasising the development of generic high tech manufacturing skills which are not solely dependent on the needs of the main local player, and by also working to attract different industries. The strategy has emphasised local skills development and the ability of London Riverside to design bespoke learning development programmes for new types of employers.

In both cases, lifelong learning strategies have been successful in managing economic change affecting a locality because:

- lifelong learning was recognised as a key driver for change;
- local stakeholders departed from the opportunities and limits that the social and economic circumstances presented locally;
- key local partners were and still are involved in drawing up, implementing and modifying the strategies
- the role of key private sector employers has been placed at the centre of the strategies

- strategies have been designed with global competitive pressures in mind.

3.2 Lifelong learning to enable localities to stay ahead of the game

Sensing change locally means that lifelong learning strategies devised and implemented at the local level can enable a locality to “stay ahead of the game” and remain competitive. Two examples from the IDELE Seminar highlight this particularly effectively: Jönköping (Sweden), and the Tampere (Finland) example cited above.

Actors in Jönköping have an acute awareness that constant effort is required in order to maintain and improve the presently high employment rates. Promoting lifelong learning is seen as key for achieving this.

Jönköping, Sweden

Jönköping is a town in central Sweden economically dominated by SMEs specialising in manufacturing. It is a well-off place and currently suffers from relatively little unemployment (4%) compared to the European average. Despite this, the motto in Jönköping regarding future development is “Doing nothing means decline”. The municipality of Jönköping has therefore placed great emphasis on the lifelong learning strategy for the city. The nationally-funded lifelong learning programme (*Kunskapsliftet*, the “knowledge lift”) was applied throughout Sweden, and although generally regarded as having been successful, expired in 2002. In Jönköping, the local administration, with all party support, decided to continue to promote lifelong learning, by mobilising local funding.

A Centre for Adult Education was founded and this centre is responsible for developing and implementing a local lifelong learning strategy in close contact with local businesses, learners and training providers. This helps to establish what skills shortages exist, which courses are appropriate for addressing them and whether their quality is good enough. This knowledge is shared with local politicians in order to ensure that funding is made available for relevant training and learning courses to be offered to the inhabitants. This approach means that the (future) skills needs of local companies can be met and Jönköping’s competitive edge maintained and expanded.

Tampere, Finland

Many global market leaders in sectors including telecoms, container handling machinery, mining and construction machinery, forest machinery, automation for process industry, safety glass machinery, rock and mineral processing equipment are located in Tampere. The City's strategy, discussed above, outlines a vision for the city to attract more international companies to the locality and to keep them there.

Lifelong learning support explicitly covers all periods in the lifetime from kindergarten through basic education to adult education and senior citizens' learning. Tampere learnt the hard way how all aspects of learning can affect the economic development of the city. A large French industrial firm relocated from Tampere to another city in Finland on the basis of the other city's guarantee of children's education for all (from kindergarten through basic education) in French and German, so as to support the hundreds of French and German families moving to the area. For a relatively small city such company moves can have a significant impact on the local economy. The Tampere strategy has sought to learn from such experiences by continually emphasising the need for providers, funders and consumers of lifelong learning to tailor programmes flexibly to emerging needs and opportunities, and by benchmarking against global best practice.

Localities that manage to "stay ahead of the game" usually develop strategies that manage to combine a number of key elements, including:

- a solid local development strategy which embrace continual renewal and responsiveness to threats and opportunities;
- good horizontal links, meaning a strong partnership at local level involving all key stakeholders – in these two Nordic examples, local traditions of political consensus and long term planning have greatly strengthened the durability and solidity of the local partnership and have guaranteed sustainable funding;
- good vertical links - solid contacts with actors at higher levels of government, at the regional and/or national level.

3.3 Adapting to changes in the employment system (shocks / pressures)

One aspect of the turbulence of 21st century life is that globalisation makes it easier for companies to move production across borders. This can create employment shocks at local level when large numbers of jobs are lost. Local strategies cannot be static and have to be able to manage change if they are to be successful. The following elements are important for local strategies to successfully adapt to change:

- flexibility in the strategy to be able to work in the context of changing circumstances and to respond quickly to such changes;
- mechanisms to sense weak signals and anticipate change;
- flexibility in the horizontal links (local partnership and networks) and vertical links (with higher level agencies) and ability for institutional learning.

Some local partnerships adapt to change by monitoring employers' continuously changing demands and by "upskilling" the local workforce quickly to responding to or even anticipate employers' needs.

London Riverside Ltd., UK

London Riverside Ltd. works closely with local employers to ensure that projects and programmes meet their skills needs as they change and evolve. To this end it works closely with the London Development Agency, learning providers and funders, Community representatives and the dominant employer in the area, a global motor company. Focusing on the interaction between physical regeneration and lifelong learning, the company has also laid the infrastructural foundations for economic development by investing in a state-of-the-art Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence. Providing both undergraduate and postgraduate training, the centre is to address the problem of manufacturing decline.

This strategy has been explicitly designed against the backdrop of considerable threats to the local economy from globally mobile capital and manufacturing. The introduction to the area of tertiary level and beyond learning opportunities is regarded as an essential component in demonstrating the commitment of the local region to the provision of the high level skills it will clearly need to remain competitive in the global environment, as well as ensuring the local availability of academic and high technical skills able to predict and react to fast moving developments in the key industries. This is also important as a mechanism for attracting to the area new residents and workers to deliver the high level skills and knowledge which would take too long to deliver through education of the existing and future local workforce – an injection of high level talent. The ability of the initiative to combine a learning perspective with regeneration resources has enabled it to lever investment beyond that in the institution itself. The initiative has also influence delivery of higher quality and cost housing stock and other infrastructure such as transport and leisure facilities which are necessary both to attract new talent, and retain that emerging locally which might otherwise itself exploit its new skills to move elsewhere.

Other successful partnerships have put in place mechanisms to sense weak signals of future change.

Tampere, Finland

An important element of the Tampere strategy around lifelong learning is for it to be flexible, to have mechanisms in place to 'sense faint signals' of future change and anticipate such change. This is mainly achieved by a continuous study of development needs and business needs and through open discussion between entrepreneurs, business developers and educational institutions. This has been achieved in a variety of different ways, with formal meetings, informal networking events, circulation of information and ideas, and, importantly, an emphasis on setting local needs and concerns in the global context. This has made Tampere a prime example of co-operation between private companies and educational institutions.

We have seen then that, in the context of change and turbulence:

- lifelong learning is clearly associated with the ability of local areas to define their strategic priorities and deliver local labour markets attuned to global needs;
- learning is not purely an instrumental policy aimed at delivering a workforce with generic, competitive skills – the notion of learning itself is central to the ability of local areas to understand their position in the global context, to define their needs and assets, and generate ideas and imaginative responses;
- the more successful initiatives exploit the learning potential inherent in exchange and debate between diverse points of view, and all combine adaptive horizontal partnerships with vertical linkages plugged in to levels able to offer opportunities and resources;
- all also combine clear views of the need to articulate supply and demand;
- with even currently successful areas putting a lot of emphasis on the value of learning cultures and support so as to maintain their position and cope with unknown future changes, there is a clear imperative for lagging areas to take learning even more seriously;
- most successful areas embrace diverse populations and are welcoming and accommodating to new arrivals as a key resource for refreshing and strengthening talent. Lagging areas tend to be less welcoming, and a learning strategy can be key both to providing changing local attitudes and as a key element in attracting new talent – new high skilled and knowledgeable workers also want high quality education for their children and opportunities to learn in their spare time!
- all local learning strategies are heavily influenced by higher level policies, many of which can be subject to change and disruption as governments come and go, competencies are moved, and economic conditions ebb and flow. The more successful are highly adaptive to such changes, and in some of the examples we have seen, local strategies have been successfully embedded in local political and cultural consensus as of key importance. This can provide both a bed rock for sustainable development, as well as a platform for extension of services beyond current limits.

4.0 BUILDING HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL⁶

In this section we examine a different perspective on the interaction of learning with local employment development, where learning strategies have been designed to strengthen community cohesiveness and build social capital⁷. Strategies of this nature tend to be found (although not always, as we shall see) in areas with deep rooted and intractable, often multiple problems, including high unemployment; poor educational achievement; poor infrastructure; often high proportions of disadvantaged immigrants and ethnic minority groups. Strategies here are based on the premise that strengthening the cohesiveness and confidence of local residents, in particular by encouraging and supporting individual and group networking, is a key component necessary (if not sufficient) to create conditions where economic and social development can take place. Social capital is an inherent component in the context of the local, and its nature, extent, coherence and fragility has powerful but complex influence over key elements of importance for local development, including employment development.

The link posited between learning and social capital is that:

- social capital enables human capital investment to be realised
- learning sustains social capital and
- social capital is strongly associated with trust and quality in a knowledge economy

It is possible to distinguish between the learning which applies to individuals and to groups; and also to distinguish in the benefits of learning for individuals and the collective with regard to their sustaining or transforming effects – lifelong learning strategies have the ability to impact in all of these areas. This is illustrated below:

	Sustaining	Transforming
Individual	Self-maintenance, for example a young mother keeping in touch with the labour market is an individual, sustaining benefit. <i>Blackburn with Darwen</i> <i>Vorarlberg</i> <i>Bilbao</i> <i>Linköping</i>	Personal change, for example a labourer retraining as a laboratory technician, is an individual, transforming benefit of learning <i>Blackburn with Darwen</i> <i>Vorarlberg</i> <i>Bilbao</i> <i>Linköping</i>
Collective	A local group learning how to use ICTs to manage and publicise its affairs and is	Local activists learning how to influence the development of local economic development planning is a

⁶ This sub-section began with a keynote presentation given by Dr. Tom Schuller (OECD), at the start of the Thessaloniki seminar, and developed in dialogue with the case study projects

⁷ . Two common definitions of social capital are: “Networks coming together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups”: van der Winde 2005; and “the resource inherent in the interactions between groups and individuals” Ecotec 2001

	Sustaining	Transforming
	stronger as a result is a collective, sustaining benefit <i>Blackburn with Darwen</i> <i>Bilbao</i>	collective/community, transforming benefit of learning <i>Blackburn with Darwen</i>

Some challenges for local strategies around learning relate to:

- applying the right measures
- balancing diversity with common issues
- the quality of local learning environments, to what extent the physical infrastructure is available for promoting or inhibiting learning.

Some strategies for lifelong learning adopted by our case studies therefore focused not only on building human capital but also on building social capital.

4.1.1 Building social capital and promoting active citizenship

Some initiatives presented in Thessaloniki consciously used learning to build individual's social skills, contacts within and outside their 'group' and confidence. Learning which enhances social capital can help improve individual's position in the labour market and their overall perspective on life. Lifelong learning in Blackburn is seen not only as a route towards employment for its population but more importantly as a way to bring people together and encourage their social and intellectual development.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Britain

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is the 26th most disadvantaged borough in the UK. It is characterised by low aspirations across all age groups, low skills levels and faces community cohesion issues, with 23% of the population coming from minority ethnic groups. In the mid 1990's Blackburn was seen and saw itself as a failing town. It was a low skill town with low wages. The residents' aspirations were low with learning not seen as relevant and no obvious link between employment and learning.

Building social capital is one of the key objectives of the lifelong learning strategy. Policies and measures that aim to encourage an interest in learning in general (not just in a functional employment-related way) dominate the strategy, as a way to build social capital within and between groups of learners.

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal was a catalyst, providing a national policy framework within which local strategy could be developed. Of equal significance however was the application of some of the ideas of the Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire⁸ who saw adult education as the way to create democracy.

⁸ "Pedagogy of the Oppressed"

The learning strategy in Blackburn with Darwen set about using lifelong learning as a key tool to improve social cohesion in the borough. Whilst the objective was clearly seen as employment focused, it was felt that the base was too low. What was needed was a transformation of the attitudes / culture across both diverse communities and employers. The population was seen as chronically low skilled and broadly little interest in learning; as an *offer* to potential inward investment the local workforce was seen as a ‘negative’.

The Council decided that its approach to lifelong learning had to start with changing this disaffected culture. A wide and imaginative set of techniques was used, beginning with encouraging participation in a variety of taster activities. Whilst some of these were employment related, the bulk were underpinning the drive for confidence building and motivation. Basic Skills – starting from literacy and numeracy – was promoted, as central to an appreciation and understanding of the world.

The Council has also used a number of other methods to reach non-traditional learners and to create a culture of learning and an awareness that learning can improve many areas of people’s lives. These include:

- enlisting the help of established figures in each ethnic community (the Community Learning Champions) to engage people in learning activities, an approach that has had great success in reaching beneficiaries from these communities
- organising learning events that are geographically and culturally close to the different population groups (e.g. traditional poetry, henna art etc)
- entering in close dialogue with the different communities present in the Borough to discover what areas of learning would interest each ethnic group.

In parallel, activities that aim to encourage an understanding and a degree of control within the community are also supported together with programmes and structures developed to aid engagement in ‘civil governance’. For example, courses that directly aim to build social capital (such as courses on ‘Assertiveness and confidence building’ or on ‘Volunteering’) are also on offer.

The Council has sought to change the disaffected local culture by developing ‘learning communities’ targeting the traditional communities. They foster partnership especially with the community and voluntary sectors. There is an active Lifelong Learning Forum as a subset of the Local Strategic Partnership and smaller areas are now developing *Neighbourhood Learning Plans*. These are the principal arena in which area needs can be articulated; the Council sees the ‘social capital’ that is being developed as part of the LLL strategy as finding its expression here. The Council works closely with the citizens of the borough to develop a dialogue and build trust and thus develop motivations to learn, anticipating that this process will raise aspirations and allow citizens to make improvements in other areas of life such as employment, health and combating crime.

Bilbao is also following a similar approach, inspired by the Basque Learning strategy, aimed to make the Basque Country of Spain, a learning region.

Bilbao, Spain

The Bajo Ibaizabal County scores low in respect of a number of life-long learning indicators, including a high proportion of the population over 65 years of age, low educational attainment levels, high illiteracy rates and high unemployment levels, especially for women. Following the guidelines of the Basque Lifelong Learning Strategy, the FONDO FORMACION organisation for skills' development in Bilbao, has developed a customised local strategy in order to mobilise resources in support of a culture of learning and to help citizens overcome barriers to learning.

The principle behind the regional strategy (which has been translated into a local strategy) is that lifelong learning favours the drive towards active citizenship. Knowledge strengthens the critical mind and helps people better understand their rights and obligations and the way the political and economic system operates. People have thus greater chances of influencing the decisions that affect them, especially through participation in NGOs, cultural groups, political parties etc. Learning can thus lead to and greater participation in social groups and more generally, in governance.

4.1.2 Engaging people in learning to encourage social cohesion

The Training Network Vorarlberg has as one of its key objectives building the competencies of disadvantaged people and easing their inclusion into education and the labour market. Although less consciously based on developing social capital, in practice the strategy and techniques of this initiative are clearly attempting to deliver a broad approach to learning, and encourage individually transformative learning to enable social as well as economic participation.

Training Partnership Vorarlberg, Austria

Vorarlberg is one of the smallest Austrian regions (Land) in Austria which located at the borders of Liechtenstein, Germany and Switzerland. It suffers from growing unemployment and strong competition from neighbouring countries such as Germany and Switzerland. Its population is characterised by comparatively low educational attainment and a comparatively high share of immigrants.

As part of the regional approach for economic development, the EQUAL partnership Training Network Vorarlberg developed a strategy to engage disadvantaged people in lifelong learning in order to equip them for participation in the labour market. One of the main objectives of the Training Partnership is to attract immigrants to learning by raising awareness of opportunities through events and information material. A key feature, apart from an information campaign highlighting the benefits of lifelong learning, is the advice and guidance centres that have been created to help beneficiaries with employment and learning-related decisions.

Blackburn, Bilbao and Vorarlberg are all examples of where conspicuously lagging areas have adopted lifelong learning strategies in an attempt to stimulate and transform low confidence and often fragmented populations. In Sweden by contrast, Linköping is an example of a successful and optimistic area where nevertheless lifelong learning is actively pursued, no so much to achieve transformation out of poverty, but to retain and enhance quality of life for all and bring immigrants "in to the fold".

Linköping, Sweden

A broad partnership between the city council and key local employment and training stakeholders in the Swedish city of Linköping are implementing a lifelong learning strategy which sets out to build human capital locally. National law gives every employee the right to take a sabbatical from work in order to pursue further training, and the strategy seeks to exploit this for the benefit of more than just the individual. Linköping has amended this system with a job rotation scheme which offers the opportunity to unemployed people to fill in temporary vacancies arising from training sabbaticals. The local partnership has developed tailor-made adult education and practical work placements for immigrants designed to help them into work. Hence, apart from building the competencies of the local labour force, this system is also one of the best examples in Sweden of using lifelong learning to promote social inclusion.

We have seen then that in different ways some local areas have developed and pursued strategies which seek to use learning indirectly for development purposes. In all the cases above the strategies have a clear objective of economic improvement and employment impact. However, they are all also united in promoting a vision of learning which sees it a fundamental to individual and collective confidence and ability. Cohesiveness and adaptability are key requirements for any locality to thrive in the turbulent world we are all confronting, and these initiatives promote learning as an obvious and effective component, for individuals and, at least in the cases of Blackburn and Bilbao, for collective groups as well.

These examples are inspiring and imaginative, but it must be acknowledged that this sort of approach is not without its limits and problems. In particular:

- the philosophy behind this approach is subtle, and the results do not easily lend themselves to clear evaluation and demonstration of impact
- in many cases therefore such strategies are the result of a particular local political view and commitment, which may well not survive political change or different emphases from National governments
- funding for such initiatives is often fragile, and may depend on pilot or experimental programmes. Whilst valuable, these tend not to be over the long term, and in most of our cases long term sustainability of the approach was very far from being guaranteed
- such an approach will often not sit easily within existing institutional structures, and will often be a peripheral, discretionary area of work rather than a central preoccupation of, for example, education departments which are mainly focused on running schools

We discussed in previous Idele reports the significance of imaginative and charismatic individuals in creating and sustaining effective local practice. Nowhere has this been more

evident that in this cluster of cases. Despite the problems of the approach presented above, all these examples had achieved remarkable and inspiring successes. This type of approach seems to have the ability to attract committed and innovative people, perhaps, in itself, an illustration of the transformative impact of learning. The features which have enabled them to take place even in the face of institutional barriers include:

- effective publicity and an ability to work with and manipulate the media
- effective networking and securing of political support, particularly where the initiative provides valuable positive publicity for those supporting it
- an inspirational style with the ability to generate excitement and enthusiasm

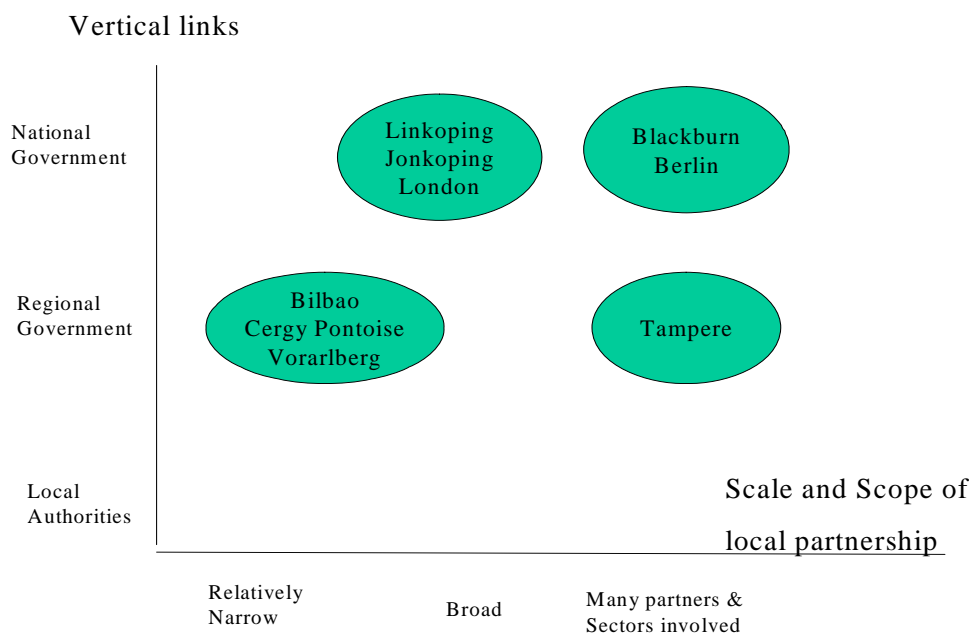
5.0 STRATEGY TO TACTICS – LESSONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In this section we move on from the broader strategic priorities followed by our case studies to look at some of the more tactical, implementation issues.

5.1 *Integrating lifelong learning strategies vertically and horizontally into the political system*

Many of the examples above have emphasised the importance of local partnerships involving stakeholders operating at broadly the same spatial level (horizontal links), as well as the importance of vertical links to higher scales and higher levels of decision making and power. Our case studies illustrate a variety of experiences of how these links have been formed and used, with some local partnerships being very wide ranging, others more narrowly focused on particular concerns; whilst some have used vertical links to the very highest level of National political or global company decision making to advance their case, whilst others have sought more to exploit linkages rather closer to the local scale.

The following diagram seeks to map the horizontal and vertical links of the case studies. It shows how far up the political scale each of them is linked, and how broadly based their partnership is, in terms of both the numbers of partners and the diversity of sectors involved.



Jönköping and London riverside are both examples of where a significant role has been played by high level links up to the national (and indeed global) scale, by relatively broad but not all encompassing local partnerships. In London, the scale of the ‘local’ area is itself rather large in both area and population, meaning there are many local players involved. The key local partners however, those most focused on the economy-skills interaction and so most closely involved in the strategy and its delivery, were fewer in number and specifically targeted to ensure access to higher levels of decision making. In Jönköping, previous access to National level programmes and the unlocking of discretionary national funding for learning

development has been key to resourcing, legitimising the “stay ahead of the game” strategy followed by the local learning partnership.

Tampere by contrast has focused most of its vertical attention on the regional level. The clarity of the local strategy to create a world class learning environment has been ‘sold’ very widely indeed in the locality, and its all embracing scope means a very diverse and broadly based network of local partnerships. Rather than a simple, albeit large single main partnership as in Jönköping, in Tampere the strategy is more all pervasive, and involves overlapping and network relationships between different partners and partnerships, all brought together by a common view of the core strategic imperative. In this case National linkages have been of less significance, although clearly the emphasis on high class global production means the locality has links beyond national boundaries. The important point here for Tampere is its ability to deliver a convincing world class learning message *directly* to key global investors, bypassing the need for significant National level involvement. Its ability to do this rests on the breadth and flexible sophistication of its strategy, which is as much a commonly agreed *idea* as it is a set of specific plans and programmes.

The local level of governance suffers from a certain dilemma in that in order to conceive employment and education action it frequently depends on the regional and national levels of administration and policy, even though at the same time it is the main driver for implementation⁹: in the words of one delegate at the IDELE seminar in Thessaloniki, “if it doesn’t happen at the local level, it doesn’t happen at all”. Good vertical links from local stakeholders, solid contacts with actors at higher levels of governance, can mean more effective employment policies at the local level. Working together with all the key partners (horizontal integration) provides for added strength of the local approach.

The Learnshop in Berlin-Neukölln (Germany) and the town of Linköping (Sweden) are examples of localities that have successfully managed horizontal and vertical integration – Berlin being very broadly based and diverse with links to the National level, Linköping still nationally connected but more locally focused.

⁹ The second IDELE seminar in 2005 addresses exactly this issue by examining local employment development within the multi-level governance system. See www.ecotec.com/idele for further information and the forthcoming 6th thematic report.

Learnshop Berlin- Neukölln

Berlin-Neukölln is the most densely populated borough of Berlin with 320.000 inhabitants, roughly 64.000 of which are of foreign origin. The Borough has a high percentage of ethnic minorities and long term unemployed, many young people who are early school leavers without qualifications, a high proportion of older workers with low or inappropriate skills, a lack of vocational training places, a mismatch between the qualifications of the unemployed and the demands of the companies as well as a lack of information about education and learning provision. A local development strategy with overarching goals and well defined tools already exists for the area of Berlin- Neukölln, and it takes the form of a Territorial Employment Pact (TEP). Within this broader employment strategy for the area, there was a need to develop the lifelong learning aspect of the strategy.

The Learnshop Berlin-Neukölln was set up as a way to develop a learning culture locally. It takes the form of a ground-level shop, open during market opening hours, that inhabitants can visit to obtain information and advice around training and learning. The aims of the Learnshop include improving activation, qualifications and enhancing the mobility and language skills of low-skilled and disadvantaged people from the area, whilst increasing in-company training by small local businesses. These aims are seen as key elements both for local economic development and social inclusion.

A strong local partnership supports the TEP, and a strategic local action plan has been in place for years ensuring good horizontal links in the area. The Learnshop is networked with Neighbourhood, managers making it even more strongly embedded horizontally.

The Learnshop Neukölln also has very good vertical links since it is embedded in the TEP's action plan for the area but is also embedded in the broader approach of the LearnNet for the whole of Berlin-Brandenburg region. The LearnNet Berlin-Brandenburg itself is part of the national program "Learning Regions" of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (FMER) and is embedded in the FMER initiative "Lifelong Learning for All".

This very structured position does not prevent locally customized implementation and provision. The Neukölln district has specific characteristics that influence the needs, opportunities and methods to be used, such as a high proportion of immigrants, local cultural diversity, and the specific profile of local companies and employers. There are predominantly low paid jobs, high unemployment and associated poverty. For many of these issues it is clear from the project's experience that it is only at very local level that specific target groups can be reached, while the activation of local people for lifelong learning requires good knowledge of the area and local networking approaches.

The strength of the initiative comes therefore from a combination of a very locally sensitized and responsive service delivery ethos, but in combination with a highly permissive higher level policy environment which can be used to provide resources and political support. This environment is itself available in large part as a result of the dense network of connections and links accessed by the initiative, and its ability to demonstrate the effectiveness over time of its practices.

In Linköping (Sweden) it is the whole lifelong learning strategy that is embedded in, and supported by, regional and national levels of governance.

Linköping, Sweden

Linköping is a university town and a regional centre of commerce. The city is growing and well-educated inhabitants are recognised as an important strategic asset. Linköping has a long tradition of lifelong learning. Local and regional politicians have given a fundamental support for adult education and lifelong learning in Linköping and actively driven it forward.

A strong ‘hub-and-spoke’ local partnership exists around the municipality, which consists, among others, of local employers, the local University, training providers and the social partners. This partnership is based on a broad cross-party support both at the local and at the regional level which has existed since 1998/99. At that time, it was locally agreed that *irrespective* of the political party in power, adult education would remain high on the agenda. This unity to drive lifelong learning forward by all the key actors in the city has meant that investment in adult education has remained stable despite other budget cuts in recent years. Interestingly, this stance has not always been popular with all citizens, but has been maintained through the durability of the local political consensus over the importance of this policy, with further political support from higher levels.

In Linköping, lifelong learning activities are not only embedded into regional and inter-regional networks, such as the Regional Network for Lifelong Learning in which both Linköping and the neighbouring town of Nörrköping co-operate to design and develop adult education initiatives. These initiatives are linked to the national qualifications framework.

Lifelong learning policies in Linköping also make creative use of national unemployment and social security funds, which in Sweden can be used flexibly at the local level, in order to manage the skills development of the local workforce. This point is very important since the flexible use of welfare funding to specifically support provision harnessed to clear learning objectives has been central to the long term resourcing of, and political support for, a learning based development strategy.

In both these cases, (Berlin and Linköping), lifelong learning is part of a wider development strategy for the locality, and is connected to dense networks of partnership. Lifelong learning is a key component of the wider local strategy alongside other elements which can include economic incentives, infrastructure plans, social inclusion elements and so on.

The situation in Blackburn is somewhat different, with the lifelong learning strategy being conceived as a means of building local social capital and community coherence as a step towards making the area more competitive and economically attractive. The political impetus began with the Local Authority embracing the lifelong learning message, using National development programme funding to initiate the programme, and then setting about building a wide ranging and well connected support partnership.

Blackburn and Darwin, UK

The Blackburn and Darwin Borough Council took a dynamic lead in setting up a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for its area, aiming to raise the profile of learning and engage citizens who normally would not take part in learning. The partners in delivering the strategy are many and varied, including: the Lancashire Connexions Board, the Lancashire Learning & Skills Council, the Blackburn College, St. Mary's College, the Education Action Zone Sure Start Boards, the Roman Catholic and Church of England, the Lancashire Council of Mosques, the Interfaith Council, all schools in the Borough, the East Lancashire Learning Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce, the Workers' Education Association, the Talia Theatre, Bootstrap Enterprises, Action Factory, Blackburn Rovers Football Club, the Racial Equality Council, the Ethnic Minorities Development Association etc.

There has been a continuity of management and purpose since the policy was adopted. The Council plays the role of facilitator and influencer; many of the partner agencies cover larger geographic areas than Blackburn district so there is a continual need to re-focus their attention on Blackburn. The Blackburn Council also recognises that influence has to carry some practical weight. There are no significant 'high quality' employment opportunities in the town and limited current inward investment so the Council and the Health Authority provide the 'role models'. They seek to operate to standards that become exemplars and they seek to provide job opportunities that can be targeted at the most disadvantaged in the area. The Council itself employs 8000 people and in 2002 was judged by an independent Audit Commission to be one of 22 "excellent" councils in the UK under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for upper tier authorities and was also named Council of the Year.

Strong leadership also entails taking steps for the sustainability of the strategy and the partnership itself: even though the LLL strategy was the brain child of one person, a recent restructuring of the responsible Council department has taken place which ensured that responsibilities and knowledge were spread between several people so that if the originator leaves, the groundwork will be laid for the continuation of the strategy.

One important feature of the initiative has been its ability to access political influence and publicity at high levels. A senior government minister is the Member of Parliament for Blackburn, and has provided support and influence to help develop and publicise the work locally. The project has also been successful in attracting 'celebrities' such as well known sports stars to take part in events to attract new learners, using a wide variety of networks and influencers to make contact. The opportunity to take part in such events is attractive to such people since existing publicity and the wide reach of the project guarantees both good turn-outs and media attention.

The remaining three case studies, Vorarlberg, Cergy Pontoise and Bilbao, are all characterised by a more regional and rather narrower approach to partnership and networking. Vorarlberg is a relatively small Land in Austria, meaning the decision making power available to all Lands can be concentrated on a rather smaller population than elsewhere. The embedding of the

Territorial Employment Pact approach in Austria gives considerable power in this policy area to Lands, and in Vorarlberg the approach has been to involve partners across the whole region, with a particular focus on the areas most in need of intervention and organisations with a direct contribution to make. In practice there has been relatively little need for higher level linkages to be made, and the project has concentrated on involvement of partners with direct relevance to learning and employment.

Cergy Pontoise is a different, more "bottom up" story. A change in national led to a vacuum at the higher, Departmental level, which the local initiative has moved to exploit. Vertical linkages have therefore concentrated on the immediate higher level, with little advantage to be found through national level networking. As with Vorarlberg, the partnership network has been relatively instrumental, focusing on partners with direct relevance to the particular services offered, rather than a more all embracing approach. In Bilbao, the high level of autonomy in economic development and learning held by the Basque government means locally based initiatives focus almost exclusively on this level for higher level networking.

The Idele programme has from the very beginning emphasised the importance of both horizontal and vertical linkages. Looked at from the point of view of lifelong learning, we can see from this set of case studies that:

- LLL is a broad concept, which has been applied in very different ways in the different places we have examined.
- Therefore, the types of both horizontal and vertical linkages found to be useful and effective vary as well.
- Nevertheless, some patterns emerge. Strategies focused on global competitiveness and the link between high level, avant garde learning philosophies as a strategic competitive asset tend to have wide and flexible networks which seek to involve a lot of different partners, with a particularly strong focus on businesses (including global companies) and the involvement of higher education institutions.
- Strategies which are more directly instrumental in using learning to maintain and improve skills and competencies tend to be a little narrower in focus, often involving large numbers of partners, but from more restricted sectors where there is a clear supply-demand dynamic, often linked to the availability of funding
- Those with a broad social development and social capital philosophy tend to be locally very broad, and go out of their way to involve many different, sometimes unexpected, partners as ways to reach diverse groups and inject creativity into the process. They also tend to have "high energy" leadership, with clear visions and an ability to network at high political levels effectively.

5.2 Institutional learning: keeping linkages flexible in the face of change, and adapting to changes in the governance system

Some successful local initiatives have shown an ability to adapt to institutional changes or changes in politics, demonstrating institutional learning, such as by adapting their structure and aims in order to respond to changing institutional arrangements. One such is Cergy

Pontoise, which falls in to the category of relatively locally/narrowly based partnership with primarily regionally based linkages.

Cergy Pontoise

The 'new' town of Cergy Pontoise aims to encourage lifelong learning among employees of SMEs and micro-businesses. It has a number of private training institutes in addition to the local university and aims to attract inward investment by marketing itself as a "centre for excellence" in training. The Maison de l'Information sur la Formation et l'Emploi' (MIFE) based in the city of Cergy Pontoise leads a local network of partners, trainers and SMEs with the aims of improving training opportunities for the local workforce, informing and providing advice to SMEs and to employees/job seekers about training and re-training opportunities in the area.

The MIFE itself has had to continuously adapt to changes in politics over the past few years. Originally, a network of MIFEs was set up at local level to offer adult education guidance, an area which was under the competence of the central government in France. In 1993, the national government decide to devolve the competence for adult education to the regional level. This meant that some regions chose to discontinue support for MIFE at the local level and many MIFEs disappeared. In the area of Cergy Pontoise, the Département (the sub-regional level of government) continued to support the MIFE, but this meant that the structure had to adapt by expanding its activities to cover the much larger area of the whole Département.

The Cergy Pontoise MIFE had to adapt to the new remit and multiply the information gathered and disseminated for a larger area. It proved successful in meeting the new challenge, a fact which led the Département to entrust more tasks to the MIFE. Hence the MIFE expanded not only the area of its remit also its thematic focus. To its support role for employees and job seekers it added the function of offering advice to SMEs on opportunities to train and re-train their staff. In order to develop training actions proposed to small businesses, the MIFE has set up a partnership including training institutes, the Directorate for Employment, the Directorate for Industry, organisations collecting training funds from enterprises, the Council for the Economic Development of the Val d'Oise area, and the Cergy Pontoise development agency amongst others.

In this case it should be emphasised that this is not an example of an organisation fighting simply to stay in existence for its own sake – the MIFE has generated a set of expertise and an institutional belief in the value of its contributions to the local area based on locally demonstrated success. Change in national policy created conditions of disruption in the lifelong and skills training market which drew attention to the continuing need for a coordinated and strategic approach to learning throughout the economy locally and regionally, particularly for businesses and their employees as well as those outside the labour market. The MIFE has proved able to fill this gap through its strong roots in successful local delivery, combined with an ability to exploit its networks and act entrepreneurially and adapt its offerings to demonstrated local demand.

The process described above shows how a local agency responded to the changes in political will and the sources of political support and managed to develop a successful survival strategy for the agency itself and also to maintain and expand the local partnerships adjacent to it.

Unlike France where the state has been retreating from labour market policy, back in Germany recent reforms (Hartz IV) have on occasion opened up a window of opportunity for the local level to assume an enhanced role in employment policy.

Learnshop Berlin- Neukölln, Germany

In Berlin, the initiation of the Territorial Employment Pact (TEP) in 1998 provided the opportunity to formulate employment policies at the district rather than the *Land* level. In Neukölln this freedom resulted in the development of the Learnshop Neukölln, which is embedded in the action plan of the local TEP. The creation of the TEPs in the late-1990s resulted in labour market policies effectively being formulated at the district level. The regional partnership approach of the TEPs and the successor partnerships together with a greater focus on economic policies of the Land administration has meant that, for the time being at least, the formulation of employment policies has been effectively “devolved” to the district level.

For Berlin Neukölln, the recent labour market reforms taking place at national level (Hartz IV), have meant that the *lander*, the national level have now become the key actors in this policy area. There is little competence at the sub-national or regional level, but this leaves more space for action at the very local level, the district level, below the region. Even though it is too early to tell what results the recent German labour market reforms will bring about, the intention of the reform is for the private sector to play a stronger role in employment and job search. The reforms also place more emphasis at the local level since the new laws provide that local social security offices will in principle be responsible for at least the long-term unemployed.

In both these examples it can be argued that the learning "habit" inherent in organisations which have learning as their business has helped them adapt to and exploit environmental changes.

5.3 Engaging business, entrepreneurs and SMEs

Our case studies illustrate the often complex interactions of learning philosophies on the one hand, and economic and employment development on the other. Danielle Mazzonis, in her keynote presentation spoke about the paradigm of the Emilia Romagna region of Italy, which highlights some lessons for this dynamic.

The region has had a great tradition of innovation over the centuries and one of the key factors that enables this tradition to be maintained is social capital between entrepreneurs in the region. Ms Mazzonis spoke about how the enterprises in the region have found *a balance between co-operation and competitiveness*, helping them all to remain at the forefront of developments. Over the past decades, a number of clusters of very specialised small businesses have been developed in a number of towns of the Emilia Romagna region. These

clusters include: businesses supplying parts to manufacturers of high performance cars in Modena; ceramic tiles and machinery for producing ceramic tiles, also in Modena; woodworking machinery in Rimini; food processing and related machinery in Parma; farm machinery in Reggio Emilia; packaging machinery in Bologna etc. The enterprises in each cluster pull their resources together and co-operate on certain aspects (for example consulting among the cluster on future training needs) while maintaining their competitive edge on other aspects of the business process (such as product design or research).

Emilia Romagna, Italy

The region of Emilia Romagna in northern Italy has successfully developed into a provider of highly specialised goods that are being exported globally. In order to ensure that the development needs of regional businesses are met, the region has established so-called “Centres for advanced services for enterprises”. A number of Service Centres provide a mix of training and business services (including, among others: organising specialised sectoral meetings for information exchange; supporting networks between businesses and lobbying activities; offering support for certification, patents and quality services etc).

The Centres for advanced services enable relatively small but very specialised businesses to register very specific training needs. If sufficient demand exists from a number of businesses in the catchment area of each Centre, the centre then addresses this need by organising courses exactly tailored to what each industry requires.

By finding common purpose within a competitive environment, these small but specialised manufacturing enterprises have managed to remain cutting edge and to adapt to ever changing markets. The relevance of this for lifelong learning is clearly that cooperation amongst "consumers" of skills can lead to much better information and planning parameters for those seeking to supply the training market. Whilst not a conscious lifelong learning *strategy*, Emilia Romagna paradigm is a good example of how collaboration itself has a learning element inherent within it.

A more orchestrated approach to the same effect, learning through collaboration, has been adopted in France:

Cergy Pontoise, France

To ensure that training provision meets the needs of local businesses, the education and training strategies of the private providers are developed in close collaboration with local businesses. This ensures that an appropriate skills’ pool is available that businesses can “tap into”.

The focus is particularly on small businesses, where employers do pay a contribution for training of their staff to an aggregate Fund, but do not always know what training that gives them right to and how to materialise such training. The MIFE visits small businesses to advise them on available training opportunities. Businessmen appreciate this free service offered by MIFE, having grown weary of private consultant advice which is often very costly. The MIFE brings businesses with similar needs together, advises them and organises training for them that is tailored to their requirements.

Other case studies illustrate an apparent phenomenon of lifelong learning based strategy, that business involvement can be more easily achieved than through other employment projects. The broad scope of LLL can be moulded to the particular needs of businesses, and involvement in local initiatives with a learning focus may seem more attractive to businesses for pragmatic, publicity and "ethical" reasons. Pragmatically, some business can see immediate instrumental benefits from influencing learning provision and access to learning opportunities for current and future staff – this is clearly the case in Tampere for example, where the learning based strategy has global aspirations and is driven by the economic needs of the locality. In London Riverside, the involvement of a global company was clearly driven by its need to make a strategic, long term investment decision, with the learning strategy formed locally tailored to both its needs and those of small local suppliers. In Blackburn by contrast, businesses as well as public employers have been happy to be involved with a high profile, attractive initiative which is specifically designed to reflect well upon those supporting it. "Ethical" reasons for business involvement arise from the fact that businesses themselves, particularly local employers and managers, are of course themselves connected with the localities in which they operate, in many cases living there, raising families, consuming services and so on. In Berlin, business involvement has included many local employers and businesses who seek to contribute as well as benefit from the initiative. The same applies in Sweden, where the country wide learning-friendly culture and sympathetic national policy leads many business people to expect and encourage learning for themselves and their members of staff.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

We have seen from our case studies that lifelong learning strategies are many and various, and interact in a variety of complex ways with other issues, ranging from global competitiveness to community cohesion. We began our examination of learning by identifying three critical areas where turbulent and rapid change is taking place, and where we posited lifelong learning might have a role to play. We will begin this section by drawing some conclusions with regard to these areas:

- technological change
- demographic change
- changes in lifestage transitions

6.1 *Technological change*

Many of our cases have shown how learning strategies are being used to tackle the pressures arising from technological change in two main ways. Firstly, local development strategies with learning at their heart are being used to improve the "fit" between the supply and demand for appropriate skilled labour. Such approaches are essentially instrumental, and seek to identify the needs of local employers (both actual and potential), and provide in response a learning infrastructure able to deliver appropriately skilled and qualified (potential) employees. To a very large extent the developing skills needs of employers are technology drive. Although "softer" skills such as teamworking and creative thinking are often identified as increasingly important, for most employers the essentials of their production processes, whether it be manufacturing or the delivery of services, are dependent on specific skills related to particular, even though ever changing, technologies. This is particularly evident from London Riverside and Cergy Pontoise.

Secondly, some learning strategies take a broader, more individually developmental approach which seek to develop people's receptiveness to and enthusiasm for learning as a good in its own right – this is a strong feature in both Sweden and Finland. It is no coincidence that in both these countries many of the most successful industries in recent years have been very high tech, and have been developed on the back of highly educated but also highly "novelty tolerant" workforces. The learning strategies we examined were deeply rooted in cultural beliefs about the importance of learning as a good in its own right, and a lot of emphasis in delivery has gone on use of technology and flexible thinking approaches highly relevant to changing high tech economies.

At a somewhat different level, the inclusiveness through learning strategies followed in Blackburn and Bilbao both seek to address "techno-phobia" amongst more deprived, less well educated populations. Both seek to provide opportunities to experience technology, particularly ICTs, to those with little current access, and to relate learning experiences to aspects of people's lives that they are likely to find appealing and non-threatening.

Lessons emerging from these cases include:

- learning strategies are highly appropriate means to tackle issues from technological change, when they are well integrated and realistically designed
- most industries are now highly dependent on technology, and development strategies which do not prioritise using learning routes to assure a supply of skilled and adaptable labour are less likely to be successful
- learning strategies based on strong cultural support for learning can be successful in making areas globally appealing for high tech industries; however there is little evidence from our case studies that such cultural sympathy can be easily manufactured where it does not exist. It is more likely to be the case that instrumental motives will drive the decisions of both business and individuals over the role of learning in acquiring skills
- learning strategies for the disadvantaged can be helpful in overcoming resistance to technology, particularly when harnesses to wider and appealing initiatives. Access to the technology itself is however still a barrier.

6.2 Demographic change

The strongest relationship of lifelong learning strategies to the demographic changes discussed earlier is to be found in the area of population movements, migration and inter group dynamics. Many of the case studies, particularly Blackburn, Berlin and Vorarlberg are in relatively deprived areas with diverse populations, some long standing immigrant origin communities, others more newly arrived. In all these cases, lifelong learning strategies were being used to build social capital both within and between groups, with some success. Diverse populations are likely to lead to diverse learning delivery, often with a need for a high degree of tailoring and targeting. This is likely to be expensive, and some of our case studies have struggled to secure long term sustainability.

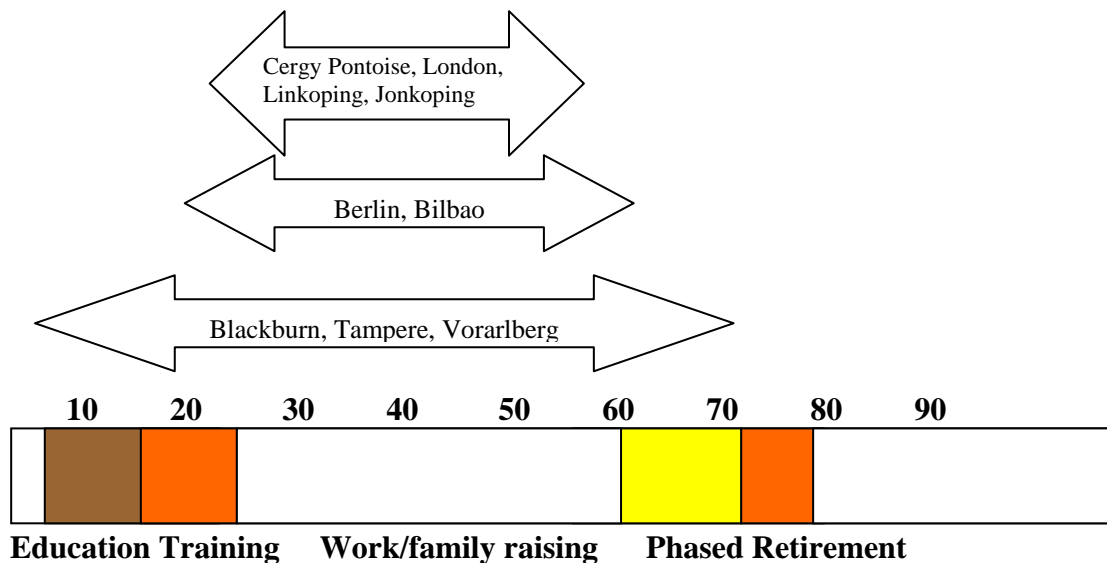
We found little evidence to show whether lifelong learning is having a significant impact on the issues arising from population ageing, at least in terms of workforce dynamics. The closest example came from Vorarlberg, where an ageing indigenous Austrian population lives alongside a much younger immigrant population. A simplistic view might see this as helping solve the demographic issue for the indigenous population, of there being insufficient younger people to fund the welfare system on which the growing older population is dependent. At the local level however there is no direct link between the two. Despite the best efforts of the project to use learning to break down barriers between the two groups, and bring immigrant workers into the labour force, there remains a degree of separation and prejudice between them.

Demographic change of a different nature was being tackled in Tampere, with the learning strategy being used consciously to provide an internationally attractive environment to help bring highly qualified newcomers to the area.

6.3 Lifestage transitions

We found rather more evidence of the role of lifelong learning in the changing pattern of lifestage transitions.

The following diagram is based on the life cycle, and shows which particular stages/ ages in life each of the case studies are working on. For example, the Tampere strategy covers all ages from kindergarten to post-retirement, whilst London Riverside was specifically targeted on those in work needing to re-train or re-enter the labour market



Interestingly, notwithstanding their roots in a strong learning friendly culture, the Swedish examples mainly focused upon those of working age. This can be explained through the fact that other aspects of Swedish public policy already provide very high quality formal education on the one hand, and generous post retirement benefits on the other. In fact many of the issues being dealt with by the Swedish projects involved integration of immigrants or long term unemployed into the labour market through the manipulation of existing learning policies, with the greatest attention being paid therefore to those perceived to have the greatest need.

London Riverside and Cergy Pontoise were equally focused on those of current working age, with the priority being to upskill the workforce on the one hand, and meet the needs of employers on the other. London was however also involved in extending its reach to the tertiary education transition stage, primarily as a means of bringing new talent to the area.

Berlin and Bilbao both reached into the education to work and work to retirement transitions. In Berlin, partnerships involved forging links between educational institutions and businesses, and on improving advice and guidance to those both arriving in, and departing from, the world of work. Some emphasis was placed on advice on the different ways retirement might be managed, including opportunities to return to private study. The Bilbao social capital based strategy was concerned to involve a wide variety of organisations, including colleges, and citizens groups including those for older people.

This sort of approach was taken furthest by the final three cases. Tampere, Blackburn and Vorarlberg all sought to deliver lifelong learning strategies which meant just that – lifelong. All included schools and even pre school activities within their ways of working, and Blackburn and Vorarlberg both targeted elder groups as well. This lifelong approach was adopted for somewhat different reasons in each case however. Blackburn's approach was based on a very inclusive philosophy, as a principle in its own right. Tampere based its approach on its strategy of seeking global recognition, and therefore carrying the lifelong learning approach to its logical extreme. In Vorarlberg the approach was more pragmatic – the nature of the community and voluntary organisations which the project needed to work with in order to reach their target groups was such that it inevitably came into contact with all ages. This was recognised by the project, and used to its advantage, by delivering its services in ways which attracted all ages and created a positive environment.

Despite all these positive examples however, we were not able to identify much hard evidence of strategies which were taking a distinctly innovative stance towards learning for older people (active ageing), nor towards the increasingly dynamic nature of 'portfolio careers' and self employment. Plenty of businesses were involved in different ways, but learning specifically for those cycling through the labour market (as opposed to 'returners to' in need of reskilling) were few and far between. It could probably be argued that the 'life enhancing' stance towards LLL as seen in Tampere and Blackburn should help create the confident, positive and flexible mind sets needed by those going into self employment or becoming entrepreneurs. We have no evidence to say this was not an indirect result of the work of these initiatives, but equally none to say it was.

6.4 *The place of lifelong learning*

This report and the IDELE seminar on which it was based, has dealt with the issue of how lifelong learning is integrated by local initiatives in local strategies. One key question discussed was 'in whose interest' lifelong learning is pursued. Apart from being in the interest of governments and public agencies, lifelong learning is in the interest of enterprises and citizens themselves (citizens are at the same time workers and business owners themselves). In this sense, lifelong learning is both a measure of quality of life and an instrument in order to achieve quality of life.

The initiatives presented during the seminar demonstrated that lifelong learning is seen as instrumental for economic development at national but also at local level. In many cases, a local lifelong learning strategy is an instrument for social development by means of activating disadvantaged persons and moving locals who are far from the labour market into the primary labour market. During the seminar, relatively fewer experiences were heard about reaching managers of enterprises and business owners, but it was concluded that a combination of competition and cooperation between local enterprises, where the bolt is *trust*, is the key for regions to successfully stay ahead of changing economic circumstances and markets, as demonstrated by the case of Emilia Romagna.

Apart from being a way to promote economic and social development, lifelong learning is also about building citizenship and improving the way life is lived. This is done thanks to the

connection between learning and building of social capital and is expressed through three elements of the knowledge society/economy: access (giving people access to knowledge and helping them engage in learning), interaction (allowing people to accumulate knowledge through human interaction), and validation (assessing and improving the learning experience).

Local lifelong learning initiatives presented during the seminar appeared to deal more with learning throughout the active periods in life, but less with the initial education phase in people's lives and with their transition from active working life to pre-retirement and retirement.

Lifelong learning should be considered as a concept covering the whole of life and not just life after formal education, since it is too late to talk about a person learning to be an active citizen in adult life. Social skills and a habit for learning should be acquired early on, and action needs to be taken on educational systems themselves, the focus should not just be on adult education. Moreover, local initiatives have to be aware of the principles of pedagogy in order to put together consistent approaches. To avoid reinventing the wheel, there is a need to learn from the experts in the field of adult learning and build on their work. At least two of the examples presented in this seminar (Blackburn and Cergy Pontoise) were inspired or emanated from the thinking of guiding lights in the field and this was a factor contributing to their success.

Regarding the ageing of the population, and going back to the importance of localities being able to sense weak signals of future trends and respond to them, the question arose of whether local initiatives are doing enough on this transition from active working life to pre-retirement and retirement. The ageing of the population, far from being a weak signal, is a very strong signal and it will be crucial for more initiatives throughout Europe to address it. Rather than thinking about retirement schemes, Europe has to focus on capturing the work product of older people who have the potential to stay active for longer. Active ageing is not just an issue for older people who will need to adapt to working while old but is also an issue for families in general and for younger people in particular, who have to understand that they too will age and that learning throughout life can help them best prepare for the future.

When considering the transferability of the approaches presented in this seminar, the concern is around what exactly can be transferred and what the costs of such transfer could be, since each locality faces different circumstances and operates in a specific context. Textbook solutions cannot work in any environment and the best approach is for each locality to design a strategy from the starting point where they are. What was unique about the initiatives that were examined in this seminar was not that they used a certain successful method, but that they have a sense of place and that they are locally rooted. Nevertheless, a vehicle is needed for a local strategy with a lifelong learning component to work and the partnership, the coalition of local actors is this vehicle.

Some common concepts seem to apply to all the initiatives examined, making up a 'shopping list of ingredients' that a successful local initiative won't do without, including a strong partnership, trust, involvement of the public and private sector etc. But there are also other elements, unique to each place that were demonstrated in many of the initiatives discussed

and which also contribute to success. Using a metaphor, apart from the recipe of key ingredients, there is also the icing on the cake, which can be elements such as passion and commitment or an insightful partnership leader.

Another key question the seminar dealt with concerned how important lifelong learning was perceived to be for a local strategy. The general view was that in what concerns lifelong learning, 'if things don't happen locally, they don't happen at all'. This was even if in some cases, such as Blackburn, there was no mention of learning in the first draft of the local development strategy, but took prominence gradually. There, it was recognised that prior to achieving economic development, the massive challenge for Blackburn's inhabitants is learning to be learners.

Finally, why does the local level matter in relation to lifelong learning? Where it is successful, a local lifelong learning strategy gives a very clear view of what the locality is trying to achieve. A strategy usually exists for lifelong learning at national level, but this is expressed in general and abstract terms. The local level can turn an abstract national strategy into something very concrete that makes sense for the locality, informed by and for the local people.

Annex One

Database of Projects

Please see separate project fiches.