



**Engaging the Glocal:
EU Mantras, National
Strategy and the Struggle
for LLL as a Public Good**

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NATIONAL POLICY DOCUMENTS



- **National lifelong learning (henceforth LLL) strategies are being developed and formulated, at least at the level of policy documents, if not in actual practice, in various EU member states.**
- **LLL derives conceptually but not ideologically from an older concept, Lifelong Education (henceforth LLE), which had less policy resonance than its present economic version.**

UNESCO & LIFELONG EDUCATION



- **The Unesco LLE movement provided an expansive and humanistic view of the entire process of human learning ‘from the cradle to the grave’.**
- **They promoted what was therefore an all-embracing concept covering education throughout the whole lifespan and comprising the various sources of learning to which a person can be exposed**

SCIENTIFIC HUMANISM



- **UNESCO: strong third world orientation**
- **A strong humanistic culture ranging from liberalism to marxism**
- **Many had their cultural roots in the Scientific Humanism associated with Julian Huxley, UNESCO's first Director General**

TWO WAVES



- **Utopian Wave**

e.g. Towards a learning society

- **Pragmatic wave**

e.g. what shape do LLE and the learning society take in particular contexts

POLICY IMPACT



- **Alas, however, the older concept of LLE had little effect on education policy itself.**
- **Trendy discourse**
- **Concept was already diluted, in Latin America - frequently accorded a 'secondary labour market' economic twist in certain projects promoted through foreign 'dependency' aid**

DISCURSIVE SHIFT



- **Economic climate in late 80s and 90s.**
- **Turbulent and fragmentary labour market.**
- **Rise of consumerism in the West**
- **Concept died out as LLE but re-emerged as LLL**
- **Re-emerged in the 90s – EU, in addition to OECD.**

90s Economic Turn



- **EU: Lifelong Learning given great importance in context of concentrated effort by members to pool resources to become competitive in an intensified globalised world.**
- **The source of this re-emergence as lifelong learning dates back to the publication of Learning for Life, a European Strategy produced not by educators or educationists but by the European Rountable of Industrialists.**

RESPONSIBILISATION



- **the emphasis in this new discourse is centred on the learner rather than on learning structures.**
- **The flip side to this is that it places the onus squarely on the individual.**
- **Education and learning become a matter of individual rather than social responsibility.**

NEOLIBERAL TURN



- **part and parcel of the Neoliberal turn in education: Education a consumption rather than a public good.**
- **Blame for failure is to be apportioned onto the individual rather than the State's inability to provide the right structures for effective learning to take place at different stages of one's life.**

NO FOLLOW UP DOCUMENT



- **The economism of LLL was criticised during the EU LL Memo consultation process.**
- **Criticised on the grounds that it placed too much emphasis on the employment and labour market aspects of learning.**
- **A much anticipated and promised 'Ten Years After' LLL document was never brought to light.**
- **Instead - a rather skimpy 'EU Agenda for Adult Learning' document**
- **smacked of a desperate, possibly 'last-ditch', effort to maintain adult learning on the EU agenda.**

PANACEA



- **LLL – the panacea for existing social ills, such as the capitalist system’s inability to provide jobs with a measure of security, hence *precarité***
- **A strictly reductionist LLL notion serves to present a ‘jobs crisis’ as a ‘skills crisis’**

LLL AND WELL-BEING



- **LLL includes learning to cope with emotional stress said to emerge from the brain's chemical imbalances.**
- **What is not said: for all the talk of 'get on your bike', 'pull up your bootstraps' or 'invest in LLL', much anxiety is caused by the dysfunctional structuring Capitalist forces shaping people's lives.**
- **They generate a sense of insecurity and despair deriving from the current situation of austerity, precarious living and inability to plan long term.**
- **Rather than LLL treating symptoms, we need LLL that provides a critical reading of the causes.**

MEMBER STATE'S RESPONSE



- **Institutions that furnish us with policy guidelines are not monolithic. EU no exception.**
- **There can be no power without resistance even though this resistance is never external to the power structure itself (Foucault)**

NATIONAL APPROPRIATION



- **How EU member states embrace and reconstruct the policy discourse, possibly *reinventing* it for non-reductionist educational ends, more so given that these organisations are increasingly dependent on EU funding.**

MALTA



- **Population: 400,000**
- **New and smallest EU member state**
- **worrying ‘early school leaving’ issue - the percentage of early school leavers in Malta hovered around the 22% mark in 2013, well below the EU’s 12% average.**

DRAFT NATIONAL LLL STRATEGY



- **Suggests at least at policy document level that Malta is not prepared to relinquish the broader conception of LLE.**
- **EU membership a catalyst for importance given to Adult Education (AE)**

AE SURVEY



- **46.8 per cent of persons aged 25-64 participated in education and LLL during 2011.**
- **Men constituted 53 per cent**
- **women constituted 47 per cent of participants engaged in education/LLL (formal, non-formal and informal learning).**
- **34% of the 25-64 population age group participated in non-formal education. 109,803 learning activities, primarily courses or on-the-job training, were registered, with 60 % being job-related.**
- **55,450 persons engaged in informal learning activities (knowledge acquisition), the majority in the 35-44 age bracket, with 17% in the 55-64 age group.**
- **The broader cultural dimension, i.e. cultural literacy, is emphasised in this slight departure from the strictly economic dimension: more than 50% of participants attended cultural events, e.g. live performances, cinemas and cultural sites visits (the most popular). (NSO, 2013)**
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- **A national level concern with education that extends beyond mere 'employability' ?**
- **Cultural accretion not to be confused with 'Social purpose' adult education –**
- **the latter connects with the struggle for a participatory substantive democracy - people as social actors and not simply producers and consumers**
- **missing from the EU's discourse - emphasis on new basic literacies but not critical literacy.**
- **Absent from Maltese statistics**

THE MALTA LLL STRATEGY



- **Gives due importance to employability issues foregrounding them**
- **Also highlights the *social dimension* of learning.**
- **overdue need to develop schools as community learning centres.**
- **recognises the sterling work of NGOs (in the adult education field, even arguing for further support in this area.**
- **it focuses on social difference - the concerns of men, women, the elderly, the disabled in the context of community development and action programmes, and coordinated communal learning strategies and networks.**
- **adult education in the context of immigration**
- **the bio-centric - emphasis on a green component at the core of a national LLL strategy for sustainable development**

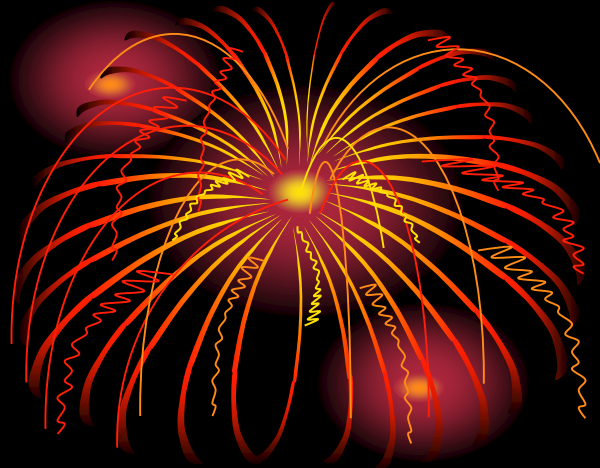


- **churlish to suggest that any strategy for LLL should eschew all kinds of considerations concerning the country's economy.**
- **refreshing to see a document whose writers seem to have learnt from the critiques of an over-economistic rendering of the LLL concept.**
- **Take into account the degree of social collective learning occurring within social movements have doing 'politics from below' and lining internationally thru' 'globalisation from below'**
- **These movements are also making their presence felt in Malta as elsewhere .**

PUBLIC SPHERE



- **Strategy to embrace a more holistic view of persons who have the skills to engage critically and collectively *with*, not only *in*, the work process and also in the public sphere at large**
That is learning critically and politically about work and the economy, echoing the most critical one time traditions of workers' education.



Thank you