Study on the links between formal and non-formal education

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The present study on the links between formal and non-formal education has been undertaken on behalf of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe/Directorate of Youth and Sport. The purpose of the study is to provide both material and arguments for further discussion within and between European bodies dealing with educational problems.

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1. Introduction

It is noticeable that once-unquestioned concepts of learning and education have been discussed in an increasingly controversial manner over the past decade by educationalists and youth sociologists, as well as by politicians and practitioners, in both national and European contexts.[1] This increased concern is a reaction to fundamental societal changes that have transformed European societies from industrial into post-industrial societies in which knowledge acquisition plays a leading role for economic growth and wealth.[2] New ideas as to what learning should be like in knowledge-based societies are gaining momentum. Self-regulated learning, context-bound learning, lifelong learning, informal learning and non-formal learning have become basic elements of education.

In the composition of society, it is the younger generation which is most affected by new learning concepts. Until very recently, learning was mainly confined to the period of childhood and youth in the human life-course. Today, learning tends to stretch over an extended period of life because job and professional requirements and labour market demands change at a high speed with largely unpredictable outcomes. In all western European societies, educational attainments have gone up, and young people pursue their education for more years than ever before. Today, more than one third of young Europeans (18 to 24-year-olds) with even low qualifications are in education and not in employment, and nearly one in every eight young adults (25 to 34-year-olds) has participated in education or training in any previous four-week period.[3] These figures, and many more, show a prolongation of educational trajectories that tend to lead to learning biographies of young people.[4]

When learning gets a more prominent place in life, the boundaries between learning, working and leisure tend to become blurred. New combinations between learning and working develop, as seen for example in the dual trajectories of study and work,[5] and leisure activities may be conducted to acquire qualifications such as language proficiency, as seen for example in European exchange programmes which combine learning and living in new surroundings.[6] These developments change the relationship between learners and teachers/trainers; the teacher/trainer may be a learner in another context and the student may want to make his or

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1. See L. Chisholm (2000), "The Educational and Social Implications of the Transition to Knowledge Societies", in O. von der Gablenz, D. Mahnke, P.-C. Padoan and R. Picht (eds.), *Europe 2020: Adapting to a Changing World*, Nomos Verlag: Baden-Baden, pp. 75-90.
2. See M. Baethge (2000), "Der unendlich lange Abschied vom Industrialismus und die Zukunft der Dienstleistungsbeschäftigung", *WSI-Mitteilungen*, 3/2000.
3. EUROSTAT, *The Social Situation in the European Union 2001*, European Commission, chapter on "Educational outcomes".
4. P. Brouwn and H. Landauer (1998), "Post-Fordist Possibilities for Lifelong Learning", in A. Walther and B. Stauber (eds.), *Lifelong Learning in Europe*, Neuling Verlag: Tübingen; J. Bynner, L. Chisholm and A. Furlong (eds.) (1997), *Youth, Citizenship and Social Change in a European Context*, Ashgate: Aldershot; A. Cavalli (1997), "The Delayed Entry Into Adulthood: Is It Good or Bad for Society?", in J.M. Pais and L. Chisholm (eds.), *Jovens em Mundanca. Actas do Congresso Internacional "Growing Up between Centre and Periphery"*, Instituto de Ciencias Sociais: Lisbon; and I. Bates and G. Riseborough (eds.) (1993), *Youth and Inequality*, Buckingham/Philadelphis.
5. See M. Wolbers (2001), *Learning and Working: Double Statuses in Youth Transitions within the European Union*, Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market ROA – RM – 2001/6, Maastricht.
6. M. du Bois-Reymond (in press), "Lernfeld Europa: Chance für Schüler und Lehrer im 21. Jahrhundert", in U. Bracht and D. Keiner (eds.), *Jahrbuch für Pädagogik*, Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften: Frankfurt-on-Main.

her own curriculum, with or without the help of a knowledgeable person. Teachers and trainers become facilitators of learning processes and co-learners.[1]

All these changes towards a learning society notwithstanding, there exist large discrepancies within as well as between European countries among young people as to their opportunities to make use of education. Socio-cultural and socio-economic differences concerning educational levels persist in all European countries, albeit in different degrees and on different levels.[2] It is a disturbing fact that despite increasing educational opportunities not all young people find satisfying jobs and life situations. A varying percentage of young people is in danger of becoming socially excluded or indeed is so already.[3] It is this section of the young generation about which European politicians and educationalists are worried, and which they are trying to help both through educational reforms at national level and through various youth programmes and initiatives at European level.

With the entry of central and eastern European countries into the European Union, young people there will be confronted with new demands and new opportunities concerning learning and labour. The European Union and the Council of Europe regard it as their responsibility to mitigate the transition from pre-accession status to full membership of the countries in question by providing material and non-material resources also in the field of education, especially non-formal education.[4]

Young people in democratic countries are entitled to active citizenship and participation, not only in their home country but also in a broader European context. Participation and active citizenship have to do with learning. Informed persons will make better decisions concerning their present and future life.[5] Active participation should, as much as possible, imply active learning and vice versa.

While formal education remains largely a national affair, falling under the subsidiary principle, non-formal education gives new possibilities for European incentives. This report aims at clarifying the links as well as the contradictions between formal and non-formal education, especially in the fields of employability, the fight against educational and social exclusion, and new forms of learning. It will examine successful examples and models of combining formal and non-formal learning and identify the causes of success and failure, and the strengths and weaknesses of youth training schemes. It will also give some thought to the question of how to achieve recognition of non-formal education and how to credit learning achievements outside the formal educational systems. The overarching aim of the study is to

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1. S.R. Steinberg and J.L. Kincheloe (1998), *Students as Researchers: Creating Classrooms That Matter*, Falmer Press: London.
2. See "Misleading Trajectories? An Evaluation of the Unintended Effects of Labour Market Integration Policies for Young Adults in Europe", thematic network funded by the European Commission under the Targeted Socio-Economic Research (TSER) programme, scientific report, April 2001; IARD, *Study on the State of Young People in Europe. Final Reports*, January 2001; and OECD (2001), *Knowledge and Skills for Life. First Results from PISA 2000*, Paris.
3. See R. van der Velden, R. Welters and M. Wolkers (2001), *The Integration of Young People into the Labour Market within the European Union: the Role of Institutional Settings*, Maastricht University: Maastricht.
4. See *Le Magazine. Education and Culture in Europe*, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, which regularly reports on European issues and programmes in the field of non-formal education; and V. Verhoeven and R. Hamelink (2001), *To Be or Not to Be Included: An Explorative Study about the Concept of the European Voluntary Service Related to the Inclusion of "Vulnerable" Youngsters and Pre-accession Countries*, doctoral thesis, Leiden University: Leiden.
5. S. Kovacheva (1999), *Keys to Youth Participation in Eastern Europe*, Strasbourg.

advocate non-formal education as a leading learning principle in knowledge and information societies.[1]

The leading hypothesis that is meant to give direction to the present study states:

> Reflecting on non-formal education is by definition reflecting on formal education as well. All measures and policies directed towards non-formal education will affect formal education in the long run, and vice versa. European learning societies need active learners who are able to create their own biographies and participate in local, national and European contexts.

The structure of the report is as follows:

- Chapter 2 deals with the meaning of non-formal education in relation to formal education;
- Chapter 3 shows how various European bodies and European youth programmes define and understand non-formal education, and goes into matters of recognition of non-formal education;
- Chapter 4 is concerned with the conditions for non-formal education in post-communist countries;
- Chapter 5 deals with non-formal education and vocational training, and discusses problems of assessment;
- Chapter 6 presents a model for an integrated European youth policy, focusing on new forms of learning and training;
- Chapter 7 recommends giving thought to the foundation of a European Academy to research problems of learning in relation to integrated youth policies in present-day Europe.

2. The meaning of non-formal education in relation to formal education

For the first time in European educational history, non-formal education steps out of the shadow of marginal relevance for the future of the young generation and into the bright light of the centrality of learning as the most important activity of human beings at present. The application of non-formal education to a much broader public than adults alone, who in the past used non-formal education mainly to compensate for missed educational chances, must not be misunderstood as only one of so many well-intentioned measures in the field of youth welfare and youth policy, but must be understood as part of a development which changes the concept of learning as a human activity, and education as the societal organisation of it. These changes are irreversible and must therefore be analysed with scrutiny to prepare a sound educational policy for the future.

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1. See "Aims and objectives of the study on the links between formal and non-formal education", Contract No. 105 CEJ-2001, Directorate of Youth and Sport, on behalf of the CDEJ.

The broadening of learning in knowledge-based, post-modern European societies entails a number of developments which can be disentangled for analytical purposes, but which in reality are inextricably bound up with each other. The following developments are concerned:[1]

- Demographic and social changes make the relations between the generations more complex: ageing societies make youth a scarce good and urge a new societal contract between the younger and the older generations. While the young have little political power at present, they have most of the learning power for the future. Therefore, the definition of what learning should imply, what it takes to make it a worthwhile enterprise, no longer lies exclusively with the older generation but is partly taken over by the young learners. This is a fundamentally new given in education. The older generation is still reluctant to give away power over the definition of the content and organisation of learning. But education and learning will have to become a shared project between the generations in knowledge-based societies.

- The prolongation of the stage of youth is due to extended educational trajectories. The nature of learning changes in accordance with it. When learning took only a couple of years in the lives of the young, it was possible to define it in terms of fixed curricula and didactic models. Only a small percentage of the young generation was allowed to learn beyond compulsory education. With the coming of mass education from the 1960s and 1970s onwards, learning tended to become a self-adopted activity of individuals and to lose its coercive character. This tendency of autonomous learning first becomes visible outside formal education, in non-formal education. Non-formal education fills the gaps which formal education does not fill by giving the learner a say in what s/he learns. Young learners begin massively to resist coercive learning modes and look for learning opportunities outside compulsory education. School is needed for credits and diplomas, but school does not succeed in motivating all learners to learn all that they can and want to learn.[2]

- The multicultural composition of (post-)modern societies demands the adaptation of formal education to suit the needs not only of the traditionally underprivileged learners, but also of the "newcomers" from ethnic-cultural minorities as well. One of the main tasks of formal education was and still is to prevent social exclusion. That is to say, to prepare the young for an independent life, socially as well as economically. Inasmuch as the educational system and the labour market grow apart from each other, the school loses its monopoly on teaching and learning. Non-formal education is one of the forces that question that monopoly by providing alternative learning opportunities and learning sites.

- Because of its centrality, learning in all its forms has become of great political relevance and is therefore subject to continuous political struggle and negotiation.

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1. See also White Paper, Chapter 2.

2. M. du Bois-Reymond and A. Walther (1999), "Learning between Want and Must: Contradictions of the Learning Society", in A. Walther and B. Stauber (eds.), op cit., pp. 21-45. In the consultation process of the White Paper, representatives of the young criticised again and again the inflexibility and often the meaninglessness of formal learning at school and demanded reforms which pointed in the direction of more influence and participation of the learners. See also the report from the European Commission, "The Concrete Future Objectives of Educational Systems", Brussels, 31.01.2001 COM (2001) 59 final, which sets the agenda for a totally new view on learning and thus criticising the "old" school.

Never before was education such an issue in public debate, and so extensively researched, were so many experiments going on, and so many people involved in the business of education and learning. The "politicising" of education involves also the learners. They participate in the debate in many ways, passively as well as actively. They react to the over-formalisation of learning in school by repeating classes, dropping out of school, underachieving, rejecting becoming school teachers and trying to make their own educational choices.[1] While it is true that young people do not care much about political matters, they are highly involved in educational politics on their own terms. It seems that non-formal education offers more chances to make that involvement productive than does formal education, by assuring young people that they are "full" citizens and participants.

- The developments towards a unified Europe – not only of the EU but also in the near future including ten more countries – affect the younger generations more deeply than those of the older generation, simply because they will be living longer in such a united Europe. They must endure and handle the contradictions inherent in European unification and in worldwide globalisation. To be able to do that they need new capacities which stretch from ICT knowledge to frustration tolerance and from political awareness to intercultural learning. They must learn to handle risks and to make intelligent use of available as well as not yet exploited resources. In short, they must develop transversal skills. For all this they need the support and solidarity of the older generation. Schools will have to change in order to incorporate these developments and to convey these new capacities. To accomplish this, formal education must get rid of rigid organisational structures and vested interests of professionals.

While there is little doubt about the definition of formal education, non-formal education is a much broader and thus less clearly defined concept. Furthermore, the definition of non-formal education may vary from country to country. In many countries, it is understood that formal education takes place in schools, training institutions and at colleges and universities. Also, it has clearly defined curricula and rules for certification. Non-formal education, on the other hand, takes place mostly outside formal educational systems and is voluntary. It covers a wide variety of learning fields, like youth work, youth clubs, sport associations, voluntary service, training and many other activities that organise learning experiences. It has less clearly framed curricula and much less "certification power", which gives it a weaker social and financial position. Also, its degree of professionalisation is lower and less strictly defined in comparison with formal education. Formal education is compulsory for the majority of students and must rely on extrinsic learning motivation; non-formal education has the advantage of being voluntary and can in principle count on the intrinsic motivation of its participants. In some countries, it is even seen as a learning process with no overt syllabus, no teacher and no examination or test at all.

A multitude of reforms are going on in formal education to incorporate elements of non-formal education, such as individualised curricular approaches, student participation bodies, self-regulated learning, allowing students to choose subjects according to their inclination as well as including ICT as a learning strategy. Also, in many European countries, school

1. Figures show that 16% of all 18-24 year olds in the EU have left education with low qualifications (ISCED 0-2 level) and are now not in any form of education or employment (*The Social Situation in the European Union 2001*, chapter on "Educational outcomes").

reforms include an enlargement of the autonomy of the school.[1] Such reforms testify to the awareness of formal education of the need to adapt to societal changes. The question remains, however, of whether it is able solve the paradox of coercive learning, on the one hand, and intrinsic motivation, on the other hand; in knowledge-based societies, intrinsic motivation is an absolute necessity because the learner must acquire a learning habitus which motivates her or him for lifelong learning.

Formal education cannot guarantee a lifelong and well-paid job as it could in the past, although there is still in most European countries – albeit not in all[2] – a strong correlation between educational level and chances of finding employment. The "normal work biography" is not a self-evident result of school learning anymore. That weakens formal education. There are many young people especially in lower educational tracks who want "to do something" and by that they do not mean learning at school. They feel that what they learn in school will not necessarily – or not at all – help them find work, so why bother?

A growth in private schools and universities can be observed which serve the needs and wishes of privileged students (and their parents), while state education remains indispensable for the majority of the less-privileged. The potentially widening gap between private schools and institutions for well-to-do students and state-financed schools for the rest forms a threat to formal as well as non-formal education. The "community school" combines formal education with neighbourhood-based, non-formal activities not so much for the privileged as for underprivileged students.[3]

Finally, the question about the relationship between formal and non-formal education is highly dependent on national context. Traditions in the field of non-formal education are strong in the Scandinavian countries and Germany, but are weak in southern Europe and were absent in communist countries except for state youth organisations. So there is no one single answer and analysis to the problem, but each country must research the question in accordance with its own traditions and needs. That obviousness notwithstanding, we shall come back to the question in our last chapter when we will suggest that a European body should take a lead in the matter.

3. Non-formal education in the eyes of European bodies and European youth programmes; matters of recognition and certification

In the Final Declaration of the 5th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth (Bucharest, April 1998), European countries were encouraged "to promote equality of opportunities by recognising the training and skills acquired through non-formal education and by finding various ways of endorsing the experience and qualifications acquired in this way."[4] Following this declaration, the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) set up a working group on non-formal education "in order to form a clear picture of what non-formal

1. See P. Dalin (1996), *Towards Schooling for the Twenty-First Century*, Cassell: London.
2. Namely, Spain where there is a very high rate of youth unemployment (25% for the age-group under 25) and where even well-educated young people do not get a job (*EUROSTAT News Release 135/2000*, Office for Official Publications of the European Commission: Luxembourg).
3. See for the Netherlands S. van Oenen and F. Hajer (eds.) (2001), *De school en het echte leven. Leren binnen en buiten school*, NIZW: Utrecht.
4. See "Report on the Symposium on Non-formal Education, Strasbourg (EYC), 13-15 October 2000", Strasbourg, January 2001, p. 3.

education should be at European level, as a learning process outside the prescribed classroom curricula or training programmes leading to some form of validated certification" (p. 3). In October 1999, the Joint Council (CDEJ and Advisory Council) of the Council of Europe youth sector organised a symposium to discuss the issues involved. Non-formal education, along with participation, education for human rights and stability in South-east Europe were chosen as the four work priorities in the youth sector for 2000-02. The outcome should be presented to the Conference of the European Ministers responsible for Youth to be held in Thessaloníki from 7 to 9 November 2002.

Together with the educational and vocational training programmes Socrates and Leonardo, the EU Youth programme intends to create a European space for education, both formal and non-formal. The Youth programme focuses on informal and non-formal experiences, assisting young people to acquire knowledge, skills and competences, facilitating their social and cultural integration (minorities), ensuring that they can play an active role in the construction of Europe and introducing a European element into projects, which will have a positive impact on youth work at local level.[1] The programme takes care of the needs of young people and youth workers, not only by offering financial support to their projects but also by providing information, training and opportunities to develop new partnerships across Europe. Within the Youth programme, Actions 1 (youth exchanges), 2 (European Voluntary Service (EVS)), and 3 (youth initiatives) are the most important. The European Commission has set as a priority the inclusion of the pre-accession countries in the Youth programme in order to support the integration of those countries with EU member states. Inclusion of vulnerable young people in the programmes is an explicit aim.

Action 2 (EVS), placed in the Youth programme since May 2001, might serve as an example to show the ambitions as well as the problems of non-formal education. The most attractive feature of EVS is that it allows young people to participate in activities in the field of environment, arts and culture, activities for children, youth or the elderly, sports and leisure in a country other than where s/he lives. They can learn in an informal way and make (totally) new experiences and hopefully friends. They are not paid for their work but get pocket money besides accommodation and food. A mentor is provided. Evaluation of EVS, though spurious, shows that young people experience an EVS project as very positive and intense. Working in a group, with one's own responsible role, in an international context, getting surprised by others and oneself in a positive way, make for the educational value of such projects. In particular, the inclusion in the programme of vulnerable young people, who have often dropped out of regular education, deserves appreciation. Often such people come from disadvantaged family and neighbourhood backgrounds and have negative experiences with cultural differences; they frequently have to deal with racism and labelling. EVS can offer positive intercultural learning experiences to them. It can also help in bridging the gulf between EU and pre-accession countries.

There are problems as well: many young people from western European countries consider voluntary work as something old-fashioned. They associate volunteering with charity, while more and more young people choose it for their own personal development. And while many young people from eastern European countries want "to go West" via EVS, the reverse is less the case, which results in an imbalance of intercultural learning. Also the heavy emphasis on voluntary work in the social sector does not fit the inclination of modern youth: they want projects in the field of music, art, sport, etc. Besides motivated volunteers, EVS cannot be

1. *User's Guide*, 2000.

realised without motivated youth workers. There is a need for a professionalisation of international youth work in Europe.[1] Finally, EVS, like so many other European programmes and procedures, suffers from over-bureaucratisation, which threatens to suffocate the spirit of initiatives in the field of non-formal education.

Youth Forum Jeunesse emphasises that, besides the advantages of the informal, voluntary and participatory character of non-formal education over formal education, the task of non-formal education is to promote civil society and human rights. But it doubts if the regular school curriculum lives up to that task.[2]

The White Paper makes a strong case for a combination of formal, non-formal and informal learning, emphasising the complementary character of formal and non-formal education. It also states that one of the aims of the EU Youth programme is to help develop non-formal learning for young people. But, it continues, even though this programme covers 100 000 young people per year, it cannot meet the demand of the 75 million young people in the programme countries. It promotes facilitating access to European education and mobility programmes and strengthening Community Action Programmes such as Socrates (pp. 33 and 34). But it does not say how to achieve these aims. One might even put the question as to whether such aims can be achieved without the help of formal education. To put it differently: formal education would win by taking exchange programmes up in the obligatory curriculum.

Looking overall at the discussion within European bodies and documents on non-formal education, it can be stated that there is growing consensus about the great importance of its potential for learning in knowledge-based societies.[3] [4] And it is generally agreed that non-formal education must be upgraded and recognised as an indispensable part of modern education.[5]

The White Paper and other documents[6] are conscious of a dilemma: inasmuch as non-formal education is recognised, possibly even credited, the danger exists that it loses its most

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1. See V. Verhoeven and R. Hamelink (2001), op cit.
2. See Youth Forum Jeunesse, "The Recognition of Non-Formal Education. A Priority for the Youth Movement in Europe" (no date, Brussels, at www.youthforum.org).
3. In the Appendix of the Symposium on Non-Formal Education, the definitions of non-formal education of Unesco, European Youth Forum, Council of Europe Committee on Culture and Education, European Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, OECD, European Youth Forum/National Board of Education Finland and the CDEJ Working Group on Non-Formal Education and Social Cohesion can be found.
4. The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly report on non-formal education "recognises that formal educational systems alone cannot respond to the challenges of modern societies and therefore welcomes its reinforcement by non-formal educational practices", Doc. 8595, 15.12.1999, Committee on Culture and Education.
5. See the definition of the CDEJ's Working Group on Non-Formal Education and Social Cohesion: "Non-formal education may be defined as a planned programme of personal and social education for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competencies, outside but supplementary to the formal educational curriculum. Participation is voluntary and the programmes are carried out by trained leaders in the voluntary and/or public sectors, and should be systematically monitored and evaluated. The experience might also be certificated. It is generally related to the employability and lifelong learning requirements of the individual young person, and may require in addition to the youth work sector the involvement of a range of government or non-governmental agencies responsible for the needs of young people." (Questionnaire on non-formal education/learning – no place/date). See also P. Sahlberg, *European Youth Forum (1999): Building Bridges for Learning: the Recognition and Value of Non-Formal Education in Youth Activity*.
6. See also "A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning", Brussels, SEC (2000) 1832. It was one of the key documents to systematically explore the relationship between formal, non-formal and informal learning in relation to lifelong learning.

valuable properties which lie precisely in its informal and voluntary character, allowing for spontaneity and participation. In other words, an upgrading of non-formal education to make it a serious partner of formal education implies a certain degree of formalisation. However, it should be underlined that this problem does exist for some countries which have developed coherent systems of recognition of non-formal education, distinct from those applied to formal education.

How to solve the dilemma of the informality of non-formal education, on the one hand, and the need for recognition which implies formalisation, on the other, is an unanswered question for a number of countries; and there are two other problems. Firstly, it is by no means clear how formal and non-formal education/learning can or must be combined. Secondly, how the instrumentalisation of non-formal education/learning through economic and labour market demands can be avoided is also an open question. At present, the European discussion has not advanced further than stating the danger of over-formalisation, expressing the desirability of combining both forms and having to avoid instrumentalisation. But the political and organisational tools to actually achieve these goals are not yet developed, either at European or national level.

The problem of reconciling the informal nature of non-formal education and learning with the need for formalisation, for reasons of recognition, is mainly discussed in terms of developing assessment and evaluation criteria which give credit to the nature of non-formal education (namely, process skills over content skills, recognition of transversal skills, etc.). This strategy, although in many ways difficult to maintain, will – we forecast – succeed; over the coming years, there will be many initiatives at local, national and also European levels to experiment with all kinds of forms of recognising capacities, achievements and qualifications acquired in non-formal educational contexts, be it the idea of portfolio, of vouchers or alternative diplomas and credits earned by young people in voluntary work such as EVS.

While it is important for non-formal education advocates to keep defending the merits of non-formal education and learning against the pressure of counterproductive (over)formalisation, they will not succeed in preventing the labour market from making its own choices as regards qualifications and diplomas, including the application of additional personality and other tests which follow another logic than that of non-formal education. It is to be expected that the most advanced enterprises, especially in the ICT sector, will make use of such new qualifications and assessments selectively and will accept only those alternative certificates in the placement of personnel that they regard as valuable; this is what they do already.

This leaves the problem unsolved as to what to do with low-educated young persons who acquire non-formal qualifications through youth programmes, etc., but who cannot “sell” them on the labour market. It can already be observed that youth work instrumentalises non-formal education for economic purposes by training (disengaged) young people in such a way that the essential principles of non-formal education are violated. We will come back to this question in Chapter 5 when discussing youth training schemes.

Accrediting non-formal qualifications does not necessarily change the nature of formal education. It is an open question if the crisis within formal education institutions – too many rejects and thus high costs – will eventually force schools to reform thoroughly and truly use non-formal learning modes. At present it seems that schools adopt the same strategy as the labour market and enterprises: selectively incorporating non-formal educational elements

(self-administered learning, ICT learning, etc.) which leaves the formal and over-bureaucratised nature of schools essentially untouched.

It might be speculated that there develops a bifurcation in education and learning, leaving non-formal education to the potentially marginalised and excluded learners. In a way, that development is already going on: youth work projects concentrate mainly on the disengaged and disadvantaged young people, not on the learners with enough social and cultural capital to compensate for lack of stimulation in formal education and who find their way on the labour market as well as in private life regardless. Although all European bodies and youth programmes crusade for social equality, human rights and citizenship for all young people, it is not clear how they can prevent such a bifurcation.

As it is, non-formal education has to accept the role of serving the potentially or really disadvantaged young people for compensatory purposes. The concept of the community school as well as the "second chance school" belongs to the most convincing examples for this role of non-formal education. It influences the formal educational system only marginally and recognition and certification of qualifications acquired in non-formal education do not really change the formal system. As regards implementation and dissemination, European educational and youth policy relies on the strategy of good/best practice, but is still in the beginning stages of working out a coherent educational strategy and policy. Such examples are produced in wealth.[1] But European bodies lack systematic evaluation procedures of the implementation of good/best practice, nationally as well as cross-nationally. We will come back to this question in the last chapter.

Bjornavold, in summing up the discussion on recognition of non-formal education, suggests two strategies, one focusing on "institutional design" and the other on "mutual learning".[2]

Institutional design must comply with three prerequisites. First of all, participants of non-formal education must be given a voice in the assessment procedure. Bjornavold realistically anticipates that (as far as vocational training is concerned) the labour market will impose demands which are not easy to balance with the principle of participants' participating in establishing assessment procedures. However, he leaves the question unanswered as to who it is that should negotiate this (im)balance. Looking at best practices in a variety of member states, one can observe that different solutions are worked out, but there are no examples that show the direct influence of participants on assessment procedures.

Secondly, relevant information must be fed into the process of assessment, which means that the criteria and standards have to be clear. Bjornavold does not enlarge on this point, but again the problem is that standards mean standardisation and formalisation, and how can this be reconciled with context learning and diversity of learners? While it is easy to establish standards for, say, assessing language proficiency (although it is not as easy as many multiple-choice tests suggest), it is much more difficult to do the same for, for example, assessing added experience after participating in an exchange programme. It is not easy for another reason, perhaps the most important of all, and that is the relationship between learner and trainer. Trainers and pedagogues involved in assessment procedures of non-formal

1. See for example Annex 1 of the "Memorandum on Lifelong Learning"; Annex 1 of the White Paper; and *Le Magazine*.
2. J. Bjornavold (2000), *Making Learning Visible: Identification, Assessment and Recognition of Non-Formal Learning in Europe*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities: Luxembourg (CEDEFOP reference series), pp. 107-8.

education must be trained for these new tasks – which is a huge task to be fulfilled at national as well as European level.

Thirdly, there must be transparency of the structures and procedures of assessment. It is, says Bjornavold, "possible to establish structures where the division of roles (setting of standards, assessment, appeal, quality control) is clearly defined and presented". But how is that possible? That is less clear: "The attention of researchers and policy-makers must be drawn to these issues in the near future." We will come back to these questions in the last chapter.

Overall, the main characteristics of best practice in the field of vocational training and non-formal education can be summarised as follows:[1]

- Individual guidance for pupils and students inside and outside formal education. The task of non-formal education in this field should be to see to it that the two systems of guidance – inside school and outside school – are more related to each other, thus guaranteeing continuity over time (following trainees and difficult-to-reach young people over a longer period of time, especially in the transition from school to vocation) as well as across different learning sites. Trainees and young persons complain about a schematic and impersonal approach to counselling. Young women especially are often channelled in traditional female vocational courses and not encouraged to try out new professions. Guidance must make the fit between the personal abilities and needs of pupils and trainees, on the one hand, and the demands of the labour market on the other. Initiatives exist in a variety of European countries to make coalitions between educationally based counselling and enterprises (for example, the Nouvelle chance programme in France; and Connexions, United Kingdom, to prepare 13-19 year olds for successful transition to work). Non-formal education should warrant against a predominance of labour market interests.

- Integration of (formal) education, training and work experiences especially for students who have dropped out of school or are in danger of doing so. Again and again, young persons talk in personal interviews[2] about their frustrations with learning at school and their wish to be connected to the world of labour. The Youthreach programme (Ireland) experiments with such an integration process (also Confindustria, Italy; and the careers advisers pilot project, the Netherlands, especially targeted at early school-leavers and young people without sufficient training). Non-formal education's function here is to become a serious partner of formal education in the interest of pupils who are in danger of dropping out of school.

- All member states develop information systems and databases to provide young people with knowledge about job and training opportunities. Non-formal education should see it as its task to help young people acquire media literacy to be able to use electronic and other information channels adequately.

The most far reaching proposal to integrate the various types of education was made by the Lisbon European Council 2000: its conclusions proposed the transformation of schools and training centres into multipurpose local learning centres, all linked to the Internet and

1. For the following see also *National Actions to Implement Lifelong Learning in Europe*, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Socrates, Eurydice, CEDEFOP, Survey 3, May 2001.
2. In the Yoyo project, educationally disengaged young people explain why they (want to) leave school. They want "praxis", not "theory".

accessible to people of all ages. Meanwhile in almost every member state, there are examples of the learning region with locally- and regionally-based learning centres. In most of the cases they aim at interlinking (formal) vocational training, the local economy and community services. In all of these examples, non-formal education plays (or should play) the role of "oil in the social machine" by acting as the advocate of the young and protecting them against a possibly too utilitarian approach of the social players in the respective fields.

Concerning the pre-accession countries, the above-mentioned strategies are less far developed. NGOs play a crucial role in this but suffer from lack of coordination. Much is to be expected to improve with the entry of these countries into the EU, and much is already done by European bodies to prepare them for this transition.

4. Non-formal education in post-communist countries

The relationship between formal and non-formal education has to be discussed on its own terms for post-communist countries. Since the breakdown of state communism, the school-to-work transitions have lost their structuring influence on societal life; there was overnight so to speak no well-known normal biography for young people anymore, leading them through education and onto a state-controlled labour market with guaranteed work. Young people had to adjust to a totally new situation which did not allow for prediction; the future became open.

The main characteristics of educational change in these countries were the depoliticisation of education and the breakdown of state monopoly, by allowing private and denominational schools to be established. For the first time in many decades, parents and students obtained the right to choose their educational paths according to their abilities and interests. Changes included new educational laws, structural reforms (school autonomy) and new curricula.[1] Therefore, much of the frustration and demotivation of students in western European countries with school learning does not hold for eastern European societies where young people are eager to learn in school. At the same time, youth work and youth associations underwent a dramatic devaluation because they had been under the control of the state and the governing party, and were deprived of their most important asset: voluntary participation. For non-formal education, this means that it has to be established as a new and attractive concept to convince young people of the value of participation.[2] (Y)NGOs play a decisive role in this, and the Council of Europe in particular concentrates on this task by offering seminars and programmes to convey the idea that non-formal education has something to do with citizenship, democratic communication, intercultural learning, and developing and negotiating one's own interests.[3]

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1. See L. Cerych (1997), "Educational Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe: Processes and Outcomes", *European Journal of Education*, 32, pp. 75-97; C. Wallace and S. Kovatcheva (1998), *Youth in Society. The Construction and Deconstruction of Youth in East and West Europe*, Palgrave: Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York (Chapter 3 on "Transitions in education, training and work); A. Azzopardi, A. Furlong and B. Stalder (1999), "Vulnerable Youth: Perspectives on Vulnerability in Education, Employment and Leisure", European Youth Trends 1999 expert report, Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe (Chapter 1).
2. See M. Vanandruel, P. Amerio, O. Stafseng and P. Tap (1996), *Young People and Associations in Europe*, Council of Europe Publishing: Strasbourg.
3. See, for example, L. Machácek (2001), "Youth and Creation of Civil Society in Slovakia", in H. Helve and C. Wallace (eds.), *Youth, Citizenship and Empowerment*, Ashgate: Hampshire and Burlington, pp. 277-292.

While new biographic pathways become possible, the outcome of choices is unforeseeable. In particular, school-to-work transitions have become chaotic and youth wages have declined dramatically. Young eastern Europeans cannot fall back on state support in case of unemployment. They are dependent on their own initiative and their parents. Formal education for them is both: an absolute prerequisite for increasing their labour market chances and a highly uncertain investment at the same time because of high rates of youth unemployment. Therefore what is defined as a problem of non-formal education in western countries – instrumentalisation through economic interests – has to be analysed differently in the context of eastern European countries: if projects and training schemes in the sector of non-formal education, even of a rigid nature, could help young people to show future employers they are an added value to their diplomas and skills, it would be most welcome to them.

Young eastern Europeans live now in three periods of time simultaneously: in pre-modern, modern and post-modern time.[1] In comparison to their western European peers, their living conditions resemble those of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: extreme poverty, subsistence economy, immobility and traditional customs, particularly in gender relations and parental dependency. At the same time, they experience modern times in terms of modern education, mobility, democracy and emancipation of women. And further still, they are connected through globalising forces with advanced ICT economies and youth cultural styles.

For non-formal education that means that is has to serve different factions of youths who have different problems and needs: "pre-modern" young people living in rural areas must be helped, first, to get enough/more general and vocational education; non-formal education might help them to find their way to that aim. "Modern" and "post-modern" young people living predominantly in urban areas want to get higher forms of general education and qualify in the field of ICT, language proficiency and preparing for more cultural and economic mobility. They will use non-formal education to acquire these capacities by entering European exchange programmes and engaging in NGOs. But for all young people in these countries the problem of unemployment is paramount.

Up to now, the Council of Europe has evaluated the youth policy of two former communist-governed countries: Romania and Lithuania.[2] In both cases, it is stated that a renewal of youth work and other forms of non-formal education is an urgent necessity and a case is made that young people must gain the right to become independent and make a decent living. But values of citizenship and participation only take on real meaning for young people if they can also reproduce themselves economically and build up self-administered biographies. NGOs and European youth programmes can help add employability value to young people's education only in a very restricted and indirect way. In essence, the problem of unemployment is a purely economic one and cannot be solved by non-formal education. This is the dilemma of non-formal education in eastern European countries even more so than in western European countries.

Should a European strategy for post-communist countries then concentrate on intensifying the relationship between the economic and the non-formal educational sector? This question brings us back to the problem of how to conceive of the relationship between formal (general

1. This idea is developed in the evaluation report by the international group of experts (rapporteur: J. Machado Pais), European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ), Strasbourg 2000.
2. See "Lithuanian National Report (2001). Review of National Youth Policy", Ministry of Education 2000 and Council of Europe; "National Report: Youth Policy in Romania (2000)", Bucharest, Youth Research Centre.

and vocational) education and non-formal (citizenship and participation) education. A comprehensive perspective connecting them is lacking in all countries, but for young Europeans who live in transition countries (and also in southern countries like Spain) this lack of perspective has particularly bad consequences.

5. Non-formal education and vocational training; problems of assessment

It is one of the main tenets – if not the prime one – of European youth policy to integrate young people in the labour market. The premise is that youth unemployment is a shortcut to social exclusion. National as well as European measures are meant to keep young people either in education or in work, one way or the other. In this policy, non-formal education plays a crucial but also ambivalent role. As far as vocational training is concerned, non-formal education didactics and programmes are used inside as well as outside formal institutions to spot young people in precarious life circumstances and offer them qualifications and the perspective to find work. Non-formal education, once associated with youth work in the "soft sector" of personal development and leisure activities, is now much more rigidly defined and financed as a means to compensate for the lack of vocational qualifications of young people. On the one hand, this development has upgraded non-formal education as indispensable in the struggle against youth unemployment. On the other hand, it has lost much of its autonomous status and is tied to the requirements of vocational training and labour market needs.

Non-formal education by its very nature promises to young people self-realisation and the freedom to take part in offers, or not as the case may be. Through non-formal education, it is supposed, young people can learn about their own needs, strengths and shortcomings in the period when they are growing up to become self-sufficient adults. Participating in the offers of non-formal education should make young people conscious of actively participating in societal institutions and decisions. From the viewpoint of the young people, though, these core tenets of non-formal education are twisted into rather coercive demands to participate in training schemes that force them into low-paid, non-permanent and unattractive jobs.

Non-formal education is more and more used to mend both the neglect of the formal education system, especially vocational training, which produces a growing number of "misfits", and the inability of the labour market to absorb (all) young people. For the "educational misfits" – early school-leavers, demotivated and frustrated low-achievers and the jobless – the "hard" version of non-formal education may be the last resort to get into the labour market eventually. But such programmes will only succeed in re-motivating young people if they adopt individualised strategies in approaching their clients. In other words, non-formal education programmes only offer a chance to help the integration of the most difficult groups of young people if they do what vocational training does not or cannot do: spending a lot of time on the individual young person, giving individual advice and counselling, and tailoring measures as much as possible to the biographical needs and capacities of the person in question.

In countries with enough labour supply, mainly to be found in southern Europe, but also in the UK, incentives for job creation have to come from the state through wage subsidies for employers, jobs in the public sector, stimulation of self-employment, etc. These countries have adopted far-reaching educational reforms to develop vocational training and to integrate it into the formal educational system, the German dual system being a much sought-after

model. These reforms lead to a prolongation of education and thus delay of labour market entry. The main function of non-formal education is here to cushion the "educational failures".

In countries with tight labour markets and relatively low rates of (youth) unemployment, like many northern European countries, the Netherlands in particular, the role of non-formal education is different: here programmes are designed to offer extra-curricular activities besides or as part of the formal curriculum and upgrade the employability of the young persons through person-directed counselling. In these countries, non-formal education can stick more to its "core business" of identifying with the needs of young persons and helping them to develop alternatives. But even then the tension remains between "soft" and "hard" sector policies with the emphasis on economic utility, on the one hand, and self-realisation, on the other.[1]

How then can that non-formal education be prevented from splitting into a hard and a soft sector, into a more instrumental and qualification-oriented branch, and a more freewheeling leisure and voluntary branch? To answer this question, one has to analyse the youth policies of the respective member states and pre-accession countries, and determine if youth policy is more structure-related, following the systemic demands of the educational system and the labour market, or more individual-related, taking the biographical needs of young people into account.[2]

Although non-formal education is largely a national affair, there is a European level as well. European bodies are very active in designing supra-national educational policies, stimulating the formal as well as the non-formal educational sector. One of the most noteworthy initiatives is the agreement of the establishment of sixteen quality indicators to apply to all European schools.[3] But it is equally noteworthy that little effort is made to explicitly address the role of non-formal education in this document, although its role is implied in stating that "high levels of knowledge, competencies and skills are considered to be the very basic conditions for active citizenship, employment and social cohesion" (p. 5) and reference is made to lifelong learning. In another document, explicitly devoted to the issue of lifelong learning, it says: "Over the last ten years, most European countries have started to introduce methods and institutions to assess and recognise learning acquired outside formal education and training systems. (…) An examination of these measures highlights the lack of a European approach throughout the member states."[4]

Bjornavold, in an overview of non-formal education in Europe, discerns five country clusters:[5]

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1. See "Youth Transitions, Youth Policy and Participation. State of the Art Report of Research Project Yoyo 'Youth Policy and Participation. Potentials of Participation and Informal Learning for the Transition of Young People to the Labour Market. A Comparison in Ten European Regions'" funded under Key Action "Improving the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base", written by A. Walther (IRIS Tübingen, G. Moerch Hejl and T. Bechmann Jensen (University of Copenhagen)), January 2001.
2. This analysis is done in the Misleading Trajectories project and IARD (see footnote 2, page 6) and in the Yoyo project (see footnote 1 above).
3. See "European Report on the Quality of School Education. Sixteen Quality Indicators", report based on the work of the Working Committee on Quality Indicators, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission, May 2000.
4. See *National Actions to Implement Lifelong Learning in Europe*, op. cit., p. 97.
5. J. Bjornavold (2000). *Making Learning Visible: Identification, Assessment and Recognition of Non-Formal Learning in Europe*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities: Luxembourg (CEDEFOP reference series).

- the dual system approach (Germany and Austria) with a certain reluctance to recognise non-formal education on its own terms, rather linking it to systemic needs;

- the Mediterranean approach (Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal) which is positively inclined towards non-formal education and its "huge reservoir" for economies;

- the Nordic approach (Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark) with advanced strategies to integrate formal and non-formal education;

- the NVQ approach (United Kingdom, Ireland and the Netherlands) with a strong acceptance of an output-oriented, performance-based model of education and training, combined with acceptance of learning outside formal education and training institutions;

- "opening up" diplomas and certificates (France and Belgium): France especially belongs to the most advanced countries in developing methodology and assessment strategies in using non-formal education.

We may add a sixth cluster for the pre-accession countries in which non-formal education is only at the beginning of its development and institutionalisation. As we have argued in Chapter 4, economic disadvantages for young people are so severe that one might be inclined to argue that the most pressing task for non-formal education with very limited or no state funding at all would be to concentrate on qualifying young people, perhaps even to the detriment of core values like self-development and participation, if the labour market so desires. Yet such a standpoint would neglect the fundamental dialectics between economic and political participation and emancipation. Linking economic with political participation is perhaps even more important in pre-accession countries than in the member states, many of which (though by no means all) have a longer tradition in participatory youth work. One must admit, though, that the danger of defining non-formal education lopsidedly as a servant of economic demands is present in all European countries.

6. A model for an integrated European youth policy

Reviewing the discussion so far, we suggest a new agenda for youth policy which defines learning in a broad meaning. We developed a model of Integration Transition Policies.[1] Going back to the first chapter, we start from the premise that modern young people do not travel smoothly toward adulthood but face many problems on their way. One of the main problems lies in the lack of a join between the educational system and the labour market. Besides that, educational standards have gone up enormously and threaten substantial parts of the young generation with being left behind. We have shown that non-formal education takes on a new importance in this situation; it has to compensate for the neglect of formal education, on the one hand, and the restrictions of the labour market, on the other.

Youth sociological research shows that the transition to adulthood does not only consist of one transition – school to labour market – but of many more: gaining independence from

1. See the Misleading Trajectories project (footnote 2, p. 6); presently we focus more explicitly on the implications of the model for non-formal education.

parents and finding a place to live on one's own, participating in societal decision-making processes, taking part in consumerism and youth culture, establishing a relationship and building one's own family or choosing other relational options. These transitions were once integrated, leading to a more or less anticipated normal biography for young men and women, but are today disintegrated in many ways: education may be finished successfully – but there is no job or there is a job while education is not yet finished; a young person may be ready emotionally and socially to leave the parental home, but there is no housing s/he can afford, so dependence on parents and family remains; a young mother may want to work but cannot afford childcare; a young Romanian person may want to qualify further but has to help her or his parents working the land. All these situations show the discontinuity and fragmentation of the transition period of contemporary young Europeans. Transitions are the result of the interplay of systemic and subjective risks or, respectively, opportunities.

Therefore youth and learning policies must be designed so as to interlink transitions instead of concentrating only on the transition from school to work. The various arenas in which transitions from youth to an ever-changing adulthood take place have to be conceived in their interconnection, if only because the young people themselves experience their lives as a whole. They are not served by a policy that leaves out essential parts of their lives in favour of only one aspect, such as getting more/better qualifications. Non-formal education can and should, on the basis of its tradition and core values, convey this basic idea of interlinked transitions to youth politicians and educational politicians alike. It should define its basic task as making young people aware of the interplay of systemic and subjective risks/opportunities. This basic component should be added to all non-formal programmes, be they more in the "soft" or "hard" sector.

An effect of the discontinuity and fragmentation of transitions is that the whole concept of adulthood changes its meaning, for the young concerned as well as for institutions. Young people can now be in one of the following states:

- being young and adult;
- being neither young nor adult;
- being sometimes young and adult at other times.

Being both young and adult is a situation very familiar to young Europeans, be it a young Italian man of 29 years or older who still lives with his family, a single English mother of 19 years or younger who meets great difficulties in finishing her education and finding a job, or a 15-year-old student living with his parents who has set up a successful computer business of his own.

Being neither young nor adult is also familiar to young Europeans: they may not get state allowances for housing or unemployment benefits because they are not defined as adults, but nevertheless are held responsible for their lives and careers. Finally, being sometimes young and adult at other times is a mixture of the first two categories.

These ambiguous statuses of being young/adult can be held at different times by one and the same person leading to yoyo-transitions. Changing between the status "young" and "adult" is unforeseeable for the young person, and takes place often without the possibility of the

individual influencing these movements. Also, the roles of gender change; both young females and males have to adjust to new gender identities in modern society.

What does all this mean for non-formal education? As a concept, it has to be so broad and flexible that it reaches young people in the changing statuses and situations of "yoyoisation". Addressing young people, for example, in training scheme measures as dependent and ill-qualified youth might obviate precisely what the programme is meant to achieve, because the young people involved do not feel they are taken seriously and will turn their back on the programme. Seen in that light, participation is not just an asset to a programme but an essential part of it. This implies that non-formal education must re-conquer its position as mediator of the rights of young people and lower the barriers between non-formal and formal education and the economic system.

Integrated Transition Policies are to be conceived and put into practice as a cross-sectoral concept covering the areas of education and training, employment, welfare and youth policy. Non-formal education could serve a bridge between these different areas. In that, the biographical perspective of the young person has to be at the centre of attention, not only for reasons of "humanity" but more so because such an approach guarantees the best results in terms of learning motivation and using the capacities of young persons to the full. A biographical perspective always implies that the concrete context in which a young person lives has to be taken into account by youth politicians and educators; "context" in the personal as well as cultural and local-national meaning. Going back to the notion of the "learning region" (see above), contextualised transition policies fit in quite well. Non-formal educators are the most evident translators and interlocutors between all partners involved.

If the transitions of young people become more flexible, discontinuous and unsafe, then an essential part of integrated transition policies is a welfare policy which guarantees basic security to the individual. If young people are encouraged (often forced) to behave flexibly on the educational and labour markets, shifting between tracks, taking risks and adapting to the job demands of enterprises, then they must be entitled to minimal allowances which allow them to make their own choices. Although it is generally true and accepted that learning is the main route to employment, it must be accepted that there are young people who are better helped by being occasionally relieved from formal learning and being allowed, for intermittent periods, to experiment with alternatives in the field of culture, private hobbies or family life. Non-formal educators can help judge the viability of such alternatives.

Finally, a central pillar of Integrated Transition Policies is participation; this means negotiation rights, negotiation space and negotiation resources (security and welfare policies). As we have argued throughout this paper, participation remains an empty phrase as long as it does not materialise in concrete results. Refusing an offer made by job agencies or refusing to enter a certain vocational training course is part of the concept of participation. Again, non-formal educators can help judge the situation in question and mediate between diverging interests.

Taken together, Integrated Transition Policies are based on new concepts and crossovers in the fields of learning, work, and support.

Learning:

- The systemic dimension of learning must be broadened to include the subjective perspective of the learner.

- Lifelong learning must balance informal, formal and non-formal education and must not be misused to force young people into learning measures which they cannot influence and which disregard their personal life situations.[1]

- The divide between general and vocational education is counterproductive in knowledge societies, so educational systems have to be revisited. European training policies still concentrate on increasing vocational training (programmes) while the evidence for a close connection between qualification level and unemployment is far from clear and certainly less strong than suggested by officials; education and training curricula should not pretend to guarantee work to young people if there is none.

- Modularisation and credit systems (as exist in the UK or France and are being developed in Italy) also recognise skills and knowledge which are acquired in non-formal settings and in informal learning contexts.

- Peer learning is a concept which is suitable for combining different learning modes and which can rely on intrinsic motivation, the latter being essential for learning in knowledge societies. Non-formal education has more experience with peer learning than formal education.

- Comprehensive transition counselling must replace counselling which is restricted to a single transition (school to work).

Work:

- Both the development of a satisfying career in terms of self-realisation and the achievement of an autonomous life through individual income are inherent in young people's work orientations. Employment policies should broaden the concept and meaning of work to include both non-market activities and atypical work arrangements which take into account specific biographical needs, care obligations among them. Non-formal education's experience with work-learning-living situations of young people should be taken seriously in this respect.

- The much (mis)used term employability underplays the role of structural unemployment and should be used with more care, making explicit the relation between individual and structural factors of the chances and risks of the labour market. The concept of transition labour markets[2] is useful here: it suggests, among others, various forms of combinations of wages or salaries with other income sources such as

1. J. Manninen (1998), "Labour Market Training Strategies in Late Modern Society", in A. Walther and B. Stauber (eds.), op. cit., classifies lifelong learning strategies into reactive, proactive and innovative strategies according to their relation with the labour market. He identifies the majority of educational measures (mainly those aimed at the unemployed) as reactive instead of activating the capacities of the applicants by inventing new measures and disregarding those which have been proven unsuccessful.
2. See G. Shmidt and J. O'Reilly (1999) (eds.), "TRANSLAM – Social Integration Through Transitional Labour", report to the European Commission.

transfers, equity shares or savings; it also allows for choices to be made between different employment statuses according to shifting preferences and circumstances during the transition period and life cycle. Flexible work arrangements – not only as systemic demands but also from the subjective needs – go along with transition labour markets.

Social security and support:

- Integrated Transition Policies seek a re-balancing of the relationship between flexibility and security for young people who live in risk societies: extension of welfare policy to young adults, providing them with individual welfare rights not derived from their families. This point is especially crucial for young people living in southern and eastern European countries.

While the respective member states put into practice some features of Integrated Transition Policies, there exist enormous differences between the countries (and especially between the EU and the pre-accession countries). The question arises as to what role European bodies can play in helping to develop standards for such a policy. The White Paper has made a start, but an all-encompassing implementation of the suggested youth policy is as yet far from being a reality.

7. A European Academy to research problems of learning in relation to integrated youth policies

The idea of establishing a supra-national body to co-ordinate the manifold and diverse initiatives in the field of learning – non-formal as well as formal – has been put forward repeatedly. One of the action points resulting from the Symposium on Non-Formal Education (Strasbourg EYC, 13-14 October 2000) states: "Establish a European-wide inventory, database and network for information, resources, research and good practice in non-formal learning, using proactive and ICT-based communication and dissemination tools. These facilities should be thematically differentiated." The document "National actions to implement lifelong learning in Europe" advocates actions at European level: "While not interfering directly in efforts to develop national systems, the EU has clearly increased interest in the issue and also contributed in a practical sense by supporting methodological and institutional experimentation" (p. 94). Moreover, the European Commission prepared a document in response to the Lisbon meeting in March 2000, "to undertake a general reflection on the concrete future objectives of education systems, focusing on common concerns and priorities".[1] Further, much important work is done by CEDEFOP. Still, we feel that there is need for what we would like to call a European Academy that unites initiatives in the field of learning with initiatives in the field of youth policy under a research perspective. The concept of Integrated Transition Policies conveys this idea.

A European Academy should be established as an independent organ and be staffed by independent educational and youth researchers who work as a scientific community being responsible only to scientific peers and scientific standards. The Academy would set its own

1. Report of the European Commission, "The Concrete Future Objectives of Educational Systems", Brussels, 31.01.2001 COM (2001) 59 final, p. 3.

research agenda, independently of national particularistic interests or European politics, and it should have its own research funds.

The European Academy should research, among others, the following fields:

- work on the further development of a theory of learning, based on structural combinations of formal and non-formal modes of learning;

- work on scientifically sound solutions for problems of assessment and recognition of non-formal education, bearing in mind the problem of how to draw the limits *vis-à-vis* formal education, on the one hand, and labour market demands, on the other hand;

- initiating follow-up research to systematically evaluate good/best examples in the fields of learning – non-formal and formal – in relation to European youth policy;

- initiating research on the professionalisation of youth workers at a European level;[1]

- initiating research to further explore cross-fertilisation of new professional standards for teachers in the field of general education and vocational training, and youth workers, with the aim of narrowing the gap between these two main professions dealing with youth-in-transition;

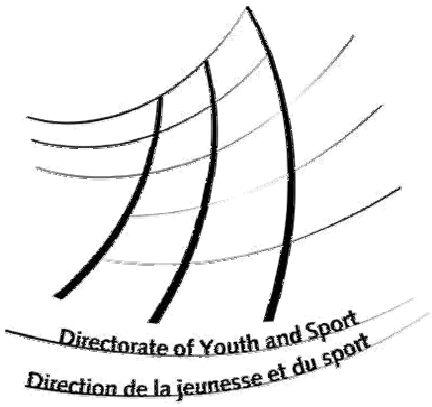
- studying the potentials of peer-learning for youth-in-transition in regard to formal as well as non-formal education;

- co-ordinating existing research and initiating longitudinal research on the "yoyoisation" of the transition of young Europeans, paying particular attention to the life situation of young people in eastern European countries;

- establishing methodological standards for doing cross-cultural research in Europe.

We do not suggest by any means that this research list is complete; we only want to give examples of research fields to show where there are white spots on the research agenda. These white spots are not so much under-researched topics *per se*; but what is missing desperately is the integration of existing research at a European level, with the new challenges of a learning Europe in mind.

1. See "Advanced Training for Trainers in Europe. Profile and Aims of the Course," application form, the Council of Europe and European Commission Training-Youth Partnership, 2001 (http://www.training-youth.net). Valuable suggestions for the professionalisation of teachers are made by the report of the European Commission (op. cit., p. 24).


Directorate of Youth and Sport
Direction de la jeunesse et du sport