EUTOPIA CLCs as Testbeds for LLL

(December 2024)

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1. SUMMARY OF THE FLECSLAB PROJECT

In November 2021, six founding partners of the EUTOPIA Alliance were awarded a new project under the Erasmus+ programme (KA220-HED - Cooperation partnerships in higher education) entitled "*Flexible LEarning Communities Supporting Lifelong Learning Across Borders*" (FLECSLAB).

1.1. Background and needs addressed

The demographics of Higher Education (HE) is changing. University graduates are increasingly looking to broaden their skills as they face the many changes in a globalized society. The universities of EUTOPIA, launching this key action, offer a response to the European Commission and the Lifelong Learning (LLL) ambitions plans by developing flexible mechanisms that recognise short-term intensive learning efforts in a transnational context. FLECSLAB provides a roadmap for a more inclusive approach to meaningful international learning that enables science to reach a broad range of lifelong learners from diverse backgrounds and across disciplines. The main inspiration for this proposal stems from the recognition that current models of HE have limited capacity to accommodate LLL students. FLECSLAB thus extends the work of learning communities in terms of international networking of best practices in active learning and explores the potential of a European University for creating a LLL offer at international level.

1.2. WP1 Deliverable: Lifelong Learning Toolbox

This tool was designed by working with a selection of 12 EUTOPIA Connected Learning Communities (CLCs) piloting diverse LLL formats and monitoring of the outcomes and outputs. In order to explore the potential of the Connected Learning Communities for LLL, 4 CLCs were selected every year to serve as testbeds. The CLC leads were interviewed about their position on LLL and the ecosystem of their CLC. The present report is the result of these interviews.

1.3. Rationale for CLC choice

The 12 CLCs were selected as testbeds (out of 30 CLCs in existence at the start of the project) based on their potential for LLL.

Areas that were prioritised are sectors that are in crisis and face labour shortages (healthcare, education, etc.), sectors where new skills are needed, for example due to new advances in technology (languages & translation, entrepreneurship), or sectors that generally face deep challenges and are undergoing a transition, for instance because of the growing diversity of the population they serve. Additionally, for some professionals, such as in the TV and Media industry, there has traditionally been a need to continue updating their skills throughout their career. Other CLCs were chosen because they intrinsically addressed adults and professionals. The CLC 'Leading Strategic Innovation in Healthcare' looks at the return to work of professionals that have upskilled to progress in their career, whilst the CLC 'IMPACT' is looking to better integrate adults from various backgrounds into society through sports. This made them ideal candidates for this project. The CLCs

chosen were at different stages of maturity when the leads were interviewed: some had just started out, whilst others had already been active for 2-3 years.

The following report is based on the data collected from the interviews conducted with the CLC leads and enhanced by the discussion with the members of the expert committee.

2. FRAMEWORK

The framework below, which highlights the dimensions underlying the transformation of HE institutions into LLL institutions, is based on a literature review conducted in Spring 2022 as well as previous Education Expert Committee meetings. The framework is a work in progress which keeps being updated with the input of CLCs and the Education Expert Committee.
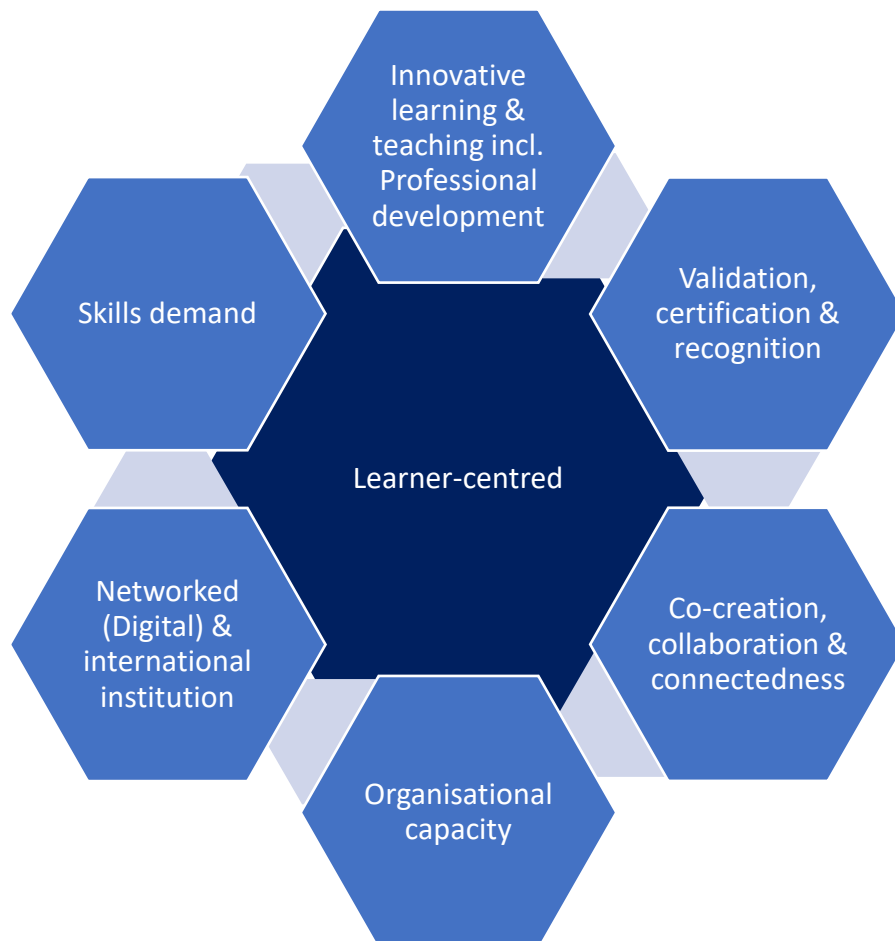
INTERVIEW FORMAT & TOPICS

1-hour exploratory semi-structured interview based on LLL framework. Topics explored:

1. Lead's position and experience with LLL
2. Lead's vision for the Learning Community and reflection on experience so far (using the framework)
3. Deliverables and Business Model

FIRST ROUND: 2022

1. CLCs PROFILES

1.1. Entrepreneurship (formerly Technological Business Development)

Lead: Thomas Crispeels (VUB)

In this Learning Community (LC), master students from different programs work together in interdisciplinary groups. Based on real life research results, emanating from the research departments of the university (VUB), students engage in a so called 'technological business development project'. The university researchers of these labs are then involved in the definition of the project and the coaching of the students, with the support of the EUTOPIA-TBDP educational team which is embedded in the faculty of Social Sciences & Solvay Business School. Typical tasks performed in these projects are, a.o., customer discovery, market analysis, customer validation, formulation of problem-solution combinations, financial analysis…

A structured process to coach the students and the researchers involved is implemented, including regular plenary sessions (interim sessions, 3 per semester). During these sessions, the different groups present their advances to their colleagues. In between plenary sessions, the students work independently whilst being supported by the researchers involved and the TBDP team. By the end of the course, the students present a final report.

The main question is how to replicate and scale this model on a European level through EUTOPIA. There are some barriers to upscale this to a European level: in most instances, business schools are a semi-independent structure outside the classical university structure (not the case at the VUB, believed to be one of the key success drivers for the model at VUB). This means that communication at other institutions between business schools and other departments is hampered, especially when legal arrangements (NDA, transfer of rights…) need to be made. Different regulations on technology transfer and different academic calendars also hamper upscaling. To date, the LC has always tried to find existing courses at EUTOPIA universities in which they could introduce TBDP. This led to other issues, e.g. with regard to evaluation.

This LC has been operating for 3 years but is currently shifting to align better with the initiatives at other EUTOPIA partner institutions and within other EUTOPIA projects. It will focus on "entrepreneurship and innovation policies or strategy for higher education." This will be in the domain of Academic Business Development and Academic Entrepreneurship in Deeptech. These ideas are in the framework of an EIT-HEI project proposal (winter 2023).

1.1.1. Lead's experience with LLL

- Business Development Academy: Thomas Crispeels teaches on this lifelong learning programme to train VUB staff on topics such as business development, technical sales, negotiation techniques (online course). They then want to expand outside of VUB to

train other researchers and business development managers inside research labs, people inside the departments that are thinking about setting up a spin-off or industrial collaborations or contract research and so on.

- VUB TechTransfer Starter and Advanced evening seminars for VUB staff, PhD students, etc. This programme has been running for 10 years.

- 1st semester: starter seminars => intro to entrepreneurship 101, no prior knowledge required, lecture-type classes.

- 2nd semester: advanced seminars => for people who already have a project, more interactive sessions.

- Off-line sessions, but they are bringing them together on an online platform so that all VUB staff members can have a trajectory in entrepreneurship.

- StartLab: Thomas Crispeels runs this incubator for young entrepreneurs that helps them develop their product (http://www.startlab.brussels).

- Learners: first-time entrepreneurs below 30 who want to have a good impact on society with their product.

- 2 cohorts/year (Oct & Feb), 1 cohort = 40 students (1 French, 1 Dutch-Eng), 36 months max. Blend of online and in-person. Teaching is after 6pm.

Phases:

3-month training programme with seminars => learn to find your product market fit (business model, etc.). Experts come to train the entrepreneurs on various topics.

Students get a coach and put into practice what they learnt => goal is to get a first sale.

Once they have a first sale => group coaching sessions on a monthly basis + masterclasses

Once they reach 10k, you have 12 months to move out of programme.

> "[My] experience with lifelong learning [is] mainly in trying to bring a sense of business and entrepreneurship into people with the technical profile."

1.1.2. Learners' profile and type of programmes run by the lead

Learners

- VUB students (who can have had some professional experience) + VUB staff

Programmes

- Business Development Academy "It's an online course."

- VUB TechTransfer Starter and Advanced seminars "are evening classes."

1.2. Leading Strategic Innovation in Healthcare

Lead: Bernard Crump (Warwick)

Management and leadership are neglected issues in the healthcare sector. For example, clinicians in medicine are confronted with decisions on resources. The available post-graduate training at business schools around leadership (such as NHS leadership) is a necessity but insufficient. One needs to codify what need to be known, compare existing curricula with requirements; need of yearly assessment/validation mechanisms. The Warwick business school provides an online education programme; tailored employers' training programme and programme as an MBA.

This LC is based on an online programme of learning which supports the development of knowledge and skills in service improvement and innovation in healthcare. It includes components which focus on: Leadership and Strategy in the context of healthcare as a professional bureaucracy and the health ecosystem as a complex adaptive system; the characteristics and antecedents of high-performance in healthcare; improvement and innovation practices; the key resources for healthcare improvement, finance and workforce, and how services can be led in the context of scarcity of these resources. The course is led from a business school, but by a Professor of Practice with extensive experience of healthcare delivery at local regional and national level. It incorporates inputs from Leadership studies, Organisational Management, HR management, Operational Management, and Entrepreneurship and Innovation, all in the context of healthcare practice.

The Learning Community intends to: share information and case studies, map the key competences that residential assistants require with case studies, focus on pressing problems, and, in the best case scenario, to "create a framework for the things one might do to design programmes that might make it more likely to get positive learning transfer". Problems to be addressed are: lack of tools, techniques and mechanisms to take back into the real workplace/learning transfer; disappointment when going back into the reality with another culture than the business school (e.g. hierarchical cultures); supporting learning transfer is expensive. As a first step, the lead and LC assistant have started a literature review on how to better manage learning transfer.

1.2.1. Lead's experience with LLL

The lead works almost exclusively with lifelong learners:

- Working with professional bodies, he participated in the creation of a management and leadership competency framework for healthcare professionals that is now used nationally at the UG/PG level and in professional settings.

- He runs an MBA (Health) supporting the continuous development of healthcare professionals. The programme lasts 18 months, and is taught mainly online, with 8 days in class. At the end of the programme, coaches work with learners on a real-life issue and continue coaching them when they transition back in their professional organisation, in order to facilitate learning transfer from the classroom to the workplace. This programme currently welcomes around 20 participants, and it is a very successful course. However, it is very resource-

intensive as well as expensive, thus the questions of scalability and sustainability are of the utmost importance.

1.2.2. Learners' profile and type of programmes run by the lead

Learners

- Healthcare professionals who have worked on average 10 years in an industrial sector

- Because programmes are interdisciplinary and interprofessional, you often find, in the same programme, clinical professionals who already have a postgraduate degree (Master's or PhD) and clinical professionals (e.g. nurses) who only have a first degree. Thus, they do not need the same things: the former are after the skills more than a qualification, whereas the latter want a degree in order to progress in their career => so, how to resolve this dilemma? Micro-credentials could be an interesting option.

Programme

- MBA **(Health)** with flexible learning pathways: "full-time, part-time, online, non-online, in Warwick, in London, in the evenings…"

1.3. Urban Education

Leads: Els Consuegra and Joost Vaesen (VUB)

This LC is based on a learning unit that gives an insight into the debates, assets, and challenges of education in a metropolitan city. In addition, students are introduced to the philosophy of education in relation to daily class practice and reflect on their own professional identity and cooperation skills. Interdisciplinary student teams collaborate with urban schools to analyse and/or develop solutions for urban educational challenges related to topics such as educational organization, school-community partnerships, school infrastructure, inclusive education. By means of collaborative inquiry all steps of the research cycle are followed to analyse a specific situation (and in some cases suggest solutions for specific challenges). Teams usually include: a teacher educator, some student-teachers, and some in-service teachers. Some schools also involve pupils in the team. The team is led by the teacher-educator and one of the in-service teachers who has been trained to act as a coach.

The Urban Education learning community provides for an exchange of information, expertise and experiences, and focuses on five possible pathways to structure and jointly shape knowledge production and sharing regarding the selected topic:

- Urban education as inclusive education taking account of socio-linguistic backgrounds of learners => **creating a glossary of key concepts in Urban [inclusive] Education research**

- Tools & skills for collaborative extended (transdisciplinary) teacher teams

- Using the city as an outside learning space/environment

- Cross-campus approach along the various HE partners

- Virtual education tour in different European cities

1.3.1. Lead's experience with LLL

The exploratory interview was conducted with Els Consuegra, one of the two leads of this LC. She is a tenure-track professor at the Multidisciplinary Institute of Teacher Education. She has experience with LLL through one of her programmes which is a school-university partnership that has been running for 10 years. The learners involved in this programme include both 'traditional' students and mature learners (in-service teachers, coming back to school to earn a certificate).

The other lead, Joost Vaesen is an assistant professor at the Multidisciplinary Institute of Teacher Education. He teaches several courses, including the learning unit "Urban Education", within the Educational master's programme.

1.3.2. Learners' profile and type of programmes run by the lead

Learners

- 50% 'traditional' students, 50% second-career teachers

Programmes

- One teacher-training programme in the form of a school-university partnership that has been running for 10 years. The programme tries to adapt as much as possible to the needs of the student-teachers (pre-service teachers) with a flexible length, a flexible start date, and day or evening classes.

Participants: a teacher-research team made out of pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and a teacher-educator. Depending on the school, other stakeholders can sometimes be involved, such as school leaders or pupils.

What they do: work collaboratively on a challenge in their school to solve a question or design a solution. The work is inquiry-based and in an authentic context. It gives pre-service teachers an opportunity to work on the type of real-world challenges they will have to face in the future, and it keeps teacher-educators in touch with what is going on in practice.

How the programme works:

➢ September: 2-day training for the teacher-educators who are the bridge makers, and the in-service teachers who are the coaches => training in coaching skills and in the research cycle that they will be following.

> ➢ Research cycle with several steps: 6 meetings/year for each team + work in between meetings => do some research, collect data in school, meet with experts or design something and then bring that to the next meeting.

> ▪ One programme focusing on school leaders investigating their own practices that has been running for 2 years:

>> ➢ Aim: investigate how to foster inquiry-based school leadership, database school leadership, and they are in the process themselves of

>> ➢ They meet every 2 months, and they benefit from the support of a teacher-educator coaching them individually.

1.4. Fundamentals of Television Direction

Lead: Manel Jimenez Morales (UPF)

This LC is based on a course that serves as an introduction to the creation and production of television programmes and audio-visual new formats in general. The course focuses on the concept of the global television sphere as an agent in shaping the values of democracy, diversity, social responsibility, citizen participation, collective knowledge and creativity applied to media, arts and culture. All these values introduce the concept of "quality television", which is approached in a theoretical and practical way. The course aims to analyse and understand the dimension of television, but also to learn how producing television and new audio-visual formats serve as a tool to build a more functional society.

The programme includes project-based learning in groups. Learners work together to create a media production (short film, video clip, etc.). Learners benefit from the help of two professionals: one specialised in sound, and one in image. Learning involves hands-on/practical sessions and visits from/collaboration with practitioners from the field of TV and Film.

The LC members have different approaches in their respective institutions: some more practical and some more theoretical. The community views it as essential to bring together theory and practice, in order to achieve a more holistic approach, rather than have different silos.

This LC is envisioning 3 types of collaboration between the partners:

- ▪ Sharing resources (such as film archives)
- ▪ Guest lectures from partners
- ▪ Students from each institution collaborating to produce a cross-university micro fiction.

1.4.1. Lead's experience with LLL

The lead has been working on "innovation in education in the last years" and his experience with LLL is two-fold:

- The Barcelona School of Management: LLL school that offers micro-credentials, online programmes, and in-company programmes has called on him to "implement new programmes and to introduce other profiles in education". He is also teaching a course on storytelling to all students at this school, who are all LLL students with various profiles.

- In the course he is teaching that is part of the Learning Community, the profiles of the learners are "quite varied" including some lifelong learners.

- The course is taught bilingually, in Catalan and Spanish. The learning methods are hands-on and use project-based learning. The students take a case to develop, which is a project that they need to solve in teams. They collaborate together to create various artefacts such as video clips, etc. For example, their end-of-module project is a micro fiction: an episode of a series that is produced by UPF.

1.4.2. Learners' profile and type of programmes run by the lead

Learners

- Varied: some 'traditional' students, some mature learners over 50, some professionals.

Programme

- The module 'Fundamentals of Television Direction' led by Manel Jimenez Morales runs from September to December at UPF. It welcomes 80-90 students for 2 hours per week + 4 hours in TV studio.

- The Barcelona School of Management offers traditional degrees, but also blended or online programmes as well as micro-credentials.

2. DIMENSIONS IN FOCUS

Overall, the framework was perceived as what we should go towards but currently difficult to implement in practice:

> "You put in the middle 'learner-centred', the thing is we're not 'learner-centred', we're 'institution-centred'. Too much, at the moment." (Healthcare)

The three dimensions that were the most discussed during the interviews, and that this part of the report focuses on, as are:

- Co-creation, collaboration, and connectedness
- Networked (Digital) and International Institution
- Organisational Capacity

2.1. CO-CREATION, COLLABORATION & CONNECTEDNESS

Strengths

2.1.1. Links to industry/professional field

The links with industry are strong in all four communities, be it with professionals/practitioners or with experts and other various stakeholders.

2.1.2. Partnership among and collaboration with various actors/stakeholders

All four communities already have established partnerships with various stakeholders:

> "Scientists from our institutions develop research results, inventions and so on and then once this to be valorised want to transfer this into a spinoff or look at for customers or industrial contacts so and then we try to mobilize students to do this for them. […] we make student groups, but the project leader is always someone from the staff member, let's say, who has to, who's actually the project champion." (Entrepreneurship)

Sometimes, teams made up of all stakeholders are already in place:

> "in this team of in-service teachers, there 1, 2 or 3 student-teachers, pre-service teachers, involved also who are doing an internship in this school and they are part of this team throughout the entire year and there's also a teacher-educator who is member of this team, so this is the minimum members: some in-service teachers, some pre-service teachers and a teacher-educator. And one of the in-service teachers is actually leading the team as the coach, and we train those people to take up the role as coach and, usually, it's kind of a co-coordination of the in-service teacher, who is the coach and the teacher-educator who is also there to support the process, who knows the steps that need to be followed,

etc. And in some schools, they also involve pupils in those teams, so children, and teams have the possibility to invite experts in meetings." (Urban Edu)

There is evidence that the collaboration can benefit all parties involved, not just the learners:

"The people from the industry "learn from the competences that young people in this subject can bring to them. […] The opportunity is being in touch with young students and do experimental things that they can't do in the industry because the industry obviously has some standards, some specific products, so it's difficult to think out of the box of that. So, for me, it is this kind of learning that is really valuable for them. Having this impact, this cross with this other generation, bringing new ideas, fresh ideas, other dynamics and methodologies and provoking a new way to produce film and media, experiment on that, and give a new format, etc." (TV & Film)

<u>Barriers</u>

2.1.3. *Availability and engagement/commitment of partners*

Balancing the diaries of the various partners can prove challenging:

"You look at the people that have to do this and their agendas […] We had the discussion just in the faculty about sustainability and including it in the curricula is that everyone agrees. But when the semester comes, you're happy that you have your material and to just teach it". (Entrepreneurship)

"you also have a personal CV to take care of, where education is [only] one of the three parts." (Entrepreneurship)

Moreover, if collaborators are not committed, the co-creation will not work:

"If you're in in this project, you have to contribute and by contributing, you also have access to the work of others. Because we don't want to have any free riders, like people who say "oh yeah, I'm participating in this" but then not contributing but then having access to this very interesting glossary at the end. Because, yeah, in the end, you're sharing work that you have been spending […]. [W]e've had some bad experiences in the past […]." (Urban Edu)

2.2. NETWORKED (DIGITAL) AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION

<u>Strengths</u>

2.2.1.Crossing sectors and disciplines

The four communities are all transdisciplinary and/or inter-professional: Business and Tech or Engineering, Healthcare and Management, Education and Urban Design, Film/Music and Storytelling.

2.2.2.Knowledge exchange and sharing

Each community has plans for knowledge exchange between the partners. Best practices and case studies will be shared to create transnational resources, design new modules or frameworks, or even improve policies at institutions.

For example, the lead of the community related to healthcare is currently designing a new module about Global Challenges in Health and Care and would like to integrate the reflections of the community in this work:

> "I can see opportunities of talking to partners about whether they have something similar, what would they regard as major global challenges, whether they have case studies that might be relevant, whether they'd be interested in contributing."

The Urban Education community is working on a shared glossary of terms, which could potentially be multilingual:

> "We're also working on a glossary. There are some key concepts for teachers to teach in an inclusive environment and we are listing these key concepts. We're trying to build shared definitions for them."

Knowledge exchange is seen as a positive first step to challenge current practices:

> "I think [EUTOPIA] is a blessing opportunity to be honest [...] I think one of the positive things of working with other universities is, of course, that we are learning from them. We share projects, we share ideas but also, we get inspired from other universities, that's very good. And the other thing is this combination of approaches. Usually helps us to break a bit the boundaries in our universities [...] And it's also like a sort of a stimulus for the students but also for the people around us." (TV and Film)

2.2.3.Internationalised institution crossing borders

Comparing national contexts can also be an interesting exercise for both staff and students:

> "It can be very interesting to add this international dimension. For example, having students in different countries/cities working on a similar case and then presenting how they have analysed it and solutions they see. Another element is a solution is always situated within a context, what would be possible, what legislation allow, in Flanders it's different as it is in... so it's interesting to compare how they are dealing with this kind of issues." (Urban Edu)

Barriers

2.2.4. Openness and accessibility of platforms and IT tools

The digital dimension can be an important barrier to collaboration, especially in the transnational, trans-institutional, context. IT tools are not always accessible by other institutions or stakeholders:

> "we are working in a forum which is part of our learning environment in Canvas but then other institutions are working in other sites and platforms, so also how will we choose one platform, and then give access to others? Or will we do the sharing in other ways and each one work in their own platform? […] the VUB is very protective of [its] learning environment. We have asked multiple times to be able to give access to our courses to external people, for example, mentors that we are working with in the school that are supervising our students or international partners, but the VUB has installed all of the… You cannot, for example Teams and Canvas they allow this, you can give access as externals, but the VUB has closed this option. It is difficult to collaborate, especially if you want to co-create with external people the platforms don't always allow this, and I feel that the universities are very afraid of making mistakes." (Urban Edu)

> It's "the platforms that don't follow. I understand there needs to be some control […] But some flexibility [is needed], yeah." (Entrepreneurship)

In order to collaborate and co-create, there is a need for platforms that are accessible to all. Furthermore, the platforms should be owned and shared on an equal basis to guarantee an equal partnership, especially with industry practitioners:

> "You really have to have a digital space where you are both equally owner of the space and can collaborate on an equal basis […] there's really a lot of work to restore this relationship, these […] schools and educational practitioners have been treated as being inferior for so many decades that there is a great mistrust towards universities so we find this horizontality, this equal basis, very important." (Urban Edu)

2.2.5. Digital Literacy

Another barrier is digital literacy as some students, especially mature learners returning to education, lack digital literacy, which creates accessibility issues and adds complexity:

> "these second-career teachers, sometimes it's 10, 15, 20 years ago that they've been at university so they are not familiar with these learning environments, so for them it's really a high learning curve to find their way in this digital dimension of university, […]. [A]t one point in our programme we had lots of tools because we were always looking at the best tools and if it wasn't part of the package the VUB was offering we would do it in other environment, but then we had to stop this and we really decided to stop certain things in certain outsides tools because it was too much for the second career teachers […] so we just decided we will only use Office and Canvas tools and everything that is outside of this,

we don't do it anymore because it's way too complex and it's missing its goal."
(Urban Edu)

2.3. ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

<u>Barriers</u>

In the four interviews conducted, the organisational capacity of institutions was seen as the main challenge to overcome in order to transform HEIs into LLL institutions:

> "The main bottleneck seems to be […] resources and capacity." (Entrepreneurship)

2.3.1. Funding

Funding was seen as a major barrier to transnational collaboration. Although much can be done digitally, there is always the need for some in-person moments, either to foster a better sense of community, or for some hands-on activities such a shooting a TV series:

> "the problem is exactly the resources. We don't have any extra money for this subject so I really rely on the students and on the willingness of students to do that [pay themselves to travel to other institutions] but obviously not all the students can pay for that" (TV & Film).

The sustainability of well-oiled programmes can be threatened by lack of funding:

> "this is the tricky part, […] the sustainability of this programme, because […] basically, we don't have the money to do this actually. […] So, it is very painful because… I have the impression that all the partners involved feel that this is valuable […], we want these kinds of partnerships between academia and practice, and everybody is benefitting from it, but nobody wants to fund it… on a structural basis." (Urban Edu)

One lead proposed a more nuanced vision of this issue and suggestions on how to approach it:

> "It's not that there isn't finance, it's that there isn't sufficient priority. Part of this, I think, is creating a more compelling narrative that helping people develop this dimension in their career really, really makes a difference, and it makes a difference to all of the dimensions of quality of care. And one of these is productivity. So, if you have a clinical workforce that understands more about management and leadership and how it might contribute, and you have the form of organisational culture in which those activated professionals are involved in helping you set the strategy for your organisation it can absolutely affect the bottom line […] so there is a business case for it" (Healthcare).

2.3.2. Workload & Administrative Burden

> "there's definitely an issue with the workload and not more resources to build that workload. I don't want to sound too negative. […] Of course, it's our job also to do this, to make sure that we teach in a qualitative way. But let's say what's holding it back is probably that one and not the willingness or the interest […] The people need the time to sit down and to develop. […] One of the nice examples that I always use is when we have a new set of professors at university. So, every year in January they go on a one week…isolation, let's say, to work on teaching and education. And what you get there then is that for the first time and maybe the last time, you get to focus 5 days uninterruptedly on education. And that's really such a nice experience for everyone involved. […] And you come back with like, OK, I'm going to change this, this and this, but then quickly… Yeah." (Entrepreneurship)

The difficulty of opening courses to external students, which then creates more administrative workload:

> "the course was already finished by the time that she was officially registered as a student. So, unless I say: "OK, I send you the team link" because at the end the student was not registered so she couldn't access the canvas learning environment, she couldn't access it. So anyway, I had to send her every week the course material, the link to the teams and so on. […] but yeah, it's a pity because next time that I get this question and maybe I will say I don't do it because, administratively, it will be a mess." (Entrepreneurship)

2.3.3. Rules and regulations in other universities

National or institutional regulations are a big hurdle for a networked institution, be it to collaborate or to establish a common system accreditation:

> "the difficult part is that the projects that they are working on are owned by the university and are also deeply under NDA or in the process of IP filing patent application and so on. There is this kind of mix with tech transfer that we need and apparently that model is hard to transpose to other universities. […] tech transfer is also organized differently all over Europe." (Entrepreneurship)

> "some of the partners in the LC already work under a series of quite restrictive rules around these things [accreditation, micro-credentials], which are probably even more restrictive than what we have in England." (Healthcare)

2.3.4. Portability of accreditations & approval of prior learning/experience

The current systems in place in many institutions mean that accreditations lack portability and thus, that the burden is placed on the learner to prove their prior experience or learning, which is very difficult and time-consuming:

> "I've delivered programmes […] in which someone could do an individual module of a Masters' programme and be given a postgraduate award […] but

the mechanisms if they then move to another university or city […] the arrangements for them to take that award and then be able to amalgamate it with other learnings into a single educational outcome aren't well developed. And often they lead to a major onus on the individual learner to convince another institution that the learning outcomes […] were exactly relevant and of a similar weight […]." (Healthcare)

2.3.5. Institutions' financial and commercial interests

Co-creation is "still hard because there are vested interests for universities in binding people into an engagement with their own institution":

> "We find it easy to recognise that we share common issues and that we have complementary skills, and quite hard to turn it into concrete examples, that both institutions are comfortable with, of real delivery. […] It's a little bit commercial interest. We had an original plan through the [Monash-Warwick] partnership […] to co-design, co-develop and co-deliver an online Masters' programme in strategic leadership for healthcare and we weren't able to make progress. In part because, particularly in the Monash case, they felt that it could successfully compete with some of their existing programmes. And, at this end, because we had expectations about the cost structure for that programme that were unrealistic for the market, which would have been mostly, at least in England, people working in the public sector. […] We put a lot of time and energy into the development of the programme in theory, and its approval […] and we don't have a programme at the end of it." (Healthcare)

2.3.6. Scheduling

Different and conflicting schedules between institutions, as well as personal and professional schedules and responsibilities can impede collaboration between the various stakeholders:

> "Sometimes it's difficult because the students have their schedules, they have their commitments in the university, they have other subjects and responsibilities – personal and professional responsibilities – and obviously the professionals have other responsibilities. So, when we try to engage both of them in the same project but sometimes it's not that easy for matter of time and combination of different activities." (TV & Film)

2.3.7. Financial Pressure for Working Students

Although the VUB gives the opportunity for flexible pathways, most in-service teachers still choose to do the Masters' full time:

> "They think 'I can do this on top of my work, on top of my family responsibilities' and it's not feasible. We try to explain this but for them it's important to have this diploma asap because if they work as a teacher without this diploma, they earn less, their wages are lower. […] So, they have this financial pressure to do it

asap. Also, they have to put a lot of things on hold to make room in their life to study and so they want to keep this period as short as possible. […] It's so difficult for them, they really hit their limits." (Urban Edu)

SECOND ROUND: 2023

1. CLCs PROFILES

1.1. Multilingualism and Diversity

Lead: Jo Angouri (UW)

The community is made up of a group of experts from leading universities across Europe, bringing interdisciplinary learning to explore key issues of Multilingualism and Diversity. We are building a community of students and academics alike, who are passionate about Multilingualism and want to explore the local relevance of global problems. Our goals are to champion diversity and cross-university collaboration, transform the learning experience and contribute to building a new academic model.

We provide an inspiring and supportive learning environment to help students develop their skills and confidence with innovative pedagogies. Our community aims to bring students from different levels together to give them the chance to collaborate on projects and make global connections. We want to empower students and provide them with the opportunity to be more involved in their own learning experiences. This is why we have launched several pioneering activities such as the possibility for students to design their module in Multilingualism. We have an exciting programme of activities ranging from courses and workshops to a student-led conference, so join us to be part of a dynamic and global community that is at the forefront of research in Multilingualism and Diversity.

(From the EUTOPIA Website)

1.1.1. Lead's experience with LLL

- Lead collaborates extensively with non-academic partners and professional organisations for her research. Her work also consists in translating research findings into training/guidelines for professionals on leadership, teamwork, decision making, complex problems resolution, risk assessment, and how to do this in complex environments with multiple stakeholders, particularly in healthcare settings.

- The lead has co-designed a course on leadership with an organisation that has then been offered through the business school to the organisation and also to regular university students.

- The lead has worked on making university courses more accessible/flexible to professionals in various instances.

1.1.2.Learners' profiles in CLC

Undergraduate and postgraduate students (BA, MA and PhD) but mostly traditional profile (18-25 years old).

1.1.3.CLC activities

Learning activities:

- *À-la-carte* programme of activities leading to a EUTOPIA micro-credential. Students choose 2 activities from the below:

- Short online courses from partner universities (3-6 weeks)

- Organising a student conference

- Designing their ideal module on Multilingualism

- Multilingualism and Diversity Student Conference

- Languages Week (in collaboration with Text and Discourse CLC): festival of languages to celebrate diversity. Includes: language cafés, academic talks, roundtables, language tasters, film screenings, etc. across the alliance.

- The CLC is exploring the implementation of a joint EUTOPIA module with some of the partners (in collaboration with Text & Discourse).

Research activities:

- Policy paper/brief on Multilingualism in HE written by some of the CLC members.

1.2. Text and Discourse Analysis

Leads: Agnes Pisanski Peterlin and Nataša Hirci (UL)

The Text and Discourse Analysis Learning Community brings together students from different European universities, offering them an opportunity to put their discourse and language skills into practice in a virtual Languages in Use Week.

The Languages in Use Week is designed as a series of online meetings of pairs or small groups of students across EUTOPIA who collaborate to explore discourse and text in use through lively conversation with their peers. Intended for advanced-level foreign language students, the Languages in Use Week involves chatting and exchanging opinions on a range of different topics in French, German, Italian, Spanish and English. The virtual meetings are recorded, and the recordings are made available to Eutopia participants to use as research material for discourse analysis projects. This endeavour aims to enrich the students' learning experience, and eventually grow to involve further collaboration among the students.

(From the EUTOPIA Website)

1.2.1. Leads' experience with LLL

Nataša has been involved in projects on how to avoid language barriers with healthcare workers, as well as with intercultural mediators working in healthcare settings.

1.2.2. Programmes in which the leads are involved and learners' profile

- BA in Translation and Interpreting.

- MA in Translation and Interpreting: students can choose between 3 pathways: Translation (30 students), Interpreting (2 students), and Digital Linguistics. Languages offered: English, French, German, Italian, and sign language. A certain grade point average is needed to enrol in the MA. The students' profile is traditional (20-23 years old) with the occasional mature student. A Careers Day with guest speakers from various fields is organised every year. The MA includes a 3-week mandatory summer internship/work placement (120 hours) in the industry (translation agencies, ministries, banks, etc.), and students can elect to do a 2nd work placement. Through their work placement, students start creating a professional network. Sometimes, this is how they get their first job once they graduate. It is not always full-time, however. Finally, many alumni end up supervising MA students during their work placement.

- UL has a LLL course for court interpreters, but the leads are not involved in it.

- The faculty used to have a part-time programme for people already working (usually in languages) who wanted to update their skills. This would lead to a degree. This programme would usually welcome some of the students who did not have the required marks to enter the main MA programme.

1.2.3. Learners' profiles in CLC

Traditional students, no LLL students currently.

1.2.4. CLC activities

Language in Use Week (see above): student-centred and student-led. As the activity take places online, it requires a certain level of digital skills. It has not been possible yet to make students analyse the recordings as planned. The leads are currently rethinking the activity.

Validation/Recognition: there is no assessment or recognition of the activity currently. But the leads are interested in certification and micro-credentials, or to embed the CLC activities into their course more permanently.

Currently, the CLC does not have links with stakeholders/industry, but is interested in pursuing this.

Barriers to activity:

- Organisational issues: difficulties matching students because of the different cohort size and language availability in each institution + high drop-out rate.

- Students' profile: the learners are not familiar with communicating with other students in this way which makes it challenging and stressful.

- The leads reflected that this activity might be better suited to LLL learners, such as retired individuals, as they have more time than traditional students and do not need a degree. Not only would it bring them language skills but also an opportunity to connect with other individuals.

Languages Week (in collaboration with Multilingualism CLC): festival of languages to celebrate diversity. Includes: language cafés, academic talks, roundtables, language tasters, film screenings, etc.

1.3. International Journalism and Global Media

Lead: Christopher Tulloch (UPF)

This learning community begins by taking a historical perspective on the media coverage of global political events from 1776 to the present day. From here, the community projects a media landscape according to which students entre the international newsroom to meet the typology of foreign news reporters, the demands of the international desk and where they can examine specific global journalism challenges such as the key role of news agencies or the professional dilemmas of war reporting. From here, the learning community then presents:

- four case studies (Islamophobia, the depiction of the African continent, the Israel-Palestine conflict and the image of Spain in the foreign media);

- South-South communication model and a News World Order based on the BRICS model;

- the concept of "transnational" journalism and the consequent "death" of international journalism.

1.3.1. Lead's experience with LLL

- Institute for Continuous Education (IDEC): the lead taught at IDEC for a long time.

- UPF Senior Programme: the lead welcomes mature students in his courses through the UPF Senior programme (max. 5 students/course).

- Journalistic Union: the lead has taught some courses at the journalistic union which attracts professional journalists wishing to upskill.

1.3.2. Programmes the lead is involved in:

- UPF BA and MA in Journalism: a lot of work is project-based and in teams. The BA includes mandatory work placements at the end of 3rd and 4th years (40-45 companies to choose from). Students are assigned a mentor in the company and at UPF.

Interestingly, traditional students are mostly women, whereas mature/senior students are usually men.

- UPF Senior Programme: for people over 50 years old. *À-la-carte* menu of courses. Learners choose their courses and have to participate in all activities alongside traditional students. No formal examinations. Learners do not get a degree, but they are given a UPF senior programme diploma upon completion of the programme.

- Previously, IDEC: 20-hour summer schools from June to September, 4 hour a day either morning or afternoon. Practical, short, hands-on courses related to communication. These courses attracted journalists in their 40s and 50s wanting to upskill.

1.3.3. Learners' profile in the CLC

All students that are part of the lead's course at UPF participate in the CLC. No LLL learners currently as there has been fewer senior students after COVID. There is knowledge exchange between partners and between students.

1.3.4. CLC Activities

- Guest lectures by practitioners (e.g. war correspondents, area specialists).
- Roundtables (e.g. the Russia-Ukraine war, Israel Palestine conflict).
- Three-part student-led podcast series on hate speech: 3 teams of students (UPF, VUB, CY) interviewed people in their respective cities. Everything was sent to the UPF team who edited and dubbed the materials in English. Around 50 hours of work for the students so this activity will be discontinued because the workload is too high for too little recognition, "unless that was actually a course option on the curriculum".

1.4. Nursing Care in Complex Care Situations

Leads: Jenny Milton, Camilla Eide, and Ewa-Lena Bratt (GU)

The Learning community is focused on guiding students towards the development of knowledge and understanding in advanced nursing care in complex care situations. The student reflects on the complexity and ethical dilemmas in different healthcare situations based on the patient's, the relative's, and the nurse's perspectives. Students are introduced to advanced nursing care in specialized fields such as paediatrics, emergency care, intensive care, anaesthesia, perioperative care, postoperative care, trauma care, prehospital care and advanced home care. By using innovative and flexible pedagogical approaches, students learn how to turn theory into to practice and explore real life issues using student-centred methods for learning.

(From the EUTOPIA Website)

1.4.1. Leads' experience with LLL

Jenny Milton teaches on some courses for returning learners who wishes to upskill. These freestanding courses lead to credits which are added to the student's previous credits.

1.4.2. Programmes in which the lead is involved

BA in Nursing

Freestanding short courses leading to credits (added to students' previous degree): e.g. becoming a clinical supervisor (5 weeks, 7.5 ECTS)

1.4.3. Learners' profiles in CLC

The CLC is intending to involve the BA students and would also welcome any other type of learner such as mature learners/professionals, as well as students from other disciplines.

1.4.4. CLC activities

Webinar featuring experts and practitioners

Guest lectures by practitioners/experts: the CLC would like to build a lecture library with recordings available for the CLC members.

[Possible future activity]: GU to open the workshop that is embedded in their 5- week course to students of partners institutions for students to work digitally together.

2. DIMENSIONS IN FOCUS

Overall, the leads once again agreed that learners should be at the centre:

> "that's the only way to proceed with this in my opinion. I mean, if it's not learner-centred in this day and age, lifelong learning is not going to be possible or feasible." (Text & Discourse)

Furthermore, the EUTOPIA educational model and the CLCs can be good tools to support and implement LLL:

> "I think that EUTOPIA can be a valuable addition or a valuable player in implementing this change [...] towards lifelong learning." (Text & Discourse)

The four dimensions that were the most discussed during the interviews, and that this part of the report focuses on, as are (in no specific order):

- ▪ Validation, Certification, Recognition

- ▪ Organisational Capacity

- ▪ Skills demand & Professional Development

- ▪ Co-creation, Collaboration and Connectedness

Some of these overlap with the first round which shows the congruence of the data. However, some aspects are different due to the different thematics and sectors the different CLCs are representing.

2.1. VALIDATION, CERTIFICATION, RECOGNITION

This dimension was highlighted by several leads as an essential one, as it ensures student motivation and enables learners to translate their skills to tangible employment.

2.1.1. Importance of certification

Some professions, for which formal training/certification was previously not necessarily needed, now require a degree. This is the case for translation, for example:

> "translation service providers […] admit that they used to employ people […] who were not necessarily graduates […]. But over the last five years, I'm noticing that there are more and more regular […] job postings for jobs related to translation where one of the pre-requisites is a diploma or an MA degree in translation." (Text & Discourse)

In some sectors, such as nursing, certification is a must as, for safety reasons, professionals are not able to practice without their skills being formally recognised.

> "it has to be validated so that everyone can carry out their work in a safe way and to be trusted." (Nursing Care)

<u>Barriers</u>

2.1.2. Lack of recognition/validation

In all the CLCs interviewed, there is a consensus on the need for the EUTOPIA activities to be formally recognised, which is not currently the case in all CLCs:

> "the more we go towards recognition, consolidation, the better. […] Credits or micro-credentials, or a mention […]. Even on their diplomas. That would be so nice." (International Journalism)

When activities are not recognised or certified, it leads to difficulty in recruiting students and a high dropout rate because students understandably want to be rewarded for their efforts, especially when faced with competing demands for their time.

> "I can post a flyer and say: 'Will you participate?' […] we've posted on Facebook […] We've used all sorts of channels. But it's very hard. […] It might work better if […] I can assign a certain grade for participating […] or at least we can issue a certificate for the students" (Text and Discourse)

2.2. ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

This dimension was already highlighted during the first round as one of the main barriers for the transformation of HE institutions into LLL institutions. Here again, many challenges regarding the organisational capacity of universities were stressed, but some interesting examples of LLL-oriented programmes were also found.

2.2.1. Existing LLL-oriented Programmes

Some HE institutions already have programmes in place that can work well for professionals wishing to upskill. For example, the University of Gothenburg offers short courses that lead to formal accreditation. These micro credits seem to be stackable:

> "you add on a course after you're done with your programme […]. Then we will give you credits for that. […] [Y]ou go to the university, have your class […] [and] since our programmes are also built on different courses with different credentials, so they all add up to a programme." (Nursing Care)

2.2.2. Need for both Traditional and LLL Education in HE Institutions

LLL education and traditional education can coexist in HE institutions so as to fulfil the needs of different learners:

> "You need different types of modularity […] You can have your traditional course with some modules, being 10-week long, but you can have other courses or modules that could be 3-week long and they can coexist because they would have different Learning Outcomes and your Learning Outcomes would be at programme level." (Multilingualism)

2.2.3. Incentivisation for LLL

In some sectors, the shortage of professionals is so acute that governments are considering incentives to recruit. This is the case for specialist nurses in Sweden which require a one-year specialisation after the Bachelor's degree:

> "The government wants to solve it through recruiting Bachelor's nurses having a paid second education. So, if you specialise, you might be able to keep your salary and then continue your work basically. You're studying to become a specialist nurse and then already recruited to a set ward or the surgery theatre, which is debated whether that is correct or not. Because then you sort of are already recruited and you are set to work there as a workforce and then you don't have free of choice where to go. But it also gives an opportunity then to continue your learning and to get maybe a better career within your nursing field." (Nursing Care)

Barriers

2.2.4.Traditional Model

Some HE institutions still function on a very traditional model, which does not work for lifelong learning:

> "the University of Ljubljana or at least […] this faculty […] is primarily organized […] to cater to very traditional students and a very traditional way of learning. And I don't mean that in a bad way or in a judgmental way, but […] it's simply the way it's been done, and it also reflects its origins." (Text & Discourse)

> "Personally, would love to [open up the course to mature learners], yes. […] However, this course is not free standing. […] It's a part of a programme and, while it gives you certain credits to be able to move forward in the programme, it's not a single course that you can participate in without being included in the whole programme of Nursing." (Nursing Care)

> "This is a state-owned university, so we're not able to go into more of the selling" (Nursing Care)

2.2.5.National or Internal Regulations

As highlighted in the first round, the different regulations between EUTOPIA institutions can be a barrier to collaboration, especially in terms of validation/accreditation as each university as their own accreditation processes. Furthermore, for sectors such as education or nursing, in which qualifications are regulated by national regulatory bodies, international courses, whilst enriching for students, might not be as attractive as they would not lead to qualification in the country they are practicing in:

> "it could be an upside and a downside with having it internationally. […] Could be a downside for mature learners that are not able to understand the language or not interested in something outside their own borders." (Nursing Care)

2.2.6.Lack of Societal Relevance

The barriers are not just logistical, but also in terms of content:

> "The problem is that the content of some of these courses hasn't changed in decades! […] all learners need to see the relevance of what they do to who they are, what they are, where they're going, what they're doing […] particularly for professionals who have more competing demands for their time and resources.
>
> […]
>
> See Linguistics. Speech and language therapy. As embedded in LLL as it gets. Some of the programmes in speech and language therapy are co-run by the NHS and so-on. […] I have students who are training for 3 years to be able to get into some of those masters and there are qualifications that universities offer. But they worked in a very different way to design, embed it, give students practical placements/internships, bring stakeholders and so on. So, here is an example

where you have already a sort of system that shows that it is very possible, but that will certainly not be possible in the kind of orthodox [way of teaching] because the connections with society are lost." (Multilingualism)

2.2.7. Digital Literacy

As mentioned by Urban Edu in the first round, digital skills can be a barrier for mature students returning to education. They need to adapt to a new learning environment which can be challenging at first:

"when they come back to a teaching environment – if they've been to one previously – which is not always the case, […] they have to see that the university has changed and that teaching methods have changed. […] MS Teams and stuff. Even pre-covid." (International Journalism)

2.2.8. Flexibility

As we know, flexible pathways are needed to accommodate the needs of mature learners:

"it needs to involve teaching and learning in different sort of bite-size type format and flexibility that we just don't have in academia, and we also don't have the funding model." (Multilingualism)

WP2 will work on the business scenarios that would enable HE institutions to have funding models that work to offer LLL provision.

2.2.9. Language Provision

Being learner-centred also implies having language provision for all, which is not always the case currently:

"I teach my courses in English. So, do all lifelong learners speak English?" (International Journalism)

More linguistic pathways are needed.

2.3. SKILLS DEMAND/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the changing landscape of the 21st century, the skill demands are very different than a few decades ago and they keep evolving as new forms of technologies appear.

2.3.1. Analytical Skills

A set of skills that are essential for any learner in our day and age are analytical skills and critical thinking:

> "I think what everybody needs is […] being able to navigate information, so critical and analytical skills become more and more relevant. The ability to synthesize because […] it is not about where the information is […] [b]ut how to quality assure, how to connect, how to translate…Generally, what I think we need more, better data analytics, but better analytics […] and have a space where you can do it safely so that's what we need to give to the learners which is something that does not go with short and intensive, which is typically the format that works for professionals." (Multilingualism)

2.3.2. Media Literacy

Critical evaluation skills and media literacy are also needed by senior students, especially as media has greatly evolved in the digital era:

> "we're very interested in helping older people decode fake news." For older people, "there's still this belief […] that it's true because it's on the television." (International Journalism)

2.3.3. Digital Skills

For mature student, digital skills are also needed as this is something that they did not learn when they were in HE:

> "in communication, we get a lot of seniors staff who want to get digitally skilled." (International Journalism)

2.3.4. Upskilling

In some sectors, the shortage of practitioners is sparking the idea to upskill professionals from the same field with a lower qualification to fill these positions:

> "There have been some ideas about fast tracking these nurse assistants to upskill. And sometimes it's done in house. However, they not being um forwarded with the ability to hand out medication for example […] But it's not very popular and it has also been a discussion between nurses and physicians whether nurses can be then trained to become assistant physicians or vice versa. Physicians can then go into the caring industry to get a job as a nurse […] but there has been a big resistance […] because it's different professions, right? […] [B]ut also to be able to produce […] a safe healthcare" (Nursing Care)

In the sectors studied in this round, there is a continuous need for upskilling. This can be due to technological advancements that change the way workers operate:

> "these professions change, and with the advent of, you know, like chat bots and things like that, they're going to change some more and new skills will be added" (Text & Discourse)

> "one of the things that people will have to keep up to date is their knowledge of how to handle all the translation technologies. Without that there is no translation anymore. […] I even know literary translators who actually work with Trados, believe it or not." (Text & Discourse)

With the rise of AI, students/workers are concerned about their value and future:

> "we try to stay positive because you know now with ChatGPT and the deep AI and all these various Machine Translations around, the students obviously feel quite vulnerable if you wish, and in a rather insecure position. Will they be able to find regular employment? Will they be paid enough? Will that work be valuable enough to society?" (Text & Discourse)

2.3.5. Changing Landscapes Create New Demands

It can also be due to new branches opening up in the profession which, in turn, require new skills:

> "our particular field is branching out into what they call community interpreting, which is interpreting for health professionals […] So this is growing with more migrations […] and new languages are being added […] We don't have so many specialists, we cannot run an entire program for languages that are more distant for us, right? So, this type of a set up for a course or a part of a course, microcredit and so on, would work, I think, better". (Text & Discourse)

Because of new migratory influx, there is a need for more interpreters of minority languages/language that are not traditionally taught at university:

> "My husband works in a hospital and occasionally they are asked to say if they speak any of the languages that is less accessible through interpretation. […] He has colleagues who are maybe fluent in one of those languages. And then there are those colleagues and it's very done informally. The hospitals recognize the need. […] [but] we cannot fill the need because we don't have the people trained yet. […] if we have to train someone who's a nurse and is employed at a hospital, but whose mother tongue is one of the languages where it's very difficult to acquire an interpreter, and we, in the hospitals, are interested in training that person to get certification in some kind of language mediation. We obviously cannot expect that nurse to drop out from work for two years. And so, we're thinking now, that developing smaller units would be something that interests us and… micro credentials […] We're hoping EUTOPIA will bring about some changes in this respect because, for a small language, you have to be flexible. You can't start a new program." (Text & Discourse)

2.3.6. Legal Requirement for Continuous Education

In some professions, professional development and upskilling are a legal requirement. This is the case for sworn translators and interpreters in Slovenia:

> "they are actually obliged – I believe it's every five years […] – they have to actually engage in in a number of different either translation workshops or

attend other workshops with some lectures where they learn about the novelties in the business, and then afterwards they're given some sort of a recognition for that. So, some sort of a certificate." (Text & Discourse)

<u>Barriers</u>

2.3.7. Competition with Other LLL Providers

For LLL, HE institutions are competing with professional colleges and organisations that already have LLL very good provisions in place:

> "There's no course in our 4-year degree that teaches [students] how to administer their own finances. […] Most of the jobs now for young journalists are as freelancers […] so if you want to write an article, how much can you charge for that article? How do you sell your work? […] How do you declare your taxes? […] you know, entrepreneurship […]. [T]he professional colleges will come and say: 'We'll tell you how to do that'. They don't do that at university." (International Journalism)

In Journalism, LLL and upskilling are mostly assumed by professional associations/organisations at the moment:

> "…we have rivals, you know, we have other institutions that do similar things. For example, the journalist professional college. Like the union. And they try to […] scale up or upgrade their journalists by having courses themselves. So, the university is also competing with professional organisations" (International Journalism)

This is similar in the translation sector:

> "I actually ended up working with some older students who came back to study […]. The way that this additional training is done is over some sort of workshops that are offered either by the continuous education, or training which is offered as part of like what they call the university for the… tertiary... […]. All these regular workshops that are offered at a number of different translation or translator societies or associations." (Text & Discourse)

The way forward is to work hand in hand with these professional organisations, as HE institutions provide a different frame and perspective:

> "We're a university. We have a different role, a different orientation, different tools. […] we're much more trained to do a different type of analysis of the needs that are involved by the different professionals, so we tend to be more informed by theory […] We are different knowledge workers. […] Basically, we are part of the ecosystem, we're not the sole providers of training. […] We never were, we shouldn't be. […] the role of the university [is] to work with those associations to make sure that the quality […] is such that it could cover needs that are very complex. […] It has to be a win-win situation. […] there are a number of

> organisations who really want to work with institutions to really do sort of what they do to be informed by current thinking, to be able to support a client-base that is actually quite sophisticated." (Multilingualism)

2.4. CO-CREATION, COLLABORATION AND CONNECTEDNESS

In all the interviews, this dimension was highlighted as an essential one. But, as we had previously seen during the first round, it is also a challenging one, especially in terms of actual connectedness with non-academic partners – and not just collaboration.

2.4.1. The Importance of Transdisciplinary

> "I think this is really important, especially related to globalisation processes and how disciplines are interrelated in today's world, and I think lifelong learners… older students, for example, still put things in a box and now things are much more fluid than before. […] we need things that are kind of transdisciplinary." (International Journalism)

2.4.2. Collaboration with non-academic partners

Collaboration and co-creation with industry stakeholders is paramount:

> "It's a sine qua non. […] I think, for me, I can't do what I do without them. And that's why and how it works. […] often it starts because they come and say: 'We have a need'. […] in a sense, it is a needs-driven start. And that's how it should be because otherwise it's not sustainable." (Multilingualism)

In some CLCs such as the Nursing one, the members are themselves coming from the professional field and have the double status of academics and practitioners, so the links to the professional field are very strong, and what the CLC does is influenced by clinical practice.

> "We're all trained nurses. So, we have a clinical background. […] we do have different professions represented in the learning community, which is an added layer." (Nursing Care)

There are several ways to establish organic connections with organisations and co-create with them. The example below illustrate how professional learners can be a bridge to connect HE institutions with the organisations they are part of:

> "one of my students was working for organisation and took an academic course […] and made agreement to have a qualification co-sponsored with an organisation […] and what we did is actually design a course that his organisation could offer which was based on a new way of teaching and learning around issues of intercultural communication and intercultural teams. And the organisation would offer it to their client base, but also with a purpose of feeding into whether the Learning Outcomes were achieved faster better." (Multilingualism)

However, collaboration can only happen on an equal basis and if it serves both partners, which is a challenge Urban Education had also highlighted in the first round:

> "I think where you have opportunities is if you have strong relationships with organisations that will be willing to work with you to provide, to actually pilot and experiment in some ways that would allow both, all stakeholders and both core driving ones to gain value from the process. […] that's really valuable for me because they go and they pilot for me, it's wonderful and then they bring me back their experience and stories and case studies and what they get from me is that I have different processing abilities because of what I do. […] They have much better ability to keep an ear on the ground, work with other professionals and so on. (Multilingualism)

2.4.3. Value of Intergenerational Collaboration

There is much value added in having traditional students collaborate with LLL learners to learn from each other:

> "My course very often breaks up into groups so there's been some really nice kind of intergenerational learning experiences there." (International Journalism)

> "[Journalism] is not necessarily a young people's game so the young people who come into journalism are in the trenches but the people who are calling the shots or making the strategic decisions, that's their [older than 50] generation. So, there's a kind of peer-to-peer relation here. […] Because the students can see the mindset of a 55-year-old person which will be their boss." (International Journalism)

Learners can become trainers themselves:

> "you have a student, you try to train them, they graduate, they're going work somewhere. They gain experience. And then they, as an experienced member of the translation team, end up being supervisors to our current students." (Text & Discourse)

2.4.4. What is Connectedness?

Connectedness has been mentioned repeatedly but

> "connectedness to me means that you get to a point where you don't suddenly need to have a needs relationship that X can only exist if you have those components because that makes it dependent. But actually, it's embedded structurally in the life of an organisation or a programme […] in a way that there would be a smooth relationship, partnership, between bodies that don't actually come from […] the same sector so you don't have two universities working together, you actually have UNESCO or UNHCR or a local government if we are to talk about languages and multilingualism. […] Organisations where you can have those structural connections but you don't need, for every iteration, to set something new up. You need to have the framework, the

structure, irrespective of the two individuals to know that this is how this programme can work and that's how we can draw on each other's expertise and that how we can actually grow. And then also to understand the changing needs they have because we're very much a one-off, so we design something and then we offer it, and then that's it so that means that that has no sustainability and no scalability. […] and that's where the CLCs are very important because it's very much a community of practice." (Multilingualism)

Barriers

2.4.5.Logistics

As seen above, the logistics to match students in cross-university activities can be tricky:

> "if you have only one university offering one particular language, then it's very hard to match those students up. […] We need to make sure that the language level is comparable" (Text & Discourse)

2.4.6.Students' Organisational Skills

Collaboration between traditional and mature students, although rewarding, can be challenging because of the different life-demands students face. It requires great organisational skills from students:

> "Meeting a lifelong learner could be a slightly longer process. Different timelines or sometimes you get some interesting stories: "I can't meet up because I've got to pick up my grandchildren" => senior students "are basically all in the morning." (International Journalism)

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS ROUND 2

From this second round, we see some themes and dimensions emerging that are similar to the ones discussed in Round 1. From the interview data, we can see that, as in Round 1, the organisational capacity of HE institutions is currently perceived as the main barrier for their transformation into LLL institutions.

Changing sectors call for new skills, therefore it is likely that the demand to upskill and/or reskill will increase. If HE institutions do not want to be left behind, they need to make sure that the content of their offering is up-to-date and socially relevant to learners. In some sectors, LLL is currently carried out by professional associations and other organisations that already have an adequate LLL provision in place. Rather than compete with these organisations, HE should work hand in hand with them, as universities can offer something different and complementary to learners.

Collaboration and co-creation between learners, educators, practitioners and other stakeholders is an essential step that should ideally lead to true connectedness, however establishing this between all stakeholders is a challenge and does take time.

Validation/certification/accreditation is essential, not only for student retention, but to sustain the demands from the professional sector. A good example is the UPF Senior Programme. It is flexible and can be tailored to learners' needs and schedule; however, it does not result in valid accreditation. Whilst this is an excellent offering for seniors and retired individuals, it might not be adequate for professionals looking to further their skills for employment purposes, for example.

THIRD ROUND: 2024

1. Updated Framework

Following discussions with the leads and the expert committee in previous rounds, the framework was updated to the below:
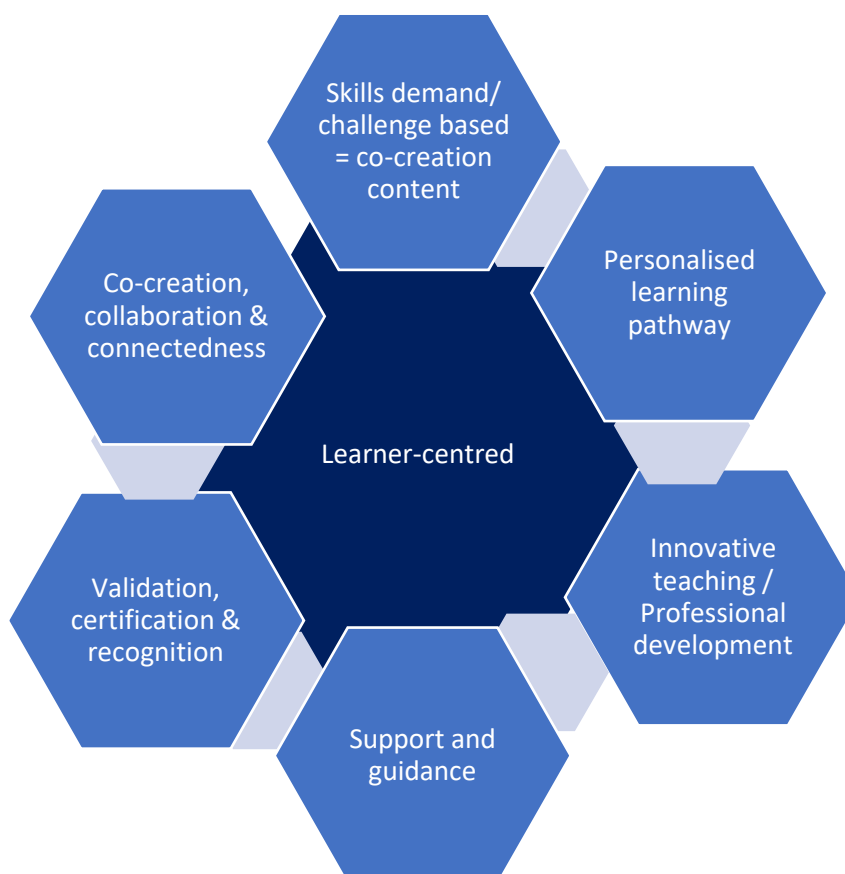
1. CLCs Profiles

1.1. Veganism vs. Animal Protein Consumption

Lead: Modest Vengušt (UL)

Veganism is a movement with a growing social footprint that spreads its cause through activism and politics. Some social interactions of vegans have also contributed to the development of vegaphobia, especially within communities directly or indirectly dependent on animal production for food consumption. The European Union relies on small to medium-sized farming to feed its population and to sell surplus agricultural produce outside the EU. Small to medium sized farms are more easily transformed into more modern and sustainable farming units than large intensive farms. However, a reduction in the production of meat and food of animal origin (milk, eggs, etc.) would cause

significant economic hardship for farmers. Currently, there is no EU policy aimed at reducing the production of meat and food of animal origin, nor are active measures being taken to change farming practices away from the production of animal proteins in line with the vegan philosophy. EU agricultural policy is mainly aimed at optimizing food production in terms of market regulation and protection of nature and vulnerable rural communities. It is also important to note that the vegan market in the EU is growing rapidly and should not be ignored.

The extreme opinion tendencies of vegans and their opponents have arisen from the diversity of opinion dynamics and the presence of individual "stubbornness". However, some people and professions are caught between opposing groups and opinions because they cannot afford to choose sides, or they would lose their purpose and mission. Veterinary medicine is one such profession. Veterinarians are tasked with protecting animals, yet most of them consume animal proteins. Veterinarians must also treat carnivorous pets that are fed vegan diets by their vegan owners, thus transferring the eating disorders common in the vegan community to the animals. These practices are also at odds with the vegan philosophy, as they can harm animals. The differences of opinion are becoming so great that they should no longer be ignored. Adjusting to these differences should begin with discussion, education, research, and policies based on reliable and transparent data.

(From the EUTOPIA Website)

1.1.1. Lead's experience with LLL

The lead is teaching some short specialty courses (e.g. 1 day) that veterinarians come to take in between jobs to update their skills/gain new skills.

The lead is himself a lifelong learner as he needs to update his credentials every few years in order to keep his veterinary license.

1.1.2. Learners' profile in the CLC

- Students: mostly undergraduates.
- However, the partners realised that the activities were of interest to very different groups as both administrative staff and students' parents attended some of the activities.

1.1.3. CLC Activities

- Seminars/Panels
- Guest lectures

1.2. Additive Manufacturing of Construction Materials

Lead: Alexandre Pierre (CY)

The community is situated on the premise that the construction sector has a crucial impact on societies, energy consumption, and carbon emissions. Despite this, it is not visible enough that any effort is being made to reduce the use of certain materials (e.g., concrete), nor to change classic building methods. The construction industry needs to benefit from an increased level of technology to reduce its carbon footprint. Additive manufacturing is an architectural, economic and environmental revolution for the construction industry. This learning community brings a disruptive approach, exploring material theology, design and design management through interactive cross-campus guest lectures and student projects investigating and redefining the way buildings are designed and built in our societies.

(From the EUTOPIA Website)

1.2.1.Learners' profile in the CLC

Undergraduate students participating in the course of the CLC lead. Master students are also invited to the activities.

1.2.2. CLC Activities

- Guest lectures by members of the CLC and discussions: these are embedded in the course of the lead.

  The idea is to build a bank of recorded lectures that can be used by each CLC member for their students. Industry stakeholders are not yet included in the CLC but there are plans to do so.

1.3. Design and Science

Lead: Boštjan Botas Kenda (UL)

This Community is situated within the context of a transdisciplinary summer school focusing on building an understanding of visual communication design in correlation with various scientific fields. Among these, each year a different topic is set. Design methods are introduced to achieve interpretation of scientific processes and findings and integration of visual theory with science.

Students will develop a clear understanding of how to design a visual communication language to appeal to users of scientific knowledge on the one hand, and how to introduce the principles of design thinking into scientific methodologies. This community offers students the opportunity to improve knowledge in the field/s of synergy between science and the arts, tackling the interdisciplinary fields where science enlightens the public and society through visual communication.

(From the EUTOPIA Website)

1.3.1. Learners' profile in the CLC

Master and PhD students, as well as professionals, have participated in the summer school. For example, 3 or 4 bioscientists participated in the summer school on Synthetic Foods.

1.3.2. CLC Activities

- Summer School: every year in July, the CLC hosts a summer school on a specific theme. "Design+Science is a multidisciplinary Summer School that promotes exploration and experimentation at the intersection of design and various scientific fields, led by renowned experts in their respective fields. This week-long Summer School includes workshops, guest lectures, tours, and other activities." (From: https://www.designscience.school/). Participants from several participating universities receives ECTS that carry credit for their home institution degree. Other participants receive a certificate.

- Guest lectures by members of the CLC.

- Interest in developing a joint master's degree in the future.

1.4. IMPACT: Interdisciplinary learning platforM for sPort 4 sociAl Change iniTiatives

Co-Leads: Marc Theeboom and Inge Derom (VUB)

This CLC is an interdisciplinary learning platform led by the VUB research group 'Sport and Society'. They have a strong track record in investigating the potential of organised sport activities for triggering social change.

The argument for selecting this CLC as a testbed for FLECSLAB is that it clearly responds to the criterium of challenge-based learning initiatives that operate in a segment of the labour market becoming increasingly important especially in metropolitan areas around the world.

1.4.1. Learners' profile in the CLC

In urban surroundings, a growing group of young people finds it difficult to integrate in society because of socio-cultural background and skills where they are different from the mainstream characteristics/norms. In many cases, this discrepancy severely limits their self-confidence, school results and job perspectives. Engagement in sports activities/clubs proves to be a powerful tool for motivating this group and helping them to perform better at many levels.

In this context, there is a large group of students and professionals that need to be prepared for taking up additional social responsibilities as part of their roles when training/steering the participants in sports activities. At institutional level, the sporting associations also have to deal with this challenge at managerial/financial level.

IMPACT is a typical example of so-called Community Engaged Learning and Research that has been promoted within VUB for more than 20 years. They launch a growing number of initiatives using sports as a medium for cooperating with a variety of extra academic stakeholders that work with socially deprived segments in society.

These stakeholders are extremely important to help identifying the potential lifelong learners that – next to degree seeking students – are interested in acquiring the competences and monitoring skills to handle the socio-cultural challenges as well as the business aspects on this issue.

1.4.2.Experience with LLL

The Sport and Development group at VUB indicated they have/are developing contracts/agreements with extra academic associations. They are still in the process of refining these agreements and learn to even more clearly specify the resources and responsibilities of all partners (academia, sports associations, sponsors and the individual learner).

To be mentioned as examples are :

1. Agreement with a science promoting foundation (Stichting Bernheim) organizing workshops for professional sports organizations and academics involved to measure the impact of their investment in a social role.

2. Service level agreement with football clubs in pro/premier league for helping them in planning and managing their efforts in assuming a social responsibility.

This national experience now serves as a basis for cooperation and mutual exchange of knowledge with global partners in EUTOPIA (in casu Stellenbosch and Monash).

1.4.3.CLC Activities

The connected learning efforts focus on co-creating an elective course for sports management students, mobility of teachers and blended intensive teaching methods allowing for student exchange thereby limiting the study abroad period as for making the participation more inclusive.

Recognition of connected learning is backed up by integrating the connected learning processes in present curricular offering and by allocating EUTOPIA micro-credentials to the students participating in the future BIPs.

2. Dimensions in focus

Interviews from this round confirmed the results of the previous rounds. The leads agreed with the importance of putting the learner at the centre and the other dimensions:

> "Always the learner is in the centre. I don't see anything else in the centre. How
> you service that learner is important to get it into the centre. If you have an

empty centre, then you can dance around theses circles and it's not gonna do any good." (Veganism)

The dimensions are needed to create an ecosystem that will sustain LLL. Currently, "We don't really provide the ecosystem that the learners would take the advantage of" (Veganism).

> "The learner is really some kind of subject which is in the first row. […] This learner is focused on his own topics, but they want to create their own environment with the possibilities that we give them in this platform. That's why I think that somehow all these [dimensions] in your map are really connected. We need to fulfil all of these, not just one or two. You need to create the whole environment, with some content and with some experience." (Design & Science)

> "My point is to really establish the means for learning and then if we can do that well, the learners are learning to come and to take advantage of what we can offer. If we are not going to be proactive and well-educated, and showing that we can benefit their professional and personal life then they are not going to come […]." (Veganism)

'Skills Demands' and 'Co-creation, collaboration and connectedness' were once more highlighted by the leads interviewed as essential dimensions. The Veganism CLC also emphasised the need for support in the veterinary profession they are representing.

> "Most of those [dimensions] that are here in this diagram, they are kind of a natural cause and effect for our profession, whereas support & guidance and co-creation, collaboration and connectedness, this is something that, I suppose, we are not as strong at as we should be, and I think that's missing in our field and should be worked on proactively." (Veganism)

Overall, the dimensions that were the most discussed in this round are:

- Skills Demand
- Co-creation, Collaboration & Connectedness
- Support and Guidance

One lead also suggested to conduct a survey to consult with employees about their LLL needs:

> "a good idea should be to do a survey that will well spread to a lot of people in civil engineering […] it can give us some order of magnitude about quantity of employees interested in this kind of things." (Additive Manufacturing)

We now go into each highlighted dimension in more detail.

2.1. Skills Demand

2.1.1. Importance of skills demand

The leads emphasised the drive for new skills coming from new technologies. LLL has an important role to play in enabling learners to keep updating their skills to respond to the demands of the market:

> "We live in a society, in an environment, in an era that constantly requires us that we need to have new skills which we cannot get from the basic education, or it may be the education was a long time ago. And then, of course, with the growing part with these working projects I guess that the specifics are new, and we need to transform it into the into the working processes. So, they need to be achieved through the organised learning processes, that's why this kind of lifelong activities and systems are needed." (Design & Science)

> "AI is something that it's creeping into almost every profession, so you can't really ignore that." (Veganism)

2.1.2. Various reasons for upskilling

There are different reasons for upskilling. For example, some workers choose to do this to have the potential to increase their income:

> "some of them want to upskill, to have the degree to earn more or get more recognition in the company." (Additive Manufacturing)

Others are interested in upskilling for their own personal benefit:

> "I remember, two years ago, it was three or four participants, which are more than 35 years old. They're coming from the field of IT and technology. But they want to get some knowledge which is shared for this topic." (Design & Science)

2.1.3. Surveying needs

Some professions survey what types of skills workers need or want to acquire in order to fill that gap:

> "The veterinary chamber takes the pulse of, you know, from the whole vet populations to see what what's they want to see, and they go with that." (Veganism)

Barriers

2.1.4. Administrative burden

Once again, the organisational capacity of HE institutions came up as a barrier:

> "The administration is not going down. It's going up." (Veganism)

2.1.5. Cost of investing in new technologies

The issue is not just the new skill demands to keep up with the new technologies but also the cost of those technologies and how to fund this:

> "what's also worrying is the new technical systems and software systems that are coming into the profession. It's worrying because if you want to be on the top, you have to have them. But that means that you have to invest something you will almost never get back. You know, we're talking about millions and millions of euros, especially for imaging and things like that. And AI is strong into imaging. So, we are just investing in that, and the costs are mind boggling […]. If you don't have things like that, you just don't offer the knowledge that is relevant." (Veganism)

2.1.6. Competition with Other LLL Providers

Universities are not the first port of call when learners want to do LLL, which is why HE institutions need to improve their LLL provisions:

> "for lifelong learning, in France, […] I think that there's not so much people thinking about university." (Additive Manufacturing)

As was the case for the journalism and translation fields in the second round, the lead of the Additive Manufacturing explained that in France, LLL was already provided by specific organisations focusing on LLL:

> "I don't know about lifelong learning at university because we are also in competition with, like, CNAM. It is a kind of lifelong learning specialist. So, for the people who are working and want to supplement their curriculum or change fields, they mostly go to the CNAM, which is known to be more professional and evening lessons." (Additive Manufacturing)

Or by employers themselves. For example, in the field of manufacturing:

> "Some people working in big companies, for example, they have until one date to follow some training. Of course, it is internal, but they need to spend 2 days and they have exams and if they fail, they can pass again, but they need to complete this to be at the same level in the company. So that's also a thing that's quite difficult: big companies have already some tools […] to give knowledge to their employees. And with this they control." (Additive Manufacturing)

Therefore, we see a very siloed ecosystem where students go to universities for degree provision, whereas upskilling/reskilling is provided by employers or LLL-specific providers.

2.2. Co-creation, Collaboration & Connectedness

Having a variety of people participate and collaborate in the activities of the CLC is seen as essential:

> "I actually aimed them [the CLC activities] at students, undergraduate students, but then I saw when other parties came in that, you know, that is enriching a

> little bit the conversation and discussion. So, I don't mind having professionals and laypeople. […] And that's the objective actually to make the model resilient going, you know into the market." (Veganism)

> "for us, it's important that these professional partners, these institutions can be part of that, not just us as a university, or maybe just kind of short projects, but also this kind of long-term projects for development of the society." (Design & Science)

Interdisciplinarity is also key as most co-creation nowadays is multidisciplinary. Learning about other professions and how to work together is thus unvaluable:

> "we are not alone in the projects […] the teams are really interdisciplinary. So multidisciplinary. We need to inform, yourself, myself, as part of the team and we need to know the boundaries and how can we organise the process of that. […] That's why we need to understand the other professions. To learn in advance which professions are part of the team. […] For example, the learning community […] it's organised as a form of merging the professions, respect each other, of course, but trying to build this through some kind of new environment, society, community." (Design & Science)

As seen in previous rounds, building a full connected ecosystem involving industry stakeholders is critical: the Sport and Development group at VUB indicated the liberty for creating contracts/agreements with extra academic associations as being an essential condition for a sustainable academic offering.

But building this ecosystem is a delicate process and takes time:

> "I think the first step is for each member [of the CLC] to be a guest speaker. Then I can say to my colleagues in companies: Ok, look we have different guest lectures, maybe it can be good if you do one? Then, it's okay. But not at this stage." (Additive Manufacturing)

> "we had 3 or 4 bio-scientists. They're coming from the bioscience professions, from industry. They want to understand the climate. It's always different because the topic gives us some kind of new approach, new parameters of the… I don't know, maybe I can grab this terminology of 'climate'? So, it's a type of environment which is not like incubator, but it looks like very specific. That's why I think we need to be patient and very focused on each step which we propose." (Design & Science)

2.3. Support and Guidance

This dimension was particularly highlighted by the lead of the Veganism vs. Animal Protein Consumption CLC in light of the systemic issues that are currently present in the veterinary profession. According to him, the two main issues that need addressing in this field are:

1. Mental health and the very high rate of suicides amongst veterinarians:

> "the psychological trauma [...] is quite heavy and we see [...] suicides, nervous breakdowns. In veterinary medicine, it's prevalent. One of the most serious problems compared to other professions. [...] It's all over the world because I get emails [...] from students that I had in Canada or in the States [...]. All kinds of problems which we don't know how to deal with." (Veganism)

2. Women in the profession and the bias against female vets in Slovenia

> "we are now getting 80% plus female population into our programs. [...] we have to somehow make people in the field understand [...] that having a female colleague is not bad. It's actually very good. [...] Some practising veterinarians think that they cannot function with female employees. It's a cultural thing and the excuse is that doing the practice in rural areas it's... but I don't think so. [...] Even when we talk about dealing with bulls or heavy horses, it's not just the muscles, it's also what you have in the head." (Veganism)

2.3.1. The importance of having mental health provision in LLL

Therefore, there is a dire need for mental health provision:

> "We lack that kind of support through lectures, workshops. [...] I think that has to become a core professional experience. At school already, and then it has to go into the lifelong learning cycle throughout the profession." (Veganism)

Although support and guidance are essential, they should be provided in a way that empowers the learners to have agency in their own learning rather than imposing this on them:

> "we need to invite the experts, [...] the solid, fixed mentors who will – not guide – just to give the possibility, the platform, to grow the topic, to grow the learning." (Science & Design)

2.4. Other dimensions discussed

Despite a more specific focus on the three dimensions mentioned above, the other dimensions were also mentioned.

2.4.1. Personalised Learning Pathways

The need for more flexible pathways was once again underlined as the traditional degree model does not work for professionals:

> "I think it should be quite short because when you work, you have family or kids, you don't want to get registered 2 years for this. [...] In my department, we don't have lessons for workers. I mean, in person. Things to improve is how we can change these things. Of course, with hybrid or online, you can change this, so it can be more convenient." (Additive Manufacturing)

Barriers

Lifelong learning needs to be personalised also because people who have been in the workforce for several years are no longer used to an ex-cathedra model of learning. They need something practical rather than theoretical:

> "It's quite difficult for workers to sit two hours listening to someone. That someone should be like… It should be at least useful, if not captivating. […]. When you're used to working and you forget how to do this, it's quite difficult. […] it should be practical." (Additive Manufacturing)

2.4.2.Validation, certification, recognition

Accreditation was still a much-discussed topic, especially by the lead of the Veganism CLC. Since his profession is strictly regulated, recognition is a must:

> "they get a certificate which gives them this credit towards the licensing. So, it has to be recognised with our national veterinary chamber". (Veganism)

The topic of micro-credentials was also covered, and some issues mentioned:

> "they're [the university's administration] especially worried that the program is not […] accredited through the European accreditation body. […] And that was also the reason why I've lost most the people that were set to start the one-year seminar course. They just didn't see the point. Why would they lose their time even though it's a little bit beneficial or very beneficial for them, if there's no real credit that they can use towards their degree." (Veganism)

Recognition/validation of prior learning is also essential as it enables people who already have the practical skills acquired in the field to go onto acquiring the equivalent qualification without having to do a full degree:

> "For 'validation des acquis' [validation of prior learning], a technician with a bachelor's degree can sometimes do the same job than a girl or guy that has a master's degree, but the salary is different. So, some of them want to upskill, to have the degree to earn more or get more recognition in the company." (Additive Manufacturing)

Finally, embedding CLC activities in the core curriculum is a must to drive student participation, "otherwise it's quite difficult to motivate the students to follow. So, it's how they get recognition, or certificates." (Additive Manufacturing). Most CLCs are indeed planning on doing this if it is not in place yet.

3. Concluding Remarks Round 3

This round confirms that the dimensions highlighted in the framework are indeed essential for LLL. Some dimensions will be more prominent depending on the ecosystem but, overall, they all capture an important LLL need.

Conclusion

This report highlights the current barriers that HEIs face to provide an adequate offer to LL learners, as well as the conditions needed to respond to the growing demands of learners wanting and/or needing to upskill, reskill, or simply to expand their horizons.

By combining literature, input from our 12 EUTOPIA testbeds, and input from a committee of educational experts, we designed a framework that encompasses the conditions needed for HEIs to realise their potential for LLL. Each round helped prioritise the dimensions that are the most critical for LLL, and to refine the framework.

For HEIs wanting to transition to being the future LLL providers, our framework is a useful model to indicate the areas they need to strengthen in order to tailor their offering to current and future LLL demands.

This report and the developed framework have served as a starting point for creating the FLECSLAB LLL Toolbox, a task which was led by Prof Christopher Tulloch and his team at UPF.