

GRID FOR A STRATEGY

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

1 VISION

- Analytical dimension: challenges, identification of drivers of change

The need for *a strategy of adult education* in 1996 became evident because of the growth of the volume of LLL at the time of the cutbacks of university basic funding. The university leadership saw a need for the internal rules of organisation, whereas CES was willing to sharpen the University profile in lifelong learning. For the leadership 'mainstreaming' was taking the ownership of the new mission at the margins of the university, for CES 'mainstreaming' was commitment to LLL as a basic task of the University.

In 2010, the Finnish universities have started a new phase as *independent public bodies* or foundations. The financial model of the universities is renewed. The new University law demands that universities promote lifelong learning. The two universities of Turku have merged and the new University has a new strategy, where lifelong learning is embedded in the definitions of policy, priorities and practices as well as the implementation plans. On the other hand, the universities cannot bypass the economic crisis, which has an effect also on lifelong learning

While we have made some success in the strategic development and breakthroughs of implementation with many institutes and faculties, this is not the case with all the units and all the development plans. In the transformation into a lifelong learning university, specialised services for adults are developed, but *all features of lifelong learning are not present in the basic teaching and degree education all around university*. Generally, lifelong learning seems to make progress when the University's own decisions gain from external pressures.

A successful lifelong learning university needs determined leadership, mainstreamed responsibility and specialized expertise. It has been a long way from adult education in the margins of the university into the mission statement with the lifelong learning impetus. To make lifelong learning a reality for the vast majority of faculty, we need both cultural progress and structural support in the management system. Without specialised experts, whose number one priority is lifelong learning, new audiences and demands will probably not find adequate support for their learning needs. One of the key questions is *how to balance the specialisation and mainstreaming of ULLL in the structures and processes*.

The fundamental challenge of promoting lifelong learning in the university is that the faculty has *many priorities*, of which scientific research is absolutely number one. Traditionally, education for Master and Doctorate degrees has been the second priority, while offering possibilities of learning for wider audiences has not been very high up in the agenda. In the University decision making, the presence of versatile internal interest groups makes the promotion of lifelong learning a challenge.

The University Board decision not to approve a lifelong learning charter in 2005 was an example of the effect of additional factors.

As to the essence of academic lifelong learning *we need to find the solutions to utilize the outcomes of research for the benefit of lifelong learners*. This is not only a pedagogical question, but also a challenge for the organizational structures, financial arrangements and very importantly for staff development.

In the times of economic crisis, the universities need to find a financial balance in a new context. Once universities have to make cutbacks, they tend to protect the academic heartland and make sacrifices in activities that are relevant in their own right. Respectively, with reduced resources the *strategic investments tend to be allocated into the essential core*.

Academic lifelong learning is structurally dependent on the trends of the University, the Ministry of Education and the markets. In the *education policy* the significance of adult population and lifelong learning increases. The obligation of the Universities Act to promote lifelong learning lays the foundation for permanent progress. The European Union, the parties of the process of Bologna and the networks of universities have set lifelong learning internationally at a central position in their reforms. Ultimately, the permanence of the public finance determines how the political will becomes concrete in the legislative work and budget solutions.

The fundamental changes in the *universities* also affect the production of lifelong learning services. The principle of lifelong learning is an essential part of the new strategy of the University of Turku. The merger of the Turku University and Turku School of Economics opens opportunities for the production of new services. At the same time the need for the control of the entirety of education increases. The change in the legal status requires new expertise in the management of finances, which is still more systematic and controls the risks properly. The structural changes in the university affect the motivations, practices and roles of lifelong learning.

The changes in the age and educational structure of the population increase the demand for academic adult education in the *training market*. On the other hand, the new learning forms, environments and the service providers tighten the competition. The rise from the recession will be insecure and multifaceted, especially in the public administration the demand for services will strengthen slowly. The possibilities to find programme financing will be good in the plan season, but after this programme period the need for direct market funding will increase.

- Strategical dimension:
 - Missions/statement

The University emphasizes its cultural and scientific role as a responsible actor in society

In the strategic process of 2009, the University decided not to produce a separate lifelong learning strategy, but *embedded lifelong learning in the relevant chapters of the main strategy*. The lifelong learning strategy demanded by the Ministry of Education had been approved as a part of the medium-term action and financial plan in 2006.

The strategy is structured in line with the academic logic of research, education and social interaction.

The new University Strategy for 2010 – 2012 approved by the University Board on 14/12/09

ULLL essence: research based, multidisciplinary, student orientation, individual pathways, learning outcomes, lifewide, worklife relevance

The multifield education of the University means wide responsibility to educate experts and ability to react to the needs of society through the creation of new combinations of expertise over the traditional fields of research.

The University emphasizes participation and communality. These principles are manifested as equal possibilities to participate in the University activities and to develop capabilities and know-how diversely. Participation stands also for taking into account the needs of the community in the development of curriculum and teaching, ensuring access to learning and sensibility to identify the demands by the multicultural context. The University ensures all students the possibility for sufficient personal study and work life guidance.

The principle of the continuum of lifelong learning signifies the possibility to gain science-based education and support for professional development throughout the career. The University realizes the principle by supplying the society with scientific knowledge and training teachers at a high scientific level for the whole education system.

The University produces services of lifelong learning for the adult population. These cover open university, continuing professional education, executive education, specialization studies and linked development projects. The services construct a meaningful coordinated entirety.

Requirements for learning besides work are advanced with the offer of the open university and guidance. In addition to diversified continuous education, the University will develop specialization studies that recognise prior learning and promote the attainment of the new special combinations of competence. The University will make use of its widened expertise in business economics through diversification of services for experts.

The student recruitment allows for multifaceted and international groups of applicants.

Students' general skills are nurtured with networked and technologically developed approaches and field-specific courses in working-life skills. Connections to domestic and international work life, alumni and other stakeholders build up the relevance of education for working life.

- Motivations
- Values

"From a free people to free science and learning"

The University operates according to ethical, critical, creative and communal values;

A critical approach is the basis of academic education

Along with the university community's pressure for change, commitment to the community and its development are of primary importance. The important themes of communal values are openness, trust, commitment, motivation and collaboration.

The basic values of the University are ethicality, criticalness, creativity, openness and communality. The openness is manifested in the open cultural practices and the scientific unprejudiced attitude. The university is open to different scientific approaches, methods and outcomes. The openness is also commitment to the dissemination of new knowledge to the society. The main principles of education are the connection to scientific research and the principle of LLL.

2 OBJECTIVES

3 ORGANISATION

Two expressions of LLL: a principle in all university education and special services for adults

The organization chart of the University is also the basic structure for lifelong learning.

As a principle, lifelong learning covers the whole University.

As to the lifelong learning services, the picture needs some additions.

The University has two special units for lifelong learning: the Centre for Extension Studies and the Centre for Maritime Studies.

Most faculties offer some courses for adults, the Faculties of Medicine, Law and Education being the most active. TSE ex of Turku School of Economics offers executive education. Of the special units, also the Future Research Centre has activated in adult education.

The Teaching Council supports University leadership in the strategic decision-making. The Council has a sub-group of adult education dealing also with the lifelong learning issues.

The task of the Centre for Extension Studies is to:

- 1) produce open university courses, academic specialization studies and continuing education and to carry out regional, national and international development projects in lifelong learning;
- 2) produce congress services and services for education and project activities primarily in university faculties and institutes
- 3) act as the lifelong learning unit of the University
- 4) carry out the coordination tasks of lifelong learning specified by the University Rector and;
- 5) act as one of organizers of staff development in the University in agreement with the University Services

The Centre for Extension Studies fulfils its task in cooperation with the University scientific community and the cooperation network.

The Centre for Extension Studies is an example of a special unit, where the whole staff works full-time for lifelong learning. The core functions are the planning and organization of courses. In Finnish, we still usually use the traditional “planner” as an official title for the person working as the project coordinator or manager. The planners have different roles as to the production of new courses or projects, the development of work practices or implementation. The planner typically pairs with the course or project secretary responsible for the clerical work. The project coordinators and secretaries build up teams or groups that are collected into the sections for open university and expert services. The group or team leaders are in charge of their parts, the heads of sections for the larger entities. The Director of the Centre is competent and responsible for the decision making in the whole unit. Support staff takes care of data administration and general administration of the Centre.

In open university, the curriculum is the same as in the degree education. The traditional organization still makes use of University teachers while the Open university in CES offers the managerial and guidance support. The wide use of blended learning has created a more complex mode of organization with tutors, IT specialists etc.

In CPE, CES works as the production unit collecting the relevant expertise to deliver the courses. The teachers and tutors are invited from various scientific and professional communities with the idea of connecting the useful and relevant combinations of expertise.

4 ACTORS

- Internal/external

Responsible for LLL: university leadership, faculties and institutes, ULLL special units

The University of Turku is a learning community with shared values. Following the principle of LLL, the University encourages its staff to learn and to develop their own work.

The university is an organization of experts

In the external cooperation *the key baskets of the implementation plan* are sharpening the active role of the University in the regional development, making use of the know-how of the alumni and networks, the strengthening of the University’s role in the innovation system and the firm-up of the service as a system. Internally, the University will clear up the management system of the interaction, produce incentives for the participation and offering support services for the actors in the faculties and institutions. The launch of incentives demands an appropriate set of indicators for the activities.

As to the principle, we can regard *the whole University staff responsible* for the promotion and implementation of lifelong learning. Also, the strategy conceives the University as a learning organization following the LLL principle offering possibilities for staff development and future careers. In addition to this, the University has *special units* that have certain sectors of adult education or lifelong learning as number one priority in their mission. Finally, the Centre for Extension studies is named the lifelong learning unit in the University.

Most of the staff in specialized lifelong learning activities work are dependent on external funding. There are, however, exceptions, and e.g. special training in medicine and dentistry receive their funding from the university and university hospital budget. Risks of funding have a reflection in the employment. Traditionally, a large proportion of staff worked with *fixed-term contracts*. Recently, permanent appointments have become more usual, but in practice the continuity of work necessitates the continuity of services and funding.

- Isolated actors/teams/ collective approach

The key actor in the production of the most important work plan for lifelong learning was *the Teaching Council* of the University. The Council had been involved in the preparation of the content for the strategy from the beginning. The Council is organised into working groups, one of which is responsible for the area of adult education. The first initial discussion about the idea of including lifelong learning as a key element in the new University strategy took place in this working group in February of 2009.

The Centre for Extension studies (CES) acts as the multifield lifelong learning unit of the University. *The roles of CES* are the production of lifelong learning services, the expertise in ULLL, services for the University institutions and faculties and ULLL cooperation inside and outside the University. The Centre has two main doors: one for the man in the street willing to take part in courses following the University curriculum and another for the experts and expert organizations willing to update and develop their know-how. The open university courses are open to everyone independent of age or motivation. The idea is to offer possibilities for learning independent of place and time. In expert services CES offers CPD, organizes regional and development projects and offers services for the faculty willing to organize a conference or an international project. In addition to the lifelong learning profile, CES is active in the regional development in the Baltic Sea area.

CES is an independent unit in the University i.e. it is outside the faculty structure under the University Board. It cooperates with the faculties and institutes, experts in various fields and clients. *The essential feature of the networks is the linkage between the production and exploitation of knowledge.* The key foci are cooperation between universities and other education institutions, links to regions, subregions and nationwide networks, connecting private, public and third sector actors and international activities.

5 DISCUSSIONS

- Risks vs. benefit

Risk for funding

Growing traditionalism in universities

Rigidity of universities to transform their activities and services into the new environments

Short term ambitions

Protectionism

- Strengths vs. weaknesses

Strategy with strong commitment to LLL

A wide selection of services for various audiences
 Open University opens for the man in the street in practice
 Versatile services for guidance and counseling
 Most active university in RPL
 Quality system covering LLL accredited
 CES and UTU regional development accustomed to the knowledge triangle approach in practice
 Participation in various development projects
 Strong tradition of practical networking
 LLL staff motivated to learn and active in participation

But

Strategy commitments do not support budget decisions sufficiently
 The entirety of the services is complicated
 Open university channel into degree studies does function properly
 Mainstreaming RPL in UTU is a challenge
 The use of the quality system is not too effective
 Strategic funding may be directed too narrowly to research
 Exploitation of project outcomes has not been mainstreamed to the full
 The tailoring of projects to the specific client needs has become too expansive
 The skills management system not well developed

- Debates, conflicts
- Level and type of involvement

Strengths. The University of Turku has documented experience and expertise in various forms of lifelong learning. The recent strategy is a step towards more significant LLL in the mainstream University.

Weaknesses. The mainstreaming of LLL has taken place only partially and the system of lifelong learning is complicated.

Options. The external stakeholders regard the University as a valuable actor in the lifelong learning agenda. Feasible development paths have been defined in the implementation plans.

Threats. The general challenges of the universities may lead to the protectionism of the academic

heartland. The rigidities of universities produce a hindrance to concrete renewal.

The steps forward from the strategy are defined in the implementation plans

6 DECISION

- Priorities (until 2015):
 - Balancing the mainstreaming of commitment and specialization of expertise in the enhancement and organization of lifelong learning
 - Documenting the entirety of lifelong learning for the use of the University steering process and the lifelong learners
 - Embedding lifelong learning into the University mission as a relevant tool for disseminating the research results, as a covering principle in teaching and learning and a central element in the interaction with society.

7 IMPLEMENTATION

- Key elements: infrastructure, human resources, organization

The University has a substantial offer of services both for the degree and adult students. The focus of development is the *accessibility, usability and coordination* of the services. Some essential services and actors are condensed below.

In the University, *guidance* is organized in each faculty and department. The focus of development is to make it work as a whole. The Open University Section in the Centre for Extension Studies is a key actor in the guidance for adults. A service point for adult students is included in the University strategy by the initiative of CES.

The alumni network is a route to the expertise and services of the University. The faculties have their own alumni organisation while the University Communications is in charge of the university-wide network. Alumni cooperation also supports the lifelong learning purposes. One of the useful services is the mentoring system, where the members of the alumni contribute to the transition to work after degree studies.

The Career Services reminds the students that it is never too early to think about the future career. The Service is concerned with internships, information on placement in the labour market, careerguidance etc. It serves the University, the students and the employers.

The Centre for Extension Studies is essentially a support system both for the adult students and the University units. The students find guidance and information both face-to-face and virtually. The units benefit from the Congress Office and the services for the projects.

The data administration serves both degree and adult students. The utilization of new technologies is often experimented in the learning environments of lifelong learning, but access to the services is not unproblematic. Remarkable reforms are “under construction”.

Turku University Library is an open-to-all scientific library, which primarily serves research, teaching and studying within the University. The nationally significant collections of the library consist of printed publications from the end of the 15th century until today, and also of extensive electronic resources.

The Study Psychologists are specialists in the psychology of learning and the guidance of students. They help with difficulties in the understanding of texts and lessons, learning skills, writing the theses, learning motivation and time control.

The University organises special support for *students with disabilities*. The University has a spokesman for the disabled and a plan of support.

Wide services for *international students* are available. They are organised by the central International Office in the University Services and by International Officers at the Faculties.

- Roadmap, workplans, timing

Implementation plan for research based teaching and LLL

The implementation plan is divided into *six "baskets of development"*:

Research-based quality of teaching and learning
 Intensifying guidance and strengthening the ability to learn
 Lifelong learning as a guiding principle and a set of services
 Multifield approach and work life relevance of education
 Student recruitment

Implementation plan for the integration of the societal interaction with research and education

- Budget: costs – resources

When we look at the principle of lifelong learning *in the whole university*, lifelong learning has not been a focus of financial statistics or follow-up. Certain appropriations can be regarded as LLL investments or expenditure, but there is no condensed information about the total amount or distribution.

The Universities have to find a growing share of their funding from external sources. In the University of Turku for example, the proportion of soft funding has been 31% and the objective is to raise it up to 40 % during the present planning period

The mission of the *Open University* is to offer university courses to all interested with reasonable costs. The Open University gets about two thirds of its funding from the University budget and one third from the student fees.

Continuing professional education is to be self-financial.

The University and the Ministry of Education make *a three-year contract* that is updated with the allocation of funding annually.

The University Board approves *the budget*. University Rector makes the decision of the concrete allocation.

The University and the faculties and institutes sign *a financial contract* annually. The Faculties have boards, but the deans have been assigned wide competence.

The full cost model is used in limited areas of research funding, but the model is not in use in the projects of lifelong learning. The University is planning to widen the use of the model in 2010

- Evaluation: indicators
- Management, leadership

8 PERSPECTIVES

- Further developments
- Next steps

The University Strategy defines the main mission and principles within lifelong learning. The strategy is made more concrete in *six implementation plans*. The most important plans for ALLUME interests are the plan for research based teaching and lifelong learning and the plan for the integration of the societal interaction with research and education. The other plans cover research, research sharp edges and research collegia, career paths, the merger of the two universities and internationalization. The implementation plans deepen the understanding of the relevant concepts and name the key priorities in the development of each plan. The organization of the implementation started in early 2010. After the short descriptions of the key implementation plans you can read the key issues that the Centre for Extension Studies included in its strategic plan for 2010 – 2012.