



Lifelong learning in Norway

Abstract by

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Lifelong learning is a part of Norwegian Governments policy, inspired from the European Commission, OECD and other international organizations. The Ministry of Education and Research is at the front of policy making and introducing measures for Lifelong learning (LLL). As it is stated by the Ministry:

“Lifelong learning is an important principle in Norwegian education policy. The goal is that all Norwegians should have the possibility of getting education and developing their skills throughout their whole life. Lifelong learning is considered as a way of increasing the individuals’ life quality, and providing for a greater value creation and flexibility at the work place.”

LLL in Norway has mainly been adopted as part of the government’s “Competence Reform” which was introduced in 1999. Briefly, this reform states the individual’s right to further and continuous training (FCT), including right to leave of absence for training, statutory right to free education at the primary and secondary level, and documentation and recognition of non-formal and informal competencies acquired through work, society and training. In other words, LLL encompasses all focused learning and training activity from “Cradle to Grave”.

As a result of this advanced framework of individual rights, LLL can be seen as part of a judicial contract between the individual and the State. Stated from a different view, LLL is an interaction between the individual’s statutory rights in one side and LLL practices on the other side. In between are the access to education and training, offers and the learning arenas.

The Norwegian government and the Ministry of Education and Research have developed a special monitor for measuring LLL called “Learning policy monitor”. This monitor is a yearly measurement of policy for learning and training among adults, with special focus on the work environment. The data is available from year 2003 to present and shows the development of the activities over time. The changes in measures are analyzed in relation to the market and economic conditions in Norway.

Although the monitor gives an indication of the “national status” on LLL, there are still challenges facing the implementation of the LLL policy. The education system in Norway is organized and controlled at the local and community level, with influence from the parents in the school. Further success depends on the priorities and action plans at the local government level.

An example of the local policy actions for LLL is the Buskerud County in south-eastern part of Norway. The county’s stated goal is to:

- Develop a culture for learning with large public ownership.
- Cover a wide specter of education and learning offers that are easily available for the public.
- Provide a realistic plan based on a binding cooperation between the education authorities and the informal learning arenas.

A project for LLL policy implementation is in place with the following focus:

- Gap analysis between the government requirements and the status quo
- Common and organized approach to providing information to the public, corporations and other organizations.
- Constant focus on “Mastering” among the population, corporations and the authorities