Benefits of Lifelong Learning
First results from 10 EU-countries

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Wider benefits – approach in research

- Participation → Learning outcomes → wider benefits
  - For individual (“human, cultural, economical capital”)
  - For family, community… (“social capital, social cohesion”)
  - For labour markets (“economical growth”)
  - For society in general (“active citizenship, learning society”)

How individuals, groups, organisations and society benefit from education?


BeLL – Benefits of Lifelong Learning

- Funding: EU LLL-programme
- Comparative study on benefits of liberal adult education
  - 10 European countries
- Partners include: DIE (German Institute for Adult Education), EAEA (European Association for the Education of Adults); UEF (Finland); SIAE (Slovenian Institute for Adult Education); ATHENA (Association for Education and Development of Women, Czech Republic); CREA (Spain); University of London (UK)....
- 2012-2014:
  - data collection ended 26.6.2013
  - survey feedback sessions September - October
  - final results January 2014

Focus on liberal adult education

- “Folkbildning”, “Vapaa sivistystyö”
- Non-formal, non-vocational courses
- Voluntary participation
- Organized usually by:
  - Adult education centres
  - Folk High Schools
  - Associations
  - Third sector organizations
  - ...

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Wider benefits research have traditionally focused on…

• … formal education (easy to get statistics), non-formal education and informal learning is less researched
• … basic schooling and formal degrees, while Lifelong Learning and adult learning is less researched
• … monetary benefits (income level, GNP), personal and social benefits are less analyzed
• … use of aggregate variables (statistical analysis comparing national educational level and income level, crime rate, health expenses etc.), less studies using empirical data on individual life situations
• … quantitative statistical studies, lack of qualitative analysis about processes and personal outcomes

On the contrary, BeLL:

• focus on non-formal, especially liberal adult education
• searching for individual and social benefits
• use person-related survey statistics (background variables + learning history → benefits)
• combines quantitative and qualitative data:
  – survey (n = 8,646)
    • structured change questions on a Likert scale
    • open questions
  – qualitative theme interviews (n = 80).
• BeLL is the first...
  – comparative analysis of benefits (10 European countries: Spain, England, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Finland, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Romania, and Serbia.)
  – large scale empirical study on liberal adult education
Hunting for Wider Benefits…

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection

• “Adults, who have participated in Liberal Adult Education courses during the past 12 months”

• Challenges:
  – liberal adult education provision is organized differently in European countries
  – only Nordic countries have a clear organizational structure

• Focus on the following forms of adult education programs (Rogers, 1996, p. 21):
  – Programs aimed at personal growth (covering a wide range of subjects, such as handicraft, arts, sports, professional orientation, preventive medicine, history and so on).
  – Programs aimed at social growth (targeted at specific population groups with the aim of enhancing their social role, for instance, parental counselling, women counselling, counselling of union trades members etc.).
**Question:** And the courses you were doing, in terms of thinking about the outcomes - what have you noticed?

In technical terms if you like, all the courses I have taken, which are liberal arts, cultural sorts of things, they have all *honored by writing skills* ¹, including the Open University course and the Spanish because you still have to write essays and things, so they *have definitely honed my skills* ¹ and in personal terms they have *given me much more self-confidence* ². […] And they have also given me *new social outlets* ³; I have *made really good friends* ⁴ - really good friends, *lasting friendships* ⁴. And other things have come out of them […]

→ Benefits:
- Skills & competencies (writing skills) ¹
- Self-confidence ²
- Social networks ³, new friends ⁴

All potential benefits found in the literature (except lower crime level) included in the survey questionnaire →

• "psychological" benefits/potential outcomes:
  - Locus of control, self-efficacy

• "other" benefits/potential outcomes:
  - Tolerance, trust, changes in educational experiences, competencies, social networks, sense of purpose in life, civic and social engagement, civic competence, mental well-being, work related benefits, physical health, health behaviour, and family related benefits
Example:

Changes in the educational experiences

• Definition:
  – Learning motivation, learner self confidence, learner efficacy control and outcome beliefs, task value, and expectancy for success (Pintrich, 1988; Ruohotie, 2000, 8; also expectancy-valence –model of participation, Rubenson, 1979).

• Statements:
  – 2. I am motivated to learn
  – 12. I feel confident as a learner
  – 8. I see adult learning as an important opportunity
  – 19. I am encouraging others to learn too

2.3.1 Now, please assess whether these liberal adult education courses have caused the following changes in your life. Use the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Much less (- - -)</th>
<th>Less (- - )</th>
<th>Slightly less (- )</th>
<th>No change (0)</th>
<th>Slightly more (+ )</th>
<th>More (++ )</th>
<th>Much more (++ +)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Main categories of course types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of course</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; sports</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>10,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT &amp; skills</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>14,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>1290</td>
<td>14,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative activities</td>
<td>1135</td>
<td>13,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society &amp; culture</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>10,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work related and vocational topics</td>
<td>958</td>
<td>11,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several courses attended *</td>
<td>2099</td>
<td>24,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8547</td>
<td>98,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8646</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This category includes participants, who have participated more than only one type of courses
2.3.1 Now, please assess whether these liberal adult education courses have caused the following changes in your life. Use the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Less than before</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>More than before</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. I am motivated to learn</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I see adult learning as an important opportunity</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel confident as a learner</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I am encouraging others to learn too</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changes caused by liberal AE courses (n = 7589)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Less than before</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>More than before</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I see adult learning as an important opportunity</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am motivated to learn</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel confident as a learner</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I am satisfied with my life</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I have respect for other people’s points of view</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I have respect for other people’s cultures</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am involved in social networks (friends, colleagues, etc.)</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I pay attention to my health</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. I am supportive of my children’s learning</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I know how to make a healthy meal</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I have confidence in my ability as a parent</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I have trust in other people generally</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I feel good at work nowadays</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I am satisfied with my physical health</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I am likely to take part in voluntary activity</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am engaged in my local community</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Top 28" Benefits based on open questions (n = 2628)

- Language skills
- Social interaction
- Self-confidence
- Motivation to learn
- General or new knowledge
- Communication skills
- ICT skills
- Physical wellbeing
- Job-related skills
- Confidence on own skills
- New networks
- New friends
- Skills (not specified)
- New inspiration
- Joy of learning
- Well-being in daily life
- Good spirit
- Career upward
- Efficiency & increase in job performance
- Skills in handicraft & arts
- Sense of achievement
- Mental well-being
- Health benefits
- Quality of life
- Cultural knowledge
- Writing skills
- Learning skills

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A BIT DEEPER ANALYSIS...

Changes in educational experiences

Young participants (15-29) with low educational background:
- Primary education, or first stage of basic education, or less [ISCED 1 or less]
- Lower secondary education, or second stage of basic education [ISCED 2]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Less than before</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>More than before</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. I am motivated to learn</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I see adult learning as an important opportunity</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel confident as a learner</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am encouraging others to learn</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 218 respondents match the criteria → young, lower educated adults participate less in liberal AE courses, BUT out of those who have participated...
→ 86% have now better learning motivation
→ 90% see adult learning now as a more important opportunity
→ 85% feel now more confident as a learner
→ 79% are more likely to encourage others to learn as well
Change of learning motivation according to educational level

Participation in liberal adult education courses makes adults more motivated to learn. The change is biggest for those who have the lowest educational background.

F = 18.087, p = .000

Change of trying to lead a healthy lifestyle according to educational level

Participation in liberal adult education courses has potential health benefits. The change to more healthy lifestyle is biggest for those who have the lowest educational level.

F = 51.038, p = .000
Interpretation of preliminary results

- Also the previous studies have found a correlation between educational level and learning motivation (participation rates etc.), well-being etc.
- BeLL results show that changes in these are biggest for those liberal adult education participants, who have lower educational level
  → liberal adult education can “fix” the differences between different social groups, caused by differences in childhood schooling opportunities
  → liberal adult education is an important “equalizer” of well-being and learning opportunities
  → participation in liberal adult education is likely to increase the probability of future participation → a good low threshold learning service motivating especially lower educated to study further

Questions, comments?

Where are you going?

To Summer University

How was it?

Comfortable chairs

I wasted our mortgage loan into sweet life.

How could you?

It wasn’t so difficult.

How about my dream of a new home?

I made a boat at adult education centre

We can live under it.

How nice.