Background Report: Germany (National report)

Lernende Regionen Deutschland e.V.

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1. General information on Learning Regions

Facts and figures:

The decision of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has been made in 2000, to launch the program Learning Regions - Providing Support for Networks. The German LRs program might be seen the most ambitious national initiative in this area. In close co-operation with the Länder and co-financed by the European Social Fund, the aim of the program was to help facilitate structural progress in Lifelong Learning networks.

In the beginning around 144 million Euro were available for promoting Learning Regions – half financed by the Federal Ministry and half by the European Social Fund. Around 90 (for the research year) and later (for the testing phase) 71 throughout Germany were selected and financially supported. The support was decreasing: 1. year: 100%, 2. and 3. year: 80%, 4. and 5. year: 60%.

The concrete selection criteria for the networks eligible for funding were those whose description and 4-years-planning-structure of goals and tasks, implementation, planning, composition, organisational structure and resources were clearly in line with the substantial goals and tasks of the federal ministry and the operating organisation in charge, the German Aerospace-Center (dlr). The appropriate regional span inclusively possible implementation of tasks on one side and on the other hand the transferability of concepts and measures had to be clearly indicated.

5 topics could be generated as "hot spots" within the Learning Regions.

- education marketing: improvement of exchange processes between suppliers and prospective users, advertising for Lifelong Learning, creation of trademarks
- training and further education guidance: orientation, competence and education guidance. Improvement of transparency
- new "Learning Worlds": innovative forms of teaching and learning, new learning locations and e-learning
- new transitions between learning and education phases, recognition of informal learning, improvement of permeability of educational sectors
- Involvement in and co-operation with small and medium-sized companies

Up from 2007 the topic "transfer regions" was created and every Learning Region had to re-apply for a 2-years-continuation within one of the offered subjects to recess the success-factors achieved so far in their respective areas. These transfer-areas were a compilation out of the former "hot spots" and summarised as:

- Educational counselling to foster change management – organisational guidance, instruments for guidance
- Learning centres, curricula, courses, certification
- Permeability between relevant stages (from the cradle to the grave): Transmission from school to employment
- SME as relevant partners and addressees for training and qualification
- Communities as learning centres: Learning communities

Out of the former ones around 50 succeeded for this continuation. The last aspect – the focus community - was newly identified. Around 40 have been selected with this new aspect. So finally around 90 Learning Regions could be newly established respectively continue for a two-years-period (2006-2008).

As distinguished from the former program the learning regions were here totally financed (100%) in terms of personal costs and subcontracts. The co-financing had to be contributed by totally funding of the facilities, room-rents, equipment which was completely in the responsibility of the supported institutions and communities. The financial split could be calculated in general by 80% - 20%.

Finally sustainable structural and organisational developed regional networks aroused for Lifelong Learning, quality development in networks.

1. *Characteristics of network and its intervention logic*

This German network emphasizes the LR as explicitly related to structural improvements of the education and training system. The networks chosen for attention in Germany each focused on the needs of the "customers" and the personal circumstances of learners. In order to perform this function they needed to be able to develop local co-operation between all the players across educational sectors and training providers.

2. *Mission and tasks of network; which problems does the network address?*

The funding was foreseen to innovative projects in the field of lifelong learning, which aimed at rebuilding networks linking the different education and training sectors and providers, developing existing cooperation with multi-sector and multi-provider networks, and increasing the range of tasks covered by existing multi-sector and multi-provider networks. The aim was to achieve both, qualitative and quantitative improvements in order to lead not least to a greater degree of user orientation. Education could be embedded into the social life of a community - with low-levelled access. Making Lifelong Learning feasible through networking and co-operation as main-duty means to strengthen the learners' personal responsibility and self-management, to motivate disadvantaged groups that are currently less involved in education, to enhance relations between all educational sectors and co-operation of

educational providers and users. In general quality, quantity and the structure of offers should be approved in order to promote user-orientation in particular.

3. Assets of educational goods and delivery mechanisms:

This should be reached by increasing flexible transition between the different education and training sectors, to interlock general, political, cultural and vocational education and training to a greater degree and to reinforce cooperation between education policy, employment policy, labour market policy and other policy fields, in order to foster people's personality development and proficiency and enhance their employability.

4. Role and functioning of network within the wider context of national, regional or local policies:

The main purposes were to enforce the regional educational and employment development, to enlarge the interregional cooperation, networking and mobility in life long learning. Embedded to that was to offer transparency on regional and interregional information about learning regions, to strengthen environmental education and rural development. The so long weakness was that regional development was not realised as a main focus. Therefore at latest communities came in, and emphasis should be given in the last period up from 2006 to education in rural, local, regional transformation.

In the middle of the period 2000-2008 the joint Federal/Land commission (FCL) issued a strategy paper, called the "Strategy for Lifelong Learning in the Federal Republic of Germany". It was focused on one hand on person's life –phases and on the other hand from the cradle to the grave. This comprised

- the integration of informal learning,
- self-guidance,
- competence development,
- networking,
- modularization,
- learning counseling,
- a new learning culture and the popularization of learning and
- equal opportunity of access to education.

It has been officially launched by Ulrich Kasparick, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*a.a.o., S.61f.*)

And Ulrich Kasparick bridged this paper to the Learning Regions:
"As part of the comprehensive measures by the Federal government to promote Lifelong Learning, the program 'Learning Regions – providing support for networks' is

of major importance. User-friendliness, target-group and requirement orientation for individuals and small and medium-size businesses alike: these are the three main strengths of the Learning Regions." Since 2000 the Learning Regions networks have produced so-called crystallization-points which were then continued in a prolongation-programme of supra-regional thematic networks

2. Collaborative patterns

1.   Interaction patterns typical for the LR:

Through regional cooperation, the players complement each other and benefit from the advantages of their size: for example, joint education marketing activities promote the opportunities of qualified training and further education and encourage greater participation in education in the region. Cross-provider guidance and quality development activities help individuals orientate themselves, and motivate and introduce students to the network. Central learning management systems allow virtual learning at different locations and are also available to smaller suppliers via the network. Recognition of informal skills and the networking of learning locations encourage the inter-changeability of elements of education and fields of life and improve the quality of education programmes. In particular, this can help small and medium-sized companies in the region fulfil requirements in terms of skilled workers, providing their innovative capacity with fresh impetus. Closer co-operation within a regional partnership promotes common ideas and mutual trust - factors that are decisive if institutional changes are to occur and a learning culture extending beyond the partnership is to evolve. A Learning Region is emerging in which the regional factor is improving education and new, previously obstructed horizons are opening up.

To ensure that they fulfil their purpose, the networks must choose priority areas. The networks should be designed to support the implementation of innovative projects, especially with a view to increasing flexible transition between the various education and training sectors, interlocking general, political, cultural and vocational education and training to a greater degree. Thus increases cooperation between education and training, employment and labour market policy, promotion of economic development and other policy areas in order to increase people's employability and proficiency. Many personal tailored services have become a common matter. Transparency of education and training services should be improved to make them more user-friendly, e.g. by combining information, advisory and agency services and providing new services, including for self-directed learning.

All these steps lead to improving the quality and usability of education and training services. Common criteria for quality have to be agreed and ideas and information on procedures for quality development exchanged.

2. Locus of control

The dlr identified itself as the "supreme court" of control. The Learning Regions had to apply for every new step:

- for the preliminary phase
- for the 4-years-period
- for the transfer-phase
- for "learning on place" (the newest development since 2009)

Within those periods Learning Regions disappeared, others were born. Continuity was in a way somehow missing and sustainability was only foreseen for those regions which were selected by the dlr as best quality. But several changes of responsibilities within the dlr lead to changes of the quality aspects followed by changes in the monitoring- and evaluation-criteria. The dlr-team was supported by two different evaluation-groups who changed also within the whole period. Therefore the built-up ex-ante-evaluations has to change and reshaped throughout the whole period – and therefore a transparent continuous development couldn't be identified and publicised towards the different stakeholders, representatives and end-users. Sustainability lacks therefore in many Learning Regions after the financed lifespan of the projects.

3. Means of interaction and communication:

Besides of the website a series of newsletters named "Impuls" has been produced first with general descriptions of Learning Regions, later then with the thematic topics. Useful examples of best practice were placed to support other regions working in the same context.

Workshops for specific transfer topics were created where staff responsible for those topics in the different Learning Regions was included. The interaction-processes lead to transferable results, and well developed results could be allocated into other Learning Regions. A quite good exchange could be identified – but finally the time left for the whole project was too short to effectively spread the results and to create sustainable innovative solutions which last also after the lifespan of the supported project-periods.

3. Main actors of LR network

1. Policy Makers

Overall strategies for Lifelong Learning require a joint procedure for all players involved. The steering-group consisted of representatives of federal and state governments as well as the social partners. They cooperated closely and jointly selected the projects to be promoted and decieded on programme development principles in round-tables under the guidance of the Federal ministry/department Lifelong Learning . Every Land delegated one official person from the responsible ministry for education. The steering-group met once a month in the beginning and later in a wider cycle and made up the main decisions.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research has charged the project management agency within DLR (PT-DLR) with the supervision of the single projects and the programme-wide transfer.

2. DLR – the project officer-group

PT-DLR is a service provider within the German Aerospace Centre (DLR - Deutsches Zentrum für Luft-und Raumfahrt), a research enterprise of the Helmholtz association. The project management agency was specialised in counselling and in the operational business of project promotion. The education research division provides structural innovation support and counselling within the Lifelong Learning policy field.

3. Stakeholders, Educators and Learners on the same level:

- All relevant groups in the defined region were included into the regional contexts to find a common solution for regional gaps within the educational systems on place
- general and vocational schools, institutions of higher education, funding agencies and institutions offering out-of school education and off-the-job or inter-firm training, trade union's and industry training organisations, adult education centres, education funding agencies of the churches, commercial providers and other educational institutions
- companies (explicitly SME), chambers, trade unions, business development organisations
- education guidance institutions, youth authorities, employment offices and other administrations
- cultural and socio-cultural institutions such as libraries, museums, art and music schools as well as youth, senior citizens', womens', sports and environmental groups and projects

- self-organised learner groups, representatives of consumer protection organisations, teachers and company training course tutors, as well as developers of teaching and learning material
- education and training advice centres, youth welfare offices, employment offices and other agencies, make-work companies

4.   The Learning Regions:

The lead agencies of Learning Regions (mainly out of the educational sector, some out of chambers, simply only 2 out of universities) had to apply first for the preliminary year (90 got approved), then again with their specific projects for the 4-year-period (first 75 approved, later then settled down to 71). In this period the former 100%-support declines first to 80% and after 2 more years to 60%. Only those Learning Regions got approved when they took into account the following rules. The representatives of the Learning Regions met after the 1st year in specific thematic contexts until 4 times a year to exchange experiences and results, to identify success factors and good practice, and to find more rapid solutions for by this inter-regional transfer.

4. Management of German LR networks:

1. How is the network managed?

The dlr:

As the overall framework of the thematic networks, the German Aerospace-Center (dlr) organised parallel to the developments in the single regions nation-wide conferences and conventions in order to open the opportunity to compare individual projects, identify success factors, present models of good practice and process them in a general form. These initiatives were accompanied by important media for the nation-wide transfer of results included "inform" - The Learning Regions Magazine and the internet platform www.lernende-regionen.info set up by the DLR project management agency.

The single Learning Regions:

Within the networks, support had been given to one main project which concentrated on developing and coordinating the network. This usually occured through a professional administrative office which simultaneously developed central educational programmes and took care of marketing. Usually linked to the main project are several sub-projects, which offered services relating to specific subjects and business fields that promote Lifelong Learning. An average of four to six persons per network were usually responsible for carrying out the necessary expert and organisational work; other persons were also involved on a temporary basis. In order to ensure lasting co-operation, most networks operate, according to their objective, in the form of registered associations (incorporated society, registered association), non-profit limited liability company (limited liability company) or foundations. All networks were open to additional members.

With this decentralised promotion approach, each network could adapt perfectly to the regional point of departure and develop their own best strategy.

2. Is there roles and tasks allocated with regard to the management of quality?

Alongside the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research the program me was based on the assumption that an important contribution to the implementation of Lifelong Learning could be carried through by the regions. The creation of "A regional education profile" and novel learning opportunities tailored to suit the market required the cooperation of all relevant partners from the sectors of education, economy and public administration on the spot.
The reality was different. Nearly to the end of the whole Learning Region-period in 2008 it came to the fore that Learning Regions couldn't survive by themselves without any other source of support. Of course registered organisations were built-up

but the main problem of basic finances couldn't be solved. One of the reasons is the relation to the low-cost-model of education in Germany. For the own lifelong learning purposes in Germany a very little amount will be in general normally spent because it was always the duty of the state to take primarily care about the costs for further education – explicitly in the vocational context.

Empirically this is demonstrated by the fact that within the newly developing regional networks there are few partners from innovative knowledge-creating universities, RTD agencies or firms. Recent evaluation showed a significant lack of systematic knowledge regarding the determinants and mechanisms of learning in and throughout regional networks. There were even more barriers in local LR policies and in the steering of regional learning systems over time to ensure sustainability.

This risks the marginalization of Learning Regions in some areas after the supported projects' lifespan.

5. Quality of LRs:

Main challenges and key issues with regard to assuring quality throughout the network

The Learning Regions started with the following demand:

"Making Lifelong Learning feasible through networking and co-operation The Federal Ministry of Education and Research Action Programme "Lifelong Learning for All" which elaborated strategic proposals for the quality and sustainability of education in Germany, pave the way for a "learning society". Their main ideas are:

- Strengthening the learners' personal responsibility and self-management
- Motivating disadvantaged groups that are currently less involved in education
- Strengthening relations between all educational sectors
- Co-operation of educational providers and users
- Improving the quality, quantity, and structure of offers, in order to promote user-orientation in particular.

"Co-operation and networking offer educational providers and organisers a chance to actively create a structural change for Lifelong Learning. Learners and companies' changing expectations, individualisation of educational requirements, and reforms in labour market policy demand new offers and innovations that cannot be initiated by single and small providers on their own."(out of the future tasks, home-page of www.lernende-regionen.de, 2004).

1. What is the current quality practice?

In the near future „The methodical monitoring" of processes by means of figures will strongly gain in importance as an instrument for planning and coordination within the field of education. In areas where important innovations across the areas of education are promoted a methodical, continuous monitoring of education the indicators of which comprehends all areas of education mirrors its effects and development trends. A regional monitoring of education – locally steered – is therefore a necessity for the evaluation of innovations and the political control afterwards. Moreover monitoring combined with descriptive media can commune developments in the area of education to various target groups and raise the public awareness for education in general.

The Learning Regions understand itself as a service provider for more transparency in the educational system and for the coordination and presentation of innovations in the area of lifelong learning. In some educational networks basic steps were already taken to introduce a regular local reporting in education. These education reports still mainly concentrate on the locally easily accessible field of the schools, but are important milestones for the introduction of the education reports as an attractive instrument for the local politics. Within the programme Bequal , a European project of Leonardo which tackled as „Learning Regions" for the database-driven benchmarking. It was tested, which since then is being used by the Learning Regions for self evaluation.

In the planned program "Learning on place" the local education monitoring will be an integral part. The gist of this instrument is a catalogue of indicators, in which all areas of education are included. In a further step an appliance will be developed, the purpose of which is to support the communes by carrying through local education monitoring thereby with a locally specific preemphasis.

2. Are there quality mechanisms, criteria or standards established?

Moreover, further training modules for personnel (e.g. on learning techniques, methods including teaching, learning counselling and support and on network management) have to be tested. New learning arrangements have been induced, developed and tested to encourage creativity and individual responsibility in both formal and informal learning. Finally certifications of learning success have been developed to enhance sustainability.

Many Learning Regions were focussed on improving access to the new information and communication technologies to increase media competence and try out new "blended" learning arrangements.

Regional educational landscape were increasingly networking. In the Learning Regions a diversity of structures has been developed. Especially where it was

possible to react successfully through cooperative structures on the specific needs on place efficient and as a rule lasting changes in the regional education infrastructure were reached.

Here are two examples:

1. Those willing to initiate or create a network tried to balance two basic conditions of a network, namely structure and dynamics. The issue is to combine the objectively necessary quickness and openness for development of a network with a certain systematization, in order to be able to act systematically. (Elke Hohmann, Gesellschaft für Wirtschaftskunde e.V.).

2. Marketing within educational networks such as the Learning Regions is characterized first and foremost by a continual relation and trust building, above all to the most important stake holders and customers in the region. This is the central managerial function in order to organize networking structures project- and demand-oriented and to engage enthusiastic people sustainably and involve them in learning processes. Thereby as well activity- , relation- and management oriented marketing strategies must be systematically planned, implemented and be under examination with a view to their effectiveness in the education system. (Andreas Käter, Lernende Region Tölzer Land).

(from: Transferkonferenz des Programms „Lernende Regionen – Förderung von Netzwerken", Berlin, 10./11. September 2008: Bonn/Berlin 2008, page 36 onwards)

3.   Keywords and short description of the main quality issues identified

"Cooperative quality development amongst competitors…

This article addresses the question of under which conditions joint quality development between competing education and training institutions can be successful and which opportunities and which challenges are linked with this process. In the "Flexible quality development" project of the lernende metropolregion hamburg 23 education and training institutions are jointly working on the launch of constant quality development in their organisations. The participating institutions consider the joint work to be a valuable addition despite the fact that the markets are becoming tighter and the increasing competition: the cooperation generates clear synergistic effects and the qualitative and quantitative benchmarking makes it possible to see beyond the proverbial ends of their noses. Not only a joint reference system and joint quality tools are necessary to this end. Beneficial framework conditions as well as clear cooperative agreements, whereby their observance is constantly monitored, are required. Prior experience of cooperation on the part of the parties involved is just as helpful in this process as the role of the umbrella

organisation as the "cooperative agent", which is the hub of matters and monitors the observation of agreements. The experiences of the Hamburg project demonstrate:

If a basis of trust has been achieved to begin with then cooperation with respect to other topics also becomes possible and desirable. The parties will also subsequently cooperate in other areas extending beyond the field of quality for the benefit of their customers (Bettina Kaßbaum, lernende metropolregion hamburg, kassbaum@ weiterbildung-hamburg.de)

The debate held in the past few years about quality assurance in the area of further training was relatively one-sided, either from the viewpoint of the public grant providers or the providers of further training. It was restricted to the question of which system of quality assurance should be applied, a voluntary or a state decreed system. However, no product quality is guaranteed in this way. However, the actual "Ultimate consumers" (participants, users) are more interested in practical results. Their questions are: Which offer and which institution corresponds to my notions in terms of the content and organisation; what awaits me; which benefits do I have; which costs will arise, are they appropriate and are the contractual framework conditions faultless in legal terms. The "Lernende EURegion Niederrhein" "Lower Rhine learning region has therefore decided to place the consumer's view of things to the fore.

In a first step the well known and already published checklists of BIBB and DIE shall be adopted for the region and published accordingly.

In a second step a working group is attempting to draft criteria for consumer-friendly terms and conditions of business with the support of the Verbraucherzentrale NRW (NRW consumer organisation), which takes account of both the interests of the users and also the differing framework conditions of the region's providers of further training. A "Model terms and conditions of business" shall be published as a result of this. The NRW consumer organisation has indicated that the participating conditions of the individual institutions can be examined by means of a contract check and "consumer-friendly contractual terms and conditions" certified. This result can then be used as good publicity by the inspected institution as a type of "Consumer quality seal".

This leads to more transparency of the offer in the region and increases the trust of the users in the
providers. This contributes towards a strengthening of the network idea both on the part of the participating network partners and also in the region itself. (Alois Becker, Lernende EU-Region Niederrhein, lernreg@akademie-klausenhof.de")

(aus: European conference „Regional Partnerships for Lifelong Learning – Structural innovations in Education and Training: Contribution to the panels, Berlin

8./9.11.2004, Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung / Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Bonn 2004, S.30).

6. Role of EU policies

1.   How is EU policies reflected in the LR networks and their programmes?

The basic idea was to realize the Lisbon strategy 2000 for Germany in a National wide initiative. This should realise the main idea that "the European Union must become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion". This idea should be realised in a bottom-up initiative across selected German regions.

This German wide model integrated the CEDEFOP-position "Regional networking on the basis of trans-sectoral partnerships, particularly in education and labour policy must become a new focus in learning and employability strategies all over Europe" by focussing on the factor education.

At the mid-term-conference in Berlin 2004 Viviane Reding, the officer for adult learning in the European Commission,was stressing the fact that it can tailor solutions to the needs identified by those familiar with the situation at the different levels and in different regions.

And by focusing on the individual learner and stressing the learner's need to be able to direct his or her own learning processes, it allows for a comprehensive lifelong and life-wide approach that recognizes the fact that learning takes place in many situations, both formal and informal, in learning institutions, in the workplace and even in the individual citizen's private living environment. …Therefore greatly to be welcomed is the program "Learning regions – providing support for networks" announced by the German authorities. Again, while this program focuses on the individual, it brings together the various organisational structures, both public and private, with whom the individual learner interacts. This is appropriate, because when the individual learns, he or she is not the only one to benefit: the current or – in the case of unemployed people, the prospective – employer benefits, but so also does wider society (Implementing the strategy for Lifelong Learning Documentation of the conference "Regional Partnerships for Lifelong Learning - Structural Innovations in Education and Training" - Berlin, November 8-9, 2004, dlr 2004, p.65 f.).

7. What are the particular issues at stake?

"The goal of the "Learning Regions – Providing support for networks" programme is to find optimal solutions for the structural challenges of Lifelong Learning. Solutions which will not only benefit the promoted networks but which can also be assumed

and continued by others. At the same time, results from other programmes should be adopted and implemented within the Learning Regions. The structure-building and sustainable approach of this programme is also generating lively interest on an international level." (The future tasks, in: www.lernende-regionen.de, home-page)

One key for structural progress in Lifelong Learning are regional networks, which systematically focus on the needs of the "customers" and the personal circumstances of these learners. This can only be ensured by a local co-operation of all players across the educational sectors as it is realised in the German Learning Regions.

The political mission was given by the former federal minister for education Edelgard Bulmahn former minister for education:

 "Structures for an effective, self-responsible learning must in the future, even more than today, be structured without frontiers (Implementing the strategy for Lifelong Learning Documentation of the conference "Regional Partnerships for Lifelong Learning - Structural Innovations in Education and Training" - Berlin, November 8-9, 2004, Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung/ Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Bonn-Berlin 2005, p.58.

8. How do the LR actors consider R3L+ to improve the quality of the network?

1.   Added value and impact:

Learning Regions can and should   create the wider societal-economic context defined by creating European social frameworks (EU policies), social and civil dialogue, inter-organisational cooperation/learning regions, learning networks. Lifelong learning is here the driver for local and regional regeneration.
In that respect we speak about "learning society" which means the learning society marks the social capital in Europe. This will be made up by strengthening the learners' personal responsibility and self-management, motivating disadvantaged groups that are currently less involved in education, strengthening relations between all educational sectors, co-operating between educational providers and users. Thus improves the quality, quantity, and structure of offers, in order to promote user-orientation in particular. By embedding now the results into the community-networks "learning on place" means to give them sustainability and a long-term-stability.

Potential impact on further areas of interest: "Learning on place"

The federal ministry of education and research decided to continue with the programme Learning Regions by focussing on communities as relevant and responsible bodies for learning and education. In November 2009 this new programme "Learning on place" with the focus on communities was opened by a

kick-off in Berlin. It is based on the results and aims of Learning Regions but goes ahead. The ministry for education and research is again taking over the leading role – now together with an interconnection of German foundations with the main focus on education and learning. These have been relevant actors so far in the communities to support or enhance learning in the local and regional contexts. Actually around 30 foundations of different size are included and embedded very closely to the chosen 40 communities for "learning on place".

The main aim is to develop local educational managements on place to enable lifelong, coordinated, complimentary learning and successful educational biographies for all citizens.

60 millions will be invested (again partly ministry and partly European social fund) in a 3-years-period with an optional opportunity for a 2-year-prolongation. This public-private-partnership intends to set the course for establishing lifelong learning in the communities. The educational system should facilitate a more transparent, straightforward access.

Permeability is on the spot! Education for All should be created for all phases of life. It starts in the family and continues in vocational education. Thereupon lifelong learning with further educational blocks until the great age will be built on.

This initiative aims at enhancing the competitiveness of every single community based on the fact that the educational level of the citizens plays an important role for economic and social development of the regional location. Main emphasis will be given to the collection of facts and figures, exchange between all educational institutions and coordination of educational contents.

9. Transfer strategy

Which enabling factors, constraints and risks do we have to consider to develop and implement a common quality framework:

After the 8-years-period of Learning Regions in Germany we can identify the following factors underlined by a SWOT-analysis:

Strengths:
Very effective was the horizontal cooperation between each other and the executive board. We came into direct contact with the ministries and they had to accelerate decision-processes besides the normal ways of proceeding decisions. Due to our direct access to other transfer-projects and interregional cooperations with important partners and bodies we could build-up networks between different actors. Finally we were able to define and implement new structures across existing systems – e.g. new job-creations which were officially accepted by the ministries of the "Länder" and on the federal level. Finally we identified that the best way for sustainability was to

combine bottom up with top-down. All these successes were good reputations for EU- and international projects.

Weaknesses:
The administrative duties were very high and complicated. Within the executive board, dlr, we had to cope with numerous changes of contact persons and administrative ways we had to go. We started with a distrust of official bodies with their top-down-policy against Learning Regions with their bottom-up-initiative. Very often we had to work without any pre-experience. Therefore we worked alongside "try and error" with failure-components.

Opportunities:
The Learning Region movement strengthened the regional development, enforced the horizontal and vertical level. It created in nearly all supported regions new flexible systems against "antediluvian" educational structures. The main success consisted of the growing interest of other European countries and moreover worldwide in systems and ruling of the German form of Learning communities.

Threaths:
Bottom-up means different conditions, aims, objectives, outcomes, structure and impacts – there is no real benchmarking possible. Finally many Learning Regions have until today difficulties to get fully accepted in their regions – in that respect only some groups and parties are interested in. In general only 90 Learning Regions are a "drop in the ocean" in a country with more than 70 millions inhabitants. The only positive answer to that is the "neew wave" – the continuation with "learning on place".

Objectives and stages of the development process and implementation with regard to the requirements of the network:

Finally we note that in diagnosing the forms and working modern societies and economies, there is a dramatic increase in complexity, emanating from de-institutionalisation, de-synchronisation and de-regulation. It is important in the development of a conceptual framework for investigating human behaviour and interaction in newly developing networks (such as learning regions) to take note of the notions in complexity theory. One part of the art of managing complex systems, because that is to put to one side the sequential model of research-development-production-marketing-using and instead try to engage with all these activities in parallel mode.

This came to the fore in Confintea VI – the world-conference of UNESCO in Belem/Brasil (1.-4.12.2009). The first-ever Global Report on Adult Learning and Education is based on 154 National Reports submitted by UNESCO Member States on the state of adult learning and education collects the basic statements worldwide for the next 12-years-decade for adult education.

This global report on this conference (Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, published 2009 by UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Feldbrunnenstraße 58, 20148 Hamburg, Germany)marks multiple and structural causes for lowand inequitable access to adult learning and education by identifying three kinds of barriers, the institutional, situational and dispositional. And then it mentions: "Examples of measures to increaseparticipation and address inequity are given, including targeted policies, developing programmes focusing on specific groups, and establishing learning communities." (Executive summary, Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, p.4 – http://www.unesco.org/en/confinteavi/grale).

On page 76 it is emphasised that an increasing rate of participation is a clear demand. This can be reached by "Establishing learning communities: While learning is inherently an individual activity, it takes place in sub-cultures that reflect different ways of life. Community education, learning cities, learning festivals and other collective efforts that extend individual learning into the realm of community and societal learning can contribute substantially to the promotion of adult learning and education. For example, Saudi Arabia's 'illiteracy-free society' programmes are models of good practice with a number of innovative features. Learning cities and regions in Europe and Asia or 'Education Cities' in Southern Europe and Latin America make for a new learning ecology in which the entire city actively participates as a provider of adult learning opportunities and activities.

In the conclusion (up from p.118) it is described: "In 1997, the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning identified adult learning as "both a consequence of active citizenship and a condition for full participation in society". Since that time there has been an increasing shift to a perspective in which
adult education is located within a lifelong learning context that, at its best, integrates both empowering and instrumental rationales for adult learning. This in turn needs to be located within a capability approach, which considers the overall expansion of human capabilities and includes not merely personal and economic development but also the capability to interact socially and participate politically."

Learning Regions could be one realistic instrument to achieve this intention. And furthermore: "Perhaps more importantly, governments should mobilise other stakeholders – the private sector, NGOs, and, in some contexts, the international community – and clarify with them mutually agreed resource and funding expectations for adult education in their country. The combination of policy-making and additional funding should establish clear roles and responsibilities – an essential component in constructing the stable platform for adult learning and education to flourish."

The main key issues emphasised in the end of the report mention "Good practice can be shared and comparative studies planned to build a critical momentum for measurement." (p. 157)

Both the individual and society benefit from investments in competence promotion and expenditures in Lifelong Learning. In combination with the development of networks and supporting structures, these are the central components of an overall system of Lifelong Learning that is being implemented at a European level. Finally the official quotation from the dlr given in "future tasks" at the website of www.lernende-regionen.info 2004 are relevant until today: "Both the individual and society benefit from investments in competence promotion and expenditures in Lifelong Learning. In combination with the development of networks and supporting structures, these are the central components of an overall system of Lifelong Learning that is being implemented at a European level."

As consequence out of it: The idea of Learning Regions are on a good way and can be used as instrument for future perspectives not only German and European, but world-wide.

Useful literature:

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www.lernen-vor-ort.info
www.unesco.org/en/confinteavi/grale

The author supported the applications of two Learning Regions (Bodensee and …) and was applying and running a third one herselve: Learning Region Dachau. Besides of that she was co-organising the pre-conference of the status-conference in March 2004 in Cologne and integrated into the preparatory team of the status-conference taking place in Berlin. Her idea to found the association Lernende Regionen Deutschland could be realised in 2007 where she is until today the chair of the board. Since 2003 she is travelling to conferences German-, European and world wide to report on the German Learning Regions and market the idea to install pilot-regions. She was also running a workshop to this topic in the mid-term-conference of Unesco V in Bangkok (2003) and could co-support the integration of the idea of "learning regions, cities, communities" into the European and global paper of the Unesco-world-conference in Belem 2009. Actually she is preparing a European application with the integration of Israel and Palestina.