



New Approaches,



New Skills



for Social Inclusion





Foreword

There is currently nothing more important than the development of opportunities to enable people of all ages and from all backgrounds to contribute to the socio-economic development of Europe. Following the global economic crisis, and in the light of the rapid growth of the emerging economies, Europe has to differentiate itself by the provision of human capital at the highest level, contributing innovative ideas and creating new ways of doing business.

Yet too many people across Europe have skills which barely equip them for today's workforce, let alone that of tomorrow. They run the risk of being socially excluded, disenfranchised from employment and suffering from low living standards and poor health and wellbeing.

Social inclusion and social mobility depend on people, regardless of their age, having the right skills and competences and the opportunities to use and develop them. This would enable them to gain confidence and self-esteem and therefore to contribute to a better society as well as improving competitiveness and productivity. Many of the emerging skills have yet to be defined, and many will rely on new media and technologies in the early stages of development.

Social inclusion and social mobility also depend on the individual's ability to transfer those skills and competences to new situations and to be able to communicate in a way which suits individual circumstances and aspirations.

We are delighted, therefore, to launch the Association of Colleges and MBO Raad project New Approaches, New Skills for Social Inclusion. The two organisations have put together an innovative programme which, although focusing on raising awareness about each other's responses to common issues, is intended to add to the body of knowledge and understanding on how to tackle social inclusion in Europe.

This document supports the formal launch of the project and gives a snapshot of the current position with respect to social inclusion and what the project intends to do. The project can be followed through <http://www.aoc.co.uk/en/aoc-create/aoc-create-projects/index.cfm>. We are very excited by the programme of activity, the launch and forthcoming seminars and hope that you are too.



Jan van Zijl
Chairman, MBO Raad



Chris Morecroft
President, Association of
Colleges



The policy context

The launch of the Association of Colleges and MBO Raad project represents the starting point of a major European project, funded through the EACEA Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-13. It is designed to develop innovative strategies to encourage vocational education and training (VET) providers across different European countries to work together to engage and involve those groups on the lower qualification levels which are at risk of social exclusion.

The project also links together the key drivers of European development in social and educational policy into a single agenda to support those who are educationally disadvantaged within Europe, and aims to bring together like-minded organisations across the nations that wish to address this agenda.

What is the project setting out to achieve?

The purpose of the project is to bring together key priorities identified across Europe and to raise the profile of the European and national policy drivers that are determining the future shape of jobs and skills across Europe.

In so doing, it seeks to address some of the priority areas through:

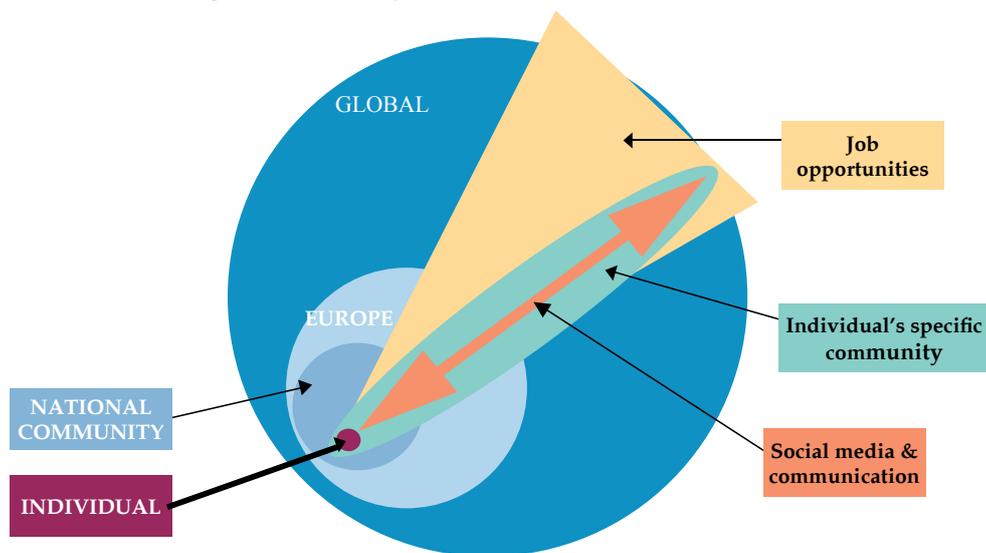
- illustrating best practice in vocational education and training on which to build new partnerships, communities and networks;
- bringing new partners together who may not have thought about working in the European context before;
- recognising the varying scales and contexts within which VET operates (see diagram below);
- recognising the role of social media as a key driver in skills development.

The project will also evidence ideas and initiatives to inform and drive forward current EU priorities including:

- equipping young people and adults for 21st century life, focusing particularly on competencies;
- promoting youth mobility;
- finding ways to address youth and adult unemployment, focusing on opportunities afforded by the new jobs agenda;
- exploring schemes such as the 'Youth on the Move' card, to facilitate mobility by providing benefits and discounts for young people across Europe as VET 'alumni';
- exploring proposals for a European Skills Passport, based on Europass, to increase transparency of competence acquired through both formal and non-formal learning;
- reviewing informal and formal learning accreditation opportunities, making the most of flexibility of national and European qualification frameworks.

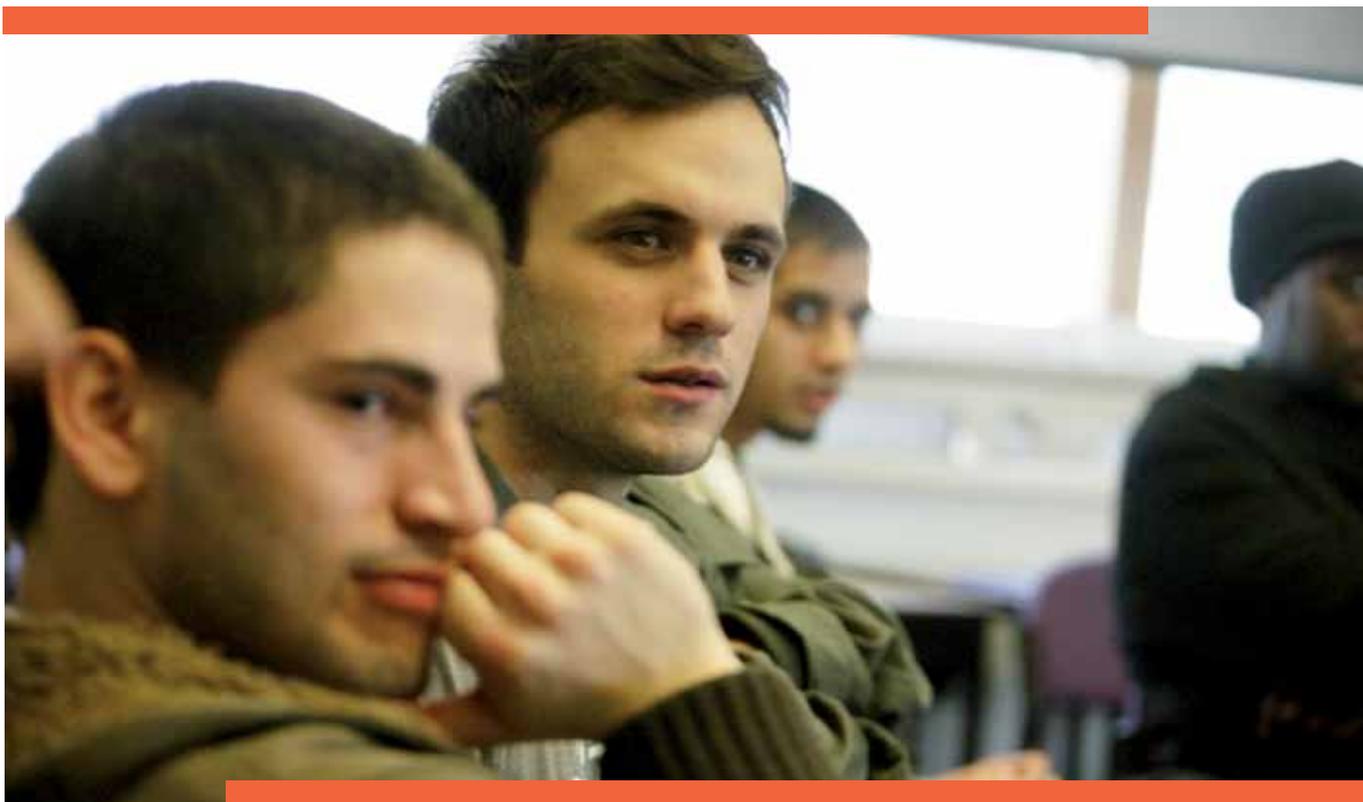


Figure 1: The individual within the global community



By the end of the project we expect to have developed:

- a new framework for developing transnational cooperative projects focusing on social mobility;
- plans for a number of future projects involving national partners in several European countries;
- much greater awareness in England and the Netherlands of the opportunities and benefits of working collaboratively across European nations;
- greater understanding of European policy and its role in supporting individual and national agendas to address skills development as a means to improve social mobility and inclusion.





What do we mean by social exclusion?

Social mobility depends on people, regardless of their age, having the right skills and competences and opportunities to use and develop them - both to gain confidence and self-esteem personally and at work - in order to contribute to a better society as well as to improve competitiveness and productivity.

Social exclusion is a term used widely in the UK, The Netherlands and across the EU. It embraces a wider concept than poverty alone, and includes inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power. However, it is possible to be socially excluded without being in poverty.

Social disadvantage refers to the range of difficulties that act as barriers to life opportunities and that prevent people from participating fully in society. These may include economic poverty, poor health, disability, poor education or skills and treatment which is discriminatory or inequitable.

Social disadvantage may be the result of circumstances out of the individual's control – they may belong to a group which has been ostracised for historical or political reasons, or they may lack the social mobility to overcome disadvantage. Although education has for long been cited as an escalator out of social disadvantage, leading to

better job prospects for young people facing greater risks of poverty and reducing the prevalence of income poverty in old age, educational failure can reinforce it.

Most observers believe that the two policy areas that can mitigate exclusion are education and social inclusion working hand in hand. Educational policies which focus on offsetting family disadvantages that can hold back achievement and bolster the cognitive as well as non-cognitive skills of students from disadvantaged backgrounds play an impact role in limiting and even reducing social exclusion and help the application of social policies at a later stage in life.

Social policies can be designed to strengthen learning contexts – they may offer incentives to poorer families on condition that young people are kept in learning and can do much to shape social attitudes. Learning that discourages dropping out or encourages adult training at the lower end of the achievement scale and provides recognition of competencies learned on the job can also influence peer groups of children. Evidence also strongly suggests that intergenerational learning can do much to break cycles of social disadvantage although, if not implemented well, this can reinforce them.



The European context

In May 2010 the European Commission launched the Europe 2020 Strategy to enable the EU to grow out of the global economic crisis and to prepare the EU economy for the next decade. The Commission identified three key drivers for growth, to be implemented through concrete actions at EU and national levels: smart growth (fostering knowledge, innovation, education and digital society), sustainable growth (making our production more resource efficient while boosting our competitiveness) and inclusive growth (raising participation in the labour market, the acquisition of skills and the fight against poverty).

Progress towards these objectives will be measured against five EU-level targets, which Member States are expected to translate into national targets:

- 75% of the population aged 20-64 should be employed;
- 3% of EU GDP should be invested in R&D;
- the '20/20/20' climate/energy targets should be met;
- the share of early school leavers should be under 10%;
- at least 40% of the younger generation should have a degree or diploma;
- twenty million less people should be at risk of poverty.

These objectives re-focus the previous priority actions which were derived from the 2000 Lisbon agreements. In order to meet the targets, the Commission identified a Europe 2020 agenda consisting of a series of flagship initiatives, the responsibility for which will be exercised at all levels: EU-level organisations, Member States and local and regional authorities.

- innovation - re-focussing the policy underpinning R&D and innovation on to major challenges and closing the gap between science and market to turn inventions into products.
- youth on the move - enhancing the quality and international attractiveness of Europe's post-compulsory system, including higher education, by promoting the mobility of students and young professionals. For example, vacancies in all Member States should be more accessible throughout Europe and professional qualifications and experience properly recognised.

- a digital agenda for Europe - delivering sustainable economic and social benefits from a Digital Single Market based on ultra-fast internet. All Europeans should have access to high speed internet by 2013.
- resource-efficient Europe - supporting the shift towards a resource-efficient and low carbon economy and sticking to the previously agreed 2020 targets in terms of energy production, efficiency and consumption.
- an industrial policy for green growth – helping the EU industrial base to be competitive in the post-economic crisis world, promoting entrepreneurship and developing new skills, so creating millions of new jobs.
- an agenda for new skills and jobs – creating the conditions for modernising labour markets, with a view to raising employment levels and ensuring the sustainability of employment at a time when the baby-boomers start to retire.
- European platform against poverty - ensuring economic, social and national cohesion by helping the poor and socially excluded and enabling them to play an active part in society.

New Approaches, New Skills for Social Inclusion addresses all these key priorities in various measures.



An agenda for New Skills for New Jobs

Research shows that new and higher levels of skills will be needed for the jobs of tomorrow. The economic crisis and structural factors like globalisation, technological change, ageing populations and the shift to a low carbon economy are all contributing to rapid change in European labour markets. As a result of this fast evolution, shortages of adequate skills in some sectors or occupations already co-exist with unemployment across the EU. Unemployment is also too high – consistently at or above 10%, and the workforce is ageing, requiring replacement skills.

To provide job opportunities for all and to create a more competitive and sustainable economy, Europe needs a highly skilled workforce able to meet current and future challenges. To ensure this, it is urgent to invest in the right skills and improve matching of jobs with these skills in the EU, by effectively anticipating future trends.

A joint policy initiative carried out in cooperation between the European Commission and the EU Member States, New Skills for New Jobs aims to address some of these issues by supporting EU countries and regions in developing more effective ways to analyse and predict which skills will be required in tomorrow's labour markets and, with this knowledge, developing and adapting education and training so that the workers gain the skills required.

New Skills for New Jobs gives EU Member States the opportunity to learn from each other and share solutions by pooling their efforts at the European level, as well as with other international organisations on the themes related to skills upgrading, matching and anticipation. New Skills for New Jobs draws on existing EU instruments such as the European Social Fund (ESF) to achieve its aims. It is an essential tool of the European Employment Strategy to expand and enhance investment in workers' skills, as part of its overall aim to create more and better jobs throughout the EU.

New Skills for New Jobs also contributes to the EU 2020 Strategy, the follow-up of the EU Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. This sets an EU employment rate target for women and men of 75% for the 20-64 age group by 2020. The strategy also highlights the EU target to reduce the early school leaving rate to under 10% and to increase the number of young people in higher education or equivalent vocational education to at least 40%.

To make Europe's labour markets function better and to deliver the right mix of skills, the Commission proposes concrete actions that will help:

- to step up labour market reform to improve flexibility and security of labour markets ('flexicurity');
- to give people and businesses the right incentives to invest in training to continuously upgrade people's skills in line with labour market needs;
- to ensure decent working conditions while improving the quality of employment legislation;
- to ensure the right labour market conditions are in place for job creation such as fewer administrative burdens or lowering the taxes on labour and mobility.

An agenda for youth – 'Youth on the Move'

The agenda for New Skills for New Jobs complements the Commission's 'Youth on the Move' initiative, which aims to help young people to gain the knowledge, skills and experience they need to make their first job a reality.

Young people have been hit particularly hard by the recent economic crisis. Youth on the Move aims to increase their chances of finding a job by enhancing student and trainee mobility and improving the quality and attractiveness of education and training in Europe. More than six million young people in the EU leave education and training with lower secondary level qualifications at best. They face severe difficulties in finding work, are more often unemployed and more often dependent on welfare benefits.

Many of the priorities coming out of the 2008 Renewed Social Agenda focused on youth. The European Commission has approved an action plan that will help Member States to achieve the Europe 2020 headline target of reducing the EU average rate of early school leavers to under 10%, from the current average level of 14.4% by the end of the decade.



'Youth on the Move' will attempt to tackle some of the key barriers that prevent students from continuing their education. These actions are primarily focused at those from disadvantaged socio-economic and vulnerable groups. It will also seek to reconcile the demand and supply sides of the job market to ensure that students have a better chance of getting quality jobs when they graduate.

This is particularly important since, according to the European Commission, "the number of young people looking for a job has increased from 4 to 5 million since the onset of the financial turmoil, with EU youth unemployment now at nearly 21%." Youth on the move will:

- contribute to building and modernising lifelong learning systems to develop the key skills, competencies and learning outcomes of individuals, in line with labour market needs. This includes supporting learning through formal and informal educational activities.
- promote the performance and attractiveness of Europe's higher education system to ensure it is competitive and well-placed internationally. This includes fostering innovation and encouraging student and researcher mobility.
- encourage the transnational mobility of young people for learning, employability and social and personal development, to support the aspiration that by 2020 all young people in Europe should have the possibility of spending a part of their educational pathway abroad.
- improve the employment prospects of young people by launching a youth employment framework outlining policy priorities for action at national and EU level.

In summary, the 28 priority areas comprise:

- the launch of a website to provide a single point of access to information about opportunities to study or gain work experience abroad, including advice about EU grants and individual rights.
- the implementation of a mobility scoreboard to benchmark and measure Member States' progress in dismantling barriers to learning mobility.

- the creation through the European Investment Bank (EIB), of a European student lending facility to support student mobility.
- the publication of a feasibility study for a multi-dimensional global university ranking system, to provide a more complete and realistic picture of higher education performance than existing rankings do.
- the development of a 'Youth on the Move' card, to facilitate mobility by providing benefits and discounts for young people across Europe in line with other student cards.
- support for a new pilot project 'Your first EURES job', managed by the network of European Public Employment Services, to provide advice and support to young jobseekers and companies, particularly SMEs, who want to work or trade abroad.
- the launch of a new European Vacancy Monitor to improve transparency and information on jobs available across Europe.
- a proposal for a European Skills Passport, based on Europass, to increase transparency of competence acquired through formal and informal learning.
- use of the Commission's new European Progress micro-finance facility, which aims to provide financial support for young entrepreneurs.
- encouragement for Member States to invest 2% of GDP in higher education and step up efforts to modernise curricula, governance and funding systems.
- the publication in one document of European Court of Justice (ECJ) rulings to improve understanding of the rights of students studying abroad.
- strengthen bilateral and regional policy dialogue on youth employment, within the EU, with the European Neighbourhood, as well as with organisations like the ILO, OECD, and G20.



The response to the European agenda in the UK

This section identifies the UK response to the changing European agenda and, where relevant, the England-specific approach. This needs to be set in the context that the key policy areas of education and health are devolved to each of the four nations in the UK.

An agenda for New Skills for New Jobs

The UK has defined seven drivers to take the New Skills for New Jobs agenda forward.



Figure 2 taken from Skills for Jobs: Today and Tomorrow - The National Strategic Skills Audit for England 2010 - Volume 2: The Evidence Report

In summary, each driver identified above comprises:

- **demographic and population change** affects skills and labour supply through population change and location of sources of labour and increases and decreases in consumer demand – in themselves impacting on skills needs;
- **environmental change** affects skills as a result of changing government priorities and investment to tackle climatic change through stimulating the development of a low carbon economy;
- **economics and globalisation** in developing economies impact on advanced economies by encouraging growth into higher value markets, leading to greater demand for higher level skills and placing demands on the capacity to adapt to emerging overseas markets;
- **technological change** (new developments and new applications of existing technologies) may create additional demand for jobs at higher skills levels and at lower levels in manufacturing new products. It will also create new skills in supporting consumers in using the new technologies;
- **changing values and identities** - family structures, education and religion affect attitudes to work and can affect labour supply through influencing choices about type and conditions of work;
- **changing consumer demand** impacts on choices and expectations about type and quality of products and services, which may segment skills needs.
- **regulation and multi-level governance** have an important influence on skills supply as they can affect labour supply through controlling entry to and exit from the education and labour market, and influence skills demand through setting of training, product or service standards;



The response in England was the publication in November 2010 of Skills for Sustainable Growth. This proposes sweeping reforms of the skills system by:

- reshaping apprenticeships so that technician level (Level 3) becomes the level to which learners and employers aspire;
- expanding the numbers of adult apprenticeships available, so by 2014-15 there will be 75,000 more adults starting than under the previous Government's plans; 200,000 adults will be able to start an apprenticeship. £605 million will be invested in adult apprenticeships in the 2011-12 financial year;
- ensuring vocational qualifications are flexible and based on the relevant National Occupational Standards and that professional standards in selected industries can drive skills development and protect consumers;
- initiating a demand-led growth and innovation fund of up to £50 million of government investment a year, to support employer-led initiatives within growth sectors;
- focusing on an SME offer to help small employers train low-skilled staff.

level) qualification when they do not already have one;

- fully funding basic skills courses for individuals who left school without basic reading, writing and mathematics;
- introducing Government-backed loans from 2013-14 for learners aged 24 and over undertaking level 3 or higher qualifications;
- protecting funding for informal and adult learning, but ensuring it engages with the disadvantaged and offers progression routes to formal learning.

Skills for Growth recognises that much is already being done but that the rate of progress needs to be accelerated. To this end, training and skills providers will also be able to supply the type and volume of learning needed in their local area, with increasing flexibility to respond to local needs and the demands for quality from learners and employers alike.

In 2009, the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee Inquiry into Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in England recommended better strategies for the identification of young people who are NEET. Many observers agreed that this needs to commence well before young people leave school,

“ A skilled workforce is necessary to stimulate the private sector growth that will bring new jobs and new prosperity for people all over this country. And a strong further education and skills system is fundamental to social mobility, re-opening routes for people from wherever they begin to succeed in work, become confident through becoming accomplished and play a full role in civil society. ”

Vince Cable MP, Secretary of State for Business Innovation, and skills, and John Hayes, Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning, introducing Skills for Sustainable Growth.

Skills for Growth also focuses on creating a fairer society for economic and social reasons to enable the unemployed to access the right skills for sustainable work and for employers to find skilled labour to help their businesses succeed. It proposes:

- helping people who are on active job-seeking benefits to secure work through labour market - relevant training;
- fully funding training for young adults aged from 19 up to 24 undertaking their first full level 2 (GCSE equivalent) or first level 3 (A

possibly as early as primary school, leading to prevention rather than intervention. It was identified that personalised guidance and support lie at the heart of supporting those who are NEET, with programmes that allow progression and are not dependent on short-term funding.

Of the 28 priorities recommended in Youth on the Move, some are already being acted upon in England. For example, a key recommendation is to reinforce the importance of language learning by embedding it into the curriculum from the early stages of education and to do much more to meet the target of every EU citizen speaking at least two



other EU languages. However, language learning will only have value if it is credit bearing and delivered in more creative ways – for example, in bars, cafes, culinary and/or cultural evenings and between native and foreign learners. Language learning will now be required in order for young people to achieve the English Baccalaureate at age 16.

Three of the priority actions will also be explored through the AoC/MBO Raad project:

- the development of the ‘Youth on the Move’ card;
- the launch of a new European Vacancy Monitor for available jobs across Europe;
- the proposed European Skills Passport, based on Europass, to increase ‘mobility of competence’ acquired through formal and non-formal learning.

incentives to take large numbers of vocational qualifications to the detriment of core academic study (eg through the GCSE equivalents they have been given within school performance tables).

The review also recommends introducing principles to formulate study programmes for young people on vocational routes post-16 to ensure they gain skills which will lead to progression into a variety of jobs or further learning. In particular, it is vital to ensure that those who have not secured a good pass in English and mathematics GCSE continue to study those subjects.

Following *Skills for Sustainable Growth*, there will also be further emphasis on evaluating the delivery structure and content of apprenticeships and vocational qualifications to ensure they deliver the right skills for the workplace. There will be a number of structural changes which will include more regulation of awarding organisations



Current developments in vocational education and training in England

Bringing together ideas that relate to Skills for Sustainable Growth and for improving the life chances of young people, the Wolf Review of Vocational Education in England was published in February 2011 and is likely to shake up vocational education for young people.

The review crucially recognises that high-quality vocational education can offer a valued and legitimate path from qualifications to both higher education and employment. The review also identifies adding real value to young people’s education should be recognised in school league tables going forward. Alison Wolf calls for ways to incentivise young people to take the most valuable vocational qualifications pre-16, while removing

that design and develop qualifications, rather than accreditation of individual qualifications, increasing flexibility within the system and allowing more opportunity to develop locally based, rather than national qualifications, to fill potential gaps in the market.

As well as flexible qualifications, there is a proposal that lecturers and other professionals fully qualified to teach in Colleges should be allowed to teach in schools, to ensure that those taking vocational courses are being taught by those best suited to do so.

It remains to be seen what the Government’s response will be to the Wolf review, but many of the ideas around apprenticeship and vocational qualification reform will be taken forward.



An agenda for social inclusion and social mobility

The UK Government published its social mobility strategy 'Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers' in April 2011, which focuses on combating child poverty and ensuring that middle income as well as low income families can progress based on merit not money or influence. Research shows that, in Britain, the influence of parental income on earnings is among the strongest in the OECD. Parental income has more than one and a half times the impact on male earnings in Britain than in Germany or Sweden. The research contains a number of key elements and seven social indicators to measure its impact; it is stated that it will take until the 2040s to really deliver.

In advance of the publication of the social mobility agenda, research was published in England by Professor Gregory Clarke in which he determined that the rate of social mobility in England over the past century and a half was substantially slower than most social scientists believe – and possibly slower than in the Middle Ages.

Professor Clark's paper, *Was There Ever a Ruling Class? 1,000 Years of Social Mobility in England*, is based on surname evidence in England. People called 'Smith', for example, are largely descended from village blacksmiths of the 1300s. Yet in the 1400s, the proportion of 'Smiths' at Oxford was as high as in the general population. Professor Clark then analysed the changing fate of two groups of people with rare surnames from the period 1858-87 up to today.



One group included Bazalgettes, Du Canes and Willoughby de Brokes; the other group studied had unusual names but backgrounds with less wealth associated with them. Despite convergent trends, the descendants of those with 'rich' surnames remain substantially wealthier in 2011 and live on average three years longer.

If such findings are confirmed more widely, it suggests that the resources spent on publicly provided education and health have created few gains in the rate of social mobility. The modern meritocracy is no better at achieving social mobility than the medieval oligarchy. Instead, that rate seems to be a constant of social physics.

For disadvantaged sectors of the British population – and particularly the children of recent immigrants, whose visible differences may also make them victims of active prejudice – it is likely that it will be many generations perhaps centuries before they achieve equal status with the rest of UK society.

However, public policies that promote educational development throughout the life course have long been advocated as a valuable tool in contributing to narrowing social, economic and health inequalities. Recommendations from both the WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health and the Strategic Review on Health Inequalities in England have called for a strategic focus on youth, particularly in the early stages of child development. Both reports assert that investment in early child development is one of the most effective strategies in contributing to tackling health inequalities.



Figure 3 Elements of the UK Government social mobility strategy, April 2011



The Marmot Review (2010) 'Fair Society, Health Lives' primarily focused on reducing health inequalities in England, identifying that this would require action in six main policy areas:

- giving every child the best start in life;
- enabling all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives;
- creating fair employment and work for all;
- ensuring a healthy standard of living for all;
- creating and sustaining healthy and sustainable places and communities;
- strengthening the role and impact of ill health prevention.

Educational programmes in order to provide social inclusion, new skills and new jobs

Despite the significant attention on lifelong learning in Europe, evaluation studies of educational programmes aiming to enhance social inclusion of vulnerable youths and adults are extremely scarce. However, given the socio-economic developments in Western countries, the group of vulnerable youths and adults without job perspectives is growing (Nickell, Nunziata & Ochel, 2005). The group of vulnerable youths and adults consists of unemployed, senior people, adults experiencing social or economical problems in daily life, physically or mentally handicapped persons or immigrants having language problems.

“Our country should be continually striving to create more opportunities for each and every person to go as far as their talents can take them. For me, the job of politics is to make that possible by breaking down the barriers that prevent people from realising their potential.”

Alan Milburn MP on taking up the role to review social mobility in 2010.

This indicates very strongly the increasingly close policy relationship between social mobility, employment and health in England.

Research has also shown that obstacles to social mobility and social inclusion can lead to significant health inequalities¹. Unemployment is a critical dimension and relates to social exclusion in one of three ways:

- it creates financial hardship, and therefore lower living standards, impacting on social integration and loss of self-esteem;
- it triggers general distress, anxiety and depression and is likely to be a chronic stressor;
- unemployment may alter behaviours, increasing smoking and alcohol consumption and decreasing physical exercise.

These key obstacles will also be reflected in the work undertaken through the project.

For this group of vulnerable people, educational programmes need to be organised with the aim of enhancing the social inclusion of the participants. These programmes increase the socio-economic standards to support daily life and improve the individual's chance to qualify for the labour market.

The target group of vulnerable youths and adults has specific features. First, they do not easily fit into regular schooling systems, as many of them have negative prior school experiences. The participants aim to reach personal goals to improve daily life instead of gaining a diploma as an entrance ticket to the labour market. Most adult and young learners defined as 'vulnerable' join training courses because they need assistance in daily life - for example in writing, developing conversation skills, using a mobile phone or personal computer, solving problems, making important choices in their personal life, organising their financial administration and later on having a job. Jarvis & Griffin (2003) suggest that for vulnerable youths and adults education is a lifelong process aimed at increasing quality of life. This implies the outcomes of these programmes are not defined in terms of cognitive learning gains or employment but in terms of social inclusion. After this they can join training in order to get qualified for the labour market.

¹ UCL Research Group 2009, Task Group 9; Marmot Review



Towards an understanding of the outcome of education defined as social inclusion – the theoretical context

In order to describe social inclusion as an outcome of education, two theoretical perspectives have to be taken into account. They are:

- Understanding the balance and recognising the importance of the individual within their learning environment (based on interactionism). The balance between an ever changing environment and the individual's capability to make choices enables them to become more productive and increase their social inclusion.
- Understanding the balance between emotionality and functionality (based on socio-emotional selectivity theory). Simply put, this explains why vulnerable people may be encouraged to join programmes and classes either to increase contact with others to cope (emotional perspective) or to gain knowledge – eg to learn to read, use the internet (functional perspective). This helps them in their daily lives and helps them to overcome socio-economic problems.

Figure 4 shows how the theories of interactionism and socio-emotional selectivity combine. Four processes of social inclusion can be identified:

- activation – the process of enhancing the ability to function in daily life, seen by some to be at the heart of social inclusion
- internalisation – the process to gain a higher level of satisfaction and to control one's own life through changing behaviours – essential for vulnerable adults if they are to increase their social inclusion
- participation – taking part in a social or cultural setting in order to feel 'included'
- connection – gaining new or improving existing social interactions or relationships and meeting others

In general terms, activation and participation help to increase functional knowledge, skills and attitude to encounter problems in daily life. In contrast, internalisation and connection are processes describing the increase of emotional rewards associated with, on the one hand, being more assertive (on an individual level) and, on the other hand gaining more personal contacts (in contact with the environment).

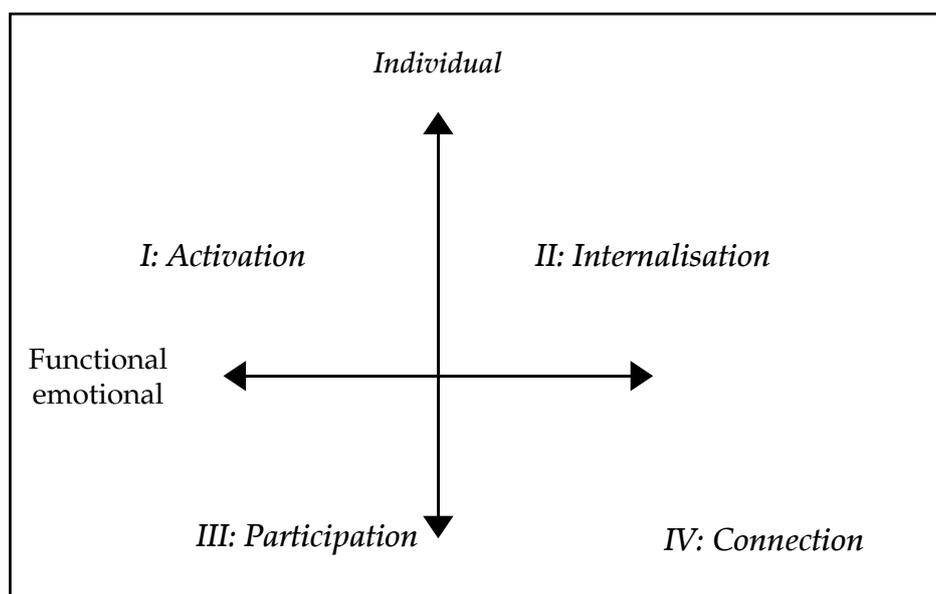


Figure 4: Balance between processes of social inclusion



1. Activation

According to Fortuin et al (1997) social inclusion is a process aiming to activate people. Movisie (2009) defines activation as a process of enhancing the ability to function in daily life. Whenever people are activated they are able to manage daily problems in life in order to survive - for example writing a letter to the housing company or communicating in a different language abroad. Furthermore Ben-Zur and Michael (2007) argue that in order to be active in daily life, different coping strategies have to be internalised.

2. Internalisation

Internalisation can be defined as a process of feeling happy and safe as well as a feeling of being able to cope with problems in daily life. Mastergeorge (2001) stated that internalisation is a process of gaining a higher level of satisfaction and the ability to manage one's own life. In order to be satisfied, personal development and self-regulation of behaviour is needed. Behaviour such as making the right decisions or being assertive when needed can support the development of one's own personality or identity. In this context assertiveness and decision making are seen as internalisation behaviour. As a result of internalisation vulnerable adults are able to feel more satisfied with themselves and are able to manage their own lives (Mastergeorge, 2001) and therefore feel more accepted in society (also Guildford, 2000).

3. Participation

Buffel et al (2007) stated that education can lead to an increase in social inclusion in terms of participation (also Guildford, 2000). Accordingly participation can be defined as taking part in society or in a cultural setting (Buffel et al, 2007). In this respect the study of Verté et al (2007) indicates that the elderly participate by taking the opportunity to go out in the evening or take part in activities in the community.

4. Connection

Besides being more active and participating more in society and or feeling better and more satisfied in life, connection between vulnerable adults can increase. In this context connection means gaining new or improving existing social interactions or relationships and meeting others (Colley, 1975; Smith, 2007; Huisman et al, 2003; Priemus, 2005; Verté et al, 2007). Consequently, establishing relationships can lead to a decrease of loneliness (De Jong-Gierveld, 1987). This 'social support' can ensure that vulnerable people cope more effectively in daily life. (Antonucci and Akiyama (2002), Antonucci, Lansford and Akiyama (2001) and Antonucci, Vandewater and Lansford (2000)).



Key aspects of education and training in the Netherlands

The Dutch government aims to ensure that every citizen has the necessary skills and education to enable them to participate successfully in the labour-market. This includes the use of specially designed work based learning programmes.

In the Netherlands education for vulnerable adults and young people consists of five 'pillars':

- participation
- societal development
- special secondary school for adults and youngsters
- continuing vocational education and training (CVET)
- secondary vocational education and training (remit of MBO)

1. Participation: this consists of three policy drivers aimed at increasing participation of vulnerable adults and young people through:

- projects for re-integration; these are designed to enable vulnerable adults to find a proper job in the labour market and to avoid the particular impact that the growing rate of unemployment may have on them. Most of the budget is used for this form of special re-integration;
- special programmes of integration (including an exam) for new migrants;
- programmes designed to improve social inclusion in daily life

Regional Education and Training Centre (ROCs) organise courses of education on topics to improve social inclusion in daily life. Vulnerable adults and young people join these training courses, for example, to improve their writing or conversation skills, to help them solve problems or make important choices in their personal life, all before joining education in order to reach a qualification for the labour market.

2. Societal development (WMO): this is aimed at supporting vulnerable citizens to become or remain self-reliant and participate in their communities and more widely in society. It encompasses wide-ranging programmes from the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) to enable people in neighbourhoods to join in "working and living together".

The WMO must give municipalities the opportunity to develop a policy in which citizens and foreigners are encouraged to increase social cohesion and quality of life in villages, districts and neighbourhoods through experiential learning, benefiting both the district and the people who live in it. Delivered through neighbourhoods, programmes and courses are less 'academically' and 'linguistically' orientated and more practical in nature.

3. Special secondary school for adults and young people: this is aimed at gaining (an) initial qualification(s) for the labour market. Not every young person can overcome barriers and achieve a qualification relevant for the labour market at high school or university. In the Netherlands it is possible to learn formally for an equivalent certificate after failing to achieve the leaving exam in secondary school. To help support this, the six levels of General Adult Education are being integrated in the Dutch National Qualification Framework (NLQF).

The Dutch government also subsidises several forms of 'special' education that lead to initial qualifications designed for the labour market. These qualifications may be studied at schools for specific professions or institutions which combine secondary schooling and VET and are organised through the ROCs. Through these initiatives the Dutch government is increasing learner opportunities to gain a VET or secondary school qualification that is not necessarily age-specific.

4. Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET): this is aimed at enabling people to gain skills and qualifications to improve attitudes to work or for employability. Special funding is available for employers who organise education and training for employees in-company and/

or outside the workplace. This includes support for coaching and apprenticeships. CVET is one of the largest segments of adult education in the Netherlands and is regarded as the heart of human resource development.

5. Secondary Vocational Education and Training (MBO): MBO programmes are based on the work-based system (approximately 35%) or the school-based system (approximately 65%). Both learning pathways offer programmes at four different levels, ranging from the assisting level (level 1) to the mid-management level (level 4). For those students who are not ready for making career choices there are AKA programmes at level 1 that offer a wider orientation for different industrial and business sectors. After the AKA programme, students are encouraged to continue



vocational programme at level 2, which provides them with the starting qualification for the labour market. Those students, however, who are not ready for further formal learning might enter the labour market as well as continue their study. The qualifications are drawn up collaboratively by social partners and the world of education and training. Several Regional Institutions of Education offer combinations of adult and vocational education designed for vulnerable adults and young people.

As an example of good practice in learning for new skills, new jobs and social inclusion, the Dutch Ministry for Education has introduced Action Plan Youth Unemployment. A part of this plan is the School Ex programme, which focuses on target groups of graduates in vocational education. 'Ex' is derived from 'exit' and 'extension', which explains the main goal of the programme: stimulating potential school leavers (exit) to continue studying (extension).

Due to the current economic situation, students from the lower vocational levels (1 and 2) have a greater risk of unemployment when trying to enter the labour market after getting their diploma, so School Ex is designed to encourage graduates in vocational education to study an extra year after their leaving diploma. The programme guides them through pathway to find a suitable job through the Dutch Employment service, (UWV Werkbedrijf) which also offers young people who are under threat of unemployment mediation after the summer vacation. The aim is to prevent young people from being unemployed and at the same time to increase their chances in the labour market by obtaining a diploma at a higher level or one which is related to a specific profession.

The School-Ex programme generally consists of two elements, put together to form a coherent whole:

- recording the future plans of high school 'graduates'
- advising on educational courses





Based on the 2009 data, it appeared that the number of students entering further education (in VET or higher education) was substantially higher than the previous years. This was particularly evident at the lower levels of education, where the growth was substantial. From level 1, 64.2% of the students indicated that they wanted to continue to level 2 while in the previous year this was only 53.2%. From level 2 to 3 this was 59.3% compared to 49% before. Converted into student numbers, this meant 10,000 extra students entered continuing education, 6,500 of which were from the most vulnerable group. Of these 6,500, 1500 entered a course at level 2 and 5,000 moved from level 2 to 3, with a subsequent better chance in the labour market. Progression to higher education has also increased to 52%, compared to 41% in 2006 representing an additional 6,000 extra students entering level 4 courses.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Although this section applies specifically to the Netherlands, it also is relevant to the UK.

There is a substantial amount of best practice in the area of the validation of informal and formal learning (or RPL), but no 'common practice'. The validation of informal learning is being more rapidly developed for people with high skills (university entry systems) and with very low skills (disadvantaged groups) and less developed for individuals with middle range skill levels.

The 'Scouting Gelderland' initiative is centred around a 'portfolio-based model' which is currently being actively promoted by the Kenniscentrum EVC (Dutch Knowledge Centre on the Recognition of Prior Learning). The focus is on individuals – learners, job seekers, volunteers, citizens. This represents a shift from a policy focus on institutions and the relationships between them (governments, social partners, education institutes/private public learning centres) towards one based on individual needs and learning plans.

EVC (Recognition of Prior Learning – RPL in the UK) is increasingly used in the Netherlands as an important instrument to facilitate lifelong learning or gain a qualification for the labour market. Currently, there are initiatives to link informal and formal education through the recognition of acquired competencies through the Netherlands National Qualifications Framework (NLQF) and finally to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). In the UK the QCF (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) has the facility to include RPL but as yet there has been limited use of it.

A portfolio method is used in the Netherlands: the candidates give extensive information on their personal data, the educational and training programmes they have taken, paid and unpaid working experience in the Netherlands and abroad, knowledge of languages, IT experience, activities carried out in the family, with friends or as a hobby. This information is used to formulate and implement a personal development plan.





An agenda for social media and skills development

An Associated Press report (March 2011) illustrated the growing number of businesses and organisations of all sizes who are searching for ways to tap the power of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, which millions of people now use to stay connected online.

Experts say companies' need for social media expertise has increased dramatically in 2011 and will continue to grow as more people come to understand and recognise its value. Potentially that means an explosion of job opportunities; it is unclear exactly how many social media-related jobs exist, but companies want their messages to get to where the people are. For example, Facebook created in 2004, has more than 500 million users throughout the world. It is not only young people who are drawn to; the number of Internet users aged 55 to 64 on Facebook has grown 88% in the past year, (study by the Pew Center's Internet and American Life Project). Initiatives on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social channels are now producing soft and hard ROI (returns on investment) by major brands, which are leading to new jobs across the global business environment.

Using social media is different to other types of marketing. In a conventional campaign, the staff may spend months planning the project, launch it and move on. With social media, the real work begins after the launch as someone has to keep track of how people react to the campaign, then respond to their comments and change course if needed.

However, the social media field is still in its early stages, similar to the late 1990s with respect to the Web. At that time, companies realised they needed a new set of skills that they historically had not valued or needed; they went out seeking those skills, but at the time, many did not know what they did not know. Skill sets might require an individual who can hire someone capable of creating an overall digital strategy and employing a variety of online tools, or simply someone who could monitor and respond to public comments on Facebook, Twitter and other social media websites.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) carried out research to ensure that it communicates effectively now and in the future with its target audiences in the face of changing technology. It will shape how SDS's services can be accessed in the future. The research was carried out among 16 to 19 year old people attending Get Ready for Work programmes across Scotland. Technology skills will be increasingly important in the jobs of tomorrow and the research illustrates the ease with which young people are harnessing the potential of the communications technologies available to them – just the skills needed to meet the demands of future jobs and industries.

The Generation Y, who may be as young as 5, are connected, see TV as background noise, worry what their friends think and use the internet as the main way to communicate and seek information. Teachers have to be as competent in emerging technologies to be credible with young people, and embrace a new pedagogy as facilitators in a global learning environment - recognised when engaging young people and raising aspirations. Yet they have to be adaptable and flexible to ensure they relate to the learning needs of older adults.

Research by Skills Development Scotland in 2010 demonstrated that more than half of Scotland's 16-19 year olds send text messages every hour, and a third send more than 100 a day. The same study into 16-19 year olds' use of technology also found that almost half never used email, with most preferring to communicate using their mobile phones or via social media such as Bebo.



Figure 5 illustrates the key connections for those using social media. At the heart is the facilitator who may be a recognised ‘teacher’ or may be another social media user. This also illustrates the key components that need to be in place to encourage social mobility for young people and adults alike.



Figure 5: Key connetions for those using social media





Bringing it all together.....

Social inclusion and social mobility depends on people, regardless of their age, having the right skills and competences, opportunities to use and develop them both to gain confidence and self-esteem personally and at work in order to contribute to a better society as well as improve competitiveness and productivity.

Social inclusion and social mobility also depends on the individual's ability to transfer those skills and competences to new situations and to be able to communicate in a way which suits individual circumstances and aspirations.

Developing ways to encourage and promote social mobility at the heart of a nation's or community's development has an important bearing on individual health and wellbeing.

Effective VET systems hold the key to developing skills and competencies, to raising levels of aspiration and meeting the changing needs of the job market, so improving health, wellbeing and social mobility.

This approach lies at the heart of the current project between the AoC and MBO Raad; through it we wish to contribute in a small way to the future development of skills in Europe.



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Contact us

Association of Colleges

Heidi Roberts
Project Manager
2-5 Stedham Place
London WC1A 1HU
UK
T: 0044 020 7034 9900
E: heidi_roberts@aoc-create.co.uk
W: www.aoc.co.uk

MBO Raad

Manfred Polzin
Senior Policy Advisor
Houttuinlaan 6,
3447 GM Woerden
Netherlands
T: 0031 0348-75 35 00
E: M.Polzin@mboraad.nl
W: www.mboraad.nl