

# Inclusive lifelong learning policies in Europe - status quo, risks and opportunities

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**die**

German Institute for  
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Leibniz Centre for  
Lifelong Learning

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- ➔ How inclusive are the national, institutional LLL policies and practices currently, what is the **status quo**?
- ➔ What potential **risks** do you foresee in the coming years that could jeopardize greater inclusion in LLL in the next 10 years?
- ➔ What **opportunities**, leverage points do you see to promote inclusion in LLL the next 10 years?



- ➔ LLL formula seems to be for the educational sector the equivalent of globalization for the economic sector:
  - ➔ it blurs existing boundaries
  - ➔ erodes the responsibility of the state
  - ➔ challenges individuals in their life course
  - ➔ and creates risks and opportunities



- ➔ LLL policies and practices vary considerably across countries.
- ➔ They are embedded in characteristic regimes of economic and social institutions (education and training systems, labour market institutions, production systems, and welfare state arrangements).
- ➔ The influence of inter-, supra- or transnational actors (EU, OECD, UNESCO) in this field is remarkable. Even though education policies are under the jurisdiction of individual countries, significant drivers for policy reforms evolve at the European and international level.
- ➔ Country-specific institutional arrangements have a decisive effect on how inclusive a country's LLL policies and practices are and can yield strikingly different outcomes both in terms of provision, access and participation in LLL, and also in terms of political reforms.

[For Europe see European Parliament | Lifelong learning \(europa.eu\)](#)

1

Is LLL provision accessible (and affordable) to a growing number of people?\*

2

Have policies been implemented to widen participation and social inclusion and reduce inequalities in, and barriers to, access in LLL?

Define criteria and develop indicators by asking questions like...

3

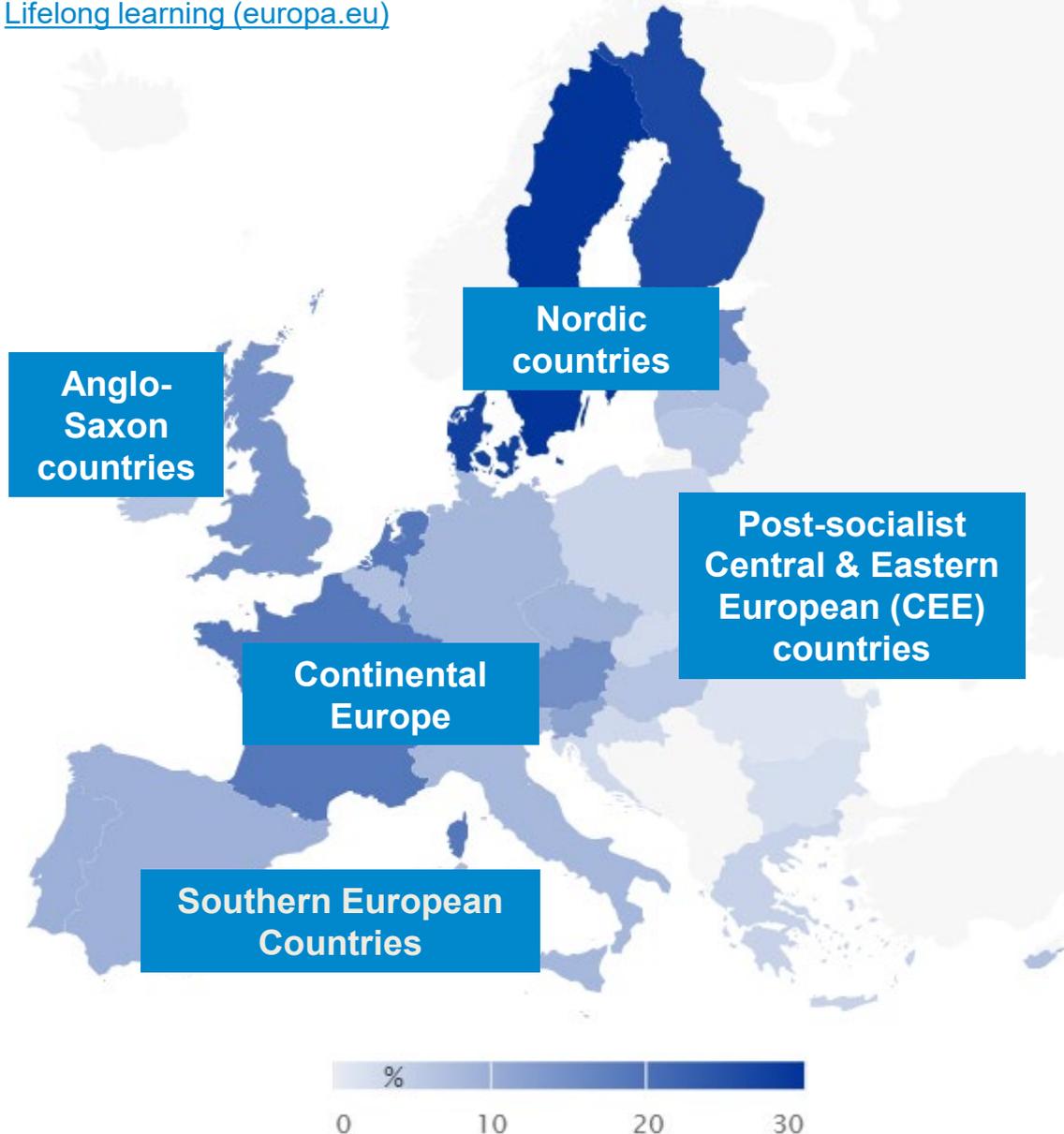
Do LLL policies enable personal progression over the life span?

Focus on Q1:

\*A good indicator is to *measure participation in LLL* and find out who participates and who doesn't and why. Available data by international and national surveys: PIAAC; EU-Adult Education Survey; National Adult Education Surveys

# What is the evidence?

Participation in training 25-64 yrs old [European Parliament | Lifelong learning \(europa.eu\)](#)



Typical clusters of participation patterns in relation to country-specific institutional arrangements, e.g. education and training system, labour market institutions & welfare state regimes

(Rubenson & Desjadins 2009; Boeren et al. 2010)

Even if participation rates vary widely across countries, a common feature is that it remains unequally distributed.

(Blossfeld et al. 2020; Lee 2018)

- ➔ Research has established that initial educational inequalities perpetuate over the life span. This effect is often referred to as the *cumulative advantage/disadvantage hypothesis* (O'Rand & Henretta, 1999) or as the *Matthew effect*.
- ➔ Initial education attainment has the highest predictive power followed by employment status. The highly educated are more likely to participate in LLL. Participation is especially low amongst those most in need: the low educated and low-skilled, the unemployed, non-standard (temporary and/or part-time) workers, those whose jobs are at high risk of automation.
- ➔ For example, workers in fully automatable jobs were found to be four times less likely to have participated in job-related training over the 12 months prior to the survey than workers in non-automatable jobs. (Nedelkoska & Quintini, 2018)

- ➔ Scholarship focuses either
  - (a) on individual determinants or
  - (b) on system-level characteristics or
  - (c) on the interaction between different levels (micro-, meso- and macro-level) that shape participation in adult learning (Boeren, Nicaise, & Baert, 2010)
  
- ➔ Participation in AET is the result of the interplay between individual agency and structural conditions; individual educational choices are constrained by institutions (Rubenson and Desjardins, 2009)
  
- ➔ Barriers to participation can be situational, dispositional and institutional (Cross, 1981). Specific policies can help to overcome situational (related to a person's life situation at a given point in the family and working life cycle) and institutional (practices and procedures that discourage or prevent participation) barriers and enhance inclusiveness

- ➔ **Inequality in access to LLL opportunities:** low-skilled and low-qualified people tend to be deadlocked in a vicious circle of limited resources (due to social origins), bad jobs, and insufficient training and learning opportunities in these jobs.
- ➔ **The skill orientation of the economy** (high vs low skills equilibrium economies) can also perpetuate educational inequalities. Several studies demonstrate a strong link between the skill orientation of the economy and the extent and distribution of adult learning opportunities (Desjardins, 2017)
- ➔ **Gradual withdrawal of state support** (regulatory efforts and budget allocation to ALE) even in countries with strong tradition of publicly funded ALE due to austerity policies and economic stagnation (also due to Covid-19)
- ➔ **Strong focus on skills and employability** and the dominance of economic rationality can side-line other functions of LLL (aiming to promote democratic citizenship, emancipation, active ageing etc.) and inclusiveness

- ➔ Evidence-based policy reform:
  - ➔ Evidence on both monetary and non-monetary (in terms of well-being, active ageing and civic engagement) outcomes of participation in LLL (Bynner et al. 2003; Schrader et al. 2020)
  - ➔ Evidence on specific institutional features that support inclusive LLL systems (financial and non-financial incentives, active labour market measures, open and flexible education and training systems, skills recognition system, programmes targeting the most vulnerable groups, childcare and family assistance) (Desjardins 2017; Desjardins and Ioannidou 2020)
- ➔ HEI implement LLL strategies and open to nontraditional students (Social inclusion policies in higher education  
[https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC117257/jrc\\_117257\\_social\\_inclusion\\_policies\\_in\\_higher\\_education\\_evidence\\_from\\_the\\_eu.pdf](https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC117257/jrc_117257_social_inclusion_policies_in_higher_education_evidence_from_the_eu.pdf); European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning  
<https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/european%20universities%20charter%20on%20lifelong%20learning%202008.pdf>)
- ➔ Digitalisation as a double-edged sword
- ➔ Peer learning through international cooperation and knowledge transfer
- ➔ Interconnectedness of LLL policies to other policy areas

LLL as an instrument for acquiring knowledge, skills and competences

**Educational Policies**



LLL as an instrument for guaranteeing skills and employability

**Labour Market Policies**



LLL as an instrument for pursuing innovation, competitiveness and economic growth

**Economic Policies**



LLL as an instrument for maintaining social cohesion and social security

**Welfare State Policies**



# Time for your questions...

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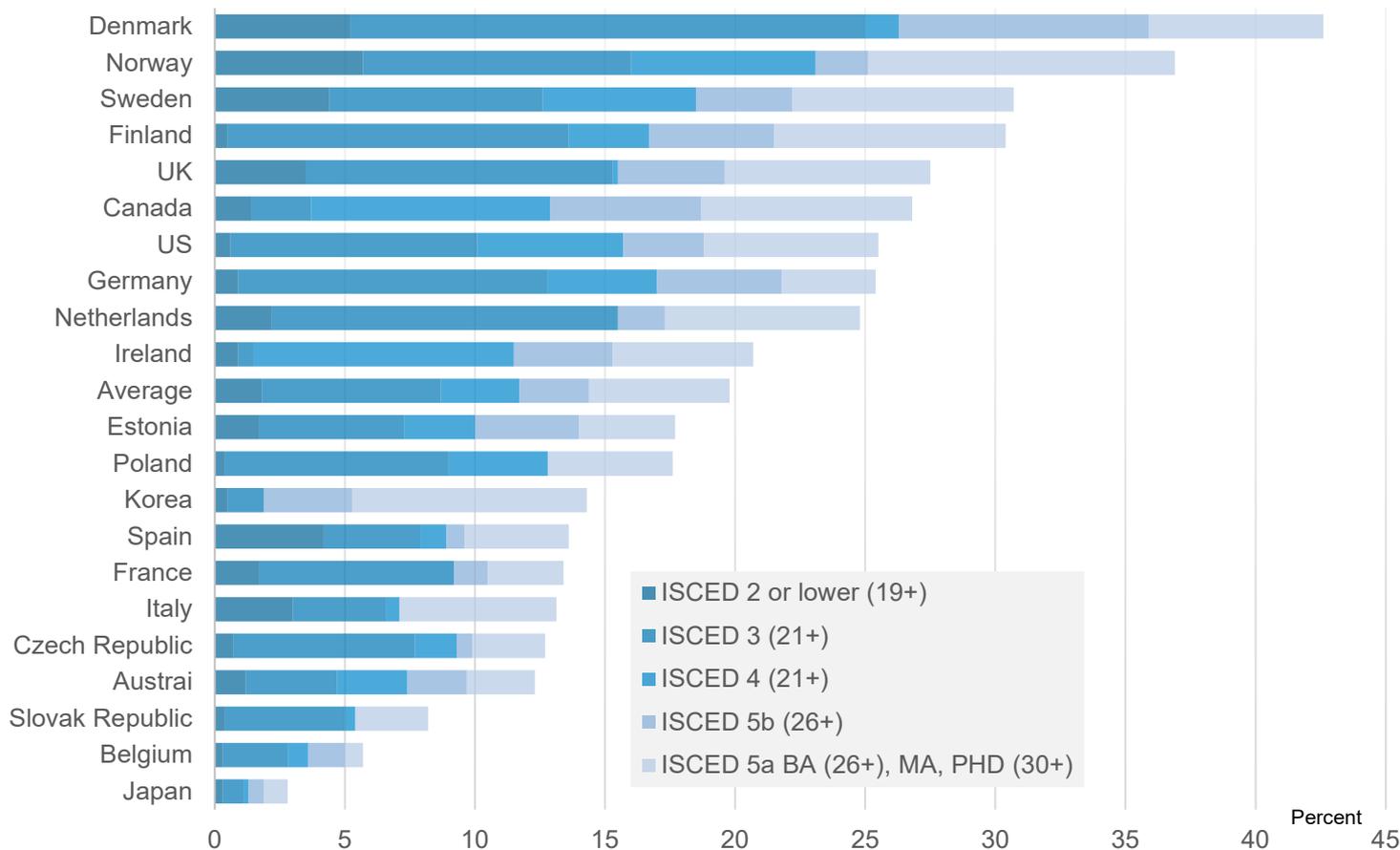
Ministry of Culture and Science  
of the German State  
of North Rhine-Westphalia



Federal Ministry  
of Education  
and Research



➔ Some countries have more open and flexible formal education structures than others



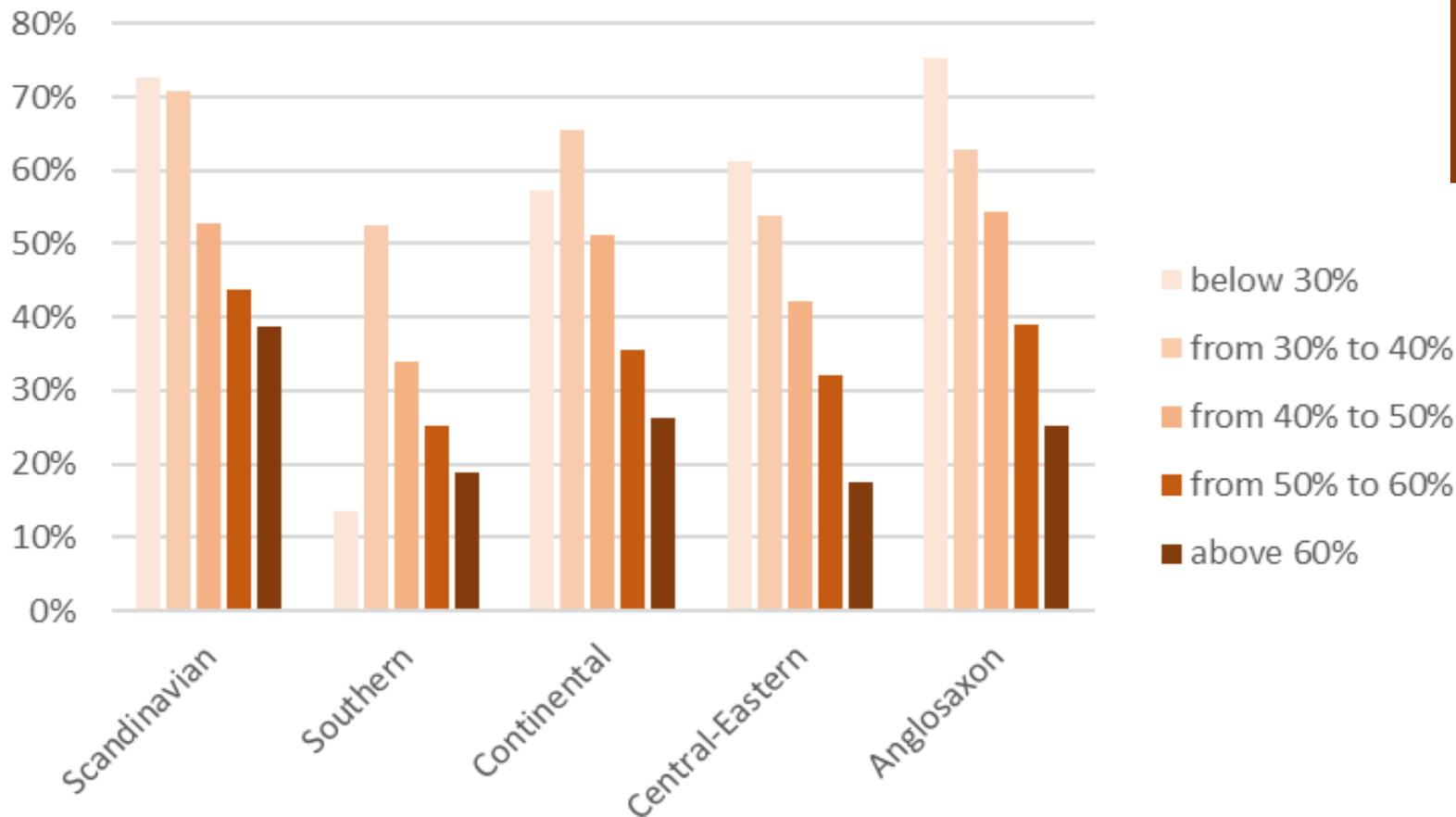
Percent of adults who attained their highest qualification as non-traditional students

Desjardins & Ioannidou 2020

Note: Non-traditional students are defined as adults who completed: ISCED 2 or lower at age 19 or older; ISCED 3 or 4 at age 21 or older; ISCED 5b or 5A (BA) at 26 or older; and, ISCED 5a (MA or PhD) at age 30 or older.

Participation in job-related AET tends to fall as the risk of job automation increases across all welfare regimes. Low skilled workers, who are facing a higher risk of automatable tasks on their jobs, are less likely to participate in AET. Nevertheless, the type of the welfare regime seems to play a role (Ioannidou & Parma forthcoming).

Job-related AET participation by risk of automation and welfare regime type



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