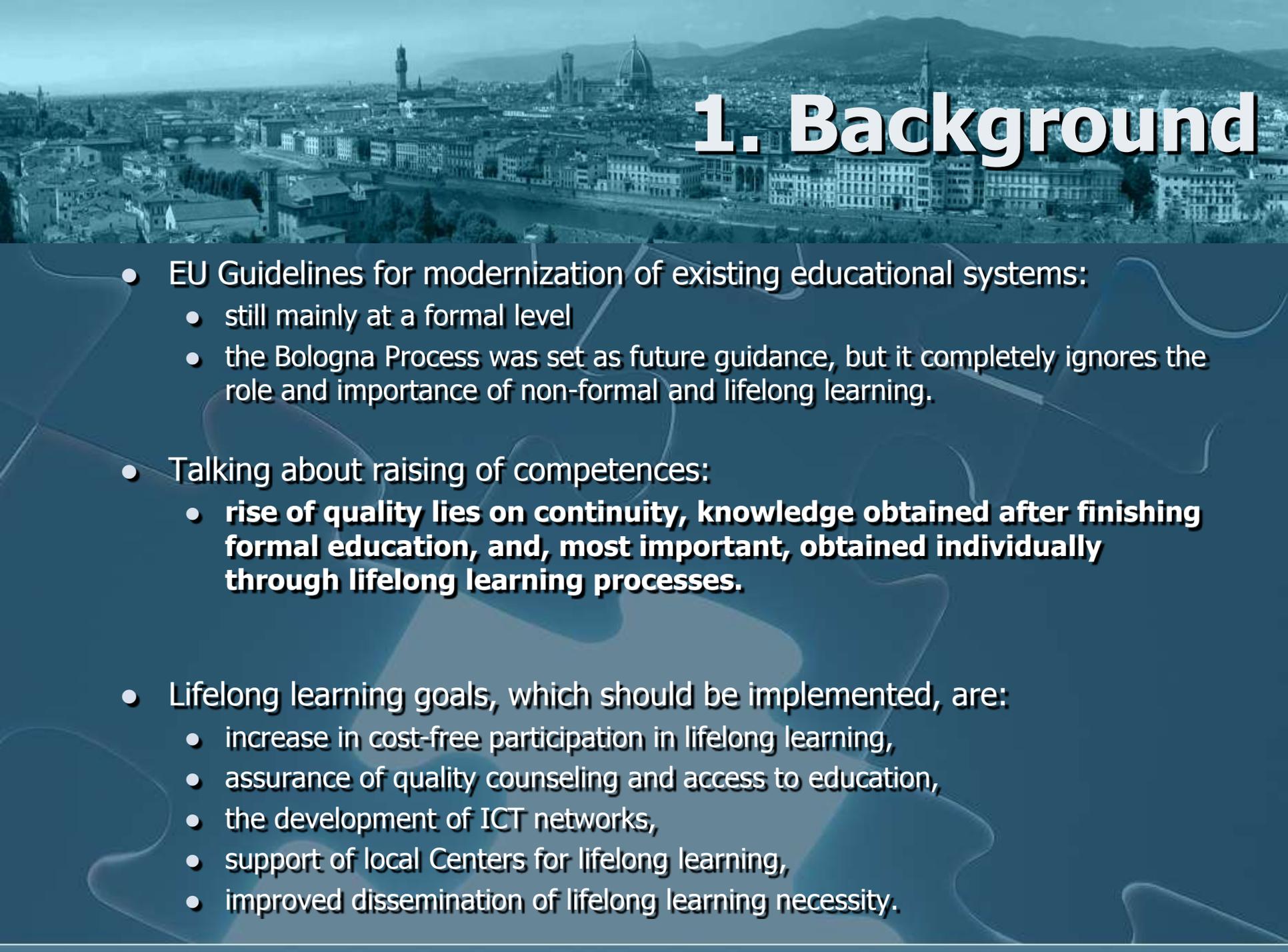


Future of Education
Florence, June 2011

Adult Education in 21st Century

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1. Background

- EU Guidelines for modernization of existing educational systems:
 - still mainly at a formal level
 - the Bologna Process was set as future guidance, but it completely ignores the role and importance of non-formal and lifelong learning.
- Talking about raising of competences:
 - **rise of quality lies on continuity, knowledge obtained after finishing formal education, and, most important, obtained individually through lifelong learning processes.**
- Lifelong learning goals, which should be implemented, are:
 - increase in cost-free participation in lifelong learning,
 - assurance of quality counseling and access to education,
 - the development of ICT networks,
 - support of local Centers for lifelong learning,
 - improved dissemination of lifelong learning necessity.



1. Background

Education of adults in the future will depend on **3 interconnected layers:**

- **Modern didactics with ICT support** – to transform modernization into realization;
- **Necessity of lifelong learning** – wide range of non-formal educational programs with methods of evaluation and validation;
- **Open-source Availability**– strict distinction between formal and non-formal education with stressed advantage of free non-formal education.

1.1 Reference background

- Since 2008 and its opening at Public University of Ptuj, a *Centre for lifelong learning* is established, which offers free participation in non-formal educational programs.
- With *CLL* we increased the access to lifelong learning by providing information and advice on various opportunities in education and career counseling.
- Necessity: verification of non-formal knowledge and the evaluation of it by the qualified person.
- At least in Slovenia we have not yet developed a system for verification of non-formally acquired skills, therefore this knowledge is not appreciated by potential employers and, hence, not appreciated by potential participants.
- From this perspective, we decided to upgrade the existing electronic support system with a project called EU-RATIO.

2. Main idea – web platform EU-RATIO©

- UNESCO commission on education for the 21st century deals with the global situation and predicts that the information revolution of the 20th century will be followed by the “revolution of the mind” which will raise education to the top social priorities.
- What we need, obviously, is *promotion* of this revolution of the mind - but on all levels. This change will affect everybody, not only those temporarily participating in formal education.
- Therefore, we wish to develop the EU-RATIO education platform which will promote this revolution of the mind and offer a new perspective on e-learning.
- The platform will offer a *web portal with web applications* which will cover all areas of e-learning thus developing high-quality tool for the comprehensive work of participants in adult education.

2. Main idea – web platform EU-RATIO©

Learning portal:

- Lectures with virtual classrooms,
- Exercises, quizzes or non-formal testing of knowledge,
- Formal system of validation of obtained knowledge implemented by the certified institutions.

a) *easy upgrade* with new contents,

b) *clear insight* over sustainability of results

c) could be offered as *complete educational platform* to each and every interested organization.

d) *networking possibilities* - classroom is allocated to mentor as a virtual tool for supervision over contents, used didactical methods, modern ways of communication and networking for infinite period of time.



Figure 1. Entry Point of EU-RATIO platform

2. Main idea – web platform EU-RATIO©

With the **new platform** for e-learning EU-RATIO we wish to meet the following requirements:

- *Keep it simple.*
- *What you see is what you need.*
- *Stop the setup.*
- *User-friendly.*
- *Free for all.*

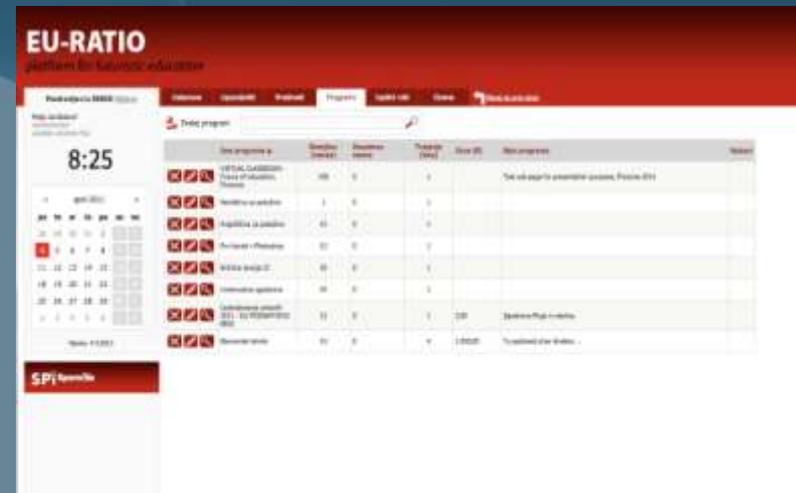


Figure 2. Screenshot of EU-RATIO platform

2.1 Advantages of EU-RATIO:

- 24 hour support for non-formal education with on-line classrooms, contents and methodologies that will enable better and more enjoyable learning
- the possibility of formal verification of non-formal learning
- development of educational social networks,
- sharing knowledge, experiences, problems and solutions
- participants developing human contacts - the added value of this social networking is cooperation between people in European countries

3. Added value – Teacher of the Future – SilentMentor©

- When offered transparable application with possibilities of usage during entire professional period, we are offering teachers completely new methods of educational thinking:
 - not only is participation in educational platform beneficiary for them, it is beneficiary for potential participants and actual employers too.
- Bridging professional methods with new didactical approaches in non-formal education would be most effective if those two methods would actually be complementary – if teachers of the future would have the ability, necessity and understanding of importance of supplementary ways of education (distant learning).

3. Added value – Teacher of the Future – SilentMentor©

- Teachers must turn towards participants, not towards theoretical knowledge
- Spin of direction – new methodical and didactical approaches
- Participants learn for themselves - teachers obtain levels of specialization as mentors
- Raising self-esteem of both parties: participants advance much faster while teachers effectively combine praxis and theory and also raise their competences with participation at in-service training mobility

4. Summary for 2020

*"Adult learning is a central task for the 21st Century – vital to enabling people to make the most of their lives and jobs and therefore an essential element in the Union's EU2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth."
(M.J. Rodriguez, special advisor to the EU Commission)*

- The general purpose is simple: to unify the ICT system of non-formal education offer all across Europe.
- The platform enables the exchange of innovative good practice from the cooperating countries.
- We hope to set an example of developing innovative ICT contents: it enables **new access** to work with participants in non-formal types of learning; it **raises** the level of ICT literacy, **encourages** the participants to an active collaboration and enables **rise of competences** – through acknowledgement of non-formal knowledge.



5. Conclusion

- Web platforms that allow users participation in virtual classrooms over distance, we must be honest, do exist. But their common problem is that for the user they are completely unusable.
- Those pioneer attempts represent more measures we must avoid than the steps we must take in the future.
- **If average ICT user can find his ways around Google, Facebook and Gmail, then *those* platforms should be our models.**



5. Conclusion

- **Essence of development of adult education lies in development and implementation of non-formal educational programs, supporting development and rise of competences and knowledge for successful appearance on labor market and active citizenship.**
 - implementation of non-formal educational programs for learning over distance with possibility of validation
 - implementation of sustainable development programs to raise the general competence of the EU population
 - implementation of programs for personal/professional competences (art, philosophy, religion)
 - educational system as a social educational network for raising social and language skills, cultural awareness and to encourage mobility



5. Conclusion

- Creating recommendations and discuss theoretical systems which would transform and enable modern support for adult education, which is still in the shadow of traditional formal education, seems like easier part of the task.
- But translated into practice it turns out to be extremely difficult, because it meets three problems, where the future of adult education fractures:
 - time flexibility: access anywhere, anytime (when and where I need it)
 - usability - the concrete results: validation of knowledge (exactly what I need)
 - free educational offer: common EU platform as an entry base for non-formal educational programs (LLP) - the expansion and implementation of new programs



5. Conclusion

Suggested model for raising the general level of adult education:

- rapid adaptation of educational services will respond to market needs much faster
- knowledge of the local environment is giving Adult Education Centers access to the needs of this environment
- future educational methodologies will be based on online classrooms and multimedia didactic tools, which is the essence of adult education in the 21st Century
- the experience of drawing funds from various EU calls



FUTURE OF EDUCATION,

Florence, 16th and 17th of June 2011

Thank you for your kind attention.

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