

Qualitative Data Analysis Report

Analysis of the BeLL interviews in 10 countries: overall report

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Benefits of Lifelong Learning (BeLL)

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Introduction

This report gives an overview of the qualitative analysis of 82 interviews that were conducted with participants of liberal adult education in ten countries within the framework of the European BeLL study.

The interviews were analysed by the national research teams in the ten partner countries. This overall report is based on those national qualitative reports. It follows the same structure as the national reports and uses statements from all countries to exemplify the results.

The aim of the qualitative interview analysis is to illustrate and complement the results of the statistical analyses. They are aimed to

- illustrate and complement the results of the statistical analyses with respect to the benefits and their individual dimension (i.e. change of attitudes, self-concept, learning biography, behaviour) and social dimension (i.e. family life, social networks);
- find out whether, and if so how, participants of liberal education courses reflect on their learning experience, whether they are aware of any benefits and able to name them;
- explore possible connections between the benefits and find observable external benefit criteria;
- explore the extent to which the emergence and development of benefits depend on course-related aspects such as the teacher (personality, expertise, and teaching approaches), the group, the teaching methods, and so on, as expressed by interviewees based on their experiences;
- identify ways in which benefits of liberal adult education, according to learners, emerge and develop in real-life and biographical contexts, and ways in which they interrelate with them.

To answer these questions, we analysed what participants report about their participation in liberal adult education courses, about their experiences in liberal adult education courses and about the impact that participation has on their lives. We want to know how participation in liberal adult education affects and changes participants' attitudes, self-concepts, learning biographies, and their learning behaviour as well as their everyday lives, and how participants do assess this. This approach allows us to find out if and how participants of liberal adult education courses reflect on their learning experience, if they are aware of any benefits and able to name them, how they explain or justify the efforts they undertake as learners and how they define the role adult education plays in their real life contexts. Moreover, this approach allows for drawing conclusions and hypotheses with regard to possible effects of personal benefits on social environments based on participants' reports.

Additionally, the researches paid attention to country-specific aspects that appear to have an impact on the ways in which participants experience and report benefits of learning. Among the research questions that have been formulated in the course of the research, this is not the core one since BeLL cannot aim at comparing national education systems. However, awareness of national characteristics is needed to assure an adequate interpretation of the results. These aspects are discussed in the national reports and in likewise in the overall report and taken into consideration here where appropriate.



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In the context of the qualitative research report, as in the whole BeLL study, we operationalise 'benefits' as effects and changes for the better in participants' attitudes, self-concepts, learning biographies and learning behaviour as well as their everyday lives AND, through this, their social environment (real-life contexts).

Below these domains we address the benefit categories that have been developed in the theoretical parts of the study and applied in the quantitative part of the analysis. However, the qualitative part of the analysis illustrates and differentiates the quantitative parts of the study, and it helps to identify ways in which benefits of liberal adult education emerge and develop in real-life contexts, and ways in which they interrelate with them. Through this, the qualitative part of the study also helps to identify hypotheses and research questions for further research.

However, on the basis of the qualitative report, we do not attempt to identify different factors that impinge on changes in real-life contexts apart from or accompanying participation. Moreover, we do not seek to trace back the development of benefits in learning processes as such. Findings in this respect would be very interesting but have to be reserved for further research. Nonetheless, we will present findings on relevant factors for the development of benefits throughout reported experiences from adult education courses, such as the learning relationships of participants with teachers and fellow learners as well as personal, thematic learning interests. They also allow for interpretations on the relationships between single benefits categories and for participants' attitudes towards liberal adult education and participation.

Chapter 2 of this report gives a summary of the methodological approach used to analyse the interviews. Chapter 3 presents the results for all benefit categories. The remaining chapters give insight into specific issues in connection with the analysis of benefits: most important benefits (chap. 4), external, observable criteria of benefits (chap. 5), development of benefits within the course context (chap. 6), and relationships between benefits (chap. 7). Finally, chapter 8 presents some conclusions of the qualitative BeLL research.

The interview guidelines and the code list are available in the appendix, as well as the national case schemes, which give more information about the national samples. All quotes in this report can be identified by country and case. GER_A, for example, refers to case A from the German sample. The case scheme in the appendix gives basic information on the respective interviewee.



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1. Methodology

This report presents the findings of the *qualitative* component of BeLL that consists of a series of semi-structured interviews with women and men of various age groups and educational levels in all the partner countries of the project, who attended adult learning courses in the recent past. They were asked to reflect upon their learning experience, their reasons why they engage in adult learning activities, the benefits (if any) they draw from these activities, and more generally on how they see the role of adult education in their everyday life.

Research design

The qualitative component of BeLL is to be understood in the context of an overall sequential (quantitative followed by qualitative) mixed-methods research design (Kelle 2006: 08) consisting of a large-scale survey in each of the ten partner countries¹ of the project, and a subsequent series of 82 qualitative interviews with selected respondents of the survey. The rationale behind the qualitative component of the study was to provide more in-depth and more contextualised insights into how people perceive the outcomes and benefits (*effects and changes*) of participating in adult learning courses. Whereas the survey provided information about the *degree* to which adult learning courses are seen as beneficial and relevant by the participating population, the qualitative interviews provide “rich” information about what such courses actually *mean* to them, how the courses in which they participated fitted into their life history, what (precise and specific) reasons led them to participating and how the benefits developed etc. In terms of research strategy, the qualitative interviews aimed at *complementing* the survey data by rich and unstandardised data and thereby obtaining an overall richer and more accurate picture of the participants in adult learning courses²). Incidentally, the interviews also allowed to grasp *culturally different understandings* of adult learning. This is particularly useful in the context of a comparative study that covers countries where adult learning has very different histories and traditions.

The interview data are analytically treated as one single data body that is analysed transversally along a set of common dimensions.

Data collection

The qualitative part of BeLL (Workpackage 5, WP 5) was carried out in all ten partner countries *after* the survey. Besides a series of closed survey questions, the survey questionnaire also contained three open questions, two of which asking to name outcomes and benefits (*effects and changes*) and one asking the respondents to describe the outcomes and effects (immediate or long term) of their course participation. The third open question asked the respondents to give examples to illustrate the development of their benefits in relation to certain course related aspects like trainer, methods or group. The results were pre-

¹ Czech Republic, England, Finland, Germany, Italy, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland.

² In Hammersley's terminology, we can say that we applied a strategy of “triangulation as validity-checking” and “triangulation as seeking complementary information” (Hammersley 2008).



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analysed (themes and frequency tables). On this basis, we then developed the interview questions and, subsequently, adapted the code system for the qualitative analysis of the interviews (cf. below).³

The survey questionnaire included a question asking whether the respondent would be willing to be contacted for a longer interview at some later point. Of the total 8'646 respondents to the national surveys, 27 per cent accepted to be contacted. Of these, 82 people were finally interviewed some months after the survey (8 respondents per country, except for Spain where 10 people were recruited for an interview). The national research teams were given the instruction to purposefully select a group of respondents that reflected the diversity of their national sample, namely in terms of gender, age, level of education and the number of courses that the person had taken in the 12 months preceding the survey⁴. The different national teams made slightly different choices, however the overall resulting sample of interviewees was overall quite similar in structure to the national survey samples, especially in terms of gender (about two-thirds women) and age (c.f. appendix). Compared to the survey sample, the qualitative sample had a higher proportion of "active" learners (i.e. people who had attended more than one adult learning course over the 12 months preceding the survey) and a somewhat lower proportion of respondents with low professional qualifications (see below for details).

The final composition of the group of interviewees was not completely under the control of the research teams, as many of the respondents to the survey who had stated their readiness to be interviewed finally did not make themselves available after all (some did not respond at all to the e-mail inviting them for an interview, whereas others declined the invitation). In some countries (Germany for example), finding enough interviewees was a real challenge. In other countries (Switzerland for example) finding a sufficient number of respondents was not a problem, but certain categories of potential respondents were particularly hard to mobilise⁵. Where a purposive sampling strategy was not entirely successful, the national teams pragmatically resorted to a strategy of opportunistic sampling⁶

The interviews were done in the months following the survey, either face-to-face or over the phone, and lasted between 20 and 45 minutes. All interviews were audio-taped.

The topic guide for the thematic interviews was developed through a collaborative process under the responsibility of the work package leader: the latter developed a first version of the interview guide, then discussed it with selected partners first, before submitting a draft version to all national teams for feedback (via google groups). On the basis of the feedback from all partners, the work package leader then finalised the definitive topic guide, which each national team translated back to their national language(s). In parallel with this consultative process, the leader of the qualitative work package also pre-tested a version of the topic guide (two pilot interviews in Switzerland), which led to some minor adjustments of the guide.

³ The open survey questions, their purpose, and construction as well as the results of this part of the study are treated in depth in the context of other parts of reports on the BeLL study.

⁴ Our overall sampling strategy could be described as a purposive sampling (Luborsky & Rubinstein 1995; see also Elam et al. 2003).

⁵ In Switzerland for example, *young* people did not react to our mails.

⁶ Opportunistic in the sense of taking the opportunities that arise (e.g. interviewing the respondents willing to respond) (see also Ritchie & Lewis & Elam 2003 and Luborsky & Rubinstein 1995).



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The final topic guide had the following structure: a first introductory section in which the interviewee was asked about his/her participation in adult learning courses over the 12 months preceding the interview (what courses, why, in what professional context etc.). In the second section the respondents were asked to elaborate on the benefits they thought they gained in participating in these courses (personal, but also career related benefits, social networks etc.). In the third section the respondents were then invited to speak about how these benefits “came about”, e.g. what elements contributed to making these courses beneficial to them (such as: the quality of the trainer, the learning methods, the other participants, etc.). In the final part of the interview, the respondents were asked to reflect more synthetically on their experiences (their overall assessment of their learning experience etc.). The topic guide contained the complete set of benefits from the survey - that is, the benefits mentioned in the survey questionnaire as well as additional benefits that were found in the analysis of the open questions (see appendix for the full topic guide).

The interviews followed the logic of the *semi-structured* interview (Arksey & Knight 1999): the topic guide served as a general guideline, but the question wording and sequence could be handled flexibly by the interviewers. Additional questions could be asked as necessary. More generally, the interviewer had a leeway to add or reformulate questions, or drop questions (if an answer had already been provided spontaneously, for instance). Overall the interviewers mostly respected the general structure of the interview guide.

All interviews were carried out and fully transcribed by the members of the national teams in the national language(s) of each country⁷. Subsequently, selected extracts of the interview materials were translated into English (see next section).

The resulting data body comprises approximately 1200 pages of interview transcripts (between 10 and 20 pages per interview).

Research ethics

All interviewees gave their explicit consent to being interviewed and to being audio-recorded. They were informed of the context of the study and the use that would be made of their data.

The interview data were anonymised in such a way as to make sure neither the respondents themselves nor other people they are referring to in the interview (such as trainers, adult learning institutions, etc.) cannot be identified. The interview transcripts contain no information allowing to link back the interview data to the survey responses of the interviewee.

To further preserve the anonymity of the interviewees, the list with the full demographic characteristics of our interviewees (such as place of residence, name of course providers, employment status, etc.) is *not* integrated to the present report. Only a simplified list is added to the report itself.

Data analysis

The interview data were analysed on the basis of a systematic coding, following the approach suggested by Saldaña (2012). This type of analysis consists of a systematic coding (breaking down) of data according to

⁷ In Switzerland, interviews were done in German.



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a *code* list (or code system⁸), in such a way as to identify (practically and theoretically) relevant patterns. The coded segments are then grouped and synthesised 'up' into (more general) *categories*, which in turn get linked to more general *themes* and (theoretical) *concepts*.

Code system and test coding

The analysis was carried out stage-wise, using a combination of deductive and inductive coding (also called "hybrid" coding, cf. Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006). The *code system* (and the categories and themes that were developed on the basis of the coding process) was developed gradually and collaboratively. The *concepts* (*the benefit categories named above that were used, operationalised and expanded in the BeLL study*)⁹ to which the codes, categories and themes finally were linked were given from the start and developed on theoretical grounds (cf. overall final report).

The final code system had the following (main) categories (cf. Appendix 2 for the full code system):

- **Benefits**
- **Development of benefits**
- **Relationships between benefits**
- **Reasons for participation**
- **External criteria.**

Each of these categories had a number of subcategories and codes¹⁰. The most important categories were "benefits", "development of benefits" and "relationship between benefits". The categories "reasons for participation" and "external criteria" were less central and served the purpose of collection additional information that could help interpreting the information coded under the main three categories.

This code system was taken from the qualitative analysis of open survey questions and further developed in a stage-wise collaborative process, in the form of various (virtual or real) workshops whose aims were to test for the applicability, common understanding and adequacy of the code system.

The starting points were the set of concepts that had been developed earlier for the BeLL survey and the set of codes that had been developed through qualitative content analysis of the open questions in the survey (cf. Survey Report and Overall Research Report). The leader of WP5 first instructed all national teams to run a first test coding (with the initial code system) on an interview by the British team. She collected all test codings, discussed the outcome in a small working group¹¹ that identified a series of

⁸ Codes, in Saldaña's terminology, are short words or phrases ("tags") that are more general than the coded text segment itself, but that remain *close to the original text*

⁹ Key concepts are for example: Locus of control, self-efficacy, tolerance, trust, social network, sense of purpose in life, civic competence, etc. (see Glossary in the appendix).

¹⁰The category "benefits" for example had 17 subcategories and 80 codes, of which 11 inductive codes.

¹¹ The leader of WP5 and two members of the German and Finnish teams.



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issues to submit to all national teams for discussion¹² (disagreements over the interpretation of certain codes or categories, for instance, or suggestions for the inclusion of new codes, or for the renaming of codes). On this basis, the code system was adjusted and complemented¹³, and guidelines for a second test coding elaborated.

The second test coding was done by all national teams on a second interview done by the British team, plus on two national interviews (in original language)¹⁴. Like for the first test, the coded materials (in English) were collected, issues to be discussed identified by a sub-working group, and then submitted to collective discussion to all national teams. On this basis, the coding system was again adapted¹⁵, and actually more or less "stabilised"¹⁶. It was also decided that the national teams could add additional codes, meant for use on their national data only, in cases where the common code system did not allow to capture some significant specificity of their data¹⁷.

Full coding

On the basis of this second test coding, the guidelines for analysis were again revised (see Appendix). On these grounds, all national teams were then instructed to code *all* their national interviews (in original language). At least two people per national team were involved in this coding: a main coder, and a second coder who systematically counter-checked the coding¹⁸. Disagreements over the coding were discussed between the main and the second coder, and where necessary, submitted to all national teams for collective discussion (via google groups). Where major difficulties arose in the application of the code system, the national teams were asked to translate the "problematic" passages into English and submit them to a collective discussion¹⁹.

Throughout the coding phase (starting with the first test coding), analytic memos and google groups discussions were used to discuss coding divergences and open questions and keep track of assumptions or hints for the interpretation of the data. In each national research team, all codings were carried out by one researcher and counter-checked by a second researcher to assure the robustness and internal validity of the coding. Apart from two research teams who used coding software (Maxqda and Atlas.ti), all other research teams coded their data manually (see coding example in the Appendix).

¹² Many of these discussions took place over google groups; some in person.

¹³ The main changes concerned the codes; the main categories and subcategories remained unchanged.

¹⁴ Interpretation workshop 1, see Appendix xx.

¹⁵ As at the previous stage, the changes concerned the level of *codes* only; the main categories and subcategories remained unchanged.

¹⁶ Only very minor changes were made to the code system after that.

¹⁷ The elements coded with country-specific codes only are not reported in this report, but only in the national qualitative reports.

¹⁸ The data were not double-coded.

¹⁹ Most issues could be resolved without modifying the code system as such.



Throughout the process, the team leader of the qualitative workpackage (in co-operation with the project leader) of the project provided the national teams with standardised supporting materials, namely (see attachment):

- Analysis guidelines for each of the three interpretation workshops
- An each time updated code list (final version s. appendix)
- A glossary with definitions of the pre-defined benefit categories and codes (developed for the survey)
- A template for the selection and translation of interview statements
- A template for the case schemes
- A structure for the qualitative reports on the interview analysis (this overall report adopts the same structure as the national reports).

An external expert was consulted in the process of data analysis, who advised on the staging, management and documentation of the process, and on quality criteria to be kept in mind²⁰.

Reporting of results

The results of the complete analysis of the interview material were reported first in qualitative *country* reports written by the national teams (in English) that were transmitted to the leader of WP5. On the basis of these reports, the key findings were synthesised into the present overall qualitative report. The national reports and the overall report on the interview analysis are structured according to the coding categories.

To make the national data accessible to all team members and to the leader of WP5, each national team was requested to *translate* parts of their data into English. In parallel with the full coding of the national interviews, each team selected approximately 25% of their qualitative data for translation, based on guidelines given by the leader of WP5²¹. The quotes in the present report and in the country reports in English are all drawn from these translated segments materials²². The interview segments that are quoted in this report (and in the preceding national reports) were only slightly edited and “cleaned up”.

Validity, reliability and generalisability

²⁰ Dr Lea Sgier, professor of qualitative research methodology, Central European University, Budapest.

²¹ The national teams were instructed to choose segments of the interviews that contained particularly meaningful statements. For the main category "benefits", they were asked to select all segments that gave a particularly interesting picture of the benefits that were key to the respondent; that illustrated changes in the participant's life particularly well; and that showed a perceivable connection between the benefits and the courses that the participant attended. For the categories "development of benefits" and "relationship among benefits", the instruction was to translate all relevant segments of the interviews.

²² However the *analysis* as such is the result of the analysis of the *full* data material.



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Various procedures were implemented in the course of this qualitative part of BeLL to ensure the validity and reliability (replicability) of our findings and, more generally, the transparency of the whole research process.

Validity (accuracy of observation) was ensured by:

- Providing detailed guidelines to all national teams at all stages of data collection and analysis (topic guide, successive versions of the code system), and writing up;
- Implementing an elaborate collaborative process throughout the research (as described above), and namely at the stage of data analysis. The aim of this process was to ensure that all researchers involved in data analysis would gradually reach a shared understanding of the codes and categories; that diverging interpretations would be explicitly discussed and common solutions sought; and that a common frame would be respected at all times;
- A systematic counter-checking of all (final) codings of the interview data by a second researcher.
- A systematic quality check of the work of the national teams by the leader of WP5²³.

These four procedures have ensured a high degree of consensus over the code system, and a high degree of "stability" and consistency in its application. The fact of having translated one quarter of all interview materials into English further adds to the possibility of checking for the quality of the analysis.

To the extent that *reliability* (replicability) can be assured in a qualitative research²⁴, it is assured by providing extensive insights into the process of data collection and analysis (cf. appendices). The collaborative process put into place to guarantee the validity of our analyses incidentally also support their reliability: our extensive discussions and formal decisions (guidelines etc.) regarding the analysis assures a high degree of "plausibility" and "understandability" of our coding logic not only within the research teams, but also beyond.

When it comes to the *generalisability* of your findings, we can assume that our *qualitative* findings – namely our typology of benefits that people typically draw from participating in adult learning courses – are most likely valid beyond our sample. Our relatively high overall number of interviews (N=82) allowed for the identification of *recurrent* patterns that are theoretically grounded and that "resonate" with the quantitative survey. We have no theoretical reason to assume that the people who accepted to respond to our interviews had qualitatively dramatically different views of the benefits of adult learning. Hence we assume that our results are potentially valid for a wider population of participants in adult learning courses. This remains an assumption though, as findings based on a non representative small-N sample by definition do not allow for inferences.

²³ The request that national teams translate 25% of their interview materials into English also allowed the leader of WP5 to keep a close eye on the outcomes of the analysis of each national team.

²⁴ The fact of working with small-N non-random samples inevitably sets strong limitations on reliability in its "classic" sense of full replicability of results. In qualitative research, the requirement of reliability is therefore to be understood in the softer sense of *process transparency* (cf. Lewis & Ritchie 2003).



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2. Benefits: Overview and Categories

The interview analysis is based on a hybrid approach, combining deductive and inductive coding. Although some codes were added or modified, the benefit categories which were developed in the theoretical part of the study and used in the qualitative part of the survey remained unchanged (see also chapter methodology above). See also the code system in the appendix.

Overview and summary of the results

In all countries, the majority of the subcategories were found in the interviews, albeit some categories were found very frequently – like, for instance, mental health or sense of purpose in life -, while others – like civic competences - were found rarely in most countries.

The following overview considers the whole sample of the 10 countries. National results are pointed out only occasionally, that is when they differ from the whole sample or highlight specific aspects. For more information on country specific aspects see the national sections in the final research report.

Predominant benefits

The following benefit subcategories are the dominant benefits in the international sample:

- Social network
- Mental well-being
- Self-efficacy
- Sense of purpose in life
- Changes in educational experiences
- Work-related benefits
- Skills and competences²⁵

“**Social network**” is clearly a predominant category in all countries and for the majority of the interviewees. The analysis shows different aspects of this benefit, including social contact inside and outside the classroom, socialisation and social integration, making new friends and so on.

‘**Mental well-being**’ and ‘**Physical health**’ are often interconnected and hard to distinguish (for instance when relaxation is mentioned, or work-life balance, coping with illness etc.). In many cases, these two benefits were analysed together, since the connection proved to be strong.

²⁵ The code list and analysis guidelines for the interviews labelled this category as ‘Competences’. The category was renamed in the course of the analysis because ‘Skills and competences’ turned out to be more adequate in both the survey and the interview analysis.



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The same is true of **'Sense of purpose in life'** and **'Self-efficacy'**. Although defined as two distinct concepts, these categories appear as closely interconnected benefit categories in several national interview analyses.

'Changes in educational experience' is a crucial benefit category as well, especially the codes 'Joy of learning', 'Motivation to learn' and 'Sense of achievement'.

In the case of the **benefit category 'Skills and competences'**, the situation is more complex, since the list of potential skills to be acquired in adult education is virtually endless. It was not the aim of BeLL to define a comprehensive, definite list of all the skills to be acquired in adult education, but the analysis nevertheless gives insights into the range of skills pointed out by the course participants. Some of the skills reported by the interviewees are closely related to the course topic, whereas others do not have such an obvious connection with the course topic and are mentioned as a result of individual reflection and interpretation of learning experiences.

Categories that play a minor role in the interviews:

- Locus of control
- Trust
- Physical health / health behaviour
- Tolerance
- Civic and social engagement / civic competence
- Family-related benefits

'Locus of control' and 'Trust' turned out to be the rarest categories. In the case of the other benefit categories playing a minor role, there are some indications that these benefits might be more closely related to the course topics than the benefits that were mentioned more frequently.

Some national reports suggest that these benefits occur predominantly through courses that are explicitly aimed to promote these competences. But there are also examples of interviewees that make connections between other topics and these competences, for example 'Civic engagement': A person might acquire transferable competences - like languages, ICT, communication or the like – for personal or professional purposes and later on find these competences useful in the context of their community engagement. The connection between transversal competences and civic engagement is not necessarily based on past or current experience, it can also be mentioned merely as a future possibility.

The same connection can be found with the other categories – 'Health', 'Tolerance' and 'Family-related benefits' – where we find direct connections with the course topic – sports, cooking, culture, parenting courses etc. – as well as benefits that do not seem to be directly connected with the topic, like an ICT course that enables a person to find information about health or baby care.

Expansion of benefit categories



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As agreed in the consortium, the national research teams were allowed to define additional codes for their national interview analysis, but any new benefit categories that might emerge from national analyses were supposed to be discussed and developed in the international consortium.

One potentially new benefit category was discussed in the consortium early in the research process: Self-development. Since it was decided during the survey development to subsume this benefit under the code 'Self-discovery' (category 'Self-efficacy'), it was not defined as a separate benefit category for the interview analysis either. However, some national qualitative analyses suggest to reconsider this decision since the researchers found it difficult to subsume self-development under 'Self-discovery'.

Apart from the issue mentioned above, no new benefit categories were developed, but the national analyses led to some suggestions for new codes within the benefit categories. These codes are discussed in the national reports but not included here, since they were used in the national analysis only.



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Benefit categories

The following synthesis and interpretation of the national analysis is based on the national qualitative reports and the statements' templates provided by the 10 research teams.

3.1 Sense of purpose in life

Codes:

- New inspiration
- Structure in daily life
- Sense of belonging to a community
- Self fulfilment & joy of doing
- Wider life circles
- (New) hobbies
- Respect

'Sense of purpose in life' is one the central categories found in the interviews. All codes were found, but 'Structure in daily life', 'Sense of belonging to a community', and 'Respect' are mentioned less frequently by interviewees than the other codes in this benefit category.

New inspiration

Participants mention new inspiration quite often and in different contexts, including professional activities or daily life. New inspiration is described either in a concrete, instrumental way or as a general feeling. Participants connect inspiration with the idea of opening up their minds, discovering new ideas and possibilities, stimulation and enrichment, depth, quality of life, or mental challenge. Inspiration is linked to cognitive, emotional, social and practical experiences.

Among other effects, liberal adult learning is reported to be helpful as a source of **inspiration for professional activities** in a general way, described as a sense of increased creativity that has an impact on one's working life, or in a specific way when leading to concrete ideas about how to solve professional problems. In some cases, this is to do with work-life balance. New inspiration with regard to work overlaps with the benefits category work-related benefits in cases where inspiration is perceived as improving job performance.

Examples:

Also, I found the topic for my paper for the professional exam in a training course. (SLO_C)

Swedish plays an important role in my life. Apart from really having an interest in starting to learn this language, it's a good replacement or supplement to what I do in my day job, working on very boring and technical topics. (SWI_D)



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I just think it's nice if you have somewhere else to go for intellectual input other than work. I use my brain a lot, write a lot of designs, so it's a bit of a break if I can do something else but still use my head. Something to give the brain some fresh air. Sometimes that can help you take a step back. (SWI_C)

Another inspirational context described in the interviews is **daily life**. Inspiration is for instance viewed as something that became possible because of specific skills acquired in courses, as for example language skills or ICT skills widen access to the internet or other information sources. Inspiration here means either new ideas or fresh perspectives on old ones.

“We are very pleased about all the things we can discover, and we can find so much information on the Internet, and not only from Romanian sites, since we can understand English too.” (ROM_NV)

“Since I've been photographing, well, been on this course, I look at the newspapers, magazines, images, differently.” (SWI_B)

Other participants point at new inspiration as a **general enrichment of their lives** or as a **challenge to routine**, without connecting this inspiration with specific skills. This idea is often connected with enrichment and quality of life and based on an attitude of progress and discovery.

Examples:

It's enabling me to delve into other areas of knowledge. [...] and to gain experiences. And it's helping me to develop and enrich my life. (GER_C)

So it has actually expanded my horizon. (SWI_A)

Feeling progression towards something positive. (ENG_V)

You think differently, some kind of directions open up, that you want to discover. (SLO_F)

I think that you remain mentally capable or able in other ways to open yourself up to something new or to occupy yourself with different things other than those which you mainly encounter in your working life. Because, at the end of the day, your everyday life is characterised by your job [...]. It's a way of coming face to face with new things for which I otherwise wouldn't have the time. (GER_B)

When new inspiration is described as a generalised experience, it seems to be part of the participants' **identity as learners**. This seems less the case where inspiration is explicitly connected with the skills that were acquired in a course. But in all the cases reported above, new inspiration appears to have a connection with **personal development as an on-going process**.

Structure in daily life

Adult learning courses can help learners create or maintain a structure when work or family routine is no longer provides a framework for daily life, as several interviewees pointed out. This benefit was found predominantly with learners who are **not on the labour market** due to retirement, unemployment, illness or parenting.

The function and importance learners attach to this benefit in their lives differ in many ways. Some typical meanings could be distinguished: The structure that course participation provides can help **preventing chaos, emptiness, boredom or exclusion** in the very pragmatic sense of keeping people busy and part of



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a social context. And it can go beyond the practical issue of structuring days and weeks towards a more **identity-related** purpose in the sense of assuring the regular availability of learning when 'being a learner' is essential to a participant's identity. A third meaning found in the interviews is the connection of **external and internal structure**, when structuring daily life enables the person to recognize and handle their own goals and interests by structuring them alongside the courses.

Examples:

On Mondays I go to a painting class which lasts all day. On Tuesday evenings I have Romanian. On Wednesdays I go walking. On Thursdays I attend a breathing exercise and fitness class and then in the evening I currently go to a painting class at the adult education centre. (GER_A)

Now and then I have to fit in what I do around them. Sometimes I have to say, 'No, I'm not free then because I've got a seminar.' They're definitely a priority. Saying that, my motorbike is my number one priority. [pause] But after my motorbike, the seminars are an immediate second. (GER_A)

Yoga encouraged me to wake up at a really early hour, to have an organised day and to set different, measurable goals. I can relate this to this personal coaching, which was also about finding measurable goals and inner inspiration. (SLO_G)

Sense of belonging to a community

The benefit of belonging to a community shows strong overlaps with benefits coded as 'Social network'. Community-related experiences were rarely coded in the category 'Sense belonging to a community'. The few cases that were coded here point at communities of **people with a specific interest in the course topic**, like writing courses and networks, local communities, clubs or – in a broader sense – **culture and tradition**.

Examples:

..but I never really knew that I always wanted to be in a writing community, in which I can belong to and feel to be a part of it. (FIN_D)

Then I think it is related into that social thing, but in a wider sense, belonging into something I don't know whether it is tradition or group or what ever. If you think about weaving carpets so then belonging and connecting on that tradition, so that you understand and can potentially pass it on through your own products. But but this is more related on that specific topic. (FIN_G)

I felt the need to belong to something. ... We do have a club where we play rummy and so on, but *it's very important to be active at this age*. If you're not active it's a tragedy – you might as well go straight to the hospital. (ROM_V)

In single cases, **providers can be viewed as communities** too, especially by learners who choose the same provider for all their learning activities, seeing this provider as a community of teaches and learners that is essential to one's own learning experiences. Example (originally coded in the 'Social network' category).

Examples:



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Through the college I've [...] got more involved in what's happening. It's an agricultural college and they've got a charity event coming up in June which I've been involved with. (ENG_V)

Plus being part of Leeds Met is great, having the student card, being able to use the union. That has been nice too. (ENG_R)

Self fulfilment and joy of doing

This benefit category was rarely found, which might have to do with the fact that self-fulfilment is named by the participants less explicitly than other aspects of personal development. The few examples of explicit notions draw a direct line from a **specific activity** to joy of doing and the perception of development:

This change in my thinking brings great results. My flat is very beautifully decorated with flowers and with decorations from dry plants and fruits. I can also bring together such colours which fit to my flat – it means if it is bright or dark – and with the furniture. I can recognise the style of the equipment in a flat and in each room. (CZE_A)

Firstly, it's the joy of being able to learn the language in itself and secondly, it's the fact that I'm fulfilling a wish. It's something I always wanted to do but I'd never got around to finding the time for it until now. (GER_D)

It is worth mentioning, however, that this benefit shares several connotations with other codes under the categories 'Sense of purpose in life' and 'Self-efficacy'. Aspects of self-fulfilment can be found in the participants' accounts in statements that point at personal growth and personal development.

Another benefit category that has a definite similarity with self-fulfilment is 'Changes in learning experiences', because benefits that might be coded as 'Self-fulfilment' are mostly reported as experiences that changed over time and are directed towards a desirable future.

'Joy of doing', finally, could in some cases also be coded under the category of 'Skills and competences', especially when 'Joy of doing' is not mentioned explicitly but expressed indirectly in the way participants talk about the skills they acquired.

Wider life circles

This benefit was not coded often either. But some participants explicitly mentioned wider life circles in the sense of having new things to do or finding alternative ways of spending spare time. Mostly, they speak of **activities linked to specific skills** – especially languages –, which is seen as widening opportunities in a personal or professional context.

Examples:

This way I met other cultures, their history, the way of life of other nations, met various people, but the complete cultural shock I experienced in Japan and it was in the positive sense. This experience enriched my life in a way I can't describe. I learned a lot about alimentation in those countries, and about habits and customs. (SRB_J).



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In one word I can say that learning a language has opened up many opportunities for jobs, traveling, various life opportunities and points of view, a whole new world opened up for me because a second language gives you completely new opportunities, and you discover new interests. (SRB_Ž)

For the film course – I've started looking at movies differently and watch films I wouldn't have touched before. (SWI_A)

Other experiences were reported which could be understood as 'Wider life circles' but were described (and coded) in the other categories – especially 'Social networks', 'Participation in society' and 'New hobbies' – and were coded in those categories.

(New) hobbies

What was said above for wider life circles is also true for the '(New) hobbies' category. Participants report many new activities they took up in connection with new courses, activities that are mostly related to the course content, but they do not typically call these activities **hobbies**. In some cases, however, they do:

I will never become a professional dancer, but for me personally, as a hobby, this will always be an option. (ROM_T)

For example, sewing, it's just a hobby and I always gladly made my own clothes and now I've learnt to do it from scratch using a pattern. And, well, it's very rewarding. And it's great fun. (SWI_F)

Most participants who talk about new activities do **not specify the status of these new activities** in their personal life contexts. These cases are likely to be found in the 'Skills and competences' or 'Sense of purpose in life' categories, if described mainly under the aspect of new inspiration. An example:

InDesign – I was a journalist by profession and then thought about retirement. Now I write my own stories from my life, or I wanted to write our family history, so the children had something to keep. I wrote them down then thought, what now? Publishers wouldn't be interested in family history. I thought I'd like to make my own book. So I did the course and learnt how to do it. (SWI_F)

Other participants give the impression of seeing activities they took up in connection with a course and kept doing on a regular basis not as hobbies but as something that **might become of vocational use** or develop into a profession altogether, a sideline activity or '**Civic engagement**'. Examples (the first one is from a former doctor who quit her profession to become a novelist after taking up writing as a hobby):

I didn't know before if I could do it, write like this, or if it would be any fun for that length of time, and actually – almost every day I sit at the computer for about 5 or 6 hours and write something. (SWI_A)

Basically I have always been a bit interested in studying more in that direction of programming in knowing the tool, that I could later use for private or work purposes. (SLO_D)

Yes, I got to an idea, that I later discussed it in detail in my paper, and that is the foundation of a book club within the patient society I work at. That would be a club for reintegration into society for people who were cut away from society during medical treatment, maybe because they lost their job, maybe because they isolated themselves, because they were maybe ashamed to admit their sickness in society. (SLO_E)



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None of the three participants cited above would call their activity a hobby, and the examples could also be assigned to 'Wider life circles'. They are nevertheless put here in the context of 'New hobbies', since they might exemplify a substantial aspect of adult learning: a tendency to **use courses for personal development without separating personal, professional and social goals**. In the BeLL interviews, this can be observed especially with very active learners, that is, participants who engage in more than one course at a time.

Respect

Very few participants describe their own being **more respected by others as resulting from participation and new skills**, but in some cases this benefit seems to be implicitly reported in connection with '**Self-confidence**' and **social benefits**. Some participants describe positive reactions of their social network or of other course participants, which can be interpreted as respect in the above-mentioned sense.

When respect is reported in connection within the course context, it is mostly to do with improved competences. In other cases respect is about **being underrated as a learner and being able to prove** one's will and ability to achieve one's learning goals. The latter was reported for instance by an older woman whom the teacher and the group tried to dissuade from taking an ICT course together with young people. As she enrolled anyway and managed to keep up with the group, she reports the other participants and the teacher as being impressed and paying respect to her courage and learning skills:

Examples:

People perceive me now as a person with a wide horizon. (CZE_F)

With support, maybe. Or with support and maybe also encouragement, or also admiration, because I had very definite results, not everyone has had such definite results... You know, people travel, but I had so many problems with that, even though I could go, but I thought I couldn't or was not allowed to. I don't know what I thought, it is like this now. (SLO_A)

Ah, yes the class, they were somewhat sceptical at the beginning, until they realised that I really was working on a book and that something was coming from it, and that made an impression. (SWI_F)

Several participants speak about respect not in the way this benefit was defined here, but in terms of their **own increased respect for other people**, which is mentioned in connection with language and humanities courses, creative arts and competencies like communication. These benefits belong to the categories of tolerance and trust.

3.2 Self-efficacy

Codes:

- Self-confidence
- Confidence in own skills



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- Self-discovery
- Self-motivating
- Self-control

In some countries, the researchers felt the need to add a code named **self-development**, personal growth, personal development or personality-development.

Since it was decided not to add a new code during the interpretation workshop (see. chap. Methodology), the statements that were assigned to the new code/category self-development (or similarly named codes) in the national analysis are attributed here to the code of 'Self-discovery'.

All the codes included in the category 'Self-efficacy' play a prominent role in connection with the benefits reported by the participants. Only one code – 'Self-control' – appears to be less relevant for the interviewees.

Self-confidence

Not surprisingly, 'Self-confidence' is reported as a core benefit in all countries. As the term has become common in everyday language, many interviewees mention self-confidence or related terms like self-esteem without explaining their understanding of the term. But, as the following examples show, the term self-confidence typically appears in connection with other benefits (**bundles of benefits**), which allows for understanding in what contexts learners situate self-confidence.

The following examples are only a few out of a large number of similar statements collected in BeLL. They suggest that 'Self-confidence' is mainly seen either as the **result of positive learning experiences** or as a **consequence of the skills and competences acquired** in the courses.

In the cases where self-confidence is seen as **caused by positive learning experiences**, the interviewees emphasize aspects like: to learn new things, experience or develop the ability to learn and achieve specific goals, to experience the support of teachers and groups, to get energized.

When interviewees report self-confidence as a **consequence of the skills** they acquired in the courses, self-confidence is very close to, but not identical with 'Confidence in own skills'.

I feel better in the group and have more self-confidence. (CZE_B)

I strengthened my self-confidence because I learn something new again. I was proud of myself that I made such an improvement. I became more responsive and confident when communicating in Spanish. (CZE_B)

I have got better self-confidence, I value myself for my thoughts and I respect my environment. (CZE_A)

My self esteem got better, I saw that I can also do this and I have more courage. I had to dance perfectly. ... Well you had to be careful, very careful. (RO_T)

Self-confidence definitely increases, you are in a better mood, have more energy and than you basically develop everything. You get a sort of energy there, that you might lose it elsewhere, and then you finish other things with it. (SLO_C)



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The interviewees link self-confidence with a variety of **psychological aspects** like courage, pride, self-esteem, spontaneity, which points to the relevance of liberal adult education in the context of personal **identity**.

As can be seen in the examples above, self-confidence often appears in a **sequence with other benefits**. Linguistically, the benefits are linked either by 'and'/comma, or by 'because'. While the latter draw a causal relationship, the former do not explicitly define the type of relationship between self-confidence and other benefits.

Confidence in own skills

Statements that refer to specific skills instead of the person as a whole are coded as 'Confidence in own skills'. A variety of examples highlight the significance interviewees assign to the term confidence when applied to skills and competences. The dominant meaning of confidence here is: being **able to do new things** or being able to **do things better** than before. We find here the whole range of skills and competences acquired in courses as possible sources of self-confidence. In the (very frequent) case of language courses, confidence in own skills is mostly exemplified by the ability to communicate, in relation with other course topics the learners mention specific activities - like writing, dancing, handling a computer - or products they are able to create, which may be photographs, food, flower arrangements and so on.

In some cases, confidence in own skills means mainly **confidence in one's learning skills**.

Examples:

I was able to better understand Spanish texts, I became more active and self-confident in communication. Indeed, my listening improved too. So, if I should sum it up, the course met my expectations - improvement in all language aspects. (CZE_B)

(...) the difference between before and after the course... is that now, when I see cases like this, where someone asks me for support, or psycho-pedagogical support... I didn't know how to handle that kind of things, but now... I might still need some support myself because I do not know everything yet, but I feel that I will be able to identify a few things, to know when to diagnose...It makes you feel more secure... (ESP_J)

And when you realise 'I can learn that, I can learn something new', then that's satisfying and you think: 'So I could do this, too, or even this.' (SWI_F)

I didn't know before if I could do it, write like this, or if it would be any fun for that length of time, and actually - almost every day I sit at the computer for about 5 or 6 hours and write something. (SWI_A)

Self-discovery

The interviewees report changes and achievements in their personal development, which on one hand is to do with self-discovery in the sense of acquiring insight, new knowledge or **new views of one's own personality**, on the other hand with the **discovery of new interests, talents** or possible activities that



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were not considered before. Moreover, some interviewees describe a general sense of opening up one's mind and widening future opportunities for personal development.

Examples

it's like, it's arrived, it's like you have the inner will to want to do more, it gives you this joy that if you achieve this, you can do more, you can achieve more. (ENG_T)

Definitely the changes were just positive and I am very glad that they happened. I feel the development especially in being more open, tolerant, having higher self-esteem, pleasant feelings coming from reaching a set goal. I also feel very motivated to continue studying Spanish. But this is probably a natural reaction to the positive experience. (CZE_B)

... where I could reinvent my self-image as a student, get the courage to try something, and also to recognise and eliminate a subconscious, deep-seated fear. And for your sense of well-being that's a massive enrichment and relief. (SWI_H)

As mentioned above, in some national analyses new codes were defined to cover **personal development** in a broader and more identity-related way than was suggested by the code 'Self-discovery'. Here participants do not focus on the discovery of specific features or talents but speak of their development as a whole person, suggesting that their discoveries affect their identity as a whole.

These statements are assigned here to the 'Self-discovery' category, but it should be kept in mind that some partners assigned a new code to cover self-development. Examples:

Yes, I see here on the one hand my personal growth... (SLO_E)

... but maybe the most important thing was the fact that my self esteem increased and I got to know my limits and to rediscover myself... develop my ear for music, so to say, on different dance rhythms.... I discovered that I can also succeed in this field, now being a bit modest, no? I managed the music, the moves that weren't easy and I learned them in a rather short period of time. I had some big moves and not everyone could have reached this level. Now, to be honest, we had to be at the same level with the event, which was pretty big. (RO_T)

Firstly I had the opportunity to write poetry and songs and see those great writers and great musicians. Secondly, I became more spontaneous in expressing emotions through artistic creativity. Yes, there were many role models for me... and I also had the opportunity to become friends with people who were older than me. (ROM_AS)

Self-motivating

Self-motivation here means the ability to do what needs to be done, without the influence from other people or situations. This was not coded very often in the interviews, which does, however, not necessarily mean that the interviewees do not experience self-motivation. Many participants report experiences like 'I feel motivated to ...', which simply does not allow to draw clear **conclusions about the origin of the motivation**. Two typical statements for these cases is:

I am experiencing this very intensively, because I have been doing this for two years, and this is the third one... and I am very motivated... and I want to learn it... I really like it... (ESP_J)



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And when you realise 'I can learn that, I can learn something new', then that's satisfying and you think: 'So I could do this, too, or even this' . (SWI_F)

Several statements with similar content suggest that course participation **reinforces learners' existing motivation** to learn. The fact that statements like the ones quoted above lack any reference with the course context – the teacher, topic or group – can be seen as possible indicators of self-motivation.

Another important aspect to consider here is the fact that liberal adult education is usually **attended voluntarily**, which might cause participants to “hide” or forget to mention their self-motivation in the interview because it is to some degree a precondition to liberal adult learning. This cannot be clearly evidenced through single statements, but if interpreted in the case context at least some interviews inspire this suggestion. The following statement gives an impression of this line of thought:

It began after I finished studying. At first I needed a [pause] bit of a break and thought to myself, 'Finally, I don't have to study anymore.' That mindset lasted for around a year until I started thinking, 'No, that's somehow not right.' And then, somehow, I felt totally motivated again to do something other than work. Just like that, something predominantly for me. So I began to learn Swedish. (GER_F)

What I find is, unlike school, you're doing what you're really interested in. Or I'm quite interested in it so that's why I'll do it. It's just motivating. You learn better and you enjoy it more. (SWI_C)

Self-control

'Self-control' was reported by relatively few interviewees. In some cases, however, this benefit played a role, especially in connection with courses that were aimed at **improving communication and social skills**. Examples:

I've become much more confident in my ability to respond. I mean, restraining spontaneous anger – and thinking: “How can I do this differently?” I knew how to respond but this course encouraged me and, because the focus is on my reaction, I could change and it was more constructive for my way of thinking. (SWI_H)

Yes, there were benefits. Because of mastering these techniques, I developed self-control in dealing with a conflict when it appears, self-control in dealing with my emotions when I have to plan a big activity, and it was very useful for me to resort to this course and remember it as a reference point, even in my daily activities. (ROM_SN)

I mean I thought that sickness drags you down. But this can't happen unless you admit it. (ROM_SI)



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3.3 Locus of control

There were no pre-defined codes for this subcategory. Overall, the interviews confirm the results of the open questions of the survey in the fact that locus of control does not play a significant role as benefit of adult learning in the learners' spontaneous reports. But it is worth mentioning that we found some statements that match the locus concept. These statements were mostly coded (or double coded) under the category of sense of purpose in life.

The few statements that match the category locus of control include the following examples. One case focuses on a sense of **self-responsibility and the experience of control over the daily life activities** – including self-organised learning, participation in two courses and the autonomous structuring of daily life – as opposed to the other-directed situation of employees (the interviewee is unemployed and engages in a one-year continuing education period). The second case is an older woman who describes her **gradually taking control over her life over the past years** using the rather unusual expression of "...given me solidity". In contrast to the first example, where a new, on-going development towards more control in daily life is described, the second example is described in retrospect as a process that affected the learner's identity in its integrity as well as her connection with society. Finally, the third example mentions **control over the participant's illness**.

And I now (...) have another form of pressure, which I largely put on myself, but always with an eye on the future, on my own future – because I'm much more flexible at the moment. If I see that I'm getting in my own way, because I somehow feel like I need to do something for this course or this seminar and I neglect two other things in order to do that, then I am actually responsible for myself and can – I have a better chance of changing things or moving things around. Because I can't take on so much that it all falls apart. (SWI_D)

The word I would use is solidity. [...] they have given me solidity in terms of fixing my own intellectual potential, they have given me solidity in terms of honing skills, they have given me solidity in more firm friendships and a wider range of acquaintances, um, they have given me fun, um, they have given me fulfilment I suppose and they have put me firmly in the part of society which is older and still with it and wanting to be with it. (ENG_D)

With relation to what the situation was back in 2001, 2002 - compared to that, the situation has changed. I have taken control over this illness of mine as well. (FIN_E)

Due to the very low number of statements, no codes were defined for the category locus of control. On the basis of the quoted examples, **two tentative, in-vivo codes** could be suggested for eventual further analysis: 'Getting in my own way' and 'Solidity'.



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3.4 Social network

Codes:

- New networks
- Social interaction
- New friends

Social benefits are **one of the most important** and most frequently reported benefits. For several participants, 'Social network' is the primary benefit. However, there are also participants who attach little importance to social benefits.

Participants report social benefits occurring in the courses - mostly related to social interaction - as well as social benefits going beyond the course context widening the circle of friends or the range of wider social contacts. The three codes are often closely connected and reported as a bundle of benefits in connection with the social aspects of courses.

New networks

Many participants mention new **contacts they found in adult learning courses**. Some mention networks that include regular meetings, mutual support or common activities, others speak of people they got to know and stay loosely in contact with for a certain time after the course. In both cases, networks seem to be valued as essential benefits of course participation.

Participants frequently mention the opportunity to meet new people as a benefit in itself, whether or not it may result in them finding new networks or even new friends.

Examples:

At every training you meet new people. Every participation means new acquaintances. (SLO_C)

It's ok to chat on the street if someone you know from there passes you by. (FIN_C)

In the case of **non-committal networks** developing through course participation, social contact seems to be limited to the course period. Although many participants do not disclose any detailed information on their networks, there is some evidence suggesting that networks are **often temporary**. However, some participants describe the temporary nature of their new networks in a positive light, which can be interpreted in the sense that they enjoy making social contacts without looking for or expecting long-lasting contacts and friendships.

In cases where contact after the course period is limited to saying hello when seeing each other on the street, the courses have clearly not widened the social network permanently, but they may still have widened the circle of 'friendly strangers', which can also have an effect on the way participants feel at home in their surroundings.

In many cases, new social networks are reported as implying a **certain commitment**. Interviewees describe new networks by highlighting **specific activities**, some of them suggesting that temporary networks could lead to **lasting friendships**.



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Examples:

Yes it happened to me with courses. In all the courses that I took I always met people and I made friends, new people. In this case, two colleagues with the same age as me, well, more or less, and another one who is a little older than us. We met all together to study so if one of us does not come to class, the rest of us share with him our notes. I also added more people, some young people, well... in general... I added them to my Facebook. (ESP_N)

We also celebrate birthdays, or holidays, and everyone brings something to share and we brunch all together, in the morning... We share food because it is expensive and there are people who cannot afford this because of the current situation... (ESP_N)

I've been able to make new contacts. My circle of friends and acquaintances has grown. Information is transmitted better as a result. I get important information and hear about what's going on in society. (GER_A)

Some participants mention their involvement in **social media networks**. This was not mentioned often, which however does not allow for drawing any conclusions regarding the importance of social media, since the interview guidelines did not explicitly include this sort of networks.

Example:

We had our private group and we wrote there the meeting hours and even in the night of the ball after thousand of photos were taken you can think that they were posted on Facebook. .. I am still in touch with some of them, but with others it's been a while since we spoke. I have their Facebook and the phone numbers. (ROM_T)

Although the courses were generally not work-related, a number of participants mention that social networks that came out of liberal adult education courses were occasionally useful in their **professional contexts**. Example:

The network made outside class, from talks you have with the colleagues you might find out information about other people with whom you might collaborate or with whom you can develop a partnership as well as a general view of the job and the field. (ROM_IM)

Another aspect of new social networks is **social or cultural integration**. Apart from migrants who are able to settle with the help of their new networks, a number of interviewees mention social integration in connection with being out of the labour market and using adult education courses to stay connected with society. In some cases, integration takes the meaning of **mutual support and self-help** for people who share a specific problem or a difficult situation.

Examples:



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It did have a big impact – I think that also thanks to the courses I was able to settle better in Zurich and integrate in my Brazilian/Swiss circle of friends. (SWI_G)

Socialising is important, because at this age... I don't have the need yet, I have to say, because I still have enough acquaintances, but I do know a few colleagues who went mainly to socialise. They exchange opinions for a bit, and change their everyday environment. (SLO_F)

[...] we were all unemployed and we had time to socialize. Also, we were socializing with our teacher, she would sometimes drink coffee with us. I made very nice friendships there. (SRB_Ž).

We became a good group of people and we have been meeting regularly until now, even if each of us has their projects [...] [Participating in the course] was very supportive and gave us the chance to share ideas with others people. It's very important – putting aside from learning things – it's important to become a group, maybe from the group can come off a new idea, it's important women support each other. They are in different situation but they can help each other. (ITA_D)

Finally, it is worth mentioning that there is also some **ambiguity** in the interviewees' reports about social networks. Some participants seem to enjoy the new social networks while emphasizing that they do not have great importance. Example of a participant who sees a specific network as simultaneously important and irrelevant:

The realisation that we're just a group who have been on the same journey for a while now. They're important to me. On the other hand it's irrelevant because I don't go to that class to get to know people but to educate myself. When I get to know someone it's a nice bonus but it's neither relevant nor central. (SWI_E)

Participation in adult education courses do not only enable people to build new networks, it can also cause a **shift or reduction of existing social contacts**, especially in cases where participants loose interest in previous activities when discovering new topics. An example:

I've got a lot more acquaintances now who are also somehow engaged in writing. And I've actually lost interest in people I used to socialise with, like doctors. And now, you know, I used to hang out more with people from the medical profession and I'm bored of them now so your circle of friends can change. They're different people. (SWI_A)

Social interaction

Social interaction is frequently mentioned as a benefit both with regard to the **interaction occurring in the course** and that occurring **within the new social networks**. Whereas some participants just enjoy contacts, mutual exchange, or the group atmosphere, others mention mutual support as essential to their learning success. Another aspect is the role of social interaction as a **kind of laboratory** supporting the transfer of new competences into other contexts such as work.

Examples:

Other members of our group behaved friendly, too, and all of us helped and encouraged each other. (CZE_A)



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How can I work on something with a group. Interaction with other people. I think if you do that again and again it stays with you and you can apply it in your job too. I can now read something or create something at work from another perspective. (SWI_C)

It was more because of the socialising that I'd regret something, because for me, Tuesday mornings were always course mornings and, well, we know each other well by now, and you know a lot about each other and you have a lot of fun together. (SWI_F)

A number of participants point at the specific benefit of social interaction in the course as a way to relax, switch off or take a step back from work. In this sense, social interaction can have work-related benefits in the wider sense of influencing **work-life balance**.

Example:

It takes a long time for me to unwind after a stressful day. However, joining in with a group of people practising yoga or jazz dance allows me to switch off completely. (GER-C)

New friends

Not surprisingly, lasting friendships are less often mentioned than social networks and social interaction. The distinction between acquaintances and friends is in some cases difficult to make, but new friendships seem in any case to be an important benefit for many interviewees.

Examples:

I've been able to make new contacts. My circle of friends and acquaintances has grown. Information is transmitted better as a result. I get important information and hear about what's going on in society. (GER_A)

'The long term benefits are the emotional relationships established with those women... (ROM_SI)

So I think that the most important benefit is the fact that I've developed new friendships, and through these I've got to know myself better. (ROM_AS)

it's nice- at my stage of life- to be close to somebody, it's nice to make friends, it's interesting to make friends with people who are younger than you and who are treating you as an equal. (ENG_R)

I've met some good friends through it [...] lifelong friends (ENG_V)

3.5 Changes in the educational experiences

Codes:

- Joy of learning
- Motivation to learn
- Learning skills



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- Motivating others to learn
- Sense of achievement

Interview results for this benefit category show that changes in their educational experience play a crucial role for many participants. 'Joy of learning', 'Motivation to learn', and 'Sense of achievement' often seem to be intertwined so that these benefits are often difficult to distinguish. The way of speaking about changes illustrates the fact that benefits are **typically reported in bundles**, like in the following example:

So for us these courses are a way to feel useful and to gain self-confidence, because we see that we can do it. Some of us learn faster, others slowly; we struggle, but the joy is immense when we see that we were able to press the button and make something happen that we understand.... and we are making important steps. (ROM_NV)

In some cases, changes in educational experience are reported as the experience of **becoming aware of one's own learning ability**, in other cases participants describe an on-going personal development which consists of **having new experiences through learning**.

A noticeable aspect of this category is the frequent connection between the benefits of 'Changes in the educational experience' and the **voluntary nature** of participation in learning activities.

Some interviewees report **increased informal learning** as the result of participation in courses. This interesting aspect was not explicitly asked in the interviews, so that we cannot analyse it in depth here, but it might be worth keeping in mind for further research.

Joy of learning

Many statements provide explicit or implicit evidence of joy of learning when participants describe the learning process in a positive light. These descriptions **focus partly on the learning process** – emphasizing the diversity of methods or interesting topics -, and **partly on the skills and competences** or activities participants acquire or perform in the courses.

Examples:

..they taught us in such way that we felt good, we had fun, we laughed, we made jokes but at the same time we learned so much in such a short period of time so the way in which they taught us was very efficient and I really enjoyed it. (ROM_T)

I learnt nice new things because of some repetition and some tricks. An example is the arranging of dry plants using a space – you can do it for example on a piece of a dry wood from a tree or on a piece of a log. I actually create 'my nature' in my home in this way. I enjoy the shapes and colours of my models. (CZE_A)

Firstly, it's the joy of being able to learn the language in itself and secondly, it's the fact that I'm fulfilling a wish. It's something I always wanted to do but I'd never got around to finding the time for it until now. (GER_A)



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In some cases, participants explain their joy as being the **result of voluntary participation** in liberal adult learning as opposed to previous school experiences.

Example:

But I'm not saying that it's like being in school when you don't like doing something. Instead, I've voluntarily signed up to do this course and I enjoy doing it. [...]... Having fun while learning. Yes. (GER_C).

Motivation to learn; Motivating others to learn

'Motivation to learn' seems to play a crucial role for almost all participants, although they do not always mention their motivation explicitly. Often, motivation is described when participants emphasize the fact that their course **participation is voluntary** and that they would not take the course if they did not want to learn or if the course did not suit their needs.

Several participants explain how one course led them to the next one because a positive **course experience triggered their motivation to continue** learning. Of course, that learning does not necessarily have to continue in the form of taking another course, it could also be informal learning in cases where participants do not specify their further plans.

Another observation we can make is that some participants speak of their **motivation in a generalized way**, suggesting it has become a personal feature, while others make a **connection with specific competences**.

Examples:

What is very important at our age is that we want to learn – we're not forced to do it like a child who doesn't want to go to school but has to (....) But you must know that we take it very seriously and really do learn. (RO_V)

I am experiencing this very intensively, because I have been doing this for two years, and this is the third one... and I am very motivated... and I want to learn it... I like it really... (ESP_J)

It had been a number of years since I'd done any courses [...] once I got through the first year, and looked at the second year, I thought 'yeah I can do that' [...] and I wouldn't hesitate to do another. (ENG_L)

Yes, it increased my desire to learn foreign languages so I can know what I sing about... (SRB_J).

Well... the motivation that you may have is like... for example, I learned how to handle computers here, a little bit, then I knew that one thing brings you to another thing... and so you take a course and then you take another one... and you are learning and you feel very happy, otherwise... next time you will not [take a course]. (ESP_R)

It is an effort to be perfect, I take learning as an opportunity to train my brainpower to be able to be active and not to get old. It becomes more and more important when a person is getting old. At the same time it is a pleasant way to spend your leisure time. I like learning new things. (CZE_A)



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I now motivate myself, so to speak, I want to do it on my own. I don't really care but there is a bit of pressure because you want to make progress as a group. You like to be good at what you're doing and that definitely helps. (SWI_C)

When participants talk about **motivating others to learn**, they typically seem to draw connections between their **own motivation and their willingness to motivate** others to learn. In some cases, motivating others to learn is embedded in social or civic activities.

Examples:

Then I have a large number of opportunities to talk about such questions in the trade union sector where I volunteer as an official. [...] And I pass on what I experience there or use it to motivate other people to attend such courses. [...]. That's definitely one of my intentions. [...]. 'This is what I experienced and learnt by attending. Isn't that something you want to learn as well?' (GER_B)

In that manner I motivated others a little bit and they feel similar, very good... (SLO_A)

Several participants mention positive learning experiences in the **voluntary setting** of liberal adult learning as opposed to previous school experiences. They describe these positive learning experiences as the source of their enhanced motivation to learn. In some cases, new learning experiences made as an adult seems to cause a fundamental **shift in the way participants approach learning** – which can include a re- definition of the personal biography as learners.

Examples:

I decided to take the course because I found out from somewhere that it's a course [pause] where you're allowed to lose track of the rhythm. You see, I have a problem in this area which came from my mother once saying to me, 'You're as stiff as a board and there's nothing you can do about it.' And my headmaster also once said, 'You've got no ear for music! I'm giving you a D!' That's made me feel so unsure of myself for my entire life. And then I read that it's okay or even a good thing to lose track of the rhythm here. Since joining the course, I've lost the rhythm an awful lot but I've found it just as often again as well. And that's given me a great deal of confidence. Definitely [pause] in [pause] my life as a whole as well. I've learnt that you can fall out of step but that it's also possible to keep dealing with it. (GER_A)

It's just that studying as an adult – it's slightly different because you're with like-minded people. When you do Yoga you're basically with a group of people who have the same goals. There are no rebels like you may have had at school, or even in your working life. You're a group of like-minded people who may not be of the same abilities but want to achieve the same thing. And that's to learn something and have fun doing it. That makes for a pleasant atmosphere. And creates a very positive experience. Isn't that right? I don't have to be perfect because I'm here of my own accord – but basically there are also people out there who have a set ambition, applying it to their everyday, and to a certain extent have the same passion. Or who want to achieve the same as you do. (SWI_C)

Learning skills



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Learning skills are not often mentioned as a benefit, but a number of interviewees describe how important learning skills are in their opinion. Some interview examples suggest a close **connection between motivation and learning skills** that works both ways: motivation helps people develop learning skills, and the experience of being able to learn enhances their motivation.

Examples:

...we're trying to learn, we're like sponges trying to soak everything in, even though it's harder at this age. Some of us learn faster, others slowly; we struggle ... In the same way, some of us learn words in the English language faster, others slowly, maybe we forget them faster than we learned them.... (RO_NV)

It makes you more motivated. You could say. Because you approach something new tentatively, not quite sure if it's a good idea or not. And when you realise 'I can learn that, I can learn something new', then that's satisfying and you think: 'So I could do this, too, or even this'. (SWI_F)

Sense of achievement

Many interviewees mention a sense of achievement, either as a **general feeling** or in the **pragmatic sense** of experiencing learning progress, which can in turn enhance further learning motivation, joy of learning, inspiration or self-confidence regarding one's own learning skills.

Learners report a sense of achievement in **various contexts**: for example as an aspect of their personal development, as evidence that ageing does not mean losing one's learning skills, or as proof that the person stands out from the crowd. In the latter case (third example below), learning something unusual can for instance make a difference in an environment where everybody has similar professional competences.

Examples:

The most important aspect for me is that I'm working to improve myself and my abilities, [pause] that I have a sense of achievement and that I feel motivated, that is to say that I feel motivated in my general life. (GER_F)

Kind of like inspiration when you notice that you succeed in something that you thought was difficult or almost impossible. (laughing) (FIN_D)

It's the personal, you know, sense of achievement, like 'now I can, I know stuff, almost one hundred Japanese characters. Wow!' That's a bigger success than delivering my 27th draft on 'European payment transactions', which is of course very important in my job, but doesn't really do it for me personally. (SWI_C)



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3.6 Mental well-being

Codes

- Well-being in daily life
- Well-being at work
- Good spirits
- Coping
- Quality of life
- Sense of purpose
- Staying active

Most interviewees report benefits that belong to the category of 'Mental well-being'. One participant formulated this benefit in a radical way:

At my age I believe that learning is health. (SLO_F)

The others identify a wide range of specific contexts where adult learning courses have an impact on their well-being.

Apart from the code 'Sense of purpose', all codes were used in the analyses, but 'Well-being at work' and 'Good spirit' appear very rarely in the analyses. The predominant codings in this benefit category are clearly in 'Well-being in daily life' and 'Coping'.

'Quality of life' and 'Keeping the mind active' also seem rather important, but may not be coded in some cases because of being of the overlap with 'Well-being in daily life'.

Well-being in daily life

'Well-being in daily life' is often related to a **general feeling of satisfaction** or happiness. Specific characteristics used in the interviews are for instance relaxation, concentration on a specific task or topic, stimulation and activity. Some participants also mention changes in their **daily awareness** and aesthetic perception, which they value as a benefit improving the quality of their life.

'Well-being in daily life' seems to have **three points of focus**: sense of balance or harmony, animation and stimulation, and (aesthetic) enrichment.

Examples of 'Well-being' in the sense of **balance**:

I find this quite astonishing when I'm painting, for example. Painting simply makes everything else vanish from my mind. I'd say that this is because I feel completely relaxed. Because when I'm painting, all my problems somehow, I don't know, they somehow disappear. I'm concentrating on painting and that's it. (GER_A)

Yes, it is quite possible that courses can have an impact on your health. In any case, it distracts me. I am, you could say I'm suffering, and have a certain disability – it's my health, and this is a complete escape. (SWI_F)



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I find it easier to switch off completely than when I'm doing something else. The question is what do you get out of sitting around doing nothing, drinking beer or lazing in front of the TV? [...] Somehow it seems to work better now that I'm attending these courses. (GER_B)

Examples of the **animating or stimulating** aspects of this benefit:

They've helped me to feel alive, useful, to feel as I did in my youth. (ROM_V)

I just feel very stimulated. And it makes me feel good when I – because otherwise I'm at home too much, just lying around – it makes me feel good and I think there's still something there, or when there's something new, I meet new people, my life is active, you know? And that's good for me. (SWI_B)

Yes, yes, I need something like that. I need to do different things. Then I feel complete. I enjoy being able to change from one topic to another. Focusing on just one topic wouldn't do me any good at all. You see, it's all about this sense of mental well-being that comes from being stimulated in lots of ways and satisfying your curiosity. (GER_C)

Keeping mind active (ENG_R)

Examples of **aesthetic enrichment**:

I was always in a rush. Now I take time to look at the beauty that surrounds me and I have the impression that some of the girls noticed these things at a younger age than I did, and I appreciate this and there's a joy in my soul because they see what I saw at 40 sooner and that is because I think they are wiser than I was at their age, they value more the things in life. (RO_SI)

Well-being at work

The code 'Well-being at work' was used very rarely. Work was in fact mentioned by some participants, but they mostly focused on work-life balance, which was assigned either to 'Well-being in daily life', 'Quality of life' or to 'Work-related benefits'.

Work-life balance seems to play a role for a number of participants, even if they rarely use this term. More often, they speak of '**switching off**', relaxing or coping with work-related stress, which could also be coded as "well-being in daily life. One example, where it is mentioned explicitly:

It was a complete change from what I do in my day job. So it was a form of relaxation and trying to redress the work-live balance in my life. (ENG_L)

Good spirit

This code was hardly used in the analyses, which may partly have to do with its being very similar to 'Well-being in daily life'. One of the few examples:



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The fact that I know that I'll meet nice people there. You leave, you go home in good spirits. And, of course, these good spirits help me in my daily life. (GER_F)

Coping

Liberal adult learning can obviously help people cope **with stress, personal difficulties, illness, isolation**, or other challenging conditions. Participants mention coping benefits in **connection with activities** and competences they trained in courses (like yoga, handling conflicts or identifying priorities), **and with social contacts** or exchanges they had (e.g. giving mutual support, sharing specific information and knowledge, or comparing yourself with other people, thereby putting your own difficulties into perspective).

Examples of coping with **daily stress**:

Yes, the ability to identify priorities and to think about whether any problems or things that make me angry are going to matter in ten thousand years. [...] Yes. And when I think about that, I have to laugh about it to myself and when I decide that the answer is 'no', I feel a bit calmer. (GER_A)

I can say that I felt calmness, it is like attending yoga, after choir I felt satisfaction, that I am full with that, happier and in better mood. After a hard day I enjoy it, I release stress and negative energy. (SRB_J)

Examples of coping with **physical illness**:

... it is really nice, it really helped me to overcome different times, because with this illness you go through many stages and, of course each has his problems, but when you see that the other solves them, because inevitable you hear everyone's problems because we talk amongst ourselves and are open, you think that maybe my problem isn't as big as others. (ROM_SI)

I started sewing when I had cancer surgery. And ever since I haven't been right so I thought I'll make myself some clothes to cover up my disability, you know. That's how I started. It was a wonderful distraction from the real problem. (SWI_F)

Examples of coping with **burn-out or mental difficulties**:

Yes, I feel happier. Because if I did not come to the literature circle, I would be sitting on the sofa, doing nothing. But now since I have to come, I put on make-up, I take a shower, and I come... and you feel happier... You do not have time to be depressed or things like that... (ESP_S)

I was just so exhausted. It's probably no longer an option to go back into my old profession. But it's got to be doing me some good, hasn't it? Just for my health as it is at the moment. (SWI_B)

Examples of coping with **age**:

Well... in one way or another, yes... because in the beginning of the course, you learn... then... then an important fact to me is that you develop your mind... that is... you are not just a retired person who just watches TV and goes for a walk... You make your brain work, and this really helps you... (ESP_J)

Because... I think that... and especially when you are old like me... You need to keep your brain working... because there is the risk... to suffer from Alzheimer... and maybe even this way I can get it



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as well... but it is very important to keep your brain active, I have heard this many times... it is very important... (ESP_D)

Quality of life

Only a few codings were identified in this category. However, there are many examples of codings in the other **aspects of the benefit 'Mental-well-being'** which have a close connection to quality of life.

Examples:

I naturally take a more active interest in the subject. Like how I look at a magazine or how I act at a concert or an exhibition, I'm much, much more active, much more aware of the technical side of it all. I feel that before I was, not superficial as such, but it is a depth issue I think, do you know what I mean? (SWI_B)

Well, if I had to read only technical literature, for example, just that, then I'd probably feel worse, and because we always do something a bit new, I just find it exciting all the time. (SWI_C)

Staying active

This side of 'Mental well-being' was mentioned especially by participants who are **not on the labour market** as a benefit on its own.

Examples:

"Attending seminars like these means that you're constantly being confronted with new people, new ways of working and new topics. And I believe that it goes some way towards helping me to keep on the ball. (GER_E).

Also, it means that you're always involved and you don't feel as if you've been left in the dark, you feel in the thick of things and not as if you're lagging behind. (GER_E).

'Staying active' is an inductive code which was added in the course of the interview analysis. It comes close to the code 'Well-being in daily life' but emphasises the specific aspect of stimulation.



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3. 7 Physical health and health behaviour

Codes:

- physical well-being

Physical health and health behaviour do not belong to the predominant benefits reported by the interviewees. Some of them mention physical health mainly, but not exclusively in connection with health-related, sports or yoga courses. The benefits reported here mostly concern **general physical well-being**, fitness, and coping with pain or tension.

In any case, I think that the breathing exercises are relaxing and that they and the walking provide me with a bit of endurance training. All in all, I've become a little more composed. (GER_A)

Of I come back to the issue of health, certainly this is a great gain for us. As I already mentioned, we have theoretical courses with the doctor but we also have practical courses where we do daily exercise. ... However, we do exercises adapted to our age; we're developing muscle tone, and we sweat. (RO_NV)

The practice of yoga gave me specially health benefits, by now I couldn't give up with yoga practice, it helps me to prevent different aches. Therefore is a very positive experience, I can recommend it to other people, I keep me young and healthy. (ITA_G)

A number of participants emphasize the relationship between **physical and mental well-being**. Examples:

I lose pain of my back and both my physical and mental form has improved. (CZE_E)

I feel good in my body and, I mean this subjectively of course, I feel good in my mind. So, it's a state of [pause] satisfaction. No pain, feeling healthy and capable of fulfilling my potential. Thanks to the courses. (GER_C)

... it is a way of relaxing, I relaxed physically as well as mentally, it helped me with my posture, this was very important. ... And I felt very good, not only about my health, any kind of sport is helpful. (ROM_T)

Health behaviour

This category had the codes: 'Health consciousness', 'Health skills', 'Health benefits', and 'Medical prevention and rehabilitation'. All these codes were rarely assigned.

Examples:

Another course we attend now and I think it is very important that we are informed about medical issues: how to eat, what medicines we should avoid, how to avoid medical excesses, how to live and eat naturally. (RO_V)

Each of us also does exercises every morning at home, as we learned at the course, to lose stiffness. (RO_NV)



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When I enrolled in yoga, I started to take care of my diet. It's not a drastic difference, but I realized of how little things one needs to give up and at the other side gets a lot. (SRB_M).

And someone told me about Matrix too. It is a form of self-healing, that's quite quick to take effect and anything that's quick is always good, and relaxing. It's a simple technique that you can pass on to others so they can use it themselves. (SWI_E).

Oh my health, yes. Because I bake my own pastry at home and they are freshly baked, so I don't need to buy a pastry that has been, maybe mixed with, um, donkey pee (laughs). I make them and I know the ingredients. (ENG_T)



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3.8 Work-related benefits

Codes:

- Further education
- Instrumental outcomes
- Career options
- Job related skills
- Job hunting
- Efficiency & increase in job-performance
- Appreciation & recognition of skills
- Sideline activities

Although very few participants attended liberal adult learning courses explicitly for work-related reasons, many of them identified work-related benefits of their courses, often but not exclusively referring to **transferable competences** such as languages, ICT, communication or social skills.

Most of the economically active participants do at least **consider possible effects** of liberal adult learning on their working life, even if they do not expect a direct impact. But some, on the contrary, emphasize that the courses they attend in their leisure time have **nothing to do with work**. The not-work-relatedness can even be seen as a precious aspect of liberal adult learning, like in the following example:

Well, I don't always have to follow pure utilitarianism - just doing useful things all the time - it's so boring and, I don't know, just turns me off somehow. Isn't that right? Well, if I had to read only technical literature, for example, just that, then I'd probably feel worse, and because we always do something a bit new, I just find it exciting all the time. (SWI_C)

But even participants like the one quoted above seem able and willing to identify indirect effects of liberal adult learning on their professional life, like enhanced intellectual flexibility.

The participants that can clearly see relationships between the courses they attended and their working life point especially at job-related skills, career options or job hunting, efficiency and an increase in job-performance.

Further education, instrumental outcome and appreciation & recognition of skills appear to be less important benefits for the interviewees.

Sideline activities are mentioned by both employed and retired people.

Further education

Very few interviewees mentioned that the courses they attended encouraged them to strive for a formal degree, which is not surprising since the course topics were generally non-vocational. But there are



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examples of participants who used courses for this purpose, typically attending courses that teach general or **transversal skills**, which can be applied in several contexts, both work-related or personal. Example:

I found the project management class useful because that was what I was doing at the time and I wanted to know more about how to do my job as well as I could (...) The initial idea was to learn as much information as possible and to do my job better. I don't know how relevant it is that I received a diploma at the end. (RO_IM)

Instrumental outcomes

This code was rarely used. However, some participants mention instrumental outcomes such as **certificates** or **new products** they were able to create due to their course participation. But many of these outcomes seem either not to be work-related or to have been coded as 'External criteria'. One of the rare examples coded as instrumental outcomes:

[...] after the evaluation we received a certificate which confirmed the course... So I transferred it a little into doing something which would bring me material benefits. (ROM_SN)

Career options and job hunting

While some participants hope for a better job or take **courses with the aim of improving their options**, others describe the connection with work the other way round: Having acquired competences without any work-related aims – like foreign languages, for instance – some participants think about the **possibility of using these in their professional context**. Another important aspect is more general, when participants assume that **training their learning skills** or proving their willingness and motivation to learn might eventually widen their career options. Examples:

I have got a possibility to have a better job. I can apply for a better job. (CZE_C)

In my case the focus was that I already had the competences and I just wanted to get a certificate to prove them. (ESP_J)

In any case, I can definitely say that I'm more open and that my future plans include spending some time abroad. (GER_G)

I consider I am at the age where I assimilate information in a more open way and in a bigger quantity and I am eager to learn as much as possible so I think that is the motivation I have for learning and in fields that will help me build the career I want. (ROM_IM)

Job-related skills

Most statements describing how participants could apply new skills at work seem to refer to **transferable competences** such as working methods or languages. Some participants also mention more **job-specific skills**, which are mostly related to the course topic.

Examples:



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In the long run I learned new things, interesting things for my job, or for my personality... (ESP_M)

Firstly I managed to structure my work better, to apply the theoretical part that I learned in University and to give it a more practical meaning than what it has had so far... (ROM_IM)

During the course I participated in various interactive methods related to adult education that were really special. I learned a great deal from that and I apply them now. (ROM_AA)

The positive side of these trainings was, now I just concentrated on one, that I actually could use the technique we mastered in the courses in my work right away. (SLO_C)

Efficiency and increase in job performance

These benefit codes are described partly in connection with **competencies and experiences** that come out of liberal adult learning.

Examples:

This happened in 2009-2012 so there are three years in which I saw the evolution and the fact that yes, these principles I care about are seen differently by my students. I implemented this after a certain fashion with the civics teacher and with the French teacher and we became more disciplined because we all came together on the object of this education for democracy. (RO_AA)

It meant in a professional way, some new ideas for working with a large number of participants appeared. (SRB_V)

Another aspect proves to be quite important: Participants who are able to establish or keep a good **work-life balance** or to improve their **mental well-being** in general through liberal adult education often report indirect benefits in their working life.

Example:

Yes, of course. Because feeling a sense of well-being is essential for feeling well throughout the day, for being able to do a good job at work. (GER_C)

Apart from specific skills, work-life balance and well-being, **social contacts** are another benefit from liberal adult education courses that can have an impact on participants' efficiency and job-performance. This is the case for instance when a participant meets people with similar interests or professionals from their own sector in a leisure course.

Examples:

I met people with similar interests in a very stimulating context, which supported me in focusing what I really want from my life and helped me to find solutions also for my professional plans. (ITA_H)

With the Portuguese course - my motivation was for private reasons, but it has had an impact because I've met people through it. I am an engineer myself and got to know other, older Swiss engineers, and I could talk to them about various issues, like, how Swiss companies work or why they behave like they do now and not otherwise. And they were able to help me in certain situations or they'd give me the odd tip; 'Why don't you try this, or this?' (SWI_G)



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Appreciation and recognition of skills

This code was rarely used in the analyses. One of the few examples where a participant feels that her skills were appreciated:

For instance, recently I've had a bit, I've achieved a bit of a coup, I've had a double-page spread in a really reputable magazines about my trip to Patagonia last year, complete with pictures I took myself, and I'm not a photographer really, and it's been well received apparently, so that's kind of pleasing. (ENG_D)

Sideline activities

Sideline activities as an **additional income** option or as an **opportunity for retired persons**. In some cases, sideline activities are undertaken for pleasure but without ruling out the possibility that they may eventually evolve into a job option, freelance activity or independent business. Liberal adult education can in this sense **widen individual long-term professional opportunities** without having an explicit work-related focus.

Examples:

Yes, based on this course I introduced an optional course of rhetoric and speech at the institution, which is still happening, every Saturday afternoon... So I transferred it a little into doing something which would bring me material benefits. (ROM_SN)

I guess longer term, I could quite see myself going off and starting my own business, freelance or whatever. I could see me taking it further certainly. (ENG_L),

If I wanted to do a money-making opportunities, I could do that as well, I could do some business, you know? (ENG_T).

Similarly, sideline activities can be seen as options that could lead to **civic voluntary engagement**.



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3.9 Tolerance

Codes:

- Cultural knowledge
- Tolerance

The only pre-defined code here is 'Cultural knowledge'. But a series of statements were assigned to the category 'Tolerance' without being coded more in detail. On the basis of national qualitative analyses these statements can be attributed to the code 'Cultural diversity', which was located in the template under the category 'Development of benefits/other participants'. This code designs tolerance as a benefit that results from social interaction in a heterogeneous group (i.e. a multicultural, mixed age group of learners with very different backgrounds).

Cultural knowledge

Cultural knowledge is often, but not exclusively, mentioned in connection with **culture-related course topics**, such as languages, humanities, and arts, or with political education. Additionally, some participants mention **cultural knowledge that is acquired as a side-product** of other topics.

The benefit of tolerance has a strong connection to notions like **difference and otherness**. While some participants keep their descriptions of this issue general, others describe specific differences that mirror regional or national aspects of culture and multiculturalism.

Examples of **tolerance as a result of cultural knowledge**:

Well, doing something like this definitely promotes or confirms your respect of others ... of other opinions, of other cultures, of other people. (GER_B)

I am more flexible, and I go beyond "positive discrimination". This term was at some point really bad in my mind and I learned how to overcome it. I developed a certain flexibility, a different way of communicating, the part about democracy which also leads to accepting new cultural values because democracy is different for the Muslims and the Romanians; it's the same principles but different actions".[...] "They emphasized the values of the Roma, setting aside all the debates and going beyond the controversy of their situation. The Roma have their good parts. (ROM_AA)

There is time to talk about culture and what's acceptable and what things will appear rude to someone who isn't Finnish but not to a Finn- it broadens your mind as well. (ENG_R)

Well because it's not just the dancing. Well. At the same time you learn about the culture and the Arabic music, it's so very different in comparison to western music. (FIN_C)

Some participants describe tolerance as sort of **generalised competence** they acquired in connection with liberal adult learning. In some cases, participants relate this benefit to the workplace context, although there is no direct connection between the course topic and work.

Example (referring to a course in Japanese):

We have a lot to do with international companies, and the course helps me there because I am more aware that different cultures work differently. And you're more aware that when you're in an



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international environment you have to know that what's right for one person isn't necessarily right for the next. (SWI_C)

Apart from the cases mentioned above, 'Cultural knowledge' is also mentioned as a benefit that includes the connotation of tolerance without explicitly mentioning it.

Tolerance

Some participants mention tolerance as related to the experience of **social interaction in a heterogeneous group**.

Examples:

Even though we got along well with the other participants, still they were foreign people to me. I had to work with them intensively so I became more open and tolerant. (CZE_B)

Because one's mixing with a random group of people- because Slough has a very mixed population and the course represents a good cross section of that- so we've got a Hindu, a Muslim, a couple of old folks like me, a few young ones, men and women, different ages [...] to listen carefully to what other people have done [...] so I think it hones one's people's skills. (ENG_D)

The class was attended by at least the 20 per cent non-native Italians, but the confrontation never became a clash, it was very interesting to see. I liked the foreigner's approach to our language." (ITA_B)

This way of speaking about cultural knowledge points at participants' awareness that heterogeneous learning groups can **challenge their sense of tolerance** and that it requires **efforts to understand** each other.



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3.10 Trust

No codes defined.

This benefit was hardly ever mentioned in the interviews. The very few participants who do describe an increase in trust refer to the **course context**, i.e. the **teachers' competence** or the competences of other group participants.

Example:

And I think I realized that there were a lot of competent people. I gained faith in the competence of other people. (SRB_T)

3.11 Civic and social engagement

Codes:

- Participation in society
- Interest and knowledge of politics

This benefit category is among the less frequently mentioned. Moreover, the results suggest that civic benefits might be more closely related either to the **course topics** or to **specific providers** than most of the other benefit categories. The interviewees that emphasize civic benefits typically refer to courses in political education or to courses offered by trade unions or other socially and politically engaged organizations. This also allows us to assume a connection between civic benefits and individual attitudes towards society.

Participation in society

Some participants talk about participation in society in connection with liberal adult education. Those who do so especially point to **voluntary activities**, **moral duties** or a **sense of responsibility** for their community. Examples:

Amongst other things, you know that our group of intergenerational members work with the schools, and I go with them. We go and we exchange information; we help them in various activities, and they help us, so it's an amazing thing. What impresses me is the fact that we are active. (ROM_V)

I go together with the members of the association to help these seniors in their housework or in collecting and editing their books and manuscripts, or helping them do their shopping. (ROM_AS)

And other things have come out of them. For instance, out of the writing classes and the Welsh class, some of whose members coincide, I've set up a quiz team and we do charity events. (ENG_D)

We are trying to bring back into the collective memory all the history of Timisoara, its architecture, the beautiful symbol of the rose – you know the books we edited, and this is how we believe we can transmit the memories of Timisoara to the next generations. For us it's a debt of conscience, a moral



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debt to keep the goods and acquisitions which were around in our grandparents' time alive, and to maintain their continuity: these things that we inherited ourselves and must pass on. (ROM_NV)

Interest and knowledge in politics

One of the rarest benefits reported in the interviews is interest and knowledge in politics.

One example:

You see how active they are at all the debates and how they really try to understand thoroughly what is happening, what our politicians tell us. (ROM_NV)



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3.12 Civic competence

Codes:

- Change of attitudes
- Shared expertise
- Sense of responsibility
- Advocacy for political convictions
- Sense of community

The national reports contain only a few examples of 'Civic competence'. One benefit code was not used at all: 'Sense of community'.

Change of attitudes

This benefit was reported in a few cases, referring, in the first example, to **democracy**, and in the second to the development of a more **critical attitude to consumer goods** that were produced under exploitative conditions, and in the third to a critical **attitude to consumerism**.

I am more flexible, that I go beyond "positive discrimination". This term was at some point really bad in my mind and I learned how to overcome it. I developed certain flexibility, a different way of communicating, the part about democracy which also leads to accepting new cultural values because democracy is different for the Muslims and the Romanians; it's the same principles but different actions. And professionally, there were the methods and the way of looking differently at an individual. (RO_AA)

How can I put it? ... That it brought about a change for me? I may have raised my standards, too. Because to a certain extent I can do things exactly how I want and how I think is right, and that's made me a bit more critical, especially with clothes. I'm really critical when it comes to shopping, I can no longer bring myself to buy cheaply made stuff. (SWI_F)

Daoism and things like that make you think. We in the West are terribly consumerist and so back to nature [...]it gives you another perspective. (ENG_H)

Shared expertise

This code was rare as well. The very few examples from this code refer to either **specific activities** or the experience of being with people who have **something in common**.

Examples:

It is a book in which each of us found herself and we underlined paragraphs and said look this is me and it was nice to see that all of us talked about the book and each of us found a piece of herself or a familiar situation here. (RO_SI)



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You know that our group of intergenerational members work with the schools, and I go with them. We go and we exchange information; we help them in various activities, and they help us, so it's an amazing thing. (RO_V)

Sense of responsibility

Some interviewees describe their **willingness to engage** in their community, in other social contexts or in society in general. They seem to show an interest not only in **politics**, but also in the **political meaning of societal issues**.

Examples:

Well, when I see that something needs to be done, I'm happy to help out so my answer would be 'yes'. I'm actually developing my own seminars for the trade union. [...]. At the moment, I'm doing something for (*provider*), which is an organization for the older generation. (GER_B)

Of course, it's always quite good to be able to see yourself from a distance, isn't it? [...] What would you have done? Or what do you think of that? Or how would you proceed with that? A society is always changing. And there I'm a part of society and want to move with it. (GER_B)

We are trying to bring all the history of Timisoara back into collective memory ... , and this is how we believe we can transmit the memories of Timisoara to the next generations. For us it's a debt of conscience, a moral debt to keep the goods and acquisitions that were around in our grandparents' time alive, and to maintain their continuity: these things we inherited and must pass on. (ROM_NV)

I had never done volunteer work before. But when I came to (*Project for young adults*), when I noticed, how everything works, I became an active volunteer in many things. I repaired computers for the project to help all Slovenians that can't afford a computer to get one. I teach others, not only at PLYA, but also my acquaintances and friends at the village. (SLO_H)

Yes, when I think about myself, I think that I have become more responsible due to the course. I am more responsible towards my duties. (SRB_D)

Advocacy for political convictions

Advocacy appears for instance in the context of courses that are aimed at promoting democracy and tolerance. An example:

Well, first of all, you never stop learning how to give a reasoned argument. The benefits are being able to speak freely, never forgetting how to do that, being able to exert yourself in a group, learning how to take the lead and how to introduce a topic into such a group [...]. And in our socio-cultural centre, we have open youth work and an office for the Bündnis für Demokratie und Toleranz (Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance). I have of course been able to give a lot of impetus to the work carried out here. As I've already said, 'It's a topic where I can [incomprehensible] for the first time.' (GER_E)

3.13 Family-related benefits



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Codes:

- Coping with parental role
- Providing information for family

Family-related benefits were mentioned only by a few participants in the international sample.

Coping with parental role

The interviewees who did report this sort of benefit referred mostly to the coping aspect, albeit often in a wider sense than the term 'Coping with parental role' suggests. Some interviewees report a development and improvement of the **mutual relationships within families**, encompassing all **generations**.

Examples:

I can talk with my sons more than before... because they got their university degrees, and now I can talk about more things... (ESP_S)

I... my job... I retired last year, so now my son has a company and I help him... Tuesday and Wednesday I go to help him a little bit... (ESP_R)

Yes, I feel more prepared to help my daughter... and I do not know... a little rejuvenation... not physically, but mentally... (ESP_N)

I have tried to use these 'word manipulations' with my family and my child, so we can understand each other, get along and be on the same page in problems which need resolving. (ROM_SN)

Improvement of family life. Yoga really calms a person down and when he or she is calm, it is easier to accept behavioural disorders of others. (SLO_G)

Another sort of family-related benefits stems from **specific competences** enabling parents (or, like in the second example, grandparents) to support families in different ways:

Because my children, they love home-baked cake, because since then, it's like, we bake cakes every week now. It's good to have fresh pasty at home. (ENG_T)

But it is very important for my grandchildren that I can do something and also have the time to use it. For little Lea I sew Princess skirts, Cinderella and Snow White dresses and I make dance skirts for her and her two friends, etc. I also filmed my three grandsons in their various stages of growth, and gave them edited videos with sound as confirmation presents. I made each of my daughters photo books of our Christmas holidays. They all really enjoy getting things like that. These things take a lot of time, which a grandmother has plenty of. (SWI_F)

Providing information



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Very few examples mention the benefit of providing information to the family. In these cases, there is a connection with **health behaviour**.

Examples:

I've already told my daughter: 'Don't give the children salami, hot-dogs or sandwich meat' – because that's what we've been taught. And there are many other things I consider very important. (RO_V)

And it is not only good for me, my family benefits from it too, especially my children. I have learned something that will keep their health too, and also I have more time to devote to them and of course to myself. (SRB_M).



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3.14 Skills and competences²⁶

The benefit category 'Skills and competences' was **deliberately kept open**, which caused one researcher to name it an 'omnibus. Indeed, this metaphor aptly captures the openness and diversity of this category. The interviewees do in fact report all sorts of skills, many of which are obviously related to the course topic - ICT and language skills, yoga, dancing, sewing, photography, creative writing and so on - while others do not have any explicit connection to the topic. Given the variety of skills, it is not possible to give an overview that would cover all the skills mentioned in the interviews.

Interestingly, most participants do **not just enumerate the skills** they acquired but they **tend to contextualise them**, explaining why a specific skill is a benefit or how they transfer and use the skills in their lives. Some examples:

I am able to understand Spanish so I believe that this fact can help me in various moments. (CZE_B)

I took Catalan because it is important to... your own language and to understand that it is important to speak and to know how to explain yourself in a correct way... and then I took it because I had the level C and I thought that it would be interesting to have a higher level... (ESP_M)

My IT knowledge has improved. Today it is a very desirable qualification. (CZE_D)

Furthermore, I began to read news on foreign websites, newspapers and some interesting things. When I watch TV shows and movies I understand much more without looking at the subtitles, the song also, I even took the lyrics and translated them. (SRB_Ž).

Yes, certain techniques of negotiation helped me at my present job. (ROM_SN)

Apart from skills that relate directly to the course topic, there is a range of skills that are – in the participants' opinion – **topic-related but in a less obvious way**. These skills seem to be essential for many participants, even if they are not likely to appear in any course announcement.

²⁶ The code list and analysis guidelines for the interviews labelled this category as „competences“. The category was renamed in the course of the analysis to “skills and competences”.



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Examples:

Dancing changes you, your respect for others - and you learn how to respect others, because otherwise you can't dance together ... and how to talk to one another - so dancing indirectly teaches you a whole load of things. Because it's just that dancing is not just about learning steps, but it also teaches you a whole host of social skills. As well as rhythm and coordination. (SWI_G)

Actually, the only impact the rhetoric course had on me was actually these two images of self-perception and perception by others. And the main impact I felt was seeing how others perceived me. (SWI_G)

Finally, participants report skills that have **no evident connection to the course topic**. These seem to be mostly **generic skills** that can easily be acquired in a wide range of courses and transferred to different contexts. These skills include especially social skills, communication skills, learning skills – skills that at least some participants seem to consider a **key to their personal or professional development**.

Examples:

I think I got the insight for the first time into how study circles function in Slovenia, in what way, with what methods. I got the idea, how I could get involved as well. And the other thing, I got a lot of knowledge about learning methods, I found that very good. (SLO_E)

And generally, I am gaining some knowledge, general knowledge. (SRB_D)

I think it [working in culturally mixed group] hones one's people skills. (ENG_D)

So the real impact is actually not letting yourself lose the art of learning and developing content. And that's what I like best about it. Doing something challenging, be it physical or mental, outside my professional life. (SWI_C)

The fact that most participants do not only describe the skills but contextualize, explain and interpret them in the perspective of their own lives indicates a **willingness and ability to reflect** on the way adult education influences their lives.



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4 'Most important benefits'

When asked which of the benefits they have described was the most important one, almost all interviewees named benefits that belong to **more than one benefit category** (see case schemes in the appendix), which is another indicator that they perceive bundles of benefits.

Examples:

I would sum up two things: that it developed my knowledge regarding dancing and also created an image a social position for me in society. I learned new things on the emotional as well as the educational level and it opened, it showed me opportunities or other things that can be done because we were many involved in organizing this ball and after lots of work appeared the result. (ROM_A)

If I were to make a list, the first benefit concerns the social network and socialising The fact that we, as pensioners of various ages, with different life experiences and specialisations, from different jobs and different areas of expertise, the fact that we are together and can help each other is an incredible thing. (ROM_B)

In a word, yoga has encouraged me to change my lifestyle and improve the quality of life. (SRB_M)

And it's important not to take it home with me because doing that over the last ten years was terribly stressful. And, how can I put it, [pause] it has made me find it a lot easier to deal with my daily life. [...] I've learnt to let go and not to latch on to things and [pause] I get on better with my [pause] friends and my daughter. (GER_A).

I have understood things of myself that I've never before (...). We went deep into women's reactions to the world around, to things which happen during our lives... (ITA_B)

I really think it's a depth that exists in our lives. It gives you a whole new level of perception. That's the most important thing for me. But, you know, I'm not doing it for that reason - I just think it's an impact that I'm becoming more and more aware of. Your survey has made me think about what these courses are doing to me. And they're really giving me a whole new level of perception. (SWI_B)

The greatest benefit was that it helped me integrate into the Swiss way of life. Yes, I think that's by far the biggest effect. (SWI_G)

I've had the opportunity to be guided by someone who is better at doing it than I am, in what to do to improve my own practice a life drawing. You accelerate more when you've got someone else to say 'ah, that's where you're going wrong, I used to do that, don't do that, do this instead, try that', it's much faster. (ENG_C)

Since the question is asked towards the end of the interview, most interviewees went back to one or more benefits they mentioned before, focusing and condensing them to what they saw as the very **essence of their learning adventure**. From a constructivist point of view, these answers can be seen as the result of a construction process that the participants undertake to explain to a stranger why the courses they took were worth the trouble, the time and money they invested. In some cases, the core message that comes out of this process is very clear and simple – an insight, a fact – in others it looks more like an on-going



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search or even a sort of vision quest, giving the impression that the participant is convinced of being engaged in personal development without being able to name a precise goal.



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5 External criteria

The interviews show a wide range of external criteria for the benefits. External criteria were defined as external, **observable activities or products that provide verifiable evidence of the benefits** reported by the participants. The purpose of identifying such criteria was to make sure that the analysis captures concrete, real effects as opposed to mere abstract ideas about the potential of adult learning.

The codes found in the interviews are:

- Participation in events and social or political activities
- Organising events (cultural, social, sports' events, journeys etc.)
- Social recognition/appreciation
- Adherence to organisational frameworks (e.g. membership in organisations or networks)
- Carrying out specific new activities (e.g. creative activities, writing etc.)
- Sideline activities (e.g. publishing books)
- Transfer into everyday life (e.g. ICT skills, languages, handicrafts)

This catalogue of possible external criteria is not comprehensive. The purpose of identifying these criteria was not to define the range of existing criteria but to provide a good basis for interpreting of the benefits reported by the participants. Moreover, asking for examples of (observable) activities that would illustrate the benefits participants mentioned helped to check the plausibility of participants' statements to recognize socially desirable answers or clichés about lifelong learning.



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6 Development of benefits

All participants could identify course related aspects that contributed to the process of gaining benefits from course participation. This category was built through the qualitative analysis of an open question from the survey questionnaire (see. Chap. 2 Methodology and, for the codes, the code list in the appendix)

The **preliminary categories** are:

- Trainer
- Teaching methods
- Course in itself (incl. content/topic)
- Group/other participants
- Institutional/organisational framework
- Learner's internal resources

The national analyses show that **all of these aspects play a significant role** in the emergence and development of benefits. All statements regarding the role of course-related aspects for the development of benefits were collected, translated into English and analysed on the national level like the benefit categories.

An additional, more detailed comparative analysis will be done after the project has ended, since this research topic was not scheduled within the project framework.

Preliminary results

Nevertheless, some results could already be developed from the first analysis:

The categories generally worked well, but their codes need further development. Moreover, a number of new categories were suggested, such as 'Learning environment'.

In the overall sample, the interviewees identify **teachers/trainers** as the dominant factor influencing the development of benefits within the course context. The participants emphasize different aspects of the teacher's personality – like charisma, authenticity, passion, empathy etc. – as well as the teacher's approach, that is the way teachers present the content, the type of exercises they suggest or their ability to create a good atmosphere etc.

Teaching methods were not mentioned very often as a distinct influence on the development of benefits. But it is noteworthy that many interviewees describe the teachers' skills in a way that comprises teaching methods, for example when highlighting the teacher's ability to keep the learning process interesting, to motivate learners by providing a wide range of exercises or to create a good atmosphere. In this sense, we can say that the majority of the interviewees do not typically distinguish between teacher and teaching methods, which does not mean that methods are irrelevant for the emergence of benefits.



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Almost equally important from their point of view is the impact of the **group/other participants**. The aspects mentioned here are mainly social interaction, mutual support in the learning process, exchange and sharing experiences. Moreover, some interviewees mention specific aspects of the group such as solidarity, common goals, peer support, the fact that all group members participate voluntarily and are motivated to learn, or the group's structuring function, which keeps the learning process active and makes progress visible.

Compared to the categories mentioned above, the course subject - **content and topic** - seems to play a less prominent role in interviewees' understanding of the emergence of benefits in courses. Many participants did not mention the course content at all when asked how the benefits they mentioned emerged within a specific course. But there are exceptions: In three national samples (England, Germany, Switzerland), content/topic were identified as the dominant factor. However, the analysis shows that content does usually play an important role in the context of motivation and reasons for participation. If interviewees do not mention the content when asked about the development of benefits, this does not mean that content and topic are irrelevant but that many participants do not explicitly and consciously connect the emergence of benefits with the course topic.

The remaining two categories – **organisational framework** and **learner's internal resources** – are mentioned less frequently. The persons who do mention these aspects, however, seem to see them as important factors in the development of their benefits. Moreover, learner's internal resources might be mentioned implicitly by participants who emphasize content and topic, especially when they show a tendency to self-directed or self-organised learning.

Conclusions

The first analysis of the course-related factors influencing the emergence and development of benefits confirms the conclusion that was drawn from the analysis of the benefit categories: Course participants perceive bundles of benefits and **multiple interrelations** between the various benefits. In the analysis of the development issue, an additional aspect becomes visible: Participants often see **specific benefits simultaneously both as the cause and the result of their learning - and as the cause of other benefits**. This is the case for instance when participants describe social interaction as both resulting from and causing their learning progress, as well as causing the emergence of other benefits, such as tolerance or self-confidence. Social interaction frequently occurs as a mediating factor for the emergence of the benefits.

A first, explorative comparison between interview accounts that emphasise the teacher, group or content and others that do not mention these categories at all, suggests that participants **interpret the learning process differently**: While some tend to perceive learning as a **transmission of content** – which requires teachers as suppliers but not necessarily as mediators -, others tend to perceive learning as the **result of a teacher-learner relationship** – which requires skilled, engaged teachers - or as a **act of individual appropriation** of content, which in turn makes teachers or their methods rather insignificant. This different way of interpreting the learning process can also point at different learning styles or reasons for participation.



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These initial conclusions indicate that course-related aspects play a significant and complex role in the emergence of benefits. Although many interview statements suggest causal relationships between specific course-related aspects and benefits, the interpretation of these statements in their context does not allow for drawing any general, linear causal conclusions. A deeper analysis, however, will certainly reveal patterns of interconnections between course-related aspects and learning benefits, which could be useful for practitioners (for more information see final research report).



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7 Relationship between benefits

The interviews show that participants typically report bundles of benefits and establish various relationships among the benefits when describing their experiences. This finding opens up **new research questions** that were not envisaged in the initial research framework. The statements evidencing relationships among benefits were collected for later analysis.

Some relationships, however, were discussed with respect to the different benefit categories as well as the development of benefits (chap. 7). One of the most obvious relationships is the connection between **mental well-being and physical health**. And those two benefits can be seen as supporting the emergence of other benefits, like social interaction, tolerance or self-control.

Another relationship that could be discovered without deeper analysis is between **skills and other benefit categories** or between social network and sense of purpose in life or new inspiration.

Interviewees that explicitly establish relationships between different benefits most often do this using 'and' to link the benefits. Some interviewees also establish causal connections.

Some examples:

I thought I'd like to make my own book. So I did the course and learnt how to do it. And it was a success - I really enjoyed it and the whole family's happy that I've made a book. (SWI_F)

It makes my everyday life exciting, entertaining and interesting. Yes, and in several areas - like in gaining knowledge and in human relationships, because my network of friends has really been enriched as a result of meeting so many different people. (SWI_F)

Only a few connections are reported in the way cited above. To analyse relationships between benefits more in-depth, an interpretive approach is needed, considering not only isolated statements but the whole interview context of each case as well as the broader context of adult education.

A comprehensive, interpretive analysis of relationships among benefits could not be done in the framework of BeLL, since it was not part of the research questions, but the BeLL analysis and the statements that were coded as "relationships" provide a number of hints for future research.



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8 Conclusions

BeLL adopts a mixed-methods research. As the qualitative analysis shows, the interview results validate the survey results in terms of the benefit categories: The benefit categories (concepts) that were used in the survey proved to a high degree adequate for the analysis of the interviews, since they covered all benefit aspects mentioned by the interviewees.

The interviews were based on one general research question: How does liberal adult education influence the participants' lives? The analysis shows that the interviewees do indeed perceive a high influence, albeit we have to keep in mind that half of the interview sample are active learners (attending several courses) and the majority of them have medium or high qualifications.

On the basis of the qualitative interview analysis we can draw a number of conclusions:

- Participants are usually spontaneously aware of more than one benefit category, although there are also benefits they only become aware of when asked to discuss their experience.
- Participants are able to recognise and reflect on their learning and articulate direct as well as wider benefits and long-term effects of their learning.
- Participants generally report bundles of benefits rather than single benefits.
- The benefits are related to specific contexts, whose significance can be perceived very differently.
- Participants make connections between the benefits of learning and their individual life contexts.

Benefits and life contexts

Apart from confirming the survey results and validating the benefit concepts, one of the most valuable results of the qualitative analysis is that it gives insight into the diversity and context-relatedness of benefits, as well as the fact that all participants see liberal adult education in connection with their individual life contexts. This is an aspect that could not be seen in the statistical analysis. The interviewees emphasise their personal interest in the topics they study, and they interpret learning in the context of personal strategies to achieve diverse goals. This is true even in cases where learning is undertaken for pleasure and without any explicit goal in mind apart from the joy or challenge of learning.

With these findings, the qualitative BeLL analysis confirms and illustrates what Illeris (2004) says on the basis of his research on the process of adult learning processes:

'...adult learning has the character that:

- adults learn what they want to learn when it is meaningful for them to learn
- adults, when learning, draw on the resources they have
- adults assume the responsibility for their learning they are interested in taking (provided that they have the opportunity).(…)

We might reverse these formulations. Then the key message would be that adults have very little inclination to learn something that makes no sense or has no meaning on the basis of their own perspective. ' (Illeris 2004, p. 125).



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Another result of the interview analysis is that the interviewees report bundles of benefits rather than isolated effects. Although they are generally able to distinguish clearly between the wider benefits of different specific courses, they tend to see all benefits as interconnected aspects of their biographical situation, especially when taking a more long-term perspective. In other words, the interviewees tend to present their participation in liberal adult education not as a single, isolated activity but as part of a more or less coherent, but not necessarily rational strategy for their individual development. They seem to address what Illeris calls '**strategic life projects**':

'From the point of view of learning, "adulthood" is typically dominated by having some strategic life projects that spawn a multitude of things to do and attitudes that fill up the individual's life, and at the same time provide the benchmark for what one learns and does not learn. (Illeris 2004, p. 124)

Life projects are not necessarily based on clear and conscious decisions, as Illeris points out, they may also be driven 'by the "automatic pilot"' without much reflection, while the individuals nonetheless continue to choose and reject the various options that offer themselves' (ibid., p. 124). Life projects can be concerned with family life or working life, but also with leisure activities, politics, religion, or any other area of interest.

'Strategic life projects' appear in several BeLL interviews, most clearly – but not exclusively - in interviews with participants who report several courses in one year. These interviewees may have more than one project going on in their lives, but in most cases their narration about learning experiences seems to orbit around a dominant life project, for the achievement of which they find adult education useful. Examples of life projects found in the BeLL interviews are: keeping fit in later life; making up for learning opportunities missed out at a younger age; processing traumas experienced in childhood; ensuring a high level of performance at work; advocating for social justice; being a good mother, and so on.

The BeLL results suggest that individual life contexts and life projects are not only important benchmarks in the learning process but that they also influence decisions to participate in specific adult education courses.

To sum up: The qualitative analysis gives insight into some individual experiences of and perspectives on the wider benefits of adult learning. The interview analysis cannot answer the question of how many people experience wider benefits in the way the interviewees do or how many people use liberal adult education for a specific life project. But as part of the mixed-methods approach adopted in the BeLL project, the interviews help understand and illustrate learning benefits in their specific individual contexts. The interviews thus complement thus the statistical analysis, which in turn can give a picture of the frequency, relevance, and complexity of benefits but is not able to show the relationship between specific benefits and individual life projects or biographical contexts.

Future research

The national analyses lead to a series of hints for future research. Some of the most promising questions that emerge from the qualitative BeLL research are:

- What role of course-related aspects (like trainer, learning environment, didactical methods etc.) play in the development of benefits?
- How are the different benefits connected with each other?
- Can trends be distinguished across age groups, educational backgrounds and gender in in the way participants experience benefits of liberal adult learning?



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- What role do learning benefits play in the participants' biographical context and identity (life projects, learning strategies)?
- How do participants construct benefits of learning?
- How does society benefit from individual benefits?

These aspects could partly be analysed on the basis of the existing BeLL results. For a deeper analysis of the benefits in the individual, biographical context as well as the national context additional interviews would be necessary.



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APPENDIX

- Appendix 1: Interview guidelines
- Appendix 2: Analysis guidelines
- Appendix 3: Code list
- Appendix 4: Coding example (Interpretation workshop 2)
- Appendix 5: National case schemes
- Appendix 6: Additional description of the interview sample



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APPENDIX 1: Interview guidelines (topic guide for the thematic interview)

A. Introduction:

Thank you for taking part in the interview. During the interview the focus is on the outcomes and benefits due to your attendance in liberal adult education courses (please provide definition of liberal AE). We want to find out what experiences you have made during such courses.

The interview refers to the last 12 months.

1. How many liberal adult education courses did you attend in this period? If you attended more than one course, please indicate on which course you refer when answering a question.
2. What was the topic of the course(s)? (Name and type of the AE organisations)
3. Why did you attend the course(s)?
4. How did you experience the course(s)?
5. What job(s) did you have the last 12 months?

B. Main part: Benefits of liberal adult education courses

Focus on activities, experiences and attitudes.

6. When you think back of the course(s), what (immediate) outcomes have you noticed from your participation in learning?

→ Let the person tell his/her experiences and ask further questions, when the person talks about the outcomes and benefits of the course towards her/his life. Ask the person to describe each single benefit as concretely as possible. E.g.: How do you recognise these benefits? Which external signs exist concerning the benefits? What did explicitly change? How do you feel the benefits/changes?

Referring to the previous answers, please check which of the following 6 topic areas have been mentioned. Please ask explicitly after those topic areas, that haven't been mentioned yet. If it makes sense, you can explain that also negative effects are allowed to mention. Please formulate the questions according to the language style of the interviewee and try to ask questions that don't stimulate a certain direction of answer.

Have you recognised changes in..

- 6.1. **..personality:** self-confidence, tolerance, confidence (E.g.: Have you noticed any changes in you as a person? Did the course participation have any impact on your perception of yourself?)
- 6.2. **..vocational situation** (E.g.: Did the course(s) have influence on your vocational situation? If yes, how? If not, why not? Did the course(s) influence your vocational plans? Did you come up with new ideas/perspectives?)
- 6.3. **..motivation to learn/learning experiences** (E.g.: Did anything change in your attitude to learning due to the course(s)?)



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- 6.4. **..social network** (including family/children, if existent) (E.g.: You surely met new people during the course(s). Do you still have contact to course participants?)
- 6.5. **..health:** psychological (E.g.: Coping with stress), physiological (E.g.: Do you have the feeling the course(s) had an impact on your health?)
- 6.6. **..commitment:** voluntary work in a community, club etc. (E.g.: Are you voluntarily active in a community, club or something else? If yes: Did the course(s) have an influence on your voluntary work?)
- 6.7. **Other benefits** (E.g.: Did you notice any other benefits or changes due to your course participation?)

7. What other outcomes, long term effects or changes have you noticed?

Please refer to the same topic areas as in question 6 above. Use the topics 6.1 - 6.6 again as a checklist and proceed in the same way as for question 6: check explicitly with the topics that have not been mentioned yet etc.

C. Reasons for the mentioned benefits

Ask further questions, if the reasons for benefits are missing in part B.

- 8. You have now mentioned plenty of benefits. Could you please tell me the main reasons for those benefits? What is the reason that the course(s) had those benefits you mentioned before?

(Reference to question 2.4. of the questionnaire: Trainer, learning methods, other participants, group activities, content and topic, opportunity to make something with your own hands, support and counseling, learning something new, being an active member of a group).

→ These aspects should not be asked consecutively and not directly. Depending on the narration of the interviewee, please check individually. E.g.: You have described the benefit xy. What influence had the trainer/ learning methods etc. on that benefit?

D. Conclusion: Any other benefits

Ask then further questions, when you expect to obtain further relevant information.

- 9. You now have mentioned plenty of benefits that relate to your course attention in liberal adult education. Are you aware of any other benefits that might be related albeit only slightly to the course(s)?
- 10. Could you please sum-up your most important benefits due to the course(s)?
- 11. If you would now register for a course what course would you choose?
- 12. End and thank you for the interview.



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Project number - 519319-LLP-1-2011-1-DE-KA1-KA1SCR

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E. Statistical and demographic data:

Information concerning the interview:

Date of the interview: _____

Time and duration of the interview: _____

Setting: telephone / face to face, location: _____

Distractions: _____

Name of the interviewer: _____

Country: _____

Information concerning the interviewee:

Sex: _____

Age: _____

Highest educational level: _____

Occupational status: _____

Mother tongue: _____

Nationality: _____

Further remarks concerning the interview: _____



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APPENDIX 2: Analysis guidelines (V3)²⁷

Version for the coding of national interviews (Task C)

1. Preliminary work to finalise the code list (A: June 26 – Juli 3 / B: July 8 – 29)

A Coding test with the 1st UK interview

Aim: testing of the coding procedure, see document «Interpretation workshop 1»: All partners code the same portions of 1 interview provided by Sam, UK (we've worked on it already in Bologna).

Done.

B Coding test with a second UK interview and 1-2 national interviews (July 8-29)

In this phase we do a more extensive test and refine the coding procedure that was tested in task A . and ensure a common understanding. In the same time we develop new codes and categories.

Done

2. Coding and analysing all national interviews (C: 5 August – 15 Sept.)

C All partners **code their national interviews** along the revised code list which is provided by DIE/SVEB after the coding tests in the preliminary phase. The code list remains a work in progress and can still be modified during the analysis. During this process all partners can make suggestions for new codes or the modification of existing codes and categories. The process of developing and refining the code system is led by SVEB/DIE.

Open questions, interpretations and national particularities are discussed with all partners in google groups. The discussion is led by SIAE.

Coding procedure:

²⁷ Versions 1 and 2 of these guidelines contained detailed instructions for the first two phases of the analysis (tasks A and B). The three versions were elaborated subsequently in the course of the research process so that specific issues and questions which emerged during the partners' coding and analysis process could be reflected and taken into consideration.



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We proceed in the same way as proposed in the previous test phases, with some slight adjustments.

A practical tip for the interview templates: To put the interview into a Word table, it is best to mark the whole text and then choose “insert table” (this is less time-consuming than beginning with the table and copy/pasting the text statement by statement into the table). And please number the sections (see overview workshop 2) and use the colours proposed in the code list V3.

1. Step: Coding the benefits (first cycle coding)

Code the benefits according to code list provided by SVEB/DIE (which is based on the Template two open questions) and insert new codes/categories into the code list.

Please note:

If you want to create new (sub-)categories or codes, discuss this with the partners on google groups.

What should (not) be coded?

We code **only benefits the interviewees have experienced personally**. That means: If interviewees talk of benefits that other people have experienced (i.e. friends, or other course participants) we do not code these. The same for general reflections on the benefits of lifelong learning (like «it is good to learn new things»). But if interviewees make interesting remarks about other people’s benefits or about general issues regarding AE, please take notes/memos if you think they might give hints for the later interpretation of the results.

If interviewees report **benefits that are not directly linked with the courses** they attended, we code them only if they seem relevant, which to some degree is a subjective decision. See for instance the text example in the second UK interview (interpretation workshop 2): The interviewee had taken a course in Chinese Art, which led indirectly to a journey to India. In the course of his narration, he draws a connection between these two activities. Such cases can be coded and if they are, they should be accompanied by an analytic memo saying that the benefits were seen as related to the course (or the things learned in the course) although they were not a direct consequence of the course. In case of ambiguity: discuss the question with the partners.

2. Step: coding the 3 dimensions (second cycle coding)

We continue developing codes and categories **for 3 dimensions** of the benefits. The first step or first cycle was about identifying benefits, the second cycle is about finding qualities (observable criteria), processes (development) and patterns (relations) of the already identified and coded benefits.

This means that we have many or even mostly double or overlapping codings here. However, we will also find statements to code as dimensional codes that were not coded as benefits.



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- a) External criteria for the benefits** (external means basically observable: we look for actions or verifiable evidence – like “meet course participants at home” - as opposed to attitudes or abstract statements like “have more social contact” or “feel more confident”).

Observable or «external criteria» might be benefits themselves, so that coding «external criteria» might look like unnecessary work. We should do it anyway because we will need statements to illustrate observable criteria of the benefits in the reports. This makes our interpretation more robust in the end.

- b) development of the benefits** (here we ask: how did the benefits develop, what are the reasons that make the benefit “happen”, see also interview question nr. 8 and question 2.4 of the questionnaire). Please use the code list and propose new codes if needed. See also the document «Analysis of the dimension ‘development of benefits’» by Bettina.

- c) relationship between benefits** (this dimension deals with the way benefits are connected; different benefits may influence each other i.e. in a causal, reinforcing way, but might also be perceived as autonomous – the codes have not been developed yet)

How to proceed? Please mark every statement that shows any sort of relation among different benefits and assign the general category «relation». You do not need to develop codes for this category. Just collect the statements, translate them into English, write a memo, and send them to Irena, Bettina, and Jyri who will analyse all statements and suggest codes and subcategories. Subsequently, the codes will be put up for discussion on google groups.

One example from the UK interview that was coded by most partners as relationship between benefits is:

«I suppose one thing leads to another. You know. It takes you to areas that you would never have considered otherwise. I would never have thought that I would have gotten.»

Please do not forget to comment the statements where necessary to clarify the context (memos).

Working group (Bettina, Irena, Jyri – and others if interested):

A working group will collect the statements, analyse them and suggest codes. We plan to use pattern coding for this purpose. This means:

«Pattern codes are explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation. They pull together a lot of material into a more meaningful and parsimonious unit of analysis. They are a sort of meta-code. Pattern Coding is a way of grouping those summaries into a smaller number of sets, themes, or constructs.» (Miles & Huberman 1994, cited in: Saldana 2013, p. 210).

It often helps to use In Vivo codes in a first step: To choose a word or a whole sentence from the text and use it as a code, like «one thing leads to another». After coding several statements, we can go back to the In Vivo codes, look for similarities among them and then hopefully find a more general code. In the case of «one thing leads to another» (quoted above) we might for instance choose something like «sequential relation» or, more metaphorically, «relay» (the



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group sport where each group member runs a stretch of the distance) or «torch relay» (like 1 benefit enlightens another benefit). When we reach this stage, we drop the In Vivo codes and re-code their statements with the new pattern code.

Sometimes creativity is required to name pattern codes: «Many codes – especially pattern codes – are captured in form of metaphors (...), where they can synthesize large blocks of data in a single trope» (Miles & Hubermann 1994. Cited in: Saldana 2013, p. 212)

You can leave the pattern coding to the working group, but of course you are free to participate in this process and suggest codes if you like.

During this process we should also turn our attention to **cultural differences** that might show up in the interviews as well as in our different ways of coding and analysing them. Please keep this in mind, take notes and write memos on possible cultural differences and discuss on google groups and use for your national research report.

3. General methodological aspects

How to assign and create codes and categories:

1. **Select and mark «key» words**, sentences, paragraphs which seem to be important to you when answering to the questions on the benefits and their dimensions. Use colours and (1) numbers to mark the text segments (please use the colours according to the coding list V3).
2. **Assign a code/category** using the code list V3. **Add new codes** and/or modifications. A code «is most often a word or a short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data» (Saldana 2011, p.3). The coding is the «transitional process between data collection and more extensive data analysis» (ibid. p. 4) and it's always a «**cyclical act**», which means that **codes can be modified** and data can be **recoded** several times.
3. **Formulate preliminary assumptions/hypotheses** on possible categories, themes, contexts, or interpretations of the results if needed (analytic memos, see Saldana).
4. **Build a new category**, if needed, which means to group similar coded data into a category. **Look for patterns** and write analytic memos about possible connections between the benefits.

(Saldana: «I advocate that qualitative codes are essence-capturing and essential elements of the research story that, when clustered together according to similarity and regularity - a pattern – they actively facilitate the development of categories and thus analysis of their connections.» (Saldana 2011, p. 8)

Writing analytic memos



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Memos should be written during the whole coding process. «The purpose of analytic memos is to document and reflect on: your coding process and code choices; how the process of inquiry is taking shape; and the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories, themes, and concepts in your data. (...) Analytic memos are somewhat comparable to researcher journal entries or blogs – a place to 'dump your brain' about the participants, phenomenon, or process under investigation». (Saldana 2011 p. 31, see attachment «Saldana memos»).

As a sort of researcher journal, memos are a mix of scientific and personal reflection. You can write them in your own language and translate only the ones you would like to share with the partners into English.

Interpretation of the codings

The interpretation process is still to be discussed and agreed upon. But for now we would suggest the following:

- We do **not quantify** the benefits.
- And we do **not plan to describe each interview case** separately.

We suggest instead that each partner retrieves the coded statements from all his/her interviews and describes the results. So you retrieve i.e. all statements that were assigned to the subcategory «mental well-being», read them, describe the results, and choose statements that might be appropriate for quoting or translating. And so on for all subcategories. Of course you do not need to analyse every category separately but can also retrieve several categories at once and analyse them together (i.e. mental well-being and physical health).

- **The interpretation should include:**
 - **What benefits** did the interviews show? Not only the most important or frequently mentioned benefits, but also new, interesting or surprising aspects of benefits that were mentioned by few or even only one single person.
 - Description of the **results of the dimensional coding**: What external criteria were mentioned, what did you find out about the development of benefits, what relationships between benefits could be identified?
 - As mentioned above, we do not analyse each interview case separately. But this does not mean that we should forget the individual person and the circumstances of their learning experience. On the contrary, it is important that we consider the individual as well as societal, systemic (AE system) and cultural **contexts** when analysing the results. We can do this by moving back and forth from original data to interpretation. Analytic memos help to keep in touch with relevant contextual aspects.



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Additional documents you need for the test phase (task C)

- **Code list version V3**, containing the benefits and suggestions for the dimensional categories/codes, which have to be elaborated and completed during the coding and interpretation process. This list contains also codes which were suggested by partners during the second test (codes in Italics).
- **BeLL template «Analyses two open questions» V4.1**
- **Transcripts** of your national interviews
- **2 Texts by Johnny Saldana (2011, second edition 2013, sent to you for the previous workshops):**
 - An Introduction to Codes and Coding
 - Writing analytic memos

From: The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. London: SAGE, p. 1-31 and p. 32-44). This text is proposed by SVEB/DIE as a basis for the discussion and a common understanding of the coding process (see pdf attached).
- **Texts by:** Saldana, Hattie, Darkenwald, Valentine (see separate e-mail).

3. Interpretation, report, translation (until 30 Sept., overall report SVEB 31 Oct.)

D Translating 25% of the interview material into English

SVEB provides guidelines that suggest criteria for the selection of the 25% as well as a template to fill in the text portions.

E Interpretation of the results and writing of the national report on the qualitative interviews.

Every partner analyses and interprets their own national results and writes a report (about 5 pages per country). SVEB provides suggestions for the structure and content of the national reports.

All reports are sent to SVEB for the overall evaluation. The national reports are also uploaded on google groups, so that all partners can have a look at each others' results.

F Writing the overall Qualitative Data Analyses Report (SVEB)

SVEB writes the qualitative data analysis report on the basis of the national reports. Portions of the translated statements are integrated into the overall report.

Partners are asked to read the report and give a short feed-back to SVEB.



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APPENDIX 3 : BeLL interviews - code list (V3)

Main categories	Subcategories (= cat. of the open questions + dimensional categories)	Codes
		New Codes/subcategories = in <i>Italics</i> (has to be discussed, some are double, some are quite similar...)
		benefits = blue
		Reasons for participation = green
		Development of benefits = red
		Relation among benefits = pink
		External criteria = brown
		In <i>Italics</i>: codes that were suggested in workshop 2 (to discuss as needed)
Benefits		
	Locus of control	
	Self-efficacy	Self-confidence Confidence in own skills Self-discovery Self motivating Self-control
	Tolerance	Cultural knowledge Tolerance
	Trust	<i>Trust in competence of others</i>
	Social network	New networks Social interaction New friends
	Sense of purpose in life	New inspiration Structure in daily life



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		Sense of belonging to a community
		Self fulfillment & joy of doing
		Wider life circles
		(new) hobbies
		Respect
		<i>General learning interest</i>
		<i>Activating (new) actions</i>
		<i>New perspective</i>
	Civic and social engagement	Participation in society
		Interest and knowledge of politics
	Civic competence	Change of attitudes
		Shared expertise
		Sense of responsibility
		Advocacy for political convictions
		<i>Sense of community</i>
	Mental well-being	Mental well-being
		Well-being in daily life
		Well-being at work
		Good spirits
		Coping
		Quality of life
		Sense of purpose
		<i>Staying active</i>
	Work-related benefits	Further education
		Instrumental outcomes
		Career options
		Job related skills
		Job hunting
		Efficiency & increase in job-performance
		Appreciation & recognition of skills
		<i>Sideline activities</i>
	Physical health	Physical well-being
		<i>physically active</i>
	Health behaviour	Health consciousness
		Health skills



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		Health benefits <i>medical prevention and rehabilitation</i>
	Family	Coping with parental role Proving information for family
	Shift/changes in the educational experiences	Joy of learning
		Motivation to learn
		Learning skills
		Motivating others to learn
		Sense of achievement
		<i>Sense of learning</i>
	Competencies²⁸	Skills (not specified)
		Physical skills
		ICT skills
		Skills in handcraft & arts
		Language skills
		General or new knowledge
		Self-expression and creativity
		Information seeking skills
		Better reading skills
		Increased reading practices
		Numerical skills
		Writing skills
		Increased writing practices
		Social skills
		Staying updated
		Communication skills
		Environmental awareness
		Musical skills
		<i>Information seeking skills</i>
	No outcomes	

²⁸ This category was renamed „skills“ in the course of the analysis, see footnot in section 3.2.12



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	Most important benefits (conclusion, see interview question 10)	<i>(use the same codes as above)</i>
Reasons for participation (see note below)**	goal oriented	
	activity oriented	
	learning oriented	
Development of benefits (see quest. 2.4, reasons)	Trainer	<i>Trainer's competencies</i>
		<i>Trainer's knowledge</i>
		<i>trainer's approach</i>
		<i>teacher's expertise</i>
		<i>teacher's person/ trainer's personality/Trainer's personal background</i>
		<i>teacher's resources</i>
		<i>trainer's instructional skills</i>
		<i>status of the trainer</i>
		<i>tutoring skills; pedagogical/didactical skills</i>
		<i>Quality of teaching</i>
	Learning methods	
	Other participants	<i>Behaviour</i>
		<i>Randomly mixed group</i>
		<i>Cultural diversity</i>
		<i>Interesting people</i>
		<i>Lack of experience</i>
	Group activities	
	Content and topic	
	Make something with your hands	
	Support and counselling	
	Learning something new	
	Being an active member of a group	



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Relationship between benefits	Interdependence	
External criteria	Participation in events and social activities	
	Social recognition/ appreciation	«eggheads»
		« <i>friends have been quite interested</i> »
	Provider	quality control
	organise events	Sideline activities
		Chat/ travelling/organizing events
	Institutional framework condition	membership
Basic information (facts)		
The basic information about the person and the courses they attended are not part of the code system.		
This information should be put down in a separate note. If you use MaxQda: i.e. in a document memo (see template).		
Additionally, some parts of this note should be included in the case scheme at the end of the analysis (see template).		
*** Houle's reasons for participation (the orientations may overlap):		
Goal Oriented learners use education as a means of achieving some other goal		
Activity Oriented learners participate for the sake of the activity itself and the social interaction it provides.		
Learning Oriented learners seek knowledge for its own sake.		



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APPENDIX 4: Coding example (interpretation workshop 2)

Apart from two countries, where Maxqda and Atlas.ti software were use to code the interviews, the interviews were coded manually using a template and pre-defined coding guidelines. The following example gives a picture of the coding method as well as the use of analytic memos to support the interpretation process and the discussion within and among the research teams.



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Coding example, taken from the second interpretation workshop

BeLL interviews: Interpretation workshop 2 (Task B: Coding procedure) - Template for the **coding of the benefits (blue)** and **the development of dimensional codes/categories (red)**

	Interview segment	Subcategories	Codes	Analytic memos / questions to discuss
14	H: Well, partly because the first course, <u>the history from the 12th century to the 19th, to the last emperor</u> -1. <u>that was so interesting that 2 I thought I want to find out more</u> - yes, I'm interested in current affairs but you get fed up with reading the papers, 3. <u>you want to get more background to it, and more long term or considered views</u> , and 4. <u>to keep the old mind active really.</u>	1. sense of purpose in life 2. shift/changes in educational experiences 3. civic competence 4. Mental well-being Content and topic	1. new inspiration 2. motivation to learn 3. interest and knowledge of politics (and historical background?) 4. Mental well-being	3. This seems to be about a merging of historical knowledge and the development of a new understanding of current politics. The overall meaning/drive of his interview seems to be about how his study of history/cultural history gives him a new, better, understanding/perspective on current events/politics- which makes me think this benefit is indeed about civic competence- but would be grateful to talk this through with someone! 4. The idea of 'keeping my mind active' or 'exercising my brain' came up a lot in the qualitative bits of the questionnaire- and I think this isn't really mental well-being- in that it's not primarily about mental health (which is usually understood to be more about an emotional state than cognitive fluidity- isn't it?)- so perhaps we need a new code for this?
15	S: Thinking about the courses you've done over the past 12 months, what do you think are the benefits for you of doing those courses?			



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16	H: Um, well, it's, 1. <u>it's just made me more interested in finding out about these places</u> and the other thing it's done- I had a friend who works in a school in Stroud and they had a school trip to India for three weeks and they were a bit short and they said 'do you want to go?' and I thought, I've never travelled much_ I've been to obviously Europe a few times- and I thought oh, 2. <u>and anyway I went.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shift/changes in the education experiences 2. Sense of purpose in life <p style="color: red;">Content and topic ('these places')</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Motivation to learn 2. New inspiration/new hobbies (both? Which?) 	I would probably have seen 1. and 2. as the same benefit (but whether motivation to learn or new inspiration would have been a tough one- perhaps new inspiration because it's about a motivation to learn, but not necessarily through formal or nonformal learning situations, but rather through travel etc), but he has explicitly identified them as two different benefits ('and the other thing it's done') so I have gone with that.
17	S: Is this where you've just been?			
18	H: Yes, it's where I've just been for three weeks and it was – oh I'm really glad I went. Well, it's just, it's more of a continent. And you see, you begin to see you know, it's a different culture- and you realized, I suppose you just realize, you know the world is a different place from how it is portrayed through the normal channels, it's just fascinating- you just think- oh I just find it fascinating. It's made me more interested.			I decided not to code these benefits as this is about the benefits of the trip rather than – directly- of the courses. Though he is clear on the link- so perhaps these should be coded?
19	S: So the courses you did, which were focused around China, those led you to be interested in going on this trip to India?			
20	H: 1. <u>Yes, yes</u> , because, yes because um, <u>obviously the Moghul invasion of North India was about the same time as the Mongol invasion of China.</u> China has never itself invaded another country- it has just responded to the invasions of others. The Mongols very quickly got assimilated into the Chinese ways and became very civilized, weren't barbarians and so on, and then I just wondered how- because the Mongols used to stretch all the way along to Western Europe, didn't they? and so I wondered how they	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sense of purpose in life 2. Competencies (or is this civic competence or engagement?) OR he is also arguing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.new inspiration 3. New or general knowledge 	I've uncertain about 2. for two reasons, firstly, it is not direct – he seems to be arguing that the course led him to the travel (though possibly also the course- it is ambiguous) and the travel has had the benefit of making him more informed which would allow him- he is imagining- to be more active in the



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	<p>affected India. But the Moghul's were different- they were from Samarkand or Afghanistan, they were Muslim and so on. So that was interesting. And I wanted to see the architecture. It's world history really. Being a teacher, and you know there's all this stuff recently about oh, education needs tightening up, it's got to be more rigorous, and they were having a go at history teaching and I know it's all a load of tosh and, well, it seems that it's all going in the wrong direction, and I thought 2. <u>if I'm more informed about things</u>, then if there is ever an opportunity, because I'm still involved in the union, they have people who go onto exam boards and they have views and there are consultations and I thought, you need to have a wider perspective- that's my view. So, it's useful from that point of view, in a semi-professional way.</p>	<p>that it is work-related—to be politically engaged in work-related activities/advocacy ?</p> <p>Content and topic</p>		<p>political/social engagement/advocacy aspects of his former profession- in the teachers' union etc.</p> <p>Secondly, I'm not sure whether it is about new or general knowledge, or more about civic engagement, or more about work related benefits...</p>
21	<p>S: That's what I was going to ask about next- whether you see any links between the courses and your past or present work or work involvement?</p>			
22	<p>H: Yes it's more out of interest, my own interest, but 1. <u>it does make you think</u>, and then <u>you think</u>, yes, things like that- I'm out of education at the moment, but <u>certainly my professional body</u>, it does make you think <u>about things like that</u>, and if there were any opportunity or forum I could raise it, say that. I mean I don't think I'm alone in that, a lot of people have had their say, about these [Gove's] ill-thought out ideas, on the back of an envelope or something.</p>	<p>3. Work related Content and topic ('things like that')</p>	<p>? None of the codes fit? Is this about work-related civic engagement?</p>	
23	<p>S: Can you see, do you feel that the courses have changed you at all personally?</p>			
24	<p>H: Um, oh, yes, I mean, when I'm talking to my friends, they, they, have been quite interested, so it's, yes, it think it has, and also <u>Daoism and things like that, it makes you think</u>. We in the West are terribly</p>	<p>4. Civic competence 5. Sense of purpose in life Content and topic</p>	<p>6. Change of attitudes 7. New inspiration</p>	<p>I think these are two separate points- two separate benefits: 1. a shift in perspective to appreciate what we have, to reassess what we</p>



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	<p>consumerist- and 1. <u>so back to nature- it's made me think</u>, although I don't have a great deal of money at all, <u>I live quite comfortably compared with most people around the world</u>. When you go to India – you think- gosh we're so- and we, we moan- 2. <u>and- it just gives you another perspective-</u> and that's great- it's great to think 2000 years ago people were doing this, that and another. So, yes,- <u>it's reinvigorating-</u> would that be a word?</p>	<p>('Daosim and things like that')</p>		<p>need etc and 2. A 'reinvigorated' perspective about human achievement (what people could do 2000 years ago...). He is clear, though, that they are linked interdependence?</p>
25	<p>S: Yes! Do you think it's changed at all your ideas about learning or your interest in learning?</p>			



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APPENDIX 5: national case schemes

Case scheme CZECH REPUBLIC

Interview	Gender	Age	Level of education	Profession	Course/s	Provider/s	Most important benefits
CZE_A	F	58	Educated in the tailoring	Dressmaker for women	Arranging of flowers (floristry)	A private organisation	Self-discovery Well-being in daily life
CZE_B	F	28	University degree	Project manager	Spanish language	A private organisation	Competencies/ Language skills Social network/ New friends
CZE_C	F	29	University degree	Clerk in the state administration	English language	A private organisation	Self-confidence Language skills
CZE_D	M	34	University degree	Consultant	IT	A private organisation	Self-confidence Efficiency & increase in job-performance
CZE_E	F	24	A-level	Operator in the call centre	Yoga	A private organisation	Quality of life Medical prevention and rehabilitation
CZE_F	F	34	Educated hairdresser	Hairdresser	English language	A private organisation	New perspective Cultural knowledge
CZE_G	F	40	University degree	Librarian	Communication skills	A private organisation	Self-discovery Well-being in daily life
CZE_H	F	33	University degree	Quality auditor in an industrial company	Spanish language	A private organisation	Language skills Cultural knowledge Quality of life



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Case scheme ENGLAND

Interview	Gender	Age	Level of education	Profession	Course/s	Provider/s	Most important benefits
ENG_V	F	33	Undergraduate degree	Has not worked much due to mental health difficulties. Is doing voluntary work along with her course	1) Course to take care of courses and teach disabled adults to ride	Further Education College	Mental well-being
ENG_D	F	70	Some secondary school, is in process of doing an Open University Degree	Retired secretary/PA/event organiser/advertising account manager	1) Creative writing 2) Creative writing 3) Welsh	1) WEA (Workers' Educational Association) 2) County Council 3) Privately organised	Competencies, Self-efficacy, social networks, mental well being
ENG_T	F	42	Undergraduate degree	Manager at a community centre	1) Baking 2) Jewellery making 3) First aid 4) Safeguarding	1) Community education centre 2) Community education centre 3 & 4) Workplace	Competencies Self-efficacy Social network
ENG_B	M	57	Undergraduate degree and teaching qualification	Retired teacher	1) Lifedrawing 2) Lifedrawing	1) Local authority education 2) Privately arranged group	Competencies
ENG_R	F	62	Undergraduate degree and MA	Semi-retired teacher and teacher educator	1) Finnish	Evening classes at Leeds Met university	Competencies Tolerance Civic competence
ENG_L	M	37	Undergraduate degree and accountancy qualifications	Accountant	1) Digital photography	Further education college	Mental well-being Sense of purpose in life
ENG_M	M	43	None, perhaps L2 (unclear)	Unemployed	1) Photoshop 2) Web design	1&2 Further education college	Competencies Social network
ENG_H	M	59	Undergraduate degree and teaching qualification	Retired teacher	The arts of China	Workers Educational Association	Competencies, Sense of purpose in life Civic & social



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							engagement
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Case scheme FINLAND

Interview	Gender	Age	Level of education	Profession	Course/s	Provider/s	Most important benefits
FIN_A	M	64	Technician	Retired	Writing Cooking for men	Summer University	Competencies Work related benefits
FIN_B	F	41	Master's degree	Researcher, nurse	Painting, Capoeira, Singing Scuba diving, Yoga	Adult education centre, Diving club	Sense of purpose in life Changes in the educational experiences
FIN_C	F	44	Secondary level commercial	Librarian	Middle East dancing Handicrafts	Adult education centre, Dance group	Physical well-being Changes in the educational experiences Social network
FIN_D	F	47	Master's degree	Lecturer	Nature photography, Photography, Writing	Adult education centre	Social network Competencies Mental well-being
FIN_E	F	60	Master's degree	Inspector of Vocational Education	Peer support group, Choir singing, Knowledge of a specific disease	Adult education centre, Disease association	Health benefits Competences Sense of purpose in life Self-efficacy
FIN_F	F	64	Secondary level commercial	Retired	Basics of Volunteering, Afro dance, English	Adult education centre	Mental well-being Locus of control Changes in the educational experiences Self-efficacy
FIN_G	F	61	Matriculation exam	Janitor	Wisdom of Mind; Weaving; Upholstery; Literature;	Adult education centre	Changes in educational experiences Social network Sense of purpose in life
FIN_H	F	70	Secondary level	Retired	Self organised bowling and gymnastic clubs	Self organized courses	Health benefits Social network



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Case scheme GERMANY

Interview	Gender	Age	Level of education	Profession	Course/s	Provider/s	Most important benefits
GER_A	F	70	Secondary school	Legal assistant	1. Painting 2. Gymnastics 3. Walking 4. Breathing techniques 5. Romanian	Adult education centre Private studio	Sense of purpose in life Mental well-being Self-efficacy Health behaviour
GER_B	M	60	University degree in social work	Press officer at the municipal administration Head of town the twinning office	1. Cabaret at the KZ 2. Political intending work	Educational institution of the trade union	Competencies Civic and social engagement Civic competence
GER_C	M	45	University degree: Wirtschaftsingenieur	Manager	1. Yoga 2. Jazzdance 3. Leadership 4. Meditation	Adult education centre Private studio	Sense of purpose in life Social networks Health behaviour Mental well-being Work related benefits
GER_D	M	72	Secondary school	Manager	1. French (since four years)	Adult education centre	Competencies Self-efficacy Mental well-being
GER_E	M	63	Secondary school	Lath operator/union employee/community secretary	1. Islam Critique 2. New Patriotism 3. Cabaret at the KZ	Educational institution of the trade union	Civic and social engagement Civic competencies Sense of purpose in life Mental well-being
GER_F	F	28	Diploma as in oecotrophologist	Employee at the voluntary service of the UNESCO	1. Swedish (since 3-4 years)	Adult education centre	Competencies Sense of purpose in life Changes in educational experiences
GER_G	F	30	Secondary school	medical technologist	1. English 2. Cooking	Adult education	Self-efficacy Work-related



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					3. Different sports courses	centre	benefits
GER_H	F	41	University degree in Laws	Advisor for banking supervision	1. Prague parent child programme (PEKiP)	Family Education Centre	Social networks Family

Case scheme ITALY

Interview	Gender	Age	Level of education	Profession	Course/s	Provider/s	Most important benefits
Example: ITA_A Mariagrazia	F	38	Univ. degree in Contemporary History	Unemployed, former copy editor	1. Yoga	1. Cultural association	Self-efficacy Health benefits
ITA B AnnaPia	F	65	Univ. Degree in pedagogical sciences	Retired, former public servant	1. Creative writing 2. Creative writing 3. Self consciousness and autobiography	Cultural association	Social networks Self-efficacy
ITA_C Ludmila	F	40	School leaving certificate (in Moldova)	She works in the small building enterprise owned by her husband	Italian for foreigners	Cultural association	Self-efficacy Health benefits
ITA_D Sonia	F	37	School leaving certificate (in Ucraina)	Professional caregiver	Italian for foreigners	Cultural association	Self-efficacy Health benefits
ITA_E Carla	F	42	School leaving certificate	Civil servant	1.Creative writing 2.yoga	Cultural association	Self-efficacy Health benefits
ITA_F Paolo	M	64	Univ. Degree in Human Geography	Retired Former manager in a public administrative office	1.yoga	Cultural association	Health benefits Social networks
ITA_G Rosa	F	55	Univ. Degree in Italian Literature	Librarian	1.Photography 2.Yoga	1. Third age university 2.Cultural	Self-efficacy Mental wellbeing



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						association	
ITA_H Elena	F	28	Univ. Degree in Communication	Self employed worker	1.E-book creation 2.English language	Cultural association	Social network Work-related benefits



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Case scheme ROMANIA

Interview	Gender	Age	Level of education	Profession	Course/s	Provider/s	Most important benefits
Example: ROM_T (Teea)	F	18	Example: High school	Student	2. Dancing 3. Volley	1. Private course 2. School	Self-efficacy Social network Changes in the educational experiences Health benefits
ROM_NV (Nicu)	M	70	Higher education, technical univ.	Retired mechanical engineer	1. English 2. ICT 3. Health	Seniors association	Social network Civic and social engagement
ROM_IM (Ioana)	F	24	Higher education	Assistant manager	1. Project management 2. Catalan language 3. ICT	Private course Spanish University Private course	Competences Work-related benefits
ROM_SN (Simona)	F	37	Post high school	Librarian, student	Techniques of communication	Private foundation	Competences
ROM_V (Viorica)	F	73	High school	Retired	1. English 2. Health 3. ICT	Seniors association	1. Social network 2. Health behaviour 3. Changes in the educational experiences
ROM_AS (Alex)	B	26	Higher education, PhD	Univ. assistant	Poetry writing	Cultural association	Competences Social network
RO_AA (Alina)	F	32	Higher education, MA	Teacher	Education for democracy	Intercultural institute	Work-related benefits / competences
ROM_SI (Infonina)	F	53	Higher education	Medical retirement	Handicraft	Church workshop	Social network



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Case scheme SERBIA

Interview	Gender	Age	Level of education	Profession	Course/s	Provider/s	Most important benefits
SRB_T (Tanja)	F	56	Univ. degree in pedagogy (Magistar/Master)	Secretary	Guitar course for beginners	Private course	Health benefits
SRB_S (Sasa)	M	29	Univ. degree in economics	Economist, consultant	Germany language, B2/2 level	Private institution	Work-related benefits Changes in the educational experiences
SRB_D (Dusan)	M	24	Beachelor degree in Andragogy	Student of master studies	German language Intermediate level (B2)	Private course	Work-related benefits
SRB_J (Jelena)	F	34	High school – musical school	Administrator at company	Chorus - musical course for amaters	NGO	Competencies Changes in the educational experiences Self-efficacy
SRB_V (Violeta)	F	54	PhD degree in Andragogy	Assistant professor	Yoga	Private course	Health benefits Work-related benefits Changes in the educational experience
SRB_M (Maja)	F	38	High school – medical school	Masseur, housewife, mother of two children	Yoga	NGO	Health behavior Mental well-being Self-efficacy
SRB_B (Bojana)	F	31	University degree in Andragogy	Secretary at the Department for Andragogy /Trainer	The professional orientation on transition to secondary schooling	NGO and Ministry of Education	Work related benefits
SRB_Ž (Željka)	F	28	Master of Food Technology	Developer of packaging	English language, B2/3 level	Private institution	Work-related benefits Competencies Changes in the educational experience



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Case scheme SLOVENIA

Interview	Gender	Age	Level of education	Profession	Course/s	Provider/s	Most important benefits
SLO_A Alenka	F	61	University degree in sociology	Retired (before: a sociologist)	1. Mediation – conflict resolution 2. Grandmothers and grandfathers 3. Computer course	1-3 Third Age University	Self-efficacy Sense of purpose in life
SLO_B Branko	M	31	Grammar school	Candidate for graduation	1. Theatre improvisation 2. Workshops on voluntary and other work 3. Vineyard issues	1. Theatre 2. NGO 3. Private entrepreneur in Austria	Competencies Civic competence Tolerance
SLO_C Cvetka	F	32	University degree – the Slovene language	Adult educator, mentor, professor of the Slovene language	1. Classes on adult education 2. How to make a skirt 3. The Spanish language	1. Folk high school, Institute for Adult Education etc. 2. Private dressmaker 3. Language school	Self-efficacy Mental well-being
SLO_D Darko	M	27	University degree – in electrotechnics	Computer programmer	1. Computer course (programming)	1. Computer company	Competencies
SLO_E Erika	F	49	M. SC. in computer science and informatics	Disability pension	1. Mentoring for study circles 2. Reading circles for elderly	1. Institute for Adult Education 2. Institute	Changes in the educational experience Social network
SLO_F Franci	M	76	Technical High School	Retired (before: head of prototype workshops in a factory)	1. Arts class 2. Computer class	1. Artist 2. Computer company	Changes in the educational experience Social network Self-efficacy
SLO_G Gizela	F	24	Upper secondary school	Unemployed	1. Yoga 2. Business communication 3. Personal coaching	1. Private yoga trainer 2. Company 3. City Youth Council	Self-efficacy
SLO_H			Lower	Unemployed	1. Project	1. Folk high	Changes in the



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Herbert	M	22	vocational school (computer field)		learning for young Adults	school	educational experiences
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Case scheme SPAIN

Interview	Gender	Age	Level of education	Profession	Course/s	Provider/s	Most important benefits
ESP_M (Maria)	F	25	University degree	Red Cross	1. English B 2.0 2. Catalan D 3. Intervention of Socio Addictions		Work related benefits, Competences, Self-efficacy
ESP_J (Jose)	M	66	Basic Education	Retired	1. English		Social network Changes in educational experiences, Competences
ESP_D (David)	M	77	Basic Education	Retired	1. Literary discussion 2. ICT resource		Competences Changes in educational experiences, Social network
ESP_N (Noemi)	F	73	Basic Education	Housewife	1. Bobbing lacing		Social interaction, Skills in handcraft, Civic competence, Changes in educational experiences
ESP_N (Nuria)	F	37	High School	School dining instructor	1. Preparation of entrance exam for the intermediate grade of vocational training	Public School	Social network, Self-efficacy, Mental well-being Family
ESP_E (Esther)	M	28	Basic VET	Worker at a nightclub of public relationships	1. Preparation of entrance exam	Public school	Competences, Self-efficacy, Social network
ESP_J (Juan)	M	38	VET	Unemployed	1. English for adults 2. IT 3. Furniture restoration 4. Early detection of	Public school	Self-efficacy, Social network, Competences, Changes in educational experiences



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					dyslexia		
ESP_R (Raquel)	F	70	--	Retired		Public school	Changes in educational experiences, Competences, Mental well-being
ESP_S (Sofia)	F	44	Basic Education	Unemployed	1. Literature of Catalan	Public school	Changes in educational experiences, Mental well-being, Self-efficacy
ESP_M (Marisa)	F	67	Basic Education	Retired	1. Literacy 2. Technology (Photoshop)	Public school	Self-efficacy, Social network, Mental well-being, Competences, Changes in educational experiences



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Case scheme SWITZERLAND

Interview	Gender	Age	Level of education	Profession	Course/s	Provider/s	Most important benefits
CH_A (Anna)	F	59	Univ. degree (Dr med.)	Writer (a former doctor who gave up her medical)	1) Script writing 2) Style in modern literature	Private provider	Sense of purpose in life Competences Work-related benefits
CH_B (Brenda)	F	57	College of higher education	Remedial teacher (currently out of work for health reasons)	1) Digital photography (2 courses) 2) Acoustics 3) Sewing	1) Private provider 2) Public provider 3) Private sewing studio	Sense of purpose in life Mental well-being
CH_C (Chris)	M	44	Baccalaureate (upper secondary, general qualif. for university entrance)	Project manager in the financial sector	1) Japanese (basic and advanced) 2) Power Yoga	Private providers	Mental well-being Physical well-being Changes in the educational experience
CH_D (Daniel)	M	38	Federal VET diploma (upper secondary, vocational qualification)	Accountant (currently in full-time self-organised education)	1) French conversation 2) Swedish (basic) 3) Economics (self-organised, 1 year)	Private provider, self-organised learning	Competences Sense of purpose in life
CH_E (Edith)	F	51	PET college degree (tertiary professional education)	Employee at the public administration and freelance coach	1) Awareness training 2) Matrix (self healing technique)	Private providers	Mental well-being
CH_F (Frieda)	F	77	Vocational education	Retired journalist	1) Desktop Publishing, 2) Photo-shop 3) Dutch 4) Sewing	1-2) Public provider 3) Private provider 4) Private sewing studio	Sense of purpose in life Mental well-being Social network
CH_G (Gregor)	M	42	University of applied sciences	Electro engineer, Technical University	1) Portuguese (2 courses), 2) Brazilian dances 3) Rhetoric (vocational)	Public provider	Sense of purpose in life Social network Mental well-being



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CH_H (Henrik)	M	71	Vocational qualification (social work)	Speaker at funerals, weddings etc.	1) German language and grammar 2) Conflict solving	Public provider	Changes in the educational experience
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APPENDIX 6: Additional description of the interview sample

The total sample of interviews is N=82 (8 per participating country, except for Spain that made 10 interviews). The structure of the interview sample is similar to the structure of the survey sample in terms of *gender* (two thirds women, one third men) and *age* (except for respondents under 18, less represented in the interview sample than in the survey sample).

Age group	Interviewees	
	N	Percent
15 - 24	6	7.3
25 - 36	20	24.4
37 – 49	22	26.8
50 – 64	19	23.2
65-92	15	18.3
Total	82	100%

Table 1

In terms of *level of education*, the qualitative sample contains slightly more respondents with high qualifications than the quantitative sample.

Level of education	Interviewees	
	N	%
ISCED 1 – 2	11	14%
ISCED 3 - 4	34	41%
ISCED 5 - 6	37	45%
Total	82	100%

Table 2



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Finally, in terms of *course topics*, the interview sample includes people that attended almost all course areas represented in the survey sample.

Course topics	Number of courses taken by the interviewees	
	N	%
Social & political education	9	5.8%
Languages & humanities	37	23.6%
ICT	14	8.9%
Health and sports (doing)	30	19.0%
Creative activities (doing)	39	24.8%
Skills and competences	12	7.6%
Work related topics	9	5.8%
Other	7	4.5%
Total	157	100%

Table 3



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