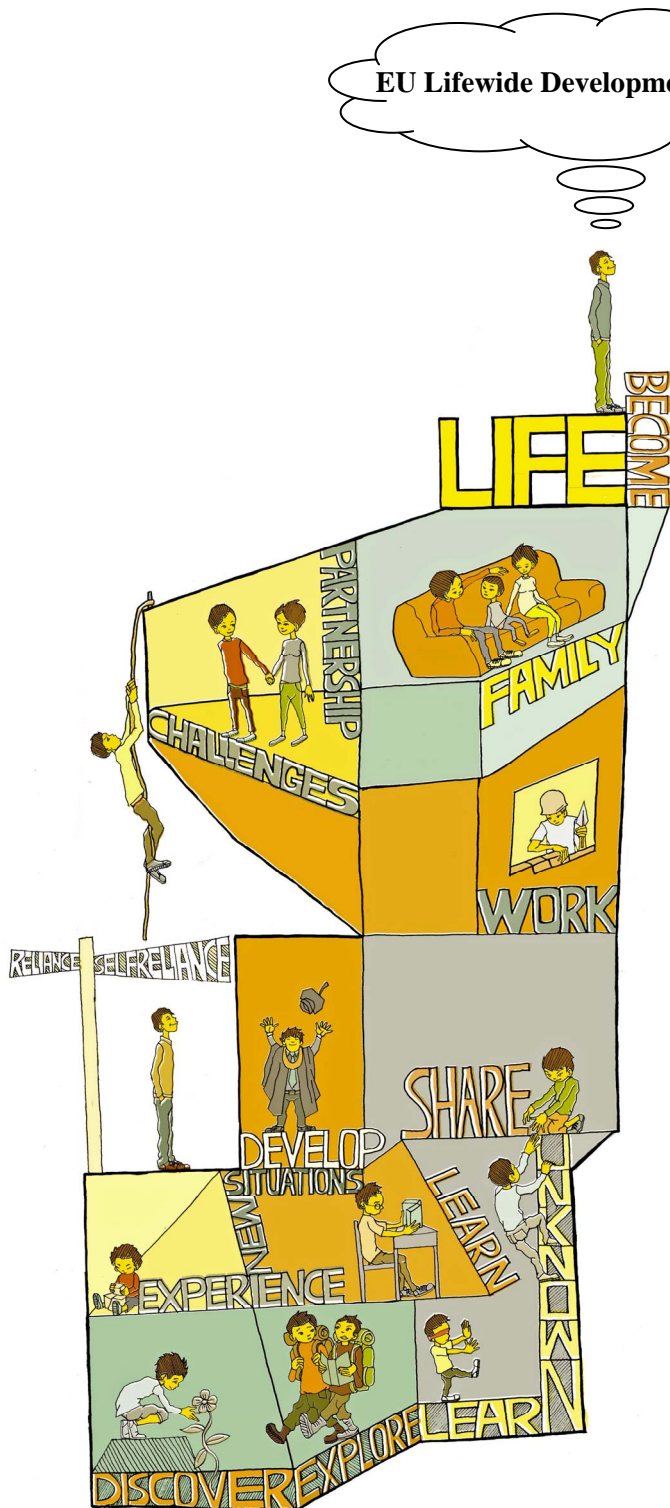


### EU Lifewide Development Award

Norman Jackson

*A high status 'EU Lifewide Development Award' will encourage, support, and recognise the personal, collaborative and informal nature of learning and do much to cultivate a culture of openness and promote the ideals of lifewide, lifelong learning.*



### The Vision

A credible, high status EU 'Lifewide Development Award', open to all EU citizens, that recognises through Open Badges, individuals' learning, development and achievement through their lifewide experiences

An open Award that engages with the vision that personalisation, collaboration and individualisation will be central to learning in the future

An open Award that is valued by employers, educational institutions and community organisations

An open access technology-enabled infrastructure that facilitates an EU-wide mentoring scheme and fosters a community of lifewide learners

An EU-wide community of mentors that is open to any EU citizen willing to volunteer their time, to act as 'learning partners' supporting lifewide learning across the generations

A European society that understands and values *lifewide* learning throughout the lifecourse and embraces the ideals of lifewide education

EU citizens that are better prepared for a lifetime of self-managed learning and self-development in an ever changing, challenging and disruptive world, who are open to learning through their life experiences and open to sharing their learning through supportive and productive learning partnerships

An EU Lifewide Development Award would do much to cultivate a culture of openness and promote the ideals and practices of lifewide lifelong learning and education, and 'knowledge socialism'.

## **Europe 2020 strategy**

acknowledges that a fundamental transformation of education and training is needed if Europe is to remain competitive, overcome the current economic crisis and grasp new opportunities.

The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training recognizes that education and training have a crucial role to play in meeting the many cultural, socio-economic, demographic, environmental and technological challenges facing Europe and its citizens today and in the years ahead. In 2009 EU DG Education and Culture commissioned a foresight study aimed at visualising the Future of Learning<sup>i</sup> the overall vision emerging from the study is that

**personalisation, collaboration and informal learning will be at the core of learning in the future. The central learning paradigm is characterised by lifelong and lifewide learning and shaped by the ubiquity of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).**

The big question is **how do we prepare and enable EU citizens to inhabit this future world** in ways that are relevant, meaningful, interesting and fulfilling?

Encouragement and practical support for lifewide learning and its recognition as a valuable developmental asset provides one possible solution to how we might bridge the gap between the current learning and education paradigm and the future paradigm outlined in the Foresight report. This paper outlines one possible way in which lifewide learning and education might be promoted across the EU drawing ideas and inspiration from two small-scale projects that have been undertaken in the UK in the last four years. The first project involved development and implementation of a Lifewide Learning Award at the University of Surrey<sup>ii</sup>. The second is the current project of the Lifewide Education Community to develop an open-access Lifewide Development Award<sup>iii</sup>.

## **Recognising lifewide learning**

If lifelong learning defines individuals learning enterprises at different stages of their lifecourse from 'cradle to grave', lifewide learning adds important detail by recognising that most people, no matter what their age or circumstances, simultaneously inhabit a number of different spaces - like work or education, being a member of a family, being involved in clubs or societies, travelling and taking holidays and looking after their own wellbeing. So the *timeframes* of lifelong learning and the multiple *spaces* of lifewide learning intermingle and who we are and who we are becoming are the consequences of this intermingling and our will and agency<sup>iv</sup>.

We live out our lives in these different spaces and we have the freedom to choose which spaces we want to occupy and how we want to occupy them. In these spaces we meet and interact with different people, adopt different roles and identities, and think, behave and communicate in different ways. In these different spaces we encounter different sorts of challenges and problems, seize, create or miss opportunities, and aspire to live and achieve our ambitions. In these spaces we create the meaning and purposes that is our life and play our part in being a citizen of the world.

Because we occupy so many different spaces simultaneously we have to learn how to manage our life, juggling and prioritising competing and conflicting demands.

For example, depending on our age and circumstances, in the space of 24 hours we might inhabit spaces relating to work, the classroom or self-study. We might care for a child or elderly parent, look after our home or garden and go shopping. We might go to a pub to socialise with friends, travel somewhere, play some sport or a musical instrument, participate in a community activity and do any number of things in the virtual spaces we inhabit through our smart phones, computers or other devices.

We take our everyday learning for granted in these spaces until we look back and think about what we can and can't do, usually when we are confronted by an unfamiliar situation. In this way our learning and capability accumulates imperceptibly over time. Each of our daily activities has its own rhythm; fast and slow time jostle and compete and we have to manage our time, determine priorities and fulfil our multiple roles in an appropriate manner. Lifewide learning is a fact of everyday life and it continually helps us develop capability to manage ourselves and our lives, look after the people that matter to us, and play our role in society.

It is through our lifewide activity and experiences that we learn to manage our busy lives, cope with the unexpected, adapt to situations as they emerge and transfer our understandings and capabilities between different contexts, and use this self-knowledge to imagine and plan for the future.

**Personalisation, collaboration and individuals' informal learning are already with us in our everyday lifewide learning. The educational challenge is to encourage and enable people to take advantage of this resource that is open to everyone to use for their own learning and development. Our argument is that the learner of the future should understand and master their own lifewide learning in order to be an effective lifelong learner.**

### **EU Lifewide Development Award**

One solution to this challenge is to create an award framework that could be used across the whole of the EU to:

- raise awareness and the level of understanding of the meaning of lifewide learning
- encourage citizens to use their own lives as resources for learning, development and achievement
- value individuals' commitment to their own development
- encourage the habits of personal development planning and reflective learning
- value and formally recognise individual's learning and achievements

### **A Lifewide Curriculum**

When designing an academic curriculum teachers begin with *their* purposes and the outcomes *they* want students to achieve and what *they* will assess. Then *they* think about the content *they* want students to learn and *they* design the process and select the resources students will use to learn. Finally, *they* assess what *they* believe counts as learning and students' perceptions of what really matters to them don't count at all!

Lifewide learning turns this way of designing education on its head. Design is based on the learner's own life and *their* purposes. It honours *their* personal ecosystem for learning and developing themselves. The learner is viewed as the designer and implementer of *their* own integrated and meaningful life experience. An experience that incorporates *their* formal education as one component of a much richer set of experiences that embrace all the forms of

learning and achievement that *they* believe are necessary to live a meaningful and fulfilled life.

We start with the learner's purposes and how they want to develop themselves to achieve their purposes. These may not be clear to them but the process of lifewide learning is the way in which they come to understand them better. Being clear on purposes allows learners to focus their will.

The learner determines what they need to know and they draw on their own experiences and the people they interact with as their main resource for learning. They chose what evidence they will provide to demonstrate their success in achieving their goals, aided by some general criteria, and claim achievement against their intentions. Independent assessment is concerned with making judgements of good enough informed by knowledge of the learners' commitment to their own development. The process and validation of learning is aided by learning partnership<sup>v</sup> between a learner and her mentor.

Lifewide learning draws on a range of theorists from the fields of education, particularly adult education, developmental psychology, social and situated learning and anthropology<sup>vi</sup>. Theories that are constructivist, humanist, developmental, experiential, situational and social in their outlook are readily assimilated into frameworks, tools and processes for encouraging, supporting, explaining and validating the phenomenon of lifewide learning.

### **An open learning process**

To illustrate what an award might look like we can draw on the experience of piloting such an award in the UK at the University of Surrey<sup>vii</sup> and Lifewide Education's community-based Lifewide Development Award <http://www.lifewideaward.com/>

- 1 To gain access to the Award learners simply complete the Registration Form which can be downloaded from the website declaring their commitment to the lifewide learning process for one year.
- 2 After reading the on-line Guidance supported by on-line video tutorials, learners prepare their lifewide activity map (LAM) and personal development activity plan (PDAP)
- 3 A mentor will be assigned to each learner and they will have their first on-line conversation with the learner to consider their lifewide activity map and personal development plan.
- 4 Throughout the year the learner participates in self-determined and self-managed activity guided by their PDAP using the opportunities they have in their lives. They record their experiences and reflections on what they have learnt in an on-line diary or blog. Learners are expected to make an entry every week and it can be text, audio, video or image based. This process is intended to help learners appreciate their personal learning ecologies<sup>viii</sup> and develop their capability for narrative learning<sup>ix</sup>.
- 5 Learners are provided with their own website building tools such as weebly.com and one of their initial tasks is to design and build their own website to host their blogs and the artefacts of their learning. In this way, regardless of previous experience, learners develop their presence in the digital world. Example websites are provided to demonstrate the ways in which learning, personal development and achievements might be represented and

communicated. The process is intended to stimulate learners' creativity and learners may represent their learning through text, images, audio- or video-based artefacts.

- 6 Every two weeks the mentor checks their mentee's website, observes their updates and offers commentary, encouragement and questions to help them gain deeper insights into their own learning and planning.
- 7 At three points in the process the mentor has a face to face conversation on-line, through a video chat room provided through the Award. These conversations check progress towards the learners own learning goals, consider the nature of lifewide learning - personal, informal and collaborative, and feed forward into learners development plans. Conversations can be recorded and provide part of the evidence base in the learners portfolio.
- 8 Towards the end of the year they are registered for the award, learners summarise what they have learnt and how they have developed in a written account, audio or video story or annotated scrapbook. Their insights are shared with their mentor whose role at this stage is to evaluate and validate the learner's self-knowledge.

### **Open Badges**

The Award would utilise the Open Badges idea currently being developed by Mozilla<sup>x</sup>. Badges are digital tokens that appear as icons or logos on a web page or other online venue. They signify accomplishments such as completion of a project, mastery of a skill, or gaining experience and developing through the process.

As records of achievement, badges can recognise the completion of projects within a traditional educational programme or acknowledge experience gained through personal experience, community interaction and contribution, online learning venues, or work-related projects. The idea that badges are 'open' is the fundamental principle on which the system is built. The infrastructure is open (anyone can become an issuer) and the technology is open (open source). Users control their own data and the system permits individuals to create their own badges which an issuer can endorse.

Some of the ways in which badges could add value to the strategic personal development process that underlies the Award include:

*A taster:* someone who is considering undertaking the LDA might participate in an introductory exercise to give them an idea of what it's like.

*A motivational force* in the early stages of the LDA to help learners appreciate the progress they are making

*An ongoing motivational force:* eg for completing activity eg forum contributions over 10 weeks

*A learning process:* designing and justifying a badge is a learning process in its own right

*A unique expression of personal learning, development and achievement:* demonstrating unique pathways, experiences and capabilities that they had developed through the LDA.

*A means of recognising achievements if a learner does not complete the LDA*

EU involvement in an Open Badge system through a Lifewide Development Award would rapidly build credibility and currency in this innovative way of valuing and recognising lifewide achievement. Current ideas for Open Badges lack the strategic framework for planning and reflecting on personal development and encouragement for narrative learning, that a Lifewide Development Award would provide.

### **Evaluation of learning & development**

There are two levels of evaluation.

#### *Self-evaluation by learner*

The learner is responsible for evaluating and explaining how they have developed through their self-directed learning process in their blog, synthesis account and conversations with their mentor

#### *Evaluation by mentor*

The mentor will complete a report outlining his/her view about the evidence of personal development provided. After considering:

- Their commitment to their own development through self-directed and unplanned activities and their commitment to the learning process
- Their self-awareness - the ability to recognise their own learning and development through their experiences
- Their ability to explain and communicate their self-awareness of learning and development using the tools provided or your own tools – their learning narratives
- Their contributions to the community of lifewide learners through the on-line forum or other means

### **Accreditation**

National or regional Lifewide Development Accreditation Panels would consider the report and recommendations of the mentor.

If sufficient evidence is provided the EU Lifewide Development Award will be made to the participant and they will be entered on the register of recipients of the Award.

If the mentor is not able to form a firm judgement a second opinion will be sought from another member of the panel.

If there is insufficient evidence of development and commitment, the participant receives feedback from their mentor and they have the opportunity to continue the personal development process until they are ready to make a new submission.

### **Implementing an EU Award**

While not underestimating the work involved in creating an award and building the supportive infrastructure, given adequate resourcing, political backing and buy in from education, business and community organisations,

it should be possible to develop and implement the Award over a 10-15 year period to achieve a 2030 goal of an EU Lifewide Development Award.

Initial development and piloting over 3-5 years might involve a small consortium of interested partners. Learning gained would inform the next stage involving larger groups of partners added at 5y and again at 10y until participation is EU-wide by 2030.

### **Open Education**

Open Education<sup>xi</sup> is underlain by values and principles like freedom to participate, open access to resources and support which are free, meaning no or insignificant cost to the user. Resources are provided through open licenses that give everyone permission to reuse and modify them so that they can be adapted to local circumstances. The principal resources being offered through an EU Lifewide Development Award are ideas, tools, frameworks, guidance and perhaps learner narratives of learning.

Free and open sharing increases access to education and knowledge for anyone, anywhere, anytime. It allows people to make changes to materials or to combine resources in new ways to build something new. The resources provided would be available for anyone to adapt and use in their circumstances.

Open Education incorporates free and open learning communities, educational networks, teaching and learning materials, open textbooks, open data, open scholarship, open source educational tools and on and on. Open Education gives people access to knowledge, provides platforms for sharing, enables innovation, and connects communities of learners, educators and mentors.

But new concepts of educational openness are evolving. New forms of technological-enabled openness are laying the foundation for Web 3.0 universities<sup>xii</sup> which utilise web technologies like social networking, blogs, wikis and user-created content and media to create new models of openness to promote 'radically decentralized, genuinely interactive, and collaborative form of knowledge sharing that can usefully serve as the basis of 'knowledge cultures' [and 'knowledge socialism']'. The proposal for an EU Lifewide Development Award aligns well to this conceptual view of openness, although it shifts the focus from institution (university) to community as the P2P foundation for knowledge creation and sharing.

### **Open & Openness: learners' perspectives**

The approach being advocated in this paper has the potential to extend the concept of open education from the resources and support given to individuals to their own stances and orientations to their learning, development and achievement.

Lifewide learning encourages learners to be open with their plans for their own development, and in P2P mode, to share these with learning partners (mentors) in order to gain feedback to open new possibilities (feedforward). Learners' embodiment of openness extends to their sharing of experiences, challenges and insights with other members of the lifewide learning community in order to seek help, progress or share their understandings.

Lifewide learning encourages learners to become open in their learning stances, and be prepared to maximise learning opportunities whenever and wherever they are and in whatever modes they present themselves.

Characteristically, lifewide learners display an openness to their experiences (openness to self) they are willing to explore new avenues and are willing to take risks (to be explorative<sup>xiii</sup>) to venture into unfamiliar contexts and situations - a necessary condition for learning and creativity. They are open to all forms of knowledge and ways of knowing throughout life (epistemological openness). And they are open to sharing their self-knowledge with others who act as partners in their learning (communal and collaborative openness).

The approach being advocated also has potential to open more opportunity for intergenerational learning as possibilities increase for involving older learners in learning partnerships with younger learners. An EU Award would do much to cultivate a culture of openness in the ways outlined above and promote the ideals and practices of lifewide lifelong learning and education.

### **Inspiring Vision**

The European Commission has called for Visionary Papers on the future of “Open Education” and the use of OER. The vision offered here is of a world that values lifewide learning and education and gives this meaning and substance through an EU Lifewide Development Award. We might ground this vision in the enlightened and inspiring words of Eduard Lindeman writing in 1929.

A fresh hope is astir. From many quarters comes the call to a new kind of education with its initial assumption affirming that education is life - not merely preparation for an unknown kind of future living. Consequently all static concepts of education which relegate the learning process to the period of youth are abandoned. The whole of life is learning, therefore education can have no endings.<sup>xiv</sup>

It would be a fitting tribute to this visionary adult educator if an EU Lifewide Development Award could be implemented on the centenary of this idea.

### **About the Author**

*Norman Jackson* is Emeritus Professor at the University of Surrey and Founder of the Lifewide Education Community. Between 2005-11 he was Director of the Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education (SCEPTrE) which developed and implemented the idea of lifewide learning and education in a university. During a long career in higher education he has been a teacher, course tutor, researcher, inspector, policy developer and broker, and held senior positions with Her Majesty's Inspectorate, Higher Education Quality Council, Quality Assurance Agency and Higher Education Academy. In 1999-2000 he developed in partnership with key stakeholders, policy for Personal Development Planning - the only policy in UK HE that mandates an approach to learning and personal development. In the space of 10 years this policy has been successfully implemented at all levels of UK HE.



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