



ZENTRUM für WEITERBILDUNG
center for continuing education



**Experience of EU project's partners in ULLL development
University of Graz, Austria**

EU project COMPASS

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Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova

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<https://zfw.uni-graz.at>





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The University of Graz and LLL – Basic facts

6 Faculties and Administration & Services | 4,300 staff | 32,500 students | over 100 regular study programmes (Bachelor/Master/Ph.D.) and Continuing Education

Our approach: The University of Graz is a “Partner for Lifelong Learning” for all generations

LLL as a clear strategic goal and targeting all generations at all university levels with a wide range of learning opportunities (lifelong and lifewide learning), contributing to the further development of individuals and groups, organisations and the community; institutionalised at the University of Graz and within the responsibilities of the University

General interest courses at university level for public access – civic & community programmes; training; specialised programmes up to Master’s Programmes (including languages, IT-skills, soft skills...)



- **Staff development programmes (special unit within the Personnel Unit) – partly accessible to external participants**
- **Continuing professional development and training of staff in their specific fields | IT-Training, including financial software | Activities of associations and Alumni networks**
- **Formats: from public lectures addressing a wide audience to short courses and diploma courses and up to Master's programmes lasting several semesters**
- **Money: from “no fees” to “cost-covering fees”**
- **Certificates: from “confirmation of participation/certificate of attendance” → “university certificates” → “Master's degrees”**
- **University Continuing Education (UCE) provision is not part of the regular (under)graduate degree programmes of the universities**
- **Partnerships with external bodies, organisations,...**



Institutionalisation

June 2000: “leitungsunterstützende Stabsstelle” (assistant to Rector/Vice-Rector)

Autumn 2002: Center for Continuing Education

Autumn 2004: Association for the Promotion of Lifelong Learning

Summer 2006: The UNI for LIFE Ltd. – Continuing Professional Development, for graduates/post-graduates (<https://www.uniforlife.at/>) AND the Center for Continuing Education – “Education for All” – research-based programmes of general interest, courses at university level for public access, Learning in Later Life (<https://zfw.uni-graz.at>)

Parallel to others such as: University Continuing Education in faculties/institutes or outsourced; University for Children; Alumni Association; staff development courses



The Center for Continuing Education

Our educational programmes – general education at university level

- **Academy on Monday**
- **Vita activa**
- **Megaphon University**

Our programmes offer:

- **“university learning processes”, i.e. research-based – state-of-the-art;**
- **critical and reflective approach, also taking into consideration the experience and knowledge being brought into the process by participants from their individual environments and their work;**
- **“social inclusion of older people” by means of access to general education at university level;**
- **contribution to the implementation of the social dimension (cf. performance agreement 2019-2021 between University of Graz and Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research; p. 51)**



State of play of implementation of University Lifelong Learning in Austria (1)

- **Legal Framework:**
Austrian universities are required by law to include Continuing Education in their performance objectives: “continuing education, particularly post-graduate training” (Austrian Universities Act 2002, fully implemented on 1 January 2004).
→ Universities are autonomous, i.e. have to develop their own profile, their own strategy, position themselves
- The Austrian Universities Act 2002 explicitly allows – in order to provide financial and organisational support – cooperation with other legal entities.



State of play of implementation of University Lifelong Learning in Austria (2)

- **Relationship State – Individual University: Performance agreements (contract to be signed and published) to be negotiated between the individual university and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research; a “global budget” – lump sum for three years**
- **Priorities in the area of ULLL requested by the State from each university (“minimum”):**
 - to define a ULLL strategy
 - to develop ULLL programmes for working students
 - to ensure quality development and quality assurance



Effects of ULLL on the local community and wider region

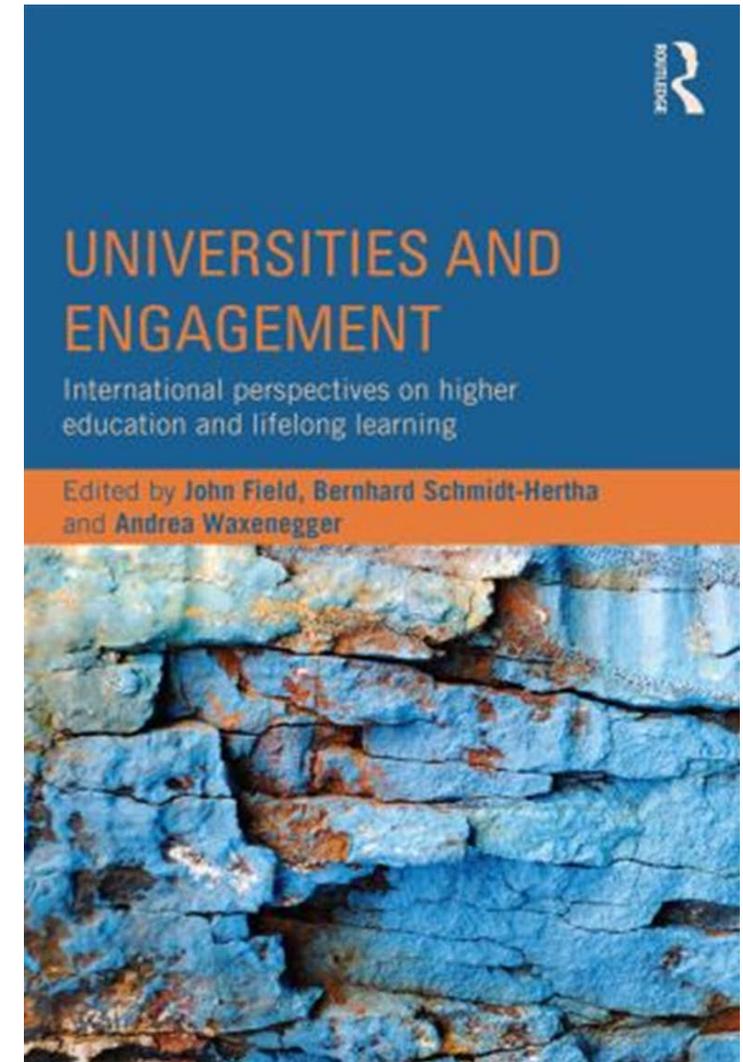
- **Provision of lifelong learning programmes aiming at 1) professional development, and 2) research-based programmes of general interest for public access**
- **“university learning processes”, i.e. research-based – state-of-the-art; critical and reflective approach, also taking into consideration the experience and knowledge being brought into the process by participants from their individual environments and their work;**
- **"social inclusion of older people" by means of access to general education at university level;**
- **specific attention to those we engage as “facilitators of learning”**



Further reading

Universities and Engagement. International perspectives on higher education and lifelong learning

- Edited by John Field, Bernhard Schmidt-Hertha and Andrea Waxenegger, Universities of Stirling, Tübingen and Graz
- What HEIs can contribute to their communities and economy through LLL
- Provides a theoretical background, draws on recent research and practice examples, and demonstrates a variety of conceptual approaches
- 17 papers collate the work of specialists from research and practice from across Europe and beyond who have first-hand experience in the field





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Institutionalisation of LLL

- **Strategies and programmes: exist; broad concept of University Continuing Education, less “University Lifelong Learning” as “mainstream”**
- **Infrastructure: exists; usually as “Centres”, sometimes outsourced (companies)**
 - **Continuing Education/LLL as a concept has arrived; implementation delegated to the Centre for Continuing Education; is this “LLL”? Variation: All we do is “LLL” (meaning: we do not need to change as institution)**
 - **Stronger connection between “regular university study programmes” and continuing education, but organised separately; opening up to new target groups, mixed groups; stronger cooperation with external partners**
 - **LLL as new organisational culture – real focus on learners and their needs – link to research – accompanying learners throughout their professional career and in retirement; especially in “transition periods”**
- **Acceptance as task of universities? In general, University Continuing Education is an accepted task of the universities, internally and externally.**