



SELF-ASSESSMENT MODEL FOR UNIVERSITIES  
EMBRACING LIFELONG LEARNING IN EUROPE

# SHORT PRESENTATION – DATA COLLECTION

## HEIs Questionnaire

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Erasmus+ ERASMUS-EDU-2024-PCOOP-ENGO Partnership for cooperation in the field of Education and Training | Project 101184156

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# Data collection by the SAMUELE project

Two levels of data:

1. **Survey at national level** to identify key elements that should be common to all HEIs in each country that has participated. This was a short form addressed to national networks or ministries of education. Total collected: 18 different countries
2. **Questionnaire at HEI level** to identify how institutions organise and deliver ULLL programmes. This was an in-depth form with over 63 questions, exploring different aspects of ULLL. Total collected: 102 questionnaires



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# Results of the HEIs Questionnaire

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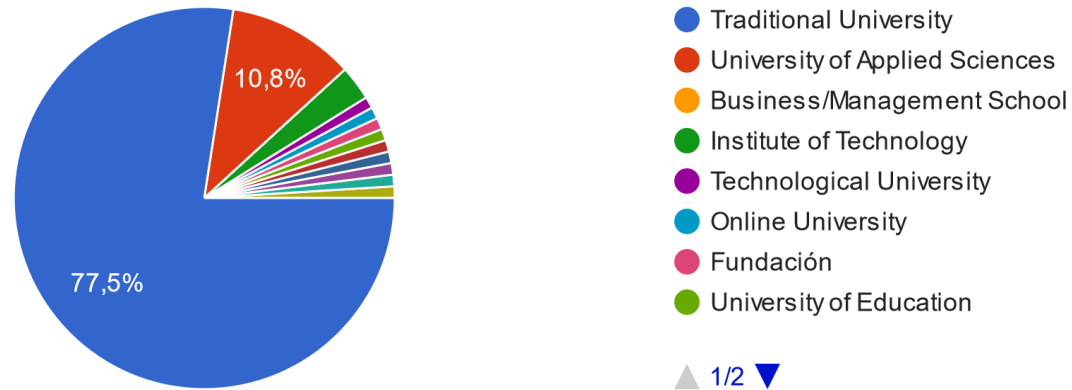
102 HEIs  
in 20  
countries  
responded



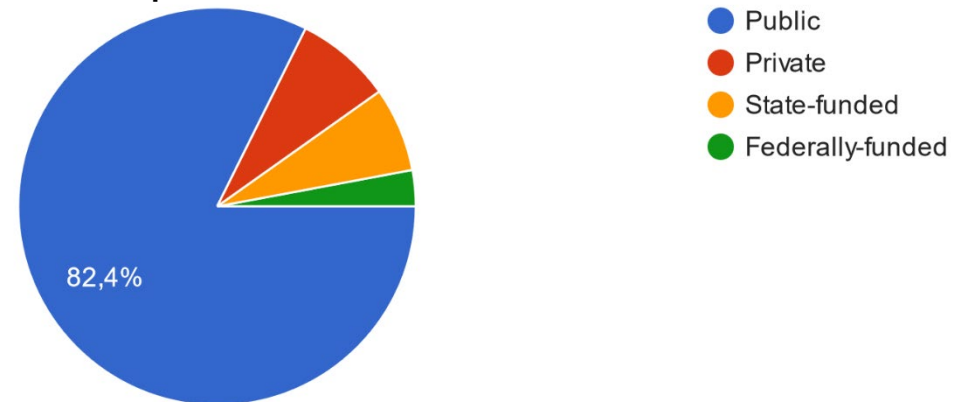
102 HEIs

## Profile of the respondents

The majority of respondents come from Traditional Universities



The majority of HEIs are public institutions



# Methodology

## *Structure of the Questionnaire*

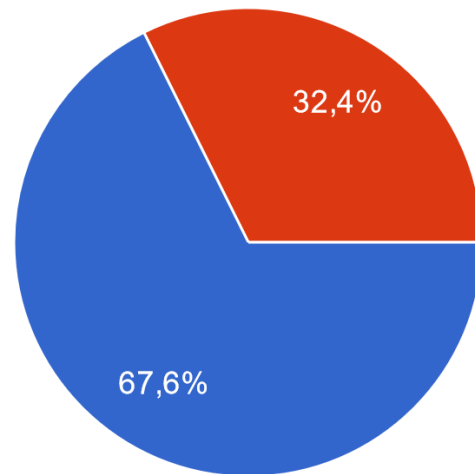
The analysis of the questionnaire was structured around four key thematic areas

- **Strategic commitment and vision of ULLL** (strategy, institutional context, policy drivers, transformation levers...)
- **Structure and organisation** (organisational models, degree of autonomy, resources to implement ULLL...)
- **ULLL operations** (ULLL offers, design, quality, target, delivery methods, flexibility...)
- **Impact and engagement** (partnerships, collaboration, learner support, effectiveness...)

*Strategic  
commitment and  
vision of ULLL*

## Definition of ULLL

67,6 % of respondents have a clear definition of ULLL



- Learning throughout life
- Access for adults, professionals, specific target groups beyond initial education
- Flexibility: part-time, online, blended, modular
- Underrepresented groups, migrants, unemployed
- Professional development, reskilling, and upskilling connected to labour market needs
- Green transitions, Digital transitions, Societal challenges
- Societal role of university, strategic vision or mission

\*Recurring key words/synonyms consistent with eucen definition (open-ended question in the form)

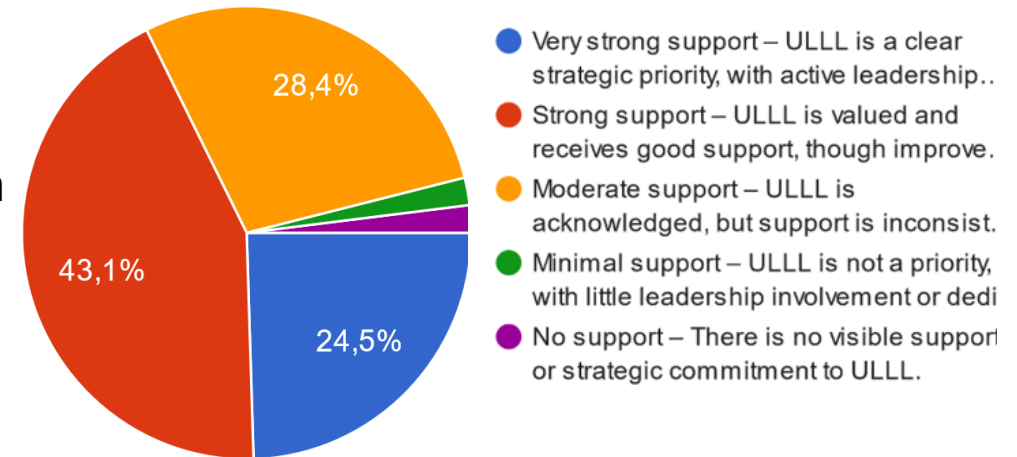
[samuele@eucen.eu](mailto:samuele@eucen.eu)

**Strategic  
commitment and  
vision of ULLL**

**Senior  
Leadership**

Only 25 % reported ULLL as a clear priority with very strong support:

- ◆ active leadership
- ◆ resource allocation



**Strong leadership & institutional commitment → 51.4% is the 1<sup>st</sup> key factor in the top factors for a successful programme**

- *Flexibility in delivery formats* → 13.3%
- *Financial sustainability* → 12.4%
- *Industry/employer collaboration* → 9.5%

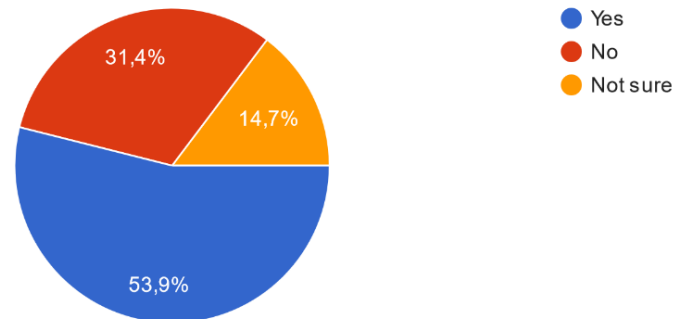
## Strategic commitment and vision of ULLL

## Legal Framework

## Funding & Quality

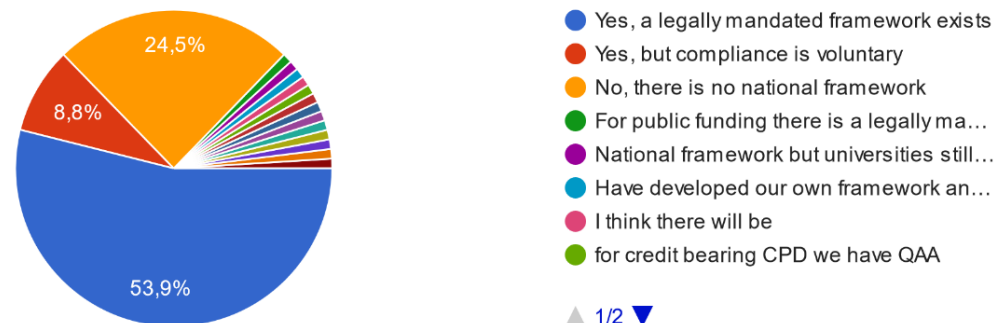
Is there a national funding scheme specifically for ULLL in your country?

102 réponses



Is there a national or legal framework governing the quality assurance of ULLL in your country?

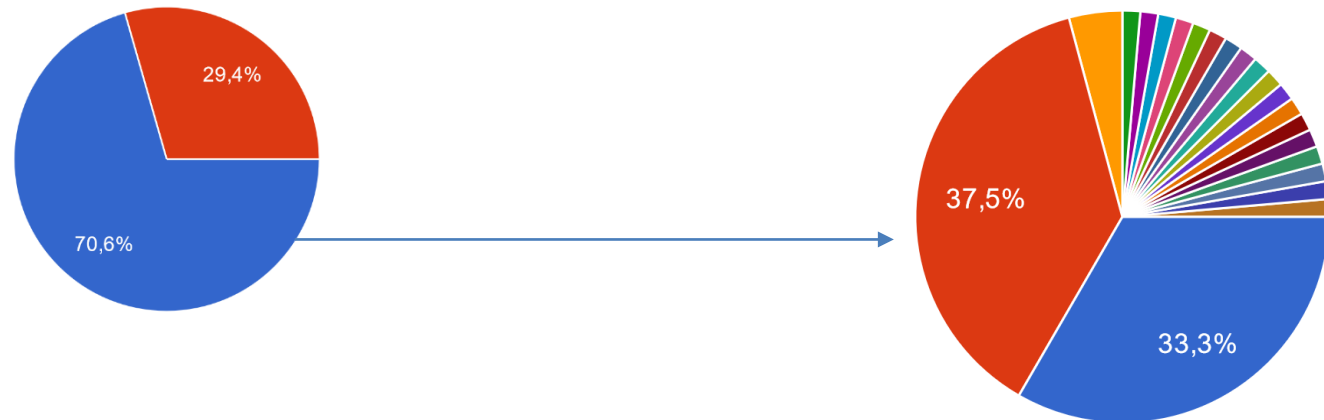
102 réponses



## Structure and Organisation

# Centralised vs. decentralised Model

Most institutions have a **centralised model (70,6 %)**



A **single unit** to manage ULLL at institutional level

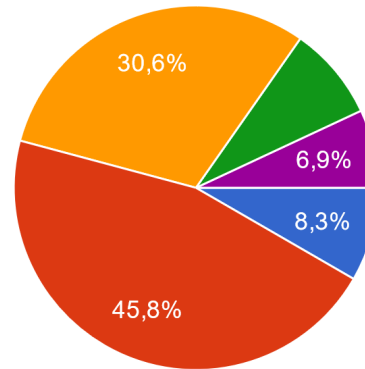
- ◆ Dedicated university lifelong learning unit (33,3%)
- ◆ Centre for continuing education (27,5%).
- ◆ Diversity of models (~30 %)

## Structure and Organisation

# Centralised Model

What degree of autonomy does this unit have?

72 réponses



- Full autonomy (Independent decision-making on strategy, funding, and progra...)
- High autonomy (Manages most aspects but requires approval for major decisions)
- Moderate autonomy (Operates within institutional guidelines with oversight fro...)
- Limited autonomy (Decisions require approval from central administration or...)
- No autonomy (Acts as an advisory or administrative unit without decision-ma...)

50 % = **roles and responsibilities clearly defined**

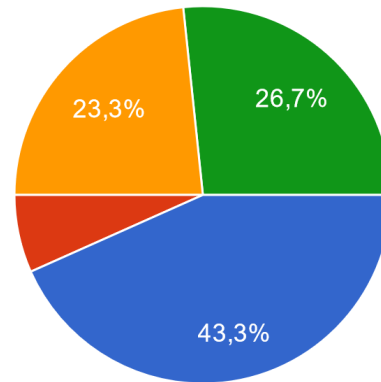
47,2% = some roles are defined (overlaps, ambiguities)

## Structure and Organisation

# Decentralised Model

How is the overall ULLL strategy coordinated across faculties/schools?

30 réponses



- Centrally guided but implemented independently by faculties
- Fully independent strategies per faculty/school
- A dedicated committee ensures alignment
- No formal coordination mechanism

**80 % = partial autonomy** (central guidelines and flexibility)

16,7% = full autonomy

**50% = responsibilities are distributed** among faculties members (diversity of organisation for the others)

# Challenges

## Centralised

1. Limited faculty engagement in ULLL initiatives (62,5%)
2. Funding constraints for centralised ULLL initiatives (50%)
3. Bureaucratic challenges in programme approval and implementation (41,7%)
4. Difficulty in addressing diverse faculty/school needs (22,2%)

## Decentralised

1. Challenges in securing fundings for decentralised initiatives (56,7%)
2. Lack of coordination between faculties/schools (53,3%)
3. Challenging for external stakeholders to collaborate with HEIs (50%)
4. Difficulty in ensuring consistent quality accross programmes (40%)

# Benefits

## Centralised

1. Consistent quality assurance and standards (83,3%)
2. Stronger institutional branding (69,4%)
3. Better alignment with institutional strategies and priorities (66,7%)
4. Easier for external stakeholder to collaborate with HEIs (66,7%)

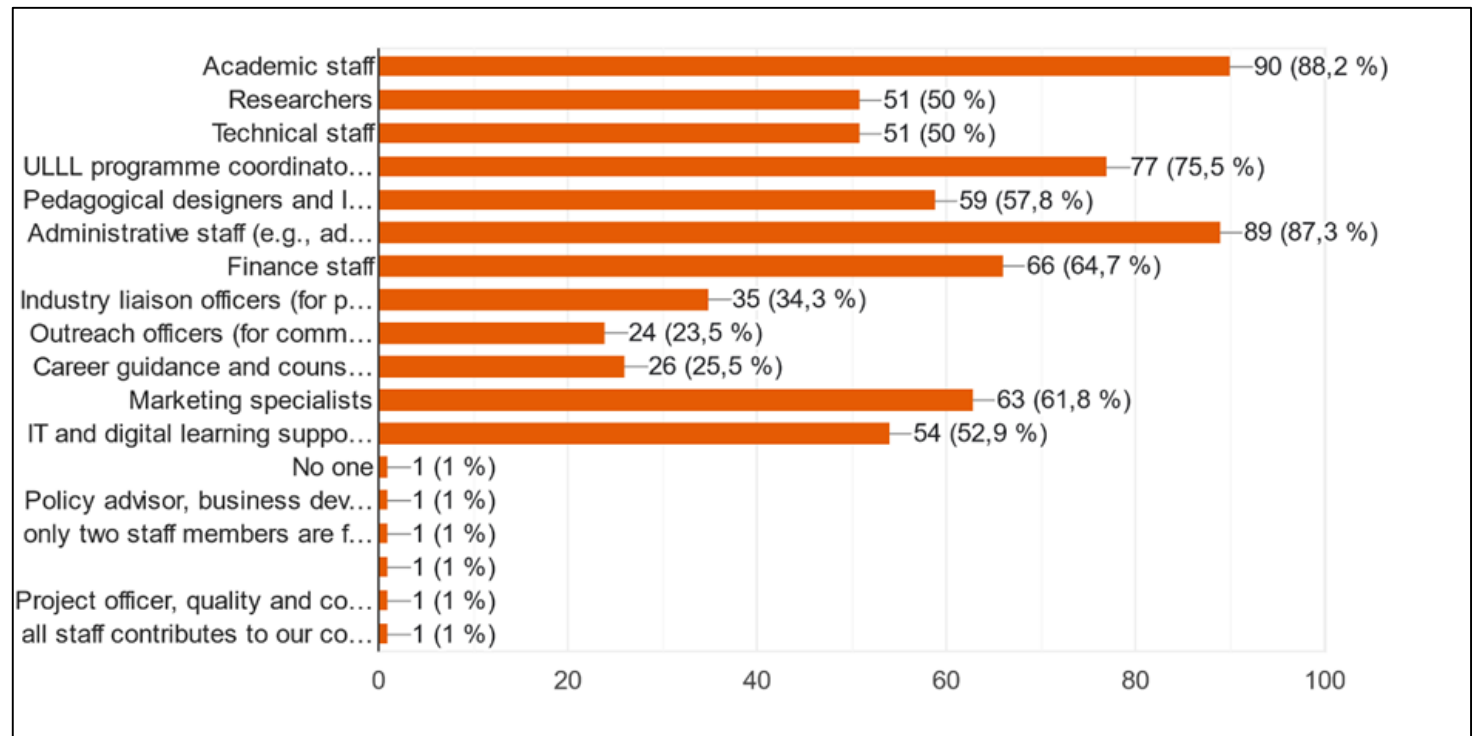
## Decentralised

1. Closer alignment with faculty expertise (76,7%)
2. Increased faculty/school ownership for ULLL initiatives (63,3%)
3. Greater flexibility in programme design (60%)
4. Better responsiveness to local/regional needs (40%)

## Structure and Organisation

## Staff

### Categories and diversity of staff involved in ULLL



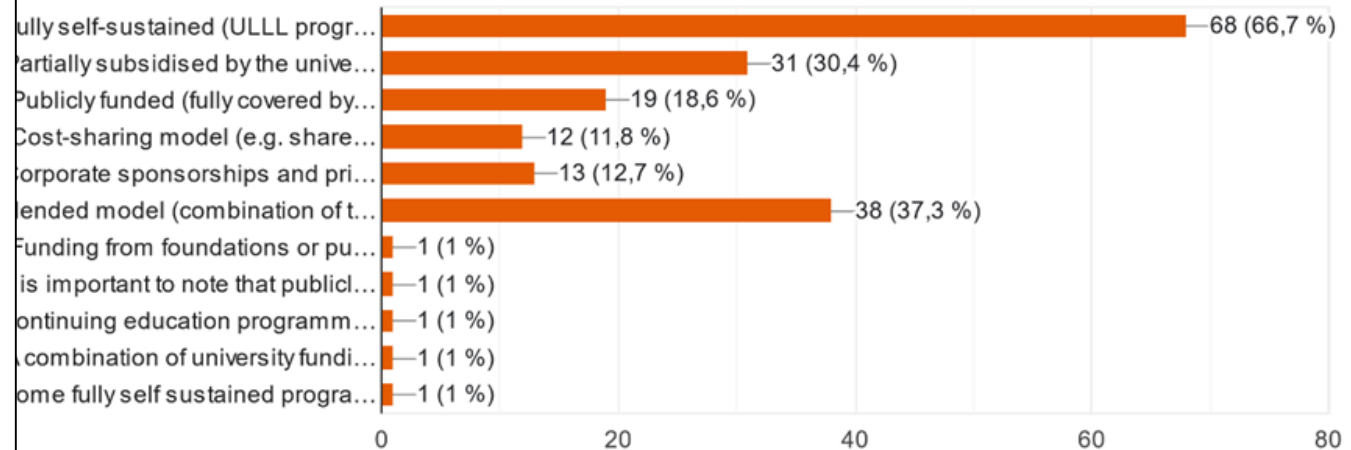
**Critical issues:** workload, no formal training, lack of recognition, insufficient staff involved.

## Structure and Organisation

# Financial Sustainability

What is the predominant business model for ULLL programmes at your institution? (Please tick all options that apply)

102 réponses



**Weak point:** ULLL programmes must cover all costs through revenue generation

## ULLL Operations

# ULLL initiatives

**The 4 main ULLL initiatives** revealed by the questionnaire are:

1. Postgraduate awards → 78,4%
  - certificates, diplomas, masters' degrees, doctoral degrees
2. Short courses non-credit-bearing → 78,4 %
3. Short courses credit-bearing → 71,6 %
4. Microcredentials (single) → 70,6 %
  - NB. → 44,1% for stackable microcredentials

**The 5 main target groups** are:

1. Adults returning to education → 87%
2. Working professionals → 85%
3. Unemployed/underemployed → 57%
4. Underrepresented groups → 46%
5. Employers and organisations → 41%

## ULLL Operations

# ULLL initiatives

### The main primary purposes:

1. Upskilling and reskilling → 87,3%
2. Workforce development → 70,6 %
3. Personal development → 66,7 %
4. Providing accessible education → 60,8 %

### How ?

1. Based on area of interests → 75,5%
2. Collaboration with companies → 75,5%
3. Government or public sector or funding schemes → 66,7%
4. Partnerships with other HEIs → 64,7%
5. Customised courses for specific learners or organisations → 64,7%

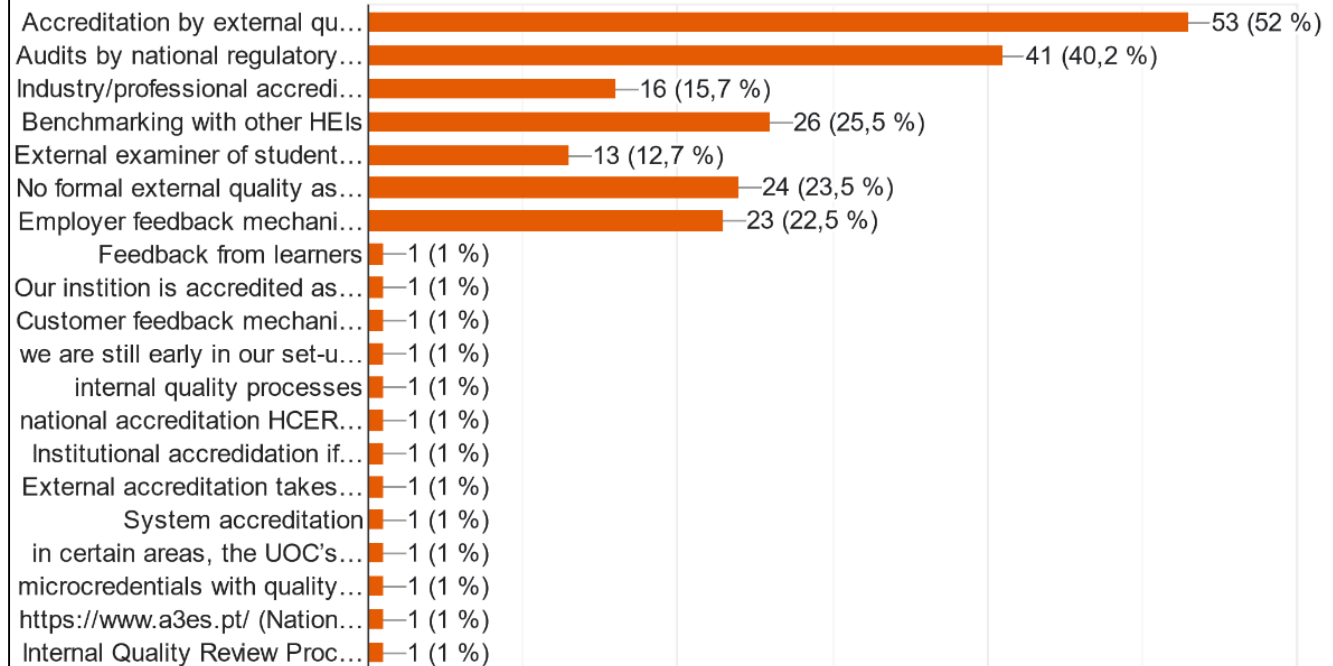
**Flexibility** is also one of the main features with online and blended offerings but still **in-person delivery on campus as the 1<sup>st</sup> mean** (90% of respondents)

## ULLL Operations

# Quality

What mechanisms does your institution use for external quality assurance of ULLL? (Please tick all options that apply)

102 réponses



40% of the respondents believe that their QA procedures are more efficient than those implemented by “private providers”.

HEIs are engaged in learner support in 81% of cases through **online platforms**

**Types of supports:**

- academic tutoring / mentoring represents → 69 %
- career guidance represents → 62%,
- administrative support → 54%,
- digital literacy and inclusion support → 38%.

**Constraints and barriers** related to:

- accessibility (44%),
- costs (56%)
- visibility (61%).

## Partnerships

### **Main key strategic partners:**

- Business and industries → 77,5 %
- Local and regional authorities → 63,7%,
- Other HEIs → 60,8%
- Funding organisations → 40,2%

### **3 main types of collaborations:**

- Co-development of programs → 62 %
- Guest lecturers and teaching → 55%,
- Shared infrastructures or labs → 34%

*Engagement and  
impact*

## Partnerships

Challenges	Benefits
Lack of internal resources (staff, time, expertise) (63,3%)	Strengthened reputation and HEIs visibility (73,5%)
Bureaucratic hurdles and administrative complexity (58,2%)	Enhanced curriculum relevance through industry input (59,8%)
Limited funding and sustainability of partnerships (45,9%)	Improved employability and career outcomes for learners (56,9%)
Difficulties in aligning institutional and partners priorities (43,9%)	Greater innovation in teaching and expanded access to wider learner (both 45 %)

# Key findings and conclusion

## ◆ Diversity of models

- Large number of centralised model
- Challenges in the coordination and lack of transparency

## ◆ Constraints and structural barriers

- Limited staff/time for design and delivery of ULLL offerings
- IT infrastructure and digital platform (lack of development)
- Difficulty in attracting adult learners (raising awareness, costs)
- Complex procedures (validation, recognition, certification, credit transfer...)
- Clarification of roles between ULLL units and faculties
- Incentives for staff

# Conclusion

## ◆ Operational development: a gap

National or Strategic **frameworks**

VS

Local **implementation** within HEIs

## ◆ Vision of ULLL

Differences between a **broad educational mission of ULLL** aligned with Unesco values (societal, inclusive mission supported by strategy, policies, leadership)

VS

**Market-oriented service** aimed at adult learners as a revenue stream supported by a strong business model (practical, mainly focusing on flexible, short-term offerings and income generation)

## Access to Reports

You can download now:

- Report from the National Survey
- Comparative Matrix
- *Upcoming* Analysis of the HEIs questionnaires

 <https://samuele.eucen.eu/analysis/>



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Thank you

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