

ANNEX TO FINAL REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL ADULT LEARNING
MODULE (OECD AL MODULE)

This paper was produced Ann-Charlotte Larsson (Statistics Sweden)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
BACKGROUND.....	1
PURPOSE	1
CONCEPTS AND METHODS IN EU AES.....	2
MAIN OBJECTIVE WITH AES	2
DEFINITION OF THE POPULATION	3
REFERENCE PERIOD.....	3
SURVEY DESIGN	5
SAMPLE DESIGN	5
MODE OF DATA COLLECTION	6
RESPONSE RATES AND PRELIMINARY PARTICIPATION RATES IN LEARNING	7
EDITING OF DATA.....	8
CONTENT IN AES	8
RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON EXPERIENCES FROM THE LLL MODULE.....	9
DEVELOPING NATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRES.....	11
QUESTIONS CONCERNING FORMAL EDUCATION, NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND INFORMAL LEARNING	11
EXAMPLES FROM SOME NATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRES.....	11
<i>GENERAL REMARKS</i>	20
ORDERING OF QUESTIONS/MODULES.....	21
FORMULATION OF SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES	22
LEVEL OF FORMAL EDUCATION	22
FIELD OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING	24
HOURS OF FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION	26
PROVIDER OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION	30
EXPERIENCES IN SOME COUNTRIES FROM TESTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE.....	32
GENERAL REMARKS ABOUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE	32
FORMAL EDUCATION, NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND INFORMAL LEARNING	33
OTHER MODULES IN EU AES	34
RECOLLECTION PROBLEMS.....	36
EXPERIENCES IN SWEDEN AND UK FROM IMPLEMENTING THE SURVEY.....	37
BOUNDARIES BETWEEN FORMAL EDUCATION, NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND INFORMAL LEARNING	37

DETAILS ABOUT LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR FORMAL EDUCATION, NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND INFORMAL LEARNING.....	37
COMPARISON PROBLEMS BETWEEN COUNTRIES	38

Introduction

Background

This report is a part of the contract between OECD and Mr. Helmut Kuwan concerning the preparation of the Continuing Education and Training (CET) module final report. The purpose of the CET final report is to provide guidelines for the development of surveys on continuing education and training / lifelong learning, which would produce internationally comparable data based on accepted common concepts, definitions and methodologies. The work with the preparation of the European Adult Education Survey (EU AES) should be taken into account during the development of the CET module. The main purpose with this part of the project is therefore to describe the development of EU AES.

The experiences from the Lifelong Learning module (LLL), which was implemented in the EU Labour Force Surveys (LFS) during 2003, constituted the base for the development of EU AES. The problems faced in different countries with the LLL module were taken into account during development of the concepts in EU AES. The concepts in the survey were developed between 2002 and 2005 in different task forces organised by Eurostat. The first task force developed the concepts in AES, the second task force developed the questionnaire and the third task force used input from pilot studies in some countries to develop the final AES questionnaire. The work in the task forces has been documented through a final report from TF AES, conclusions from the meetings in the task forces and an EU AES manual. A new task force for EU AES has been created, which started working in March 2006. The main goal with the work in this task force is to follow up national experiences during the implementation of EU AES, in order to draw conclusions about future surveys.

The EU countries can implement EU AES between 2005 and 2007. Sweden and UK are the only countries, which started the collection of data during autumn 2005. Finland, France, Lithuania, Italy and Slovakia started the collection of data during spring 2006. Four more countries plan to start the implementation of EU AES during 2006, while the remaining 13 countries plan to implement the survey during 2007.

Statistics Sweden participated in all the task forces. The conclusions in this paper will be based on experiences from some EU countries, which are Sweden, UK, Finland and Cyprus. Experiences so far during developing national questionnaires, testing the questionnaires and implementing EU AES will be described. The discussions in the task forces will also be taken into account when describing different concepts in EU AES.

Purpose

The main purpose with this paper is to;

- Describe the development of the concepts and methods in EU AES, which will include conclusions made by the EU TF AES and changes in the concepts in EU AES compared to the LLL module due to quality problems in the LLL module.
- Describe problems and solutions concerning concepts and methods used in EU AES, which are based on experiences during developing questionnaire, testing and implementing EU AES in some countries.

It would have been preferable to be able to base the conclusions in this paper on experiences from a majority of the countries implementing EU AES. This is obviously not possible because only 7 countries have started with the collection of data and only a few countries will have finalised the implementation of the survey during the summer 2006, which is the deadline for this project. Each country conducting EU AES will deliver quality reports to Eurostat according to specific guidelines. Eurostat will receive the first quality reports at the end of 2006. The quality reports will be analysed and it would have been preferable if this information would have been taken into account before finalising the description of the OECD CET module.

Concepts and methods in EU AES

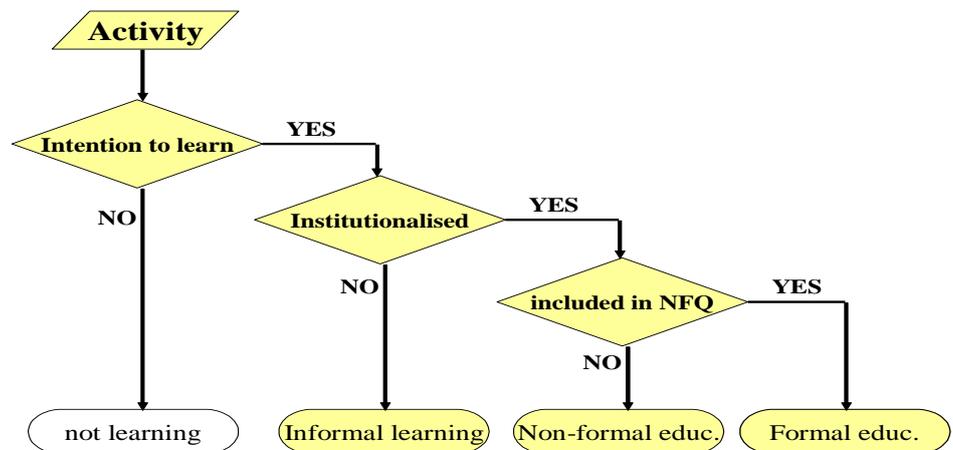
The Task Force on Adult Education Survey (TF AES) was created in order to develop concepts and methods for a harmonised EU survey on participation in education and learning by adults. The final report from this task force was presented and endorsed by the group of Directors of Social Statistics in September 2004. The main conclusions in the final report¹ will be presented in this section.

Main objective with AES

The main purpose of AES is to describe participation in education and learning by adults. Learning activities are defined as “any activities of an individual organised with intention to improve his/her knowledge, skills and competence”. Intentional learning is defined as “a deliberate search for knowledge, skills, competences or attitudes of lasting value”. The learning activities are divided into formal education, non-formal education and informal learning, which are defined according to the classification of learning activities. The criteria’s used for distinguishing between the three categories in the classification of learning activities are intention to learn, institutionalised and included in the national framework of qualifications (see the figure below).

There have been no real consensus between countries concerning how to divide between different types of learning in the previous national surveys about adult education (see annex 5 section participation in learning in the final report from TF AES).

Figure 2.1. Distinguishing between different types of learning



The purpose with EU AES is to provide information about the adult population's participation in education, training and learning. Information is also produced about people's opinions and experiences of adult education and training, their willingness and need to participate in it, and obstacles to it. In addition, studied will also be adults' information technology skills, knowledge of foreign languages and participation in cultural and social activities. Internationally comparable data will be produced for the first time on such a large area describing adult education and training.

One important purpose with EU AES is to provide information about non-learners, who is currently especially interesting for policy-makers.

The following four groups are possible to identify with the help of AES;

- Non-learners
- Learners only in formal or/and non-formal education
- Learners combining participation in formal or/and non-formal education with informal learning activities
- Learners only in informal learning activities

Participation rates in learning and the volume of training in hours are deemed to be the most important indicators from the survey. The discussions in the task forces resulted however in that hours of training weren't requested for participation in informal learning because of feasibility reasons. It was judged that it wouldn't be possible for the respondents to remember the hours of informal learning during a 12 months reference period. There were discussions about using a shorter reference period than 12 months for participation in informal learning. The main disadvantage with this is that it wouldn't be possible to compare participation in informal learning with participation in other types of learning.

Another purpose with the survey is to identify the adult learner. The adult learner is defined as persons who have left initial education. One definition for initial education that was discussed in the task force was that it comprises any education that the person participates in before a break of sufficient duration. It was decided that students in initial education should not be excluded from the survey. To be able to identify the adult learner requires questions describing the path through the educational system and reasons for longer breaks. This kind of information can probably be collected with sufficient quality through information from registers at statistical offices in the Nordic countries. In the beginning of developing the concepts for EU AES it was decided that it should be possible to divide between students in initial education and persons participating in continuing adult education through the questions in EU AES. It was however judged that it would be difficult to construct harmonised questions on this matter which would give comparable results between countries.

Definition of the population

The final recommendation for target population was to focus on the working age population 25 to 64 years-olds. This is mainly because of practical reasons as this is the age group common for most potential policy users of the AES information. This target population leads probably to a very small number of persons who are in initial education. Because of this, the final EU AES questionnaire didn't contain any questions which would have made it possible to identify persons in initial education. Some countries have however included such questions in their national questionnaires. There were a lot of discussions about the target population in the task forces and it is possible for countries to widen the population in their national surveys. Lower age limits concerning 16, 19, 20 and 25 and upper age limits concerning 64, 74 and older were discussed.

In Sweden it was decided to use the same definition of target population as in EU AES i.e. persons in the age of 25 to 64 years permanently resident in Sweden. This was also the case for Cyprus and Lithuania. In UK the target population is persons permanently resident in England, Wales and Scotland in the age of 16 and older. The UK survey didn't include persons younger than 25 years if they were in continuous full-time education. In Finland the target population is defined as persons permanently resident in Finland in the age of 18 to 64 years. In France the same definition of target population is used as in Finland.

Reference period

Advantages and disadvantages with different reference periods have been discussed since the development of the LLL module. The majority of countries carrying out national adult education surveys use a reference period of 12 months or longer (see the section about target unit in annex 5 in the final report from TF AES). Either the last 12 months from the time of the interview or the calendar year is used. It has been widely agreed, because of policy interest, that the AES should produce annual estimates. In EU AES it is therefore recommended that the last 12 months from the time of the interview should be used as reference period.

The majority of the users are interested in estimates for a calendar year, especially for formal education. The main disadvantage with using the calendar year as reference period is that the collection of data in most countries takes place during several months, which probably will lead to increasing quality problems due to recalling problems as the periods between the time of the interview and the calendar year are getting longer and longer. One disadvantage with using the last 12 months from the time of the interview is that the estimates from EU AES will not be entirely comparable with other statistics, for example the statistics from the UOE questionnaires. The last 12 months can cover participants in formal education during three semesters, instead of two semesters which usually is covered by a calendar year.

Both longer and shorter reference periods than 12 months have been discussed by the EU TF AES. A shorter reference period could lead to a better recall of learning activities, especially for participation in informal learning activities. Participation in informal learning activities would probably be measured with much better quality if a shorter reference period than 12 months was used, for example last week or last two weeks. This would make it possible to ask several detailed questions about how and in which context informal learning takes place and for how many hours. However, for participation in non-formal learning a shorter reference period than 12 months will in some countries lead to very low participation rates, which will limit the analytical potential of the data. The results would also be influenced by seasonal effects.

In surveys on education and learning there is a risk for over-reporting in order to provide socially desirable responses. The use of a longer reference period than 12 months would give the respondent the opportunity to report some learning activity and thus reduce the risk of over-reporting. In this situation both the last 12 months and a longer reference period should be used.

All the countries conducting EU AES will use the previous 12 months from the time of the interview as reference period. In UK, both last three years and past 12 months are used as reference periods. The previous experiences from UK regarding the reference period is that long learning activities are reported while short activities are forgotten when a longer reference period than 12 months is used. In Finland it is asked if participation in learning have taken place during the previous 12 months, earlier or not at all. The main purpose with adding the category "only earlier than the past 12 months" is to avoid over-reporting of learning activities during the 12 months period.

The experiences from piloting and implementing EU AES shows that the respondents will have problems with remembering shorter learning activities in the beginning of the reference period, for example a seminar lasting for 2 hours. The main reason for this is the long reference period of 12 months. Problems remembering the exact dates of the learning activities can cause both over reporting and under reporting.

There are mainly two methods which have been used by the countries in order to help the respondents to recall the learning activities;

- Usage of a learning calendar, which is filled in by the respondent during the interview. This has been used by UK.
 - Advantages; should eliminate overlapping of the reported activities and facilitate memory.
 - Disadvantages; makes the interview very long.
- A letter sent out before the interview in which the respondent is asked to go through which learning activities he/she has participated in during the last 12 months. The letter also lists some examples of questions that will be asked during the interview. This has been used by Sweden, Cyprus and France. The respondent is also informed that a calendar is a good tool for assisting the respondent to be more aware of the exact reference dates and which activities to include.
 - Advantages; if respondents are prepared the duration of an interview can be limited.
 - Disadvantages; all the respondents didn't prepare themselves before the interview. It can cause higher non-response and bias if respondents that haven't participated in any learning activity consider the survey as irrelevant.

Survey design

Sample design

It was recommended that EU AES should be carried out as a separate household survey. This made it possible to cover more of the variables assumed to be correlated with participating in education and learning. A separate survey will probably also lead to better quality in the results because the respondents can focus on one subject area. Some countries already had a national adult education survey, which it was desirable to make comparisons against. This was the case for UK and Finland. For UK and Finland their national adult education survey were adapted to EU AES. Fifteen EU countries plan to develop a new separate household survey with main objective to measure participation in learning, for example Sweden and Cyprus. Six EU countries, for example France and Italy, plan to implement EU AES as a module in an existing survey with another objective than measuring participation in learning. In most cases the national labour force survey will be used as a carrier survey.

Recommended sample design is a stratified sample of individuals at least according to age and gender. Sample sizes are based on precision requirements for some main indicators. It isn't possible to harmonise the sampling design because it depends on available sampling frames in different countries. In some countries like Sweden and Finland the sample of individuals can be directly drawn from a population register. In other countries without population registers several stages are needed for selection of the sample. In UK dwelling units (households) are selected in the first stage and one individual per household is selected in the second stage. This is also the case for Cyprus, France and Lithuania.

When characteristics of non-formal learning activities are estimated for example purpose or field of learning, the sample design contains two or three stages according to the following;

- Random sample of individuals in the first stage and a random sample of three non-formal learning activities per responding individual in the second stage
- Random sample of households in the first stage, a random sample of one individual per selected household in the second stage and a random sample of three non-formal learning activities per responding individual in the third stage

Not all countries will use a random selection of three non-formal learning activities. In Sweden, a selection of three non-formal learning activities has been used. In Finland, information about field of learning, purpose of learning, hours of learning, if learning took place on paid working time are collected for all reported non-formal learning activities. Some information concerning effects of training has been collected for one randomly selected non-formal learning activity for job related purposes. In UK and France, only one non-formal learning activity is selected. The random selection of non-formal learning activities has been done automatically during the interview in all these countries. It has been shown in Finland and Sweden that if less than three learning activities are selected; the estimates for small domains based on characteristics of learning activities like fields of learning and learning for personal reasons will be more uncertain².

According to the grant application for EU AES are precision requirements desirable for the following key indicators:

- Participation rate in non-formal education
- Participation rate in non-formal education, by gender
- Participation rate in non-formal education, by 3 age groups (25-34, 35-49, 50-64)
- Participation rate in non-formal education, by 3 ISCED levels
 - ISCED1+2+3C short programmes (<2 years)
 - ISCED 3A,B, 3C long programmes (>=2 years)
 - ISCED5+6
- Participation rate by employment status (employed, unemployed, inactive)
- Share of the job related activities in non-formal education

Mode of data collection

Recommended method for collection of data is Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI). The main reason for recommending face to face interviews is that the content in the survey is broad and difficult to approach in a telephone interview. Face to face interviews make it possible to use visual support as show cards during the interview for complex questions. The duration of the interview isn't that critical for face to face interviews as for telephone interviews. The countries will use different methods for collection of data.

In Sweden both CAPI and CATI were used as methods for collection of data. There will probably be mode effects when different methods for collection of data are used. In Sweden it was allowed to use telephone interviews in AES when the person was unwilling to participate in a face to face interview. The result is that 37 percent of the interviews have been conducted through telephone interviews. A majority of the interviewers felt that there weren't any big problems with conducting the interview through telephone. In Sweden the AES questionnaire is probably shorter than in other countries because some of the background information is collected through registers and the modules about cultural participation and attitudes towards learning aren't covered in the Swedish AES. From the results in the Swedish AES it can be seen that the persons responding through face to face interviews have reported more learning activities than the persons responding through telephone interviews. The average interviewing time for CAPI was 33 minutes while the corresponding figure was 23 minutes for CATI. Since the data collection mode is not randomly assigned to the respondent it is hard to test for mode effects. A higher rate of reported non-formal activities for CAPI compared to CATI could indicate a mode effect, but it could also be that the subgroup of individuals interviewed by CAPI has participated more in learning than individuals interviewed by CATI. Face to face interviews will probably allow the respondents to use more time for trying to remember the learning activities and if they really took place during the reference period, compared to using telephone interviews.

Figure 2.2. **Average interviewing time and dispersion in interviewing time (minutes) in Sweden**
Interviews as of March 1st 2006

Mode of data collection	Number of non-formal learning activities	Mean	p90	q3	median	q1	p10	Percentage of interviews
CAPI		33	48	35	27	20	15	100
	0	24	36	25	20	15	11	25
	1	30	45	32	25	20	15	19
	2	29	45	35	26	20	18	17
	3 - 4	36	55	40	30	25	21	22
	5 - 6	39	55	43	34	28	22	10
	7 - 8	48	60	45	35	30	25	4
	More than 8 activities	59	60	50	43	30	29	4
CATI		23	35	28	20	15	10	100
	0	18	25	20	15	10	10	39
	1	23	30	25	20	15	12	20
	2	24	30	30	23	20	15	14
	3 - 4	29	40	34	28	21	18	16
	5 - 6	32	45	37	30	25	20	7
	7 - 8	33	45	35	30	25	23	3
	More than 8 activities	47	60	53	41	30	30	1

The majority of the countries conducting EU AES will use face to face interviews. In UK, Finland and Cyprus CAPI is used as mode of data collection with automatic validation checks and routing rules. In Lithuania face to face interviews with paper and pencil is used. In UK the average interviewing time was 45 minutes. The interim findings concerning length of the interviews from the pilot survey in Cyprus are;

- 20-30 minutes if there is no participation in learning activities
- 40-50 minutes if there is some participation (1 – 3 non-formal learning activities)
- 55-70 minutes if the respondents have participated in more than 3 non-formal learning activities.

In France the majority of the background demographic variables were collected through the LFS questionnaire. In addition to that, almost only the core variables (level of preference = 0 in annex 1) was covered by the French AES questionnaire and information was only collected for one non-formal learning activity. The average duration of an interview was 13 minutes in case the respondent didn't participate in any learning activity and 26 minutes for respondents answering more detailed questions for one selected non-formal learning activity.

Response rates and preliminary participation rates in learning

Sweden

The response rate in the Swedish AES was 73 percent, which is a bit higher than the goal of 70 percent.

Figure 2.3. **Response rate in Swedish AES**

Response code	Total number	Proportion of sample	Proportion telephone interviews
Interviews	3638	73	38
Couldn't participate in survey	114	2	
Wasn't reached	808	16	
Didn't want to participate	353	7	
Moved abroad, diseased	65	1	
Totally with response code	4978	100	
Totally without response code	22	0	
Totally in the sample	5000	100	

At least once a month frequencies for the most important questions in the different modules has been calculated, in order to detect errors in an early stage. In the majority of the questions less than 2 percent are missing values or don't know responses. For respondent's expenditures on books etc. (NFE13y in annex 1) the item non-response is about 10 percent.

Preliminary estimated participation rates in learning during a 12 months period for persons in the age of 25 to 64 years were according to the following;

- 13 percent in formal education
- 69 percent in non-formal education
- 53 percent in employer sponsored formal or non-formal education
- 76 percent in informal learning

UK

The response rate until the end of January 2006 was 52 percent. The fieldwork ended in February 2006.

Preliminary participation rates in learning during a three year period for persons in the age of 16 years and older were according to the following;

- 21 percent in formal education
- 49 percent in non-formal education
- 50 percent in informal learning
- 71 percent in any learning

Editing of data

Sweden

The computer aided interviews allow for checking of responses during the interview and ensure that valid values for all variables are collected. It is however still possible to make errors during the interviews. Before the interviews started the automatic skips were checked thoroughly. There was however some minor errors in the programming of the skips which were detected after the 10th of October. They were corrected in the middle of October.

Mostly categorical variables are collected. The editing of data was done through checking for valid values in each question and also by comparing answers from different questions. Item non-response is treated as don't know (no imputation). The editing of the data started at the end of March 2006 and will go on until the middle of August 2006.

The item non-response isn't higher for the questions at the end of the interview. There are consequently no signs that the respondents stop in the middle of the interview. The item non-response isn't higher for the second and third selected non-formal learning activity than for the first selected non-formal learning activity. There is up till now no evidence that the selection of three non-formal learning activities have caused problems with getting detailed information about the second and third learning activity. This will be more in depth analyzed when the collection and editing of data has been finalized.

The participation rates in learning and the number of reported learning activities is much higher in the SW AES 2005 than in the Swedish module on Lifelong Learning during 2003 (SW LLL). In the SW LLL module there seemed to be a big underestimation of participation in employer sponsored training. This conclusion was based on a comparison between SW LLL 2003 and the Swedish staff training survey for 2003. Based on the Swedish staff training survey for 2003, the participation rate in employer sponsored training for persons in the age of 16-64 years was 57 percent, in comparison to 43 percent based on SW LLL 2003. Participation rate in employer sponsored training, for persons in the age of 25-64 years based on the Swedish staff training survey 2003, was 60 percent. The preliminary estimate of participation rate in employer sponsored training from SW AES 2005 is 53 percent.

Content in AES

The EU AES is structured in different modules. The modules in the survey are;

- Background information on the household
- Information on the individual
- Education and training successfully completed / not completed
- Current labour market situation and employment characteristics
- Labour market situation one year ago and employment characteristics
- Income
- Parental education
- Participation in education and training
- Formal education and characteristics of selected activities
- Non-formal education and characteristics of selected activities
- Obstacles in participation in education
- Participation in informal learning
- Access to information about learning possibilities
- Use of ICT and ICT skills
- Language skills and use of languages
- Participation in cultural activities
- Participation in social activities
- Attitudes towards learning

The final AES manual which contains the EU AES questionnaire is a separate document and will not be included in this paper. There are both variables and questions in the questionnaire. For the variables the wording of the questions should be adapted to national conditions. This means that the wording of the questions will be different for different countries. The questions in the AES questionnaire should be directly translated into the national language. For each question/variable in AES a level of preference for inclusion in the survey has been established. The questions/variables with level 0 are core questions/variables and should be included in the survey for all countries.

If for any reason it isn't possible to cover all questions/variables in the survey the questions/variables with lowest level of preference (9) should be excluded first. All the questions/variables in EU AES and the level of preference for each variable/question are included in annex 1.

The inclusion of questions/variables in the survey and the levels of preference were decided with consideration to policy interest and feasibility. The core variables cover almost all questions in the modules about participation in education and learning and obstacles to learning. Computer use and language skills are also covered in the core module. It was important to have some information about the non-learners as well.

Formal-, non-formal and informal learning are defined according to the classification of learning activities. The EU AES contains variables for identifying formal-, non-formal and informal learning (see the EU AES manual). This means that each country have adapted the variables to national conditions when constructing questions. For formal and non-formal education the definitions in the classification of learning activities are followed. The division into classes and sub-classes for non-formal education are however not entirely followed. For informal learning some of the sub-classes suggested in the classification of learning activities are excluded from the survey. The reason for this is mainly that it would have been difficult for the respondents to make the separation, for example between learning from colleagues, on the job training and learning through a learning group.

There was also a discussion about the difficulties to separate informal learning from random learning for the respondents. It is stated in the classification of learning activities that informal learning should be a deliberate search for knowledge, skills etc of **lasting value**. There were suggestions about cut-off limits for informal learning, for example at least 10 hours of learning.

Another suggestion was that only one question should be asked instead of several questions as in EU AES. In UK two questions are asked concerning participation in informal learning instead of the proposed six questions in the EU AES manual.

Recommendations based on experiences from the LLL module

The main problems in the LLL module are described in the quality report (Doc. ESTAT/D5/2005-ETS-14.02-EN version 20.01.2004). Some of these are;

- Recalling short term learning activities, due to the long reference period of 12 months
- Processing errors due to incorrect coding of open-ended answers
- Inaccurate information, due to proxy interviewing, some countries had a rather big proportion of proxy interviews in the national LFS
- Inefficient coding of field of training, due to inadequate/unclear description by the respondent
- High cost of the survey and limited participation, due to the length of the module
- Lack of coherence of certain ad-hoc module variables with similar variables of the core LFS questionnaire or with data from other sources.

Some recommendations for future improvement were;

- A shorter reference period should be introduced in order to gather more accurate information and compare taught hours of non-formal learning between countries
- Inclusion of additional checks on data entry to decrease inconsistency with similar variables of the core LFS questionnaire
- Provision of training to the interviewers on classification of field of education

- More explanations in the questionnaire should be given, along with rephrasing of the questions and inclusion of additional fields to improve understanding

There is also a description of specific problems in variables in the quality report, which were of interest for the development of the AES. One problem was difficulties in distinguishing formal from non-formal education. There were also problems with the comprehension of the questions about informal learning. One big problem was how to avoid that the respondents report random learning. The solution suggested was that the definitions for the different types of learning activities should be reviewed.

The questions concerning participation in formal education, non-formal education and informal learning has been changed in EU AES compared to EU LLL module. The Swedish AES questionnaire contains an introduction to each type of learning (formal/non-formal/informal) and also more examples of learning activities belonging to each type, by using questions or show cards. This has probably made it easier for the respondent to separate the learning activities between the three types, in comparison to the questions in the Swedish LLL module.

The reference period hasn't been changed in EU AES compared to EU LLL module, but as stated above in the section survey design, the countries use different methods which probably will help the respondent to remember the learning activities during the reference period.

Proxy interviews aren't allowed in the majority of the countries conducting EU AES.

The open-ended answers are checked and re-coded when applicable in the Swedish AES.

In the countries that have implemented the EU AES a training course with the interviewers has been held. In the Swedish seminar there were a session concerning descriptions of fields of learning.

- 1) Task force report on adult education survey N 3/2005/D/N 30
- 2) Selection of learning activities in the European Adult Education survey (AES), Ann-Charlott Larsson Statistics Sweden 2005-02-28

Developing national questionnaires

A majority of the EU countries plan to cover almost all of the questions/variables in EU AES in their national surveys (see Doc. ESTAT/Fα/2006-ETS/22-EN, Adult Education Survey, progress report and plans of the countries). The main difficulty is to construct national questions which will make it possible to distinguish between formal education, non-formal education and informal learning.

Questions concerning formal education, non-formal education and informal learning

The question for participation in formal education should be phrased in such a way that the concept of education leading to qualifications, which are included in the national framework of qualifications, is described as fully as possible. In some countries it is easily understood what is meant by designed to lead to a qualification, while in other countries the word qualification will confuse the respondents. In some countries a list of providers of education will be used instead of defining formal education. In EU AES details for formal education should be given for the three most recent activities. In Sweden it is judged that a minor part of the population has more than two formal activities which is the reason for reporting details for a maximum of two activities. In UK and France details is given for one formal education activity.

Examples from some national questionnaires

Finland

Finland uses one question for participation in formal and non-formal education with a lot of categories describing common formal and/or non-formal learning activities in Finland. The categories in the question are classified according to formal education and non-formal education.

Q: Have you participated in training at the following general education institutes in the past 12 months or earlier?

ANSWER ALTERNATIVES IN QUESTION:

Never studied 1
 In the past 12 months 2
 Or only earlier? 3
 Don't know9

01 Primary school or lower secondary school? 1239
 02 Comprehensive school or middle school? 1239
 03 Upper secondary school?1239
 04 Evening school
 (adult or evening upper secondary school or middle school)? 1239

B. Some forms of vocational training are listed below. Have you attended any in the past 12 months or earlier?

05 Apprenticeship training? (Periods of courses taken at vocational adult education centres or vocational education institutions.) 1239
 06 An employment-promoting course paid for by labour authorities (labour policy training)? 1239
 07 Training for youths at vocational or professional education institutions? 1239
 08 Training arranged specially for adults at a vocational education institution or a vocational adult education centre in order to get a vocational or professional qualification (polytechnic education and private students included)? 1239
 09 ... for other purposes ?
 10 Military institute (not conscript service)? 1239

C. The following is a list of institutes that offer both vocational and general-interest courses and studies. Have you studied at:

11	a folk high school or folk academy in order to get a vocational or professional qualification?	1239
12	a folk high school or folk academy for other purposes?	1239
13	a conservatory in order to get a vocational or professional qualification or in a music school or college (not in the adult application)?	1239
14	the music-school level adult department (former folk conservatory department) at a music school or college?	1239
15	a college of physical education (sports institute) in order to get a professional or vocational qualification?	1239
16	a sports institute in other training?	1239

D. I will list different study modes of universities and summer universities. Have you studied:

17	for a basic degree at university?	1239
18	for a post-graduate degree at university?	1239
19	at university or its continuing education centre in a further training course?	1239
20	at university or its continuing education centre for a separate degree or open university courses?	1239
21	at summer university?	1239

E. In the following I will ask about the providers of training that take adults into account separately in the courses that they cater for. Have you in the past 12 months or earlier attended:

22	an adult education centre?	1239
23	a language school or institute in Finland?	1239
24	a correspondence school?	1239
25	training provided by an organisation, union or association?	1239
26	courses or a study circle arranged by a study circle centre?	1239
27	a separate typing or word-processing school?	1239
28	a dance school or institute (modern or jazz dance or ballet)?	1239
29	a driving school?	1239
30	studied by regularly following an educational programme series on the radio or television?	1239

F. The following is a list of common modes of organising education and training. Have you participated in:

31	training provided by your employer at your workplace, in the employer's training facilities or in other training units (also applies to secondary jobs)?	1239
32	training provided by a separate training enterprise or training centre (business-based training centres, consultants, etc.)?	1239
33	guided on the job training?	
34	conferences, seminars or other similar training?	1239

G. Have you participated in any other training ?

No	1
In the past 12 months	2
Only earlier	3
Don't know	9

After this question there is a question about informal learning (asked as proposed in the EU AES manual). Then there are questions about formal education (questions FED1- FED12x in the AES Questionnaire) and after that questions about non-formal education (questions NFE2Y-NFE22Y in the AES questionnaire) for all reported formal and/or non-formal learning activities.

The Finnish way of asking about formal and non-formal education is quite heavy. But on the other hand the long list of types of learning activities works as a reminder for the respondents. Finland has used this kind of list in their previous Adult Education Surveys too, and their experience is that it works well.

Sweden

It is important that a learning activity is classified in the correct type of learning but it can be hard for the respondent to know which type of learning he/she has participated in. It is also important that all learning activities that the respondent has participated in are captured during the interview and that a learning activity is not reported twice.

The interviewers working with AES has participated in a seminar held by the staff responsible for AES at Statistics Sweden. During this seminar there was information given about the definition of the different types of learning activities. The interviewers had an exercise where they were given examples of learning activities which they were asked to classify as formal, non-formal or informal. The interviewers have also received a document with instructions for the AES interview. The document contains information on how to classify the learning activities.

The questionnaire is designed in aim to help the respondent remember all learning activities and to report the learning activities in the correct type of education. Formal educations are supposed to be reported first. This section of the interview starts with an instruction (read by the interviewer) to the respondent, that education programmes/activities at primary/lower secondary, upper secondary, university or other post-secondary level should be reported as formal education. The interviewer also gives the respondent a card listing the types of education that should be reported as formal education. If the respondent has participated in more than two formal educations during the last 12 months, the two most recent educations are reported.

The question about formal education is listed below;

I shall now ask questions regarding education programmes/activities at primary/lower secondary, upper secondary, university or other post-secondary level.

<p>17 Have you studied in one of these programmes/activities in the past 12 months?</p> <p>REPLY CARD 1</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES → Proceed to question 18</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO → Proceed to question 34a</p>
---	---

Reply Card 1

Question 17, 18 and 19) Education programmes/activities at primary/lower secondary, upper secondary, university or other post-secondary level.

1. **Adult education, skills enhancement.**
Example: nine-year compulsory education qualification, upper secondary school qualification and complementary courses
2. **Swedish for foreigners (SFI)**
3. **Folk high school, vocational training or programmes giving access to further studies**
4. **Labour market training via the employment service office, vocational training or education giving access to further studies.**
5. **First stage of tertiary education or research education at university or college, including independent courses.**
6. **International education, vocational education or education giving access to further studies.**
Example: High school and college
7. **Advanced vocational training (KY).**
8. **Other education, vocational training or programmes giving access to further studies.**
Example: Occupational or bachelor degree at Berghs school of communication, education of deacons or pastors

Note that courses relating to a hobby and short courses (shorter than one semester) should not be included here.

After the formal education has been reported, the interview continues with non-formal learning activities. This section starts with an instruction that other types of education than reported earlier should be listed, for example courses, workshops, seminars and lectures.

Non-formal educations are captured by four different questions, listed below.

You are now going to be asked some questions concerning another type of education, involving courses, workshops, seminars and lectures.

<p>Examples of such education are training courses in the workplace, driving lessons, parenting course, language or computer courses, study circles in crafts or music.</p>	
<p>34a In the last 12 months have you participated in courses or study circles in the <i>workplace</i> or in your <i>free time</i>?</p> <p>I</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES → Proceed to question 34b</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO → Proceed to question 35a</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW → Proceed to question 35a</p>
<p>34b Please list all courses and study circles that you have participated in, including those which are still ongoing.</p> <p>IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS.</p>	<p>Open question</p> <p>If more than 6 – report the 6 most recent activities.</p>
<p>35a In the last 12 months, have you taken private lessons? <i>E.G. PIANO LESSONS</i></p> <p><i>N.B. IN ADDITION TO THE EDUCATIONAL COURSES ALREADY REPORTED BY THE RESPONDENT</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES → Proceed to question 35b</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO → Proceed to question 36a</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW → Proceed to question 36a</p>
<p>35b Please list all types of private lessons received, including those which are still ongoing.</p> <p>IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS</p>	<p>Open question</p> <p>If more than 6 – report the 6 most recent activities.</p>
<p>36a In the last 12 months have you participated in seminars, lectures, workshops or similar in the <i>workplace</i> or in your <i>free time</i>?</p> <p>N.B. THE ACTIVITY SHOULD INCLUDE SOME FORM OF EDUCATION.</p> <p><i>N.B. IN ADDITION TO THE EDUCATIONAL COURSES ALREADY REPORTED BY THE RESPONDENT</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES → Proceed to question 36b</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO → Proceed to question 37</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW → Proceed to question 37</p>
<p>36b Please list all seminars, lectures etc. that you have participated in.</p> <p>IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS</p>	<p>Open question</p> <p>If more than 6 – report the 6 most recent activities.</p>

<p>37a In the last 12 months have you received education, instruction or training <i>directly in the workplace or in the work situation with the aid of advisers or other instructors?</i></p> <p><i>e.g. to operate a new machine or to learn new software</i></p> <p>DO NOT INCLUDE HERE CASES WHERE THE RESPONDENT ASKED A COLLEAGUE'S ADVICE TO SOLVE A WORK TASK.</p> <p><i>N.B. IN ADDITION TO THE EDUCATION ALREADY REPORTED BY THE RESPONDENT</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES → Proceed to question 37b</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NO → Proceed to question 38</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> UNEMPLOYED → Proceed to question 38</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW → Proceed to question 38</p>
<p>37b List all the education, instruction or training which you received <i>directly at the workplace or in the work situation.</i></p> <p>IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS</p>	<p>Open question</p> <p>If more than 6 – report the 6 most recent activities.</p>
<p>If No to all the questions 34a – 37a → Proceed to 56a, otherwise proceed to 38</p>	

The purpose of having four questions instead of one for non-formal learning is to capture all types of learning activities that the respondent has participated in. These questions could in some cases be overlapping, for example it is possible that a course contains seminars.

To avoid double reporting of a learning activity, the respondent is reminded in each question that he/she only shall report learning activities in addition to those already reported. The respondent is also regularly reminded about the reference period and that activities both during work time and free time should be included.

If the respondent has participated in more than three non-formal activities, three of them are selected at random automatically during the interview for more detailed questions. It happened that the respondent remembered additional learning activities later on during the interview. The interviewers went back to the questions about listing non-formal learning activities, which lead to a new random selection of learning activities. This was experienced as a problem by the interviewers because they had to ask the detailed questions concerning the new selection of learning activities again. In future surveys, the first random selection of learning activities will be applicable even if additional learning activities are reported later on in the interview.

At last, informal learning are reported. The questions in this part of the questionnaire follow the recommended way of asking in the EU AES questionnaire. This section starts with an instruction according to the following; Now we have looked at education programmes, courses, seminars and lectures. Other than the activities discussed above, we shall now discuss learning on your own.

To avoid that incidental learning are reported, the interviewer reminds the respondent that he/she should have had the intention to learn something. It is probably difficult to avoid receiving incidental learning. The respondents will make their individual interpretation of the questions and this should be taken into account when analysing the results. It would probably have been easier if there was some kind of question about volume of informal learning.

Cyprus

The questions used in Cyprus are showed below;

B. PARTICIPATION IN FORMAL EDUCATION			
Question serial number	QUESTIONS/ANSWERS	CODES	QUESTION FLOW
72. (FED1)	During the last 12 months, that is from.....untilhave you been a student, apprentice or generally took part in any program in formal education (ie. at a school, college or university, in Cyprus or abroad)? (excludes apprenticeship scheme and evening classes of technical schools). (show list of schools)		
	- Yes,.....	1	
	- No,.....	2	→ Qu.94

Before starting completing any part of the questionnaire, the interviewer had to make an introduction to the respondent, explaining him/her the scope of the survey and also in brief the whole content of the survey. This proved very helpful for gaining the interest and the cooperation of the household. This introduction is shown on the electronic questionnaire and in a way the interviewer is obliged/ reminded to read it.

Also at the beginning of each part of the questionnaire, the interviewer had to read an introduction regarding the theme of that part.

One of the most important tasks was to take time and explain to the respondent the concept of Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning, together with helping him/her recall what he/she has done during the previous 12 months.

Show cards were also used in many cases to help the respondent, and they proved essential: For formal and non-formal education a show card with examples of educational institutions and programmes were used. The show card for non-formal education was shown before the questions about courses, distance learning, seminars and guided on the job training. The show card contained many examples of non-formal education that are characteristic in Cyprus.

In the full scale survey, two more show cards will be used, one for informal learning and one for attitudes towards learning.

If the respondent has participated in more than three non-formal learning activities, a random selection of three non-formal learning activities was done. The random selection was done simply by using a card of random numbers.

C. PARTICIPATION IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Question serial number	QUESTIONS/ANSWERS	CODES	QUESTION FLOW
------------------------	-------------------	-------	---------------

Introductory Questions

Introduction:
We would now like to talk to you about your participation in non-formal education, whether during the last 12 months you have attended any kind of activity with the intention to improve your knowledge or skills in any area (either concerning your job or for other personal reasons including hobbies).

(Interviewer, show NFE1 card)

94. (NFE1a)	During the last 12 months, have you participated in any private lessons or courses in order to improve/learn a language or your computing skills, music, dance e.t.c? (includes courses undertaken by the Adult Education Centres)		
	- Don't know.....	0	
	- Yes,.....	1	
	- No,.....	2	

94n. (NFE1an)	In how many? - Write the exact number.....	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	
--------------------------	---	---	--

95. (NFE1b)	During the last 12 months, have you participated in any courses conducting through open and distance education?		
	- Don't know.....	0	
	- Yes,.....	1	
	- No,.....	2	

95n. (NFE1bn)	In how many? - Write the exact number.....	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	
--------------------------	---	---	--

96.	During the last 12 months, have you participated in any seminars or workshops?		
	- Don't know.....	0	
	- Yes,.....	1	
	- No,.....	2	

96n. (NFE1cn)	In how many? - Write the exact number.....	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	
--------------------------	---	---	--

If in questions 94, 95 and 96 (NFE1a, NFE1b and NFE1c) you had code 1 (YES) even once then questions 97 and 98 (NFE1abcn and NFE1abcdXX) will be asked. If "YES" was not given at all, then move to question 100 (NFE1d).

97. (NFE1abcn)	Total number of activities of type a, b or c (sum of questions 94n,95n,96n) that the interviewee participated in during the last 12 months. (includes all activities given in questions 94, 95 and 96 (NFE1a, NFE1b and NFE1c))		
	- 0 activities.....	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	→ Qu.100
	- 1-20 activities.....	<input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	

Please describe the subject of every activity you stated above.

98. (NFE1abcdXX)	Description of learning activity	99. (NFEcodeXXT)
	1.	NFE01T
	2.	NFE02T
	3.	NFE03T
	4.	NFE04T
	5.	NFE05T
	6.	NFE06T
	7.	NFE07T
	8.	NFE08T
	9.	NFE09T
	10.	NFE10T
	11.	NFE11T
	12.	NFE12T
	13.	NFE13T
	14.	NFE14T
	15.	NFE15T
	16.	NFE16T
	17.	NFE17T
	18.	NFE18T
	19.	NFE19T
	20.	NFE20T

100. (NFE1d)	During the last 12 months did you have any job training at your workplace? Did you learn something new concerning your job? (On the job training)	
	- Don't know.....	0
	- Yes.....	1
	- No.....	2

If the answer to question 100 (NFE1d) is "NO" then;
 (i) If NFE1abcn>0, then move to the selection of the 3 activities (SELECT)
 (ii) If NFE1abcn=0 and question 72=1 (FED1), then move on to question 148 (OB1b)
 (iii) If NFE1abcn=0 and question 72=2 (FED1), then move on to question 147 (OB1a)

101. (NFE1dn)	In how many such activities did you participate during the last 12 months? (all activities stated in the above question should be noted)	
	- 1-10 activities..... (write the exact number. In case the activities are more than 10 write 10)	<input type="text"/>

Please describe the subject of every activity you stated above.

102. (NFE1ddX)	Description of learning activity	103. (NFEcodeXG)
	1.	NFE01G
	2.	NFE02G
	3.	NFE03G
	4.	NFE04G
	5.	NFE05G
	6.	NFE06G
	7.	NFE07G
	8.	NFE08G
	9.	NFE09G
	10.	NFE10G

104.	Total number of learning activities of all types (a,b,c,d) (max.30)	
(CountAll)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

(SELECT) From the tables of questions 98 and 102 3 activities must be chosen. This will be done using the card with the random numbers. Note the number of the chosen activities. The 3 activities may belong only to the XXT category or only to the XXG category or to both these categories. If the interviewee participated in 3 or less activities, then all activities should be chosen.

If the chosen activity is of type T then move to questions 105-134 (NFE2XXT - NFE22XXT).
If the chosen activity is of type G then move to questions 135-146 (NFE2XXG - NFE22XXG).

ACTIVITIES OF T TYPE:	a) Courses, private lessons
	b) Courses conducting through open and distance education
	c) Seminars and workshops

At last, informal learning are reported. The questions in this part of the questionnaire follow the recommended way of asking in the EU AES questionnaire.

United Kingdom

In UK a different classification of learning activities were used in order to be able to compare against previous national adult education surveys. The types of learning activities that were used was taught and non-taught learning activities but similar prompting questions as in EU AES was used to catch the different kinds of learning activities. This makes it possible to classify the learning activities in the UK questionnaire into formal education, non-formal education and informal learning according to the following;

Learning activity	NALS Category	AES Category
Course designed to lead to a qualification	Taught Learning	Formal Education
Course to help you develop skills for work	Taught Learning	Non-formal Education
Course or tuition in personal skills	Taught Learning	Non-formal Education
Adult education/evening classes	Taught Learning	Non-formal Education
Learning from a package of materials	Taught Learning	Non-formal Education
Some other type of course/tuition	Taught Learning	Non-formal Education
Supervised on the job training	Self-directed learning	Non-formal Education
Keeping up with developments at work by reading books, manuals or journals or by attending seminars	Self-directed learning	Informal learning
Deliberately tried to improve your knowledge about something	Self-directed learning	Informal learning

The questions about informal learning in UK is quite different from the questions in the EU AES manual and will probably not lead to comparable results between UK and other countries for participation in informal learning.

General remarks

The countries that have performed pilot tests or implemented EU AES haven't reported any big difficulties with classifying the learning activities into formal, non-formal and informal learning up till now. Respondents had however some problems with distinguishing between "seminars, workshops" and "courses" and also between "guided on the job training" and "courses taken for job-related reasons".

There were also some problems with distinguishing between “learning from colleagues, family and friends” and “guided on the job training”. The subcategory “guided on the job training” was identified separately due to the fact that some further questions are irrelevant for it and because this type of training may not be perceived as one to be reported by respondents. Participation in guided on the job training is not going to be analysed/published separately.

Ordering of questions/modules

Not all countries that have conducted EU AES have used the recommended ordering of questions in EU AES manual. The ordering of questions in Sweden and Finland are presented below;

Sweden

A majority of the information regarding information about the household, information on the individual and education and training successfully completed are collected through registers at Statistics Sweden. Not completed education and training will not be collected. This means that the Swedish AES questionnaire starts with questions about main labour statistics.

Concerning main labour statistics, Sweden have moved the question concerning existence of more than one job directly after the main current labour status. This was done after discussions with measurement experts at Statistics Sweden. The main reason was to make it clear for the respondent that the other questions about labour market situation only concerns the main job.

The next part of the questionnaire concerns questions about participation in formal education. Sweden have changed the ordering of the questions as a result of the measurement test. FED7X (Volume of instruction hours) is the last question in this section, because it is regarded as the most difficult question.

In order to make the questions shorter and also in order to first ask about financing of tuition, registration etc. and then about financing of books etc., the ordering of the questions was changed according to the following; FED10X, FED9X, FED11X, FED10aX, FED9aX, FED12X.

Concerning participation in non-formal education Sweden made the same changes in the ordering of the financing questions as for participation in formal education.

Concerning obstacles to participation in education, The Swedish questionnaire starts with the question about the reasons which made it difficult to participate in education during the past 12 months (OB4). The reason for this is that this question is closely connected with the questions about participation in formal and non-formal education. This means that OB4 is asked for everyone who has participated in formal and/or non-formal education. After OB4 the following questions are asked; OB1, OB2 and OB3.

For access to information about learning possibilities, use of ICT the same ordering is used as in EU AES questionnaire. For language skills the first question is about mother tongue (LG2).

Sweden only asks about books (CA12, CA13 and CA14) in the section about cultural participation. In order to help the respondent to define at home in the correct way this section starts with a question about the number of persons in different age groups living in the same household (BG4).

The questionnaire ends with questions about highest successfully completed education according to the following, the type of education (level of education on an aggregated level) and the year when the education was completed (BG12).

Finland

In Finnish AES the recommended order in the EU manual were followed with very few exceptions:

- formal and non-formal education and informal learning: were asked as described above
- question about income (BG28): asked later than recommended, the question was included in the national part of the Finnish survey (“Work conditions and income information”)

Formulation of some questions about formal and non-formal learning activities

Level of formal education

The level of formal education was classified during the interview by the interviewers or after the interview in Sweden, Finland and Cyprus. In Sweden the coding is done automatically after the interview with the help of responses to several questions. The questions used for classifying the level of formal education in Sweden, Finland and Cyprus are included below.

Sweden

The questions used for classifying level of formal education in Sweden are listed below.

19	What type of education programme/activity was it or is it?	REPLY CARD 1 (see above) DEPENDENDING ON THE REPLY ANSWER QUESTIONS 20A – 20D
INSTRUCTION 10; IF QUESTION 19 = 2 PROCEED TO QUESTION 23, IF QUESTION 19 = 1 PROCEED TO QUESTION 20A, IF QUESTION 19 = 3, 4, 6 PROCEED TO QUESTION 20B, IF QUESTION 19 = 5 PROCEED TO 20C, IF QUESTION 19=7, 8 PROCEED TO QUESTION 20D		
20a	Was it or is it a basic education, upper secondary school education or complementary education programme/activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> BASIC ADULT EDUCATION PROCEED TO QUESTION 23 <input type="checkbox"/> UPPER SECONDARY ADULT EDUCATION PROCEED TO QUESTION 21b <input type="checkbox"/> COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION PROCEED TO QUESTION 21a <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW PROCEED TO QUESTION 21a
20b	Was it or is it an education programme/activity at primary/lower secondary, upper-secondary or post-secondary level?	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIMARY/LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL PROCEED TO QUESTION 23 <input type="checkbox"/> UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL PROCEED TO QUESTION 21b <input type="checkbox"/> POST-SECONDARY LEVEL PROCEED TO QUESTION 21a
20c	Was it or is it a graduate or a post-graduate programme?	<input type="checkbox"/> GRADUATE PROGRAMME PROCEED TO QUESTION 21a <input type="checkbox"/> POST-GRADUATE PROGRAMME PROCEED TO QUESTION 21b <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW PROCEED TO QUESTION 21a

<p>20d Was or is the programme/activity at upper- secondary or post-secondary level?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL PROCEED TO QUESTION 21b</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> POST-SECONDARY LEVEL E.G.RECREATION LEADER, CANTOR PROCEED TO QUESTION 21a</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL E.G. RECREATION LEADER, CANTOR</p>
<p>21a What is the total duration of the programme/course?</p> <p>GIVE THE TOTAL DURATION OF THE COURSE, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER IT IS PART-TIME OR FULL-TIME. DO NOT GIVE THE TIME THE RESPONDENT HAS SPENT STUDYING IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Shorter than 1 term</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 3 terms</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 terms or longer</p>

Finland

The categories used for describing participation in formal and non-formal education in Finland are also used for classifying level of education together with some additional questions listed below.

C3. Did/Does the schooling lead to a qualification or degree?

- Yes 1
- No 2

C4. What is the name of that qualification or degree?

C5. What institution or organisation cater/catered for this education?

Cyprus

The questions used in Cyprus for classifying level of education are listed below.

74a. (FED3A)	What is the level of the first educational activity?		
	- Primary school.....	1	
	- Gymnasium (3 first classes).....	2	
	- Lyceums(4th-6th or 7th class), Technical/Vocational schools.....	3	
	- Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary.....	4	
	- Tertiary education (Non-university level (2-3 years vocational studies, eg.Higher Technical Institute, Higher Hotel Institute,college 2 years) and University or college for 4 years (includes master's degree).....	5	
	- Doctorate (PhD).....	6	

75a. (DESCR1A)	What is the level of the first educational activity?Describe:

76a. (DESCR2A)	Where did you attend this first educational activity? Give in detail the name of the school.

78a. (DESCR4A)	What was the <u>ordinary duration</u> of your studies, given in years/months, for the first educational activity?

Field of education and training

In Sweden, Finland and Cyprus open questions for description are used and post coding was done at the office for field of formal education, field of non-formal education and field of informal learning. The post coding are sometimes difficult because the descriptions in the open questions aren't detailed enough.

In Sweden two questions concerning name of the programme/course/seminar/other activity and main content/subject of the learning activity are used for post-coding formal and non-formal learning while one question about the main content/subject is used for post coding field of informal learning. The coding of the open answers was done with the help of a computer program, which automatically suggested an appropriate field from a table containing names/subjects of courses/training in Sweden and their corresponding field of training according to the "Swedish classification of education and training" on three digit level. The Swedish classification almost corresponds with the international classification "fields of education and training". The proposed field-code had to be approved by the person working with the computer program. The list of possible names/subjects for formal and non-formal courses/training in Sweden came from the survey on staff training 2003 and the LLL module 2003. For informal learning the subjects in the Swedish classification was used for suggesting field-codes. If the computer program couldn't suggest any appropriate field of education the coding was done manually.

In Finland two open questions according to the following are used for post coding formal and non-formal education.

What was/is the course or training called? If you do not remember what it was/is called, please describe the subject or theme of the course as fully as possible.

What was/is the content of the training?

For on the job training the following questions are used;

What were/are the contents of the training?

What were/are the name of the training?

For informal learning the following question was used.

Please list max. 3 most important subjects you taught yourself using these methods

The following questions were used in Cyprus for post coding field of education.

Formal education

77a. (DESCR3A)	In what field or subject was the first educational activity about? Give as much detail as possible.

Non-formal education

Please describe the subject of every activity you stated above.

102. (NFE1ddX)	Description of learning activity	103. (NFEcodeXG)
	1.	NFE01G
	2.	NFE02G
	3.	NFE03G
	4.	NFE04G
	5.	NFE05G
	6.	NFE06G
	7.	NFE07G
	8.	NFE08G
	9.	NFE09G
	10.	NFE10G

Informal learning

Introductory question: Mention the 3 most important subjects you taught yourself during the last 12 months.

186.1 (INF81a)	Describe the first one (most important subject you tried to teach yourself using the above methods).

In UK a show card was used for coding of fields of education and training for formal, non-formal and informal learning during the interview by the interviewers according to the following;

“SHOWCARD 7: What was/is the main subject or content of this course?”:

- Hist "Historical and philosophical studies",
- Modlng "Modern languages and literature",
- Anclng "Ancient languages and linguistics",
- Art "Creative arts and design",
- Phyisc "Physical sciences",
- Math "Mathematical and Computer sciences",
- Eng "Engineering",
- Bio "Biology and biochemistry",
- Medic "Medicine and dentistry",
- Othmed "Other subjects allied to Medicine",
- Vet "Veterinary sciences, agriculture and related subjects",
- Soc "Social studies",
- Bus "Business and administrative studies",
- Comm "Mass communications and documentation",
- Educ "Education and teacher training",

- Law "Law",
- Othac "Other academic subject",
- Othwrk "Other specifically work-related subject",
- Compu "Computer use (including internet use)",
- Num "Number skills",
- Writ "Basic reading and writing skills",
- Englng "English language/ creative writing skills",
- Firsta "First aid",
- Gard "Gardening/ garden design",
- Envir "Environment/ sustainability",
- Gene "Local history/ genealogy",
- Hand "Handicrafts/ arts",
- Photo "Photography",
- Mus "Music and drama",
- Sprt "Sport/ physical activity",
- Self "Self-development (e.g., parenting skills, self-awareness, etc.)",
- Othles "Other leisure or life skills subject",
- Mix "Mixed subjects – DO NOT USE")

Hours of formal and non-formal education

In Finland, Sweden and Cyprus the total instruction hours of the learning activity is calculated after the interview based on several questions about months/weeks/days/hours. The questions in the national questionnaires are listed below;

Sweden

Formal education

<p>In the last 12 months, how many weeks did you participate in "xxx" (name of education activity/program)</p> <p>ONE YEAR IS EQUAL TO 40 WEEKS ONE TERM IS EQUAL TO 20 WEEKS</p> <p>IF THE INTERVIEW IS CONDUCTED IN THE MIDDLE OF TERM ONLY THE COMPLETED PORTION OF THE TERM SHALL BE COUNTED.</p>	<p>NO. WEEKS _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW</p> <p>IF THE INTERVIEW IS CONDUCTED IN THE MIDDLE OF TERM ONLY THE COMPLETED PORTION OF THE TERM SHALL BE COUNTED.</p>
<p>What was the number of instruction hours per week on average of the activity/programme ?</p> <p>IF YES TO QUESTION 25 (DISTANCE EDUCATION); INSTRUCTIONS FROM TEACHERS VIA THE INTERNET OR E-MAIL COUNT AS INSTRUCTION HOURS.</p>	<p>NO. HOURS: _____ DO NOT USE DECIMALS</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW</p> <p>IF LECTURES ARE 45 MINUTES ROUND THEM UP TO ONE HOUR.</p>

The total number of instruction hours for formal education is calculated through multiplying number of weeks with number of average hours per week.

Non-formal education

<p>How many instruction days during the last 12 months did "include the name of the activity" comprise? Report only the last 12 months. SELF-STUDY AND TRAVEL SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED. EACH INSTRUCTION OCCASION IS COUNTED AS ONE INSTRUCTION DAY, WHICH MEANS THAT ONE INSTRUCTION DAY CAN OFTEN ENTAIL MORE OR LESS THAN 8 HOURS, E.G. A SEMINAR OF 2 HOURS. 1 DAY IS THEN RECORDED IN 48A AND 2 HOURS IN 48B.</p>	<p>NO. DAYS _____ <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW IF THE RESPONDENT IS NOT CERTAIN OF THE EXACT NUMBER OF INSTRUCTION DAYS, THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE MAY HELP TO CALCULATE THE NUMBER OF INSTRUCTION DAYS, OTHERWISE THE RESPONDENT SHOULD REPORT WHAT IS MOST LIKELY.</p>
<p>EXAMPLE; 1 WEEK IS RECORDED AS 5 INSTRUCTION DAYS; 1 MONTH IS RECORDED AS 20 INSTRUCTION DAYS; 1 COURSE CONSISTING OF ATTENDANCE ONCE A WEEK DURING 1 YEAR IS RECORDED AS 40 INSTRUCTION DAYS. 1 COURSE CONSISTING OF ATTENDANCE 2 TIMES A WEEK DURING 3 MONTHS IS RECORDED AS 24 INSTRUCTION DAYS</p>	
<p>On average how many hours per instruction day did the course/seminar entail? <i>Do not record self-study and travel.</i></p>	<p>NO. HOURS: _____ NO DECIMALS <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW IF THE SEMINAR LASTED 45 MINUTES, ROUND THIS UP TO ONE HOUR.</p>
<p>INSTRUCTION 15; IF SELECTED COURSE 1/2/3 COMES FROM THE LIST IN QUESTSION 34B OR 35B PROCEED TO QUESTION 49; OTHERWISE PROCEED TO QUESTION 50A.</p>	
<p>Approximately what was the total number of hours you spent on self-study connected with this course/seminar?</p>	<p>NO. HOURS: _____ NO DECIMALS <input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW</p>

The total number of instruction hours for non-formal education is calculated through multiplying number of days with number of average hours per day.

Finland

Formal education

How many instruction hours per day did this education comprise on average (0-12)?

How many days per week did this education comprise (0-7)?

And how many weeks in the last 12 months did this education comprise (0-52)?

The total number of instruction hours for formal education is calculated through multiplying instruction hours per day with days per week and number of weeks during the last 12 months.

Non-formal education

Please estimate how many instruction hours altogether you were in this training in the past 12 months

How many instruction hours per day did this education comprise on average (0-12)?

How many days per week did this education comprise (0-7)?

And how many weeks in the last 12 months did this education comprise (0-52)?

The total number of instruction hours is calculated through multiplying instruction hours per day with days per week and number of weeks during the last 12 months. The result from the calculation is compared against the estimated total instruction hours.

What was the total number of hours you used on one-off travels (back and forth) connected with this activity (travel during working hours not included)?

What was the number of minutes per day you used on daily travelling (back and forth) connected with this activity (time per day) (travel during working hours not included)?

Apart from the instruction hours which you have already told me about, what was the total number of minutes you spent on homework or self study connected with this activity?

Guided on the job training

Please estimate how many instruction hours altogether you were in this training in the past 12 months

Cyprus

Formal education

How many teaching hours have you participated in (on average) for the first educational activity during the last 12 months?		
- 1-25 hours..... (write the exact number. In case the hours are more than 25 write 25)	<input type="text"/>	

For how many months?		
- 0 (if the duration was less than 1 month).....	<input type="text" value="0"/>	
- 1-12 months..... (write the exact number of months)	<input type="text"/>	→ Qu. 86a

For how many weeks?		
- 1-3 (write the exact number)	<input type="text"/>	

Calculate the total volume of instruction hours for the first educational activity during the last 12 months:		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Non-formal education

During the last 12 months, how many hours of instruction per week (on average) have you participated in for the first learning activity?		
- 1-25 hours..... (write the exact number. In case the hours are more than 25 write 25)	<input type="text"/>	

For how many months?		
- 0 (if the duration is less than 1 month).....	<input type="text" value="0"/>	
- 1-12 months.....	<input type="text"/>	→ Qu.119a

For how many weeks?		
- 1-3..... (write the exact number)	<input type="text"/>	

Total number of instruction hours for the first learning activity during the last 12 months. Calculate;		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

How many hours per week have you spent on homework or self study with this first activity during the last 12 months?		
- 0 hours.....	<input type="text" value="0"/>	→Qu.124a
- 1-25 hours..... (write the exact number. In case the hours are more than 25 write 25)	<input type="text"/>	

For how many months?		
- 0 (if the duration is less than 1 month).....	<input type="text" value="0"/>	
- 1-12 months.....	<input type="text"/>	→Qu.123a

For how many weeks?		
- 1-3..... (write the exact number)	<input type="text"/>	

Total number of hours spent on homework or self study connected with this first activity during the last 12 months. Calculate;		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

How many instruction meetings did you have per week for the first learning activity during the last 12 months?		
- 0 meetings (for long distance education).....	<input type="text" value="0"/>	→Qu.127a
- 1-14 meetings..... (write the average number of weekly meetings. In case the meetings are more than 14 write 14).....	<input type="text"/>	

What was the duration of the distance in minutes for one instruction meeting (go and return) for the first learning activity during the last 12 months?		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Total number of hours spent on travelling connected with this first activity during the last 12 months. Calculate;		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Provider of non-formal education

The majority of the countries will use national lists of providers which are translated into the categories in the EU AES manual. Below are examples of national questions from Sweden, Finland and Cyprus. Cyprus uses an open question which is post coded according to the categories in the EU AES manual.

Sweden

<p>Who was the provider of the course/seminar? <i>By provider is meant the company/organisation that provides the course leader.</i></p> <p>ONLY ONE ANSWER MAY BE GIVEN</p> <p>REPLY CARD 3 IS DISPLAYED DIRECTLY TO ASSIST THE RESPONDENT.</p> <p>IT IS NOT THE LOCATION OF THE LEARNING ACTIVITY OR THE PARTY WHO PAID FOR IT THAT SHOULD BE GIVEN, RATHER THE PROVIDER OF THE EDUCATION. PROVIDER OF THE EDUCATION IS DEFINED AS THE ENTERPRISE/MUNICIPALITY /STATE AUTHORITY/ PRIVATE PERSON WHO PROVIDES THE TEACHER, LECTURER OR INSTRUCTOR FOR THE LEARNING ACTIVITY</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYER, OWN COMPANY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE TRAINING COMPANY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER COMPANY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATION, TRADE ASSOCIATION</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> TRADE UNION</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CLUB, NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION OR POLITICAL PARTY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> LERNIA, F.D. AMU-GROUP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> UNIVERSITY/HIGH SCHOOL</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL ADULT EDUCATION / FOLK HIGH SCHOOL</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> STUDY CIRCLE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE PERSON</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER PROVIDER (PLEASE SPECIFY): _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DON'T KNOW</p>
--	--

Finland

What institution or organisation cater/catered for the training?

Educational institute	1	-> 5.1
Employer	2	
Employer's organisations	3	
Trade unions	4	
Individuals	5	
Something else	6	-> 5.2

5.1 What educational institution cater/catered for the training?

5.2 What institution or organisation cater/catered for the training?

Cyprus

Who was the provider of this activity? Give the name of the institution/service;	
.....	

Experiences in some countries from testing the questionnaire

Some countries have already performed tests of their national questionnaires. The main conclusions based on the tests/pilot surveys for some of these countries are described below.

General remarks about the questionnaire

Sweden

- Too long and too many questions – the final questionnaire didn't contain all questions in the EU manual. Almost all questions in the module about participation in cultural activities and all questions in the module about attitudes towards learning were excluded from the questionnaire.
- The questions were not very difficult or sensitive
- Some of the test persons were in favour of telephone interviews instead of face-to-face interviews
- The interviewing time varied between 22 and 44 minutes
- Most time consuming questions – responding to questions about non-formal learning activities.
- It wasn't good to change the reference period during the interview (3 months for use of ICT in the test questionnaire). This question was changed in the final questionnaire.

UK

- Because of UK-specific issues, the questionnaire was averaging around 55 minutes. The only practical solution was to ask about only one randomly-selected formal learning activity (instead of 3) and about only one randomly-selected non-formal learning activity (instead of 3).

Finland

- Overall it might be a problem that work related context and personal context are not clearly separated in the questionnaire. In the test interviews it became clear that the respondents were answering some questions from a work related context and some from a personal context. The answers are different when the respondents are thinking about the education at work and when they are thinking about the education outside work. It is not possible to identify which context respondents are contemplating while answering a survey question. The respondents often started answering a question from a work related context but then changed the context suddenly to a personal one.

Cyprus

Results concerning the procedure of the survey:

- Biggest problem was to come in contact with any member of the household in order to start the process of the questionnaire. Letters should have been sent in advance. Also, contacts by telephone should be made before visiting the household for fixing an appointment.
- Even if at the beginning the respondent is hesitating to accept the interviewer, after that the subject of the survey is described, he/she is accepted with enthusiasm, especially from those that participate in learning (the over 64 are sometimes disappointed that they are not included, especially if they participate in learning).

Formal education, non-formal education and informal learning

Sweden

- The respondent were thinking about the same learning activity on several occasions
- The description of formal education (education leading to a qualification in NFQ) was not clear enough, which lead to misinterpretations by the respondents.
- The introduction for the non-formal education questions is important. The test persons understood the concepts (NF) rather well.
- Difficult for the test persons to understand the level of studies required for answering yes under informal learning. Deliberately is a key word that should be used in more than one of the alternatives. Using printed material and visiting learning centres are overlapping.
- Overlapping between taking part in learning groups and participating in courses (study circles). Instructions to the interviewers are important. Taking part in learning groups was excluded from the final AES questionnaire.
- Overlapping between learning from colleagues and on the job training. Instructions to the interviewers are important.
- Risk of including self-studies in connection with taking part in education or courses in informal learning.

UK

- UK found that people were not including obtaining qualifications through research e.g. PhDs in the list with formal education. So UK added a note for interviewer to include research courses.
- A few people had done around 20 learning activities and were finding the section about listing non-formal activities tedious. UK provided a note to interviewers telling them that recording details of the 6 most recent activities was sufficient, as long as they recorded the total number of activities.
- The 3 digit codes were mostly not suitable regarding field of informal learning. One solution would have been to have an open question and postcode it. However, UK decided to provide a subject list that included the most frequently reported subjects of informal learning from NALS 2002 as well as the main 3 digit subjects

Finland

- The question/concept - guided 'on the job training' produced various problems in the Finnish interviews. Two different kinds of wordings were tested and some common themes came up. Many respondents understood that 'on the job training' meant that someone outside work community came to their work place to teach the respondent or a small group he/she belongs and that this was provided by the employer. Secondly, this concept was not accessible to many at all. Some respondents did not know how to make a distinction between on the job training and normal help from colleagues. One of the main issues seems to be who is the provider of this learning activity. In Finnish language the concept 'on the job training' has to be produced with more than one definition.

The question about volume of formal activity or non-formal activity is cognitively challenging because it requires a lot of recalling and counting. Two kinds of questions were tested.

Question 1

- Estimate how many weeks did you spend in this program/course in the past 12 months?
- Estimate on average how many days per week that was?
- Estimate on average how many hours per day that was?

Question 2

Estimate all together how many hours did you spend in this program/course in the past 12 months?

The conclusion of the testing was that it would be reasonable to ask the volume with two different questions, depending on the duration of education activities. Question 2 is suitable if education lasted one week or less and question 1 is suitable if education lasted for a longer period of time.

Cyprus

- It was difficult to distinguish between “Guided on the job training” and “Course or seminar” if the course/seminar was job related.
- It was difficult for the interviewers to decide if learning from colleagues was “Informal learning” or “Guided on the job training”.
- The question about activity leads to a certificate required by law was confusing and probably the responses to the question are not correct. A risk of over reporting learning activities leading to certificates.
- Provider of Non-Formal activity was difficult to post code. More precise description is needed.
- ISCO/NACE/ISCED: for post-coding more detailed description is needed.
- For informal learning it was in many cases not possible to find an appropriate ISCED field.

Other modules in EU AES

Sweden

- Some of the alternatives in the questions about obstacles were too indistinct for example “experienced difficulties in finding what you wanted” (Regarding content, time period or location?). It wasn’t clear for the respondent what was meant by the category “training took place at the distance hard to reach”. The categories were changed in the Swedish questionnaire into the following; “it was difficult to find a programme/activity with the appropriate content” and “there was no training offered within a reasonable distance from your home”.

UK

- Respondents who had several qualifications at the same level but in different subjects could not answer the question about the subject of their highest completed education. So a new response category was added: "A mixture of subjects at the same qualification level".
- A few respondents wanted to tell the interviewer about more than one current labour activity (e.g., working and looking after the home). UK decided that the codes were in priority order, so they should choose the first that apply.
- UK found that “Please list all the languages you can speak” discouraged respondents from mentioning languages because they felt 'speaking' the language implied a higher degree of fluency than they felt they had. UK decided to ask about mother tongue first and then change wording on LG1 to: "Do you have some knowledge of any other languages?"
- Respondents found the phrase “mother tongue” very strange and old fashioned. UK changed wording to: "What is your first language?" This should be a multi-code where up to 2 languages can be entered for bi-lingual people.

Finland

- Some major findings concerning obstacles and especially things that are considered important in interpreting the quantitative data are reported below. (1) The obstacles had more than one dimension. (2) Several obstacles could be interpreted in different ways. (3) Respondents' answers were different depending on what kind of activity they primarily had in mind. There was a big difference between responses when the respondents thought about short work related learning and when the respondents thought about long full time studying. (4) It was also quite clear that the respondents were thinking about the obstacles to participation in general and were not considering the reference time of 12 months.
- The concept 'prerequisite' should be better explained because there is no translation in Finnish for this expression. Does this concept mean entrance requirements that can not be acquired (e.g. age, height) or does it also mean entrance requirements such as skills (e.g. playing skills)? If a person does not pass the entrance examination does it mean he/she does not have the prerequisites? Two different kinds of questions were tested with different emphasis. The latter wording where 'prerequisites' refers to 'fulfilment of conditions' worked better, but still some work needs to be done with this obstacle. More precise objectives of this obstacle item are needed in order to finalise the wording.
- The obstacle 'training was too expensive/you could not afford it' was interpreted in several different ways. Some respondents thought that the education was too expensive for their employer, and because of this they could not participate in the activity. Some interviewees thought that it was too expensive to pay for it themselves. Some others considered the financial situation of their family. They thought that even if the education was free, the other household members were depending on their fixed salary. This means that 'training was too expensive' and 'you could not afford it' can be understood in a different way and therefore are not the same obstacle.
- Employer's support was understood either as monetary support or flexibility in working hours. This question seemed to be clear to the respondents.
- The obstacle "training conflicted with your work schedule" was understood in two different ways. It meant to some respondents that because of work schedule there is not enough time for education. Others understood that it meant difficult working times like working at nights.
- The obstacle "you didn't have time because of family responsibilities" was clearly understood as a child care problem but we also tested a supplementary question which wasn't about lack of time. In this question the obstacle was "other family responsibilities" and with this obstacle the respondents were for example thinking about the other family members' attitudes towards their education. Probably these kinds of obstacles are not captured if the question is worded "you didn't have time because of family responsibilities".
- The obstacle "training took place at the distance hard to reach" was clear to the respondents but like with the other obstacles also here there was a big difference between answers where the respondents thought about short work related studying and answers where the respondents thought about long full time studying. This question is clearly connected to the area where respondents live.
- The obstacle "your health or age" was quite clear to respondents but again with this obstacle the answers were different depending on whether the respondent was thinking about short work related studying or long full time studying. Some respondents however thought that age could also be a prerequisite.

- Some respondents thought that the obstacle about “You were not confident with the idea of going back to something that is like school” was peculiar. It is peculiar especially to those respondents who are in some training or education at the time of answering. For them ‘going back to something like school’ is not relevant, because they are in school already and not going back.
- The obstacle “Training was organised in the inconvenient time” appears to be clear to respondents.
- The obstacle “Training took place at the distance hard to reach” appears to be clear to respondents.
- The obstacle “You experienced difficulties in finding what you wanted” got mixed reactions. Some respondents thought it was clear, but some saw it as a strange obstacle. One respondent thought that people first find a subject they like and then they want to study that subject. He thought it is backwards to think that people first decide that they want to study and then start thinking of the subject.

Cyprus

- Attitudes towards learning: Respondents had difficulty in understanding and deciding which category to use, especially for ATT4 “The skills you need to do a job can’t be learned in the classroom”.

Recollection problems

Sweden

- Difficulties to Remember, particularly short non formal activities due to the long reference period.
- The majority of the test persons thought that it would be a good idea to prepare themselves before the interview, by going through their learning activities during the last 12 months with the help of a calendar.

Experiences in Sweden and UK from implementing the survey

Experiences during the implementation of EU AES in Sweden and UK so far are presented in this section. This documentation isn't complete because the analysis of the quality in the variables in EU AES hasn't started yet in Sweden or UK. The editing of data isn't finalised in Sweden and the results from editing of the UK data isn't available at the time of finalising this report.

Boundaries between formal education, non-formal education and informal learning

Sweden

There are still problems with separating between the three types of learning activities in order to avoid misclassification of a learning activity and double reporting. It could be possible to check how common these errors are through taking a random sample of respondents and checking the description of subjects. This kind of analysis hasn't been made yet. The concepts are not entirely clear for the respondents and the interviewers. Therefore it is very important with education of the interviewers before conducting the survey. In the Swedish survey there were fewer problems with understanding the concepts concerning formal education and non-formal education for the respondents than with understanding informal learning. For informal learning there are very high response rates which aren't surprising. It should be reconsidered what kind of information about informal learning really is interesting for the policy users. There are also serious quality problems with the questions about informal learning. It is really difficult for the respondents to separate between incidental learning and deliberate learning or avoid reporting self studies in connection with participation in formal or non-formal education. The methods of learning used as questions in the questionnaire are overlapping, which makes the respondents confused.

UK

Informal learning question will illicit a very high response rate.

Seminars or workshops are difficult to have as a separate category because of the risks for double reporting.

Three formal and three non-formal activities are too much.

Details about learning activities for formal education, non-formal education and informal learning

Sweden

Based on editing of data so far in Sweden there are no big problems with asking the questions about purpose of formal learning, if formal learning took place on paid working hours, total instruction hours and personal investments in registration fees, books etc. The proportion of item non-response is very low in all the questions. For the questions about number of instruction hours and amount of money paid by the respondent or any family member for tuition fees, books etc. the proportion of item non-response and don't know answers is between 3 and 4 percent. The number of instruction hours is however an approximate figure based on calculations of number of weeks multiplied with average hours per week.

The experiences from asking the detailed questions about non-formal education are similar to the experiences from formal education. The item non-response rate is very low in the majority of the questions. For the amount of money paid by the respondent or any family member for tuition fees books etc. the proportion of item non-response and don't know answers is between 5 and 6 percent.

Regarding providers of non-formal learning are the item non-response rates for all three selected learning activities below 1 percent. The most common provider of non-formal learning activities is the employer, between 40 and 50 percent of the non-formal learning activities are provided by the employer. The proportion of other providers for non-formal learning activities is between 7 and 9 percent. These learning activities are either provided by any of the fixed categories in the question or provided by a new type for example a library. The open descriptions for the category "other" will be checked in order to decide on the correct provider.

The respondent is asked for information about the name of the learning activity and the main content or main subject for the activity. Sometimes the descriptions are not detailed enough for coding. The subject for non-formal education for personal reasons and informal learning are sometimes difficult to postcode according to “fields of education and training” (ISCED) on three digit level. An adaptation of ISCED for coding of these kinds of learning activities might be necessary. It would also be good if a list of common subjects for these kinds of activities in different countries with recommended field of training according to ISCED could be developed. The item non response rates for coding of ISCED were between 1 and 2 percent for all types of learning activities.

To get knowledge about errors caused by incorrect coding an experiment has been implemented. A random sample of non-formal and informal learning activities has been selected. The sample sizes were 550 non-formal learning activities and 535 informal learning subjects. The reported learning activities were stratified according to ISCED on one digit level and about 50 learning activities were sampled in each stratum. The sampled learning activities have been coded independent of each other twice. To receive a general picture of the quality in the ISCED codes, the proportion of learning activities which have been classified in the same field-code both times, has been estimated. It seems to be more problems with classifying non-formal learning activities compared to classifying informal learning activities, which is somewhat surprising. However, the biggest problem with classifying informal learning activities was to decide on an appropriate field-code. When this was done, the descriptions of subjects/contents for informal learning activities were clearer than for non-formal learning activities. For non-formal learning activities, the quality is much better for field of education according to ISCED on 1 digit level or 2 digit level than for “fields of education and training” on 3 digit level.

Estimated proportion of learning activities classified in the same field category twice

	Proportion in percent		
	ISCED 1 digit level	ISCED 2 digit level	ISCED 3 digit level
Non-formal learning activities	83±4	79±4	63±5
Informal learning activities	89±3	86±3	76±4

UK

Subject of informal learning doesn't fit very well with the “academic” codes in ISCED.

Comparison problems between countries

The EU AES 2005 until 2007 can be seen as pilot surveys, because the technical documents describing the contents and methods have been developed in parallel with implementing the survey in some countries. This means that there will be big differences between the countries regarding survey design, wording of questions etc, which should be taken into account when comparisons are made between the results in different countries. The experiences during implementation of EU AES 2005-2007 will be taken into account when the next AES survey for 2010/2011 is developed. Below the main differences between countries are listed.

- Differences in survey design
- Differences in wording of questions for example regarding participation formal education, non-formal education and informal learning. It will be difficult to make the classification of formal and non-formal education comparable between countries because of big differences in national education systems. One country offers an educational programme which is very similar regarding content and kind of qualification compared to an educational programme in another country. The educational programme can be unequally classified in different countries depending on if the qualification is included in the national framework of qualifications or not. One of the solutions for this is to avoid separating formal education from non-formal education when comparisons in participation rates are made between countries.

- Differences in ordering of questions
- Differences in survey year
- Differences in response rates

List of variables in EU AES and their level of preference

	Short description	Level
BG1	Year of survey	0
BG2	Month of the survey	0
BG3	Degree of urbanisation	0
BG4	Number of persons living in the same household (including the respondent)	0
BG5	Sex	0
BG61	Year of birth	0
BG7	Nationality	9
BG8	Years of residence in this Member State	0
BG9	Country of birth	0
BG10	Highest level of education or training successfully completed	0
BG11	Field of highest level of education or training successfully completed	0
BG12	Year when highest level of education or training was successfully completed	0
BG13	Education at the higher level than achieved started but abandoned	9
BG14	Level of the education started and abandoned	9
BG15	Main current labour status	0
BG16	Professional status	0
BG17	Economic activity of the local unit	0
BG18	Occupation	0
BG19	Number of persons working at the local unit	0
BG20	Year in which person started working for this employer or as self-employed	0
BG21	Permanency of the job	0
BG22	Full-time / Part-time distinction	0
BG23	Existence of more than one job or business	9
BG24	Situation with regard to activity one year before survey	0
BG25	Professional status one year before survey	0
BG26	Occupation one year before survey	0
BG27	Permanency of the job one year before survey	0
BG28	Income group based on the monthly (take home) pay from main job	2
SF1	Highest level of education attained by father	9

	Short description	Level
SF2	Highest level of education attained by mother	9
SF3	Main Occupation of Father	9
SF4	Main Occupation of Mother	9
FED1	Student during the last 12 months	0
FED2	Number of activities	0
FED3X*	Level of Xth education or training	0
FED4X*	Field of Xth education or training	0
FED5X*	Main reason (j/p) of participating in Xth activity	0
FED6X*	Distance learning in the Xth activity	0
FED7	Volume of instructions hours of all the activities	1
FED8X	During paid working hours	0
FED9	Respondent's financial investment as for the tuition, registration, exams fees regarding all the reported activities	0
FED9a	Respondent's financial investment as for books or technical study means regarding all the reported activities	1
FED10	Employers financial support for the tuition, registration, exams fees regarding all the reported activities	0
FED10a	Employers financial support for books or technical study means regarding all the reported activities	1
FED11	Respondent's expenditures on s for the tuition, registration, exams fees regarding all the reported activities	0
FED11a	Respondent's expenditures on goods (books and/or technical study means) regarding all the reported activities	1
NFE2	Codes of all listed activities	0
NFE1Y**	Code of the Y selected activity	0
NFE2Y**	Field of selected activity	0
NFE3Y**	Main reason (j/p) of participating in activity Y	0
NFE4Y**	Detailed reasons of participation	1
NFE6Y**	During paid working hours	0
NFE10Y**	Respondent's financial investment as for the tuition, registration, exams fees regarding the selected activity	0
NFE10aY**	Respondent's financial investment as for books or technical study means regarding the selected activity	1
NFE11Y**	Employers financial support as for the tuition, registration, exams fees regarding the selected activity	0
NFE11aY**	Employers financial support as for books or technical study means regarding the selected activity	1
NFE12Y**	Respondent's expenditures tuition, registration, exams fees	0

	Short description	Level
	concerning activity Y	
NFE13Y**	Respondent's expenditures books and/or technical study means concerning activity Y	1
NFE14Y**	Volume of instructions hours	0
NFE15Y**_ NFE16Y**	Volume of hours spend on homework and travelling	1
NFE17Y**	Use of the computer by participating in the activity Y	0
NFE18Y**	Distance learning in the activity Y	1
NFE19Y**	Types of delivery for the distance learning	1
NFE20Y**	Provider	0
NFE21Y**	Use of skills acquired from activity	1
NFE22Y**	In the country or abroad	1
OB1	Obstacles experienced when participating in any of the formal and non-formal education and training	0
OB1M	The most important obstacle	0
OBW	The intention to participate in learning and training	0
OB2	Obstacles for those who didn't want to participate in education and training (all that apply)	0
OB2M	The most important obstacle	0
OB3	Obstacles for those who wanted to participate in education and training but did not (all that apply)	0
OB3M	The most important obstacle	0
INF1	Learning from a friend, family member or colleague	0
INF2	Using printed material (books, professional magazines, etc.)	0
INF3	Using computers (online or offline)	0
INF4	Through television/radio/video	0
INF5	Guided tours of museums, historical/natural/industrial sites	0
INF6	Visiting learning centres	0
INF71	1st subject	0
INF72	2nd subject	0
INF73	3rd subject	0
ILP1	Looking for any information concerning learning possibilities	3
ILP2	Source of information	3
ILP3	Use of the internet for accessing information	3
ICT2	Frequency of computer use for job/study reasons	0
ICT3	Frequency of computer use for personal reasons	0

	Short description	Level
ICT4	ICT skills level (derived variable)	5
LG1	List of all the languages the respondent can use (including mother tongue)	0
LG2	Mother tongue	0
LG3	2 foreign languages used most frequently	0
LGZ41***	Frequency of use of the Zth*** foreign language for work/study	4
LGZ42***	Frequency of use of the Zth*** foreign language with family/friends	4
LGZ5***	Level of knowledge of the Zth*** foreign language	0
	Frequency of:	
CA1	Seeing a live performance	7
CA2	Going to the cinema	7
CA3	Visiting historical monuments, museums, art galleries or archaeological sites	7
CA4	Attending a live sporting event	7
<i>Practising of the following cultural activities:</i>		
CA5	Taken part in a public performance involving singing, dancing, acting or music	7
CA6	Composing music	7
CA7	Singing or dancing	7
CA8	Acting	7
CA9	Making photographs, movies, video tapes	7
CA10	Making a painting, drawing, sculpture or printing (including computer graphics, designing web sites, etc.)	7
CA11	Writing prose, poems, short stories	7
CA12	Number of books in the respondent's house	0
CA13	Reading books for leisure	7
CA14	Frequency of reading books for leisure	7
CA15	Reading newspapers	7
<i>Participation in activities of:</i>		
SP1	political parties or trade unions	6
SP2	of professional associations	6
SP3	churches or other religious organisations	6
SP4	recreational groups or organisations	6
SP5	charitable organisations	6
SP6	other groups or organisations	6

	Short description	Level
SP7	informal voluntary activities	6
ATT1	People who continue to learn as adults are more likely to avoid unemployment	8
ATT2	If you want to be successful at work you need to keep improving your knowledge and skills	8
ATT3	Employers should be responsible for the training of all their employees	8
ATT4	The skills you need to do a job can't be learned in the classroom	8
ATT5	Education and training can help you manage your daily life better	8
ATT6	Learning new things is fun	8
ATT7	Learning gives you more self-confidence	8
ATT8	Individuals should be prepared to pay something for their adult learning	8

*concerns all the reported activities X=1, ..., 3.

**concerns 3 randomly selected activities Y=1, ..., 3

*** concerns 2 most frequently used foreign languages Z=1,2