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Globalizing Lifelong Learning – International Organizations' Strategies of Lifelong Learning

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Abstract

While the 1970s still knew 'permanent education' (Council of Europe), 'recurrent education' (OECD) and 'lifelong education' (UNESCO), over the past 20 years, 'lifelong learning' has become the single buzz word and catch-all term for reform in above all (pre-) primary, higher and adult education in both national and international education policy making. Both highly industrialized and less industrialized countries embrace the term, in many cases motivated by international and supranational organizations. Yet, literature and empirical investigation on the concepts, models and strategies those organizations promulgate and pursue remains, at best, scant.

The paper first wants to demonstrate the worldwide diffusion of concepts of lifelong learning as found in national education reports and international organizations' statements. It then sheds light on the particular lifelong learning positions in the concepts of the European Union, the World Bank and UNESCO. Additionally, national development agencies' position towards lifelong learning will be assessed since it constitutes one specific type of international policy making.

Particular attention will be given to trends of convergence and divergence in international organizations' concepts and implementation strategies of lifelong learning, especially in light of highly different socioeconomic and sociocultural conditions of industrialized and less industrialized countries.

keywords: *Lifelong Learning • Globalization • International Organizations • Development Cooperation*

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