

# Lifelong learning in France

*Lifelong-learning is defined*

*as the “ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons”*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifelong\\_learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifelong_learning)

Françoise Forette  
Marie-Anne Brieu  
Meghan Shineman  
ILC France

Long life expectancy creates a  
demand for education

# French and European Innovative Lifelong Learning Models

- Professional development or Skills Training on the job or not.
- Adult Education
- Volunteering

# French Population in 2030

- 20 million French people will be more than 60 years old, and 15 million less than 20 years,
- the most dramatic increase will be observed in people over 75 years old (x 3)
- and over the age of 85 (x 4).

# The 20 to 30 years of life after retirement are gradually differentiated

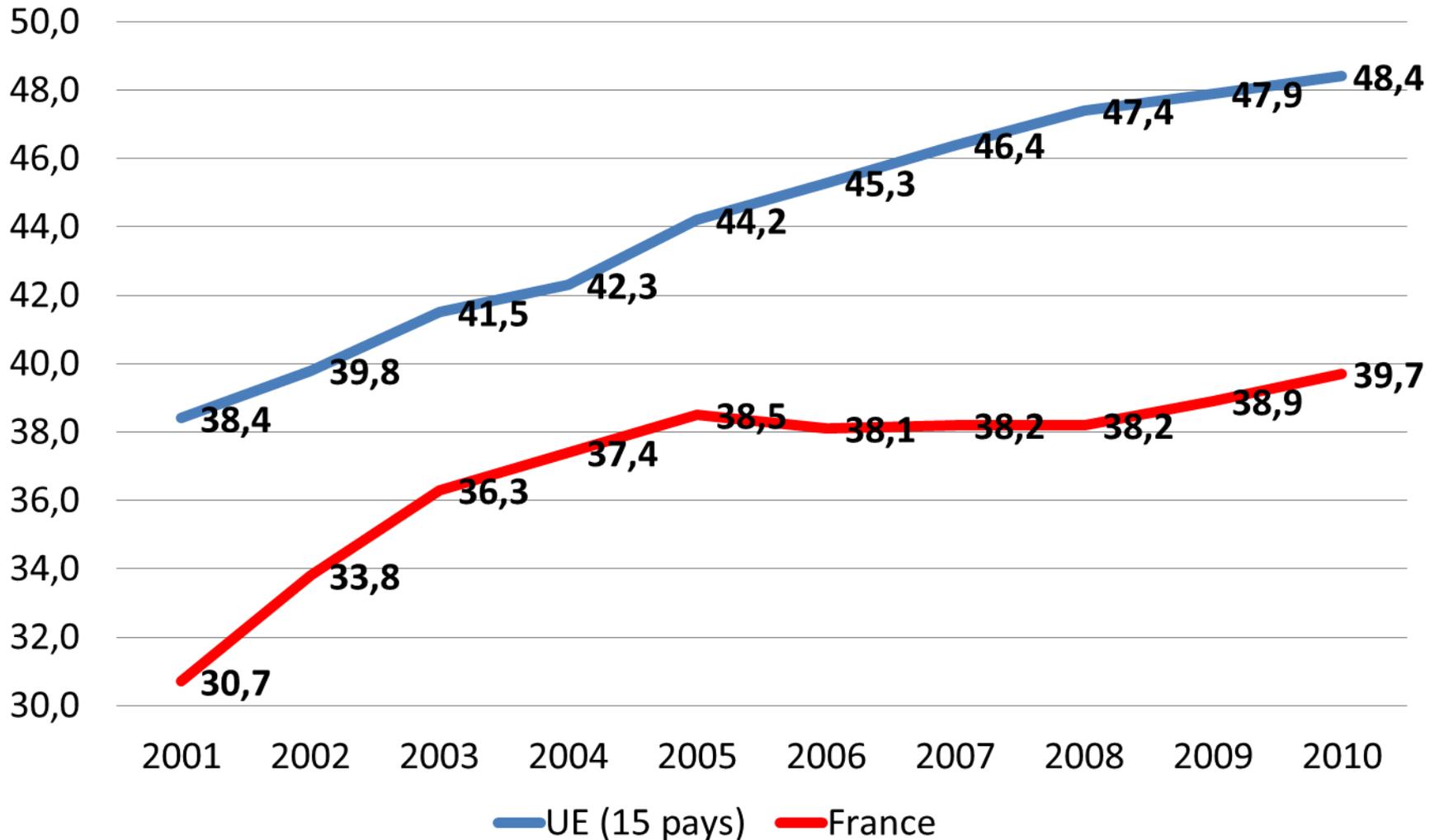
- 60-75 years : « Active seniors »
- 75-85 years : autonomous but with possibility of « poly-mini-disability and frailty »
- Over 85 years : at risk of dependency

But old age is not an homogenous public including opportunities available to advance one's knowledge

# Lifelong learning and employment

- Currently France has one of the lowest employment rates for those aged 55 – 64 in Europe – 41,4% against 49.1% for Europe in 2009.
- The consequence is that between 2010 and 2060 France is expected to experience one of largest increases in employment rates among persons aged 55-64 years—more than 20% increase- (16% for Europe).
- The need for skills training is therefore strikingly important

# Employment rates 55-64 yrs in France and in EU



# Mandatory regulations for Professional Development

- 2002 RPL : Recognition of Prior informal or work-based Learning (VAE : validation des acquis de l'expérience)
- 2004 Right to Lifelong learning (DIF: Droit Individuel à la Formation)
- 2006 The National Action Plan for Seniors Employment (aimed at reaching a 50% employment rate (55 to 64 years) improves the working and lifelong learning conditions.
- 2009 In addition, the French Law for the Funding of Social Security requires employers to encourage senior employment or pay a penalty of 1% of earnings/profits.. The plan focused on skills or professional development

# The right to lifelong learning (DIF)

- The 2004 Law entitles all employees to access a minimum of 120 hours of training/education over a 6 year period (20 hours/year) during working time or free time.
- Entirely financed by the employer. No tax for the employees for this benefit.
- A good way towards the process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL , VAE).

# The right to Lifelong Learning (DIF)

- Based on the employees' self-assessment of their needs and own project to develop their abilities and careers
- Discussed and negotiated together with the employer
- For a tailor-made learning path and various learning activities:
  - Cultural background, professional skills, foreign languages....

# Recognition of Prior Learning RPL (VAE)

- A process to obtain a certificate or a diploma after a 3-year informal or work-based experience.
- Recognition at the national level by universities or national jury
- First step to higher qualifications through Short Cycle Higher Education

# Short Cycle Higher Education (SCHE)

- Missing link between secondary or work based knowledge and higher education
- Objective : Professional specialization focusing on employment
- Enhances employability
- Partnership with public authorities, HE institutions, employers and employees, trade unions, chambers of commerce ....
- Makes lifelong learning a reality

# European initiative in Lifelong Learning

- The European Commission established a Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) in November 2006 to increase transnational education and training activities throughout 31 European countries, reaching almost 900,000 European citizens and 50,000 organisations .
- Financed publicly by the European Union
- Delivered through national agencies responsible for managing projects and dispersing funds ie the “Agence Europe Education Formation France”.
- The LLP combines four well-established sub-programmes ([Comenius](#) for schools, [Erasmus](#) for higher education, [Leonardo da Vinci](#) for vocational education and training, and [Grundtvig](#) for adult education).

# The Grundtvig Project

- The Grundtvig projects effectively engage elders and improve the capacity of education and training systems.
- Many of the Grundtvig programmes throughout Europe focus on ICTs – such as
  - the “Learning Partnership “E-Com+45 Grundtvig” project for all workers over age 45,
  - and the intergenerational “Simulating ICT Learning for active EU elders” (SILVER) project.
- But participation decreases for both lower-skilled and older adults

# Joint Public/Private Skills Training

- AGE Platform Europe is a European network of around 165 organisations of and for people aged 50+ representing directly over 30 million older people in Europe since 2001.
- In their attempt to create an “Age-Friendly European Union by 2020,” they have identified best practices throughout Europe on employment, active ageing and education and lifelong learning.
- In France, they identified a few Grundtvig-funded programs, in addition to “Génération & Talents” – an intergenerational programme of Alcatel-Lucent and APEC (a French recruitment agency) revolving around skills development and mentoring/knowledge sharing.

# Adult Education

- The University of the Third Age (U3A) – started in France in 1973 – aims to provide continuing education and various cultural activities for seniors in order to “prolong active life”.
- Since its formation, the model has now expanded throughout Europe – and other places, like Australia and the US.
- In 1993, it became known as “Union Française des Universités Tous Ages” (UFUTA) encouraging intergenerational exchange, in-person meetings, and less emphasis on formal registration and graduation processes.
- The U3A model, is now open to anyone regardless of age or degree, and can use various names (such as "University All Ages", "Inter-Ages", "For All", "Retirement and Free Time", "Third Time", "Permanent" etc).

# Adult Education

- In some locations, U3A is offered as a virtual community, an online learning community of older people
  - with less curriculum structure and more group interaction,
  - making the model more accessible for those who live in isolation (due to geography, health/physical ailments, etc.).
- The model is linked with either local universities or associations
  - available in 41 French towns.
  - most U3A programs are privately funded,
  - the UFUTA programs are dependant on public funding from the Ministère de l'Éducation nationale.

# Adult Education

- Some organisations have been developed by older persons themselves. For example, Old Up focuses on intergenerational interactions of their members and training older persons for useful daily functions – including how to use the new technologies (i.e., create a Facebook account, call friends and family using Skype), how to cope with death, illness, children, etc.)
- In addition, other virtual communities throughout Europe have also emerged, which are online community promoting active ageing through the use of ICT; however, most of these forums remain small.

# Volunteering

- The “Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Projects” are available to all European citizens aged 50+ years
  - funds projects between 2 organizations in 2 different countries over a 2-year period.
  - A large percentage of participants in Europe thought the experience increased their technical skills (43%) and language skills (just under half).
- During 2007 and 2009, France led another Grundtvig project “Transfert de Competences Acquises et de Savoirs Techniques (TCAST),
  - offered the opportunity for younger generations to benefit from the technical skills and knowledge of older skilled artisans who are retired or about to retire.

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# Volunteering

- Another Grundtvig program that France partnered in, “Seniors in Action”, trains older people with specific skills to informally educate school pupils.
- The “Lire et Faire Lire programme” started in France in 1999, provides older persons the opportunity to read to younger children. While the program has successfully expanded across the country, there remains difficulty in recruitment of older volunteers since time-frames and locations may not be ideal.

# Health literacy

- Health literacy of older adults is another important area to improve the status of older workers.
  - For example, the “Empowering Health Learning for the Elderly” (EHLE), offered through the European Commission's LLP, has partnered with Italy, France, Spain, and the Netherlands to improve training so that professionals will be better able to educate elders to live healthier lives.
- Road Scholar/Elderhostel international organization
  - offers travel and learning experiences – sometimes referred to as “leisure learning” – to adults age 55+ throughout the world.
  - although it began in the United States in 1975, it has since expanded offices to other locations, including France.

# Mutual reinforcement between health, wealth and education: a virtuous spiral.....

