

The Role of Learning in Stimulation Policies to Increase Participation in Lifelong Development: A Government Policy Analysis

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Abstract : In an ever-quickly changing society, lifelong development is seen as a solution to labor market problems by politicians and policymakers. In this paper, we investigate how policy instruments are used to increase participation in lifelong development and on which behavioral principles policy is based. Digitization, automation, and an aging population change society and the labor market accordingly. Skills that were once most sought after in the workforce can become abundantly present. For people to remain relevant in the working population, they need to continue adapting new skills useful in the current labor market. Many reports have been written that focus on the role of lifelong development in this changing society and how lifelong development can help keep people adapt and stay relevant. Inspired by these reports, governments have implemented a broad range of policies to support participation in lifelong development. The question we ask ourselves is how government policies promote participation in lifelong development. This stems from a complex interplay of policy instruments and learning. Regulation, economic and soft instruments can be combined to promote lifelong development, and different types of education further complex policies on lifelong development. Literature suggests that different stages in people's lives might warrant different methods of learning. Governments could anticipate this in their policies. In order to influence people's behavior, the government can tap into a broad range of sociological, psychological, and (behavioral) economic principles. The traditional economic assumption that behavior is rational is known to be only partially true, and the government can use many biases in human behavior to stimulate participation in lifelong development. In this paper, we also try to find which biases the government taps into to promote participation if they tap into any of these biases. The goal of this paper is to analyze government policies intended to promote participation in lifelong development. To do this, we develop a framework to analyze the policies on lifelong development. We specifically incorporate the role of learning and the behavioral principles underlying policy instruments in the framework. We apply this framework to the case of the Netherlands, where we examine a set of policy documents. We single out the policies the government has put in place and how they are vertically and horizontally related. Afterward, we apply the framework and classify the individual policies by policy instrument and by type of learning. We find that the Dutch government focuses on formal and non-formal learning in their policy instruments. However, the literature suggests that learning at a later age is mainly done in an informal manner through experiences.

Keywords : learning, lifelong development, policy analysis, policy instruments

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