

# Information Literacy from the Policy and Strategy Perspective

Sirje Virkus\*

Tallinn University

## Abstract

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This paper examines IL from a policy and strategy perspective and reports the selected findings of the research project that was carried out within open and distance learning universities in Europe. The research problem for this study focused on the need to know how information-related competencies (IRC) were developed in European higher open and distance learning (ODL) institutions. The general research strategy in this study was a mixed method strategy, using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, built into a two-stage research design. A survey provided a broad picture of a phenomenon, and case studies covered a more limited area of the same ground but in more depth.

The first stage was a small-scale questionnaire survey, with a structured questionnaire using a purposive sample, which was analysed using statistical techniques. The objectives of the questionnaire were to determine the extent and the ways to which IRC were developed within European higher ODL institutions, to investigate the role of libraries within the development of IRC and to identify examples of 'good practice' in the field of IRC in European higher ODL institutions. The second stage of the study involved a multiple case study in six European ODL institutions. In this part of the study the researcher was trying to discover what people actually did in practice to develop IRC, how they experienced those processes and made sense of it.

The research results will contribute to the development of ODL courses with library and information literacy support, that would improve students' IRC, and also to the Bologna aims of competence development and professional development in a context of lifelong learning.

**Keywords:** information literacy, IL, policy, strategy

### \*Contact:

Dr. Sirje Virkus, Lecturer  
Tallinn University, Estonia  
E-mail: [sirvir@tlu.ee](mailto:sirvir@tlu.ee)

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## Introduction

Information literacy (IL) has been seen as a strategic construct since early 1970s. In 1974 IL was expressed by Paul Zurkowski as a policy goal with the aim to establish a major national program to achieve universal IL (Basili, 2011, p. 395). From the beginning a view was expressed of IL as something serving a wider function than simply efficient problem solving in a work setting, and extending to the functions of citizenship. It was believed that IL is important because of its contributions to work effectiveness and efficiency, and IL is needed to guarantee the survival of democratic institutions (Bawden, 2001, p. 230). More recently, President Obama during National Information Literacy Awareness Month also linked IL to an informed citizenry (Obama, 2009).

Pejova, Catts, Tichá and Dombrovska (2006, p.7) argue that the main rationales for IL policy in all countries are social, economic, and educational:

- The social reasons include the use of IL in social and public services, and informed participation in community and cultural life;
- the economic reasons include development of a skilled information literate workforce, especially in the services sector and in the emerging information industry;
- the educational reasons (academic and research) imply information use in formal, informal and non-formal education and research as components of lifelong learning (LLL), with the emphasis on critical thinking, collaboration skills, and creativity.

Therefore, it is believed that in order to achieve those social, economic and educational goals IL should be addressed at strategic and political level.

This paper examines IL from a policy and strategy perspective and presents the selected research results of a wider exploratory study which aimed to understand the experience of those involved in the development of information-related competencies (IRC) in European open and distance learning (ODL) higher education institutions (HEI), and various contextual factors influencing this development. These factors were grouped into four dimensions: strategic, educational, professional, and research. Policy and strategy, leadership and management, physical and human resources and organizational culture represented the sub-dimensions of the strategic dimension. The educational dimension included the following sub-categories: integration of IRC into the curriculum, learning and teaching approaches, assessment, leadership and collaboration. The professional dimension was divided into the following sub-dimensions: the role of the library and librarians, competencies of library and information professionals, collaboration between academic staff and librarians, and leadership. The research dimension represented research into information literacy, research resources and management, supervision, collaboration and research leadership. These dimensions were developed as conceptualisations within this research and were closely interwoven within successful educational practice of IRC. Each dimension contributed to the success of the development of IRC but the development of IRC could only be effective if these dimensions are considered holistically.

Thus, although this research identified a variety of contextual factors which were identified within the sub-categories of the above mentioned four dimensions, this paper focuses only on the strategic dimension of IL and more specifically on policy and strategy. Due to the limited space for this paper, other contextual factors are not discussed here.

This paper is divided into eight parts. The first section gives an introduction. The second part reviews the literature related to strategy and policy aspects of IL. The third part presents the methodology of this research; the fourth section provides selected results on policy and strategy of the small-scale questionnaire survey of European higher ODL institutions. Section five presents the qualitative research that emerged from the six case studies (including a pilot case study) conducted in European HEIs of ODL. The sixth part relates the main findings to existing literature, the seventh discusses limitations of this research and finally conclusions are given.

## Information Literacy at Policy and Strategy Level

Several authors argue that the policy dimension of IL has not got sufficient attention in the academic literature (e.g. Basili, 2011; Whitworth, 2011). This section reviews the literature related to strategy and policy aspects of IL since 2004. The review published by Virkus (2003) considered some institutions and organizations concerned with IL and some strategic documents and initiatives up to 2003.

In 2007 Corral explored strategic commitment to IL in UK universities and provided examples of institutional practices. She explored policy and strategy documents accessible from university Websites. Evidence of engagement was located at seventy-five institutions.

In 2011, a special issue of *Library Trends, Information Literacy Beyond the Academy, Part I: Towards Policy Formulation* was issued. In this issue several authors examine various policy documents and IL from the strategic perspective. For example, Horton (2011) highlights the importance of the advocacy and points out the key role of UNESCO in this process. He suggests *Ten Commandments* how IL advocacy should be done. Lloyd (2011) conceptualizes IL from a workplace perspective and presents her ongoing work toward a theoretical framework for IL. Weiner (2011) examines factors that influence the inclusion of IL on political agendas in the United States through the lens of the multiple streams framework, an analytical model for explaining policy process: how problems are recognized, how and why they are added to the policy agenda, and how policy decisions are made. Whitworth (2011) reports on a qualitative content, using the *Six Frames for Information Literacy Education* model (Bruce, Edwards, & Lupton, 2006), of six national IL policies from the US, Australia/New Zealand, Hong Kong, Finland, Scotland and South Africa. Pilerot and Lindberg (2011) critique policy documents, such as the Prague Declaration from 2003 and the Alexandria Proclamation from 2006 and find that these are static and missionary. They highlight the work of Catts and Lau (2008) and Lau (2008) as “recent prominent contributions to the policy-making strand” (ibid., p. 343). Haras and Brasley (2011) examine IL in public policy contexts in the US and provide recommendations for dissemination of IL. Jacobs and Berg (2011) analyse several strategic documents (e.g. the Alexandria Proclamation, the Association of College and Research Libraries’ Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education and the American Library Association’s Core Values of Librarianship) using method of appreciative inquiry. Basili (2011) analyses the data collected by the European Observatory on Information Literacy Policies and identifies fifty-four policy initiatives in Europe. She finds that courses generally dominate and policies are less important. She concludes that in most countries in Europe IL has not yet entered the policy agenda and it is still necessary to promote policy awareness regarding IL. She has published some results from the data available from the the Observatory also in her earlier publications (Basili, 2008; 2010). Irving (2011) provides an overview of activities of the National Information Literacy Framework in Scotland which tries to link primary, secondary, and HE with the workplace and LLL. Domine (2011) focuses on media literacy and its role in school education in the US.

EU-funded [EMPATIC](#) (*Empowering Autonomous Learning Through Information Competencies*) project has aimed to improve current perceptions among policy makers in Europe regarding IL. The project summarises the results of previous IL initiatives across four sectors, the school, university, adult and vocational learning, and aims to use this evidence to influence policy makers’ perceptions and actions to support mainstreaming of IL. The analysis of eighty-seven projects from years 1994-2010 have been conducted and best practice suggested. Several workshops and other events have been arranged and recommendations developed for these four sectors. The project website gives access to documents and information about these events.

On the basis of the literature review there are different views on how well IL has matured at policy and strategy level. Some authors believe that IL has become a national and international policy issue (Crawford, 2011, p. 258). Horton (2011, p. 271) argues that because of UNESCO’s remarkable leadership IL has emerged onto the twenty-first century landscape as a critical skill in

the global information society. Haras and Brasley (2011, pp.362-363) believe that four primary documents: the Prague Declaration, Alexandria Proclamation, Obama's Proclamation, and Governor Schwarzenegger's Executive Order S-06-09, attest to the fact that IL has captured the attention of decision makers.

Lloyd (2011, p. 277) notes that IL has been "proclaimed as a foundational literacy of the twenty-first century by many researchers, library practitioners, and international agencies". Haras and Brasley (2011, p. 361) agree but argue that IL policies have not resulted in government funding or mandates in the US and key educational policy documents do not identify clearly the role of IL. Weiner (2011, p. 297) also acknowledges growing recognition of IL as a critical skill for educational and workplace success, engagement in LLL, and civic participation, but admits that IL is not yet a priority for many organizations or governments. She also notes that there is no published examination of factors that may influence the adoption of IL as a policy priority.

In addition, Haras and Brasley (2011, p. 368) believe that IL lacks name recognition and broad-based public support, IL is not mandated in primary and secondary education, and its implementation is ineffective. Basili (2011) describes IL as still being in a pre-policy phase. Whitworth (2011, p. 318) also argues that "IL is rarely recognized at the highest political level, being "subsumed within an 'information society' agenda focusing primarily on the promotion and development of ICT skills and infrastructure".

The analysis of IL in policy documents has been quite popular among several authors (e.g. Bawden, 2001; Jacobs & Berg, 2011; Pilerot & Lindberg, 2011; Virkus, 2003; Whitworth, 2011). Most often the documents and initiatives of the UNESCO and IFLA at strategic level have been described. It is believed that *The Prague Declaration* which was the main outcome of the Prague meeting in 2003, was an important strategic document in awareness raising and in setting UNESCO policy on IL (Horton, 2011; Pilerot & Lindberg, 2011; Virkus, 2003; Weiner, 2011). The *High-level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning* in Alexandria in 2005 is another strategic initiative often mentioned. The main outcome of the meeting, *The Alexandria Proclamation*, contains the major findings, conclusions, and recommendations (Horton, 2011; Virkus, 2011a; Weiner, 2011; Whitworth, 2011).

Talja and Lloyd (2010, pp. x-xi) found that the "dual emphasis on the empowerment of individuals" and "the need to respond to society's demands" has prevailed in most policy programmes and state-level definitions of literacy and IL until today. The new literacies movement shifted the viewpoint from individuals' empowerment and from the workforce viewpoint on learning requirements to local situated practices and literacies to the concrete site.

The next sections will present results of the study which explored policy and strategy dimension of IL among other contextual factors within the development of IRC in European higher ODL institutions.

## Research Methodology

This research focused on answering the following central question: *What is the nature of successful educational practice of information-related competencies and what are the factors and conditions which influence this?* However, this paper reports only research results related to IL policy and strategy.

The research reported in this paper was conducted in the period 2003-2004. However, the results seem to be still relevant in the current IL landscape. The general research strategy in this study was a mixed method strategy, using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, built into a two-stage research design. A survey provided a broad picture of a phenomenon and helped to identify the institutions of good practice in the development of IRC for the second stage of the research. Case studies covered a more limited area of the same ground but in more depth.

Thus, the first stage was a small-scale questionnaire survey, with a structured questionnaire using a purposive sample, which was analysed using statistical techniques. The objectives of the questionnaire were to determine the extent and the ways to which IRC were developed within European higher ODL institutions, to investigate the role of libraries within the development of IRC and to identify examples of 'good practice' in the field of IRC in European higher ODL institutions.

It was decided to focus only on the member institutions of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU). The reasons for focusing on the EADTU member institutions were the following: EADTU, established in 1988, has a long-standing reputation in the field of ODL and it is the important voice of the higher education community for ODL in Europe and its member institutions. National distance teaching universities (open universities) and dual and mixed mode universities offering distance education that belong to the national consortia of HEI and represent the respective country in EADTU are representing the most active and innovative actors in the field of ODL in Europe (Henderikx, Hoff & Hardy, 2000). This network of distance education institutions was participating in a variety of innovative educational research and development projects. It was believed that those institutions innovative in ODL probably are contributing actively towards IRC building as well and there are cases of 'good practice' within EADTU member institutions from which the researcher can learn the most.

An e-mail questionnaire was distributed to all EADTU member institutions – 156 conventional universities and seven open universities - in March 2003. The literature review helped to establish the aspects that have a major impact on the development of IRC: policy, curriculum integration, supervision, staff development and research and so the questionnaire was divided into these five sections. The questionnaire consisted of 24 main questions but with several questions included sub-questions. The total number of questions was 46. Both closed and open-ended questions were used. In closed questions respondents had three possible answers: 'yes', 'no', 'I don't know' or 'always', 'sometimes', 'never'. Similar questions were grouped together. Questions 1-4 comprised the policy section, questions 5-13 the curriculum section, questions 14-16 the research section, question 17 the higher degree supervision section and questions 18 and 19 the academic development section. Several questions gave the option of specifying the answer and questions 20-23 asked data about the institution and its ODL programmes/courses which can be regarded as open-ended questions. At the end of the questionnaire respondents were encouraged to provide comments under the heading 'Please use this space provided for any comments you feel are important' and to add contact information. The questionnaire was piloted with sixteen persons.

The questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter which explained the aim of the survey, introduction of the key terms used in the questionnaire, confidentiality guarantee, the time needed to complete the questionnaire, the date when the questionnaire was expected to be returned and the contact address of the researcher. It was asked if the phrase 'information literacy' was familiar to the interviewee and how s/he interpreted the term. The interviewees' perceptions of the concept of 'information literacy' are discussed in other publications (Virkus, 2011b).

The sample collected consisted of seventy-one respondents from the EADTU member institutions. This gave the survey a total response rate of 43.6 % which was felt to be satisfactory. The responses from the questionnaires were presented and summarised by using descriptive statistics.

Thus, the results of the questionnaire survey enabled the researcher to assess the prevalence of phenomena, describe and know more about the phenomenon, identify institutions and areas of IRC development, determine cases of 'good practice' and thus provide data for the next stage of the study.

It was decided that institutions with policy, curriculum integration, collaboration between faculty and librarians, staff development and research related to IRC should be regarded as institutions of 'good practice'. Other criteria were that these institutions of 'good practice' should

represent both single mode and dual/mixed mode ODL institutions and should have a wide geographical coverage. The reason to choose both single mode and dual/mixed mode ODL institutions was made to find out whether there are significant differences in developing IRC in those two types of institutions. However, there was no intention that the study would necessarily be representative of all higher ODL institutions with 'good practice' in IRC development within Europe.

On the basis of the questionnaire survey results two open universities fulfilled all the selection criteria. No dual/mixed mode institution fulfilled all the selection criteria. However, twelve dual/and mixed mode institutions partially fulfilled these criteria, each missing one of the criteria. For example, one institution fulfilled all criteria except an institutional policy in the field of IRC. Another two did not report staff development in the field of IRC and one institution did not report research activities connected with IRC. Another eight institutions missed some aspects of integrating IRC into learning. However, among them several institutions were from the same country and eight institutions were located in the same region. In order to make the decision which institutions to select, the criteria that these institutions should represent wide geographical coverage was followed. However, it was decided that it would be beneficial to include two institutions from the same region in the study to discover if there might be some regional aspects that influence the development of IRC. Thus, it was decided to include two national open universities and four dual/mixed mode universities (including pilot institution) in the study so that all the criteria were met as far as possible.

The second stage of the study involved a multiple case study in six European ODL institutions, where in-depth, semi-structured, tape-recorded interviews with 72 people were conducted which were supported by an unstructured non-participant observation and fieldwork and document analysis. To better understand the phenomenon, the views of various stakeholders (academics, senior managers, librarians and students) were gathered by interview to develop a holistic picture. Site visits, observations, document analysis and interviews were conducted during the period of November 2003 – October 2004. The pilot study was conducted in August 2003 in one mixed mode higher ODL institution. The names of the surveyed institutions are kept confidential in this study. In this part of the study the researcher was trying to discover what people actually did in practice to develop IRC, how they experienced those processes and made sense of it.

The qualitative and exploratory nature, and the objectives connected with 'good practice' of this study did not require a representative sample of these actors or require demographic or disciplinary criteria into the selection of participants. The proportion of female and male interviewees was determined by their participation in 'good practice' initiatives, willingness and availability for interviews and by selection of institutional contact persons. The selected institutions had to offer examples of 'good practice' in the field of IRC development. They had to identify four or five students who had taken part in those 'good practice' initiatives and who expressed willingness to participate in this study. The institutional contacts arranged interviews with three to five university academics and two to five librarians who were involved in those 'good practice' initiatives and one or two senior managers who were familiar with these IRC initiatives and had some power to influence IRC development in their institution.

Themes for case study interviews were similar as defined in the questionnaire survey: policy, IRC integration into curriculum, supervision, staff development and research. The majority of questions in the interview instrument were aimed at gaining an understanding of interviewees' views, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour related to the development of IRC. A set of questions was prepared and interview guides were developed for senior managers, academics and librarians, and for students. The interview guide contained the same questions for senior managers, academics and librarians with slight changes to wording to reflect an actor's perspective and in addition those pertaining more to the specific group. However, interviews did not follow the exact interview guide but rather the logic of conversation. Thus, the interview topics were pre-specified in an interview guide, but were reworded as needed and covered by the researcher in any sequence or order

according to the interview situation. Therefore, those interviews were designed as explorations of the key actors perceptions and experiences of IRC development.

The onsite site visits lasted approximately one week. All interviews were conducted in English, except one interview when the researcher had to switch to the local language she had sufficient knowledge to conduct the interview. The interviews were designed to take up approximately to an hour. However, the interviews varied in duration, as the shortest interview was thirty-seven minutes and the longest two hours and eight minutes.

The qualitative data was analyzed using a constant comparative method of data analysis, developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This method advocated theory development and provided methodological guidelines for theoretical sampling, making comparison between data and the use of a coding paradigm (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987). The full transcripts of the interviews and field notes were entered into Microsoft Word and then were imported into a qualitative data analysis software package NUD\*IST (version N6) for open coding and identification of themes and patterns. The codes derived from analysis which consisted of analysis data line-by-line or phrase by phrase and then with data within and between cases in this study. Three types of coding were used: open (identifying, naming, categorising and describing phenomena), axial (the process of relating codes to each other) and selective (choosing a core category and relating other categories to that) (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Thus, the explanations were driven to a great extent by data and key elements and contextual factors were identified.

No previous work was identified which examined the development of IRC using a mixed method approach, survey and multiple case study strategy, in a wide geographical coverage from the viewpoint of the students, faculty, senior managers, and librarians in HEI of ODL in Europe. Existing research on IL in Europe, during the time of this study, was mainly specific to particular country, institution or target group. More knowledge about how different actors perceive and experience the development of IRC was needed to facilitate the efficient development of IRC (Virkus, 2011b).

## **Results of the Survey**

This section presents the results of the small-scale questionnaire survey which aimed to find out the extent and ways how IRC were developed in European higher ODL institutions. The research question which was generated on the basis of the central research question of this research was identified as follows: To what extent are European higher ODL institutions involved in the process of developing IRC? However, only results related to national and institutional policy are presented in this paper.

The analysis is grounded in the questionnaire data of seventy one ODL institutions (response rate of 43.6%) delivering distance education in a single or dual/mixed mode. The questionnaire was sent to university senior managers with overall responsibility for teaching and learning. However, many senior managers sent the questionnaire to the university library to answer. Thus, thirty-nine respondents (54.9%) were managers and/or academic staff and thirty-two of the respondents (45.1%) were librarians.

### **National and Institutional Policy on Information Literacy**

The respondents were asked several multiple-choice questions related to policy on IRC: the existence of national and institutional policy, the content of policy documents that was related to IL, and the librarians' involvement in policy-making bodies. It was believed that if the main actors in the process of developing IRC are familiar with national and institutional policy and strategic documents, those policies and strategies probably have an important role in supporting the development of IRC. It was also believed that the content of policy documents that was related to IL and the librarians' involvement in policy-making bodies could influence positively the development of IRC. This section presents the descriptive statistics for these questions.

### **National Information Literacy Policy**

In response to the question “Is there any national document or agenda for ‘information literacy’ in higher education in your country?” almost half of the respondents responded ‘no’ (35 respondents, 49.3%), another 21 respondents (29.6%) answered ‘yes’ and further 15 respondents (21.1%) did not know if there was any national document or agenda for IL in their country.

However, there was no agreement on this issue in several countries; for example, three institutions answered this question from both Denmark and Finland and all three options were used (yes, no, I don’t know). From Sweden 20 respondents answered this question: 14 institutions answered ‘no’, three institutions answered ‘yes’ and three institutions did not know if there was any national document or agenda for IL in their country. From the United Kingdom six institutions indicated that there was national document or agenda for IL, one institution responded ‘no’ and three institutions ‘I don’t know’. From Slovenia one institution answered ‘yes’ and another ‘no’ to this question.

There was no significant difference in the responses whether the respondent was manager/academic staff member or librarian answering. 12 (16.9%) managers/academic staff and 9 (12.7%) librarians answered ‘yes’ to this question, and 15 (21.1%) managers/academic staff and 20 (28.2%) librarians answered ‘no’ to this question. Among those who answered ‘I don’t know’, 12 were managers/academic staff and 3 were librarians.

### **Institutional Information Literacy Policy**

More than half of the survey respondents (38 respondents, 53.5%) declared that they had policy documents in their institutions that emphasized the need to focus on IRC in curricula or in student learning; 23 (32.4%) indicated neither any form of institution-wide IL strategy nor any initiative under development; 9 (13%) were not aware if there were such kinds of policy documents, and one respondent did not answer that question. There were no significant differences in answers from respondents holding different positions in response to this question. However, among those who answered ‘I don’t know’, 7 were managers/academic staff and 2 were librarians.

### **Information Literacy Content within Policy Documents**

Half of the respondents (19 respondents, 50%) who declared that they had policy documents in their institutions that emphasized the need to focus on IRC in curricula or in student learning, noted that institutional policy documents included such items as IL plans; 13 (34.2%) responded ‘no’, five (13.2%) ‘I don’t know’ and one (2.6%) did not answer to this question.

18 (47.4%) of the respondents noted that institutional policy documents included such items as lists of graduate attributes or ‘qualities of graduates’; 12 (31.6%) respondents indicated that lists of graduate attributes or ‘qualities of graduates’ were not included, 7 (18.4%) did not know if such kind of items were in institutional policy documents and one respondent (2.6%) did not answer this question.

24 (63.2%) of the respondents noted that institutional policy documents included strategic plans in teaching and learning that emphasize the integration of problem-based learning (PBL) and resource-based learning (RBL) into the curriculum; 10 respondents (26.3%) indicated ‘no’, 3 (7.9%) ‘I don’t know’ and one (2.6%) did not answer this question. According to the respondents, one institution had both IL plans and lists of graduate attributes or ‘qualities of graduates’ within the institutional policy documents. Five institutions (13.2%) had both IL plans and strategic plans in teaching and learning emphasising the integration of PBL and RBL into the curriculum. Five institutions (13.2%) had both lists of graduate attributes or ‘qualities of graduates’ and strategic plans in teaching and learning emphasising the integration of PBL and RBL into the curriculum. Ten institutions (26.3%) had all three components within the institutional strategy documents.

Most often institutional policy documents included strategic plans in teaching and learning that emphasized the integration of PBL and RBL into the curriculum (24 respondents, 63.2%),



followed by IL plans (19 respondents, 50%) and lists of graduate attributes or 'qualities of graduates' (18 respondents, 47.4%).

### **Involvement of Library Staff in Institutional Decision Making Bodies**

28 (39.4%) of the respondents answered that library staff belong to the educational committees that make decisions about curricula and learning. 33 (46.5%) of the respondents indicated that librarians do not belong to the educational decisions making bodies. Seven respondents (9.9%) were not aware of it and 3 respondents (4.2%) did not answer this question.

Thus, the results of the survey indicated that there was limited progress in IRC being incorporated into governmental agendas during the period 2003 to 2004 and a lot of confusion around it; several respondents from the same country did not agree on this issue. However, many HEI of this survey had policy documents that emphasized the need to focus on IRC in curricula or in student learning, included strategic plans in teaching and learning that emphasized the integration of PBL and RBL into the curriculum, IL plans and lists of graduate attributes or 'qualities of graduates'. Library staff belonged to the educational committees that make decisions about curricula and learning in less than half of the surveyed institutions. This indicates that in many institutions librarians may not have the authority to take decisions regarding the development of IRC. Almost half of the respondents, however, indicated that existing procedures for review of curriculum design in their institutions required the incorporation of features to facilitate the acquisition of IRC into the curriculum.

### **Results of the Case Studies**

A number of factors emerged from the case study data which are influencing the development of IRC at macro-, meso and micro level. These factors were categorized into four dimensions; strategic, educational, professional, and research. However, groupings were not mutually exclusive; some variables were important at all levels. This paper focuses only on policy and strategy as viewed by three main actors (senior managers, academics and librarians). Interviewees' quotes to interview questions are cited as they appeared in their answers. The names of the case study institutions are kept confidential in this study.

#### **National Policy**

The majority of senior managers, academics and librarians expressed the view that government policies have an important role in determining how innovative approaches and strategies are developed and implemented in HEI. For example, a senior manager notes:

A long-term and stable educational policy would be a prerequisite for any modernization of education. Thus, the government policy would support the idea (...) [SM: Int.28].

An academic staff member adds:

I think, many of the developments in higher education, quality assurance in particular, have had an impact in terms of formal documentation. We can look things up and say that there is a report or strategy and things like that (...) [AS: Int.30].

Librarians agreed with this view:

The [information literacy] policy in the United States and in Australia has really influenced information literacy developments there (...) [LIB: Int.25].

However, one academic expressed a different view. She thought that it depends on the individuals how they develop specific programmes, not because there are institutional or governmental policies that support that kind of initiatives.

(...) more about individuals who feel the need to introduce this kind of elements in the curriculum, because more than a half of these 25% of having introduced the information competence in the curriculum have not in obligatory subjects, but in optional way. [...] I

introduce it in the programme or in the new way of work, not that it is supported by governmental or institutional bodies [AS: Int.39].

In general, the new innovative teaching and learning approaches have been rapidly developed in those countries which have experienced very supportive governmental policies from an early stage. Many examples were given by interviewees that supported this argument, especially in the field of ICT-based teaching and learning. For example, ICT in education was put forward during the June 2000 Lisbon Summit of the EU as a key factor of the EU's overall strategy towards digitalisation and global competitiveness and e-learning was an important component in it to enable LLL and to support the development of European citizenship. Thus, it was found that inter-governmental and governmental policies can support at national level many institutional and bottom-up initiatives. It was highlighted that the importance of IRC needs to be recognized more explicitly by the government and more top-down strategic decisions were needed to support the development of IRC.

All senior managers believed that national policy supported IRC building to a certain extent via different initiatives even if the notion of IL or IRC were not explicitly mentioned. For example, IRC were recognized by the interviewees in the context of information society developments, the Lisbon strategy and the Bologna process, electronic or digital library projects at national level, e-learning strategies, key or general skills and quality assurance initiatives, and the lifelong learning agenda. Senior managers stated:

(...) the most active discussions have now taken place as a part of the Bologna process. If we are developing a new university structure and a new curriculum, the important part of the new curriculum in different fields will be so called general skills, and now when we have started to talk about it, about these general skills, then of course information literacy has been one of the promising candidates that should be included into those general skills that should be taught in all disciplines in all degree programmes [SM: Int.2].

Information literacy has been a very hot topic in [country name] ... discussions at all levels of education and somehow it is also included into the new curriculum of our primary school and high school (...) [SM: Int.3].

(...) we have a huge initiative ... called, the Electronic Research Library, it's a huge initiative and under this have been a lot of projects (...) to develop information competence (...) [SM: Int.4].

Academics and librarians also referred to skill development initiatives, information society developments, the Lisbon Strategy and the Bologna process, electronic or digital library projects, e-learning strategies, quality assurance initiatives and the lifelong learning agenda. Examples:

I think, a lot of the areas of more formal recognition and definition of subject benchmarks and quality standards in higher education have had quite a strong influence because it has raised the profile of both, information literacy and computer literacy as well and the use of ICT in more generally [AS: Int.30].

The Bologna has influenced many things we are doing here right now. Competencies and learning outcomes dominate there a lot (...) [AS: Int.47].

In e-learning strategy documents it is mentioned a lot, I think [LIB: Int.27].

In addition to the strategic documents connected with the developments in HE and especially in e-learning, IRC were often related to the learning to learn skills in the lifelong learning context in several policy documents:

I have seen information literacy referred to in a number of government documents that are about the development of higher education, the development of education generally in the country at different levels (...) And it is interesting to see how a number of important themes have started to become currency in these documents, e-learning is mentioned a lot and kind of almost in relation to that the notion of information literacy. And particularly strong theme that comes across is the awareness that we need to teach people how to learn and how to learn outside formal teaching frameworks. One of our tasks is to enable people to carry on learning within their work, within their workplace, within the discipline of their work in order to stay up to date, in order to carry out what we would think was critical practice, to continuously keep their own practice under review. So, this is the theme of using information and using information technologies now is very-very strong in government documents and the documents of a number of professional bodies [SM: Int.1].

(...) we had the [name of the strategy document] in the 1990s about lifelong learning and transferable skills which was the beginning to say to academics not just about content, but the graduate needs to be able to show how to learn, they can learn anything, they can use the skills, they can transfer their skills to the workplace and so on [LIB: Int.23].

While all senior managers and many academics believed that IL was embedded in many strategic documents, some academics and librarians were quite sceptical. For example, an academic who was involved in reviewing key skills standards was concerned that these standards focussed on IT and their suggestions to include IL into these standards did not get any attention. He notes:

There is no any national policy on information literacy. I have been involved in work at the University in terms of developing national standards for key skills. (...) The key skills standards include what we call information technology. We made a case that information technology should at least include information literacy skills and more to the point, perhaps, information technology skills themselves will becoming less important and information literacy skills will becoming more important and are becoming seen more important in other countries too at national level. Other countries start to invest to these skills. But that wasn't a view taken here. We don't see in national standards information literacy emerging from the Government even there is a growing acceptance that these sorts of skills are important [AS: Int.29].

A librarian confirms this view:

Nationally I'm not aware of any national policy. I do not see these words or these understandings been clearly formulated (...) We don't see that those words are being used. We do see interest from national bodies, linked with librarians (...) taking more active interest [LIB: Int.24].

It should be also mentioned that senior managers and librarians were more familiar with national policy developments; several academics were not always very confident as to whether there were policy documents at national level which explicitly referred to IL.

I really don't know if there are some kinds of documents, but I think there might be. There should be maybe. I do think there have, but I don't know, I'm not sure, I haven't seen any paper, but I do think they have [AS: Int.44].

I don't know really, probably there is something (...) [AS: Int.41].

Interviewees also often stated that most of the national strategy documents in HE highlighted the need for the development of competencies and skills; and references to government work force development and strategy documents were given. Especially senior managers felt that in a university they needed to articulate those connections much better, so that students and employers could see that what they were doing in universities was not only leading to particular subject area knowledge, but also that they were delivering these desperately important wider transferable skills. Document analysis of the case study settings also showed that in all respective countries

there were information society policies and strategies which might have influenced the development of IRCs; however, the main focus was often on ICTs and information society technologies.

### **Institutional Policy and Strategy**

The majority of senior managers and librarians also agreed that institutional policies and strategies have an important role in facilitating the development of IRC. However, some academics were hesitant about the need for such kinds of policies and strategies.

The majority of senior managers indicated that there were institutional strategies in their universities which supported the developments of IRC and referred to actual strategy documents which emphasised the need for the development of IRC. However, the term IL or IRC were not always explicitly mentioned. Senior managers note:

(...) we have a specific strategy, so called virtual university strategy, where we have much more detailed recommendations and these should be guidelines in developing curriculum and evaluating if the learning outcomes are adequate in terms of information literacy skills which should be joint aims of all university students [SM: Int.2].

In our main strategy, we have basic recommendations about the importance of new information and communications technology, as a part of the academic expertise and the importance of this technology in organizing teaching and learning and there is also emphasised the importance of information literacy skills [SM: Int.3].

It is very recent, but now there is an Information Literacy Unit in the library and a strategy document that has been circulated actually quite recently, within the last few weeks. A lot of this thinking has started to be a little bit more formalized. I think that it makes it possible now for course teams and curriculum planners to actually think about that strand of skill development in a more coherent way. (...) And particularly for my areas of university, notions of information literacy have been cropping up in strategy documents from the Chair of National Health Service, and now the Social Care and Social Work Force [SM: Int.1].

However, in one university a senior manager explained that there are no specific strategic documents, because the responsibility for teaching activities is left to individual teachers and it is more embedded in organizational culture that supports PBL:

I don't think it's written down. It is integrated into culture instead, you know, when we have this problem-based learning strategy, that was once written down in a formal document. And it's also, of course, in the descriptions of study programmes, we mention the word project et cetera and et cetera. This project-based concept is written down and I think that people have the cultural agreement that all stuff about information and et cetera is part of this problem-based project work [SM: Int.7].

The academics' and librarians' view of the existence of institutional strategies and documents varied and some academics were even doubtful as to whether such kinds of policy and strategy documents were needed at all. For example, several academics said that there were no strategic documents in general which very exactly specified the skills in general and IRC in particular. In one university an academic staff member said:

I think policy here has often been seen as fairly *ad hoc*. As an institution our tradition is that we tend not to have very many definitive high-level policy documents which then pass down through the system. Most of what we do, for better or worse, has been generated on the ground level and then lifted up and if it is a success then it is embedded into high-level policy. And if it isn't, it disappears. So, I don't see much top down policy (...) ... you will not find a very detailed policy at a high level [AS: Int.29].

An academic staff member from another university also supported this view and even wondered if such kinds of documents are needed at all:

(...) things which are not compulsory, not bureaucratic, not formal, but based on the enthusiasm, on the professional interest, on the human factor, they are stronger than the bureaucratic mechanisms in our programmes [AS: Int.48].

Several academics, however, referred to strategic documents within their university supporting the development of IRC and highlighted the importance of such documents:

I would say yes, perhaps not exactly about information competence but about information policy in general is related with that [AS: Int.40].

Senior managers supported the view that policy and strategy documents have an important role:

I don't think that it is ever going to improve dramatically while it's left to individual course teams to think what sort of level of the skills development, including information literacy, is appropriate for their course. (...) Achieving a sense of coherence there and a way of building up a systematic record what the students have done, I don't think it will happen if you just leaving it to each course team to think about. So, I think there has to be a programme level thinking first of all and I think we have to achieve some economies as well by having some programmes that thought about across the whole university. It is too fragmented at the moment and (...) if we are going to have good use of that it's got to be rather more centralized framework for development [SM: Int.1].

Those librarians who headed the IL developments knew the content of these documents well and were very precise in giving references. They believed that the general institutional strategy supporting the development of IRC and the library IL strategy together could create a good basis for IL development within the university.

We have a new strategy been written at the moment. But that strategy very clearly talks about information literacy. I think the fifth major objective of the strategy is what is called to prepare students for knowledge society. So, that strategic objective is kind of umbrella for a lot of our activities. That's the top-level policy. Beneath that we have developed our own Information Literacy Unit strategy, which we just are disseminating at the moment and we are hoping to ask faculties to comment and react to that strategy. So I hope that these two things will complement each other [LIB: Int.23].

Senior managers and academics confessed that the majority of IL initiatives came from libraries and many strategic documents were initiated mainly by librarians.

It is very recent, but now there is an Information Literacy Unit in the library and a strategy document that has been circulated actually quite recently, within the last few weeks [SM: Int.1].

The main document I would refer to is the information literacy strategy the library has produced [AS: Int.31].

Interviewees also reported that several committees and units to address IL issues were set up in universities. From the interviews with librarians it became apparent that they still felt that more support of the top management is needed to reach to people who are developing courses and programmes:

(...) to have a policy that has applied across the university then it would need someone higher up, a quite high level to say yes, this is a way we are going to go [LIB: Int.11].

Several academics expressed concerns that IL discussions and documents do not always get to the people who are developing courses and programmes.

I'm not quite sure how many people know that it [IL strategy] exists yet (...) I'm thinking today that we have to check within academic units and faculties about either the main people who are involved in developing and reviewing courses were actually aware of it,

because quite often documents are produced and circulated to members of committees, but they don't necessarily get disseminated to everybody [AS: Int.31].

I was a member of the Library Services User Group for the Business School. I was probably more aware than most people of library services available and I was also involved in the development of the [online information literacy] course. Many of my colleagues don't use the library very often even if they are developing new courses. They are not aware of the resources available. I think we need to publicise the strategy, I think we have got a quite sound and clear strategy, but not necessarily embedded into so many people's consciousness [AS: Int.30].

(...) if you do not actually have somehow close connection to the library, it's like impossible to see that there is a strategy [AS: Int.34].

Several senior managers and academics elucidated that it was more difficult to develop a strategy for autonomous and highly experienced staff and especially so when the university was highly decentralized:

(...) in this kind of organization, a traditional multidisciplinary university, it means that faculties are very autonomous organizations in matters of teaching and curriculum. It means that their curricula are decided at the faculty level and there are no ways how the university, the Rectors Office of the university, would have a direct influence on these things. They are independent and autonomous players, we have to accept this situation because it is so important value for the university that we have such autonomous situation [SM: Int.2].

We have a lot of very autonomous units who are used to doing what they believe is the best. It's very difficult to develop a strategy when you have very very experienced and actually very competent decentralized units. So, what is happening now is that they are trying to establish a policy on ICTs, but it has to be done very carefully in order to have all these decentralized units support the idea (...) [AS: Int.34].

It is a very decentralized university and it is very difficult to make one decision that everybody has to do. That's almost impossible. But in a way, it's always, in the other hand it's the strengths of our university as well that it is so decentralized as well. It gives us some problems with this issue [LIB: Int.17].

It was reported that librarians together with supportive academic colleagues had made efforts to put IL on the agenda of high level academic bodies. The librarians strongly felt that an institutional policy and strategy was needed to support the development of IRC.

I think that it needs to come from the top of the university, from the principal manager, through the senior management team and who say to the academics, this must happen, you must talk to the staff of the library, you must get them working with you in partnerships [LIB: Int.8].

Getting information literacy into the high level university strategies may help us, well, to convince various sub-deans in faculties to look at this area [LIB: Int.26].

One librarian also felt that students' motivation is also influenced by policy:

(...) the students' motivation is also formed by the policy, if you have a policy that says you have to attend this course because it's very important for the rest of the courses, the students were motivated to come, I think. (...) So, I think, it is a policy [LIB: Int.20].

Academics who were involved in good practice initiatives shared a similar view:

I would say one big step would be the statements of the university saying that one of the most important things we can give to our graduates is tied with the development of

information literacy and sort of related skills. Then all of that would have an impact how people proceed themselves in the university [AS: Int.29].

One librarian suggested that a policy should be quite flexible and not very prescriptive:

I think we need the policy in a basic level, on a core level, higher than we have at the moment, but I think we always need to allow a certain amount of freedom for subject people to run it and to try new things and explore what could be done (...) [LIB: Int.9].

Several librarians reported that they were trying to find good models for IL and gathered experiences to develop IL policies and strategies. They visited several universities in Australia and invited prominent IL researchers and practitioners to give seminars and workshops. Summarizing his Australian experiences a librarian said:

So we talked the need for the university to sign up really, to have it within its values, its value statements, to provide its courses, its culture to the organization which develops information literacy across the student body (...) It is the commitment from the part of the university and the philosophy of the university and making sure that people who are developing a policy are aware of things like information literacy as an important thing what we do within the university. And I think you got to have somebody who has the ability to go to them and say: This is very very important here [LIB: Int.8].

The library staff of three universities reported that they took part in the work of several educational committees that made decisions about curricula and learning and therefore they had an opportunity to make their voice heard.

The learning and teaching strategy, it belongs to the Pro Vice-Chancellor of Learning and Teaching. They have various boards. They have a top level board, called the Learning and Teaching Board, and our library director is sitting in that Board. It is such kind of decision-making board for learning and teaching strategy. They also have a working group which reports to that board called the Learning and Teaching Strategy Working Group and that is the group that is responsible in implementing strategy and I sit on that group alongside with the representatives of faculties and other units. We are also very involved in developing a strategy and consultation. So, I think our library has a good representation and it is effective, they are listening to us (...) [LIB: Int.23].

Well, within the library, it tends to be a senior librarian and above who sit in these various committees (...) [LIB: Int.11].

However, it was believed that in general although some universities were making efforts to include elements of IRC into their strategic plans, in many other institutions there was little sign of strategic management of such efforts. Some librarians tried to find explanations for this and felt that it was mainly connected with human resources and the attitudes of academics. One librarian put this in this way:

(...) it is still seen very much as a library thing. We need input from pro vice-chancellors and this type of things. The recognition that it is the skill they want all students come out with. So that it is in learning and teaching strategy. It is quite difficult in the university even then, because course teams don't read the learning and teaching strategy. We actually had this in our faculty board, the dean actually asked all the course chairs and put up their hands if they had read the draft of learning and teaching strategy, and none had. It is because the University is so big and it is always allowed the academics to do what they think is the best. There is no such kind of a real strategic vision or there is no way to pushing the strategic vision into practice at the moment. I think that they are trying to get a bigger grasp on that, but if you got academics that have been here for the last 30 years, they are thinking the old way. It is really difficult [LIB: Int.25].

Librarians also suggested that IL strategies should be better embedded in general teaching and learning approaches within the university and articulated more clearly:

So, what we have to do is to define what we think information literacy is in our library and in our university and how that fits into this problem-based learning model what we have. Because these two things fit very well together, students have to do information searching, because they can choose to write about the subject that they haven't been taught [LIB: Int.17].

Thus, the majority of interviewees expressed the view that institutional policy and strategy is needed for the successful development of IRC, but the development of such kind of policies and strategies was in the beginning stage in all institutions of good practice in the period 2003-2004. However, institutional strategies in general emphasised the need for the development of IRC although the term IL or IRC were not explicitly mentioned; for example, university educational strategies, virtual university strategies and also organizational culture that supported PBL. Some academics, however, were hesitant towards the need for policy and strategy. The IL policy and strategy initiatives came mainly from libraries and in several HEI the library staff was represented in university decision making bodies and were able to influence strategic developments. Increasing IL awareness was still an issue so that all faculties could understand its importance. It was extremely difficult to develop policies and strategies in very autonomous and decentralized universities and therefore flexibility and academic freedom was highlighted.

In addition to the policy and strategy within a university and national level many other factors that influence the development of IRC were highlighted, though an exploration of these factors is beyond the scope of this article.

## Discussion

Very few authors have written about the inter-governmental, governmental or institutional policies of IL in Europe. The ongoing concern is that IL should be more explicitly recognized at international and national level (Virkus, 2003). A recent overview provided by Basili (2011) confirms that the policy dimension is still a less explored dimension of IL. According to Basili in most countries in Europe IL has not yet entered the policy agenda. Whitworth (2011) refers to Finland and Scotland as the countries in Europe that have recognized IL at strategic level. The literature does not indicate much progress at strategic level since 2003-2004 when this study was conducted. The interview results indicated that national and international policies supported IRC building to a certain extent via different initiatives even if the notion of IL or IRC were not explicitly mentioned. For example, in the context of information society developments, the Lisbon agenda and the Bologna process, electronic or digital library projects, e-learning strategies, key or general skills and quality assurance initiatives, and the LLL agenda. These initiatives were often seen in a broader European context rather than just at the national level. These results were confirmed by the document analysis of EU and OECD documents that showed that competency-based education is strongly in EU and OECD agenda and IRC are often mentioned explicitly or in embedded way (European Commission, 2007; 2010; OECD, 2005). However, there was some concern among research participants that the main focus of strategies was on ICTs and information society technologies. These observations are in line with Muir and Oppenheim (2001) and Johnston and Webber (2003). ICT in education was put forward during the June 2000 Lisbon Summit of the EU as a key factor of the EU's overall strategy and therefore the dominance of ICT in national policies was understandable.

All case study settings explored in this study were in countries which were part of the Bologna reforms and therefore the Bologna process influenced all activities of respective HEI: degree structures, curricula, learning outcomes and competencies, teaching and learning methods, establishment of a system of credits, quality assurance and qualification framework. While gradual emergence of a learning outcome perspective in the Bologna process increased attention on competencies and therefore created a favourable environment for the development of IRC it also put a lot of pressure on institutional leaders and their staff. The reforms were time and resource



consuming and the increasing demands and challenges had to be met with limited human resources and financial capacity. Thus, IRC were not the only concern in HEI in the last decade. However, senior managers in this study suggested that skill development connections should be articulated much better in universities that students and employers could see that what they were doing in universities was not only leading specific subject area knowledge, but they were gaining these desperately important wider transferable skills. Corral's (2007) study also confirms that linking the IL concept to the employability agenda can be a pragmatic alternative to incorporation of IL in an institutional learning and teaching strategy.

However, several survey respondents from the same country did not agree in this survey if there was IL policy and strategy in their country. Different answers to this question might be connected with the elusiveness of the concept of IL. IL is referred to in different terms in different countries (Virkus, 2003) and it could have been difficult to relate it explicitly with national policy and strategy documents.

Several authors have discussed characteristics of good practice in IL education and policy and strategy are mentioned as an important part of it (ACRL, 2003; Breivik, 1998; Bruce, 2001; Curzon & Lampert, 2007; Griffith University, 1994; Town, 2003; Webber & Johnston, 2006; Wilson, 2001). The majority of senior managers and librarians agreed that institutional policy and strategy has an important role. Many institutions of this survey had policy documents that emphasized the need to focus on IRC in curricula or in student learning, included strategic plans in teaching and learning that emphasized the integration of PBL and RBL into the curriculum, IL plans and lists of graduate attributes or 'qualities of graduates'. Almost half of the respondents indicated that existing procedures for review of curriculum design in their institutions required the incorporation of features to facilitate the acquisition of IRC into the curriculum, which can be interpreted as a serious move 'towards the information literate university' (Webber & Johnston, 2006).

The case study data also indicated that there were institutional policies and strategies in universities which supported the developments of IRC (even if the phrase IL or IRC was not explicitly mentioned). Iannuzzi (1998) argues that the language is not the prime concern as long as the ideals of IL are included. The *Big Blue* project and Corral's study also found evidence of strategic commitment to IL in UK universities. However, the *Big Blue* project explored information skills in the Library/Information Service development/strategic plan and reported that it featured in 61.3% of HEI (Corral, 2007; University of Leeds, 2002).

Library staff belonged to the educational committees that make decisions about curricula and learning in less than half of the surveyed institutions. This indicates that in many institutions librarians may not have the authority to take decisions regarding the development of IRC. The IL literature documents librarians' leading role in IL initiatives over several decades (e.g. Curzon & Lampert, 2007; Dewey, 2001; Fjällbrant & Malley, 1984; Wilson, 2001) and the need for better incorporation of IL into institutional strategies (e.g. Bruce, 2001; Corral, 2007; Webber & Johnston, 2006). The findings from the case study institutions confirm that librarians are still the main initiators in IL activities and the wider recognition of IL is still an issue.

## Limitations

It should be also mentioned that the qualitative part of this study explored the process of developing IRC within the institutions of 'good practice' and therefore the results of this study might be a bit more positive as in other HEI in Europe. Although the policy and strategy are important affordances they are not the only factors that support efficient development of IRC.

All participants from this study were from European HEI who were members of EADTU. Therefore, this study does not argue that the results are applicable outside Europe and even across all HEI of ODL in Europe. It will be necessary to conduct further research to assess the extent to which these findings can be applied across different HEI in Europe and other regions.

In terms of theoretical framework and reviewed documentation only English, Finnish and Estonian language literature and documentation was reviewed.

## Conclusion

Limited progress was identified as regards IRC being incorporated into governmental agenda in the period 2003-2004 in Europe and there was some confusion around it. However, many HEI had policy documents that emphasized the need to focus on IRC in curricula or in student learning. Almost half of the survey respondents indicated that existing procedures for review of curriculum design in their institutions required the incorporation of features to facilitate the acquisition of IRC into the curriculum. Library staff belonged to the decision making bodies in less than half of the surveyed institutions. This indicates that in many institutions librarians might not have the authority to take decisions regarding the development of IRC.

The majority of interviewees agreed that policy and strategy at national and institutional level have an important role to play in the way that innovative approaches and strategies are developed and implemented in HEI. It was highlighted that the importance of IRC needs to be recognized more explicitly by governments and more top-down strategic decisions were needed to support the development of IRC. It was believed that without administrative and institutional support many successful initiatives would remain limited in scope. Furthermore, it was believed that inter-governmental policies can support at national level many institutional and bottom-up initiatives. The interview results indicated that national and international policies supported IRC building to a certain extent via different initiatives even if the notion of IL or IRC were not explicitly mentioned; for example, information society developments, the Lisbon agenda and the Bologna process, electronic or digital library developments, e-learning strategies, key or general skills and quality assurance initiatives, and the lifelong learning agenda.

The development of institutional policies and strategies related to IRC was in the beginning stage in all institutions of good practice in the period 2003-2004. However, institutional strategies in general emphasised the need for the development of IRC although the term IL or IRC were not explicitly mentioned. The IL policy and strategy initiatives came mainly from libraries, in several HEI librarians were represented in university decision making bodies and therefore were able to influence strategic developments within the case study universities. IL awareness was still an issue so that all faculties could understand its importance. Librarians still felt that more support from top management was needed to reach those who are developing courses and programmes, and suggested that IL strategies should be better embedded in general teaching and learning approaches within the university and articulated more clearly. It was extremely difficult to develop policies and strategies in very autonomous and decentralized universities and therefore flexibility and academic freedom was highlighted. The independence of institutes, schools, faculties and departments meant that many decisions were made at the unit level and therefore implementation depended on how committed the faculty was.

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