

The More Flexible – The Better?

Flexibilisation and Perspectives for the Adult Education of the Future

TRANSIT TREND REPORT

The third TRANSIT trend report illustrates how trends towards flexibilisation permeate society. It examines three areas: life courses, the world of work and sources of knowledge.

Flexibilisation leads to greater openness when shaping life courses and places a stronger emphasis on individual responsibility for this. In the world of work, meaningfulness, co-determination and self-determination are becoming more important. The boundaries between private and professional life are also increasingly dissolving. Sources of knowledge are diversifying. As a result, the volume of available information and the requirements regarding the way it is classified and interpreted are increasing.

These developments are accompanied by changes in lifestyles, expectations and basic attitudes. In addition, they reveal an increasing demand for diverse competencies and skills. Therefore, the question arises as to what role flexibilisation will play for adult learning and education in the future.

PERSPECTIVES AS ORIENTATION POINTS

It is important to harness the potential of flexibilisation for the future of adult learning and education. There are many uncertainties connected with the future, so well-founded analyses of current social developments are necessary to derive possible perspectives for adult education.

The third TRANSIT trend report addresses this matter. It discusses social developments and their implications for the future of adult learning and education. The analyses and discussions aim to open up a broad field of vision.

Based on this foundation, the trend report outlines three perspectives that are intended to serve as orientation points for the future design of adult education. These perspectives focus on the social responsibilities of adult education. Ideally, they will inspire people to draw on the potential of flexibilisation, to think more deeply about a wide range of adult education issues and to deal with upcoming problems.

BACKGROUND

THINK TANK TRANSIT

The Think Tank TRANSIT engages in discussions on long-term social developments, conducts analyses and outlines perspectives for the adult education of the future. It has an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach. It uses academic knowledge and also practical experience for this.

The Think Tank TRANSIT was founded in 2017. It is an initiative of the Swiss Federation for Adult Learning (SVEB) and is supported by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). More information can be found at www.thinktank-transit.ch

TRANSIT TREND ANALYSES

The Think Tank TRANSIT has a new focus topic approximately once a year. The chosen topic is intended to be significant for the future of adult education and provides the framework for the questions and discussions pursued by TRANSIT. In a survey conducted among the TRANSIT community, the topic of flexibilisation was chosen as the key issue for the year 2022/23.

For each focus topic there are several events where TRANSIT enthusiasts engage in a collaborative and creative process to discuss ideas and develop visions. To conclude each focus topic, a trend report summarises the content that has been developed.

DEFINITION OF FLEXIBILISATION

Flexibilisation is a development towards increasing openness and manoeuvrability. It is associated with the dissolution of traditional spatial, temporal or organisational boundaries.

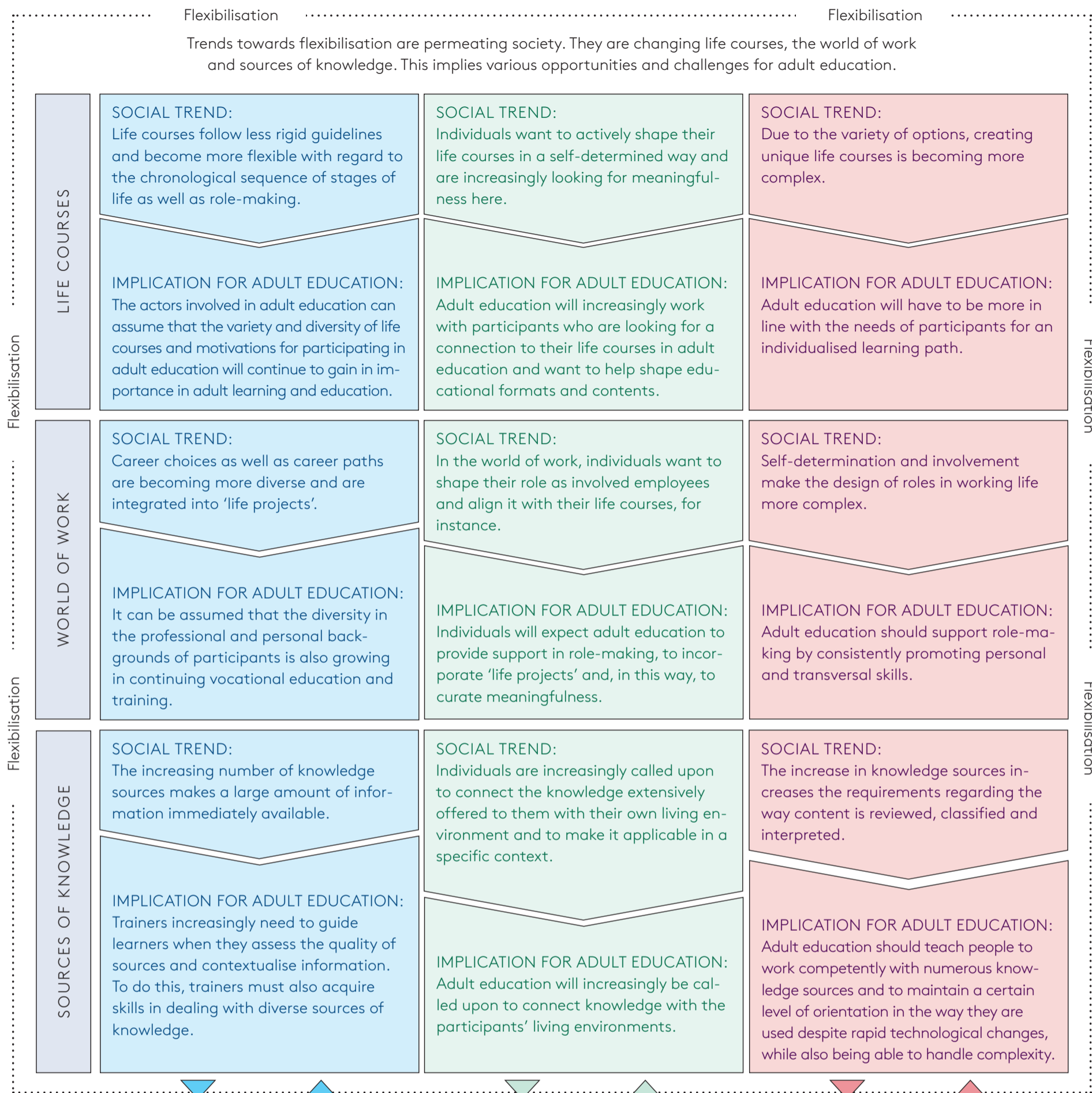
Flexibilisation is also associated with increasing individualisation, which can be understood as an individual's transition from heteronomy to self-determination. Flexibilised societies are characterised by individually experienced meaningfulness and the need for people to have autonomy, for example, when shaping their personal life course.

TRANSIT
THINK TANK FOR ADULT LEARNING

S V E B ■ Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung
F S E A ■ Fédération suisse pour la formation continue
Federazione svizzera per la formazione continua
Swiss Federation for Adult Learning



Flexibilisation Trends towards flexibilisation are permeating society. They are changing life courses, the world of work and sources of knowledge. This implies various opportunities and challenges for adult education.



The following three perspectives emerge from the analysis of flexibilisation constituting points of orientation for the future design of adult education.

VARIETY AND DIVERSITY

- Adult education promotes awareness of variety and diversity.
- Adult education continuously and consistently reflects on how it approaches variety and diversity.
- Adult education takes variety and diversity into account at all levels - from organisation to educational formats and educational marketing.
- Adult education ensures manifold access to lifelong learning.
- Adult education ensures opportunities for participation for people with diverse life courses.
- Adult education helps shape diverse life and career paths.

MEANINGFULNESS AND CO-DETERMINATION

- Adult education continuously and consistently reflects on how it can relate to the learners' personal living environment.
- Adult education has a meaningful effect by helping to connect knowledge with the living environments of learners.
- Adult education promotes skills that enable self-determination and co-determination.
- Adult education exemplifies self-determination and co-determination.
- Adult education promotes skills to take responsibility in self-determined learning and working contexts.
- Adult education helps to find and promote forms of work that generate meaningfulness and allow for co-determination.

COMPLEXITY

- Adult education enables people to take a careful approach to complexity by allowing it and, where necessary, helping to reduce it.
- Adult education promotes the ability to connect knowledge and skills from different areas, creating a foundation for dealing with complexity.
- Adult education calls on individuals to tolerate uncertainties and contradictions.
- Adult education teaches knowledge and skills that promote a proactive way of dealing with complexity.