

# EUCEN Open Fora 2021

*Reimagining Lifelong Learning in Higher Education.  
How can we do it differently?*

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## Lifelong Learning in HE

- ▶ *University lifelong learning should embrace learning in a very broad sense, including the social, cultural and economic development of communities and the region (EUCEN, n.d.)*
- ▶ The role of universities in promoting lifelong learning rests on an articulation of the meaning of 'lifelong learning' for a particular institution and, by extension, the values and practices associated therewith.

# Lifelong Learning in a Changing HE World

- ▶ Lifelong learning is seen as an effective tool for improving growth and economic productivity as well as advancing social integration and responsible citizenship
- ▶ *Lifelong learning is increasingly understood in terms of the formation of human capital and as an investment in economic development* (Biesta, 2006, p.169)
- ▶ University dialogue of being world-class, performance-based and open access in conflict?

## Breaking Free from Normalisation and Pedagogic Continuity

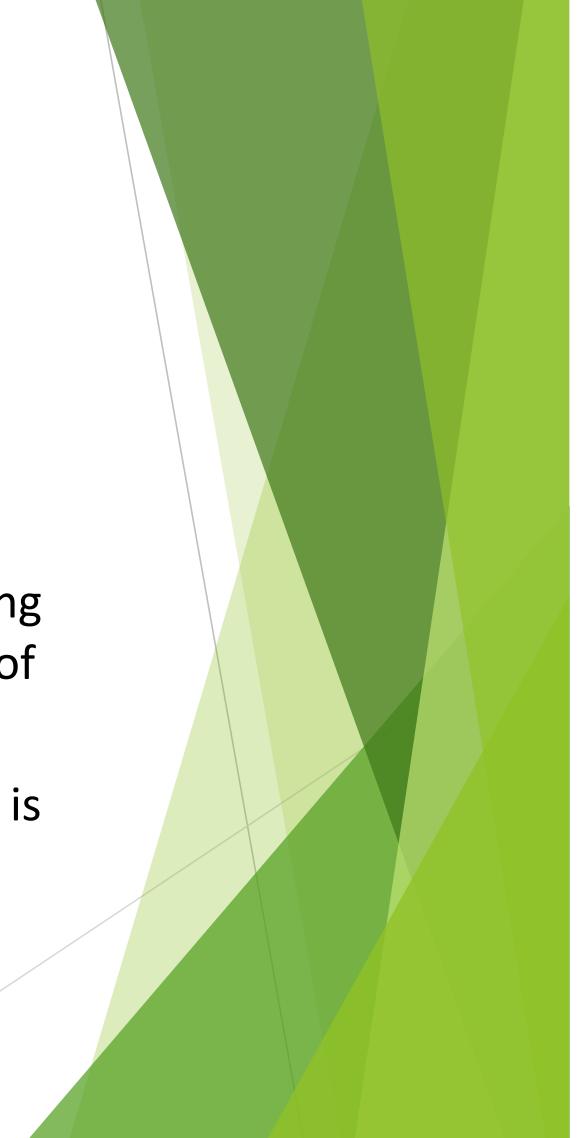
- ▶ The Covid-19 pandemic underlines the urgency for universities to be resilient and to use their full potential for continuing education to enhance their adaptive capacity and resilience
- ▶ Normalization of a form of education that ensures pedagogic continuity can also perpetuate structural inequalities of class, race, and support and that is what we actually need to break free from
- ▶ In reimagining lifelong learning in HE, it is vital to critically reflect on ethical challenges related to transforming practices, so that the new norms do not merely shuffle old problems

## A renewed vision of HE...just imagine...

- ▶ ...our universities need to ensure they reconstruct their curricula recognizing it is the individual will that precedes intellect and in what we teach, or are taught, should embrace a unity, truth and goodness of all being (Peters et al, p.4)
- ▶ Learning valued for its own sake and expands human capacities and possibilities, without always having to ponder the market value of their interests and /or stay up to date

## HE having the broadest reach

- ▶ ...*involves reaching a broad spectrum of students - including post-secondary students, adult learners, professionals who seek to up-grade skills for the workplace, senior citizens taking advantage of their **increasing longevity** to pursue **cultural interests**, and others - for high quality and relevant higher education throughout their lifetime (EUA, 2008, p. 5).*
- ▶ Not just about 'work ready' and 'learn to earn'



## Learning for Integrated Life

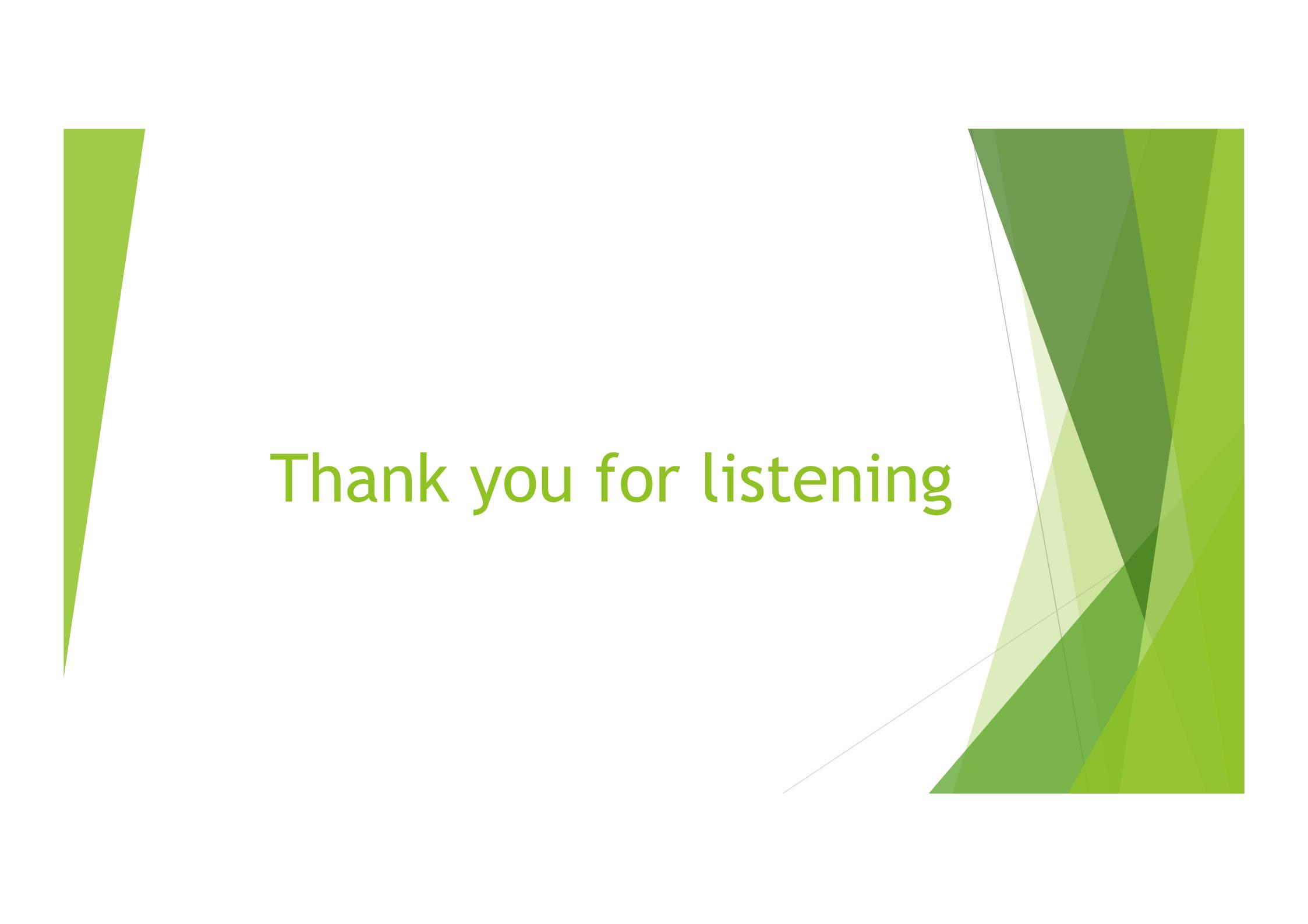
- ▶ Higher education as part of a chain of progression for continuing education and skills that stretches over the life course.
- ▶ Every person's path through is a continual journey, with ongoing opportunities for learning and skills development as enablers of success, and purpose
- ▶ But to deliver this requires access to a system of learning that is fit for purpose – that can capitalize on that journey

## Reinventing HE...an Educative Focus

- ▶ Universities must accept that lifelong learning is a core mission.
- ▶ Teaching and learning based on the needs of learners moves away from inequitable, individualised, deficit models of learning and brings about change in understanding both self and society
- ▶ Universities have the possibility to be places of compassion, of wisdom and worthiness

## References

- ▶ Biesta, G (2006) *What's the point of lifelong learning if Lifelong Learning Has No Point? On the Democratic Deficit of Policies for Lifelong Learning*, European Educational Research Journal, 5, (3 & 4), pp.169-180
- ▶ Peters, M. et al (2020) *Reimagining the new pedagogical possibilities for universities post-Covid-19*, Educational Philosophy and Theory Reimagining the new pedagogical possibilities for universities post-Covid-19  
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- ▶ EUA (2008) *European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning*. Brussels: European University Association. Link:  
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Thank you for listening