



EUROPEAN POLICYBRIEF

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ADULT EDUCATION AS A MEANS TO ACTIVE PARTICIPATORY CITIZENSHIP (EDUMAP)

- POLICY BRIEF 1 -

BROAD RESEARCH OF EUROPEAN ADULT EDUCATION FOR YOUNG ADULTS AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION: PERSPECTIVE OF ACTIVE PARTICIPATORY CITIZENSHIP

European adult education (AE) systems face significant challenges in meeting the educational needs of young adults in situations of vulnerability. Vulnerabilities experienced might include low levels of confidence and lack of basic skills, disabilities, or structural marginalisation based on ethnicity or gender.



The Horizon 2020 research project EduMAP seeks to:

- help educators and educational authorities to discover what is needed to lower barriers preventing access to educational activities among the most vulnerable groups;
- help policymakers and educational authorities to tailor adult education policies and practices to meet the needs of young adults in a vulnerable position;
- understand and develop the real and potential impact of adult education on learning for active participatory citizenship *in Europe*.

EduMAP is a multi-national research consortium of seven countries that has surveyed both European and national adult education priorities, policy developments and educational practices in the EU28 and Turkey. The findings indicate that current adult education policies are more often focused on country specific agendas than on vulnerable learners' interests and needs. This and other findings presented in this Policy Brief have been revealed through the review of literature, statistics and documentary evidence. The EduMAP recommends adult education policies, programmes and actions to pay attention to vulnerable young learners' needs and to set explicit goals for the promotion of **social, economic and political aspects of active citizenship**. Such goal setting should recognise the complexity of vulnerability and seek balance between the humane-personal and instrumental-societal value of adult education.

EduMAP research question is: What adult education policies and practices are needed in Europe to include young adults at risk of social exclusion in **active participatory citizenship**? The project aims to help European, national and local policymakers and educational authorities discover the barriers of accessing adult educational opportunities and find ways to include vulnerable young adults into active citizenship and societal participation.

This Policy Brief summarises the country specific findings of the EduMAP state-of-the-art report "Broad Research on Adult Education in the EU". The report offers an overview of research and policy developments in adult education and lifelong learning in the EU28 and Turkey. The review mapped the impact of adult education on young adults' (aged 16–30 years) engagement in active participation in society. The concept of 'active participatory citizenship' (APC) was defined to embrace **social, economic and political dimensions of participation**. A wide definition sets, correspondingly, wide socio-economic-political criteria of assessing the conditions of social inclusion through adult education.

EduMAP state-of-the-art review paid particular attention to the existing mismatches between the educational needs of different groups of vulnerable young people and the educational opportunities available for them. The country-specific findings provide both examples of good practice and the shortcomings concerning how well the current adult education system prevents social exclusion of vulnerable young adults.

Active Participatory Citizenship (APC) entails:

- Social dimension: focuses on the development of social competences, social capital
- Political dimension: encourages civic and political participation, running for boards, neighbourhood activities
- Economic dimension: relates to employment (e.g. developing employability skills), access to social benefits etc.

In such an interpretation, active citizenship is not restricted to juridical state membership, but also applies to, for instance, foreigners residing permanently in a country. APC contains multiple political, social and economic positions occupied by individuals.

The EduMAP review showed that the manifestations of active societal participation are driven by national policy developments and agendas rather than by the needs of vulnerable young adults. This, in turn, affects adult education policies. The most part of the AE programmes that do target vulnerable groups are age-independent.

Denmark, Finland and Sweden are Nordic welfare states that have traditionally valued education as a means to increase equality and provide support for those in need. Folk high schools have targeted young adults in non-formal education; now assuming new tasks, such as (age-independent) integration education for migrants. The countries have aimed to fulfil the EU Youth Guarantee through various initiatives. Budget cuts have affected particularly non-formal adult education (AE), while resources have increased on formal guidance and counselling, transition from basic to upper secondary education, one-step-up activities for the low-skilled, continuing training, and preparing courses for immigrants. The Nordic countries' adult educational ethos of democratic community values presents the socio-political dimensions of active participatory citizenship (APC), which today is facing the increasingly dominating dimension of the liberal market economies.

In Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the market and job-related adult education prevails. Estonia focuses on continuing education and on the job training models; increasingly on flexible transfer between study levels, NEET (not in education, employment or training), and social cohesion programmes; less on informal education and self-directed learning. Latvia and Lithuania tend to move from "adult education" to "education for adults" concept, including self-development in civil society as part of AE goals. Actions of AE are obviously taking place age-independently in on-the-job training, second chance education, and validation of non-formally obtained competences. The Baltic countries stress civic initiative, innovativeness and entrepreneurship putting emphasis on the economic dimension of APC.

UK, Ireland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg share some developments in relation to policies and practices for the social inclusion of vulnerable young adults. Measures have been taken towards socio-economic participation, employability skills and tackling early school leaving. Particularly UK and Ireland have focused on young adults in NEET position. Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg have developed programmes for inclusion of young migrants. European initiatives (e.g. Youth Guarantee) have also influenced country-specific education and training opportunities for young adults. Remedial, retraining and basic skills courses represent efforts to tackle social exclusion, enhance individual life chances, and provide learners with skills and formal qualification. Informal learning has been recognised as a means of facilitating inclusion; however, there are concerns that non-formal or informal education provision (e.g. community education) and universal education services are being neglected over more 'targeted' formal programmes. The concept of 'citizenship' is not used explicitly but may be embedded in a wide range of other programmes, such as ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) in the UK. In general, the dimensions of APC are implicitly readable in AE programmes. UK, among others, puts emphasis on socio-economic dimension of participation, in particular employment skills.

France, Germany, Austria, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia in Central Europe with different historical and contemporary adult education traditions offer points of comparison. The EU policies have influenced the national developments by promoting a common legal and policy framework in the field of AE, and introducing the concept of life-long learning (LLL). What further unities these countries is the need to address the problem of refugee and migrant inclusion, which creates informal initiatives; self-organised, volunteering actions that play an increasingly important role in civic education. Specifically in Germany, Austria and France, this has resulted in a high number of courses for migrants and refugees. Reports on Poland and Slovakia, on the other hand, indicate few or lacking offers of civic education and intercultural learning. The tendencies towards market orientation (and less needs-driven education) indicate a strong economic dimension of active participatory citizenship in these countries. At the same time, there are movements to increase non-formal and informal learning offers for vulnerable young adults, which may strengthen social dimension of participation. France and Germany, particularly, seem to stress values on political dimension; France on values such as liberty, equality, human rights, tolerance, rule of law and citizen duties; Germany on competences for democracy and active socio-political participation.

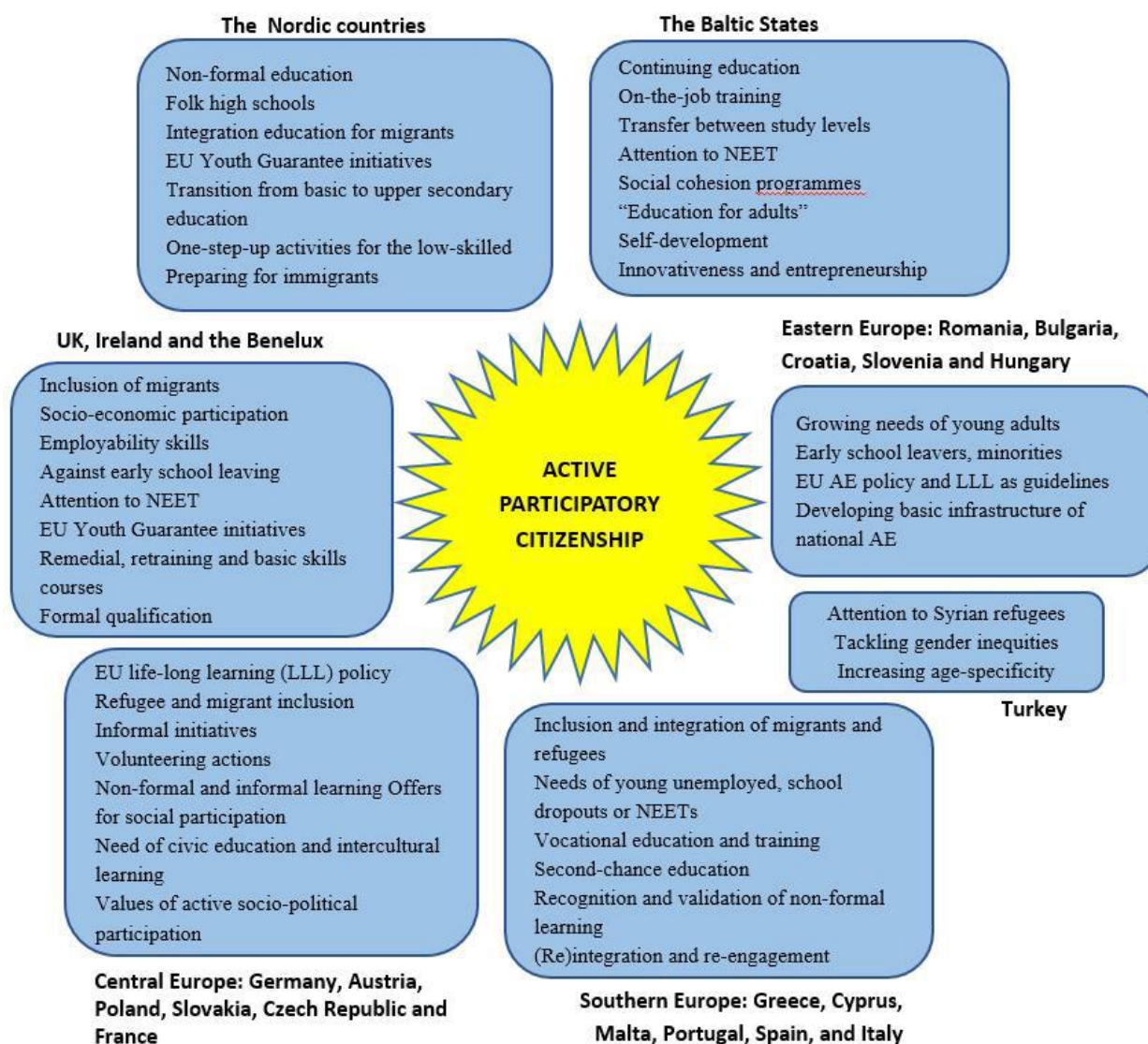
In Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary, societal uncertainties during the post-Soviet decades have resulted in rising numbers of early school leavers and adults with deficiency in basic skills, and aggravated minorities' (e.g. Roma) difficulties in communication and integration. In recent years, the European integration has formed the principles of AE policy and the interpretation of LLL, besides local challenges and priorities. Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia have established the basic infrastructure and policy of AE gradually changing social attitudes towards LLL. In Eastern European countries, active citizenship is rarely highlighted or linked to AE programmes. Recent policy

endeavours with the aim of ensuring social cohesion have resulted in increasing nationalist rhetoric and intolerant attitudes. In Hungary, 'responsible citizenship' does not expect initiatives from the citizens, but relies on government-led institutions and increasingly apparent representative democracy.

In Southern European and Mediterranean countries, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Portugal, Spain, and Italy, overcoming the economic crisis is one of the major challenges for the development of AE. Due to the geographical location of these countries, migrants and refugees have become a key target group and challenge for inclusion and integration through education. Meeting the needs of the new groups requires re-structuring of AE programmes and organisations. Youth unemployment and the number of school dropouts or NEETs are on a high level; vocational education and training, second-chance education and recognition and validation of non-formal learning are playing an increasing role in (re)integration and re-engagement of young adults and improving their life chances. The programmes to include young adults across the Southern European countries involve indirect rather than direct measures of active citizenship. Adult education is to support social cohesion. Greece puts a high value on the political and economic dimensions of the active citizenship debate dealing with the severe social problems related to the economic crisis and the growth of extreme right forces.

Turkey, reviewed with Southern EU countries, shares many challenges of this region. For Turkey, Syrian refugee inflow posed a major challenge for public administration as well as for educational system. In addition, gender inequities have been noted as one of the challenges that needs to be tackled throughout AE programmes. The political development of Turkey will determine, to what extent AE infrastructure will allow increasing age-specificity and enhancement of active citizenship.

ADULT EDUCATION FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATORY CITIZENSHIP OF VULNERABLE YOUNG ADULTS



POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the EU28 and Turkey, there are only few adult education programmes that explicitly focus on the promotion of active citizenship among the target groups. Engaging vulnerable young people through adult education has typically addressed some specific problems, such as poor literacy levels or unemployment. The available information of vulnerability comprises personal traits or attributes (e.g. ethnic origin) or by bio-political and societal conditions (e.g. disability, long-standing illness, low household income, unemployment).

Until recently, adult education used to provide people with a broader humane, liberal education. At present, adult education serves the improvement of individuals' employability or 'learning for earning'. Citizens' entrepreneurial attitudes are generally encouraged. The EduMAP state-of-the-art review clearly confirms that these trends are moulding the adult education policies in the European countries.

In recent years, the policies for adult education and active citizenship have strongly been influenced by global economic crisis and the humanitarian migration across the EU and Turkey. Adult education systems of these countries have responded by setting up programmes and strategies with the aim of integrating refugees and migrants into domestic labour markets.

In adult education programmes, gender is not generally perceived to be a category of vulnerability. There are only few gender-specific programmes that focus on the promotion of active citizenship. Still, research shows that active citizenship is often conditioned by gender and gender roles. Young women, particularly in Mediterranean region and Turkey, need extra support.

Given the importance of learning for active participatory citizenship among vulnerable groups, the increasing availability of digital media and communication means, in particular, open up many new and innovative avenues for young people to practice their citizenship. The contexts where participatory citizenship can be learned do not range just from educational institutions to political, social and economic activities, but include also new and less conventional forms of participation, such as one-off issue politics and responsible consumption. Thus, in addition to schools, civil society and workplaces, the participatory forms of citizenship can be learned through diverse actions in virtual communities, digital milieus and single-issue interest groups.

Based on the research findings, the following concrete recommendations can be made for adult education policies, programmes and actions:

- In order to enhance active participatory citizenship in its wide meaning structure your goal setting for adult education programmes according to social, economic and political dimensions
- Include the criteria and embed measures of sustainability in the adult education programmes
- Recognize the complexity and diversity of vulnerability when creating the measures for the adult education programmes
- Consider vulnerability as a situation of risk (e.g. age, disability) rather than a label to specific groups at risk of social exclusion; those needing special attention by means of adult education may change in a short period of time
- Be open to new characteristics and contexts where active citizenship is learned and listen to the practitioners' ideas for creating up-to-date adult education programmes
- Take action for promoting young women's societal participation (e.g. Turkey)
- Facilitate co-operation, learning and partnerships between different sectors and levels (European, national, regional)
- Pay serious attention to the tendencies of intolerance towards vulnerable people in the world

RESEARCH PARAMETERS

- The objectives of the EduMAP project are to:
- compile an inventory of adult education in the EU28 and Turkey, and investigate the effectiveness of adult education policies and practices in preventing social exclusion (WP2);
- study successful educational initiatives among vulnerable groups within and outside Europe (WP3);
- investigate and map communicative ecologies in the field of adult education and create innovative forums for dialogue between stakeholders (WP4);
- create and test an Intelligent Decision Support System (IDSS) (WP5);
- make recommendations to policymakers and other stakeholders for enhancing learning active participatory citizenship in Europe (WP6)

In the quest for better matching in the field of adult education, both broad and targeted studies have been undertaken. In the first phase, adult education policies and practices across Europe were investigated. The adequacy, matches and shortcomings in the existing statistical data were mapped and analysed.

Once a general understanding of the state-of-the-art in the EU28 and Turkey was gained, successful education practices among young adults at risk of social exclusion within and outside the EU is under investigation through case studies. The empirical work will address the mismatch between AE policy agendas and the needs of vulnerable young adults, expanding the recommendations on specific actions for policy actors.

Communicative practices and information flows within the best practices under study and in the wider fields of adult education will also be mapped and scrutinised.

The research findings will be utilised to enhance dialogue between educational actors and vulnerable groups. In order to enable easy access to adequate information, an Intelligent Decision Support System (IDSS) will be produced for the use of policymakers, educational authorities and other stakeholders.

PROJECT IDENTITY

PROJECT NAME	Adult Education as a Means for Active Participatory Citizenship (EduMAP)
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FUNDING SCHEME	Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020), Societal Challenge 6 – Europe in a changing world: inclusive, innovative and reflective societies", call YOUNG-3-2015, topic "Lifelong learning for young adults: better policies for growth and inclusion in Europe".
DURATION	February 2016 – January 2019 (36 months)
BUDGET	EU contribution: 2,498,112.50 €
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FURTHER READING	"Broad Research on Adult Education in the EU" http://www.uta.fi/edu/en/transit/index/D2.1.Report.30.6.2017.pdf EduMAP publications: https://blogs.uta.fi/edumap/category/publications/books-and-articles/