

Germany

Working Paper

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Adult Education as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship





Adult Education as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship (EduMAP)

EduMAP is a Horizon 2020 research project focusing on adult education among young adults at risk of social exclusion. Particular attention is paid to educational policies and practices needed to foster active citizenship among vulnerable young people.

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1. Challenges in AE provision and access

Related to the participants, the three cases studied in Germany focus on young people who have come to Germany from other countries. Nevertheless their approaches and objectives are different, therefore also diverse provision and access challenges are stressed. Also, they operate in different sectors, the Youth Forum in the frame of the national programme Social City, the Youth Integration courses in the frame of the national Integration programme and the third case in the frame of a cooperation programme between an AE institution and cultural institutions such as museums.

All of them are in some way or other centred around the larger theme of 'integration'. In the cases where German language and integration courses are compulsory, there is not so much an access issue, but the challenges lie in fostering access to social networks and enabling learners to understand the functioning of German society and institutions and build sustainable relationships with the host country. As German is considered a difficult language to learn, failure rates for the language tests are quite high, frustrating learners except the most motivated ones.

Challenges in provision brought up by respondents working in the frame of the integration programme relate to the following:

- A high demanding nature of the national programme as described in the concept. In less than one year participants have to reach a B1 level of German language and be independent in the use of the language. Not all learners are able to reach this goal. Classes are heterogeneous as regards education level and experiences as well as the individual's learning approach and process. In addition, critical personal present and past situations may affect learners' learning ability.
- Learners claim that the course does not offer an appropriate preparation to become independent in the use of the language. The course length does not give them adequate time to acquire fluency in the language: the course offers the possibility to learn the grammar, new words but the practice is actually done outside the course.
- The local programme coordinator and all teachers agree on the limitation of the orientation course, the second part of the programme. They dispute the conceptualisation of the orientation course's examination method, which consists of a multiple-choice test of 33 questions, taken from a list of 300 available to learners. This method would be counterproductive for learners' learning motivation, as most of them would only focus on passing the test, learning the answers by heart, without paying attention to the course's content.

Challenges mentioned by respondents working in the frame of the Social City programme mention:

Integration issues have to be tackled on a 'higher', meaning a political level, it cannot be left to the programme or provision level. From a critical perspective the representation and perspective on migrants and refugees is mirrored in the

treatment of young people with a refugee and migrant biography:

- The Management of the neighbourhood quarter (Quartiersmanagement) does not have an intercultural concept, so in parts it is impacting as exclusive and not inclusive
- Migrant groups are not represented structurally because there are no democratic structures, although the number of migrants is high.
- Funding should be available on a democratic basis. Now there is a competition between the different districts in need.

Learners reflections are based on their very concrete experiences of, on the one hand living in this deprived part of the city and also being in an age group that is often not taken seriously. Also, because often parents have not surpassed a basic language level and adhere to their cultural background, young people do not have a supportive family environment, parents often not being able to understand what the Youth Forum is about and what it is doing. Sometimes parents are even worried, when their children spend so much time hanging out in the youth centre, because this concept of youth social work is not known to them. Also young people experience that it is not easy and possible to produce change and effects in a short time.

2. Gender and diversity aspects tackled in the studied programmes

The Youth Integration Courses have a specific focus on diversity and use an intercultural approach, acknowledging the importance of protecting human dignity and the freedom of the individual and the importance of respect for personal, political, religious and cultural differences and divergences of opinions. It then recognises potential differences and similarities between country of origin and destination country with respect to the expressions of pleasure and displeasure and with regard to societal expectations of communicative conflict solutions; potential differences and similarities may occur in terms of hierarchical structures in family, work and the public and in terms of teaching and of an adequate teacher behaviour. Moreover, potential differences and similarities may exist in terms of non-verbal and semi-verbal signals in communication, e.g. eye contact, physical closeness, shaking hands, distance behaviour, volume. Strictly related to gender, the Concept for the federal Youth Integration Courses (BAMF, 2016) acknowledges potential differences and similarities in terms of gender relations and in relation to legal and social position of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals and intersex (LGBTI), e.g. concerning to same-sex realities of life.

In general and by nature of origin of participants diversity is the normal set up of a group and contributes to intercultural learning. As a rule the classroom participant composition is quite international and might differ just depending on the location of the centre where courses are delivered. The group diversity in terms of nationality, language, religion and gender contributes to increase participants' cultural awareness and intercultural understanding, according to the local programme coordinator and some teachers. This can be considered a successful impact, to the extent that the classes are constituted on the basis of the entry level of German language. From teachers' point of view, the groups' heterogeneity is also beneficial for the learning process. Participants are, in fact, constrained to use German language to communicate and not to rely on their peers who speak the same language.

In the youth integration courses gender is often a matter of discussion during courses, brought also up by the didactic material, for example as regards job descriptions. Some topics trigger more discussions, such as men/women roles and marriage. Having a mix group in terms of gender and nationality has an effect on role attribution and gender relationships. In some cases, this can trigger an inner conflict as participants might be confronted with other realities in their families of origin. Men can often have quite strong opinions on gender equality formed by socialization in a patriarchal culture and it is left to the teachers to deal with issues as they show up. As in the books used in the integration courses gender roles are purposefully illustrated with gender equality aim, this can trigger discussions.

3. The concept of APC as it is defined, understood or approached in the context of the study by different respondent groups

Polymakers: According to the Concept for the Federal Youth Integration Courses, a successful integration occurs through professional integration, in addition to social inclusion in the host society and political participation in society. The possibilities of integration, especially in the long-term, are considered to be higher if young migrants have a vocational qualification.

Educators: Educational staff observes that the conceptualization of active participatory citizenship (APC) within the Youth Integration Courses framework is limited to education for getting a job. Education is deemed instrumental to enter the job market, either in the form of vocational education –*Ausbildung*, or high school diploma - *Schulabschluss*, or professional education – *Berufsbildung*.

In relation to APC, the Concept for the Federal Youth Integration Courses refers to voluntary engagement. It is conceived as a special contribution to the participation and active participation and integration of young people with a migrant background. Through their voluntary commitment, they can discover, use and develop their own skills and thus gain self-confidence. They can socialize and strengthen their motivation for future engagement. The role of personal commitment and engagement is also highlighted by a teacher.

Learners: Some conceived APC as professional engagement, having a job, an internship or simply going attending an educational course. Others see it as political engagement, in particular being informed about politics and taking part in elections; some consider APC as social engagement, participation in activities outside the courses, such as practicing sports, and having social contacts. 6 participants out of 10 answering the question conceive APC as voluntary activities, helping older people or support friends. Most of them relate the APC exercise to an individual attitude, in particular they mention having a daily structure, being focused, having an objective, having a positive approach to life, respect other opinions, being interested and committed, doing everything possible, according to the own possibilities.

Comparing the cases, it is notable that the second case which has been created by the provider with promoting AC explicitly is mirrored in the answers especially of the learners which show a higher level of self-reflection as far as their role as active agents is concerned. In case and in terms of promoting Active Citizenship the perspectives of the Youth Forum coordinator, the provider and the participants do not differ too much, maybe it can be concluded that the programme elements seen as critical for creating an enabling environment for young people to experience positively their potential influence is *working in reality*. When interviewing young people it becomes quite obvious that they do appreciate this opportunity and they can also reflect on the changes that they experience through their active participation.

The element that is in theory the closest to practicing the *legal political* dimension of active citizenship is to organize meetings with either representatives of different political parties or the mayor of the city. Here the experience can be positive or negative, it gives young people also an insight, that politicians are not always interested in their issues.

4. Elements that are critical and or significant for enabling learners to become active citizens, or to develop APC competencies in the studied programmes

Although all GP programmes focus on migrants and refugees the standard context is completely different. Although - because of the different nature of the programmes - no common elements can be extracted, there are elements to both that seem to contribute to their success:

- A well organized adult education sector with institutions that have a long tradition and experience in working with young people in situations of risk as well as delivering a variety of adult education courses.
- In the case of the national programme, financial support to the institutions and also participants
- Teachers and facilitators well trained in working in the different sectors
- Teachers motivated and willing to support young refugees and migrants and seeing their potential

In terms of contributing to APC competencies, the integration courses are developed as to bring young refugees into work, promoting their economic citizenship, whereas the other cases aim at fostering competences of young people in all dimensions (socio-cultural, political-legal, economic).

5. Competencies and qualifications possessed, represented and/or cultivated through by the AE practitioners who contribute to the design, development and delivery of APC programmes for Participants

As regards qualification, a requirement profile was created for the additional qualification of teachers in the area of "German as a Second Language", in case teaching staff does not have a corresponding education title. The additional qualification is evidenced by a certificate, which is acquired after the participation in an additional qualification course as well as the creation of a portfolio provided by an institution accredited by the BAMF. The additional qualification includes compulsory modules, such as migration and migrants, methodological approaches, and intercultural learning, and selective modules, thought for specific target groups, such as conflict management, alphabetization, professional orientation, lessons for young people, new media. The additional qualification can be a short-additional qualification: it requires 70 lessons of 45 minutes of presence in qualifying classes for the compulsory modules. Moreover, 10 lessons for the selective modules should be chosen - at least 2 lessons per topic should be applied. An additional qualification requires 140 lessons of 45 minutes of presence in qualifying classes.

For teaching in Youth Integration Courses an academic degree is a precondition. The modules for an additional qualification seem to be fundamental to teaching activities, as they focus on reflection, the understanding of roles, and the social role of the teacher in the courses, as stressed by the local programme coordinator, who suggest making them compulsory as well.

In general, additional training and assistance to practitioners in the Youth Integration Courses are desirable, since they often have to deal with traumatised people who often suffer from psychic disorders. More support should be provided through further training and skill-building. Intercultural skills should also be enhanced.

In the youth forum the facilitator (completed studies in Social Work) plays a pivotal role especially in motivating and addressing young people and a set of attitudes were mentioned that can be seen as a requirement for running the project successfully:

- Anti-discriminatory, be willing to change oneself
- Live in the 'Quartier' to be able to meet the people
- Have authentic empathy without losing the critical perspective
- Continuity

From observations by attending one of the sessions also a need to be creative, to be committed and have an interest in the individual's life situation can be added to the skills on demand. The provider also sees a need for skills related to intercultural conflict mediation.

6. Critical factors and conditions (favourable and unfavourable) that affect the potential of AE policies to cultivate APC for Participants

Favourable

Germany has well established support systems, especially for young people that are in threat of 'falling' out of the system. The *federal child protection act* clearly specifies the protection mandate of both the youth welfare office and the independent organizations of child and youth welfare. Agreements with the youth welfare office are designed to ensure that all organizations and institutions providing services according to the German Social Code, Book VIII (SGB VIII), fulfill their protection mandate accordingly. The age range covered is from 12 -26.

Socially disadvantaged young people as are defined amongst them *young foreigners and late emigrants with language deficits and/or integration problems* and young single parents are also covered by the German Social Code (SGB III, 2016).

In light of the high numbers of refugees in 2016 legislation has been clarified, extended and amended to accommodate necessities regarding employment services, vocational training, training of disabled persons, unemployment benefit, assistance during transition between unemployment and employment, and suppression of illegal employment of foreigners.

The identification of vulnerable groups has also been made a priority measure in the German programme for the implementation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). Within this programme, a number of projects for identifying and supporting vulnerable groups receive AMIF funding.

Also it can be deemed favourable that in 2012 German government declared Germany finally to be a country of immigration, contributing to a better chance of a more open debate on the process of integration and the necessity of institutions to be more culturally open and follow more principles of diversity.

Approaches such as those taken by providers in the framework of the Social City offer opportunities to young disengaged people in situations of risk. Because inhabitants meet to discuss their visions for the Quartier they engage in activities and build social contacts for implementing self-chosen activities. The impact of this can be seen by the amount of migrant organizations that have been established in different quarters of the city, demonstrating the motivation of migrants to be active.

Unfavourable

Only if a legal status has been granted do refugees have access to all types of support in Germany. To be able to receive protection in Germany as a refugee as defined in the Refugee Convention signed in Geneva in 1951 or to receive entitlement to Asylum or be granted the status of subsidiary protection which grants a residence permit for only one year, a formalized asylum seeking process has to be passed. Protection is only granted if the threat of persecution or serious harm looms in all parts of the home country. If some regions of the country are safe, migrants will need to return there – protection will not be granted in Germany. Recently, the

application process has become a lot quicker and German government has tightened asylum laws.

Since 2005, the integration programme is under competence of the *Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs* and treated as issue of relevance for *internal security*. This aspect has been criticized: it would desirable if the programme was under competence of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research or of the Ministry for Family Affairs. There are many financial opportunities through programmes targeting democracy development, active participation, or empowerment that cannot be applied to integration because the programmes are under the competencies of different Ministries.

In addition to language-related obstacles, legal uncertainties in the perspective of staying and limited political civil rights, we need to mention negative prior experience with state authorities, including violence and discrimination in the country of origin as creating unfavourable conditions.

In addition the rejections, inequalities or even racist hostilities experienced by the host society influence the motivation for active participation. Experiences of "lack of recognition" and "experienced powerlessness" can literally block the participation opportunities (not only) of migrants (Roth 2009, 23, Beer, 298). Frank Gesemannu.a. (2013, 59) concluded in their study on the status of municipal integration policy in Germany that the participation of migrants in municipal decision-making and design processes deserves more attention.

7. Lessons learnt from laws and policies that contribute effectively to cultivating APC for Participants

EU Programmes (URBAN II for disadvantaged cities) and funding have given important incentives and financing for developing projects. The Antidiscrimination directive from the year 1997 also generated funds from the city to improve antidiscrimination related to housing. In this frame the provider organising the Youth Forum was able to create close cooperation with the Agencies for antidiscrimination and receive some additional funding from them. Funding is important on all levels – EU Programmes tend to be financially more rewarding but also entail a lot of administrative work.

The Youth Forums are funded by federal (Ländergefördert), the youth and leisure centres are financed by the communal level. It is a clear advantage to have information about all possible funding sources and be able to secure funding for the work without having to rely on the formal channel.

A suggestion for improvement is that all communal funding should flow together and be distributed on a Sozialraum level.

Education for Active Citizenship

Although 'Teilhabe' (active participation) and active citizenship is seen to be the new paradigm in the programmes related to integration, there is a whole sector of adult education in Germany dedicated to promoting democratic attitudes and behaviours, tolerance, mutual respect participation, humanity and solidarity, valuing diversity and peaceful conflict resolution. The Federal Agency for Civic Education, FACE is the German federal government agency responsible for promoting civic education. It is subordinated to the Federal Ministry of the Interior and was established already in 1952 and has institutional branches in every single federal state.

An interesting synergy has been created between the programme social city and the NRW branch of the Agency by establishing 'Democracy labs' for inhabitants in selected quarters with high integration requirements in different locations. The aim is to promote the skills and capacities of inhabitants to co-develop their neighborhood living space

As regards promotion of *civic education* for young people two specific national support programmes are relevant:

Civic Education for young people (politische Jugendbildung) financed by BMFSFJ (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend*/ Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth) and the corresponding child and youth plan (Kinder- und Jugendplan des Bundes) from the Ministry.

Different projects of diverse providers can be financed under this programme, but usually they address ALL young people including young people in situations of risk such as refugees. This means that refugees are individual participants, so that these projects do not reach out to a high number of young people in situations of risk.

8. Existing practices of information access and communication (emerging patterns and tendencies; people/social networks; media/platforms/channels; content/messages) about adult education in the studied programmes

Considering physical access and devices, many studies confirm that the use of the smartphone has become crucial for media and information access, replacing television and radio, due to its accessibility. In particular, recent interviews carried out in Germany among Syrian people (2017) revealed how the smartphone turned out to be a necessary means for the safe and protection of migrants in their long journey to Europe.¹

For migrants and refugees, newcomers in the country, exchange of information occurs in networks and platforms that they know and that they can access to. Informal networks play a crucial role in these terms because allow them to rely on shared experiences of peers. Other local initiatives, for example promoted by NGOs, are also relevant for accessing information. As regards social platforms, Facebook has been the most mentioned social media to find information and establishing networks. The interactive platform is also used to access news for free, automatically selected by relevance and passively consumed. The sources can be important agency press or media houses, but also individual bloggers or journalists. One important obstacle to access news in the new country of destination is represented by the language and by the scarce knowledge of the media environment.²

As reported by interviewees, communication with other people in the country and abroad is mainly guaranteed through social media-communication and instant messaging channels, which are important means for networking and maintaining contacts. Thanks to their cost-efficiency, the dynamic and real time nature of the communication, the possibility to communicate asynchronously and globally, social media-communication and instant messaging channels play a fundamental role for the generation of social capital in migrants' community. On the other hand, the integration and participation in the Germany society is less direct and apparently mediated by digital networks. For example, the Syrian respondents reported that the internet is the system through which they get to know the new country and the information source that helps them better cope with new legislation and regulations regarding their status.

As regards education, most refugees started learning the language alone, since asylum seekers are not allowed to participate in education programmes until their application process has been completed. YouTube channels in Arabic offering German lessons were mentioned as a useful and flexible platform to learn, alongside other downloaded language applications.³

¹Abujarour, S., and Krasnova, H. (2017) *Understanding the role of ICTS in promoting social inclusion: the case of Syrian refugees in Germany*, Twenty-Fifth European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS), Guimarães, Portugal

²Council of Europe Report (2018) *Spaces of Inclusion - An explorative study on needs of refugees and migrants in the domain of media communication and on responses by community media*.P. 17-18. Retrieved from: <https://bit.ly/2GL411C>

9. Leveraging on VYA's information access and communication practices about adult education

Personal networks seem to be the most used channel to receive information about adult education opportunities. Most are informed directly through the organisations they were attending and where the interviews took place. Volunteers and personnel report directly about existing opportunities, flyers were distributed in the rooms, and members of other AE institutions are often invited to advertise their offers.

Information about AE programmes is reported to be also obtained by the JMD – Youth Integration Centre Point or by the Job centres; the latter is in fact the gatekeeper service to address young people to the Integration courses. Some reported to also search for education opportunities online. Other media and particularly social media are not mentioned with reference to accessing AE.

In general, ICTs offer a valid support for translation and to simplify everyday communication. For example, an interviewee reported to enter the question in her/his language into Google, to translate it into German, get some results and translate them back into her/his mother tongue. The internet is used as a general source of information for queries irrespective of the field. In general, it can be considered as a first mediation of information, which then needs to be verified. Through the internet, respondents also benefit from entrainment activities, such as music or dance courses.

With regards to the physical access and devices, the use of the smartphone has been mentioned in all cases, especially for the access to the internet, use social media applications, such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp or game applications. Some respondents mentioned to use radio, mainly to passively practice the language through German channels, for example Deutsche Welle, local and public radio broadcasts. A few respondents watch television, mainly for entertainment activities, such as sport, music or for children programmes, but mentioned to have one in the past. It seems that the use of television has changed after displacement. Notebooks or computer are mentioned only by three respondents. One of them, in particular, has a shared computer with other family members. These devices are mainly used to check e-mails or for studying purposes.

As far as education is concerned, some reported to watch YouTube videos in order to learn the language autonomously, and to receive information about the German system and cultural aspects of Germany. Other applications are downloaded for free to learn German, but it seems they do not substitute language courses or personal contacts to actively practice the language.

10. Information accessed and used during the design of AE for APC programmes

In the case of the youth integration courses the main channels of information run between the individual provider and the national agency (BAMF) responsible for curriculum. Teachers have some freedom in how they organize the learning process in the classroom, but the final test is related to the contents. The development of the group dynamic can be considered as a form of socialization that plays a role in raising APC awareness. This element is subjective and change from group to group, but the group's relationship has an impact as regards the learning process and competence development; learners learn together but also from each other. The more integrated is the group, the better do the participants learn. In particular, excursions are a good opportunity and a different way to enhance socialisation and to integrate the group.

In the case of the Youth Forum information provision itself is a core element. Young participants have the opportunity to receive information about education activities or social initiatives targeted to them. For example this includes the opportunity to a trip to Brussels to visit the European institutions for free, organised by the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb), and to take part in a local project aimed to discuss media presentation of Islam and Hebraism through filmmaking and the use of social media. On regular basis, young people have the opportunity to meet policy-makers during special meetings organised within the Youth Forum.

As pointed out by the Youth Forum facilitator and coordinator, the Youth Forum wants to be an opportunity for networking for young people. It characterises by being a platform through which participants can express their needs and opinions. Thus, learning to listen to others, to communicate their opinions and respect those of other participants is par to the learning process of the Forum. During the Youth Forum sessions, communication is facilitating by a speaker, appointed among young people, and occurs by raising hands.



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