Hungary

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.

1. Challenges in AE provision and access

The main difficulty of the research is that GP participants and policy makers are difficult to reach. There is no monitoring and follow-up analysis, what has become of the former participants, students and mentored young people within various projects and programs. Therefore, according to the old parameters, Roma or disabled young people are not available today. Policy makers are therefore not accessible because AE has not been a priority in Hungary, while the state (ministerial, municipal) governing and decision-making bodies are constantly transformed, there is no stability for the potential respondent. The essence of the transformation is to merge several administrative and public service sectors, including vocational training, adult education, and change the ministry. For AE purposes, EU funds are mainly used by the government and these resources are not equally available, GP1 and GP2 are a good example (religious organizations versus civil/university organizations). For young people with disabilities, the first condition for success is to get adequate financial support during the training, because they lack resources for traveling to the training and living. Only this can be based on the given training in which the goal is to acquire cooperative experiences and to strengthen the ability of self-development. Well-designed training can only deliver knowledge and competence development in an appropriate proportion if the participants share the same/similar knowledge/education level or the same/similar ability level. However, this requires a thorough selection of the participants (knowledge, experience, skills), but this is often not provided in the terms of the call for proposals and in the appropriate recruitment procedure. The heterogeneous learning group hindered certain student expectations.

2. Gender and diversity aspects tackled in the studied programmes

Gender roles and sexuality is a centre issue in the Roma Colleges because in the Roma culture this is more conservative than in the entire Hungarian culture.

"The great part our students are women. They are the best, the most intelligent, the most motivated. If we did not care, all of our students would be women. Or gay man. Our College can provide a community that is the highest proportion of Roma gay men in our country. There were some community events where, for example, homosexuality was the central theme and a student did a "coming out". But anyway this is a highly accepting community, much more accepting than, for example, the traditional Roma communities." (Educator)

On the other side, gender roles are powerful in the program, because children educational issues are usually discussed by moms and the program have little to say about this. They try not only to communicate with moms and dads to come and participate in for example family days or in any discussion. Sometimes males show up, but the moms are typical.

"We can see that within the poor families, the classic separation of gender roles are much stronger. There is a different kind of relationship, and on the one hand, it is because if the mother takes more children, she is out of the job market, her relationships are closed, she has more at home, she is also the "father" of the outside world. This, in my opinion, leads to an inequality, a situation that a low-income culture typically has a bit of strengthening. " (Program coordinator)

Diversity was also given in the program of disabled youth, both age and sex. At the same time their economic activity and labor experience were also different. However, they were almost the same: AE participants had low or minimal income, so the AE funding (scholarship, lodging) was very important in choosing to participate.

We did not experience any signs of gender inequality and gender discrimination in our good practices. Of course, the cultural and social circumstances that determine the groups under investigation may raise these questions. In the Roma communities, early marriages and childbirth fundamentally limit women's engagement. This is why it is assumed that young adult learning is not considered a priority. However, experience shows that the proportion of women in higher education (such as Roma Colleges representing the social rates) is slightly higher among the students entering. The number of women in Roma has been higher than male to the traditionally female-dominated jobs (such as in education, social work, health care), but Roma women have also appeared in tertiary institutions and universities (technical, natural, cultural and social sciences, law and economics) whose presence has not been so far. It also follows that, unlike the supposedly, many more women choose the academic career and do not necessarily return to their original community. However, the programs studied can help to ensure that cultural change and breaks

with traditional expectations do not lead to these for women to identity crisis. There was no disadvantage among female students with disabilities, their proportion was higher than that of men, but this is explained by the fact that women's education and communication skills are higher than parameters of males and that the AE opportunities are also stronger. A strange way of reversing discrimination was felt in terms of gender composition in certain forms of AE, especially among vulnerable groups.

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

Citizens do not feel political integration, only economics, just because poor direct democracy, and respect for human rights, forums of participation, traditions, the press and the civil sector, the competitions of views, ways of life and beliefs are fragmented or weak. Therefore, the term *active participatory citizenship* could only be used indirectly in research. The main elements of the concept had to be applied: self-knowledge, responsibility for myself, responsibility for the narrower community I belong (family, residence, college, workplace, institution), ability to act for myself (for example, to study, to go to an event); to be solid let me tell you my opinion. Interviewing could not take more concrete form because segregated, low-educated persons are hardly concerned with democratization, deliberate participation in elections, party referendums, NGO membership, donation, participation in petitions, participation in demonstrations or these mean taboo topics for them. Post-2010 populist governance continues to weaken the civil sector, adult training, media pluralism, Roma self-organization, inclusion of people with disabilities, and generally human resources development and public investment there. Therefore, the vast majority of the population identifies public life with the (party) politics or government policy, so respondent is not willing to answer either generalized public policy or specific political questions, or respondent hide own opinion. For this reason, the use of statistical data would not have helped answer the academic questions in many cases. There is no difference among the participants of the GPs in this indirect approach to the active citizenship, and policy makers and project managers also avoid this term and direct applicability of the concept. Only exceptions could be found among the objectives and principles of the Roma Colleges: it is part of their operating principles that efforts should be made to strengthen Roma identity and Roma community action among university students.

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

Vulnerable groups and those involved in adult training link the citizen's activity, awareness to volunteer work and community building, and therefore through these actions, indirectly may interpret and accept active citizenship.

Strengthening Roma identity for Roma young people involved in adult training is an element that should serve as a project for all communities, community development and volunteering, if they want to promote public participation and active citizenship.

The communication pattern of vulnerable groups in the area indicates that, without community building and development, young people may use adult training opportunities through the net but they can only be accessed, involved and informed on adult education programs through social media (facebook).

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

Until the emancipation and integration of Roma people do not create the institutional and existential (political and financial) conditions, it is very difficult to expect from them more activity and to assume any training. The Roma have to return to the labor market for the first time. The basic condition for this is to achieve equal opportunities, ban of segregation and accession to talent management in primary and secondary education. However, the achievement of these goals is not supported by the current education policy, but it specifically hinders the realization of these goals. Due to the 16-year-old school attending obligation (from 18-year-old), the reorganization of secondary school education, the institutional transformation of vocational training and the reduction of learning content in professional schools (minimization of general information on the world, understanding, critical ability, It skills and foreign language), the ESL has become commonplace among the poor, marginalized millions of social groups. These young people can count only on the auxiliary or trained workplace position on the job market, losing the ability and chance of learning. The growing ESL rate is exacerbated by the fact that in the domestic economic structure, employers are expecting to acquire modern manufacturing technologies that they are unable to master because of lack of linguistic and IT competencies and lost ability to learn due to the shortcomings in the education system. Similar problems are faced by people with intellectual, physical and mental disabilities: institutions for their development and their introduction into the labor market are lacking. Instead of this, they receive only suboptimal social benefits destroying their autonomy and image of utility (the invalidity monthly pension accounts for half of the subsistence minimum). This difficult situation, the shortcomings of state responsibility - sometimes beyond their power – would be compensated by local governments and civil organizations. Some of the settlements mostly inhabited by Roma intend to manage it by their own organizations/initiations so that their citizens complete their primary education (grade 8) and may complete secondary school (grades 9-12), obtain a certificate of maturity. In these settlements (such as Cserdi), small businesses are set up, meaning "creative" activities for families. The "pay-for-wage" principle also applies to business employers who seek to provide profit (e.g. Sze-Fo, Szeged) or a foundation / association framework for young adults with reduced working abilities and / or disabilities.

In this context, they should be placed in adult education programs within the NGO organization framework and those that are financed by EU funds through AE programs, whether they are able to offset the shortages of adult education policy and comprehensive state measures. They cannot in themselves compensate for the social problems that have been inherited or have been exacerbated since 1990, which should be solved by the partnership cooperation of state, local governments, civilians and churches, in consultation with the needs of local communities and people. It is therefore difficult to critically assess civil initiatives with regard to adult

education programs for vulnerable young people. It is difficult to separate that success / failure is caused by the wider social environment, more or less the rigidity, design shortcomings or even novelty of the particular program. The success of these good practices was largely due to the fact that adult organizers trusted in the vitality of vulnerable young people, in their instincts of integration and autonomy, and helped to build and strengthen their relationships. This is the basis of the active citizenship (responsibility, autonomy and self-knowledge).

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

We outline four debilitating circumstances: (a) Devaluation of knowledge and learning abilities in a work-based and non-welfare, non-knowledge-based or non-learning society - therefore, since 2012, complete public education, higher education, vocational training has been transformed, serving the short-term needs of economic and employment needs; (b) To put pressure on civil organizations/NGOs - eg. Norwegian Civil Fund, Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Open Society challenged them by judicial, tax and criminal procedures – combating critical voices and autonomy;(c) Priority support for churches is discriminatory for other formations when it comes to the same talent-keeping, catch-up programs, segregated support, and especially when it is performed less effectively and less professional by the church; (d) People with disabilities and Roma are only considered as labor / employment and social burdens in public policies, but their human and community development does not fit into economic development plans, the concept of a working-based society.

The result is that adult education has become marginal in itself, but can only be achieved through other policies (public education, higher education, special education for segregated persons, promotion of churches in the public service, implementation of ESF funded projects). In research, the result was that with the growth of state centralization and control, GP participants did deny their sincere criticism, while their self-reflection capacity and learning-career-building and integration chances have diminished due to changes in recent years in Hungary.

Positively: Conservative/old-fashion adult education policy serving the short-term needs of the labor market and employment cannot support vulnerable groups effectively and in a sustainable way, so it is advisable to incorporate vulnerable young adults' education into related contact policies. Only an adult training policy that is based on human complexity and development of communities can independently set up sub-goals and specific tools, methods for training and learning of vulnerable young adults.

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

Although the motivational practice of the Christian Roma College is controversial (i.e. the degree of student scholarship depends on the tasks undertaken and performed), but for those young adults who have never met an individually tailored development plan and fixed expectations in primary school and high school, maybe it's a good idea. Fulfillment support - according to domestic stereotypes - is not commonly accepted and accepted in Roma communities. It is therefore a good practice to apply it in adult education. At the same time, it should also be noted that young Roma students, in addition to their academic and study work, have found the tasks that can serve the purpose of active citizenship (voluntary work, organization of events) are too overwhelming. Students should therefore choose their existential security (sometimes their poor families also benefited from the money that the young Roma had received as a scholarship but she had to do so many tasks at the college) and between the tasks and commitments to active (Roma) citizenship coming from the mission and spirit of the college schools .

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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

Access to information and the use of media technology is quite uniform: information is gained mainly from the Internet, every young adult has some kind access to it, and everyone have smartphones. Their primary source for news and information is the web – with no difference regarding the topic –, if they are interested, they read online media occasionally, but only if they want to know something.

The phones are rarely used for calls, they use specially to talk with parents and when they are called by parents. Social networking sites are used for the interaction with other family members, friends, fellow students, students from dormitories, and mentor partners primarily through their smartphones. It cannot be emphasized how and with whom most people communicate with the cell phone, practically all communication is done through their mobile devices. The difference is rather how they do it. SMS and phone conversations are hardly used, especially when urgent formal issues are should be arranged and when they are communicating with the older generation, but there have been some who reported that grandparents also know how to use the Viber (an online messaging application that is popular in Hungary) and not just with their parents.

However, the majority uses various chat programs when talking with fellow students, friends, other family members, especially for relationships in their private sphere or informal relationships connected to their studies (Messenger, but also Viber is a common platform or maybe Whatsapp, sometimes Skype).

The smartphones are also used to access various online content (mainly press), but they are also used for listening to music and watching movies (Youtube, Spotify, etc.). The photo function is popular, as well.

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

Interviewers did not report challenges or problems which can be linked directly to the programs. AE programs should improve their social media skills as well as other programs nowadays.

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

Not available

http://blogs.uta.fi/edumap/