

Latvia

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

The case of competence validation of informal and non-formal vocational education describes an alternative way to become qualified for the low skilled young adults, they can identify competence gap, get additional studies tailored to their needs and finally can make the competence validation test.

The challenges in Latvia: The needs of the adult learners' groups defined as the vulnerable young adults' group are difficult to be identified in the national documents about Lifelong learning guidelines.

Accessibility and motivation issues. Preventively, it should be the conditions clarified that allow groups at risk to participate in the social, cultural, economic and civil life. Adults with low basic skills often do not recognize the need for education and are not motivated to become involved.

Educational documents do not show clearly defined educational needs in the adult target groups, and the need for active participative citizenship. It is difficult to access the groups, defined as the groups at risk.

There is no adult education planning function delegated to regions, local coordinators funding depends on ESF. There has been a discrepancy between national regional and local policies in practice.

Municipalities are not provided with the sustainable funding for AE and adult learners at risk. All municipalities' funding is dependent on ESF projects at is not clear what happens in longterm perspective.

Opportunity to get a qualification is provided but it doesn't offer of further education supply for VYA

Ensuring sustainable workplaces/job during the AE

Pure learning outcomes of AE, 20-40% of the content is interesting, 60-80% of the content is boring for adults, mostly unconnected with social, cultural, economic and civil life.

Studies in the e-environment exclude direct contact with the instructor and the course-mate.

The compulsory classes, you cannot miss a lesson, it is often very difficult for people who already have a family and their own responsibilities outside the studies. It immediately means that a person loses a scholarship, attitude to you is getting worse, etc.

2. Gender and diversity aspects tackled in the studied programmes

The programmes target the gender needs by gender neutrality communication of professions, it has some tailored means for language minorities, low educated students and students with special education needs. Gender issues in Latvia are not too serious. However, it should be noted that the employment rate was around 5% higher for men than for women, both in 2014¹ and in 2015². This was in contrast to almost all other EU Member States, where the opposite trend was evident. Amongst the low-qualified (ISCED levels 0-2), the employment rates for men and women developed differently: employment of men increased by 7.2 percentage points in 2015 compared to 2011, while it decreased by 11.2 percentage points for women in 2015 compared to 2011. There are also notable differences by gender with a participation rate of 4.1% amongst males and 7.2% amongst females in 2015³. In Latvia, as is the case in Finland and Lithuania, women were considerably more likely than men to have participated in education and training, whereas the reverse was true in the Netherlands and Germany⁴.

The case of competence validation of informal and non-formal vocational education supports young adults from variety of backgrounds:

- Adults with functional /existential problems, disorientated in life and work situations, with low self-esteem, not confident in communication with responsible persons in diverse life and work situations, have always problems in negotiation), they don't understand what is written at official web-pages etc.);
- Adults with functional /existential problems, disorientated in life and work situations, with low self-esteem, not confident - (No) can mean "yes", etc.);
- Foreign workers/migrant workers/migrant workers who are temporarily employed or political migrants from Post -Soviet countries (Ukraine et.) and don't know the Latvian official language.
- Low educated adults with low motivation to learn and/or to find the job;
- Adults with health problems;
- Officially undefined groups at diverse physical meeting places;
- Adults with low key competences.
- Adults with special needs (autism, handicaps etc.)
- Early school leavers (ESL)
- Young mothers with small children
- Social disadvantaged adults.

1. EC, Eurostat, (2016). Latvia. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=0&language=en&pcode=t2020_10&tableSelection=2 [accessed at 27.08.2016]

2. EC, Eurostat, (2016). Latvia. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=0&language=en&pcode=t2020_10&tableSelection=2 [accessed at 27.08.2016]

3. EU, Eurostat, (2016). Statistics Explained. File: Lifelong learning, 2010 and 2015 (!) (% of the population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training). Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Lifelong_learning,_2010_and_2015_\(%C2%B9\)_\(%25_of_the_population_aged_25_to_64_participating_in_education_and_training\)_YB16.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Lifelong_learning,_2010_and_2015_(%C2%B9)_(%25_of_the_population_aged_25_to_64_participating_in_education_and_training)_YB16.png) [accessed at 24.09.2016]

4. EU, Eurostat, (2016). Statistics Explained: Lifelong learning statistics. Article. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Lifelong_learning_statistics#Further_Eurostat_information

- Young adults with prison sentence

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

Young adults defined APC as follows:

Become new friends/ Create new relationships participated in sport-teams, dance collectives, choirs, song festivals, music-bands, amateur collectives or by fishing etc.

More self-confidence and faith in what one is doing.

Confidence in communication.

Definitely raised self-esteem through the improved knowledge baggage.

Friendships: It is important to keep in touch with friends who have kept the church despite the time and geographic location. We do not share common traditions or work. The process of friendship is natural, and only the satisfaction of the social needs is important. Good Latvian and English language skills, good verbal communication skills.

Experience exchange between the people from diverse cultures.

Breaking stereotypes that someone of a different nationality would want to hurt you.

Using acquired knowledge and skills to find information in competent information survey.

Increased reading interest.

Communication experience with many other religions from all over the world.

Life-experiences abroad (mobility experiences).

Participating in sport-teams, dance collectives, choirs, song festivals, music-bands, amateur collectives.

Finding qualified job related to own abilities, interest carrier opportunities and good salary or/and opening own business using the acquired knowledge and skills in practical work at workplaces and in family life.

Intercultural communication in diverse working/job situations.

More opportunities instead of those at current workplaces. Widespread practical experience has been developed.

Confidence in the desire to work in the chosen profession.

Responsibility: I vote.

Thinking about what happens in own country, in the area of taxes and legislation, when and why something goes wrong and what happens, thinking about all kind of things that happen in birth- or life place and doing the very best for your own country (leadership and responsible decision-making).

Educators defined APC: Being an active citizen means not being indifferent to issues of general interest and without fear of expressing one's position. *I believe that in public administration, employees have restrictions on being personally civic activists, because they have to comply with decisions taken by the government.*

There is not much significant evidence that the GP programmes directly contributed and cultivated APC. In fact, that is because the APC was not mentioned in the country's normative regulations.

Policymakers defined APC: We use the term "active civic participation" and we are interested for better understanding how this concept/ term is defined and used in other organizations as well. *Being an active citizen ... in my opinion is to be a citizen who (a) nevertheless thinks about the country and about education in our horizons; b) takes responsibility for our actions; and c) correct the principles of disparity, cooperates with the public administration in the particular case. If there is a problem, he is very correct and concrete to deal with it.*

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

Workplace learning: Mostly by employers at workplaces organized in cooperation with vocational institution and/or colleges - not academically only, timely short programmes (1- 1,5 years). Opportunity to get the work-experiences while learning with guaranteed workplace under the studies and solid salary, and social guarantees. Receiving a scholarship from 70 to 115 euro per month, transport/Internet subsidies. Free accommodation during the studies. Competent inter-institutional collaboration in providing the timely support by need. To get a profession within 1-1,5 year throughout validation of informal learning and/or at the end of the training, complete the 15-week qualifying practice with broad mobility opportunities and take the qualification exam. Workforce subject teaching mostly organized by employer at workplace acquires the useful knowledge and skills for social, cultural, economic and civil life in work-situations.

Personalized and individualized learning: Accessibility of mentors/tutors outside of lessons for not only academically issues, but for dialogical informal communication/discussions and experiences about social, cultural, economic and civil life exchanges.

Self-directed learning. Opportunity to combine studies and work: the presence at organized learning activities are free of charge, providing the opportunities to choose the learning pace and place. Opportunity to access the mentors outside of organised learning activities, online materials, interactive e-learning opportunities.

During the training students are provided with teaching aids and the necessary equipment, receive a scholarship of 70 to 115 Euros if there is no unjustified absenteeism and a successful assessment (at least 4 points) in all subjects. The students may live in a paid service hotel in a vocational school, receive career support provided with supplementary knowledge in the exact subjects related to engineering, science, technology and mathematics, or in the chosen profession studying in a real work environment with employers offering work-based learning. The students can obtain the certificate or certificate necessary for the profession, for example, work with a cash register, work with a system for booking tourist services, a car or tractor driving license, etc. certificates are provided for in the specifics of the chosen profession.

During the qualification practice 15 weeks students are: accompanied by an employer who will need your newly acquired skills, payed for travel and accommodation costs up to € 71 per month, payed the civil liability insurance provided with compulsory medical examinations needed for the specifics of the chosen profession.

The most successful way is the available offer of open libraries, where members of vulnerable groups receive counselling, support and can receive information.

Availability of a career counselling for all independent from their societal status.

Promotion of group and community organization: not to provide educational services in a traditional way, but understanding what is to be done to involve

VYA in group and community activities to help themselves and others to develop their ability to restore awareness to rescue themselves from the limited environment.

Individual dimension is important to design a number of competency complexes to upgrade the result - the person who in his life is personally responsible for creating the public significant values.

An active citizen's stimulated environment is developed tailoring the VYA needs. A bottom-up pack of open multifaceted forms of informal learning is offered and supplied.

Institutions that carry out public adult education policies go to villages to contact VYA and find out their educational needs for APC and after that, they prepare the education policies.

The role of mentor movement is an effective way to help young adults in education.

Transportation and childcare services for AE participation are available.

Information server is provided where all the learning materials are available, as well as the materials from the previous years, there are still materials to be placed there, you can see all the materials, lectures of courses. You can view all the materials you have access to at your own place and pace. You can even attend educational activities. Coming up and just downloading.

Small number of adult learners in groups where the individual approach to each learner is taken.

All time access of the adult educator - Supportive are these educators who write to their e-mail, phone, and just tell to them when they are available on Saturday and all other times. So they can know where and when it is possible to meet them.

E-Learning as the key element of good practice

AE provider has to deliver community learning opportunities in special education, in non-formal education, in formal adult education to facilitate the sense of community in all types of education and workplace learning through collaboration and communication with peers and in teams.

All formal and non-formal education programmes are self-evaluated by participants, and providers and licensed by the States Quality assurance centre.

The most successful way to access the information is mentioned the Open Library volunteer project, where the VYAs (refugees) are supported in access to information and consulted directly.

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

Very important are AE practitioners personal (transversal), collaborative, communicative, digital and didactical competences to increase VYAs self-esteem and confidence, so as competences in design, development and delivery of the AE programmes, projects and instruments to work in diverse complex situation of VYAs in local communities. Also, the competence in elaboration of the AE outreach strategies. There is the lack on pedagogical leadership of informal learning of VYAs and in validation of informal learning outcomes, not only acquired for the vocation but for social, cultural, economic and civil life quality. The AE practitioners need to learn how to facilitate the development of basic, general and transversal competences of VYAs at the workplaces in formal and non-formal learning settings to facilitate social, cultural, economic and civic active life position of VYAs in local communities.

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

It is evident that the Adult policy makers solve the challenges and see the pathways of improvement what depends from political willingness. Thereby, political willingness and too strong dependency of GP on state commissioning ESF are the main challenges for the sustainability of AE provision. There is a discrepancy between national and regional policies in Latvia. The national and regional policy documents should be consolidated. The question is about improper development of adult education because 15% of VYAs cannot be involved only by project funding and administered centrally through the agency of state agencies. It is not clear what will happen with the local coordinators after the project ends. The effectiveness of current approach is critical in the long term perspective because by the territorial moving of people in the regions and abroad.

To develop new policies / activities / programs in organizations a database about the graduates in both formal and non- formal education modalities has to be ensured, so as the educational grew up data and dynamics data. It is still an inadequate exchange of information, and there is a indistinctiveness in providing of detailed data on vulnerable groups of people and their access to educational activities. It is necessary to provide information to the regions about the current adult education activities in regions carried out and about the adult learning outcomes achieved.

The state commissioned ESF projects related to adult education (ESF targeted 8.4.1. activities) are disconnected with other ESF projects in contexts of vulnerable groups needs.

Missing outreach strategy.

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

State commissioned ESF open calls. The institutions willing to validate informal competences must apply the proposal in ESF project No.8.4.1.0 / 16 / I / 001 "Improving the professional competence of employees". If the results of the competition are positive, the opportunities to offer the non-formal education programmes in municipalities Y, Z, F and W will be extended (AP 7, Local level, Latvia).

The Lifelong Learning Policy Guidelines for 2013-2017 (Lifelong Learning Strategy) which states its long-term goal as being 'to ensure lifelong education according to the residents' interests, ability and the socioeconomic development needs in the regions' is the main source for the development of the adult learning policy. The sub-goals include ensuring access to LLL for residents irrespective of their age, gender, educational background, place of residence, income level, ethnicity or functional disability; creating a quality education offer for adults that provides sustainable competencies for work, civic engagement, personal growth, and promotes the development of the knowledge economy and democratic society in Latvia; and creating a comprehensive policy framework and effective management of resources". The guiding principles for future development of the adult learning sector were set out in the Education Development Guidelines 2015-2020. According to these guidelines (specifically the section on "adult participation in educational activities"), in order to achieve the target of 15% participation in adult education by 2020, the adult learning programmes offer should be expanded, effective management of resources (including financial) should be ensured, and more effective use of existing facilities, e.g. libraries, museums, cultural centres and other institutions providing adult learning, including informal learning opportunities, should be encouraged.

The monitoring, such as EU research, using the data bases and resource bases such as EPALE, LLL; the postponement monitoring, which is also published and widely used extensively, for example the study of second chance education; working with received letters from inhabitants etc.

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

The information exchange take place by conducting surveys, interviews, organizing seminars and discussions on the topic by placing information on the page, publishing material directly and creating data bases and research results and resource bases such as EPAL, LLL and etc. As the most: successful way to access the information is mentioned the Open Library volunteer project, where the VYAs (refugees) are supported in access to information and consulted directly. The regional policy makers receive the information for design of AE programmes per newsletters from ministries and their subordinates, as well as information from the various committees where the regions are represented, not from local municipalities.

9. Leveraging on young adults' information access and communication practices about adult education

An educational institution or examination center must be able to orient applicants in the process of evaluating their professional competences and help the applicant to gain assurance about their existing and missing knowledge and skills. The consultant's work begins with the process of attracting applicants and continues until the applicant's satisfaction with the results of the evaluation. The information exchange takes place by conducting surveys, interviews, organizing seminars and discussions on the topic by placing information on the web-page, publishing material directly.

The most successful way is the available offer of open libraries, where members of vulnerable groups receive counselling, support and can receive information. E-Learning is the key element of good practice.

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

Institutions that carry out public adult education policies go to villages to contact VYA and find out their educational needs for APC and after that, they prepare the education policies.



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