

The contribution of adult education to active participatory citizenship

Bettina Brand/Beate Schmidt-Behlau (Editors)

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The reports, studies and materials published in this series aim to further the development of theory and practice in adult education. We hope that by providing access to information and a channel for communication and exchange, the series will serve to increase knowledge, deepen insights and improve cooperation in adult education at international level.

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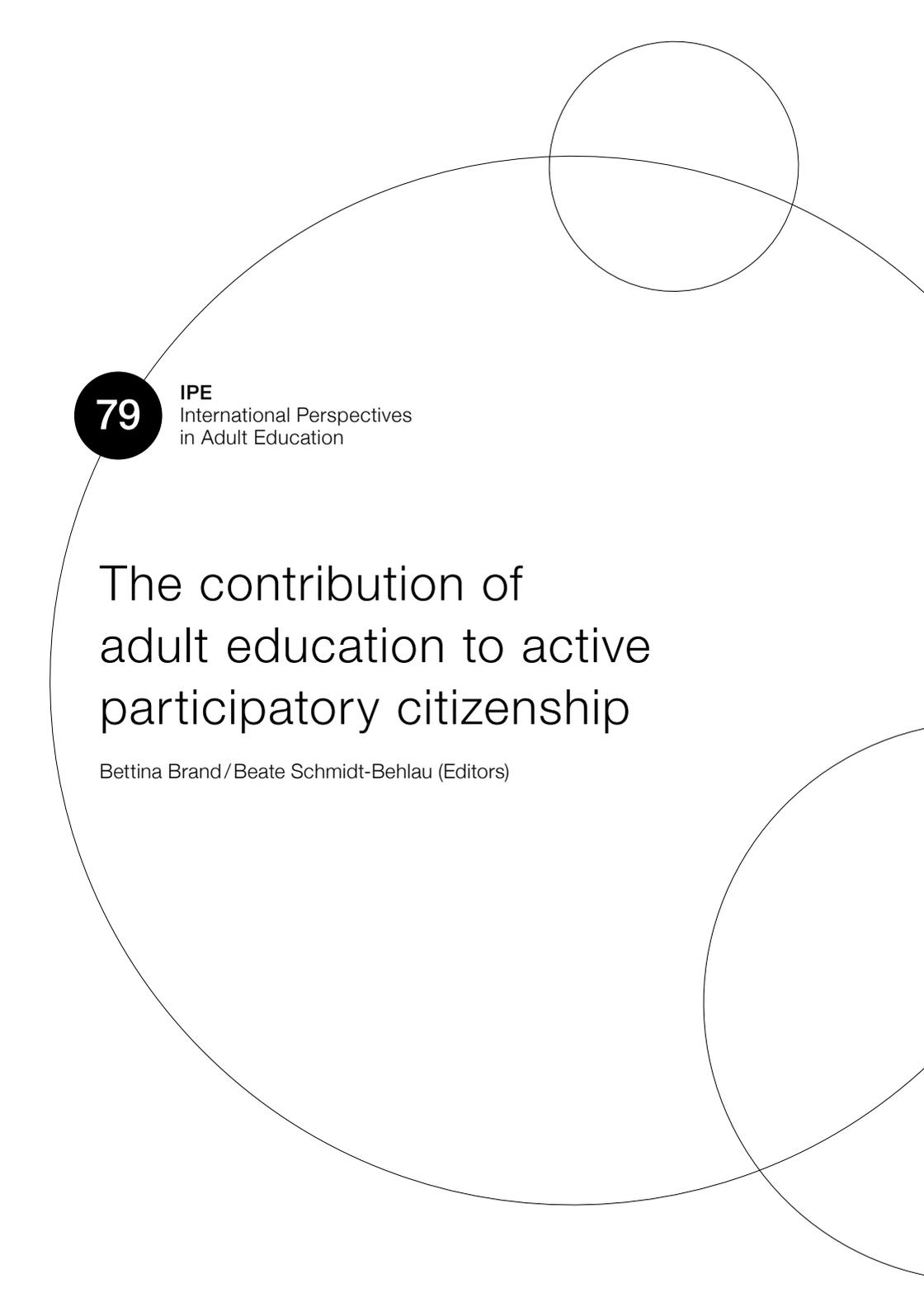
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Editorial

The idea for this publication was born out of DVV International's engagement in the European research project entitled "Adult education as a means to active participatory citizenship – EduMAP".

In 2018, colleagues from DVV International's offices in the Eastern Neighbourhood (EN) countries were inspired by EduMAP's insights to also take a closer look at their ongoing projects on active citizenship education in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. In the EN region, high priority attaches to the issue of active citizenship among civil society organisations, but it suffers from a lack of adequate support on the part of governments.

Beate Schmidt-Behlau, leading the work package for EduMAP in DVV International, and Bettina Brand, regional director for the Eastern Neighbourhood countries, decided to take the idea forward to launch this publication in DVV's IPE series, aiming to better exploit for DVV International the valuable work of the EduMAP consortium and complement it by adding its insights into current practices on citizenship education in the three Eastern Neighbourhood countries.

Both results from the 40 cases researched in different European countries in the framework of EduMAP, as well as the seven cases from the Eastern Neighbourhood countries, demonstrate the importance of including in general terms the promotion of active participatory citizenship as a cross-cutting objective in adult education services.

The publication is divided into two parts, the first edited by Beate Schmidt-Behlau, and the second edited by Bettina Brand.

Part I

From 2016-2018 onwards, DVV International had the opportunity of being a partner in the EduMAP project, which was fully funded from the Horizon 2020 programme. In the 50-year-long history of DVV International, this was the first time that DVV International had taken a leading role in a research-based European project contributing to conducting, coordinating, analysing and systematising the field research results of 40 cases in different contexts and countries to bring to light the good practices of adult education in promoting active participatory citizenship for young people in situations of social exclusion. The project consortium consisted of seven

European universities, whereas overall coordination was in the hands of the Department of Adult Education of Tampere University in Finland.

Being a project partner and work package leader enabled DVV International to participate and analyse on a deeper level – through qualitative research – the complex issue of how practices and policies related to adult education can help promote active participatory citizenship with young people in diverse situations of vulnerability. EduMAP was dedicated to mapping the state-of-the-art in all 28 European member states plus Turkey by means of desk research in the first year. In the second year, field research then concentrated on 40 well-selected cases in 19 countries, which built the foundation in the third project year for the analysis and systematisation of practices and policies in adult education to foster active participatory citizenship.

In Part I of this publication, conceptual work and the theoretical embeddedness of active citizenship as debated in the EduMAP project provides an up-to-date insight into the current discussions regarding the issue. The results draw heavily on an array of publications produced in the years before 2006, when active citizenship was also high on the agenda of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, with much more funding available to researchers and civil society organisations than is the case today. Two selected examples – the Youth Forum (Germany) analysed by Beate Schmidt-Behlau and the case of second chance schools (France), described by Patrick Werquin and Sabrina Foka – show the importance of having good policy frameworks in place.

Based on work package 4, results of the EduMAP project, which placed a – hitherto very much neglected – focus on communication issues in adult education, Jo Tacchi, Amalia Sabiescu and Cecilia Gordano briefly present a framework on communicative ecologies, which will hopefully inspire adult educators to take a look at their institutional communication practices and strategies.

The three-year EduMAP research project has obviously generated a great deal more information than can be dealt with by this publication. Readers are welcome to study the relevant articles on the project's website: www.edumap.uta.fi

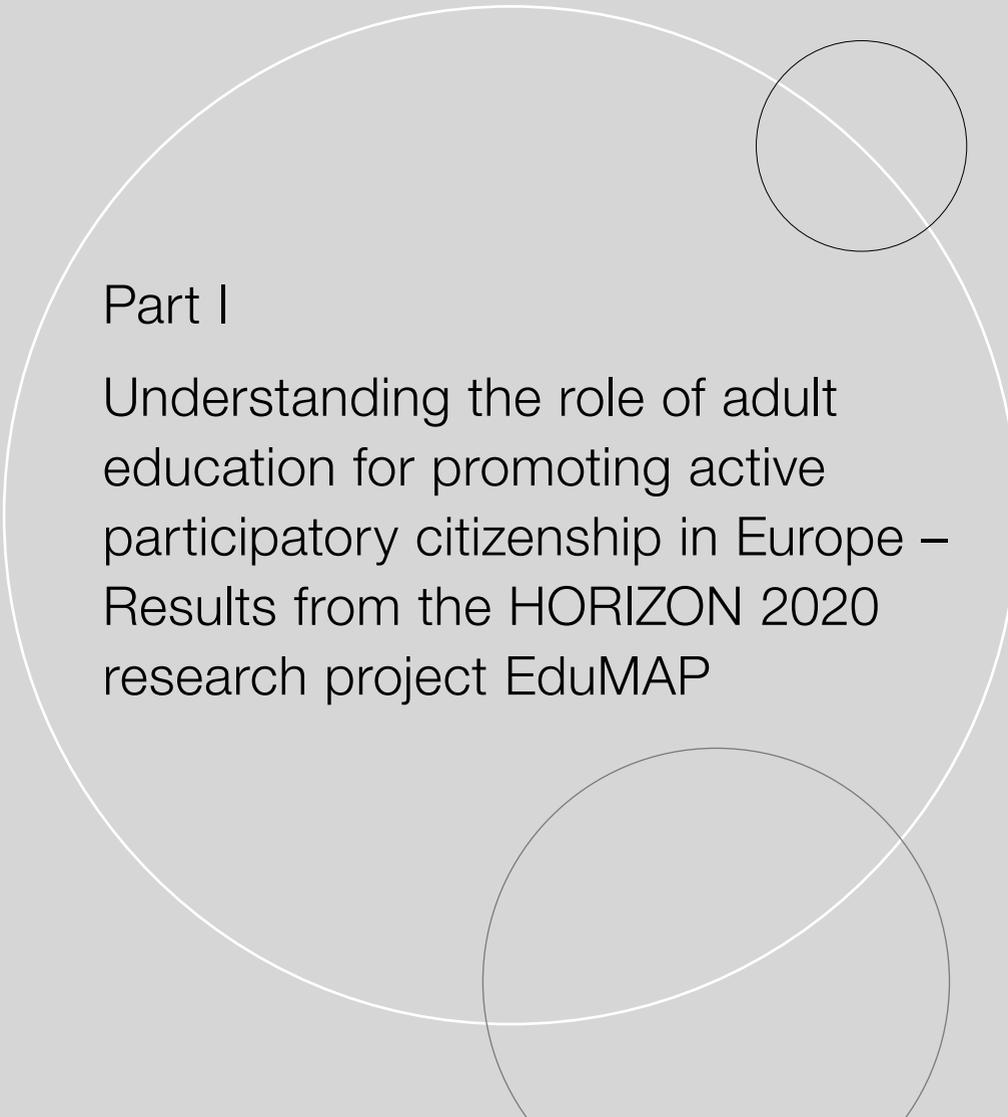
Part II

Part II of this publication presents research results and concrete examples of best practice from the three countries where DVV International is supporting non-formal education targeting young people and adults at risk of social exclusion. The articles by Adela Scutaru-Guțu and

Liliana Poștan, by Oleg Smirnov and Yana Dragovenko and by Galina Veramejchyk describe the different, difficult framework conditions for and recent approaches to active citizenship education in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Analysing the research results, they identify success factors for educational practices on active citizenship. Seven cases show how small educational programmes can create opportunities for learners to apply the competences that they develop during training and to “learn by doing” – which according to the findings of the research is the key component of active citizenship education.

Bettina Brand

Beate Schmidt-Behlau



Part I

Understanding the role of adult education for promoting active participatory citizenship in Europe – Results from the HORIZON 2020 research project EduMAP

EduMAP – Research design and methodology

The research project with the title “Adult Education as a means to Active Participatory Citizenship – EduMAP” was implemented in the period between February 2016 and January 2019 with generous funding from the Horizon 2020 programme¹. The consortium was led by the University of Tampere in Finland, involving research teams from different universities from Estonia, Hungary, the UK and Greece, with Turkey representing a “non-EU member state”. The following information is only a very concise, summarised description of some of the elements of the profound and rigorous research design and methodology developed by the consortium of the EduMAP project. The aim is to give an orientation to the reader to help understand the foundation and background to the contributions in PART I of this publication².

-
- 1/ 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.
 - 2/ A first article describing the methodology, as well as some first findings, were published in DVV’s journal Adult Education and Development No. 85 (Endrizzi, Francesca, Schmidt-Behlau, Beate: How to study the impact of adult education: The EduMAP example. In: Adult Education and Development AED 85/2018: Role and Impact of Adult Education. DVV International, Bonn, 2018). More extensive information on the full research design and methodology is available in the shape of five documents on the project’s website (<https://blogs.uta.fi/edumap>).

Objective and research question

The project set out with the aim of studying and identifying best practices on the policy and practice level in the sector of adult education, directed towards young people in the 16-30 age range in situations of risk.

The objectives of the EduMAP project were 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 (work package – WP2);
- study successful educational initiatives among vulnerable groups within and outside Europe (WP3);
- investigate and map communicative ecologies in 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 to enhance learning active participatory citizenship in Europe (WP6).

EduMAP's key research question was formulated as:

What policies and practices are needed in adult education in order to include young adults at risk of social exclusion in active participatory citizenship in Europe?

The findings are based on the analysis of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and communicative ecology mapping with 814 respondents.

The screenshot shows a blog post from Tampereen Yliopisto. The header includes the university logo and the EduMAP logo. A navigation bar contains links for HOME, ABOUT EDMAP, CONSORTIUM, EVENTS, POLICY CORNER, PUBLICATIONS, CONTACTS, and LINKS. The main content area features a title 'Communicative Ecologies in Adult Education illustrated' with a date of March 14, 2019. Below the title is a small diagram of a communicative ecology. To the right, there is a text box titled 'Adult Education as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship (EduMAP)' which describes the project's focus on young adults at risk of social exclusion. A word cloud on the right side of the page contains terms like 'exclusion', 'learners', 'stakeholders', 'IDSS', 'citizenship', 'labor', 'education', 'inclusion', 'engagement', 'access', 'information', 'communication', 'ecologies', 'inventory', 'social', 'ecology', 'mapping', 'young', 'adults', 'at', 'risk', 'of', 'social', 'exclusion', 'in', 'active', 'participatory', 'citizenship', 'in', 'europe', 'needed', 'policies', 'practices', 'to', 'include', 'young', 'adults', 'at', 'risk', 'of', 'social', 'exclusion', 'in', 'active', 'participatory', 'citizenship', 'in', 'europe'.

TAMPEREEN YLIOPISTO

EduMAP

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Communicative Ecologies in Adult Education illustrated

March 14, 2019 - Other resources - Tagged: Adult education, Adult education in the EU, Communicative ecologies - no comments

The task 'Communicative ecologies in adult education', investigated the role of information and communication processes in shaping aspects of access, inclusion and engagement in adult education (AE) for young people...

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.

The main research question is: What policies and practices are needed in the field of adult

Read Post →

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

They represent adult education providers and practitioners, policymakers, young adults (including but not limited to current learners on programmes) in 20 countries: Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the UK.

The role of DVV International in the project

Among the six work packages of the project³, DVV International with its two-person research team consisting of Beate Schmidt-Behlau and Francesca Endrizzi was responsible for contributing to all work packages and leading the field research in work package 3 (WP3) on best practices. This WP was conducted in close cooperation with the work package 4 on communicative ecologies led by the University of Loughborough team. Both of these work packages made up the core contribution for the project results from the field research.

The objective of WP3 was formulated as follows:

“Examine the effectiveness, achievements and shortcomings of educational initiatives identified as good practices (GPs), assessed according to their effectiveness in enabling vulnerable learners to participate in social, political and economic life.”

The objective of WP4 was formulated as follows:

“Map and examine the varied communicative ecologies (CEs) that exist in adult education among the providers of educational initiatives and vulnerable groups in order to:

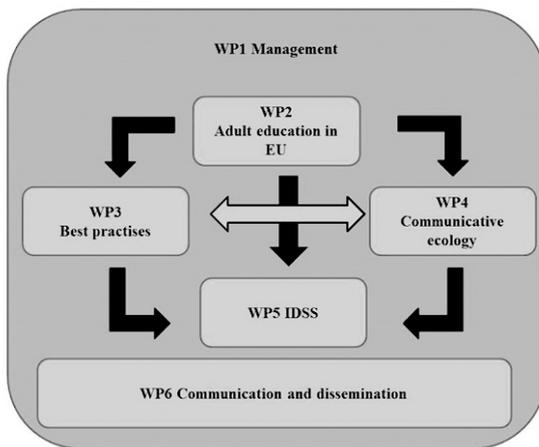
- shed light on interconnections and mismatches between the supply and use sides of adult education;
- offer an in-depth view of the information and communication context of vulnerable groups.”

³/ The work packages and the work plan are described in greater detail at <https://blogs.uta.fi/edumap/about-edumap/>

Research design

Data collection was conducted jointly for WP3 and 4 among three categories of respondents: educational authorities, educators and learners in adult education programmes. In addition, data was collected for WP4 from groups targeted by educational initiatives, but not necessarily accessing them. Data collection was carried out in three strands:

1. Context analysis (WP3 & 4)
2. Targeted research on good practices (WP3 & 4)
3. Targeted research on vulnerable groups:
Communicative ecologies mapping (WP4)



<https://blogs.uta.fi/edumap/about-edumap/>

To give guidance to the project and to the research teams in their process of conducting field research, five key documents were developed. They were used to ensure consistency across the consortium for the data collection and interpretation. EduMAP partners collected data in 19 EU countries plus Turkey, covering a total of 40 adult education (AE) programmes. In addition, eight groups of young people at risk of social exclusion (91 respondents) from seven EU countries plus Turkey were involved in the study to investigate their communicative practices and identify leverages that can be used to improve access to adult education.

Questions for semi-structured interviews were developed to be conducted with

- educational authorities/policymakers whose area of focus is relevant for the GP,
- educators, designers, managers and other staff involved in the design and management of the specific educational initiative identified as GP,
- current and former learners involved in each GP.

To facilitate and structure the research design, the overarching research question of EduMAP on what policies and practices are needed in adult education to include young adults at risk of social exclusion in active participatory citizenship in Europe was further broken down into four specific research questions (RQ):

Research question 1.1: What practices are needed in adult education to include young adults at risk of social exclusion in active participatory citizenship (APC) in Europe?

Research question 1.2: What policies are needed in adult education to include young adults at risk of social exclusion in active participatory citizenship in Europe?

Research question 2: How can communication inside and around adult education (AE) programmes be improved in order to:

- Reach out to and connect effectively with young adults at risk of social exclusion?
- Enhance interaction and learners' engagement?
- Enhance engagement and collaboration within the AE organisation and with relevant external agents?

Research question 3: What kind of information do policymakers, educational authorities and educators need in order to increase their ability to design/shape policies and programmes that respond to young people's needs?

These questions were further refined, for analytical purposes, into narrow-scope and more detailed questions, which have been used to guide the coding, the development of queries and the analysis and systematisation of the results. All consortium partners delivered final reports related

to each of the four particular questions to the DVV International research team, which had the final task of writing a consolidated report on findings across all cases⁴.

Challenges

Multifarious challenges arose throughout the process, but they also fuelled the motivation to investigate the complex and valuable role and impact of adult education to foster APC.

Challenge 1: Concept and definitions

The first issue was related to the definition and use of the terms **vulnerability**, in relation to the research target group, as well as **active participatory citizenship**, which are both interrelated.

As an outcome of a profound reflection process, the project consortium strongly opposed the use of the expression “vulnerable groups”, which had still been used in the application phase. Reasoning that grouping people in this manner can contribute to the production of stigmatising and labelling effects, therefore terms were applied in a more sensitive manner. Vulnerability could be considered as forming part of the human condition, potentially affecting every individual uniquely, based on his or her personal and social situation. Having adopted this perspective, the group decided to define it in relation to a restriction of people’s choices and capabilities (Abrisketa et al. 2015)⁵. In this sense, the concept used in the EduMAP project was closely aligned with the idea of “disadvantaged people” possibly lacking opportunities.

Challenge 2: Research access

A more practical challenge was the exploration of the cases’ accessibility and negotiation of research access. The context analysis phase was fundamental in this regard. We started with existing contacts and networks, such as adult

4/ The final report on WP3 results will also be published on the project’s website as deliverable 3.1 <https://blogs.uta.fi/edumap>

5/ Abrisketa, J.; Churruca, C.; de la Cruz, C.; Garcia, L.; Marquez, C.; Morondo, D.; Nagore, M.; Sosa, I. and Timmer, A. (2015): Human rights priorities in the European Union’s external and internal policies: An assessment of consistency with a special focus on vulnerable groups. FRAME Project Fostering Human Rights among European Policies: Work Package No. 12 – Deliverable No. 2. <https://bit.ly/2ujWnef>

education organisations and experts, who suggested good practices on the basis of their knowledge and experience in the sector. Once the contact was established with the “gatekeeper”, who could be the director of the organisation or the programme coordinator, then access was guaranteed. Other relevant stakeholders were identified using snowballing, whilst potential respondents among young people were indicated by the practitioners.

Challenge 3: Gathering information from young adults

The interaction with the young people was also challenging. The use of semi-structured interviews for data collection did not emerge as the most effective method for gathering information from young adults in a particularly disadvantaged position. Furthermore, there was no time to build up a relationship of trust, or in some cases to conduct full and in-depth interviews, as most of the young adults had time constraints. There were positive experiences using communicative ecologies mapping, and involving people in drawing the map turned out to be a more appropriate tool, given that it was interactive and more practical, thus enabling young respondents to overcome the sometimes more uncomfortable interview situation.

Adult learning and education (ALE) for active participatory citizenship (APC) in Europe – the current debate

The reflections in this chapter stem from intense exchanges in the consortium of researchers involved in the EduMAP Horizon 2020 project. As the planned field research involved young people between the ages of 16 and 30 in situations of risk and exclusion, it was important for the Consortium to find common ground on general assumptions regarding vulnerabilities, adult education and active citizenship (AC), also driven by the wish not to fall into the “labelling” trap. To start from shared ground was essential for preparing the research design to conduct empirical fieldwork, analyse data consistently and present final conclusions. Discourse on AC from research and policies definitely peaked in 2012 at the European level, although the role and impact of adult education is highlighted in the wake of constantly rising right-wing ideologies across Europe. The chapter summarises the academic and policy discourse, and moves on to present young people’s perspectives, elements of success and challenges as systematised from cross-cutting findings based on field research in EduMAP. Conclusions and implications from these findings are also presented. More information can be found in the final publication on work package 3 and the project’s website.

Concepts, definitions and characteristics of active participatory citizenship

On the **political level**, the “latest” larger study is the report of the European Commission from the year 2012, the Europe for Citizens Programme, led by the Institute of Education, University of London, providing a detailed investigation of participatory forms of citizenship across the 28 member states of the European Union (EU) covering policy, practice and engagement. The results of the study show that the consequence of the economic crises in the field of participatory citizenship has been cuts to funding. The effects have been felt at all levels, challenging the sustainability of policies and practices that have previously supported the participation and engagement of citizens in decision-making. The effects of the economic crises on citizens can already be seen in terms of a loss of faith in political institutions, with a dramatic reduction in trust in national and European institutions, particularly in Spain, Ireland and Greece, and this although strategies that include innovative participatory and social cohesive elements that move beyond job-related skills could prove a useful balance, particularly for young people in periods of high youth unemployment.

The study suggests the following definition of active citizenship: “participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterised by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy” (Report 4 European Commission, Europe for Citizens Programme, p. 12)¹.

Summary of the discourse on A(P)C in European research and policies

Results of basic research on AC, conducted especially between 2009 and 2013 by financing through EC and Council of Europe programmes, suggest that the question of active citizenship is very important for the legitimacy of democratic governance. This is so because, according to a study by Biesta (2009), legitimacy depends on the extent to which democratic structures and practices are “owned” by individual people.

In practice, however, young generations are more passive vis-à-vis political and social engagement than older ones are, at least when it comes to traditional methods of participation. Instead of top-down social

^{1/} This report can be retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index_en.htm

participation, those born in the Information Age may prefer groups and virtual communities which are primarily organised as peer networks where individuals and their communities can become world-shaping forces and drivers of change (Allison, 2007).

Engagement in a community based on values

For a further understanding of how such participation could be facilitated and promoted, the notion of the community is of central importance. Research indicates that a common idea is that being actively engaged in a community is considered to be more desirable than being outside a community. Field and Schemmann (2017:172) observe that, in the EU policy context, an active or global citizen is understood to be a member of the wider community who in some unspecified way is engaged with or has expectations of the policy process. Being a part of and participating in a community relates to the notion of the sphere of citizenship. The increasing internationalisation and globalisation as well as expansion of new technologies have widened the sphere of citizenship (Field and Schemmann, 2017; Jarvis, 2004). In the contemporary world, therefore, a person can be actively engaged with diverse national and international communities by means of new information and communication technologies. Other authors (Brooks and Holford 2009: 17) also point to the discourse that sees a widening of the sphere of citizenship through globalisation and is supported by new information and communication technologies to include international communities characterised by the values of tolerance and non-violence and by the acknowledgement of human rights and mutual respect. As a number of authors (Biesta 2009:148; Hoskins et al., 2006:11; Hoskins et al. 2008: 389; Mascherini et al 2009: 10) have already pointed out that

active citizenship is not an arbitrary concept of participation in the community, but that the idea of active citizenship denotes a set of activities which are considered necessary for a stable democracy and therefore is incorporated with democratic values. Ethical boundaries set limits for active participation, specifying the particular values that should be underpinned through participation in community life. As a rule, people's activities should support the community and should not contravene principles of human rights and the rule of law.

It has also been argued that the manner in which active citizenship is engaged in is often strongly differentiated by gender, and that it tends to perpetuate conventional gender roles. For example, for many young wom-

en, active citizenship frequently means taking responsibility for themselves economically, while at the same time taking care of others. Young men, on the other hand, receive stronger encouragement to participate in a wider range of citizenship-related activities (Brooks and Holford, 2009: 16).

Neoliberal shift – from a holder of rights to a bearer of duties

Different authors however also point to the change in discourse within a neoliberal approach that has become the leading perspective across Europe. In the neoliberal view of the good society, the individual actions of active citizens are considered to be the main “solution” to collective problems. In fact, in the Anglo-American context, the idea of active citizenship emerged strongly in the wake of Thatcherism and Reaganism as the “answer” to the vacuum that was created after the deconstruction of whittling away at the welfare state. In this context, an active citizen was first and foremost the person who, through active involvement in the local community, would provide those “services” that were no longer available through welfare state provision (Biesta, 2009: 150). According to Eriksson (2009: 194-198), the neoliberal shift has meant that citizens have gone more and more from being holders of rights to bearers of duties, which suggests that the idea of active citizenship approaches the idea of citizenship very much from the needs of the socio-political order. It specifies the kinds of activities and “investments” that individuals need to make so that the specific socio-political order can be reproduced. Active citizenship, thus, as noted by the European Commission document, focuses on whether and how people participate in all spheres of social and economic life, the chances and risks they face in trying to do so, and the extent to which they therefore feel that they belong to and have a fair say in the society in which they live (European Commission, 2000: 5).

Defining the term “vulnerability”

Different approaches

There is a range of definitions and perspectives on vulnerability and, subsequently, on who might be a vulnerable person or a member of a vulnerable group. Vulnerability can be seen both as a universal part of the human condition, and as particular in the sense that it is embodied and

embedded, affecting individual people uniquely based on their personal and social situation (Abrisketa et al., 2015).

The UN Development Programme's Human Development Report (UNDP, 2014) describes vulnerability as multidimensional, dynamic and relational, linking it to a restriction of people's choices and capabilities which are critical to human development (e.g. in the areas of health, education, personal security or command over material resources).

A helpful categorisation of different policy approaches to considering vulnerability, including ways in which the concept has been used in EU policies and practices, is provided by Abrisketa et al. (2015) as part of the FRAME project (Fostering Human Rights Among European Policies). The authors considered various EU policy and legal frameworks in the human rights field, and found that the concept of vulnerability has not been defined by the EU across the board, but rather that there are specific definitions embedded within particular policy areas. Moreover, there is a tendency with some EU policies to use vulnerability alongside a range of connected concepts such as exclusion, discrimination or marginalisation—with conceptual boundaries not always being clear or explicit, and terms sometimes being used interchangeably. Overall, Abrisketa denotes three main approaches within specific EU policy frameworks: (1) a vulnerable groups approach based on lists of specific groups (e.g. women, children, elderly people, migrants, etc.) without further definitions of the concept of vulnerability itself; vulnerability here has the tendency to function as a “label”; (2) a factors approach which refers to the issues that might make people vulnerable (e.g. gender, age, disability, etc.), and thus provides explanations rather than just labels; and (3) a mixed approach which refers to vulnerable groups and explains the factors which make people vulnerable.

According to Gynther (2017), who contributed to the WP2.1 EduMAP study with a differentiated analysis of existing policies and laws on EU level, different policies and regulations at EU level targeting educationally-disadvantaged young people can be described as fragmentary at best. Nevertheless, at legislative level, the anti-discrimination clauses included in the Lisbon Treaty (nationality, sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion/belief, disability, age and sexuality) suggest an awareness of specific grounds of potential vulnerability (to discrimination and therefore exclusion).

Vulnerability and being at risk

As suggested earlier, vulnerability is essentially defined in relation to a restriction of people's choices and capabilities. In this sense, the concept is closely aligned to, and even almost synonymous with, the concept of “disadvantaged people”, given that such individuals are also held back

(incapacitated, restricted) as a result of having certain disadvantages or possibly lacking advantages/opportunities.

Vulnerability in the sense of a restriction of one's choices and capabilities is complex, dynamic and context dependent. Being disabled ("different-ly-abled") might create a disadvantage in certain cases, leading to exclusion, while it might not have a significant effect on other individuals' lives. In a similar way, being a refugee might be a debilitating disadvantage for certain individuals, while it may even work to the advantage of others. For example, Papadopoulos (2007) suggests that in addition to negative consequences of adversity (e.g. trauma and distress), there are possible neutral effects (which he describes as resilience), as well as potentially positive outcomes (which he summarises as "adversity-activated development").

Arguably, what defines vulnerability and distinguishes it from some other concepts such as disadvantage is its implication of being at risk. In other words, when we talk about vulnerable groups, we refer to those individuals and communities who are at a considerably more significant risk of restriction, exclusion and disadvantage.

Another important aspect of effectively defining vulnerability concerns discussing its implications. In other words, when we say that an individual is vulnerable in the wider sense of being at risk of disadvantage and exclusion discussed above, and beyond the sense of restriction of choices and capabilities, it should be asked what kind of disadvantage and risk are we talking about. To what are they vulnerable? What are the implications of their vulnerability?

Vulnerability and resilience: towards active participation

By describing vulnerability in terms of a limitation of choices and capabilities, the 2014 UNDP report provides an important link to the concept of active participatory citizenship: Human resilience, the counterpart to vulnerability, is what helps people cope better with risks and setbacks, in the form of expanded choices, agency and capabilities. The role of institutions at local, regional, state and global levels in the context of promoting resilience involves "...removing the barriers that hold people back in their freedom to act [...] [and] enabling the disadvantaged and excluded to realize their rights, to express their concerns openly, to be heard and to become active agents in shaping their destiny. It is about having the freedom to live a life that one values and to manage one's affairs adequately." (UNDP, 2014: 5).



Illustrations based on material from youth interviews.
Active citizenship is associated with autonomy

Abrisketa et al. (2015) make a point of distinguishing between protection and empowerment approaches, which may be used by institutions to mitigate against vulnerability. While protection can bring about additional rights, including in the shape of prioritised access to resources, there are associated risks, such as the reinforcement and perpetuation of diminished capacity and agency (including through the abovementioned labelling and stigmatisation), as well as insufficient tackling of the root (structural) causes of the person's or group's vulnerability. On the other hand, an empowerment approach aims to increase choices and capabilities by building resilience and by addressing structural barriers (e.g. discrimination).

Promoting active citizenship through adult learning and education

Both key policy actors at European level, namely the European Commission and the Council of Europe, have promoted and financed policy events

and scientific studies with the view that adult education (AE) is a key means for supporting active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion in Europe (European Commission 1998, 2000 and 2016; European Council and European Commission, 2015). Within official European policy, the idea of AC has been emphasised by the Lisbon European Council in 2000 where the strategic goal set for the European Community was to become “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”.

Promoting AC through education has become one of the European Commission’s strategies for increasing social cohesion and equal opportunities, and for reducing the democratic deficit across Europe (European Commission, 1998). It is expected that the education system will enable and motivate people to voice their opinions in a democratic way, and thus increase their trust in the political system. In the document “Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality”, the European Commission highlighted three major pillars, one of which was “learning for active citizenship” (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). The importance of strengthening AC through education has been underscored by the recommendations on lifelong learning, issued by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union since 2006. In this policy discussion, the key competences which should be given priority in all EU member states include the ability to communicate in one’s mother tongue and in foreign languages, adopting civic competence based on knowledge of social and political concepts, and a commitment to active and democratic participation. The objectives of lifelong learning have been integrated with other strategies, and these in turn have the effect of making individuals less dependent upon the state, or of transforming learning into a desirable consumer commodity. In this discourse, the strategies of adult education and lifelong learning have been used for mobilising people to help themselves, rather than providing services to them. Young people in particular have been targeted through initiatives to encourage AC through community involvement and volunteering (Brooks and Holford, 2009:11; Field, 2006).

Through its extensive analysis of how AE caters to the needs of young people in vulnerable situations in all 28 European member states, EduMAP researchers also identified the abovementioned neoliberal shift, the influence and impact of which can be observed in the adult education sector. While, historically, adult education has been an important means for providing people with a broader, more humane education, recently in many European countries adult education has been reduced to only one of

its functions, namely that of employability or “learning for earning”². As the report of results indicates, the economic dimension has become an important aspect of AC. Besides formal education, policy literature typically stresses informal learning as a key factor for developing and maintaining essential work-related skills.

Nevertheless, the recent debate on AC and adult education has also been strongly underpinned by the discussion of how the practice of AC could be exercised in a way that would promote social justice, inclusion and participation and what role is played by different forms of adult education and lifelong learning (Jarvis, 2008). This discussion acknowledges complex interdependences between citizenship, inclusion and participation in both local and global communities. The recent policy discussion on AC has also been driven by a concern that young people in particular are often not strongly embedded within their communities, and may lack the knowledge and skills to act effectively as citizens. In this discussion, education is seen as a key means for supporting AC and social cohesion (Brooks and Holford, 2009; Henn et al, 2005; Vromen, 2003; de Weerd, Gemmeke).

With such an interpretation, learning for AC is seen as part of a life-long activity in which a person constructs links between learning and societal action. People can take an active part in diverse formal and informal learning processes at local, national and international levels. The contexts in which citizenship can be learned thus occur not only in educational organisations, but also in various areas of social life: civil society, work, and what is usually referred to as the private sphere (Kalekin-Fishman, Tsitselikis and Pitkänen, 2007: 30).

Different concepts: Learning about, for and through citizenship

Three different but overlapping dimensions can be explored from learning for AC: learning for multicultural citizenship, learning for inclusive citizenship, and learning for participatory citizenship. Generally speaking, learning for AC comprises two approaches to citizenship learning, namely learning about citizenship and learning through citizenship (Kalekin-Fishman, Tsitselikis and Pitkänen, 2007: 28-32). Learning about citizenship is a traditional task of formal education and the subject of civics. It often covers historical and cultural understanding as well as information on citizens’

^{2/} see full report EduMAP Work Package 2.1.

rights and responsibilities. This learning is primarily about citizenship as status, and focuses mainly on the politico-juridical spheres of citizenship. Learning through citizenship is learning citizenship mainly by practising it in everyday life. Learning is normally informal and bottom-up in nature. Learning for citizenship is particularly appropriate for adult education, as it offers the prospect of linking formal and informal learning, individual and collective actions and making dynamic connections between citizenship as status and citizenship as practice. It has the potential to incorporate and develop skills for citizenship while locating them within wider societal contexts.

Learning for multicultural citizenship

In the current increasingly interconnected and mobile world, there is a need for education to be reformulated in ways that are enriched by cultural diversity. In contrast to the traditional conceptualisation of education as a panacea for ensuring national unity within the nation-state, the emphasis has increasingly been placed on the management of diversity. Issues relevant to dealing with the inclusion of culturally-diverse populations are a salient challenge for education systems burdened with the responsibility of preparing people for active citizenship.

The reproduction of active citizenship has received attention as a way to overcome vulnerabilities in a multicultural society. There are many means for political and societal engagement and participation open to legally resident newcomers, but in practice a lack of juridical citizenship (such as in the case of denizens) often entails exclusion from the labour market and society. Addressing this issue means acknowledging the wide range of contexts in which citizenship can be learned. Especially among vulnerable minority groups, learning for active citizenship should include a course of action enabling them to find ways to be part of society and influence its processes in multiple ways.

Learning for inclusive citizenship

People's social inclusion or exclusion shape or limit their societal participation. Research has shown that social exclusion and alienation are real issues in European societies. Especially many youth groups live in a hybrid space between the mainstream culture and peripheral ways of lifestyles. If no efforts are made to create real conditions for their membership of and participation in society, the members of these groups are at risk of being marginalised and defined as outsiders (McCollum 2011).

It is conventionally understood that after completing formal education, a graduate should have acquired relevant competence and self-awareness as a national as a core identity construct of the state. This type of approach implies a distinction between the dominant (hegemonic) cultural tradition and peripheral irrelevancies, and may not relate to the problems that the minority learners have to face. In order to prevent social exclusion among vulnerable groups, educational institutions need to shape curriculum contents, educational initiatives and pedagogies in ways that are acceptable to a wider range of cultural codes and communicative practices in which learners have been socialised.

Learning for participatory citizenship

According to Hoskins et al. (2012: 9), the concept of active citizenship was initially introduced to highlight the shift in the understanding of citizenship: to be perceived not only as a legal concept, but also to include individual involvement in participatory democracy, with a greater focus being placed on citizens' involvement in decision-making and policy development. At the EU level, the increasing focus on participatory forms of citizenship has been developed to remind European citizens of their rights and responsibilities, and to encourage them to engage in the European community. The main concern of European policies resides primarily in the participatory elements aimed at securing the stability of European societies (Milana, 2008: 211). Much effort has also been invested in developing indicators and instruments for measuring participatory forms of citizenship and learning for active participation (see e.g. Hoskins, 2007; Scholze, 2009; de Weerd et al., 2005).

Learning for active participatory citizenship is a challenge for policymakers and institutions responsible for education alike. The contexts where participatory citizenship can be learned range not only from educational institutions to political, social and economic activities, but also include new and less conventional forms of participation, such as one-off issue politics and responsible consumption (Hoskins et al., 2006: 11; Biesta, 2009: 148). 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. Equality and human rights are also crucial elements of learning for active citizenship. A further significant question is whether educational initiatives allow the forms of learning that foster critical citizenship, or whether their aim is mainly to channel a person's political agency into reproduction of the existing socio-political order (cf. Brooks & Holford, 2009: 21).

Further, the competence necessary for active citizenship covers an operative dimension: a person's human, social and cultural capital. An ideal citizen possesses relevant professional and/or entrepreneurial skills, digital competence, innovativeness and creativeness. S/he is able to communicate interculturally, as well as interacting and creating webs of networking, underpinned by shared values, trust and reciprocity.

A capacity for political, social and economic participation can be seen as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for active citizenship; there may be mental barriers that prevent people who have the capacity to be active citizens from participating. Thus, in addition to improving skills and knowledge needed for active participation, the transformation of the learner's identification and engagement is also important. Learning for active citizenship has a strong affective dimension, seeking to reshape not only people's awareness and behaviour, but also their identities and emotions. The attitudinal dimension includes issues such as engagement with the principles of human rights, equality, democracy and motivation to support the (local/national/European/international) community and not contravene the rule of law.

Findings from EduMAP field research

The conceptual approach in EduMAP

In EduMAP we employed the concept of AC to provide a better understanding of social inclusion and participation of young people in situations of risk. AC was seen by the research consortium as being related to the social, political or economic dimensions of participation and engagement as follows:

- social dimension: focuses on the development of social competences and social capital;
- political dimension: encourages civic and political participation, e.g. running for boards, organising neighbourhood activities;
- economic dimension: relates to employment (e.g. developing employability skills) and knowledge about access to social benefits.

Our EduMAP research suggests that citizenship is not to be seen as a legal issue purely and simply, but that it is complementary in terms of people's participation in political, social and economic arenas. For instance, foreigners residing in a country permanently are seen as potentially active citizens in terms of political, social and economic participation. In such

an interpretation, AC is not restricted to legal membership of a country, but contains multiple political, social and economic positions occupied by individuals.

Within the project, we took the view that education contributes to strengthening social cohesion and active citizenship, specifically in its three-dimensional interpretation. Obtaining the perspectives and views of young adults in situations of risk is one of the core priorities of the project.

We argue that in today's world, participation in associational life is multiple: People can be active players at local, national, European and international levels. In an ideal case, a person's participatory activities and interactions with other people are characterised by mutual respect and non-violence. Especially among the young generations, a topical question is the extent to which individuals are participants not only in states and other territorial entities, but also in discursive networks of contested information and knowledge. This approach draws upon young people's own political concerns, and recognises their potential for establishing new forms of solidarity at the local, national and transnational levels.

Education has its targets in each of the abovementioned dimensions of citizenship. Primary education is the main agent of societal empowerment, but active citizenship cannot be encapsulated in a set of competences to be acquired "once and for all".

EduMAP's findings emphatically confirmed that learning for active citizenship is a **lifelong and changing** process which cannot be successfully completed in childhood or early adulthood. Facilitating social engagement and inclusion of young adults in situations of risk and danger of exclusion can take place through different types of adult education and lifelong learning (e.g. vocational education, basic skills classes, second-chance education) in both formal and informal settings in which AC is seen as being related to social, political and/or economic dimensions of participation and engagement.

In a first attempt to map the field of adult education as a sector that can contribute to the empowerment of young adults in different situations of vulnerability with the aim of promoting their active participatory citizenship, it was necessary for the EduMAP research team to formulate some factors of vulnerability. This was done through extensive desk research in the first phase of EduMAP (in 2016), resulting in a document (work package 2³) that analyses the status quo of existing policies and legal attitudes

^{3/} See publication on project website on WP2.

towards young people in situations of risk across all EU 28 member states. This was done with an awareness that institutions as well as academic researchers who are in positions of power in societies may, by using categories such as “vulnerable groups”, inadvertently contribute to the very processes that have stigmatising and labelling effects. At the same time, the Consortium concluded that the objective of research such as that of EduMAP must be to work towards more empowering approaches, including by taking account of the subjective perspectives and self-descriptions of the young people themselves.

In the EduMAP project, the perspective that we took on addressing vulnerability is to regard adult education as a potential means to contribute in different ways towards helping build the resilience of young people.

Young people's perspectives

One of the most valuable inputs from the EduMAP field research is the extensive compilation and analysis of young people's first-hand testimonies concerning their experiences, opinions and expectations regarding education/learning and active citizenship. Their perspective, composed of a series of diverse, spontaneous – at times dramatic – accounts, help to understand the complex relationships between opportunities and motivations for learning on one hand, and the multitude of barriers and challenges that populate their experiences on the other. The analysis gives evidence of how vulnerabilities are multi-layered, based on overlapping structural (e.g. lack of access to basic services) and personal factors (e.g. destructured families, discrimination based on ethnicity and/or gender differences, among others).

The young people interviewed are highly aware of existing specific conditions which create a lack of opportunities, making or leaving them vulnerable. Young adults across the EduMAP cases mention, for example:

- a level of poverty;
- lack of formal qualifications, in Finland e.g. a comprehensive school diploma;
- lack of or limited access to resources such as information, knowledge and technology;
- lack of or limited access to political power and representation (marginalisation, exclusion);

- lack of or limited social capital, including social networks and connections;
- inadequate beliefs, customs and attitudes in response to risk or disasters;
- poor living conditions (e.g. weak housing structure, poor social protection, poor maintenance infrastructure, etc.);
- frail physical and mental limits.

In turn, findings show that active participatory citizenship constitutes an elusive concept that is highly context-dependent and unevenly appropriated by the interviewees. Diverse AE practitioners, policy actors and young people interviewed refer to one or many of APC's multiple dimensions, namely **economic** (related to employability), **political** (often related to party politics and voting) or socio-cultural (related to participation in leisure and/or community activities).

In particular, young people's understanding of citizenship and participation is very much related to their daily life situations. Most of them relate the exercising of APC to an **individual attitude**: In particular they mention having a daily structure, being focused, having aims and objectives, having a positive approach to life, respect for other opinions, being interested and committed, doing whatever they are able within their capacities.

Some young people mention a list of what they associate with autonomy: for example professional engagement, having a job, an internship or simply attending an educational course and being a useful member of society. Another perspective is considering APC as **social engagement or participation** in activities outside courses, such as practicing sports and having social contacts. Some conceive of APC as voluntary activities, helping older people or supporting friends.

Others see it as political engagement, in particular being informed about politics and taking part in elections. APC is frequently related to a concept derived from human rights: the right to receive basic services and goods, such as health insurance, but also the right to vote and be active politically, socially or economically.

Elements and drivers of successful programmes

Against this backdrop, research results across cases suggest that AE programmes play a key role in the way in which young persons and young adults understand and experience active citizenship. The different cases



Active citizenship is associated with political engagement

give an account of the enormous potential to enhance young people's understanding of their contribution and agency, and to offer them true opportunities for practice and reflection through a wide range of educational strategies.

Some examples – to mention only two here – encompass encouraging participants to help others as part of the programme (such as in the UK case), or to actively search for alternative solutions to improve their living conditions (e.g. by organising youth councils and forums, such as in Germany). Thus, field research findings highlight how diverse adult education programmes types categorised as second chance, remedy, retraining, basic skills and vocational education, manage to re-engage young people not only in diverse learning processes per se, but also towards active and participatory civic engagement.

For this purpose, some main drivers of success in adult education programmes and provision which emerged from EduMAP field research highlight the following aspects:

- acknowledging the multidimensional reality of young people's needs (mainly learning, social, emotional, as well as basic maintenance needs) and matching them – aligned with their motivations and aspirations – with programme content, methods and contexts of delivery;
- identifying underlying causes for young people's disengagement with learning and providing attractive educational alternatives in supportive environments and through trustful, respectful and empathetic interactions that enhance social capital acquisition;
- offering highly-personalised education through contents and methodologies that are sufficiently dynamic, practical, relevant to everyday life, group-focused and flexible so as to adapt to diverse individual profiles and interests;
- ensuring a wide range of supportive services, from financial allowances to psychological coaching, mentoring, career and learning guidance.

Challenges for ALE

The list of elements of success is however context dependent, and makes rigorous demands of AE providers and programme staff to accomplish a key mediator role between learners and the resources available for their personal and professional development. Some of the most pressing challenges reported by interviewees in the EduMAP research relate to:

- the availability and training of multidisciplinary teams able to cover AE participants' multidimensional needs;
- the struggle to deliver high-quality services in a European context marked by austerity policies, with funding and budget cuts affecting numerous initiatives in the AE and associated social inclusion sectors. As some cases show, civil society has started to compensate for the lack of public funding by engaging as volunteers, the most recent example being in the informal and non-formal education recently implemented to respond to the refugee crisis;
- at social policy level, uneven policy responses against the backdrop of social exclusion across the various cases analysed.

In summary, it can be concluded that in all European member states – even in those where affirmative policies are more effectively implemented – stronger cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder-based policies are urgently needed at different geopolitical levels (European, national and local) in order to create supporting conditions for AE providers to meet their challenges in providing services to young people in situations of risk.

Conclusions and implications for creating supportive policy responses

The EduMAP research context proves a series of political, economic, demographic and cultural challenges that demand fast and innovative policy responses. The most pressing challenges encompass, for instance:

- the increasing diversification of European societies due to migration movements and, more recently, to a higher number of refugees in some countries;
- the lack of exchange between policy stakeholders and local populations, leading to a risk of ghettoisation and exclusion to the detriment of civic engagement;
- the rise of right-wing politics, exclusionary immigration policies and the exacerbation of nationalisms disguised as “easy” answers;
- in the AE field, country cases prove that APC-related content in learning provision has declined to the point of quasi non-existence on the policy level in some of the countries analysed, and has weakened in others;
- policies do not always reach the most vulnerable young people’s needs, especially those of low-skilled migrants;
- although conceptions of vulnerability are complex and multifaceted amongst policymakers, a key issue revealed was the difficulty in outlining a definition that covers all groups experiencing situations of social exclusion, risk and vulnerability. There is a danger of providing a limiting definition that fails to protect and address all young people’s needs;
- issues of equality and equal access to resources are closely tied to inclusion. Policy implementation is particularly important, given that if policy is not adapted to real needs, or if it is not implemented and funded effectively, social inclusion policies and legislation remain a matter of rhetoric;
- when discrimination, including racism, is structurally embedded throughout societies, including as well as the mechanisms of government, young people in situations of vulnerability face additional multifaceted barriers which may be obvious or hidden and ingrained.

In addition, EduMAP research results reveal that prominent dual drivers of economic contribution and immigration triggered by higher numbers of refugees in some European countries have prompted policy responses which tend to place “blame” on individuals, with many countries pushing for penalties (usually cuts to welfare payments) for non-compliance with educational attendance. Especially countries affected by acts of terrorism tend to view integration as being closely related with security issues.

Responses from the young learners interviewed point to the (negative) long-term impacts of these types of policies on motivation, belonging and identity among young people.

As a result of the challenges identified through empirical research, there is an urgent need to promote and strengthen critical citizenship education as essential for learning how to live peacefully in a social context marked by diversity and difference. Policies against discrimination, racism, intolerance and hate speech for example need to be reinforced and implemented on a structural and systematic level.

The second European policy brief⁴ of EduMAP spells out the concrete policy implications and recommendations for the European, national and regional levels – resulting from the WP3 findings and structured in six areas of intervention:

1. Learning to live together.
2. Strengthening drivers for inclusion of APC in AE systems.
3. Improving AE accessibility and inclusivity for young people in situations of risk.
4. Facilitating participation by AE stakeholders and young people in policy consultation and decision-making.
5. Building cross-sectoral coherence and cooperation.
6. Harnessing human and machine intelligence for information processing and dissemination.

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^{4/} The two policy briefs developed in EduMAP are available on the project's website <https://blogs.uta.fi>.

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Case Germany Youth Forum

Empowering young people to become agents for social change

Three good practice (GP) examples were identified for the EduMAP field research in Germany conducted by DVV International's research team: A youth integration course, a programme related to language and culture implemented by one of the adult education centres, and the Youth Forum (YF) which will be the focus of the this chapter.

Based on a project aiming at promoting more youth participation, the contribution highlights how young people can be supported to become active agents in their community against all odds and in spite of the difficulties they are facing. In listening to the young people's reports and the critical reflections of the provider, it stands out that good practice not only needs supportive policies, but – in the case of the specific situation of migrants and refugees – responsibility also lies with the host society if integration is to be a successful two-way process.

Introduction and methodological notes

The group focused on for the good practice (GP) cases of EduMAP research in Germany were migrants and refugees, reasoning that with regard to the refugee crisis in Europe in 2015, this group constitutes one of the largest potentially vulnerable groups, considering the needs of young people for inclusive integration and to become active citizens of Germany in the future.

The Youth Forum good practice case was identified during desk research, in particular thanks to a research paper written by the director of the provider. The director, and founder of the Youth Forum, was willing to provide the contact of the current Youth Forum coordinator and facilitator. All the respondents – ten in total – were interviewed in German. Observations generated from on-site visits to a live session of the Youth Forum were reported in field notes and analysed as part of the raw data.

The participants for the interviews were selected by the Youth Forum coordinator and facilitator. They were all motivated and already active in the Youth Forum. We cautiously assume that the data resulting from the interviews may be biased towards more active young people and positive experience of participation in the Youth Forum.

Learning active participatory citizenship in Germany in the context of migration and integration

The situation in 2016

Around 1.2 million refugees came to Germany in 2015 and 2016 to apply for asylum. Although it is not the first time that many people have fled to Germany (thousands of people arrived in Germany in the early 1990s from the collapsing multi-ethnic Yugoslavia), the sheer numbers and needs for additional adequate adult education provision created a great deal of new challenges for the sector and the system. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that the vast number of people who came are not actually from Syria, but from other countries in Europe. According to the German Federal Statistical Office, around 2.1 million people came to Germany in 2015. Approximately 45 percent came from the European Union, and 13 percent were from other European countries which are not members of the EU. Many came from Southern EU countries, leaving the economic crisis back home to look for jobs in Germany. However, many people also sought protection from war-torn countries. Around 476,000 people submitted an asylum application in Germany in 2015. In 2016, that number was 745,000.

Box 1: Youth Forum

Focus: Contextualised in community development activities and developed in the Association's interest of offering opportunities to practice democratic thinking and acting, the Youth Forum project promotes the participation of young people in political decision-making processes at district level. Young people become aware that they can help shape their district with their commitment and ideas. The Youth Forum activates participation by young people aged 14 and over by creating a platform on which they can articulate their own needs and interests. Young people can draw attention to and discuss the issues in which they are interested, get in touch with politicians, and learn that a commitment has a positive impact on the living environment.

Target group(s): The Youth Forum is a project within the framework of the "Action Programme for more Youth Participation", which is jointly financed by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the Federal Agency for Civic Education, and the German Federal Youth Council. It is aimed at young people living in the deprived district of a selected city in the northern region of Germany.

Requirements and access: No access requirements. The Youth Forum is accessible to all young people living in the district (main age group 16-26). Some of the young people also visit schools to publicise and encourage participation in the Youth Forum. Thanks to its location inside a youth centre of the city district, the centre's additional offers such as cooking initiatives, outings, projects and group games can also be attractive and motivate young people to come. The Youth Forum is however focused more on developing motivation, and on taking responsibility to act as a change-maker and on generating interest in political issues.

Find more information in the working paper on good practices at:
<https://blogs.uta.fi/edumap/2019/01/21/edumap-country-based-working-papers/>

Many people who arrived in 2015 were unable to submit their applications to the Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) until 2016 because the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees was overloaded. This means that although fewer people arrived in 2016, the number of applications submitted was considerably higher than in the previous year.

The concept of integration in Germany

It can be observed that the adult education sector in Germany has – since the 1980s – gathered a lot of experience in further developing its concept(s) of integration. In an interview, the responsible policy officer of one of the largest adult education providers highlights some milestones of the evolution of the concept:

- In the 1980s, the concept was more about integration as an idea of “assimilation” of newcomers into German society and having to learn “German values” so as to be accepted.
- It was not until 2010-2012 that the German government accepted that Germany was “a country of immigration”, and this enabled a change of focus from languages and European integration to immigration and language as capacity and means.
- Since 2013, the debate has been enriched by a vision that integration has to be seen as a cultural process of negotiation (“Aushandlung”) among different players in society, with migrants forming part of this society. Integration should no longer only focus on “Teilnahme” in the sense of participation, but on “Teilhabe” as conscious, active participation in society, which encompasses personal motivation. This is closer to the idea of “inclusion” (although the term is not explicitly used in the Adult Learning and Education (ALE) sector).
- The concept has now entered a “post-migration” phase. It is recognised that migrants have different needs and characteristics. And it is no longer a matter of integration, but more about active participation on the part of **all** members of society.

To bring this idea of inclusion and diversity into the mainstream on a structural level, the German Adult Education Association (DVV) has for example developed directives and recommendations on how the adult education centres in Germany should develop their institutions so as to encompass a concept of active participation on the part of migrants and refugees.

This evolution of the concept of integration is central to how programmes for the integration of refugees have been developed in Germany.

Structural disadvantages

The concept for the federal youth integration courses¹ acknowledges that the migration experience has changed, and that migrants' and refugees' social networks have been partially destroyed. Migrants need to readjust themselves to a host society that has fundamentally different, foreign values and beliefs. According to this consideration, although this is not explicitly mentioned, we can regard the phase of readjustment as a specific situation of disadvantage or risk for the people concerned.

However, the interviewee at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees refuses to use the term "vulnerable" to characterise refugees and migrants in general. Among the latter, only specific groups can be defined in these terms, such as unaccompanied minors, asylum-seekers with no prospects to remain, people with other special needs, and women. Discrimination among migrants generally occurs between people who are entitled, or are not entitled, to receive social benefits.

According to the local programme coordinator for the provider that was investigated, vulnerability among young migrants is only structural in nature. As individuals, they cannot be automatically defined as vulnerable. If they are deemed "bildungsfern" (educationally deprived), this is a highly-subjective judgement. On the other hand, they can be considered vulnerable as they do not benefit from all conditions and rights of German citizens; for instance, they cannot take part in all social and institutional processes in Germany, and they cannot easily access the labour market due to limited language skills.

"They are not disadvantaged as individuals. They are not automatically anti-education in terms of their origin. But I would regard them as being disadvantaged in structural terms because as migrants or immigrants they are denied access to a great number of processes which are societal processes here in Germany. And this constitutes a structural disadvantage. They are not on the same footing as other people living in Germany. And this is basically a structural disadvantage. They are barred from societal institutions to which German citizens have access."

(Local programme coordinator, Germany)

1/ Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (2015): Konzept für einen bundesweiten Jugendintegrationskurs. revised edition – April 2015. retrieved from: http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Integrationskurse/Kurstraeger/KonzeptLeitfaeden/konz-f-bundesw-jugendik.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

Teachers recognise some common challenges among the target group, such as the language barrier, the rearrangement of the living conditions, and problems with residential status.

“Of course, it is common to all those who are relatively new in Germany and first have to learn German. This is the challenge that is the same for everyone, i.e. the language. Then of course many of them have similar living conditions. So they have to take care of apartments. They have to change. Yes, in general that means taking care of the organisation of everyday life if you have just arrived somewhere.” (Teacher)

In general, they agree not to use the term “vulnerable”, as they primarily see potentials in their learners.

“For the courses themselves, I see just the group, for me, as not disadvantaged. They all have the same, the same goal, they want to learn the language here, and, I mean, I do not now see coming to a foreign country as a vulnerability.” (Teacher)

“I tend to see the strengths that these people simply bring, because they have already graduated from high school in their hometowns. Most of them have studied for one or two years, or they have learned a profession [...] and acquired a lot of social skills. So from this perspective, for me, strengths are more important than assessment.” (Teacher and director)

What makes a great difference is the educational attainment or the educational access that these people have so far experienced.

“So I would just use now [the term] vulnerable for people who have had little access to education. And therefore are unfamiliar [Note: with the learning process], and naturally you can clearly feel that in the course”. (Teacher)

Important laws and policies

Urban development assistance

The case of a participatory Youth Forum is run in the context of Germany’s urban development assistance programme: Social City, launched in 1999,

which is an important element of urban development policy at federal level in Germany. The programme's funding is used for investments in urban development in line with Article 104 b of Germany's Constitution, the Basic Law ("Grundgesetz"). Some 850 assisted areas in nearly 450 cities and municipalities have already benefited from the funding. The programme will continue to receive € 190 million in Federal funds in the Government's Bill for the 2018 federal budget.

EU Programmes (URBAN II for disadvantaged cities) and funding have given important incentives and financing for developing projects. The 1997 Antidiscrimination directive also generated funds from the city to improve antidiscrimination measures related to housing. In this context, the organisation was able to establish 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 programme focuses on stabilising and upgrading economically and socially deprived run-down quarters and communities. Urban development investments in the neighbourhood environment, infrastructure, and the quality of homes, ensure greater intergenerational equity and family-friendliness in the quarter. They also improve the opportunities of residents for participation and integration. The aim is to promote vibrant neighbourhoods and strengthen social cohesion. The integrated development concept is a key element of the programme, bringing together all stakeholders and resources of a quarter. Citizen participation ensures new ideas, improves results, and raises acceptance for construction measures.

Supportive acts and code books

The Federal Child Protection Act clearly specifies the protection mandate of both the youth welfare office and the independent organisations of child and youth welfare. Agreements with the youth welfare office are designed to ensure that all organisations and institutions providing services according to Book VIII of the German Social Code (SGB VIII) fulfil their protection mandate accordingly. The age range covered is from 12-26. Socially-disadvantaged young people are defined as including young foreigners and ethnic German resettlers ("Spätaussiedler") with language deficits and/or integration problems, and young lone parents are also covered by Book III of the 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 persons with disabilities, unemployment benefit, assistance during the transition between un-



employment and employment, and suppression of illegal employment of foreigners. It can also be deemed favourable that, in 2012, the German government finally declared Germany 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.

It is evident that Germany is a country that has well-established support systems, especially for young people who are at risk of exclusion. A wide range of AE programmes, providers and services, including supportive services based on a complex system of laws and code books, is in place to cater to the needs of young adults in situations of risk. Through a democratically-established,

complex system of cooperation between the state and the second and third sectors, especially including civil society organisations, it is possible for providers to apply for funding for projects under different programmes. That said, the federal system makes it quite difficult to assess the state-of-the-art, as every single (federal) “Land” has its own devolved laws on adult education, youth support and even integration.

But there are obviously also many aspects such as language-related obstacles, legal uncertainties with regard to prospects to remain, and limited political civil rights, and also negative prior experience with state authorities, including violence and discrimination in the country of origin, which create unfavourable conditions for the motivation to become an active citizen. In addition, the rejections, inequalities or even racist hostilities experienced in 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, 2013, 298). Frank Gesemann et al. (2013, 59) concluded in their study on the status of municipal integration policy in Germany that migrants’ participation in municipal decision-making and design processes deserves more attention.

Adult education for active citizenship

Although “Teilhabe” (= participation) and active citizenship are regarded as constituting 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, FACE², is the German federal government agency responsible for promoting civic education. It is subordinated to the Federal Ministry of the Interior, was established as long ago as in 1952, and has institutional branches in every single Federal “Land.”

An interesting synergy has been created between the Social City programme and the North Rhine-Westphalia branch of the agency by establishing “Democracy labs” for residents of selected quarters with high integration requirements in different locations. The aim is to promote the skills and capacities of inhabitants to co-develop their neighbourhood living space.

Civic education for young people (“politische Jugendbildung”) is financed by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth³ as is the corresponding child and youth plan. Different projects run by a diversity of 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 large number of young people in situations of risk. Only since August 2016 has there been a 3-6 week education programme available for young refugee adults (aged 18-26) neither engaged in school nor in other activities.

The Youth Forum

Context

The Northcity (literally translated from “Nordstadt”) Youth Forum is a project within the framework of the “Action Programme for More Youth Participation”, which is jointly financed by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the Federal Agency for Civic Education, and the German Federal Youth Council.

According to the city’s statistics, the proportion of people benefiting from social assistance, and the percentage of unemployed people in this part of the city, is 37.6% and 24.5%, respectively, i.e. twice the figures of the city as a whole. 43.4% of residents are migrants.

Established back in 2007 and currently still up and running, regular youth forums have been organised in this deprived area of a larger

2/ Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: www.bpb.de

3/ Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend: www.bmfsfj.de

German city, also as part of the Social City (“Soziale Stadt”) programme. Young people have the possibility to discuss topical issues with socially important stakeholders. The results of the discussion, the themes and implementation of which are chosen by the young people themselves, are intended to lead to concrete proposals for change and to be presented in committees such as the city’s children and youth committee.

The provider is organised as an association to promote democratic city planning and city-related community development⁴, and its approach is based on a principle of enabling engagement (“aktivierende Einmischung”), meaning that people living in that area of the city do not only acquire individual skills, but they are also empowered on a structural level in the sense that they are enabled to identify their interests and voice them. Through planning from “nearby”, it is possible to enable a low-threshold outreach, thus easing communication. This enhances the chances of interaction and communication with less mobile inhabitants. There are currently 12 employees working in the association, one of whom acts as the coordinator/facilitator of the Youth Forum.

Active citizenship concept

It is worth noting that the Youth Forum, which was created by the provider to promote active citizenship (AC), is explicitly mirrored in the answers especially of those learners who show a higher level of self-reflection as far as their role as active agents is concerned. In this example, and in terms of promoting active citizenship, the perspectives of the Youth Forum coordinator, the provider and the participants do not differ too much. It might be cautiously concluded that the programme elements that are seen as being critical for creating an enabling environment for young people to positively experience their potential influence is working in reality. When interviewing young people, it becomes quite obvious that they do appreciate this opportunity and that they can also reflect on the changes that they experience through their active participation.

Stating positive experiences, young people summarise in their own words that the possibilities provided through participation in the Youth Forum work for them:

“That everyone can contribute an idea and be listened to. Young people without family support can talk freely about their prob-

^{4/} In German: „Verein zur Förderung demokratischer Stadtplanung und stadtteilbezogener Gemeinwesenarbeit“.

lems; questions that are important to them are discussed; the problems of the district are discussed together; they receive information on how to engage politically, for example by learning how to demonstrate; they engage through the activities of the YF.”

And one young person (Learner 5) concludes:

“The Youth Forum points out the actual problems of the district to young people from a different perspective. It makes things clearer, in a different way. At the same time, it provides suggestions as to how issues can be approached, how young people can also make a contribution. She also appreciates the opportunity to listen to the experiences of other people who come to the centre and present their stories. In particular, she talked about a project that was presented at one of the event locations by a person who supports young people in Ghana. She would very much like to have the opportunity to travel there also.”

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

The living context of the Youth Forum can be generally characterised as disadvantaged inhabitants, at least in terms of a high long-term unemployment rate (60%), and for the reason that housing was constructed in an area with a lot of environmental issues and high traffic volumes, so that its low prices attract large numbers of migrants. Nevertheless, the real vulnerability in the eyes of the provider and facilitator can be seen as related to discrimination and unequal treatment and being stigmatised by the host society:

“We do not approach (young people) with a stereotype, but we say that there are different situations of risk in a lifetime. And a young person is anyway in such a situation of risk; young people are “vulnerable” anyway. And then many things can come together: unemployment, lack of education, language problems.. and the project tries to identify which conditions are needed so that these young people engage actively, in spite of this situation.”

From the perspective of the young people themselves, none of them fall to the role of seeing themselves as victims, but more in terms of the perspectives and opportunities that they have:

“He is particularly active. He participates in two other projects promoted by the Youth Forum. He is a member of the district’s Youth Forum and of the general Youth Forum of the city. He has been a talent scout for six months, and is currently a football trainer. He thinks that willpower and interest can make a difference, as young people have the right to change things.”

Concept of vulnerability

Although people with a migration background living in the city’s northern district account for 60 % of the population, the provider does not view migration as the main problem. The data shows that this part of the city suffers from twice the unemployment rate of other city areas; the long-term unemployment rate is dramatically high. In general terms, the district is a disadvantaged one, as housing was constructed in an area which has a lot of environmental issues and high traffic volumes. Housing was low priced, which attracted large numbers of migrants (95 % of the population living in the area has a migrant background). Because to live in “Nordstadt” at the same time constitutes a stigma, young people prefer to state a friend’s or relative’s address outside the district and many move out as soon as they can. The residents’ main countries of origin are Syria, Romania and Bulgaria.

Asked to formulate his concept of vulnerability, the facilitator interviewed would however not define these young people as “educationally deprived” (“bildungsfern”) because this is not always the case. Some young people come from more vulnerable families, but they are still encouraged by their parents, and have prospects to complete their formal school education. That is why, according to his perspective, it is important to show young people all the opportunities they also have. Vulnerability is seen as related to discrimination and unequal treatment. As he admitted, the really vulnerable ones are those young people who have given up and who do not attend the Forum.

And although the Youth Forum takes place in this disadvantaged district, some of the young people interviewed describe themselves in a positive way, which we interpreted as demonstrating a resilient attitude. Sometimes even young people, being better integrated than their parents, assume an active role in the family, so that they can also experience their strengths: “She supports her parents in dealing with German institutions due to her language skills.”

But even for young people who are already active, the Youth Forum enables them to connect to the wider community, and young people appreciate its enabling role:

“The Youth Forum brings to light the potential of young people living in the disadvantaged district, who often lack motivation. She takes part in two projects promoted by the Youth Forum.”
(Source: EduMAP research team)

Vision, mission and goals of the Youth Forum

The vision of the Youth Forum is to enable young people to participate in politics, to develop their commitment and to give them a venue in which to voice their concerns. The group that attends the Youth Forum is defined by a diversity of migrant backgrounds and religions. The facilitator himself has non-German cultural roots. The high percentage of migrants and ethnic minorities living in the district leads to the diversity of the group, and at the same time some are German citizens. Both young men and young women participate equally.

Furthermore, identification with the “Nordstadt” district, and tolerance and respect for all cultures, should be promoted, making young people aware of politics and enabling them to participate in political processes at district level. In this way, young people should learn that they can shape society as citizens in a democracy.

Main aims:

- Young people should be aware of and be able to express their needs and interests. The Youth Forum is created as a platform on which they can articulate their interests.
- To bring together young people from different cultures, reduce prejudices among each other and provide assistance in conflict resolution.
- To promote identification with the district and self-confidence.

Educational approach

No specific pedagogical methods are implemented, as the provider is not an educational organisation, but the approach is to purposefully give young people the space and possibility to acquire skills that are closely related to active citizenship by, for example:

- giving young people responsibility, for instance leading the Forum’s sessions;
- putting young people’s initiatives and ideas into practice;
- giving young adults a platform where they can debate;
- involving young people and discussing solutions together (“mitreden”).

One of the best opportunities to learn and implement active participation lies in the role of the spokesperson of the Youth Forum (Learner 1).

One young person mentioned the different environment from school and from life as a positive setting for learning. Nobody is judged or gets marks as in school. Everyone can take part in the Youth Forum without experiencing discrimination and/or being treated differently. Young people aged from 10 to 35 take part without any problems.

The projects in which the Youth Forum engages enable practical learning, give opportunities to travel and to experience other locations and work. There are also training courses for disadvantaged young people, and the youth centre that hosts the meetings of the Youth Forum offers an additional meeting and learning space.

Methods and activities

Some activities and initiatives cited by the facilitator:

- Speed dating: The federal and national political frontrunners meet the young people.
- Presentation of programmes providing grants or financial incentives, and people benefiting from them, as proof that they also have the possibility to apply for and obtain the funds.
- Competences acquired are in the area of job applications, digitalisation – media skills. The Youth Forum offers young adults the opportunity to learn to lead groups.

The diverse and sometimes “fun” activities are important to motivate young people to attend the Youth Forum. The facilitator is highly active when it comes to encouraging young people to come to the Forum and try it out without entering into any commitment.

Thanks to its location inside a youth centre in the city district, the additional offers provided by the centre such as cooking initiatives, outings, projects and group games can also be attractive and motivate young people to come. The Youth Forum is however more focussed on developing motivation and responsibilities, towards acting as a change-maker and to generate interest in political issues.

At the same time, it is not always entirely obvious that young people are aware of the differences between the youth centre and the Youth Forum. So being at the youth centre helps the Youth Forum’s facilitator to approach young people and invite them:

“He learned about the centre from other friends. He goes there to have fun, meet other people, talk with friends and listen to music.”

Young people also visit schools to publicise participation in the Youth Forum. Activation of young people in schools very much depends on individual teachers. Some are highly active and support students in their activation as well.

Practitioners' skills

It is the main coordinator working for the association/provider who is responsible for attracting the interest of young people in the district, setting up an interesting agenda and motivating young people to attend on a regular basis. Although the speakers are elected and the facilitator/coordinator might form a team with them, responsibilities to keep the Forum running and make it successful lie on his shoulders. The coordinator is a sympathetic, dynamic, active personality who has a background in social work. Through his roots as a migrant, he also has a good understanding of the situation of the young people in "Northcity".

His personal skills of addressing and inviting young people and motivating them to attend were mentioned several times by some of the attendees.

The providers considered the following knowledge and skills to be necessary for facilitators to have:

- Need to know the issue (vulnerabilities) and processes.
- Need to be able to look beyond one's own perspective and be willing to learn from each other.
- Be able to work in teams of experienced and less well experienced persons.

Attitudes deemed necessary:

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

Apart from these basic qualities, from what we experienced ourselves as observers at one of the sessions, commitment, social skills and interest in personal issues could also be mentioned as very important skills for a good facilitator to have.

- A lot of the success also indicates that the coordinator needs a great amount of creativity to keep interest high among participants. This is exemplified by the following statement from one of the participants:

“She had access to the Youth Forum thanks to the youth centre’s facilitator and coordinator, who introduced the workshop and the topics debated. She decided to attend because she found them interesting; for instance, the possibility to meet the Mayor, the presentation of books, the personal stories of people who come to introduce themselves, and the opportunity to interact and ask questions.” (Source: EduMAP research team).

Trainees also have the opportunity to learn “on the job”:

“She had the opportunity to be a trainee at the youth centre for two weeks during the last autumn holidays. She appreciates that they can become more aware of their rights thanks to practice. Currently, she is attending as a participant. Her tasks were to collaborate, to provide information, and to help wherever she could. She was interested in the internship due to the topics debated and the possibility to find a solution to problems.” (Source: EduMAP research team).

Learning outcomes and achievements

In line with the approach of the association/provider as creating and coordinating the Youth Forum as an opportunity for “political” involvement of young people and – with this – generating concrete experiences of neighbourhood interaction, the principle and aim of the Forum is to promote APC in a quite direct way. The exclusion of migrants and refugees from representative political structures is the driving motivation in the deprived social quarter of “Northcity”.

Travel and exchange with politically-relevant institutions at the same time contributes to the attractiveness of the Forum for young people:

“She thinks the Youth Forum is central for the young people of the district. The Youth Forum actually provides a lot of opportunities and enrichment: excursions, trips, meeting place. It conveys the message that young people’s opinions matter. Young people can also change things (example of the street magazine). The Youth Forum gives the opportunity to travel to

young people whose families cannot afford it.” (Source: EduM-AP research team)

The Youth Forum offers a direct experience for young people on different levels.

Structuring and grouping the reflections of participants interviewed on their answers to the question about their learning outcomes related to APC, three levels emerge, starting with changes noticed on an individual level, leading to soft skills deemed necessary to enable them to become active citizens.

Level A: Neighbourhood community engagement and networking

It is important to keep in mind that this GP is contextualised as an opportunity established by a provider with a political aim.

Expanding their networks and giving them opportunities to experience a community activity and get to know forms of socialisation. Many are not part of any association that provides opportunities, like BfDT, the Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance – against Extremism and Violence (Bündnis für Demokratie und Toleranz – gegen Extremismus und Gewalt), or Juleica (training for professional qualification for voluntary work in the youth sector).

The answers from some of the interviewees confirm that the objective of making young people see themselves as active citizens in the district and contribute to its development, even though holding a stigma, is successful:

“She has personally learnt to be critical, and has changed her points of view on some aspects of the district.” (Learner 4)

“She does not rule out the possibility of having an internship at the youth centre. The reputation of the district and of the centre is not so positive, but she has changed her mind.” (Learner 3)

“The fact that young people can contribute their own ideas and that these can be developed and implemented. They feel free to take decisions. How the money is allocated is not a topic. This experience helps him to reconsider the district’s reputation and potentialities.” (Learner 7)

Level B: Individual

The Youth Forum by its form and methodology aims at developing knowledge, skills and attitudes which are necessary to act as a citizen or towards active citizenship.

Some of the objectives mentioned by the facilitator include:

- Leading them successfully from school to professional life.
- Enhancing motivation and self-confidence: showing them various possibilities in the professional environment.
- Encouraging their possibilities and strengths, especially showing them. positive models and successful stories of individuals who, regardless of some difficulties, succeeded in pursuing their own objectives.
- Further development: Over time people's personalities are also strengthened.

The success of this type of non-formal and informal "learning by doing" is stated as "happening" by all of the interviewees, when asked what they have learned through participating in the Youth Forum:

- Learner 8 has developed critical thinking, and is now politically more self-conscious and better informed.
- Learner 7 has learnt to ask questions, and to listen and change his own thinking when appropriate.
- Learner 6 is now more self-confident and stronger in character.
- Learner 5 now has a positive attitude and a broader horizon. She is more willing to learn about and explore new topics.
- Learner 4 is now better informed about her surroundings; she has broadened her vocabulary, can stand her ground better in the group.

Learning paths even seem to enable development and changes in terms of the perception of one's own personality:

- Learner 4 has become more tolerant and able to accept different opinions, and has improved her assertiveness.
- Learner 6 tended to be shy and cautious in approaching people directly; now he feels more secure and open towards other people.

Level C: Group

To be able to act as an active citizen, social and communicative skills have to be developed and trained. With regard to this, the Youth Forum seems to promote and enable such skill developments, making young people "fit" to participate in a democracy:

- Learners 8, 5 and 6: All reflect on the improvement of being better listeners and better accepting diversity of opinions. One can listen to other people with greater patience, and this affects his everyday life; he has

learnt to respect other opinions (Learner 8). Another has learnt to carry out a discussion, to listen to others (Learner 6). She has learnt to listen to and respect other opinions, and to handle different opinions within the group (Learner 5). As regards her future training in the social sector, she has learnt to deal and work with a variety of people.

- Learner 7 and Learner 6 stress the positive, stimulating effect of belonging to a group: They have more contacts with people who also want to be active. This proactive approach is positive and stimulating for the implementation of new projects. Increased motivation and willingness to be engaged thanks to contact with other people. They are more enthusiastic about activities – indirect positive feelings.
- Learner 5 reflects on the widening of her horizon by having opportunities to experience new fields: She is engaged with new things that she never approached before. She has been able to approach new things that she did not get in her family, for example attending a classical music concert. She is also improving her cultural education.

Young people also appreciate in general the experience of being in a group, making new friends and even being able to talk about personal problems:

“She wishes they could go on trips as a group because the group dynamic makes the learning experience richer: You can learn from each other. She appreciates the meetings with people coming to present their stories, and the opportunity to ask them questions. She feels on the same level with people attending the Youth Forum.” (Learner 5)

“By character, she is not so open, but thanks to the youth centre she has improved her self-confidence, communication with others, and her vocabulary. She has made new friends and met new people. It is possible to talk about personal problems at the centre as well”. (Learner 3)

Some other impacts are also mentioned by the facilitator such as tolerance and solidarity enhancement:

- Youth Forum participants see the benefits of having access to more information, the opportunities that exist which they did not know about before.
- Two participants mentioned the connection with the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb), the activities of which they only had the opportunity to get to know through the Youth Forum. The bpb also organises free visits and extra activities, such as a visit to Berlin for four days, to

Nurnberg or Leipzig, but most of the young people do not know about these opportunities. She pointed out that this is a pity because these are financed by public money.

Visits to other places were mentioned by different interviewees, including the opportunities to learn about other positive social initiatives:

“She had the opportunity to learn about a project targeting homeless and socially-disadvantaged people. It consists in the publication of a street magazine, the sale of which is a low-threshold job that offers a chance to people for whom other forms of employment are temporarily out of the question. The aim is to strengthen self-confidence and everyday structure so that reintegration into regular employment is possible. The street magazine has appeared monthly since February 1995. She was positively impressed by this initiative, which was also documented in a film.” (Source: EduMAP research team)

Considering the financial issues to which the young people in the district might be exposed, we can assume that the possibilities to take part in excursions also contribute to the success of the programme:

“She has already had experiences with voluntary work without any form of compensation. Therefore, she particularly appreciates that the activities organised by the Youth Forum are often free, or only a limited financial contribution is asked of the young people, who cannot always afford these expenses.” (Source: EduMAP research team)

As activities she mentioned, for instance, study visits to Strasbourg, Amsterdam, Cologne and Düsseldorf. In Düsseldorf, they attended a session of the Landtag (regional parliament).

Considering the importance of building networks and having social contacts outside their own group, young people also become aware of the benefits of establishing networks and contacts through the Youth Forum:

- She had the opportunity to meet new people, socialise, obtain new information and create her own network.
- She thinks that knowing more people also helps in professional life. For instance, she met during a youth meeting of one political party one person working at the Job Centre who then sent her vacancies. Another example: The coordinator of the Youth Forum helped her to write an application.

Migrants and refugees as re-builders

The role of the provider

Taking into account the wider picture of deprived city districts such as “Northcity”, the provider reflects on its role as an intermediary body. This then is the contribution that the provider creates through establishing the Youth Forum:

“Social capital concepts” can also provide helpful approaches for the goal of participation and activation in the Social City (see Huning 2005, 254 et seqq.). In addition to norms and networks, “social trust” is an essential condition for the formation of social capital, according to Robert D. Putnam. Given the lower average availability of economic capital, especially in deprived neighbourhoods, social capital as a resource takes on all the more meaning too. Different types of social capital can be distinguished: Social immigration capital (“bonding social capital”), for example, can be very strongly developed and, in the sense of internal integration into one’s own community, can be quite supportive and helpful at the time of arrival. In the long term, however, it can also have an exclusionary effect (“mobility trap”), since it is aimed primarily at one’s own group.

Rather than seeing the problem on the migrants’ side, the provider points to the responsibility of the host society, forming the basis for the success of the YF in a positive attitude towards migrants and refugees. Given that the main problem lies in general mistrust vis-à-vis the majority society, all projects aim to build confidence socially, individually and by showing continuity and having migrants as the organisation brokers and bridging the gap. Migrants themselves are seen as more trustworthy. A sense of solidarity and friendship is created through projects that bring people together and enable and empower them to have a positive experience as actors.

Improvements

The improvements that have been mentioned are related to the challenges concerning the Social City programme rather than the Youth Forum itself, but being closely intertwined the provider has also concluded that not tackling challenges on a higher level would lead to only limited success at micro level. According to the director of the provider, and 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 (Quartiersmanagement) does not have an intercultural concept, so that to some degree its impact is exclusive, and not inclusive.
- Migrant groups are not represented because there are no democratic structures, although the number of migrants is high.
- Funding should be available on a democratic basis. Now there is competition between the different districts in need.

The criticism after so many years of “activation” remains that the Youth Forum cannot be the sole solution to the activation of young people. Policymakers expect young people to be more active, but according to the provider:

- Young people with a migration background are not well represented at political level.
- Young people’s ideas are not seriously taken into account and put into practice.
- Young adults cope with political contradictions, for example as regards the state’s trading in weapons or the state’s support for undemocratic regimes.

Learners also have their reflections that are based on their highly-concrete experiences of, on the one hand, living in this deprived part of the city, but also of being in an age group that is often not taken seriously. Also, because parents have often not progressed beyond a basic language level and remain within their cultural comfort zones, 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 unfamiliar to them.

Young people also experience that it is not easy, or indeed possible, to produce change and have an impact in a short space of time.

The facilitator’s suggestions for improvement largely related to the Youth Forum as such in order to enhance its impact on young people. He mentioned:

- allocating some of the budget to young people’s initiatives in order to stimulate a critical sense of responsibility and instil encouragement, and
- having a larger team of employees in order to be able to engage in more projects.

Although generally highly satisfied with the opportunities offered by the YF, young people did put forward the following suggestions:

- more financial support, for example also by cooperating with new sponsors, e.g. via football associations and prominent sports personalities,
- more support on the part of institutions is desirable, as well as greater acknowledgement of the Youth Forum,
- an age differentiation in the activities,
- to have more money at the disposal of the group itself. At the moment for example trips with an objective of political education are financially supported, but this is always through extra applications, and sources of financing must be known to the provider to be able to access them.
- The Youth Forum is not so well known, but publicity costs money. The best form of publicity is word of mouth. Only once young people have attended do they realise that they can learn from and get something out of their participation.

Conclusions

In the example of the Youth Forum, established in the deprived community of the “Northcity”, the most interesting aspect is that the provider has put theoretical background and critical thinking about participation by migrants into practice. Coming to the field with social capital concepts of participation and activation in mind, the provider has taken care to help point out the responsibilities of the majority (host) society to engage with migrants, and not be caught up in a stereotyping and mistrusting position.

As in contrast to all other cases, the political objective and the fundamental role of a provider in trying to overcome stereotyping by enabling positive experiences with young people in a difficult life situation stands out as an example of overcoming large numbers of challenges. By establishing the successful Youth Forum, the provider contributes to the empowerment not only of individuals, but also of a whole district.

He is also reflective on the fact that there is a need to establish a political framework that has to be offered by the city itself in a form in which it could provide an intercultural concept, that the city would need a better democratic structure, involving migrants and refugees, and that funding for projects should be provided on an inclusive and not a competitive basis.

It is easy to expect a Youth Forum to be a solution to the activation of young people. Policymakers expect young people to be more active, but according to the provider, the very same policymakers fail to take young people’s ideas seriously, and often do not act as a positive role model.

Although generally highly satisfied with the opportunities offered by the YF, young people raised the following suggestions:

- more financial support for example also by cooperating with new sponsors. For example using soccer associations and prominent sports personalities,
- more support from institutions is desirable, as is greater acknowledgement of the Youth Forum,

In fact, these recommendations point to the limits of working structurally in the form of a project. Although projects can also be justified, what this example demonstrates is that more profound transformation and change need at least committed practitioners and sustainable and supportive structures.

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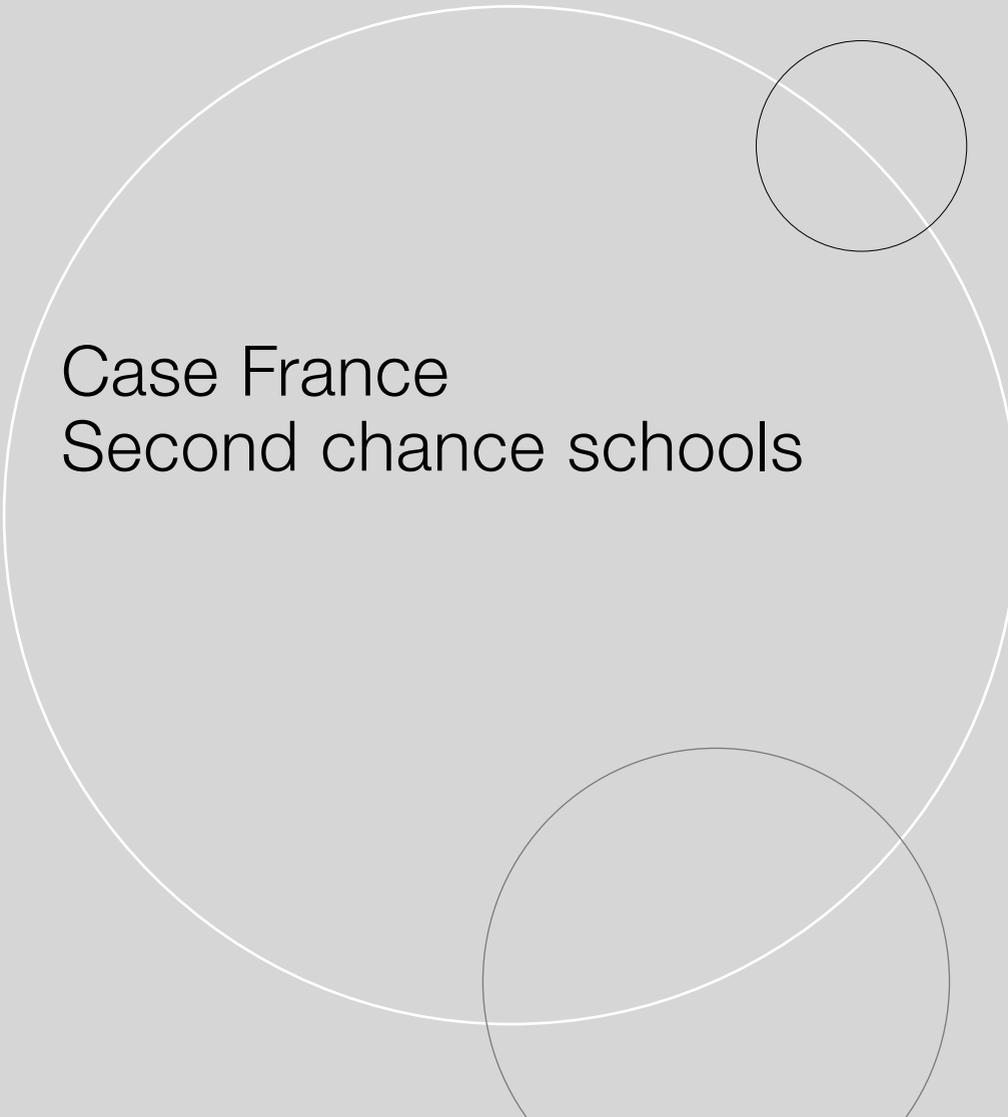
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Case France Second chance schools

Addressing citizenship indirectly through vocational training

This contribution aims at discussing whether or not active participatory citizenship may be decided at the political level only. France has a long tradition of addressing the different issues relating to citizenship, especially around the concept of “living together” (“vivre ensemble”). What it boils down to is the idea that all citizens must be able to adopt the point of view of the public interest, and to place the social good ahead of their private interests. It has been addressed for decades in the school system with the introduction of civic education in the school curriculum. More recently, different schemes have been implemented to promote the civic engagement of young adults. This paper describes the schemes that France has been implementing under the last two presidencies in the aftermath of the 2015 terrorist attacks. The case is made that, if basic conditions are not met, active participatory citizenship may well be a luxury that some young adults will never even consider. Economic independence and equal access to high-level education and training opportunities are prerequisites before active participatory citizenship may be addressed in any sound way, whereas France displays a high level of social reproduction. To that extent, this contribution also shows that the approach taken in second chance schools may be an interesting method.

Adult learning to promote active participatory citizenship in France

The French context

The terrorist attack that took place in France in January 2015 – against journalists and cartoonists – led to the immediate revival of the discussion around citizenship and commitment of all to the republican values. The agenda for the mobilisation of the school system in support of republican values that took place soon after that confirmed the long-established mission of education, through eleven measures. Most of them touch upon citizenship in terms of the way in which the school system should be mobilised¹, through promoting secularism, republican values, a culture of commitment to promoting citizenship from all partners of the school system, and social diversity; through combating inequalities and mobilising higher education and the research world.

The French Act on Equality and Citizenship² is clearly a reaction to the fresh terrorist attacks that took place in Paris on 13 November 2015. Even though it is most commonly referred to as the “Bataclan terrorist attack”, named after the theatre in the 11th arrondissement of Paris where most of casualties were reported, it was in fact a series of coordinated attacks that occurred on Friday, 13 November 2015 in downtown Paris and in the city’s northern suburb of Saint-Denis, near the national sports stadium (“Stade de France”). Under Hollande’s presidential mandate, the government adopted this Act on 22 December 2016. It promotes civic engagement, social diversity, fighting against all forms of discrimination and providing young adults with new rights. It is composed of three chapters (see Box 1).

1/ <http://eduscol.education.fr/cdi/actualites/archives/1er-semester-2015/mesures-valeurs-rep>

2/ www.jeunes.gouv.fr/actualites/actualites-interministerielles/article/loi-egalite-citoyennete

Box 1: The Act on Equality and Citizenship

The first chapter sets the stage for generalising a culture of citizens' engagement throughout life, and reinforcing the position of young people as a key target group of its policy since 2012 (e.g. creation of a right to take a leave from work to enrol as a volunteer in a not-for-profit organisation³, civic reserve⁴, systematic recognition of engagement in a not-for-profit organisation in qualifications awarded in the tertiary education system⁵, opening up of the civil service to a broader public⁶, financing of driving lessons⁷ through the newly-revised individual learning account, health⁸).

The second chapter initiates programmes in the housing sector in order to promote living together, and to fight territorial segregation (e.g. promoting social diversity, reserving a share of social housing for target groups, putting a cap on monthly rents, increasing transparency regarding the housing available, ending discrimination against the nomadic population, (clarify: Who? The homeless? Sinti and Roma migratory, seasonal workers; construction of social housing in municipalities where it is needed).

The third chapter confirms and creates new rights for all citizens (e.g. amplification of the role of the Citizens' Council, broadening of the recruitment of civil servants, strengthening of penalties targeted at offenders found guilty of racist behaviour, fighting against discrimination in enterprises, improvement of the relationship between the police and the public).

Source: <https://www.gouvernement.fr/action/la-loi-egalite-et-citoyennete>

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- 3/ www.jeunes.gouv.fr/actualites/actualites-interministerielles/article/un-nouveau-droit-a-conge-pour-les
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There is no evidence yet regarding the effects of this Act. Only a few comments may be provided at this rather early stage:

- When it comes to discrimination in recruitment processes, on the labour market, it seems that this is still happening: Young people of non-European origin experience discrimination in the hiring process (Dares and “France Stratégie”, 2017; p. 28). In 2016, the Ombudsman (“Défenseur des droits”) published a report that shows results from a call for witnesses between March and June 2016. It contains evidence of a significant amount of discrimination by enterprises against job applicants due to their geographical origin. The responses of 758 individuals, most of whom were young and highly qualified, permit one to confirm that this is a topical issue in France today.
- The amount of leave taken by volunteers willing to engage in a not-for-profit association is unclear at the time of writing.
- Recognition of civic engagement when entering the tertiary education system may not be a very inclusive approach. When registering with “Parcoursup”, the new portal for accessing tertiary education – to replace the former APB⁹ system – students are asked about their engagement in a not-for-profit association, and tertiary education institutions value this when they recruit new students. However, this may reinforce social inequity, as future students living in conducive environments will be more likely to engage in volunteer activities, compared to those living in difficult neighbourhoods.

The current government (in office since 2017) has taken forward the policy efforts to promote citizenship and civic engagement, for example by creating the Citizen Engagement Account (“Compte d’engagement citoyen, CEC”).¹⁰ This account is a scheme targeting volunteers who have responsibilities in a not-for-profit organisation. The key idea is to link it to the Individual Learning Account (“Compte personnel de formation”, CPF) so that those interested may enrol in education and training programmes paid for by the Individual Learning Account. The objective is to increase the overall level of competences among volunteers, without imposing heavy financial burdens on the participants.

^{9/} *Application Post Baccalur at* (Post Upper Secondary Education Application).

^{10/} <http://www.uniformation.fr/Salaries/M-informer-sur-les-dispositifs-de-formation-et-d-evolution-professionnelle/Le-Compte-d-engagement-citoyen>

Citizenship in the French education and training system¹¹

Civic education

In France, the notion of instruction is not separated from the notion of preparation for citizenship and full exercise of democratic rights and duties. The fact that civic education is delivered as part of the curriculum is among the pieces of evidence. It has been at the same time a constant element of the French education system for the last 200 years and a variable component of this system, depending on the political and social situation (Galichet, 2005). The French approach to democracy and national values makes civic education an important component of “living together”. The French Model is indeed built on a clear distinction between the private space and the public space. The former is the sphere of familial, social, cultural and also religious background. The latter is the public domain where the major political debates are organised. Citizens of the French Republic must be able to adopt the point of view of the public interest, and to place the social good ahead of their private interests. This requires an education that prepares them to make judgments, and this may be organised at school.

The history of civic education in the French school system has always been tormented. It has been regularly revised based on the respective crisis situation. The French Republican Model is facing difficulties due to globalisation and multiculturalism that stem from the presence of populations of African origin, whether North African or sub-Saharan African, that have been in France for a long time, and of migrants fleeing the wars in the Middle East who have just arrived. It should therefore not come as a surprise that education to citizenship is also undergoing a crisis with ongoing debates and controversies. In theory, republican values, in particular secularism (religious neutrality)¹² and equality (equal treatment of all children), are at the heart of the French education and training system.

Recent schemes for young people still in the education and training system

The most recent measures targeting young people still in the education and training system may be summarised as follows:

^{11/} See Schreiber-Barsch (2015) for an interesting complement regarding the French system in English, comparing it to the German case. See also Cox (2016) for a broader international comparison regarding the citizenship concepts used in curriculum guidelines.

^{12/} There has been a clear separation of religious authorities and the state since a law was passed in 1905.

- Citizenship pathway (“Parcours Citoyenneté”)¹³. This was implemented for all classes from the 6th to the 12th grade (i.e. junior and upper secondary education). It corresponds to the introduction of “Moral and Civic Education” in the curriculum, and to the addition of activities left to the goodwill of the school heads. It is therefore not surprising that this pathway – and also the others that were created at the same time for proposing a comprehensive approach to young people: health, future, art and culture pathways – are hardly used. Apart from the moral and civic education courses, there is little happening in the junior secondary education system, and even less in the upper secondary education system. Scattered evidence suggests that some school heads do organise activities – such as civic weeks, where a full week is organised around exposure to citizenship – but without actually building a framework in the context of the citizenship pathway. For instance, there is barely any connection with the future pathway that aims at establishing a link with the labour market, the understanding of employment and living area, equality between women/men, which is somewhat more present in the curriculum. An evaluation of the citizenship pathway was undertaken, but it has not been made public. Another evaluation was published, albeit on a smaller scale because it comprised only the Education District of Créteil (in the suburbs of Paris), but the results are not very encouraging. Again, the actual implementation of activities in the context of the citizenship pathway is left to the goodwill of the school heads, even if it is part of the 2015 Act on the Competences Base (“Socle de compétences”). Teachers and other school staff are dedicated to preparing young people to become tomorrow’s citizens, but this is barely connected to the pathway. For example, in practice, the main expression at national level of civic action may well be the election of class representatives; and even then without the necessary communication about their role. This could be detrimental to taking an active role in future national elections.
- Implementation of the new platform for young people at the end of upper secondary education to register for access to tertiary education: “Parcoursup”. Among the criteria listed for facilitating access to the chosen tertiary education institution, there is investment in society through commitment to a not-for-profit association. However, following the work by Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) on social reproduction, the question remains whether France is not still a country where there is a high level of discrimination regarding access to tertiary education and all in all a low level of social diversity. This pioneering work has been repeatedly con-

¹³/<http://eduscol.education.fr/cid107463/le-parcours-citoyen-eleve.html>

firmed by the Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD, 2015 example). A strong case may be made that it is difficult to learn to all live together when there is no exchange between different groups and, in particular, when some groups are isolated in the suburbs of the large cities. Responsibility for this lack of mobility, and therefore lack of social fluidity, rests not only on the Ministry of Education, but the fact is that the compartmentalisation of geographical zones leads to some form of ghettoisation that is detrimental to civic engagement, because some young people simply believe that they do not belong. The lack of ambition on the part of policymakers often prevents young adults from engaging with others outside their comfort zone. The study in second chance schooling presented below provided strong evidence along those lines during the fieldwork. Large numbers of young adults enrolled in second chance schools live in a complicated social situation. They need to learn the codes of the society in which they supposedly live.

- The reform of the alternating training scheme in France 2017¹⁴ (i.e. the dual system) aims among other things to make sure that no young person leaves the initial education and training system without a qualification. However, young people may find it difficult to gain entrance to the French dual system as this demands that they obtain an apprenticeship contract (“*contrat d’apprentissage*”) or a professionalisation contract (“*contrat de professionalisation*”) – the former forms part of the initial education and training system, and the latter can be found in the adult learning system (“*formation continue*”) – for their on-the-job training component, which may account for 80% of their learning time. This may prove a serious barrier, and at least two others can be identified: Young adults at risk of unemployment frequently do not have a network that would facilitate their access to the labour market, and ultimately to employment, and young adults do not have the necessary codes to operate on the labour market. These are codes that cannot be acquired by young adults too disconnected from their society. To that extent, policymakers are right to attempt to address citizenship issues, but if France does not start by considerably reducing social reproduction, citizenship may remain a non-achievable dream.

Living together

If the French model of Living Together (“*vivre ensemble*”) – based among others on the priority of the public sphere over the private, on a fully-inclusive

¹⁴/ <http://www.cci-paris-idf.fr/entreprises/formalites-et-taxe-dapprentissage/reforme-apprentissage-dfacta>

Box 2: Second chance schools

Focus: The E2Cs target 16-25 year-olds who are experiencing severe challenges in finding a job. They use a work-based learning methodology which takes individual participants' learning styles into account. The E2Cs facilitate the school-to-work transition by providing personalised training for between six and nine months. There are three key elements to the E2C's work-based learning approach: the Training Hub, which updates young people's basic competences, the Business Hub, which establishes partnerships with local companies, and the Social Life Hub, which encourages inclusion in the wider community.

The partnerships forged with businesses are a pillar of the E2Cs' success; a key element of the work-based learning programme is immersion in internships in partner businesses.

Target group(s): Second chance schools in France are considered as institutions under the general name of: "Établissements pour l'insertion dans l'emploi" (translated as institutions for integration into employment). As such, they are bodies that aim to ensure the social and occupational integration of young people aged 16-25. They are now jointly managed by the Ministry for Social Cohesion and by the Ministry of Labour. In these institutions, the approach applied for young people who are heavily at risk of social exclusion, and early school dropouts in particular, is based on work-related competences.

Requirements and access: The prescribers are mainly the Local Outreach Office ("Mission locale" – a not-for-profit organisation sponsored by the state) and the Public Employment Service ("Pôle emploi"; formerly ANPE, "Agence nationale pour l'emploi"). The participants are former interns of the French VET system and, if registered and without a qualification, they are remunerated.

Find more information in the working paper on good practices at: <https://blogs.uta.fi/edumap/2019/01/21/edumap-country-based-working-papers/>

social security system, on free provision of and full access to preschool services for all children as early as the age of three¹⁵ with a heavy focus on socialisation and highly-trained teachers (holding postgraduate degrees) – has been under threat for the last fifty years, and this menace has been growing in recent years due to the successive economic crises, as well as to terrorism.

School is the place where children acquire competences that will be indispensable for the rest of their lives, beyond school age, for completing studies and/or vocational preparation, building a project for their learning and occupational future, having a successful social life, and accessing full citizenship: autonomy, responsibility, opening up to others, self-respect and respect for others, as well as critical thinking. It is at school that they learn to live together, in a democratic and republican society. To this end, the French approach to defining the Competences Base (“Socle de compétences”) comprises the following social competences that need to be acquired¹⁶:

- Sense of dialogue, of negotiation, of consensus, and teamwork;
- respect for the rules of living together, whether in the classroom or in education and training institutions;
- sense of responsibility, both individual and collective, in relation to security, health, and sexuality; and
- respect for others, of civility, and combating stereotypes and discrimination.

On a broader scale, recent efforts¹⁷ have been made in order to explain to migrants and even to temporary visitors what French culture is about. However, the recent general focus on citizenship in France is somewhat disconnected from the labour market, and from economic success. One of the objectives of this study is therefore to assess the capacity of second chance education to address citizenship issues while preparing young adults for the labour market. We hypothesise that the former is a necessary condition for the latter (see chapter about Second chance schools and active participatory citizenship p. 80).

¹⁵/ As of September 2019, preschool (from 3 to 6) has become compulsory for all children. It will not make a big difference as most children were already attending preschool before the new Act came into force. It will impact only a tiny fraction of the population, such as nomadic populations and some other families not sending their children to preschool for various reasons.

¹⁶/<https://eduscol.education.fr/cid47749/apprendre-vivre-ensemble.html>

¹⁷/www.france-terre-asile.org/actualites/actualites/lactualite-france-terre-dasile/ensemble-en-france-la-plateforme-numerique-du-vivre-ensemble

A consistently high level of early school school drop-outs in France

Public policies to promote the employment of young adults primarily target people with educational disadvantages who face severe difficulties in having a smooth integration into the labour market. The main target group is composed of young adults without qualifications and NEETs (those not in education, employment or training), who benefit most from the government's specific schemes and youth labour contracts. The second chance school network is among the former, together with the Youth Guarantee, and the EPIDE ("Establishment for Integration into Employment")¹⁸.

To give an idea of the size of this cohort of young adults entering the labour force every year without a single qualification that is worth anything on the labour market¹⁹, the number reaches a million every seven years, compared to a total labour force of less than 30 million. The number of early school leavers is enormous – and it seems that Spain shares similar figures – and there had been no real policy action to address this issue until the 2012-17 government; hence the significant drop in 2013 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of early school leavers in France 1998-2017

Year (leaving initial education and training)	Number of young adults without a qualification (below EQF)	Number of young adults entering the labour force	Ratio (in %)
1998	148,000	742,000	19.9
2001	133,000	762,000	17.5
2004	123,000	737,000	16.7
2007	133,000	739,000	18.0
2010	119,000	708,000	16.8
2013	96,000	693,000	13.9

Source: Céreq (2002, 2005, 2007, 2013, 2017); compiled by the authors.

In France, holding a qualification is a visa for work

Among comparable countries, within the European Union or the OECD²⁰ for instance, France is known for having a labour market where holding a

¹⁸/*Établissement pour l'insertion dans l'emploi*, a somewhat military approach.

¹⁹/Some do have the certificate awarded at the end of Lower Secondary Education, but it has no currency whatsoever on the labour market. The first significant qualification on the labour market, and the basis of all collective agreements, is the CAP (*Certificat d'aptitudes professionnelles*) that is the first TVET qualification of the French Qualifications Framework, and which is EQF Level 3.

²⁰/South Korea and Malta share this strong attachment to qualifications.

qualification²¹ is the most common formal requirement for young people wishing to successfully enter the labour market. Holding a qualification is a necessary, yet not sufficient, condition to obtain or even simply apply for a job. Due to the plethora of applicants and the small number of job vacancies in France, the screening process organised by employers often relies on the holding of a qualification. Then interviews, tests or work simulation may be organised at a later stage, and represent additional hurdles, but possessing a relevant qualification is frequently the first stage of the application process. The content and characteristics of the qualification have to appear in the CV, and a copy of the qualification has to be provided if the applicant is to be selected for the subsequent stages of the recruitment process.²²

The French Centre for Research on Qualifications (Céreq, “Centre d’études et de recherches sur les qualifications”), established in the early seventies, has also focussed equally strongly on labour market issues, as well as on social ones, ever since it was created (see Céreq, 2013, for a recent example of the role of living conditions such as living in a deprived neighbourhood identified as Sensitive Urban Areas by Public Policy). Its flagship survey, the Generation Survey, which has been in operation every three years since 1998, focuses just as much on social issues as it does on education, training and economic ones²³.

The last key parameter to figuring out the French labour market is the field of education/training. At a given level of qualification, the field in which the holder of the qualification has been trained creates a major difference in easing the school-to-work transition process. If they have no occupational experience, young people’s productivity is assessed on the sole basis of their field of education/training, especially in the vocational education and training system where vocational preparation is rather specific. To that extent, those young people who are trained to practice a trade that is in high demand (e.g. aeronautics) are less often unemployed than those who have received training in broader fields, such as those pertaining to the service sector.

In short, in France, holding a qualification and a “good” qualification (i.e. preparing an individual to exercise a trade) is a visa for work, and the system implemented in France for recognising non-formal and informal

²¹/ According to Coles and Werquin (OECD, 2007): *A qualification is achieved when a competent body determines that an individual has learned knowledge, skills and/or wider competences to specified standards. The standard of learning is confirmed by means of an assessment process [...].*

²²/ Due to frequent fraud reported by the European Commission in particular.

²³/ www.cereq.fr/sous-themes/Enquetes-Generation-Sous-Themes/Generation-2013-enquete-2016

learning outcomes – known as Validation of Experiential Learning Outcomes (VAE) – provides additional evidence of this: Adults who obtain a qualification through the validation and recognition of their non-formal and informal learning outcomes perform better on the labour market than do their unqualified counterparts (Recotillet et Werquin, 2008).

For all these reasons, there has been a widely-accepted assumption that young adults' successful transition into the labour market starts with reasonable integration into society, and perfect acceptance of and compliance with its mores, and therefore with reasonable participation in the life of the community. **The concept of citizenship therefore largely encompasses the concept of social integration.** As a matter of fact, it seems widely accepted that finding a job demands social integration, and that social integration demands that an individual have a decent job²⁴.

To that extent, the second chance schools (“Écoles de la deuxième chance”, referred to below as E2C) provide an example of this long-term tradition of addressing economic, education/training and social issues, at the same time as trying to ease the school-to-work transition process of young adults. Citizenship is among the key components of the latter.

Second chance schools and active participatory citizenship

Second chance schools in a nutshell

Second chance schools (E2C) arose from a political will (the White Paper)²⁵ to reduce the negative impact of having such a large share of young adults dropping out of the initial education and training system without a qualification. Early school-leavers have represented up to 20% of each cohort of young adults leaving the initial education and training system and entering the labour market in recent decades. The objective was therefore to prepare them for rapid occupational integration into the labour market.

Second chance schools target 16-25 year-olds who are registered with the Public Employment Service (“Pôle emploi”) and have no qualifications. They are organised in a network, but enjoy full autonomy. At the time of writing, there are 130 second chance schools scattered all over France. They employ a work-based learning methodology, which takes individual participants' learning styles into account. Second chance schools facilitate

²⁴/Given the strict labour regulations existing in France, a decent job may easily be defined as: full-time or voluntary part-time, minimum-wage, and protection against the most current risks (health coverage, unemployment benefits and retirement scheme).

²⁵/http://europa.eu/documents/comm/white_papers/pdf/com95_590_fr.pdf

the school-to-work transition by providing personalised training over a period of six to nine months.

Two-thirds of those attending second chance schools are sent by the Local Outreach Office (“Mission locale”)²⁶, and sometimes by the Public Employment Service (“Pôle emploi”), or even by the French Bureau for Immigration and Integration (“Office français de l’immigration et de l’intégration”, OFII)²⁷. In some cases (one-third of the cases), participants apply on their own initiative to enter a specific second chance school.

Mission statement(s) and approach to meeting the needs of the participants

The explicit objective of second chance schools is to place participants in a job, in a work-based learning position, or back in education. In formal terms, participants are apprentices within the French vocational education and training system, and to that extent they are paid (between 300 and 650 Euros per month). Those participants who enrol for the sole purpose of making money do not last very long because motivation is the key element of success, as confirmed by Dares (2014).

Even though the extent to which this is true is heavily dependent on the specific school (there are 130 locations mainland and overseas and 15,000 participants, scattered over 12 regions, at the time of writing), the mission of any second chance school is first and foremost to equip participants with an occupational project, and the means to achieve it. It depends on the particular school to the extent that some make job placement their priority – and aim for full-time open-ended contracts, or at any lesser alternative such as on-the-job training, or short-term contracts – whereas others work more on providing participants with key tools and competences such as learning to learn.

Generally speaking, the time spent at an E2C (frequently nine months) is organised so that participants are quickly immersed in a company close to where they live in order to optimise on-the-job learning time. Participants will experience an average of three to four on-the-job learning periods over the nine months. Other than that, the nine months are organised as followed:

- One month “discovery”;
- after two to three months: taking stock and guidance; and
- two to three months before the end: taking stock again, and guidance.

²⁶/A not-for-profit association sponsored by the state (www.mission-locale.fr)

²⁷/www.ofii.fr

There are three key elements to the E2C's work-based learning approach:

- The training hub, which updates young people's basic competences;
- the business hub, which establishes partnerships with local companies; and
- the social life hub, which encourages inclusion in the wider community.

The partnerships forged with businesses form a pillar of the E2Cs' success; a key element of the work-based learning programme is immersion in those partner businesses.

As has become clear by now, the dominant pedagogy is not the typical classroom-based approach, even if participation in the immersion projects is voluntary. As has been stated on several occasions, the approach is naturally tailored to the needs of each participant, and those who need more French lessons because they are of foreign origin and/or have dropped out of school receive more guidance, and more lessons aiming to teach written French.

In the classroom, the approach to teaching is more participative, with a lot of group work and extracurricular activities. It is in this context that elements of citizenship are introduced. The diagnosis has long been made that the typical E2C participant needs not only basic education (e.g. French literacy, numeracy), but also a sense of belonging and of living together.

Second chance schools may act as an eye-opener for some young adults, who may then see themselves as future workers. They also teach young adults formerly at risk of social exclusion how to live together. This may take place through work-based learning in local enterprises or not-for-profit organisations of which young adults were not aware, and this may be conducive to promoting active citizenship.

Learning citizenship through learning enterprises' code of conduct, and cultural field trips

The E2C system allows young adults to access the world of work, thanks to the partnerships between school and the local economic area. To this end, young adults receive a specific preparation. The necessary prerequisites are the ability to draft a CV and a letter of motivation. Above all, young adults need to learn the rules and codes of conduct that apply in companies. All along the preparation in the E2C, participants benefit from an individualised pedagogy, and are sensitised to the notion of citizenship; but this is never made explicit.

Teachers and school heads in E2Cs use a rhetoric that is impregnated with citizenship, but teaching citizenship is not a specific objective on its own, nor is it a specific objective for young adults.

The pedagogy that is used in second chance schools aims to approach citizenship from a practical, not a theoretical, point of view, unlike in a civic education course. The objective is for participants to be able to develop a sense of living together, for them to be able to adjust to their community (e.g. punctuality, appropriate language, perseverance in learning). These are deemed indispensable for proper integration in the labour market.

In addition, E2Cs open up towards more cultural activities. They organise visits to the theatre or to an exhibition, especially when they are connected with the recent terrorist attacks. The point is to prove that culture is accessible to all, and that E2C participants are just as much French citizens as any other citizens.

Box 3: Other examples for addressing citizenship

There are other structures in France that are involved in addressing citizenship issues when providing adult learning opportunities.

The not-for-profit associations

France has a long tradition of not-for-profit associations. They are governed by a law that was passed in 1901²⁸. They constitute a dense fabric that plays a considerable role outside the occupational and professional fields (sports, games, all sorts of activities, at all ages). It is mainly these associations that address the issue of citizenship, in particular in order to help young people at risk of social exclusion or living in underprivileged neighbourhoods engage in community activities.

This mere fact that associations are in charge of arousing awareness of and accession to citizenship is convincing in the sense that young people are therefore exposed to citizenship issues quite early, and to the concept of citizenship as such. But it does remain unclear whether this does not create some form of disparity among the French regions.

²⁸/The new Act on Equality and Citizenship (see Section 1) lowered the age to chair a not-for-profit association from 18 to 16.

Indeed, financing of the state, as well as of regional authorities and municipalities, varies from one place to another, and the associations will be in a more or less suitable position for implementing activities aiming at improving citizenship. For instance, the question remains open as to whether citizenship will be addressed at all in geographic areas that are rarely affected by issues of violence. Citizenship should however be for all citizens.

A specific activity: Establishment for integration into employment (EPIDE), for young adults

The EPIDE²⁹ are bodies that deal with young people aged 18-25. Their objective is the social and occupational integration of these young people. They are now jointly managed by the Ministry for Social Cohesion and by the Ministry of Labour. The prescribers mainly are the Local Outreach Office (“Mission locale”³⁰) and the Public Employment Service (“Pôle emploi;” formerly ANPE, “Agence nationale pour l’emploi”). In these institutions for young people who are at severe risk of social exclusion, and mostly early school dropouts, the approach is heavily based on discipline, and preparation for active citizenship is a priority area.

Participants are however already convinced that they need some sort of discipline, and this leaves behind those young people who are most in need of exposure to citizenship. In addition, the take-up remains very low, and does not begin to address the global issue.

The voluntary civic service³¹

The Civic Service was created in 2010 (to replace the Civil Service created in 2006, in turn to replace military service that had been discontinued in 1996), and was strongly reinforced in 2016 with the creation of the Civic Service Agency (“Agence du service civique”, ASC) (ASC, 2017).

The Civic Service allows anyone who volunteers – provided they have French nationality, and are aged 16-25 – to engage in a collective project of general interest. The duration of the contract ranges from six to twelve months, and participants have to attend on site at least 24 hours per week.

²⁹/Établissement pour l’insertion dans l’emploi, a rather military approach.

³⁰/A not-for-profit association sponsored by the state (www.mission-locale.fr)

³¹/<https://www.ccomptes.fr/sites/default/files/2018-01/07-service-civique-Tome-2.pdf>

Participants may work in any of the nine domains of intervention that have been identified as priorities (e.g. humanitarian action, education for all, environment, remembrance and citizenship, sport)³². One of the strong points of the programme is the civic and citizen training that is compulsory and lasts at least two days.

The evidence regarding this programme is unclear: there were only 260,000 participants between 2010 and 2018. Even after the reinforcement of the programme, there were only 125,000 participants (80,000 new contracts) in 2017. This programme is therefore not particularly cost effective, given its budget of 448 million EURO, which is a significant increase over 2014 (134 million EURO)³³. The objective for 2018 was to reach 150,000 signed contracts, but the final numbers are unknown at the time of writing. The budget for 2019 is 497 million EURO, once more representing a significant increase of 49 million EURO.

Universal National Service (“Service national universel”, SNU)

Universal National Service has been piloted from June 2019 onwards. At the time of writing, it is therefore not possible to provide any evidence regarding the way it operates, nor of its take-up. It will be compulsory for all young people, and will last between one and six months. It will take place between the ages of 16 and 18 and be integrated into the citizenship pathway, with the option to volunteer for a longer period of time for 18-25 year-olds. This measure will most likely be bypassed, and it is difficult to believe that the compulsory aspect will be enforced. Indeed, young adults leaving education and entering the labour market will probably make efforts not to comply with this law when they are studying, or if their job search is successful.

In any case, the age bracket retained for this National Service, 16 to 18, corresponds to the immediate period after the end of compulsory schooling (16), and this may be somewhat late for those who are the most in need of exposure to active citizenship. There is some sort of injunction to engage in civic participation, but the approach is not fully convincing. Again, some schools organise a civic week, and moral and civic education has been added to the curriculum, but it is very light compared to the need to actually prepare young people to become active citizens.

³²/<https://www.service-civique.gouv.fr/page/exemples-de-missions>

³³/https://www.lexpress.fr/actualites/1/societe/service-civique-objectif-150-000-jeunes-en-2018_1990274.html

State provision of relevant information

The government created a website (www.jeune.gouv.fr) that addresses the demand of the report prepared by Frank Riester³⁴, which is to provide, in one single place, all kinds of information on studies and training, employment and jobs, housing and transportation, health and well-being, citizenship, activities of all kinds, as well as international mobility for young people aged 16-25.

This website does not however seem to be known to young people. There is little or no communication about it, and those young people who access this website are those who are already “in the system” and need less assistance. For example, this website is not mentioned in the flyers published by the CIO (Information and Career Centre) and ONISEP (National Office for Information on Education and the Occupations), which are the most relevant systematic and universal bodies for young people to access relevant careers information.

Taking stock of active participatory citizenship in France

Barriers to investing in active participatory citizenship

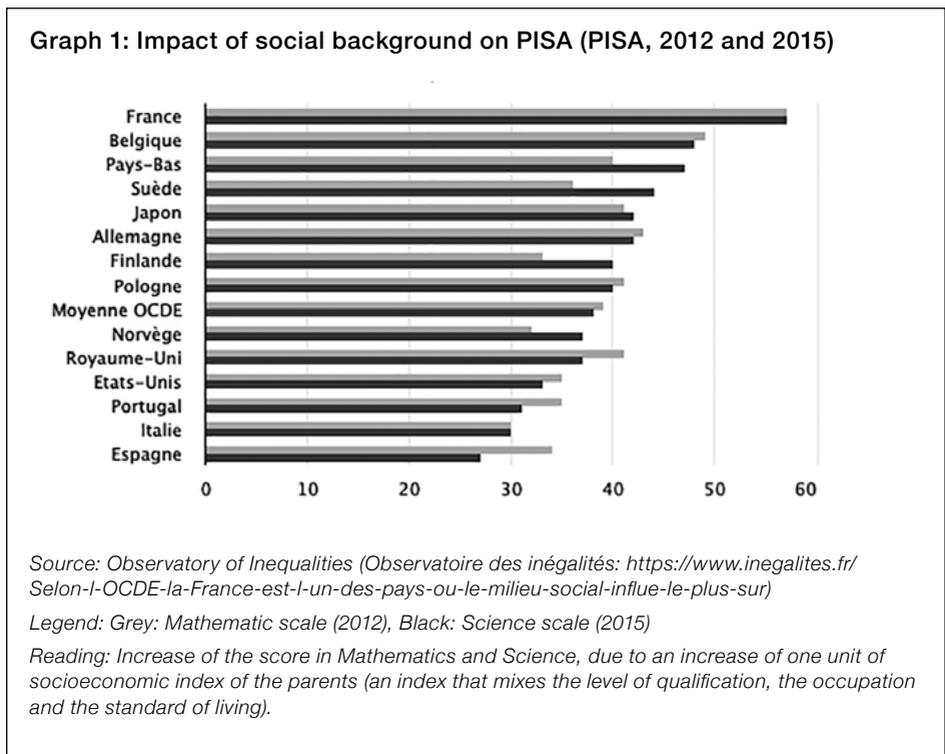
The current social and economic situation in France does not provide all the necessary conditions in order for citizenship to be a priority, or indeed an objective, of all. When individuals’ fundamental needs are not satisfied, they might be reluctant to invest in a notion that will provide them with immediate returns, such as a regular job. Within French society, there are inequities that may influence investment in citizenship:

- Inequalities in access to employment;
- inequalities in access to effective education and training;
- inequalities in access to housing: There is evidence to suggest that it is those young adults who have the smallest personal networks and the least propensity to exercise active citizenship who are the most mobile. One of the consequences is that disadvantaged adults will move within neighbourhoods they know and have little chance to benefit from upward mobility, through social diversity and access to new opportunities;
- access to quality healthcare.

³⁴/www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/var/storage/rapports-publics/114000574.pdf

In the country of “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity”, social reproduction is massive³⁵, and it is claimed here that, among other detrimental consequences, this is poorly conducive to gaining access to full citizenship. It is those young adults that are the closest to the “system”, to active participatory citizenship, who have full access to bodies that teach or promote active participatory citizenship. There is a strong selection bias.

French schools are not inclusive. They are among the least inclusive in the countries participating in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, see Graph 1). It is even the other way around: They are in fact anti-inclusion in the sense that French schools generate inequalities.



³⁵/https://www.challenges.fr/france/pisa-la-france-pays-de-la-reproduction-sociale-pour-najat-vallaud-belkacem_441727

The management of the reception of migrants remains an issue in France:

- A complicating factor is the migration background of some of the young adults, and the relative unwillingness of some elements of French society to welcome non-European foreigners. Recent political elections have heavily stressed the issue.
- The reform of the dual system aims, among other things, to provide all young adults leaving school with basic vocational education and training in the form of a qualification. However, young people may find it difficult to access the French dual system, as this requires them to secure an apprenticeship contract (“contrat d’apprentissage”) or a professionalisation contract (“contrat de professionnalisation”). This may prove a serious barrier, and at least two others can be identified: Young adults at risk of unemployment frequently do not have a network that would facilitate their access to the labour market and ultimately to employment, and young adults do not have the necessary codes to operate on the labour market. Those are codes that cannot be acquired by young adults who are too far disconnected from society. It is what the second chance schools are attempting to do.

Challenges

The challenges are not new. They naturally follow from all of the above:

- Young adults with a migrant background combine several issues³⁶. Young adults who have at least one parent not born in France are at greater risk than are young adults without a migration background. The situation is even more difficult for young adults who have two parents with a migration background, for young adults with a migration background connected to Africa, and for young men in particular.
- The vocational education and training system, which frequently deals with those young adults who are least convinced about active participatory citizenship, is a side track. It is not highly regarded, and only students who fail to enter the academic track are “invited” to the vocational education and training track. Therefore it should not come as a surprise that few young people enter the vocational education and training system with a high level of motivation.

³⁶/Dares and France Stratégie, “*L’insertion professionnelle des jeunes*”, 2017, p. 28

- The denial of citizenship: In a nutshell, a fair share of young adults are denied access to socioeconomic citizenship, despite major efforts, even if they have come much too late, and it should therefore not come as a surprise that they are also denied access to active participatory citizenship.³⁷
- An interesting idea, namely to prevent definitive socioeconomic exclusion, would be to create a guaranteed income. There was a lively debate on such a scheme during the most recent presidential election campaign, but it is clear that French society is not ready for such a modern idea, and the discussion ground to a halt even before the end of the campaign.

Food for thought

All new approaches under the current presidency are based on promoting leaders – successful decision-makers, well-off groups of society, actors and stakeholders with a high socioeconomic index – with the assumption that they will lift up the rest of society. Such an approach is purely economic in nature: for instance, fighting poverty will now only go through providing young adults with a job, and therefore proper education and training. Not only did all civilisations in all times always have poor people, but France has had the highest youth unemployment rate in Europe and in the OECD for the last 40 years. This approach is unconvincing, and if active participatory citizenship is on the political and policy agendas, the recent reforms still need to prove that they are fit for purpose. For instance, vocational education and training is once again at the top of the agenda. But in France, vocational education and training has always been a solution only for those who failed in the academic system. This leads to two categories of citizens, and this categorisation frequently overlaps with other categorisations related to social status and migrant background.

Some interesting ideas have been removed from the public debate too soon, such as income-tested guaranteed incomes. Some extremely relevant extra-curricular activities – such as visiting museums, or trips to the theatre – are not sufficiently developed in the school system for young children when they are forming their capacity to become active and informed citizens, whereas there is evidence that it is useful for developing competences such as the soft ones; but those activities are somewhat

³⁷/ <https://laviedesidees.fr/Les-jeunes-ces-citoyens-de-seconde-zone.html>

risky, and are barely organised by teachers who do not want to be considered responsible in case of an accident.

In the same vein, some partnerships could be organised between a well-off downtown district and depressed suburban zones, but this is rarely done. Still in the same vein, some highly renowned downtown education and training institutions could have quotas for less well-off suburban young adults, but there are few examples of that sort (with the notable exception of Science Po Paris having a quota for young adults coming from the depressed Northern suburbs of Paris).

All in all, it is unrealistic to believe that individuals may develop active participatory citizenship only through specific one-off schemes. On the contrary, second chance schools are rather successful when it comes to bringing across some idea about citizenship among their participants, but they are rooted in their neighbourhoods, especially local enterprises, and have a long experience, even very long in some instances. Standard schemes such as youth programmes are always very much focused on getting participants a job, and the education and training component is somewhat absent, let alone the citizenship component. This has never really been addressed in France.

The French situation regarding active participatory citizenship cannot be understood if it is addressed in isolation from the social status of the young adults, which is also connected to their migration background, or that of their ascendants (mainly parents and grand-parents). Because for most young adults struggling with everyday life from an economic point of view, active citizenship is a luxury they may never even consider.

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Communication and adult education: The communicative ecologies and assemblages framework

In this chapter we present a framework for analysing how the communication practices of adult education organisations can be improved to reach out to young adults at risk of social exclusion. We explain our concepts of communicative ecologies and assemblages, as well as the five components of the framework: goals, social, information, media and agency. We then illustrate the application of the communicative ecologies analytical framework as applied in the case of a vocational educational training programme in Romania, and compare this to the communicative situation of young adults in a very poor and largely Roma neighbourhood in Bucharest.

This chapter focuses on the creation and application of an analytical framework developed to understand the role of communication in connecting young people in situations of vulnerability and/or at risk of social exclusion with adult education opportunities across Europe. As the only communication researchers in the large EduMAP project team, our job was to design and lead qualitative research on the communicative aspects of adult education (AE).

We were invited into the project at the application stage, and explicitly asked to add a communicative ecologies approach, as the lead researcher had a student who had utilised this approach and they found it to provide interesting insights. Core to the overall project was the study of 40 good practice adult education cases across 20 countries. Aspects of communication were included in the research with these good practice cases, with all 712 respondents. In addition, we explored the “communicative ecologies” of selected groups of young people at risk of social exclusion in seven EU countries and Turkey, involving 91 additional respondents.

It is important to note that communication is understood in our approach as a practice rather than a fixed object, and as such it cannot be studied separately from the contexts, relationships, experiences, intentions and aspirations of the communicative act. Thus, when we talk about the communication aspects of the EduMAP project, this needs to be understood as a focus on communication practices embedded in everyday lives, activities and institutions. The communication focus in EduMAP was designed to be an integral part of the wider research project, adding a communicative dimension to the project’s aim to provide advice to policy-makers to strengthen adult education for active participatory citizenship across Europe. We explored the communicative practices of AE providers, young learners at risk of social exclusion, and groups of young adults in situations of vulnerability who are not necessarily engaging in any form of adult education.

What are communicative ecologies and communicative assemblages?

The concept of “communicative ecologies” was developed in 2002 (Tacchi, 2015) as an analytical framework for studying information and communication technology, structures, processes and practices in international development. It was designed to go beyond narrow conceptions of media impacts and universalistic notions of media and information and communi-

cation technologies to take account of relationships, contexts and complexities. It has been applied in a broad range of settings since 2002. Communicative ecologies constitute the whole structure of communication and information flows, channels and barriers in peoples' lives, "The complete ensemble of (symbolic and material) resources for communication in a locality, and the social networks which organise and mediate them" (Slater, 2013: 42). The approach can be understood as both a concept and a methodology, in particular its concern with *actionable knowledge*: understanding change (as it happens) and making space for intervention and action towards positive social change. Communicative ecologies are made of information and communication resources, media, networks, interrelationships and content, which are accessed by people to fulfil their information consumption and production as well as social and communication goals. The idea of "ecology" implies the existence of a complex, interrelated array of processes and practices and the resources and media used to perform them.

There is not a fixed structure, or single way of seeing and analysing communicative ecologies, and everyone's communicative ecology is both different to everyone else's, and shifting in flux. However, mapping communicative ecologies from the perspectives of individuals and groups that we are interested in gives valuable insights into how they manage relationships and information flows, their ability and desire to access technologies, platforms and information, and how all of this works within complex lifeworlds that are often very different to our own. We can identify and isolate some key elements in a communicative ecology, such as the media that are available to a person or group, the social networks they access, and typical goals and contexts for which they create diverse communication assemblages.

Within communicative ecologies, "communication assemblages" happen when people pull together resources, networks and media for specific goals in particular communication contexts. Different assemblages may be created for specific communication goals, scenarios or contexts of communication. A young person may use the same resources such as mobile phones very differently for different scenarios. For example, if there is access to social media, a young person may access Facebook for sharing information with friends, family and a broad circle of acquaintances, may use WhatsApp for close friends and family only, and may have a public Instagram profile, and all that might be accessed through their mobile phone, the mobile of friends or families, or another shared or individually-owned device.

We can think of communicative ecologies as the containers of communicative assemblages:

- Communicative ecologies make up a complex, dynamic, often messy repertoire of information and communication resources, agents and networks and flows and processes that connect them. They encompass manifold established communication assemblages, each with their own goal and typical use contexts.
- Communicative assemblages are goal-driven, they stand for the way resources, networks and media are mobilised towards a specific objective, from professional communication goals (young person looking for a job) to ones embedded in their daily routine (stopping to chat with a neighbour or gossip with a friend on the way home).

In a nutshell, when mapping communicative ecologies we speak about the availability of resources such as a mobile phone, Internet connectivity, or freedom to speak, and typical scenarios or contexts in which these are used. When we describe communication assemblages, we look at these resources in combinations that are put to use for specific purposes.

Methodologically, communicative ecologies mapping (CEM) worked as a support tool to individual interviews, focus groups and fieldwork observations, enriching the ethnographic approach of the field work. In its most tangible form, CEM offered visual sketches of communicative assemblages (as shown in Figure 1), highlighting whenever possible the information and communication *devices and platforms* used, the *people and networks* participating in the communicative events, as well as the content and purposes involved.

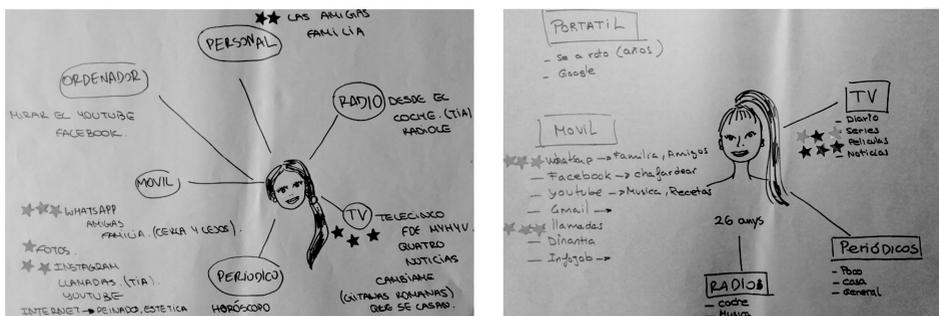


Figure 1: These images are illustrative of the communicative ecology explorations undertaken through field research with young Roma women in Barcelona, Spain.

Photos: Cecilia Gordano

Research objectives

The objective of our communication work package was to map and examine the varied communicative ecologies that exist in the field of adult education among the providers of educational initiatives and young adults at risk of social exclusion, in order to:

- shed light on interconnections and mismatches between the supply and demand sides of adult education;
- offer an in-depth view of the information and communication contexts of young adults at risk of social exclusion – separate from adult education engagements.

The data was analysed together to shed light on how communication between AE providers and young adults might be improved.

As the data was analysed, compared and contrasted, it became clear that an appreciation of the complexities of particular contexts, as well as of issues relating to access, is essential for understanding the many different practices and experiences of communication, and that it would be useful to develop an analytical framework that pays attention to complexities and contexts when organising research findings and drawing conclusions across diverse settings. At this point we developed the communicative ecologies and assemblages analytical framework.

Communicative ecologies and assemblages analytical framework

The CEA framework consists of five key components:

- the capacity to aspire and construct **goals**;
- access to **social** networks and hubs;
- access to relevant content and **information**;
- access and use of relevant **media** and platforms; and
- information and communication competences and literacies (**agency**).

The idea is that the framework opens up categories and shifts the presentation of findings in EduMAP into a more self-reflexive and self-questioning approach that recognises the complexities involved in the research process. Moreover, it aims to avoid settling on universalising categories that are likely to prioritise the perspectives and cosmologies of researchers and devalue alternative understandings from the research participants. For example, the idea at the start of the project was that new and social media offer a new way of communicating with young people that is gener-

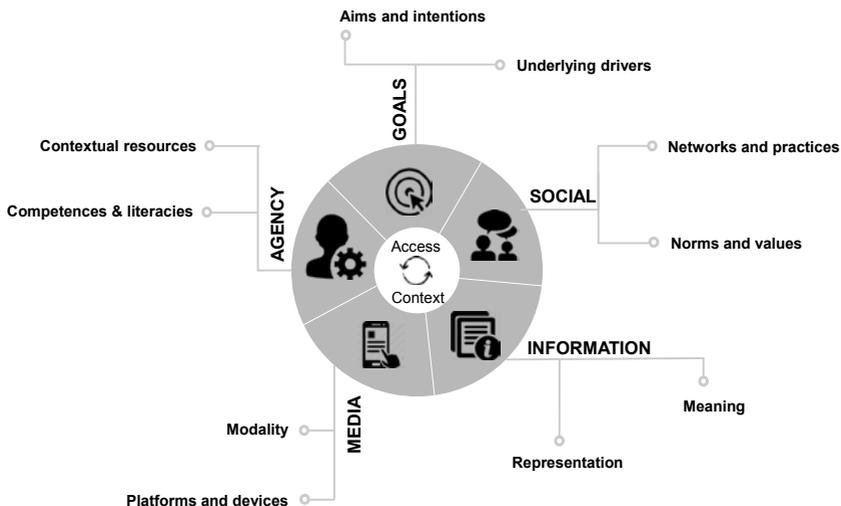


Figure 2: CEA framework key components

ally thought to be appealing to young adults, and is accessible. Thus, the original intention was to seek to establish online forums, utilising digital media, so that AE might better engage with hard-to-reach young adults. Alongside this was an unspoken assumption that if young adults who are socially excluded are reached with information about AE, then they will engage with the opportunities offered in order to improve their situations.

The framework is contingent on us challenging such assumptions and considering communication practices within broader communicative ecologies and lives. It allows us to describe, compare and contrast the goals, social networks, information access, media uses, and aspects of agency, experienced and employed by AE providers and by young adults in situations of vulnerability. It also encourages us to challenge our own assumptions as researchers. As it turns out, in many of the cases we studied, digital media was not the most appropriate means for reaching out to young people in situations of vulnerability, and even where there was an interest and desire to engage with AE, there were a great number of barriers.

We can explore this further by looking at diagrammatic representations of the communicative ecologies and assemblages of young adults in a largely Roma community in Bucharest, and comparing this with how a vocational training programme in Bucharest uses communicative assemblages to recruit young adults at risk of social exclusion to their programme. We explored the communication practices of all our good

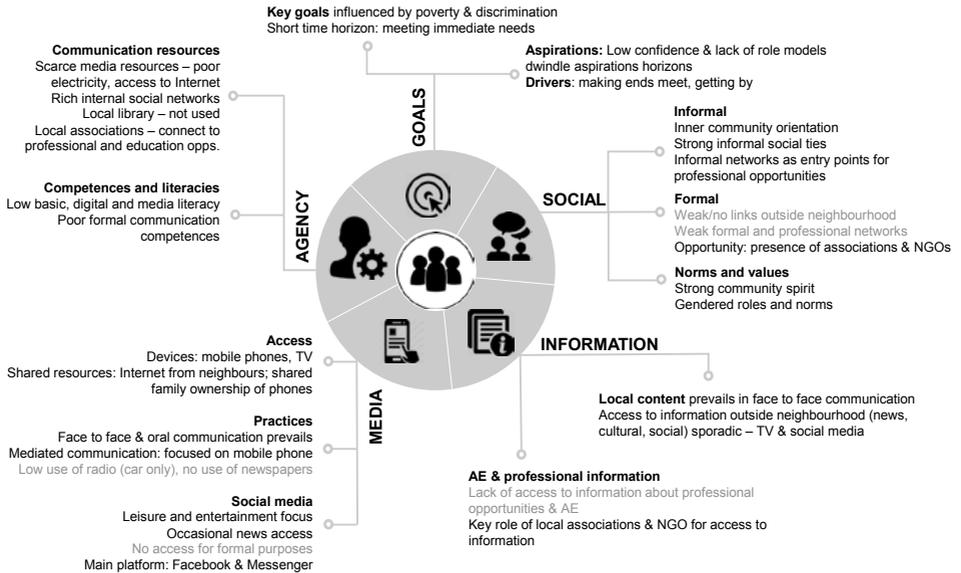


Figure 3: Applying the CEA framework on the communicative practices of young people – Communicative ecologies of young Roma in a disadvantaged Bucharest neighbourhood

practice examples across four stages: the design of the programme, recruitment to the programme, programme delivery, and post-delivery follow-up.

By applying the framework to the Romanian study site, as in the first diagram (Figure 3) – a very poor and largely Roma neighbourhood in Bucharest – we can show that the goals of these young adults are focused on short time scales and making ends meet on a day-to-day basis. Longer-term aspirations are largely absent, and there are few role models to help build confidence or demonstrate broader horizons beyond simply getting by.

The goals of the VET programme in the second diagram (Figure 4) are to reach out and have a positive impact on the lives of precisely these kinds of people. To do so, they benefit from a profound understanding of the context in which the young adults find themselves. We can see the ways in which this local vocational education initiative uses communication in its recruitment, recognising that the best way to reach the young adults is through mediating agencies, transmitting information and communicating through them. These are the trusted organisations that the young adults go to for information, as can be seen in the first diagram (Figure 3).

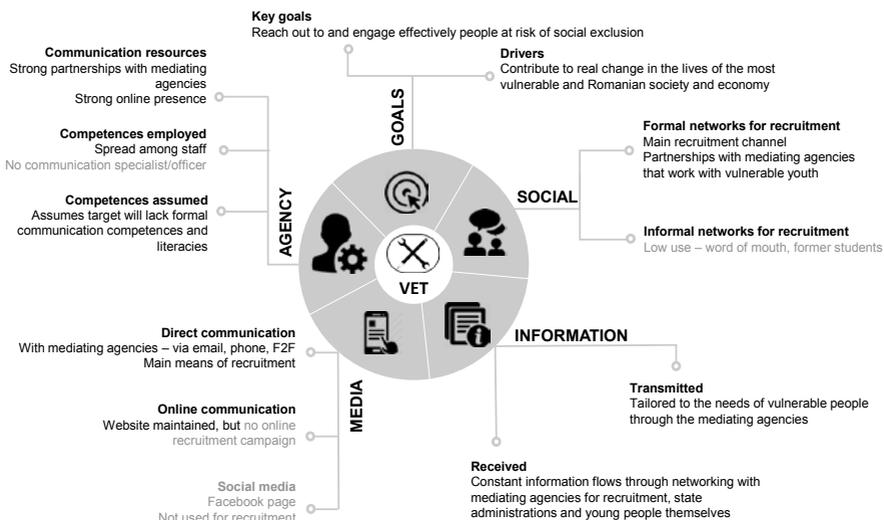


Figure 4: Applying the CEA framework in adult education – Communicative assemblages mobilised by an AE organisation to recruit young people at risk of social exclusion (VET programme for integration on the labour market, Romania)

The VET programme listens to these mediating organisations, which are closer to the young adults who they want to reach and which share useful information with the VET programme.

We can also see from comparing the diagrams that the VET programme is aware of the limited formal communication skills, and behaves accordingly. They do not use their website to recruit because they are aware that this would be far less effective (even redundant) for these young adults than working with the organisations on the ground that already have a presence and deliver services. This VET programme in Romania was chosen as one of our good practice cases because it demonstrates a keen awareness of the broader struggles and issues prevalent for young adults who are at risk of social exclusion in the country. It networks well with other support organisations, and shows an understanding of the communicative ecologies and assemblages of the young adults, although it does not use these concepts to describe them.

In terms of the young people, the important networks for them are those that are internal to their community – they have strong social ties and community support networks, governed by gendered roles and

norms. It is these informal networks that the VET programme taps into through their networks own formal communication with mediating organisations. They understand that direct formal communication is unlikely to succeed, and the diagram of the young adults shows us that this is correct. It also shows us that there may be other opportunities for the VET programme to reach out, such as through engaging alumni who have achieved some success through and beyond the programme, and who can serve as role models which are otherwise lacking.

In this article we have compared the communicative ecology, assemblages and practices of young adults in this particular Bucharest community with the ways in which a VET programme uses communication to recruit learners. This exercise focused attention on practical and pragmatic aspects of the communication practices of the VET programme in this particular example, as illustrated in the diagram above, in relation to its recruitment. The same can be done to compare their communication practices and assemblages for their programme design, delivery, and post delivery (alumni communications).

In conclusion

The framework and the five components within it are designed to encourage open engagement so that, rather than assuming that there is a universal understanding and experience of, for example, agency, we explore what agency is and how it is experienced by particular people, groups or institutions. This is not done by asking people “What does agency mean to you?”, but by discussing people’s lives, relationships and experiences. Likewise, the framework avoids assumptions about what goals people have, but tries to understand what these are and how they are shaped by other factors. The same applies to assumptions about media, information and social networks. The framework is an “empty” one, seeking to place an appreciation of the perspective of people unlike or different to us on an equal footing with our own perceptions, understandings and experiences.

For example, this means not imposing notions of what agency means to different groups, but approaching it with open enquiry and exploring it holistically and in its locality. We found from the research, and the Roma young adult framework diagram above illustrates this, that the agency to communicate and access information can best be understood for young adults as being distributed among various platforms, channels and other human and non-human actors involved in communicative processes. In each of our cases, we needed to ask which platforms, which channels,

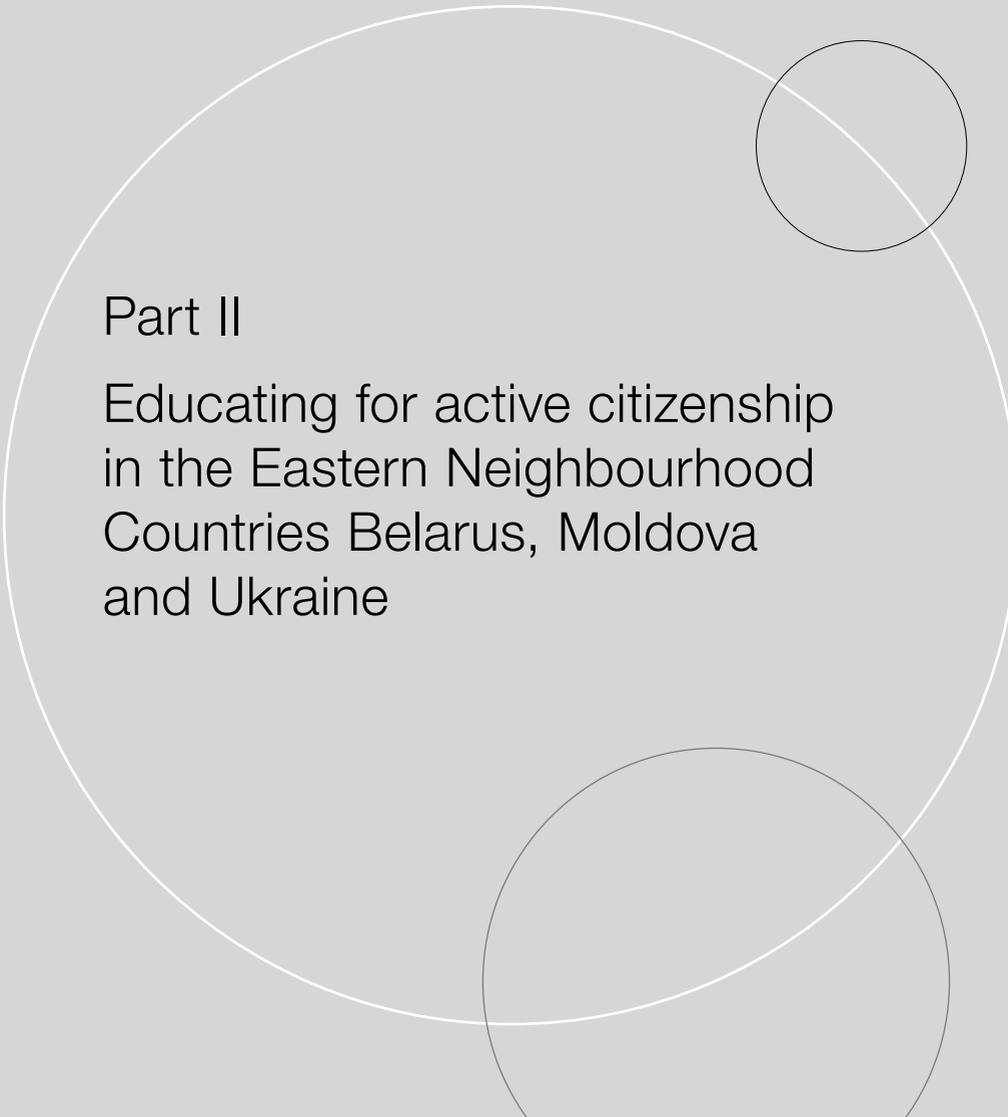
which other actors are important. This distributed view of agency places the analytical focus on the agents and relationships established with various other agents, resources and tools (Slater, 2013). In the CEA framework agency (like the other four components) is considered an “empty notion” to be observed and contested. The idea is to place the five components themselves and their interrelationships within the research framework.

The framework can be used in various communication-related scenarios – to analyse existing practices, to identify spaces for intervention, or to look at the outcomes of interventions. It can be used to focus on individual or collective practices, in communities or in organisations. It can shed light on how AE providers mobilise communication resources for specific goals and to what effect, for example, to analyse the communicative practices underpinning the recruitment of new students, to understand why some groups are typically reached whilst others are not, and what can be changed to reach out to the latter.

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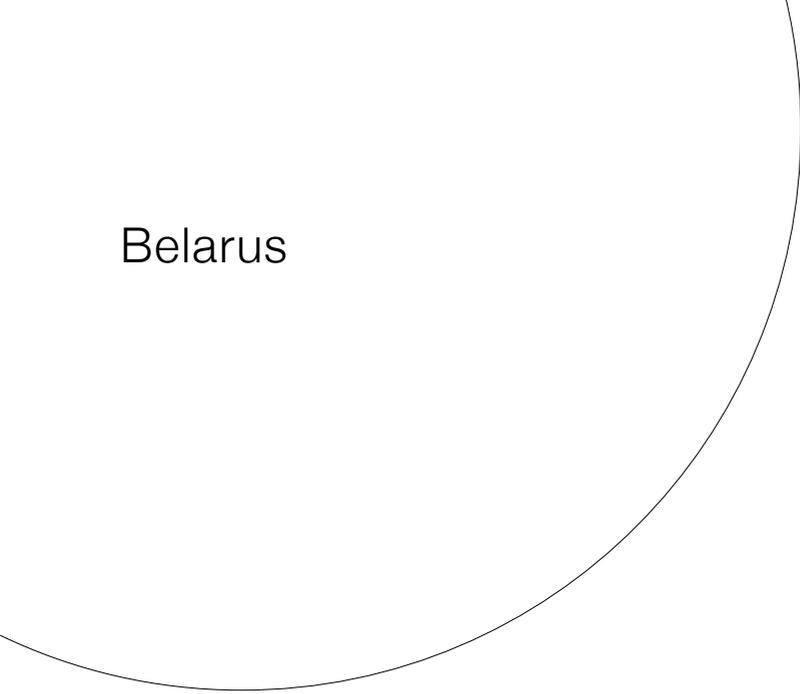
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Part II

Educating for active citizenship in the Eastern Neighbourhood Countries Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine



Belarus

Learning to act: Three stories from Belarusian regions

Civic education in Belarus

Discussions about the essence of civic education, its goals and objectives, as well as on the efficiency of civic education programmes, have continued unabated in Belarus since the 1990s. In fact, the issue of raising active citizens has been a primary concern for many since the country's independence. That said, different actors offer different solutions to the problem, and this difference in views and positions hinders the shaping of a unified approach shared by the different actors. Experts therefore talk about the mosaic and fragmented character of civic education in Belarus (Inysheva 2011). The diversity of positions and opinions does, though, permit the actors to be clearly divided into two groups. According to Vyacheslav Bobrovich, these groups adhere to two polar approaches when it comes to determining the goals and objectives of civic education, namely the state approach and the non-state approach.

Building on the centralised political system and the underdeveloped political culture, **the state** and its subordinate educational and media organisations equate civic education with the ideological work carried out throughout the country. Such an approach is also enshrined in the Education Code of the Republic of Belarus. The term "civic education" is not mentioned in the Code, but Article 18 says that the priority task of education offered in educational institutions is that of "nurturing citizenship, patriotism and national identity based on state ideology". The key provisions of the official approach to civic education are expressed in the course entitled "Ideological Basis of the Belarusian State", which is a compulsory subject for students of all specialties. The "civic education" system created by the state corresponds to the nature of the political system that has emerged so far, with such concepts as "citizen", "state" and "civic consciousness" developing some peculiar meaning. As a rule, it is limited to obedience to laws and regulations, and to an expression of loyalty to the government. The requirement to abide by the law is often assigned the "overriding" meaning of serving the "common goals", subordination of an individual to the collective, and the ability to sacrifice personal interests for the sake of those of society. According to Bobrovich, the main shortcomings of this approach are its incompatibility with the norms and values laid down in the

Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, and the reproduction of archaic ideas about citizenship, a bias towards patriotic education, and eclecticity.

The diversity of concepts is to a much greater extent characteristic of the **non-state** approach. Some of the various national and political projects that have been proposed by public and political organisations which are independent from the state contain somewhat elaborate concepts and ideas about citizens and citizenship, whilst some others' concepts are only outlined in general terms. Some focus on national and cultural identity, whilst others concentrate on civic identity. Many organisations are actively promoting a European identity. However, the unifying narrative for all of them is the orientation towards a democratic perception of what the future is to bring and the understanding of a citizen as an active player in a national and democratic construct. This can be traced in the most significant programme and strategic documents: "The concept of civic education in Belarus" (2007), "The position of the Association of Life-Long Learning and Enlightenment on Civic Education in the Republic of Belarus" (2016), the concept "Non-formal adult education in Belarus. Agenda: materials for discussion" (2019). The pluralism of approaches is a natural and important reflection of the diversity of the structure of Belarusian society and its needs. However, it is not always conducive to the effective pooling of resources and the achievement of long-term goals. In addition, the third sector in Belarus lacks mass coverage of the population with its educational programmes, something which would help achieve success in shaping a democratic legal culture. According to expert estimates, the total coverage of non-state educational programmes does not exceed 100,000 participants over five years, which is approximately 1.2% of the population aged 14 and older. At the same time, the state provides educational and ideological work programmes to roughly 3.6 million people, or about 45% of the population aged 14 and older, in addition to the coverage by state-owned media (Office for European Expertise and Communications, Office for a Democratic Belarus 2015: 8).

It would certainly be interesting to see what percentage of the Belarusian population adheres to each respective approach. Unfortunately, we have neither reliable nor any direct data available that would permit us to assess the level of civic competences and their connection to any of the two opposite approaches.

The findings from a fairly large-scale comparative analysis of the civil literacy levels among the citizens of Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus that was carried out in 2016 seem to be most relevant for this article. In general, the data of this study suggest that there are significant gaps between the citizens of Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus when it comes to the body of knowledge about the state structure, legislation, and their respective rights

and obligations (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 2017)¹. At the same time, the level of civic knowledge is somewhat higher in Belarus than in its neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, the willingness of Belarusians to use their knowledge is much lower. For example, the rate of readiness to join a protest against a toxic industrial development was lowest in Belarus, where 39% would not take part. This share is 23% in Ukraine, and 19% in Moldova. The highest rate of commitment to organise such a protest is found in Moldova, at 38%, whilst in Ukraine and Belarus it is as low as 11% and 4%, respectively. Half of the respondents in Ukraine and Moldova, and only 35% of Belarusians, report that they would be willing to join a protest (Ibid: 34). The low rate of willingness is largely due to respondents' scepticism vis-à-vis their ability to change anything. According to the study, about half of the respondents mentioned this.

The attempt of the study authors to divide the respondents into groups depending on the level of their civic knowledge is also of great interest for our article. It can be observed that the citizens of the Republic of Belarus demonstrate an extremely low level of readiness to organise civic activities in their city or village, regardless of their level of education and civic knowledge. With regard to the experience of participation in civic life, the group with the lowest level of civic knowledge happens to also be the most passive. Ironically, there are relatively more people who believe in their ability to influence the situation in their village and their country (albeit they are in a minority in each group), and at the same time fewer who believe in their ability to influence their lives and well-being in this segment. Unfortunately, the study results reported do not provide sufficient data regarding the extent to which the representatives of this segment can be categorised as people who are potentially at risk. However, it is obvious that factors such as low self-esteem and self-confidence are characteristic of citizens who are at risk of social exclusion.

We also know that a sufficiently large number of training programmes of the "third sector" are focused on the engagement of various social groups experiencing certain deficiencies. This is because NGOs aspire to change the life situation of their target groups and the perception of training programmes as an integral part of social services. The question needs to be investigated further as to the extent to which such programmes,

1/ Civic Literacy in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. Prepared by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) for the UN Development Programme in Ukraine (UNDP) with support from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It provides an account of the representative public opinion survey carried out in 2016 by the KIIS in Ukraine, CBS-AXA in Moldova (commissioned by UNDP) and SBTC SATIO in Belarus (commissioned by Pact Inc.).



Presentation of the developed programs at the final event of the mini-project “Learning with the whole family”, Bobruisk, June 2018
Photo: Yuri Kalenik

most of which do not have explicit civic-political contents, contribute to the development of civic competences.

At the same time, we assume that the key actors of civil society are aware of the following:

- Active citizenship competence building is one of the main objectives of adult education;
- vulnerable groups are generally excluded from the social context and active life, and therefore have much less experience of civic participation and lower levels of civil literacy;
- most members of vulnerable groups have limited access to such education, and therefore cannot take advantage of the benefits that it offers;
- for these reasons, participation in literally any civic society programme can be considered as the first step towards civic competence building.

The “Learn to act” project that was developed on the basis of these assumptions provided quite a lot of opportunities for analysis, as it focused on supporting and developing the educational activities of Belarusian NGOs working with various vulnerable social groups in the regions, and pooled the practices of more than ten Belarusian organisations. In addi-

tion, the research methodology that was developed within the framework of the “Adult Education as a Means for Active Participatory Citizenship” project adopted a slightly different perspective for understanding civic competences on the one hand, and made it possible to use the existing analysis tools with minor adjustments on the other.

Methodology and scope of research

An analysis of three educational practices was carried out from June to October 2018, based on the methodology of the “Adult Education as a Means for Active Participatory Citizenship” project.

The aim of the study was to investigate the conditions for the creation and effective implementation of non-formal education practices to develop active citizenship competences and mitigate the risk of social exclusion among vulnerable groups of young people and adults from the point of view of staff and participants in educational practices.

Each of these practices was a separate programme which however also formed a part of the large-scale “Learn to Act” project. Organisations from the city of Bobruisk (district centre), the city of Vitebsk (regional centre), and the town of Lyntupy (Postavy district, Vitebsk region), took part in the study. In Bobruisk, a project was implemented among families raising children and young people with disabilities aimed at obtaining skills in the fields of photography, video making, fundraising, and project management. In Vitebsk, the project contributed to improving the competitiveness of women in difficult situations on the labour market and in society. A cultural and educational space was created within the framework of the project that was implemented in Lyntupy, on the basis of which low-income or unemployed residents of the Lyntupy rural district acquired knowledge and skills in repairing old houses and making ceramic souvenirs.

The following methods were used in the study: expert survey, in-depth interview, document analysis.

The following participants were surveyed in the study:

- 4 experts
- 16 representatives of the best practices, including:
 - 3 managers
 - 3 trainers
 - 10 training participants

More than 80 different internal documents pertaining to these practices were also analysed.

Summary of the study findings and conclusions

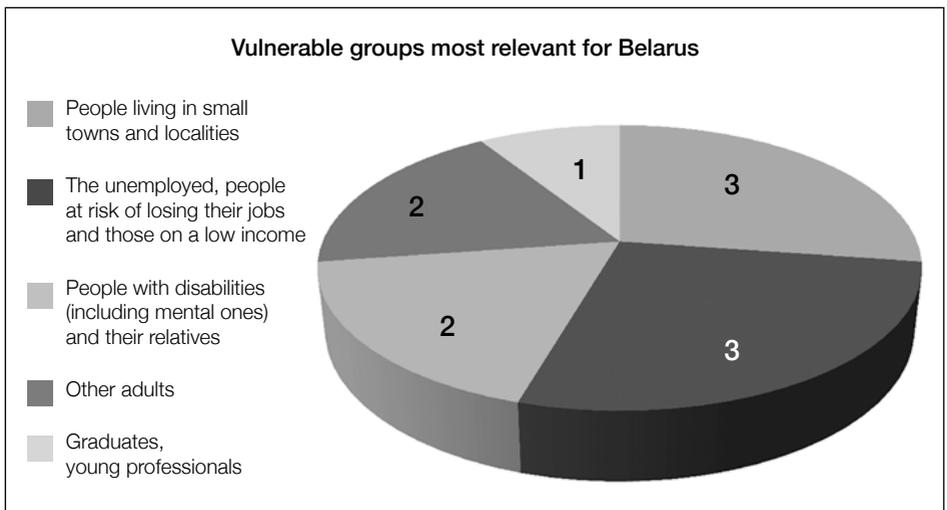
Vulnerable groups and development of their non-formal education competences

The expert survey focused both on the expert opinions regarding the best practices, and on the assessment of the situation with regard to vulnerable groups in Belarus.

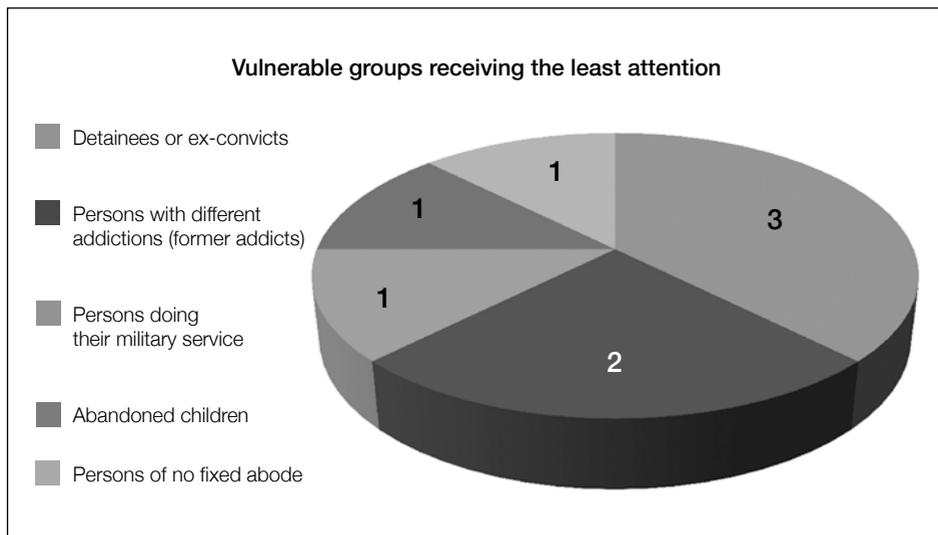
Questions were asked:

- About the most important vulnerable groups in Belarus and those currently not receiving attention;
- about the civic competences currently being most often developed in vulnerable groups, and those that are most relevant for Belarus;
- about the factors that might serve to improve the efficiency of working with vulnerable groups in Belarus.

The experts answered the question “Which vulnerable groups do you consider to be the most important in Belarus (for the state, the economy and the local community) in terms of further increasing their active citizenship (list up to three)” as follows:



The experts answered the question “Which vulnerable groups do you consider to receive the least attention in Belarus (from the state, public and international organisations and businesses) (list up to three)” as follows:

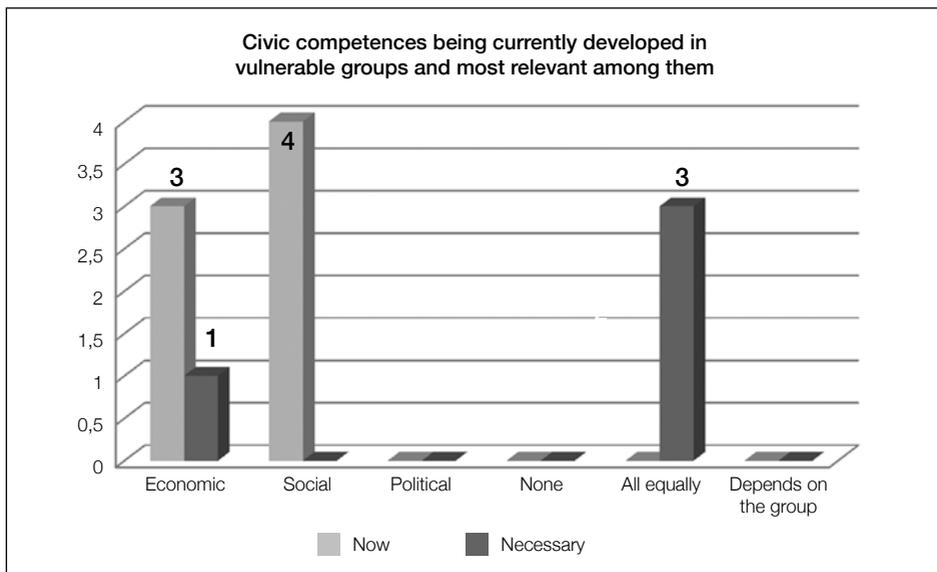


The best practice managers answered these questions as well, and identified such **most important** vulnerable groups as people living in small towns and villages, children and young people with disabilities, as well as their families, orphans, the unemployed, especially women with children, ex-convicts, and persons of no fixed abode.

The vulnerable groups receiving the **least attention** in Belarus include people living in small towns and villages, older adults, adults with disabilities, ex-convicts, persons of no fixed abode, and the unemployed in small towns and localities. The groups are italicised that were mentioned by the managers as coinciding with the opinions of the key experts. Thus, the opinions of the key experts are fairly unanimous, while the opinions of representatives of the best practices differ both from each other and from the opinions of the key experts (especially regarding the groups receiving the least attention in Belarus).

So, according to the total number of votes and the opinion of both groups of experts, working with people living in small towns and localities, especially the unemployed, as well as unemployed women with children and people with disabilities and their families, is most relevant in Belarus.

The answers of the key experts to the question about the civic competences being currently most often developed in vulnerable groups and those being most relevant for Belarus are shown in the summary diagram.



As a result, the key experts point out that the development of social and economic competences is rather active, whilst political competences do not receive attention, but ideally all three types of competence should be developed in order to improve the efficiency of work with vulnerable groups.

At the same time, the opinions of practice managers (those who work with vulnerable groups directly) are not so unanimous, and differ from the opinions of the key experts, which rather indicates that their opinions should be studied separately and in greater detail when developing any policies in this area.

The experts of both groups offered several options in answer to the question “What do you think can activate work with vulnerable groups in Belarus and improve its effectiveness (list up to three stimulating factors)”, namely the following:

- State social order, adoption of a law on social entrepreneurship providing for benefits and preferential loans to social enterprises (4 votes);
- creation of favourable framework conditions for non-formal adult education providers, equal economic conditions for providers from the govern-

ment, private and public sectors, active engagement of local authorities in promoting the development of formal and non-formal education at local level (3 votes);

- simplification of the mechanisms for obtaining funding for NPOs, since this is how the state restricts access to many vulnerable groups and impedes work with them (2 votes);
- information campaign in society as a whole and among specific target groups dedicated to successful educational practices, including their availability in the regions (2 votes);
- involvement of vulnerable groups at all stages of programme implementation and enforcement of laws relating to these groups (counselling, needs assessment, joint search for solutions to problems), their involvement in the real life of society (2 votes);
- training and employment opportunities for the representatives of vulnerable groups (special jobs), (2 votes);
- support for pilot projects with vulnerable groups from businesses, government, local authorities and international organisations (intersectoral cooperation), (1 vote).

Thus, the increased participation of the state (in particular through appropriate legislation and interaction at local level and through education) is viewed as the main factor enhancing and improving the efficiency of work with vulnerable groups in Belarus.

Results of the best practice analysis

As part of the three best practice analyses, a series of individual in-depth interviews were conducted with project managers, trainers and participants (former and/or current participants):

- Interviews with educational practice managers were aimed at studying strategic and organisational processes related to the implementation of best practices (experience of the organisation under study in the field of active citizenship, the process of programme development and participants' engagement, communication with participants and other stakeholders, selection criteria for trainers, educational process peculiarities, resource mobilisation, the impact of a practice on its participants, and recommendations for improving the practice in the future).
- Interviews with trainers were aimed at identifying trainers' qualifications, studying pedagogical approaches and practices of interacting with various target groups, and the level of consideration of their specificities,

the training process and work/communication with participants, procedures for evaluating the process of training and its results, the impact of the practice on the participants, recommendations on improving the practice in future.

- Interviews with participants were aimed at exploring their reasons for taking a specific course, the quality of communication during the course, and the influence of the educational practice on them and their lives based on the two key aspects: 1) the development of active civic participation competences; 2) the discovery and use of opportunities for social, economic, and political involvement in community life.
- Each interview included four blocks of questions, whereby those relating to the extent to which participation in non-formal education programmes influenced the development of civic competences among the participants, as well as the key factors defining the effectiveness and success of such programmes, were of particular interest for the purposes of the article.

Active citizenship competence building (how participation in training affected the participants and their lives)

All the managers interviewed are convinced that the implementation of their programmes changed the lives of the participants, albeit not all of them and not immediately. Some of them were able to increase their activity straightaway in the classroom: They wrote a successful project application, received training and employment, learned how to do repairs, and received their first orders. Such success stories inspired others. At the same time, a number of managers noted that not all participants were sufficiently motivated to work independently and change their lives. The success of the programmes depended in many ways on the degree to which their organisers and trainers were able to support the development of participants' internal motivation, both during the training and afterwards, in order "not to lead them by the hand, and to prevent social parasitism".

Such an approach is shared by almost all the trainers surveyed. In their opinion, the emergence of hope for positive changes in the lives of the participants is the principal change that they experience in most cases. In this respect, the role of the trainer and the way in which he or she sets them up for such changes is very important ("We encourage people to change their lives for the better, to participate in the life of organisations, their communities and the target groups with which we work ... We encourage them to change. Those who are ready for changes should go for them.")

All the participants surveyed also recognised the changes, and described specific examples of their activities both during and after the course. They noted the increased self-confidence and the positive influence of the example of others who faced or had faced similar problems. The major training outcomes included the ability to speak in front of people and to defend their projects (the participants of the training programme in Bobruisk, the Nadezhda NGO). According to the participants of the project implemented by the Kultyvatar cultural and educational centre from Lyntupy, they were able to gather some “reserves” for the future (“You accumulate some things inside, and then you just take them out and employ them at exactly the right moment when you need them.”). The course made it possible to break away from the routine, gain additional skills and make new acquaintances.

The women released from prison or who suffered from alcohol addiction who were trained and received advice from the Ulyana NGO in Vitebsk highlighted the development of social ties and the fact that they were able to take a number of important steps to change their behaviour in future. Some of them decided to abstain from alcohol and go for coding, whilst several people became involved in helping others; they became active volunteers and their social networks changed. (“I just stopped communicating with many casual friends while I hardly had any friends from my previous life... My husband’s friends started dropping by, which they had never done before. His brother started visiting us together with his family, something that was completely new ... I used to immediately make friends with a person who drank; now I regard him or her as someone in need of help.”)

In general, all the survey participants noted that attending training primarily facilitated the development of **social competences**. People started communicating more actively with each other and with others, and opened up more. They even made friends and started working together. The influence of the informal atmosphere and style of communication was particularly mentioned, “We have become partners ready to help each other.”

The survey participants were generally unanimous in their opinion that participation in such projects and programmes made a significant contribution to the development of **civil competences**: People had the opportunity to learn about their rights and start using them if they had some kind of support. Non-formal learning contributes to this through selected topics and diverse content, as well as through the use of various techniques that develop critical thinking, the ability to engage in dialogue, resolve conflicts, and defend your rights.

It is also interesting that many respondents, including both training organisers and participants, emphasised the role of involving participants

in the activities of non-governmental organisations and volunteer initiatives to change their civic position. This kind of cooperation had not always been planned from the beginning, but happened to become an “added value” for both sides. Such volunteers became an additional resource for the NGOs which organised training, and at the same time received an opportunity to test their knowledge and skills in a secure environment, to develop their self-esteem, and to change their role in society.

However, one of the participants in the course that was held in the village of Lyntupy (the Kultyvatar NGO) noted that a series of meetings and courses were crucial to see the changes happen and initiatives flourish at community level. (“It is important to create a place people go to, with a certain reputation. It doesn’t even have to be a physical place, but a network people want to be part of. The place can change. A one-time event is rather perceived as a gift.”)

The development of **economic competences** was not the number one concern in all the cases, which might be the reason why many respondents mentioned the indirect impact of the training on people’s lives. At the same time, they noted that having additional knowledge and competences allowed the participants to enjoy certain direct benefits,



Vadim Glinnik, the manager of the mini-project “By learning we create” in Lyntupy and head of the “Lyntupy centre of culture Kultyvatar”, October 2018

Photo: Piotr Markelov

for example to save on repairs (because they learned how to do them on their own), to start their own business after being registered as an artisan (the participants of the course on repairing old houses held in the Lyntupy village), to increase their chances on the labour market by obtaining basic skills in the new profession (women released from correctional camps in Vitebsk and the Vitebsk region), to expand the financial and material resources of their organisation through the development of new projects and obtaining corresponding funding (parents of disabled children being members of a local NGO in Bobruisk).

Key success factors for educational practices

Despite the fact that the analysis covered programmes with different content targeting different population groups, and developed and implemented by different types of non-governmental organisation, the descriptions of success factors generally contain quite a number of similar ideas about what affects the effectiveness and success of a programme.

Below are the key findings structured by respondent type:

Interviews with managers:

1. The active position of the practice manager is crucial for success (they are inside a specific local community or vulnerable group, want to make something better, and also understand the role of education in the development of active citizenship), as well as many years of working, communicating and even living with such groups; involvement of all members of the organisation in the development of programmes; cooperation with local authorities, social and other services that also work with vulnerable groups; understanding that the “introduction” of any activities into such vulnerable groups should be very gentle, carefully thought out and circumspect. At the same time, the managers noted that it was necessary to study the needs of target groups more thoroughly when developing educational programmes in the future.
2. The trainers involved in the practices under consideration were offered this job on the basis of previous experience of cooperation and communication with them, as well as the managers’ subjective assessments and assumptions as to how the trainers would interact with vulnerable groups, get in touch with them, and earn their trust, rather than through a competitive selection. Any previous experience of cooperation with a trainer was considered a valuable advantage. It was also important for

the trainer to set a successful example and be a practitioner in the field in which he or she conveyed knowledge.

3. The effective selection of participants was largely based on the use of personal connections, contacts and informal communication. At the same time, both managers and participants noted the need to expand public awareness channels and widen the audience of the practices, as well as to select the participants more strictly according to their needs in the future. The invaluable assistance that was offered by local administrations and social services in sharing contacts and establishing first contacts (especially if such practices were implemented for the first time) was also noted.
4. The training organisers interviewed were unanimous about the fact that as much applied knowledge as possible should be given in the process of learning so that the participants could start doing something with their hands and become familiar with the examples of work when the training was still underway. At the same time, it was emphasised that the main objectives of training offered to vulnerable groups should include a change in attitudes towards themselves and their lives, and a change in their life situation. The educational process should be adjusted to the life circumstances and the needs of vulnerable groups whenever necessary, and not always strictly follow the original programme in terms of schedule. It is important to be highly flexible in order to retain the initial audience until the end of the training.
5. The managers should actively participate in communication with the participants, do their best to create comfortable and relaxed conditions, to “stir up” the passive trainees. Completion of the practice should be followed by further communication with the participants in order to learn about the changes in their lives and to evaluate the results achieved.
6. Both formal (questionnaires) and informal methods should be used for evaluation and to collect feedback. At the same time, the process should be streamlined and documented in greater detail.
7. The increase in the efficiency and viability of the programmes relies on the support of local authorities that adds sustainability to the project. It was generally noted that partners were indispensable when it came to the effective implementation of non-formal education programmes.
8. The motivation of participants deserves special attention. It is necessary to design an effective system of motivating and retaining participants (granting them certificates on completing the course, offering assistance in opening their own businesses or making their first sales, covering some expenses that are important to make changes, etc.) as early as at the course development stage. It is great if the first changes take place when the training is still underway (participation in civic

initiatives, volunteering, the desire to change not only their lives, but also those of those around them), albeit not for all participants and not immediately, which will later inspire others. The training programmes should also include components that could motivate the participants to do something independently after the project has been completed, without the help and support of the organisers.

Interviews with trainers:

1. The qualification of trainers is crucial. It is important for trainers to be both successful trainers and practitioners, as well as to support the participants during the process and help them take the initiative so that they are not afraid to be proactive in future. The trainer plays the major role in defining the efficiency of work with vulnerable groups.
2. Success largely depends on the communication and cooperation established between the training organisers and the trainers. It is necessary to plan and hold working meetings, collect feedback, and clearly define the level and needs of the group at the very beginning.
3. The trainer's willingness to work closely with the participants during the implementation of the training programme is an important success factor: It is not always necessary to follow the programme strictly, but rather to focus on current needs and demands, change subjects whenever necessary, and adapt to current circumstances. It is also very important to take into account the characteristic features of the audience and offer the opportunities and skills that are relevant to them, which would become beneficial in their daily lives and help to trigger changes because the organisers' and trainers' failure to do so will render participants unable to apply their newly-acquired knowledge and skills in practice. The importance of individual forms of work and their effectiveness for both parties were noted as well.
4. Communication and evaluation: Informal personal communication which is trust-based can hardly be overestimated. It cannot be documented. It is close and confidential communication, and a respectful attitude between the trainer and representatives of vulnerable groups, that lead to the most impressive results. Post-project communication is also highly rewarding. The key forms of evaluation should also be informal and allow the participants not to be afraid of making mistakes.

Interviews with participants:

1. The effectiveness of training largely depends on whether the participants are initially motivated, understand the need to complete the train-

ing, and want to apply the acquired skills in practice. Motivation to attend the course may be primarily tied to the relevance and uniqueness of the practice in the region, and to the proximity of the training venue to the place of residence (so that a participant does not have to travel far, especially under various kinds of restrictions). The expectations of the participants formed before the start of training affect motivation as well; the majority of respondents expected specific practical results to emerge while the course was still underway, namely participation in the life of the local community, communication with those who had the same problem, higher levels of attention to them, the realisation that any problem could be solved, etc.

2. A well-built communication system also influences the motivation to participate and learning effectiveness. First of all, individual component and post-project communication are important (being able to communicate with the trainer and organisers at the stage of applying knowledge and skills, to receive feedback and support).
3. The development of civic competences is hardly possible without the experience of civic participation. It is important to already involve the participants in civic actions while they are still in the process of learning. Working with vulnerable groups currently results in the development of social competences to the greatest extent, whilst it is important to develop other types equally well (include participants in economic activities and in the real life of society, develop their legal literacy to change their life situation). At the social level, it is important for the participants to feel self-confidence and experience the positive impact of examples of other people with similar problems. The representatives of vulnerable groups cherish the chance to break away from routine, acquire additional skills and new acquaintances, and change their social networks.

Conclusions

The results of the analysis of three educational mini-projects implemented in various regions of Belarus and aimed at expanding the range of theoretical knowledge and practical skills of rural populations, families raising children and young people with disabilities, as well as of female former prisoners, and alcoholics, confirm the hypothesis given at the beginning of the article that the participants, trainers and training organisers consider participation in the activities organised by civil society organisations to be an important component of a person's civic competence building.

- It is emphasised in all the interviews that were conducted that non-governmental organisations should include practical modules aimed at developing self-help skills and skills of helping others in the course programme as early as at the stage of developing the training programmes for groups at risk from social exclusion. In addition, the introduction of multi-level programmes significantly increases the effectiveness of training (training + post-project support/consulting), when the participant keeps in touch with the organisation, their trainer and consultant, and has the opportunity to join any actions and projects of the organisation, in which they can apply their newly-acquired knowledge.
- At the same time, it is emphasised that civic participation skills can only be built on the basis of the previously-developed social competences and on the changes in an individual's attitude towards themselves that are primarily manifested in increased self-confidence, motivation and readiness to change, to solve their own problems, and engage in solving the problems of the community/society.
- Practice-orientated curricula and learning by doing run like a golden thread through all the interviews. We can therefore assume that they currently represent one of the most significant concepts/ideas for non-formal education programmes implemented by civil society organisations in Belarus.
- All the respondents emphasised the informal nature of learning and communication as a key success factor of their programmes, and as a distinctive feature that contributed to the improvement of learning efficiency.
- Partnership and cooperation were also mentioned in all the interviews as key success factors of non-formal education programmes for various vulnerable social groups. Moreover, such partnership was considered at different levels: from partnership between the trainer and participants, through cooperation between the organisers and trainers, to interaction and partnership between various organisations and stakeholders.
- In general, all the managers, trainers and even training participants interviewed demonstrated a high level of civic values and a desire to build their civic competences. However, due to a specific sample (the training programmes were organised by representatives of NGOs who were well aware of the specific goals of the organisation, and focused on promoting the interests of their target groups; voluntary participation in training implied a certain degree of activity among the participants, etc.), we cannot extend this evaluation over all potential participants and organisers of such courses. On the contrary, the fact that all three groups of respondents paid so much attention to increasing participants' motivation to develop their civic competences suggests that they considered

their experience of successful implementation of such a programme as a unique practice.

- Such a conclusion is also indirectly confirmed by managers and trainers, who insist that greater attention should be paid to a preliminary assessment of participants' needs, and that it is necessary to be highly flexible during programme implementation in order to be able to respond to the interests and needs of the participants.
- The survey did not actually provide much material on assessing the qualifications of trainers and the process of their selection/training. However, both groups – the trainers and the managers – talked at length about the subjective factors that determine the selection of the “right” trainer.

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Moldova

Adult learning and education practices in active citizenship in Moldova

Preliminaries

According to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC), **social and civic** aptitudes are fundamental to each person in a knowledge-based society; these capabilities are expressed through the individual's aptitude to effectively and constructively participate in social and occupational life, and to actively and democratically engage in community life, something which is especially important in societies with increased heterogeneity and diversity.

At the same time, active citizenship education is a relatively new concept in Moldova, and is still undeveloped at the systemic level. Most initiatives target in-school youth, while the adult population is perceived as being participative "per se". In reality, the most recent trends show a decreased involvement and lack of a civic culture in the Republic of Moldova. The reform of curricula in formal education in the Republic of Moldova since 2010 has driven the country's educational system towards a pedagogy of competences, striving to achieve harmonisation of the design of education at national level with educational practices and systems in Europe. The development of social and civic competence is among the strategic goals reflected in the pre-university-level curriculum of 2010. The curricula reform that took place at the same level in 2018 reconsidered the topic, and a compulsory course on Education for Society in secondary and high school education was introduced. The course aims to foster values of the rule of law, and to develop the competences necessary for the observance of citizens' rights and responsibilities. The curriculum of non-formal education in civic education has a 25-year presence, expressed through various educational programmes, mainly carried out by civil society organisations (CSOs).

However, CSOs are also undergoing natural processes and fluctuations. The number of registered CSOs is quite impressive, varying from 8,000 to 6,500, as reflected in various official sources. However, the analysts assess that over 65% of organisations are located in the capital, and that only about 25% of CSOs are truly active, i.e. that they implement projects on a more or less regular basis. Organisations themselves differentiate their areas of activity as follows: About 50% of all CSOs consider

themselves as providers of education and training (50%), while social services supplied by CSOs account for 40.8%. More or less complementary areas of **community development** and **civic participation** account for 36.9% and 26.2%, respectively. One can question these measurements simply because there is no profound understanding of the differences between the two areas, so that they are distinguished almost intuitively, leading to a probability of overlapping and double-counting. Unlike societies with more highly-developed participative processes, where community growth mandatorily includes local or national government, in the young Moldovan democracy, community development is mostly considered as being a responsibility for civil society, involving authorities only at certain stages, if at all. In reality, community life and civic participation are somewhat reduced in scope, mostly taking place at the initiative of international donors and supporters.

At the same time, statistical data show a **general regression** in the indicators of **citizens' participation in electoral and labour market processes**. Thus, young people's parliamentary electoral turnout in 2014 reached only 34.43%, while 64.64% of adults turned out to vote in that year. 30.73% of 15-29 year-olds turned out to vote in the first round of the 2015 local elections, compared with 55.32% among the adult population as a whole. The voter turnout in the 2016 presidential election was 50.95%, while in the 2018 local elections residents in the capital city registered the lowest participation rate in the history of local elections: about 35.53% valid votes.

Another significant indicator of participation is the activity rate of the population aged 15 and over on the labour market. The **activity rate** of this group stood at 42.2% in 2017, slightly down on 2016 (42.6%). It is evident that the quota of **inactive youth (52.6%)** is higher than the share of working or learning youth. In 2017, NEET youth accounted for 29.3% of the total number of young people aged 15-29, with the exception of those who went abroad to work or were in search of work.

The authors of the study entitled "Education for Active Citizenship. The current situation and the mechanisms of its continuous development" (2016), assess developments from a non-formal education perspective. The authors argue that "participation in voting and involvement in the decision-making process" are two manifestations of citizens' participation that have emerged from education for active citizenship. They stress that ensuring efficient cooperation among existing and potential actors at local and national levels would be an important aspect for awareness-raising and creating sustainable mechanisms for development of active citizenship.

Methodology

The present research on the development of active citizenship – best practices in adult education in Moldova – aims to assess some educational practices, and has been facilitated by the DVV International country office in Moldova, in cooperation with local partners, with the aim in mind of fostering the participation of various population groups in social, political, economic and civic life skills, as well as formulating recommendations for consolidation and development of civic competences of the staff and participants in educational practices.

The empirical study is based on semi-structured interviews conducted among DVV International Moldova beneficiaries, conducted between March and April 2018 within three partner organisations from the capital city, as well as the central and southern regions:

1. The NGO “Positive Initiative”, located in the capital Chisinau and targeting people living with HIV, including prison inmates and ex-prisoners (<http://ong.ngo.md/rus/ong/view/3189>)
2. The humanitarian NGO “Filantropia Crestina”, located in the town of Orhei and focusing on supporting unemployed women and young people (<http://arch.mitropoliabasarabiei.md/news/727/>)
3. NGO “AZI”, located in the southern town of Cahul, offering education for elderly people and people with disabilities (<https://www.facebook.com/ao.azi/>)

In order to carry out the study, the semi-structured interview method was applied based on an interview guide with predefined, specific questions proposed to the respondents in order to identify: (1) features of civic education actions, (2) the advantages, (3) the disadvantages of the educational practices, and (4) the potential for implementation on a wider scale of learning activities for the development of civic competences among different population groups. Through direct and indirect questions, the interviewer sought to identify the respondents’ perception of the concept of active citizenship and civic involvement at a personal and organisational level, as well as to capture the respondents’ opinions on civic competence and civic participation.

Each participant in the interview was assigned a code number, so that references to ideas quoted below only indicate the person’s position or role.

Research findings

“Active civic participation, active participatory engagement” and “active citizenship” are multilateral, complex concepts linked to citizens’ inclusion and participation in the political, social and economic life of the community. For countries with emerging democracies, including the Republic of Moldova, there is a quasi-understanding of the concept that leads to social confusion, expressed through social distrust, social passivity or a low level of participation by citizens in all areas of community life. The Council of Europe (EC) operates with the notion of “democratic citizenship”, meaning high participation, social cohesion, accessibility, equity and solidarity: It implies greater inclusion and less exclusion, more participation and less marginalisation, more culture and values, rather than basic processes such as voting, and of course the ability to apply and shape active citizenship practices.



Training of local trainers

Photo: DVV International Moldova

Respondents who participated in the current survey defined an active citizen as:

- “A person who perceives an injustice and responds to it in such a way that the injustice is resolved, takes care and monitors the case to the end.
- A citizen is a person who holds the citizenship of a country and is officially registered by civil offices. Also, he or she is someone actively engaged in working, learning, travelling, being busy and pursuing development.
- An active citizen is a person who engages in civic or state-owned activities, taking care not only of personal life, but also being concerned about what is going on nearby. A citizen is both self-orientated and also useful to society.
- An active citizen is participative: if we are 11 participating women, we’ll definitely bring over another 1-2 pals.
- At retirement age, people have been perceived as inactive for a while, spending time at home; but once involved in the activity they felt freer, more visible, more needed.”

It is obvious that active citizenship can be defined as taking opportunities to become active and democratically involved in defining and addressing communities’ problems and improving the quality of life.

“Civic involvement requires an active social position... I believe that our organisation has a high level of civic participation and responds to social needs; we support the initiators of significant changes in society, starting with the implementation of innovative medical programmes, e.g. hepatitis C treatment. Initially, high-priced drugs were purchased for about 300 people per year in a country where at least 300,000 people have hepatitis C. Through advocacy and lobbying actions, we have treated about 3,000 cases a year. The figure is still rising, and treatment is more effective and quicker. It speaks about the fact that you do not sit on the fence, but you get involved. In a community outside the capital, we launched a start-up where each person has his or her own responsibility, is involved in a process which then benefits the entire community and the people who will come to the community. This was decided by the people. We came up with the idea, but they supported us. Education was a mobilisation platform. You can give something

to a person, providing education or teaching, but if he or she is not ready to continue with other people, then such efforts will be in vain.”
(Project coordinator CSO)

Participation is exercised through various bodies, from school councils to municipal councils and bodies organised by fields: solidarity structures, trade unions, youth, women, elderly people’s organisations, etc. Citizens can participate individually and collectively, developing a civil society to ensure that a balance is struck between state institutions and citizens.

According to the survey entitled “Involvement of citizens in community life” conducted by the IMAS Marketing and Surveys Institute in June 2018, Moldovans, especially young people, show **low civic activity**.

Firstly, there is a low share of respondents who use official channels to solve a problem in their locality:

- 85% of the population **did not attend any meeting of local councils** in their locality (even though local council meetings are public by law).
- The overwhelming majority of the population (91%) **did not write a complaint** about any local problem.
- 79% said that they **had not contacted their elected Member of Parliament or Minister** in the last 12 months. We can therefore emphasise the absence of any communication with the people’s representatives or civil servants.
- Only 7% of respondents contacted at least one media institution to report a problem in his or her locality.
- Participants in the survey do not frequently use social media as a tool to discuss a community problem. In the year prior to the study, 91% of respondents said that they did not post any issues about them in the community.

The above-mentioned results suggest a lack of trust among citizens vis-à-vis local authorities, as well as their [in]capacity to solve community problems. At the same time, data also prove a state of indifference among the population, as well as a lack of awareness of the instruments of civic involvement.

Another aspect worth pointing to is the significant difference between the percentage of those who say that they **have discussed with other people about solving** a local problem, and those who **have been involved in solving the problem**. 54% of respondents discuss the problems of their locality, but issues often remain unresolved, as only 34% are involved in their resolution. Middle-aged people (aged 41-55) have a higher

level of civic activity (37%) compared to young people (18-25 years old), the latter being active to a similar extent as people aged over 71 (25%). And this despite the fact that most of the organisations involved in promoting civic activity view young people as a target group. It seems however that it is not young people who are champions of civic participation to solve the problems of the locality. The study shows that the level of education is an important factor for civic activity because the level of participation in resolving local problems, at 64%, is higher among people with higher education than among others. On the other hand, the researchers found an improvement in citizens' environmental awareness: 56% of the respondents participated in garbage collections, 42% in planting trees, over 40% in arranging or repairing a public asset. Also, a quarter of the respondents participated in the activities of non-governmental organisations as volunteers.

Five years after the above-mentioned survey, the situation does not seem to have changed significantly, although respondents in DVV International interviews have mentioned that by coming together in groups – be they organised along learning, cultural, confessional, rehabilitation or reintegration lines – they experience civic activism on issues of environment, building leisure and recreation facilities in their communities, promoting national values, supporting the elderly, and other categories.

“It is important that large infrastructure projects are carried out, but from our point of view the smaller projects are also no less important. This refers to local initiatives involving all people. That is what we wanted to communicate to people by our own example. The mayors of Manta and Iujnoe villages highlighted the importance of small projects; they are the most beautiful, the most valuable, because they involve the whole community, and then you have results and help.” *(CSO manager)*

Community-based social projects rely on **volunteering** (in particular by supporting social projects or people with disabilities) and **personal or social responsibility** (by people in detention or recently released from prison who act as peer consultants for prison inmates).

“... Volunteering is developed in the community through our Association (i.e. CSO) and – church-based – society (i.e. community group) that we set up. Added to this is the Association, without confusing their specific roles. Civic activity is mainly based on philanthropy, since values primarily start from the Church, and in this situation, it is about volunteering, social

support, the economic and social skills for various categories of disadvantaged people, and more recently adult education, such as professionalisation, re-qualification, employment mediation and others.”
(CSO manager)

“In our activity with beneficiaries, as well as with children and young people with disabilities, we are assisted by young people in the community. Without them we would not have managed it.

They have been with us for many years. The success of young people with disabilities is thanks to young volunteers. We have developed a volunteer policy; each volunteer has a volunteering contract. We felt that what we do can be useful to others. When

I wrote the project for these four communities, we thought of volunteering in these localities.”
(CSO manager)

“... We have two [types of] activities - community (rehabilitation) [centre] and [work in] prisons. In both activities, we talk about people with particular social status who have become involved in social responsibility activities. Prisoners have assumed the role of consultants, of people who care for others. In the [therapeutic] community, we established a start-up [small home-stead], where each person has his or her own responsibility, is involved in a process that later brings benefits to the entire community and to the people who will come to the community.”

(CSO coordinator)

Both volunteering and social responsibility are models of human interaction in society, based on a certain type of political, legal and moral value – all historically determined. It is believed that volunteers usually take actions and volunteer activities take place in countries where national and civic ideas match. One example of volunteering in the Moldovan context is traditional “claca”: Neighbours, relatives and community members get together to build a house, clean a well or jointly conduct other activities that involve unpaid work.

Community traditions, combined with innovative approaches from among civil society initiatives, have established a need for regulation of volunteering. As a result of civil society advocacy and lobbying in Moldova in 2010, volunteering is recognised in Act no. 121 as a public utility action. According to this Act, by obtaining a volunteer’s card, the volunteer benefits from accumulating work experience and its recognition by the employer; the volunteer has a competitive advantage for admission to higher education institutions, including receiving scholarships or accommodation

in student hostels; accumulation of transferable education credits for practical internships, and recognition of 40 hours of internship activity (Art. 14).

Personal social responsibility and corporate social responsibility are related to the idea of positive compensation for support received from people or companies, from social groups and from the state. A person's social responsibility appears as an added value to the personal value obtained by performing his or her fundamental insights.

“[Our] participants faced detention or used drugs, and labour rehabilitation is a serious challenge for them. The educational module has helped them become socially responsible, to understand their role in society and on the labour market, to believe that they can be useful to society, that they can initiate business processes, and that their past is not an obstacle but may well actually be an advantage. We noticed that (some) people who finished the rehabilitation programme had become successful in business. We analysed this and concluded that they developed [practical skills] that go beyond [development] limits which would be imposed in schools or universities. People generate non-standard solutions and approaches. The point is that employment is successful if it benefits people, regardless of the type of activity. Participants have considered themselves as people who invest in social programmes.” *(Trainer)*

The analysis of semi-structured interviews highlights the influence of “role models in the local community who have a similar personal history” when it comes to personal development, involvement and civic participation, including people in conflict with the law or individuals who have had an isolated way of life. Interviewees pointed out that civic participation is sometimes an instinctive effect of a person's involvement in learning activities: The beneficiary becomes more active whilst still being unaware that it is about social activism.

“The principle of our organisation is *peer to peer*: “I was like you and I know how to help you”, providing the positive pattern of success. People who have been in contact with drug users know that they do not trust people from outside. You cannot tell them that you came to teach them how to live. That does not work. They are working on the idea that he was like me, he was a consumer, he was a nobody, he too had lost almost everything, but he is successful today. This is the only model that works. We cannot integrate other types of model; they do

not work because our beneficiaries have a very low threshold of trust, so we come from that context, and the programme and the people and the curriculum have focused on the peer concept.”
(CSO Coordinator)

“We attracted participants to exhibitions, fairs and training, and it is already activist. They went out into society; they saw what other people were doing in other communities. Collaborative relationships between participants began with friendship, saw their circle of interests, exposed themselves to meetings and activities.

In this way, they became involved in spite of themselves. ‘Look, there is a festival, but what are the requirements for participation? Do they need traditional outfits?’ They were not only interested in our course, but they left the house, they became active, they widened their circle of friends and acquaintances. They understand that engaging in activities gives you the opportunity to get to know new people who can help you. It all came by itself, naturally. If you ask the project beneficiaries about civic activism directly, you won’t get an answer, but when you explain, I understand by what means they have become more active for society and can offer something new to others, then you will get a response.”

(Trainer)

Moreover, interviewed members of organisations mentioned formal problem-solving pathways in their locality or community as a tool for activating citizens: Formal requests or inquiries, cooperation agreements or memorandums, are signed and submitted. In addition, adult education courses conducted by partner organisations include modules related to citizens’ rights, labour law and entrepreneurial activity.

“I’m retired. Now that I’m involved in this project, I’m a boss. I go to the town hall, knock on the door ... I’ve written to the Mayoralty and to the District Council. We have raised 350,000 lei (about 17,500 EUR^{1/}) for the roof of the cultural centre. We got another 23 thousand lei (about 1,150 EUR) for national costumes. We also hope to get some money for traditional shoes.”

(Beneficiary)

1/ Author’s note: 1 EUR equals about 20 Moldovan Lei (MDL)

“State authorities are responsive and open, likely to take initiatives, but are unable to support us financially, and we are in a position to look for resources. They have no right to purchase services (from non-profits); the state cannot take over or take on individual priorities. They need help from civil society and donors, but we hope that these activities will be taken over by the state, that they will be sustainable and financially supported by the state. But it takes time, investment and resources.”

(CSO Coordinator)

“I know, following the training, what my rights as a beginner-worker are. At the moment, I do not feel that any of my rights are being violated, but if that happens I will know what is the right way to act.”

(Beneficiary)

Participating organisations revealed that target groups and learning outcomes differ. Some of the proposed initiatives are entrepreneurial, including the following: breeding quail, sewing and embroidery based on ethnic traditions, and beekeeping, as well as artistic activities. For all the programmes mentioned, framework curricula were developed and objectives to develop civic competences were set and targeted. In reply to the question “How did the course contribute to the development of civic activism?”, the respondents, most of them trainers and curriculum developers, stated:

“Volunteering has developed. People wanted to do something, but they had no initiative. The participants have formed a communication initiative group. They are more communicative, collaborate, help each other.”

(Beneficiary)

“It made us friendlier, enabled us to show that we are acting not only for ourselves, but also for the community. It was not a worthless activity; it was not a bad thing.”

(Beneficiary)

“We’ve become more assertive. We have become a group with common interests, common thoughts, common tastes. Sometimes when we talk, we find that we think the same way, we have become a group that wants to grow, not to stand still. We remembered old songs, we want to learn, to interpret them, not to forget the traditions of the village, the locality.”

(Beneficiary)

“We’ve understood that every age has an interest in life, everyone has their place in the community. Even if you are retired, you do not have to stay at home, forget about everything and not hope for something more beautiful.” *(Beneficiary)*

“[Trainees] have understood their obligations. They understand that not only the state has to offer citizens something, but also citizens have to take the initiative, not to be passive to what is happening in the country, in the community. I believe that this is the main thing.” *(Mayor of a local community)*

“Trainees have become aware of the right to know and to understand. They wanted this, but they did not know how to do it or that they had this right. There have been joint efforts: Someone offers planting material, or other entrepreneurs come with other contributions.” *(Training beneficiary)*

“We’ve dealt in greater detail with citizens’ rights and responsibilities. It’s one thing to superficially know your rights, and another thing to assert them. Even if we admit or find a violation, we usually say ‘Well, let it go...’ and we move on. It is our right and responsibility to be aware and to act properly.” *(Local trainer)*

“Participants know about the opportunities they receive as a result of courses – it is easier to find a job, participate in training, participate in camps, activities. The young people from the localities coming to Cahul primarily engage in volunteer activities. We have no problems with volunteers. We have different categories of volunteers – young people, adults, even pregnant women participate in our volunteer activities. Training has contributed to social integration. For example, libraries play an important role at community level, and after the volunteer work organised by the librarian in the commune of Iujnoe, the residents highly appreciated it. Their social value in society has increased.” *(CSO manager)*

“I think everything I learned was meant to develop civic competences, to achieve something at the community level, in high school.” *(Local trainer)*

“Leadership modules, the role of social business, [are] topics that raised the issue of the social relevance of beneficiaries, what they can offer to their families, to society, [all these] have contributed to the development of civic competences. The strategy that everyone owes you something is obsolete; now they [community members] also have to offer something to other people. For this we focused on the idea of social activism: By helping yourself, you help those around you.”

(CSO Coordinator)

The diversity of responses can be interpreted from different perspectives, but we find that both civil society organisations that conduct educational and training activities, and their beneficiaries, are familiar with the concept of **civic activism**. In the case of beneficiaries from rural communities, the connotation of the terms is sometimes understood quite literally – in the sense of being active in society, not necessarily in a structured or sophisticated way. They demonstrate that both participants in ALE programmes, and even local trainers, have a very basic grasp of civic activism that can



Dialogue between generations

Photo: DVV International Moldova

be reduced to being receptive to community needs and taking a stance towards immediate requests. None of the interviewees mentioned participation in decision-making or monitoring local policies. The maximum possible involvement that they managed to attain in project implementation was to urge the authorities to allocate some resources for local community needs. The key concepts identified at the level of the organisations interviewed with regard to civic activism are: “volunteering” and “personal” and “social responsibility”; while concepts such as “solidarity”, “social initiative and participative decision-making” were not mentioned.

Beneficiaries of training courses and entrepreneurial start-ups mentioned the following civic competences that they developed:

- Knowledge and awareness of citizens' rights and duties;
- identifying community issues and setting up civic initiatives;
- communication and civic cooperation;
- intervention with requests to local authorities;
- identifying partners for civic initiatives;
- trust and civic courage;
- analysing positive practices and identifying one's own resources to follow the role models.

Proposals from interviewees

Organisational representatives and course beneficiaries have the following proposals for participants, organisers and trainers from the perspective of future activities:

Regarding target groups:

- Participants are to select an appealing activity, and organisers should attract people from different areas, activities and collectives, i.e. a better, more structured needs analysis which generates more relevant results should be conducted by providers of adult education programmes.
- Along with adults, groups of young people should also be more actively involved in order to increase their motivation to live at home, i.e. counter-acting emigration.
- Parent education activities should be organised.
- For the subsequent activities, the target group should be expanded. It is necessary to take into account the demographic particularities of each village and invite people to volunteer, regardless of their age. In Cahul, as well as in rural areas, volunteering is usually mentally associated

with young people, but the situation in the villages is different: There are communities with an almost total lack of younger people, but the older groups have been overlooked as potential target groups.

- Smaller groups for ALE activities can be recommended: It is considered that groups of up to ten people can be selected for personal training courses.

Regarding learning strategy and methods (curriculum):

- Apply strategies to motivate lifelong learning, including capitalising on the concept of personal development.
- Apply learning strategies to expand trainees' comfort zones, to eliminate prejudices, to participate and to meet new people.
- Curriculum to be focused on practical activities, to capitalise on the learning experience.
- Review the duration of the course and the training sessions in order to reduce breaks between sessions. It is also necessary to pursue the principle of a systematic approach and coherence of learning units.
- Activities cultivating volunteer work are effective.



Personal development course

Photo: DVV International Moldova

Regarding trainers and learning resources:

- Support the optimism and desire of organisers and trainers to work with people in the community. It is hard work, but it needs to be maintained and developed.
- Training of trainers should be ongoing. Seminars on curriculum development are highly appreciated.
- Ensure the involvement of trainers with a variety of experiences.
- Consider changing locations for ALE activities. CSOs should be encouraged to create cozy learning spaces, to identify sources for the development of the technical-material basis necessary for the training process.

Based on the interviews that were conducted, it is noticeable that the perception of **active citizenship** in the Republic of Moldova is somewhat narrow: People who show at least some interest in community life or common commitments are perceived as being active citizens. A certain apathy towards civic initiatives has developed after a couple of decades of more or less enthusiastic civic spirit. The population at large either remembers “imposed” volunteering during the Socialist era, or is reluctant to face current realities when public trust in reforms has been seriously damaged by corrupt authorities and a feeling that nothing changes no matter how much public reaction is put into it. It is also obvious that participation in decision-making is not considered as a real possibility by most people, or is not even thought of. If civic activism is brought into the discussion, it is about participating in voting during national or local elections, and generating usually small-scale initiatives to improve the immediate environment – clean a public space, establish and maintain a park or a playground, engage in other similar activities. In the general perception, it is young people who were associated with volunteering and civic activism, and most of the projects targeted this very group. However, given the serious general exodus, more activities should be scheduled for adults as a whole, in addition to young adults in particular. This category could be more difficult to deal with in training – some interview respondents mentioned that this topic was new; interactive participation was also perceived as a new approach. Moreover, some rural intellectuals admitted that they had had a long career in teaching but lacked certain basic skills and competences, e.g. to structure an official request or inquiry or to conduct a civic initiative from planning to evaluating.

CSO leaders who are recognisable in localities, who encourage people to understand common needs and act, are also perceived as active citizens and opinion makers. They are trustworthy in many respects, including inviting people to engage in learning activities. However, the

CSOs fostering active citizenship are only slightly more experienced than the general population; their efforts are directed towards urging local initiatives, sometimes in a very basic way. These small-scale activities are not always sufficient. People and communities are still at a stage where they identify issues of relevance to certain individuals: If a rural teacher is interviewed, he/she stresses the need to work with students' parents as adults.

Local trainers are recruited from among existing human resources – educators, librarians – who also still require training in the methodology of working with adults, as well as on specific topics. They might be more advanced than learners coming to courses, but more systematic professionalisation in both ALE and civic education would be desirable.

Conclusions and recommendations

Social and civic competences are fundamental to each person in a knowledge-based society, and are expressed through the person's ability to participate effectively and constructively in social and working life and to engage actively in increasingly diverse societies. At the same time, active citizenship education is a relatively new concept, undeveloped at the systemic level, which made it more difficult to advance participatory democracy and civic culture in the Republic of Moldova, as is evidenced by the low level of citizens' participation in electoral processes and on the job market. Moldova develops policies for training social and civic competences in school in line with the Recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC). Development of social and civic competence is one of the goals of the education system, reflected in the secondary school National Curriculum in 2010. The curriculum reform in 2018 has re-conceptualised the Civic Education school discipline, introducing Education for Society as a compulsory subject for students attending grammar school (Grades 5-9) and high school (Grades 10-12). The non-formal education curriculum in civic education has generated 25 years of experience which is expressed through various educational programmes implemented by CSOs, mainly on the basis of projects funded by international donor organisations.

The respondents to the semi-structured interview distinguished between being a citizen of the Republic of Moldova and being an active citizen who:

- identifies injustice and responds to it, helping resolve the situation, and also monitors the status quo later on;

- is actively engaged in working, studying and travelling, is always busy and pursues personal and career development;
- engages in social, governmental or non-governmental activity, participates in social care activities, and takes care not only of himself or herself, but also of those around him or her, and is useful to society;
- knows his or her rights and gets involved in community life.

Thus, active citizenship is defined as the assumption by citizens of the opportunities to become active and democratically involved in defining and addressing the problems of their communities and in improving the quality of life.

Civil society development is of key importance for the fundamental, democratic and pluralistic values in any country, but also for encouraging the social involvement of citizens in development processes. However, Moldovans, including young people – a category that has been targeted by many CSO projects – show decreasing civic activity, a fact that reconfirms the urgent need to provide children, young people and adults with additional information and education programmes in order to foster civic activism.

Respondents in these research interviews, i.e. representatives of CSOs from various parts of the country, have mentioned that by coming together in groups – learning, cultural, religious or rehabilitation and social integration ones – they prove civic activism in areas such as environmental change interventions, amending and recreation and leisure facilities in local communities, fostering national values and traditions through education, offering support for the elderly and people with special needs. Conducting social projects at community level, through civic action, is based on volunteering (two of the participating CSOs) and personal or social responsibility (CSO specialised in working with prison inmates). The positive role model within the community is of critical importance for personal development, engagement and civic participation. The interviews conducted do not reveal phenomena such as: **solidarity acts, social initiatives, participation in decision-making.**

Participants in Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial start-up programmes have triggered the development of the following civic competences:

- Understanding and awareness of citizens' rights and duties;
- identifying community issues and setting up civic initiatives;
- communication and civic cooperation;
- submitting requests to local authorities;
- identifying partners for civic initiatives;

- trust and civic courage;
- analysing positive practices and identifying own resources to follow the role models.

The non-formal adult educational projects implemented by the DVV International country office in Moldova, in cooperation with local partner organisations, have contributed to the development of civic activism through the advance of volunteering and the spirit of initiative, collaboration and communication, conducting activities orientated towards community utility. Age is not very relevant in the context of civic activism; what matters is the impulse and work in groups. Joint efforts can impel revitalisation and development of civic participation and civic culture, solidarity and mutual respect. Education is the essential tool in this context.

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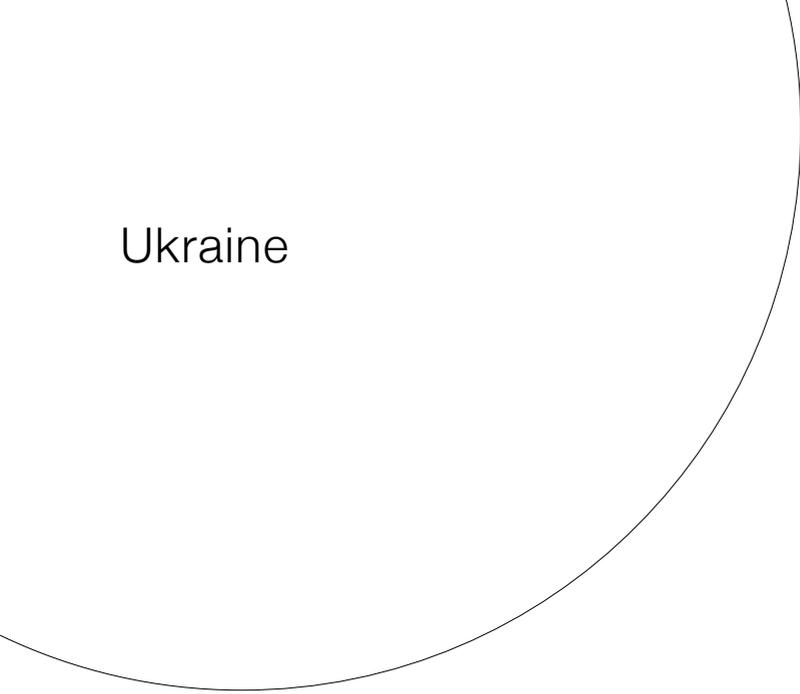
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Ukraine

Best educational practices in the field of active citizenship in Ukraine

Framework conditions

Despite the fact that the term “active citizenship” has not gained popularity since Ukraine’s independence and is used purely among public activists and experts, various approaches to “the formation of an active and responsible citizen” have been reflected in several legislative initiatives in recent years.

It should be noted that the very need for “the formation of an active citizen” has been voiced in Ukraine only during the last two decades. On the one hand, political and business elites did not always understand how active citizens benefit society, or they did not want citizens to be too active as this might lead to them preventing these elites from “managing” resources at national, regional or local levels. On the other hand, the lack of traditions of real democratic participation during the Soviet era led to a lack of awareness of such a need among the population.

The first attempts to develop and discuss a civic education concept were undertaken at secondary and high school level during the late 90s and early 2000s. Civic education departments were set up at teacher training institutes; teachers took part in special training courses, but unfortunately this initiative only received support from international organisations and foundations. The concept draft has not received official approval from the Ukrainian state, and the courses in schools have retained the status of options.

The civic education of the adult population today is in the focus of activities of CSOs, funded only by international organisations and private foundations, with the dominant approach to shaping the citizen’s ability to “protect personal rights and express interests through various forms of participatory democracy”.

According to the findings of the All-Ukrainian Public Opinion Survey on “Civic Literacy in Ukraine”, held in July-September 2016 by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in the framework of the UNDP project entitled “Democratization, Human Rights and Civil Society Development”¹, only “27% of respondents consider themselves active citizens”. It is also

1/ http://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/uk/home/library/democratic_governance/civilliteracy.html

noted that “Ukrainians display a high level of declarative civic activity: They would prefer to join the activities rather than initiate them on their own”.

However, political and social processes in the country during the 2004 presidential election, and especially during the “Maidan”, the Revolution of Dignity 2013-2014², have stimulated a broad discussion on “involving the public in the development and implementation of state policy and addressing issues of local importance”.

National strategy for the development of civil society

One of the results was the active participation of the public in the national strategy for the development of civil society in Ukraine for 2016-2020, which was approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine on 26 February 2016. The needs for strategy development include “the lack of practice of involving the public in the development and implementation of state policy and addressing issues of local importance; insufficient incentives for civil society organisations to engage in entrepreneurial activities aimed at solving social problems (social entrepreneurship); the inclusion of such organisations in the provision of social services for the promotion of employment and vocational training of socially-vulnerable groups of the population”.

The purpose of the strategy is, amongst other things, “to provide additional opportunities for the realisation and protection of human and civil rights and freedoms, to satisfy public interests, using various forms of democracy, participation, civic initiative and self-organisation”. The strategy itself identifies four areas, one of which directly relates to support for active citizenship through “ensuring effective public participation procedures in the development and implementation of state and regional policy, addressing issues of local importance”. The results would allow executive authorities and local self-government bodies to conduct public consultations with community members, initiate and conduct local referenda by citizens themselves, initiate and hold general meetings (conferences) of members

^{2/} Demonstrations and civil unrest on the part of citizens from November 2013 onwards – mainly in Independence Square (“*Maidan Nezalezhnosti*”) in Ukraine’s capital Kyiv, but also in other cities across the country – against the government, which had refused to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union. The protests lasted for three months, and forced the president to flee the country in February 2014 and the government to resign. After presidential and parliamentary elections had been held in May 2014, Ukraine chose a European vector of development.

of a territorial community at their place of residence, and implement their decisions, amongst other things.

There is an understanding that such engagement on the part of citizens is impossible without taking “comprehensive measures aimed at increasing the civic education of the population regarding the possibility of protecting their rights and expressing interests through various forms of participatory democracy”, as well as without the “inclusion of courses and topics on the development of civil society in the curricula of general, vocational, higher education institutions”, and “without stimulating volunteer activity”, something which is also foreseen in the strategy.

The annual plans for its realisation include concrete objectives and activities: “the formation of a legal culture and legal consciousness in society, raising the level of citizens’ knowledge about the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of Ukraine in various spheres of life, and consolidation of civil society” on the one hand. On the other hand, the training of local authorities and, accordingly, the “development of training programmes to increase the qualifications in civic education and to develop civil competences of civil servants and officials of local self-government with the subsequent organisation of appropriate training” is also important.³

First concept of active citizenship

In fact, one of the first attempts to understand the concept of active citizenship in Ukraine was made by experts from the Institute of Leadership and Management of the Ukrainian Catholic University⁴, which in October 2018 published the brochure “Active Citizenship as a Lifestyle”. According to the authors, “the text of the publication reflects the concept of active citizenship, based on the four-year activity of the Institute. The authors have proposed a special approach to the training of Ukrainian trainers, as well as formulating seven principles of the agents of change”. At first, considerable importance is attached to the implementation of civil competences through civil society institutions, which should be stable and form the framework of society. A space for activity, creativity and innovation should be provided through project activities. Such active citizenship makes it possible to create, reproduce and change institutions at the

3/ Activity Plan 2018 on the implementation of the National Strategy for the Development of the Civil Society in Ukraine for 2016-2020, approved by the order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 10 May 2018, No. 297-p.

4/ <https://goo.gl/nQ1GaM>



Performance “Blind in the city”

Photo: Irina Shishkova

same time. A balance also needs to be struck between institutions and project activities. Secondly, the authors propose their understanding of differences between public and civic participation: “When we say ‘public participation’, we primarily mean the local connections between members of one community. And when we say ‘civic participation’, we understand that a citizen affects relations between an individual and the state. That means that it affects vertical relations, and has an impact on power.”

Concept for the development of civic education

A significant shift towards the development of educational programmes for active citizenship for adults in Ukraine has taken place due to the inclusion of relevant legislative norms by approving the concept for the development of civic education in the autumn of 2018.⁵ The concept is based on the Act of Ukraine “on Education”, which states that “the state shall create conditions for obtaining civic education aimed at forming the competences

^{5/} Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 3 October 2018, No. 710-p.

related to an individual's realisation of his or her rights and obligations as a member of society, the realisation of the values of a civil (free democratic) society, the rule of law, human and civil rights and freedoms". This document outlines a list of civil competences, defines the value benchmarks (indicators) and the system of civic education, which, in addition to civil society institutions, also includes state authorities, local self-government bodies, as well as educational institutions in various forms of ownership.

On the one hand, the concept formulates two "main strategic directions of civic education: legal education of citizens, in particular in terms of understanding and the ability to exercise their own constitutional rights and responsibilities; and strengthening the ability to participate in public life and avail themselves of the possibilities to exert an influence on decision-making processes at national and local level (implementation of the right to participate)." At the same time, the legal framework still requires practical mechanisms for the implementation of the norms established in the concept, in particular the mechanism for financing educational programmes for adults, including programmes implemented by CSOs. At present, international donors (British Council, EU, USAID, Council of Europe, UNDP and others) are the main source of funding for adult education in Ukraine.

Research into educational practices in the field of active citizenship in Ukraine

The research was conducted in five regions of Ukraine from April to June 2018. Six non-governmental organisations became the main venues for this study, and six educational practices in the field of non-formal education formed its focus: 1) a sewing course in Bucha; 2) an educational programme of civic education at the School of Activists of the People's Self-government (CHANCE) in Skole; 3) an educational programme on inclusion of people with disabilities in the democratic processes of the community in Melitopol; 4) a course on social volunteering in Vinnytsia; 5) an educational practice "The theatre of modern dialogue as an instrument for solving social problems" in Poltava; and 6) an educational programme of socialisation in Poltava.

Based on the methodology of the EduMAP project, interview and focus group discussion guides were adapted taking into account the regional specifics of the selected cases in Ukraine. In particular, the structure of the guides and the order of questions were changed, some questions were added (for example, on the process of design of the educational programmes, on trainer activities, on support and communication

with the participants). A separate guide for trainers was developed with a focus on the teaching and learning process. Unlike the EduMAP project, the issue of policy in the field of active citizenship and adult education was not studied.

The following methods were used in the study:

- semi-structured interviews and focus groups with participants of educational practices;
- semi-structured interviews with staff of educational practices (managers, trainers, other related staff);
- analysis of documents: work plan of the educational practice; schedule of classes, list of participants, reports of trainers; media messages on educational practice; filled feedback forms of participants and/or reports with feedback analysis.

Findings

Profile of organisations/providers of educational services

Vulnerable groups are the main audience for half of the participating organisations, and the other three organisations periodically collaborate with them within the project activity. For example, one organisation, besides educational services, provides social services for these groups: counselling, representation of interests, case management, etc. This leads to some differences in the process of planning and implementing educational practices. For example, the process of involving participants is easier in these practices because there is already a developed database of contacts. There are also clearer requirements and expectations with regard to trainers, as well as with regard to the teaching and learning processes. The perception of such organisations by respondents/participants also differs. They tend to perceive such organisations not only as providers of educational services, but also as places where they obtain help, where they are heard and understood, and where they are accepted.

The programme of resocialisation for (former) prisoners (Poltava) is a good example of a combination of educational and social services. During some modules, trainers provide information on additional services. Participants can receive these services in the organisation. This includes assistance with employment, assistance to find a place to live, humanitarian aid, etc. Also, at the request of the participants, the information about their life situation can be transferred to the social worker, who can provide case management and support in the future.

The concept of active citizenship

Asked about the concept of active citizenship, the majority of respondents from different groups defined it through the interpretation of the political context related to political and civic participation. In answer to the question: "Who are active citizens?", respondents indicated that they are conscious people who strive for better changes in their own lives and in the life of the society in which they live. Another important thing is their willingness to assume responsibility for their beliefs, deeds and life situations: "... this is when you realise that your fence is a part of the street, and you are responsible for the fence as well as for the street" (R 16). Such people are aware of how and on what they can exert an influence.

Citizens with an active disposition are usually optimistic and proactive: "They tend to recover and go on, and they don't cry that life is so bad" (R 32). They have the courage to dare to change, and the persistence to achieve what they want: "It is necessary to be ready for the first letters you write to be ignored and be persistent in order to get a real answer" (R 26).

According to the respondents, active citizens have a list of competences. They know their rights well, are aware of the regulatory framework, know and fulfil their duties, are able to represent and protect their interests, and are aware of what is happening in public life at state and



Zlatomisto performance in Gadyach Poltava region

Photo: Hanna Kiyashchenko

community level. They can also search for, critically evaluate and analyse information. They can identify causal relationships, and they have high communication skills.

Design of educational practices

The specific approach to designing educational programmes was not found in any educational practice. An educational programme is typically developed under the influence of one or several factors, including the wishes of the participants, the desire and new ideas of the staff, the requirements of the donor programme, and the activities of other organisations. Designing the programme is a responsibility of the team, which can be made up of permanent staff and freelancers. The team usually includes managers and future trainers of educational practice; experts with appropriate expertise in the field can also be involved. It is rare for the programme to be developed only by trainers, and managers accompany this process.

A comprehensive needs analysis of the target audience for the development of educational programmes, which involves studying the external environment in conjunction with the analysis of requests coming from target groups, is not carried out. In most cases, such an analysis is fragmentary and is not regular. Managers pointed out that, despite its importance, such an analysis requires additional human and time resources.

The participation of vulnerable groups in designing educational programmes is provided through communication, feedback analysis of existing and/or potential participants, and periodic polling of their interests/requests, for example during public events organised by the organisation.

Types of trainer and trainer competences

Between one (Case 1, Bucha) and nine trainers/experts (Case 3, Melitopol) were involved in designing and conducting classes within practices that were studied. In most cases (5 out of 6), there were permanent staff and freelance trainers, whilst in one practice there were only full-time trainers from the organisation. It was found that organisations face challenges when it comes to finding qualified trainers in small towns, which is why they are forced to invite specialists from other cities, often from the regional centres. The level of trainer responsibility is different in the programmes: In Case 3, more trainers work together, and each trainer is often only responsible for a particular module/topic within an educational programme. If there is a lack of support from the organisers, this may cause the integrity of the whole programme to suffer.

There are four types of trainer, depending on the practical training experience:

1. Trainers by vocation

Trainer activity meaning leading. Practical experience is supported by appropriate education and training. This type of trainer has strong skills in developing training sessions, and knows how to lead them. They know and critically assess their weaknesses and strengths as trainers. As a rule, they have their own approach as a trainer, and a vision of the group work. Professional development is systematic and regular.

2. Part-time trainers

Trainer activity is complementary to, or is conducted together with, other activities such as teaching at higher educational institutions or managing a public organisation. Practical trainer experience is complemented with some training in most cases. Trainer competences and qualifications vary, and depend on a person's individual interest in the field of training.

3. Trainers who are experts in a particular field

These trainers have expertise in a particular field, but do not have appropriate educational background and practice. The practical skills of working with different target groups are based on existing work experience, and often do not have a theoretical basis. They may encounter some difficulties in developing and using educational methods/ techniques working with the group. Lectures, presentations and group discussions are the most popular, familiar methods for them. Video and case-work can also be used.

4. Novice trainers

Practical experience as a trainer starts after completing a specific educational programme for trainers. Because of their lack of practical experience, they attempt to follow recommendations received during their studies. Trainer activity is not permanent; it is considered as a hobby or an opportunity for self-improvement.

There is no special selection procedure for trainers in the educational practices studied. Managers however noted a number of criteria which should be taken into consideration in order to find professional trainers. These criteria include: the practical experience of working with the target group and understanding its specifics; tolerance; knowledge of relevant topics. Trainer skills and experience are important. However, they are

not a determining factor for further work as a trainer. As practice shows, experts with a high level of expertise in a particular area without a qualification as a trainer can be responsible for some modules or classes. This approach requires additional efforts and support from educational staff of the organisation, which may include helping an expert to design classes using interactive methods and different work formats, support for group dynamics, etc.

Two more criteria are important when it comes to active citizenship with a political context: the practical experience of the trainer in the field in which he or she teaches: “The trainer can’t be taught to run advocacy campaigns without having any experience of this kind of activity” (R 24), as well as his or her proactive disposition as a citizen, and experience of civic activity: “If they teach others to be active citizens, they should also be active” (R 26).

Besides the abovementioned criteria, the willingness of the potential trainer to follow the established rules and principles of the organisation’s work with the relevant target group is another important aspect for organisations working with a vulnerable group on an ongoing basis: “It is important for us to find a trainer who understands and accepts our rules and our experience” (R 17).

Furthermore, a set of trainer competences was found that are important for the majority of respondents regardless of the context of active citizenship:

- The ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support in the group. According to the respondents, a favourable emotional environment includes respect between the trainer and the participants, as well as between the participants, mutual assistance during practical tasks, and the absence of negative judgments from the trainer and other participants in the group.
- Positive thinking on the part of the trainer, and skills to empower/engage participants. It can be shown by the use of positive examples, including from their own lives, praise, jokes, encouragement, and from the personality of the trainer. All these aspects help reveal hidden opportunities for the participants, to provide a sense of confidence, and to encourage and stimulate changes.
- The ability to communicate information clearly in a way that involves the use of simple and illustrative explanations; life examples relevant to the target audience.
- Flexibility and readiness to change the previous plan of action and respond to the needs of the group “here and now”: “It happened that I changed the methodology during the training: some tasks were simpli-



Project participants demonstrate the accessibility of city pharmacies for low-mobility groups

Photo: Anastasia Tkachenko

fied, some things were expanded, the amount of time was increased” (R 23). At the same time, the trainers pointed out that such flexibility requires careful preparation: “I prepared every minute of my module, and this minute was multivariate” (R 23).

The psychological preparation of trainers is significant for all groups of respondents when dealing with vulnerable groups. It includes people coping with their own internal fears and complexes to prevent subconsciously superimposing them on the target group, as well as the ability to correctly respond to changing the psycho-emotional state of the participants: “We were discussing things that really affect the psycho-emotional state, and one woman began to cry ... I think that a trainer-psychologist can help a lot with this kind of target audience” (R 2).

Educational approaches and methods

The elements of active, cooperative learning, and learning through participation, predominate in the educational process of the practices studied. Active behaviour (initiative during exercises, new ideas during discussions, exchange of opposing views, etc.), and close interaction between the participants throughout the educational process, are strongly encouraged.

Trainers pointed out that their task is not only to provide information, but also to create a learning environment that forces participants to think. Trainers encourage participants to use personal experience, as well as to transfer competences acquired during training in real life. For example, participants analysed their favourite newspapers in search of manipulation and distortion of information, and tried to critically evaluate the evening news during the course on media literacy (course on media literacy, Case 4, Vinnytsya).

Reflection after exercises, sharing thoughts and impressions, are mandatory elements of the educational process. Most practices are aimed at gaining practical skills, for example the ability to think critically, evaluate and analyse information in the political context of active citizenship, skills of self-confident behaviour, communicative skills in other contexts of active citizenship, etc.

Some differences in educational approaches have been identified, depending on the context of active citizenship. Thus, learning through participation is prevalent in practice with a political context. As a rule, the educational programme has a theoretical and a practical part in these cases. The practical part provides the opportunity for participants not only to develop practical skills within the classroom, but also to try to apply them in real life. For example, in Skole after completing the theoretical part of the programme, participants became the authors and implementers of a series of civic initiatives aimed at solving local problems of the rural community (Case 2, Skole). In Melitopol, people with disabilities together with experts developed and conducted three advocacy campaigns aimed at improving local social security policies for this vulnerable group within the educational programme (Case 3, Melitopol).

The presence of a practical part therefore provides direct civic participation during the educational process, and is highly appreciated by all groups of respondents. The majority of respondents spontaneously mentioned this experience as a positive one which provides real lessons for life.

A set of teaching methods is used during the educational process. The most popular among them are various types of discussions, brainstorming, practical tasks, work in small and large groups, case studies,

interactive and role-playing games, simulations, presentations and project development. There is also individual work aimed at self-analysis, rethinking of the material that has been heard.

Training was the most popular form of studying among all the practices. In most cases (typical for 4 out of 6 practices), the educational process involves conducting a series of training sessions, each of which was devoted to a separate topic/module. Unlike the cycle of classes within the course, the respondents tend to perceive the form of training as being one which makes it possible to obtain the desired result for a shorter period of time at greater convenience to them. It should be noted that the duration of one class varied from 2 to 3 hours, and the duration of one training session was 5 to 6 hours.

Training sessions also once took place among selected educational practices (Case 4, Vinnytsya). However, according to some representatives of the staff, they do not always help to effectively master the material due to information overload, which takes time for the participants to rethink and mentally absorb.

Elements of active and cooperative learning are therefore to be found in all the practices studied. In practices with a political context, there is also learning through participation. Interactive teaching methods, including different types of discussion, role-playing games, case studies, project development, etc., contribute to participatory behaviour, and are positively perceived by all groups of respondents.

Conclusions

1. Despite the significant progress that has been made in upgrading civic education programmes for schoolchildren at state level in Ukraine during recent years, civic education programmes for adults still are the prerogative of the public sector, and of civil society organisations in particular (CSO). CSOs significantly contribute to the development of active citizenship among various groups, including vulnerable people, whose needs they address in their everyday activities. Given the absence of a number of requirements that are specific to state education institutions, civic organisations have greater scope for creativity and flexibility in developing educational programmes and through the educational process. This is reflected in existing educational programmes of active citizenship, which differ in their content, duration and format.
2. A significant shift towards the development of educational programmes for active citizenship for adults in Ukraine has taken place due to the inclusion of relevant legislative norms by approving the concept for the



Workshop "Melitopol for everyone"

Photo: Anastasia Tkachenko

development of civic education in the autumn of 2018. This document outlines a list of civil competences, defines the value benchmarks (indicators) and the system of civic education, which, in addition to civil society institutions, also includes state authorities, local self-government bodies and educational institutions in various forms of ownership. At the same time, the legal framework still requires practical mechanisms for the implementation of the norms set out in the concept, in particular of the mechanism for financing educational programmes for adults, including programmes implemented by CSOs. International donors (British Council, EU, USAID, Council of Europe, UNDP and others) are currently the main source of funding for adult civic education in Ukraine.

3. The difficulties faced by vulnerable groups should they wish to take part in education are more likely to be related to social problems that exist in society. These include social exclusion, discrimination and stigmatisation, social pressures, as well as a lack of necessary infrastructure and barrier-free environments for people with disabilities. External factors are exacerbated by internal barriers faced by people from vulnerable

groups that often have a psychological basis: self-doubt, negative perception of oneself and of one's personal potential. There are also such reasons as laziness and consumer attitudes.

4. One of the main factors in the success of an educational programme is the creation of opportunities for participants to apply acquired competences in real life during training. Educational programmes with a practical part aimed at solving a particular local problem had a greater impact on the participants than did the programmes which did not have one. Moreover, such programmes have a noticeable impact at community level. This is evidenced by the results of a number of public initiatives that have been implemented through educational programmes in various regions of Ukraine.
5. The success of educational programmes is also influenced by factors such as the atmosphere of trust in a group, the frequency of classes, and the duration of programmes, as well as the inspiration and professional support of trainers. A safe and friendly atmosphere in a group not only encourages openness on the part of participants, but also promotes a culture of trust, something which is especially important when working with vulnerable groups. Programmes with an established schedule had a more profound impact than did one-day training sessions. Professional support from coaches/practitioners has encouraged participants when it comes to implementing practical tasks and community initiatives, thus giving them a sense of assurance that they are moving in the right direction. Some of the factors that were discovered (frequency of classes and inspiration by trainers) correlate with the success factors that were identified in the civic education studies that have been initiated by USAID since 1996.
6. Seven main trainer competences were identified which a trainer must possess in order to get vulnerable people involved in active citizenship education programmes. They can be classified into two groups: universal, related to the training activity as a whole, and special, related to the aspect of vulnerability. Universal competences include: 1) knowledge of a relevant topic; 2) the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support in the group; 3) flexibility, expressed in a readiness to change the methodology and planned material during the training according to the needs of the participants; 4) the availability of information; and 5) the ability to encourage. Special competences are: 1) having practical experience with the relevant target group and understanding its features; and 2) tolerance. A proactive civic position and practical experience of civic activity on the part of a trainer are also important.
7. An opportunity to obtain additional social services delivered by an AE provider in addition to the educational component of a programme

plays an important role for vulnerable groups. Participants frequently tend to perceive such organisations not only as providers of educational services, but also as a place where they can seek help and support. Such services depend on the profile of the organisation itself, and may include: information, counselling, representation of interests, social support, and redirection to other social institutions or services. Any other related services within an educational programme are also important, for example reimbursement of transport costs or transportation to the place where the classes are held; availability of coffee breaks; an entertainment component (celebrations, parties, trips).

8. Partnerships with local authorities, social institutions and services (social service centres for families, children and youth, social security departments, employment services), other CSOs, and the media, are an important condition for the development of active citizenship education programmes for vulnerable groups. First of all, this kind of collaboration provides access to these groups, and accordingly facilitates the involvement of such participants, and secondly it creates opportunities to effectively redirect them in order to provide other social services and support if needed. Moreover, such cooperation plays a significant role in promoting one or more educational programmes in a local community, and makes it easier to obtain the necessary support for its further implementation by the government and other stakeholders.

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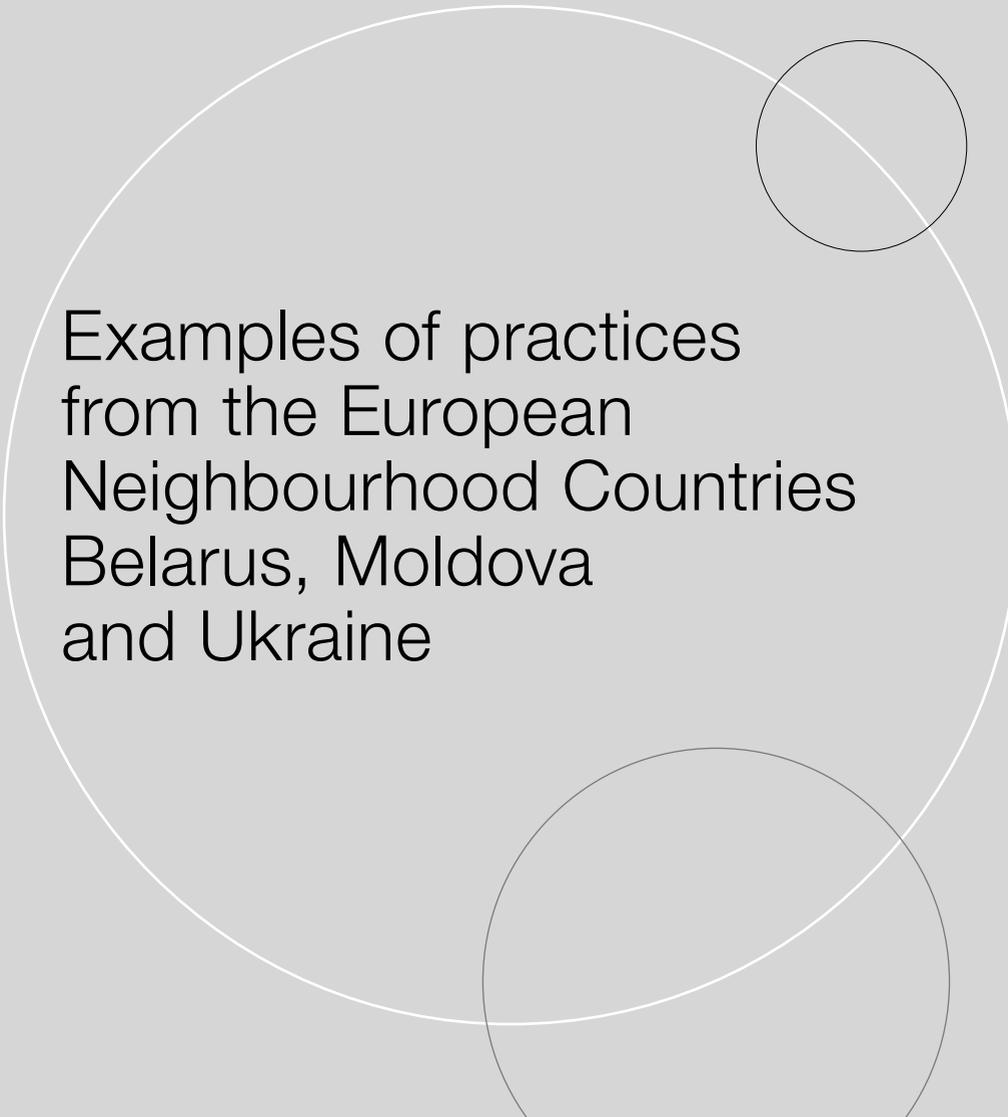
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Examples of practices from the European Neighbourhood Countries Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine

Cases Belarus

Case 1

“It seems that you need to use simpler words when you develop projects.” – How they learned to develop project applications in Bobruisk

Sometimes it takes hours, weeks, months or even years to put an idea into practice. But quite often new ideas simply never come to life. This is not down to laziness or a shortage of time; sometimes the implementation of socially-important initiatives requires new knowledge and skills – including in the development of project applications and fundraising.

How do you justify the relevance of your idea; how do you set goals and show potential donors that they should support you? That is what local activists in Bobruisk have learned.

The project entitled “Learning with the whole family” is the brainchild of Olga Solonovich, a specialist from the Bobruisk primary organisation

Goal of the project “Learning with the whole family”: Enhancing skills in photo opportunities and video shootings, and improving fundraising and project management skills among Bobruisk families raising children and teenagers with disabilities by organising educational activities.

“Nadezhda” of the NGO “Belarusian Association of Assistance to Children and Young People with Disabilities”. The idea was to teach family members of children with disabilities how to develop and implement social projects.

The project’s participants took part in five two-day training courses on project management, at which

they learned how to describe existing problems, set measurable and achievable goals, outline objectives, and plan future activities.

The project coordinator observes that its outcomes can already be seen today: “During the project, we found new friends and established new partnerships; the participants keep on writing project applications and applying to DVV International, the ‘Belarusian Children’s Hospice’, and the ‘Belarusian Association of Assistance to Children and Young People with Disabilities’. This project has become a call for action.”

At the end of the training, the participants had developed eleven project ideas, three of which received financial support to the tune of 250 Euros.

Marina Abozovik from the “Bobruisk Public Association of People with Disabilities ‘Special World’” did not initially intend to take part, but then changed her mind.

“I was enticed by the fact that we would be taught by some amazing people. I wanted to get to know them in person, and so I decided to give it a try. After the first training course, I realised that I knew nothing. True, I knew how to implement projects and reach agreements with people, but I was unable to put my ideas to paper in a structured way”, Marina says. “Then it became clear why my previous applications had been turned down, and what I was doing wrong. I became more confident as we were trained to develop every part of the project application in detail. Our trainers told us about the nuances that we wouldn’t find in books or elsewhere.”

Implementation period:
January-October 2018 by the
Bobruisk “Nadezhda” primary
organisation of the NGO “Be-
larusian Association of Assis-
tance to Children and Young
People with Disabilities”

Marina is sure that the quality of her applications has improved significantly: At the end of the training, her idea received a small amount of financial support, making it possible to buy sports equipment for the school where she used to work as a speech pathologist, and where she had created a family club.



*Training in photography and video for young people with disabilities in Bobruisk,
May 2018*

Photo: Yuri Kalenik

“I started looking for active parents to show them what they could do in school. We had a meeting, found motivated people, and organised a joint sports event which became the official kick-off for the family club.”

During the training, Marina also got a phone call from a foundation to which she had previously sent an application for the creation of a centre for visually-impaired people in Bobruisk. The donor asked Marina to make changes to her application, so the attendees at the training course analysed it and made recommendations on how to improve it. As a result, Marina’s application was approved.

“It seems that you need to use simpler words when you develop projects”, Marina laughs.

Another winning project was developed by Olga Kaznacheeva, the organiser of multiple events in the “Zapadny” district of Bobruisk. After receiving project management training, Olga managed to turn an idea about beautifying a deserted part of the district into a reality.

Olga hopes that the financial assistance will help her continue the beautification works; she will ask local residents for help in order to install an alcove and benches made of wooden pallets in the deserted area.

“People are reluctant to take action. They have to be inspired, encouraged and motivated to make them want to do something”, Olga adds. That is why she is planning to organise a Festival of Family Values next year.

Case 2

“The project made me stay in Lyntupy.” – How they taught people to renovate houses and make ceramic souvenirs

Vadim Glinnik, the head of “Lyntupy’s Kultyvatar Centre ” first visited the land of the blue lakes back in the 1980s. The local architecture, nature and

people impressed him so much that he subsequently moved from Minsk, bought a house not far from Lyntupy, and started building his “private paradise”.

Having become friends with local residents, Vadim became concerned about the future of the area: The settlement has been going through a rough patch in recent years. Employment

Goal of the project: Creating and equipping a cultural and educational centre where the low-income and unemployed people of Lyntupy Rural Council (Postavy district, Vitebsk region) can obtain additional knowledge and skills about renovating old houses and making ceramic souvenirs, which will increase their income and raise their quality of life

opportunities are few and far between, and people are leaving in search of a better life.

“About 10% of the able-bodied adult population has left the area in recent years. Some of the local men are currently working in Ostrovets building a nuclear power station. When the construction work is finished, the question will arise: Where to go to find a job? Many people go to other countries – Russia, Lithuania or Poland. The sovkhos¹ went bankrupt, and employment opportunities are virtually non-existent. It’s unbearable to watch how the lives of the people whom we hold most dear are getting worse day by day. One day we had a meeting with local activists and new settlers and discussed how we can help this region and these people. We cannot set up a company here or give a job to everybody who needs one, but we can help renovate local places of interest, and we can tell the world about the historical and natural potential of Lyntupy in order to make it more attractive for tourists. The development of tourism will, in turn, lead to the creation of new jobs. We can also organise cultural events for local people. In other words, we can bring Minsk to Lyntupy, and Lyntupy to Minsk.”

Implementation period: February-September 2018 by the “Lyntupy’s Kultyvatar Centre”

As a result, the activists decided to create a cultural centre in Lyntupy; they bought a hundred-year-old building that became a base for the centre. No one had initially planned to conduct educational activities. But the founders soon realised that many people had difficulty understanding how to make money from tourism; they had no grasp of the basics of marketing, and were losing traditional skills. That is how they realised that education and culture always go hand in hand. This idea led to the creation of the project by the name of “By learning we create”, which consisted of two courses: “Renovating an old house with your own hands” and “Creating ceramic souvenirs with your own hands: attractive and saleable”. Each course was meant for a group of 10-12 people.

During the first course, the participants mastered traditional technologies for renovating wooden houses. The idea was to pass on almost forgotten knowledge that would help local residents increase their incomes by providing services for renovating and maintaining holidaymakers’ summer houses.

“We developed specific instructions for participants, and held a series of lectures. The master classes were conducted by experts from all over the country. Practical sessions were organised on the premises of our

1/ State-owned farm – translator’s note

centre, so it was a win-win situation: The participants developed new skills and decorated the walls in our centre at the same time. The final event was organised in a room that had initially been in a semi-ruined state”, Vadim adds.

The organisers anticipated that the renovation course would only be attended by men, but the situation was quite the opposite. Later on, they found out that many people had enrolled in the course not because they wanted to master new skills, but because there was nothing else to do in Lyntupy.

“Only two people were planning to provide services on a profit-making basis. The rest were doing the course just for a change or to renovate their own houses. People still fail to understand that obtaining additional knowledge will help them improve their quality of life”, Vadim admits.

The second part of the project was devoted to creating and marketing ceramic souvenirs. The master classes were conducted by Nadezhda Soiko, a famous Belarusian pottery expert who owns a house in Lyntupy. After the master class, one of the participants registered as a craftsperson and started producing pottery on a professional basis. Her name is Ana-



Clay course in 2018 in Lyntupy

Photo: Inna Mikus

stasia Sokolovskaya, and she attended both courses. She used to live in a different town, but moved to Lyntupy four years ago. She studied painting on wood at University, and took up pottery two years ago.

“Back then when I made something out of clay, I put it on the wall and forgot about it. One day, I was on my way to the shop when I saw an advertisement for a course on the renovation of old houses and pottery, and I decided to take part”, says Anastasia and admits: “They bought an oven for the project, and I use it all the time. In fact, the project made me stay in Lyntupy.”

Soon Anastasia’s products will also be sold in neighbouring villages. The craftswoman has even started an account on Instagram and is using it actively.

Case 3

“Make things right and start with a clean slate.” – How they helped women in vulnerable life situations in Vitebsk

Everybody makes mistakes. The Criminal Code sets specific terms of imprisonment both for those feeling remorse and for those who do not. But hardly anybody in court is aware of another onerous punishment that a sentenced person faces. It is called stigma, and women are most likely to fall prey to it. On their release, women are unaware of the changed rules of social life, and often become pariahs.

Increasing the employability of women released from penitentiary institutions or occupational therapy rehabilitation centres is a challenging task, but the members of the Vitebsk City Public Women’s Association “Uliana” have dared to address it.

The project coordinator and Chairperson of the Board, Valentina Kosykh, eagerly shares what they have achieved within the project entitled “Life Lessons for Women”, and how such people can be helped. But first one should understand who these women are whose lives have changed so drastically thanks to “Life Lessons”.

Alia’s story is quite typical: Never officially married, she lived with her partner who had problems with alcohol. After a while, she started drinking herself – soon she was convicted of arson, then sent to an occupational therapy rehabilitation centre, and her daughter was sent to a foster family:

Goal of the “Life lessons for women” project: Increasing the competitiveness of women who are in difficult life situations by holding educational events for them and organising self-help groups at local level in Vitebsk, Liozno and Gorodok districts.



Announcement for anonymous consultation hours in the centre of "Ulyana"

Photo: Yanina Melnikova

"If it weren't for the project, I would start drinking again", Alia confesses. "I underwent medical treatment before, but it would last for two weeks, and now I haven't had a drink for more than a year – and I am not going to. Next month my daughter is coming back. She's 13. I will do everything to make her forget my drinking and all the fights."

Valentina is like a mother to Alia: She has no parents, so she regularly visits "Uliana" to share her concerns and ask for advice. She is planning to get another job in the near future. She mastered a new profession during the project, and she will be working as a sales assistant.

Nastia developed a drinking problem because of her husband. She did not really notice how it had happened. She did not drink herself at first, and even criticised her husband for his weakness, but then started fol-

lowing his example. It did not seem such a big deal, but her grown-up daughter left her to stay at her Grandma's place, and child protection services took away her younger

Implementation period: February-September 2018 by the Vitebsk city public women's association "Uliana"

son. Her husband was put in prison for theft, and Nastia was sent to an occupational therapy detox centre.

“I have finished my treatment, my 8-year-old son is staying with me right now, and I’m not sure if I want my husband to come back”, Nastia thinks out loud. “Thanks to the project, I got a job, I’m a hairdresser now. And what’s more important – there’s no turning back to the old lifestyle. What would have happened if it hadn’t been for the project? Most probably it would start all over again...”

Valentina Kosykh says that this target group is challenging, and that it has been abandoned. The representatives of the Committee for Labour and Social Protection under the regional executive committee admit that there are a lot of population groups in need of help, and such women do not take priority. Women released from prisons often do not have any qualifications; there are not so many vacancies in the region and, if there are any jobs available, qualified labour is usually required.

“In order to start a new life, these women have to be self-dependent”, says Valentina. “If a woman abuses alcohol and doesn’t work, she may become dependent on anybody: her drinking companions, questionable friends, relatives who drink. They’re always eager to offer alcohol as the easiest solution, which often leads to criminal behaviour.”

A new profession may help them become independent. But there is one small catch: They have to acquire a new qualification rather quickly. Waiting for eight months to complete a course in a vocational school or one provided by the Employment Agency can be difficult for them. Short-term training has therefore become one of the project’s focal points.

The “Leader” educational centre offered its services, and the professions were agreed upon jointly: Six women in rehabilitation centres received a certificate for hairdressing; those who were released had a wider choice: Two of them became sales assistants, one became a hairdresser, and another became a masseuse.

The project targeted around fifty women, and training for the qualification was only a part of it. It was crucial to show them that they could change their lives, but to achieve that they had to give up a great deal of things. They had to change their social circles, and in some cases even their addresses. It turned out that many of them are ready to do so. This became obvious during educational events, such as “Start with a clean slate”. The psychologists encouraged the participants to role play and describe their life scenarios, and to distance themselves from people who create obstacles.

“We published special leaflets for our target group”, Valentina adds. “Apart from useful information, they contain our contact data. Those in need of help still keep calling us and coming to our office. This means that seven months is not enough. Even though the project has ended, the work continues.”

“Uliana” is ready to help women in challenging life situations in the future. “We’re planning to submit an application to the European Union on behalf of five organisations: “Uliana”, DVV International, the NGO “Mogilev Women’s Centre for Support and Self-education”, Brest Businesswomen’s Club, and the Gomel NGO “Community development projects”. If the project is approved, we will be working for 28 months – a lot can be achieved within this period.”

Case Moldova

“People make places change” – How are small initiatives bringing about clear changes in Moldova’s Cahul district?

Moldova is a country of small communities, mostly rural ones. Its people are regarded as friendly, engaged, hospitable and responsive. There was a time that, when someone had a major job to do – build a house, sink a well

Goal of the “Adult education begins with me” project: Facilitating access for adults from six localities in Cahul district to educational services in the field of human rights based on real learning needs.

or other major work– their neighbours, friends and relatives would get together to engage in a joint effort, known as a “claca”, and get the job done in no time. The long, drawn-out transition from the Socialist system to an emerging democracy seems to have had an isolating effect on citizens and places.

It seems that each person now takes care of his or her own family, striving to earn a living. It appears as if Moldovans have become more self-reflective and apathetic in their voting and decision-making, and that they expect the authorities to work wonders and transform community life.

However, these appearances are usually misleading. Life in associations does exist; a large number of projects are being implemented, and civic activists are not only helping underprivileged citizens, but are also helping develop a participatory culture. For instance, the town of Cahul is only some 47 kilometres from the country’s southern border, at Giurgiulesti. Being somewhat towards the southwest of the region, Cahul is nevertheless perceived as the “heart” of the region, as initiatives reverberate from Cahul throughout the district of the same name, and also into neighbouring territories.

The “Azi” NGO, the name of which translates as “today”, aims to support and empower people who have special needs. The organisation’s credo is that people with disabilities should gain an understanding of their human rights in order to be able to defend them. Involving young volunteers, cascade-type dissemination of best practices, building local support cells, interaction at several levels from decision-making to grass-roots intervention, are among the organisation’s daily tools in the district town, and also in many villages around it. After the organisation’s training courses, small but locally-significant community-based activities are performed for whole communities, and not just for people with disabilities. An ethno-folk music group made up of elderly women has emerged in the village of Rosu, a locality with about 2,800 people in a Cahul suburb. With-



Sharing and learning among generations

Photo: DVV International Moldova

in several months, women who had been wholly given over to housekeeping became district-level artists, interested in developing the repertoire, acquiring authentic costumes, fundraising and interacting with people from other villages. “I learned to write an official request, not only out of my personal interest, but also in the interest of the locality. We have learned to be more insistent, to demand. We did it for pleasure, and we’re moving forward”, said one of the interviewees.

For such small yet cardinal changes to take place in Moldova, the role of the NGO leader is decisive, possibly more so than in other countries around the world. Tatiana Seredenco, the organisation’s CEO, is a telling example of a professionalised civic activist. Non-profit work is not free-time volunteering, it is the day-by-day effort of running several projects at the same time, acquiring small grants, as big money is not available for an organisation that does not have an impressive financial history, mobilising and motivating volunteers, coaching, consulting, counselling, guiding and paying attention to details of implementation. After years of commitments and energetic personal efforts, it pays off in terms of people’s trust and

Implementation period:
March-October 2018 by the
AO “AZI” non-governmental
organisation, Cahul

readiness to follow. “It was Tatiana who invited us to the training, and as we knew her, we gladly agreed to participate”, is a much-heard refrain, collected from participants, volunteers, even local trainers. Tatiana is not the only NGO leader who is a kind of “alpha and omega” of most of the “sui generis” initiatives that are run by her organisation. She is the main strategist, the most ardent fundraiser, the best trainer, and the “best” in many, many other roles. And it is not because of exclusivist attitudes, not because of a lack of trust in people around, or of an unwillingness to share. On the contrary, it is because people in the vicinity are best motivated by personal example: They become more inspired when they actually have an involved “doer”, rather than an omniscient “advisor”, leading them.

The “AZI” NGO from Cahul is committed to the civic education of young people and adults. It has a small team of staffers and a network of volunteers in the district. That said, kindling local democracy is contingent on the examples that are set by individual activists such as Tatiana and many other leaders from non-profit organisations. Sometimes it is even a “family contract” – members of the same families creating small implementation groups for projects generated by the head of the NGO. It may sound strange, but in a country with high corruption indexes and uncertain quality standards, relying on one’s own circle is somewhat of a seal of quality and correctness.

Although the comparison may seem slightly inappropriate, the personal involvement of civic activists, and their circle of people in activities, is very much similar to Moldovans’ most recently-acquired passion of having a piece of private land – either to build a holiday retreat outside town, or at least to cultivate a small piece of land with tasty home-grown fruit and vegetables. The market abounds in fresh harvests, but the feeling is that the products that are intended for farmers’ own tables, and what is placed on the market, are two entirely different baskets of goods. In a country where trust in the community as well as belief in change and civic participation are low, activists who are committed to bringing about real change cannot but run projects themselves with the people whom they trust most.

And the changes are happening. Tatiana Seredenco herself claimed in an interview: “It is important to carry out large infrastructure projects, but from our point of view, small projects, [...] local initiatives in which all the people are involved, are no less important. This is what we wanted to communicate to people, by our own example. The mayors of Manta and Iujnoe (villages in Cahul district – author’s note) stressed the importance of small projects; they are the most beautiful, the most valuable, because they involve the whole community, and then you have results and help.”

Cases Ukraine

Case 1

“Theatre of Contemporary Dialogue” as an instrument for solving social problems

The educational programme saw the light of day in 2015 as an initiative of the NGO “Poltava branch of the Public Service of Ukraine” and its adult education centre, the core area of activities of which was civic education among the local population. The idea was based on the “Ukrainian New Drama” movement. The main objective of the programme was to facilitate the adaptation and integration of internally-displaced persons from the

The course “Educational course in theatre arts” was implemented by the non-governmental organisation “Poltava branch of the Public Service of Ukraine”. Target groups were 20 internally-displaced persons (refugees, migrants) living in the city of Poltava. The course took 6 months.

Crimea and Donbass regions through documentary theatre. The “Theatre of Contemporary Dialogue” appeared to offer an answer to the lack of dialogue in society.

The training group consisted of 20 people who were motivated to study, the majority of whom were attending different faculties at Poltava’s Universities, as well as adult activists from non-governmental organisations. Several participants represented IDPs. Primary among the motivations for participation in educational programmes was individual indifference to the problem; the search for oneself, the need for

self-realisation and personal development; personal problems with which a person was unable to cope.

Based on the goals and objectives of the project, the appropriate educational and teaching methods were chosen by the managers. The curriculum took into account the level of involved “actors” and their needs, and was planned together with the project leader and the head of the theatre. The educational approach took into account the peculiarity of a documentary performance based on documentary material, such as interviews, articles, statistics, own reflections, and monologues that were recorded by the course participants themselves after the training. Thus, “the whole body of the performance is formed when there is nothing fictitious, but comprises only that which existed in real life”. (P 22).

In general, the work plan consisted of several stages: the first block, three months of acting classes in the format of two-day training cours-



*The "Big Filter Theory" performance at the Theatrical Spring 2017 in Kremenchug
Source: Telegraf*

es, master classes, lectures on contemporary art (conducted by well-known experts), and the collection of material. The second block included training, conducted mainly by psychologists and human rights activists or lawyers, on subjects such as "biased attitudes in society" and "(in)tolerance in society". The purpose of these training activities was to prepare the participants not only for the performance, but also for the discussion which followed each show. The actors had to be prepared not only for discussion, but also to facilitate the ensuing debate. At the end of three months, participants joined a camp, experiencing "immersion" in real situations in which they could sense the attitude of the majority in a society towards specific groups of people. In the next step, students were involved in preparation for the performance for at least two months, followed by a month of intensive rehearsals and pilot performances in front of spectators whom they knew.

A particular feature of the project was the constantly-growing needs in the training process, and this occurred at specific stages. If during the interviewing, students encountered communicative difficulties when it came to collecting information, then additional training in communication or psychology (on working with trauma sufferers) was needed and proposed at the next stage.



ZLATOMISTO' performance at the festival Gogolfest in Kyiv Source: DVV International Ukraine

The influence of this educational practice can be observed on different levels. At the institutional level, it influenced, firstly, the expansion of the organisation's activities in civic education. Along with traditional seminars and training activities, a new approach, namely documentary theatre, was used to discuss and promote the solution to a particular social problem. "We can do more than merely show what the problem is and discuss it – we can already motivate these people when they see the root cause, how important it is to others, and begin to do something. We can encourage them to do this." (R 5) Secondly, there has been a certain transformation of approaches towards teaching civic competences through the transformation that has occurred in the understanding of civic education and active citizenship. The new curriculum has included courses on various aspects of civic education: media literacy, development of critical thinking, etc. One of the results was the dissemination of this educational practice in other regions of the country, first of all in the east, by the implementing organisation.

At the individual level, firstly, it is personal development, development of individual skills, connected, on one hand, with the actors' skills, and on the other hand with everyday life skills: conversational skills, fluid movements, revealing and awareness of new emotions, ability to manage emotions. Individual influence for each participant can be traced through

their value changes (attitudes and behaviour), and at the level of practical actions. Several participants mentioned self-discovery, or stated that they had discovered their individual abilities by analysing their behaviour and that of other people, changes in value orientations, and strengthening of certain features. The project leaders documented a deeper understanding of social processes among participants. There were however certain difficulties associated with selected topics that were very difficult to perceive, unpleasant to discuss and emotionally exhausting. At the same time, there was an understanding of what they teach to resist emotions and become emotionally balanced.

Participants also indicated changes in the understanding of the issues or in the behaviour of spectators, a better understanding of the problems that exist in society, or of the problems faced by certain vulnerable groups of the population. It is also noted that performances drive people to new knowledge, or to specific actions in certain life situations. An audience member: "After the premiere of the documentary performance, the discussion is ongoing, and it is very important. Here I can express my opinion and listen to other people's opinions, and I can change my opinion in some regard, and the other person will change their opinion. There is an exchange of thoughts. The theatre raises pressing issues, such as 'malignant tumours'; they show what these are. I am impressed with the dialogue after the theatre, the communication of an actor with a member of the audience, and then even the same person becomes an actor, and I like it." (R 14)

The group of non-professional actors has continued to exist, and during the following three years presented three documentary performances devoted to various social problems.

The specifics of this training case are manifested in the following examples:

- the students involved have an immediate opportunity to practice the acquired skills on stage;
- scenarios of each performance are based on documentary materials collected during the learning process among representatives of a target group, the problems of which are relevant for discussion;
- the performances themselves are not entertainment, but are problematic, provoking an open discussion;
- each performance is accompanied by a dialogue between actors and viewers, so that each participant must master not only acting skills but also communication skills in crisis situations and learn how to lead a discussion.

Case 2

Activating the rural community to solve local problems

The educational practice “CHANCE” was implemented in 2015, and its idea was to activate rural youth, and to motivate them to change their own lives and the life of their community. The main topics of the programme were: foundations of public administration and local self-government,

The practice course: “The programme of civic education at the School of Activists of the People’s Self-government (CHANCE)” was organised by the non-governmental organisation “Impuls Information and Education Centre” in Skole. Target group was active youth of the city and villages of the region aged 23 to 35; 30 persons participated. The course took 4 months.

leadership, communication, team building, problem analysis at local level, public campaigns, ethics and responsibility of community work, conflict management, information activities and PR technology, basics of project management.

After completion of the theoretical part, participants in the programme were supposed to organise youth initiatives in rural communities. As a result, five initiatives were implemented. For example, local citizens opened a playground and organised a children’s holiday in one of the villages. They actively involved representatives of the authorities and community during the whole

process. A survey was conducted in the village of Koziv in order to explore the directions that village development might take from the point of view of its residents, and the results were presented to the village head, to other representatives of the local authorities, and to the community.

Respondents indicated that “CHANCE” allowed them to improve their communication skills, to expand social ties, and to obtain project writing skills. Several participants indicated that they had become more aware of their own responsibility to help solve the problems of their community. Many participants correlated their participation in this programme with readiness to act and to initiate changes.

According to the staff, the “CHANCE” programme provided an impetus for the development of the programme of the district council “Support of Skolivshchyna citizens’ initiatives” in 2017. The goal of the programme was to increase the social activity of people living in the Skoliv region by implementing local mini-projects (public initiatives) that have a direct impact on local communities and are implemented in partnership with local authorities, rural adult education centres, other educational and cultural

institutions, and public organisations for strengthening the potential of the community.

The NGO “Impuls Information and Education Centre” became the initiator and developer of this programme. Initiative groups initially prepared project applications, and after the information was processed, it was generalised and an application made to the district council. As a result, nine public initiatives were supported and implemented in nine communities of the Skole district, and roughly 4,000 of the district’s residents benefited from their implementation. Public initiatives were different: for example, the creation of a swimming and recreation area, landscaping, the development of culture, the creation of a sports centre, etc.

The role of the NGO included managing the entire process of implementing community initiatives from planning through to implementation. Also, initiative groups in the district received support in the form of consultations and events in local councils.

Initiative groups in the villages generally included representatives of the rural centres of adult education, teachers, people’s deputies, village heads, representatives of community halls, artists, and other interested residents.

According to different groups of respondents, the success of public initiatives is connected with the presence of a team that enjoyed the trust of the community, constant communication within this team, and regular communication with the community. Public discussion of village problems and the course to be steered to solve them with the involvement of villagers plays an important role. Another important factor for success is the involvement of the village council and village heads in the initiative.

Case 3

Inclusion of people with disabilities in the democratic processes of the community

The educational programme was part of a project that was implemented in 2017 and was aimed at increasing the participation of people with disabilities in the democratic processes of the community through the development of their civic competences and social activity. The participants of the educational practice were 25 people with disabilities living in Melitopol, and representatives of three non-governmental organisations engaged in the protection of people with disabilities.

The educational programme included theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical part allowed participants to deepen their knowledge of political culture, democracy tools, and leadership in the public sector, to learn more about the peculiarities of the budget process in local self-government, and also to increase their media literacy. The practical part included the development and implementation of three advocacy campaigns aimed at improving local policies in social protection of people with disabilities.

This educational programme within the project “Inclusion of people with disabilities in the democratic processes of the community in Melitopol” was organised by the charitable organisation: “Social Fund”, Melitopol. Target groups were people with disabilities. 25 persons participated. The course took 30 hours (5 training courses of 6 hours each).

The educational approach combined elements of practical and project-based learning. This was evidenced by the combination of work in the classroom with the practical solution of the actual problems faced by people with disabilities through three advocacy campaigns, as well as the close interaction of everyone taking part in the educational practice – students, trainers/experts, managers and other staff involved throughout the educational process.

A specific feature of the programme was the professional support that was received from relevant specialists at various programme implementation stages. For example, a psychologist was involved during the theoretical part of the programme, and performed several functions. Firstly, she inspired participants and helped them to discover their potential: “I raised their spirits, and they continued to work” (R 23); secondly, she assessed the psychological state of the participants and, if necessary, provided appropriate support, and thirdly she assisted other trainers when they worked with the group. Relevant support was also provided during the implementation of the practical part. Three external experts helped to develop advocacy campaigns; managers and volunteers together with people with disabilities took an active part in their implementation.

Regarding teaching methods, various interactive exercises were used, taking into account the characteristics of the target group. Work in the groups was accompanied by a constant exchange of participants as well as correlation of the size of the groups, and this required participants to leave their comfort zones. There were also psychological techniques aimed at creating positive self-awareness among the participants.

There were two main groups of competences which were directly impacted by educational practice. The first group was associated with participants' socio-psychological changes: gaining a sense of self-confidence and skills enabling confident behaviour; overcoming internal fears

and complexes associated with disability. The second group concerned civil competences as well as skills related to civic engagement:

- 1) the skills of interaction with authorities and a sense of being able to influence decision-making processes: “For me it was a great discovery to realise that I can communicate with representatives of authority as an equal. I realised that the voice of one person is just as significant as the voice of the entire community.” (R 72);
- 2) the skills to formulate and express personal opinions: “I got rid of my fear of speaking, I started to speak” (R 71); an impetus to act: “How did this programme affect me? ... I got on to the city’s executive committee, attended meetings on issues that concern people with disabilities, wrote a project on accessibility for people with disabilities in the park, wrote a project on budget participation...” (R 40).



Interview of a participant of the training course by a correspondent of Deutsche Welle DW-TV while monitoring the accessibility of city pharmacies

Photo: Anastasia Tkachenko

There were some difficulties. Respondents from different groups noted that it was often complicated to achieve a balance between providing support and observing respect for the independence of people with disabilities. There was also a problem with participants dropping out because of their health. Some of the difficulties were related to the implementation of advocacy campaigns. Despite new knowledge, many participants did not have any practical experience in similar activities; some of them were not ready for a new style of behaviour and to change their role from that of “passive observer and recipient” to one of “active promoter and initiator”. This required a rapid response, as well as additional support from the staff. Advocacy campaigns have had a significant impact on both the participants and on the community. Thanks to them, a variety of changes were carried out in Melitopol. For example, a social taxi service for people with disabilities who had persistent problems with the locomotor apparatus was introduced and paid for from the city’s budget. 40 communal objects and 25 pharmacies in the city were monitored as to whether they provided barrier-free access for people with disabilities. The information campaign was conducted in order to create a tolerant attitude in the community towards persons with disabilities.

According to respondents, it was possible to achieve results because of the professionalism of the trainers/experts involved, the diversity of the educational programme, the availability of the practical part in it, as well as the friendly and trusting atmosphere in the group. Respondents believe that the success of advocacy campaigns is due to the constant, skilled managerial support that was received, to the inspiration and psychological support coming from the staff, and to the presence of volunteers who were available throughout the entire educational process.

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