



# EPALE KONFERENZ

Österreich

**Politische Erwachsenenbildung in Österreich und Europa: Ziele, Methoden und Zukunftsperspektiven**

**Citizenship Education in Austria and Europe: objectives, methods and future prospects**



# BECOMING ACTIVE CITIZENS: How can we make our adult education models more inclusive?

NATASHA KERSH

University College London  
Institute of Education

# Adult Education as a path to social inclusion: towards active citizenship through economic, social and civic participation

*Natasha Kersh (UCL Institute of Education),*

*Citizenship Education in Austria and Europe: objectives, methods and future prospects*  
EPALE und Erasmus+ Erwachsenenbildung 2019

13 June 2019

1070 Vienna

Social exclusion, disengagement and disaffection of young adults have been among the most significant concerns faced by EU member states over the last decade

## Active Citizenship



Engaging socially excluded young adults ...  
through Adult Education

# Adult Education as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship (EduMAP, Horizon 2020)



*H2020-YOUNG-SOCIETY*

EU Research and Innovation programme

seen as a means to drive economic growth and advance research, specifically in the field of education.

enhancing dialogue between educational actors and vulnerable groups.

generating a prototype of Intelligent Decision Support System (IDSS) to give policy-makers and other stakeholders easy access to the information required to address the needs of vulnerable minority groups.



- University of Tampere, **Finland** (coordinator)
- Tallinn University, **Estonia**
- Foredata LLC, **Finland**
- DVV International, **Germany**
- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, **Greece**



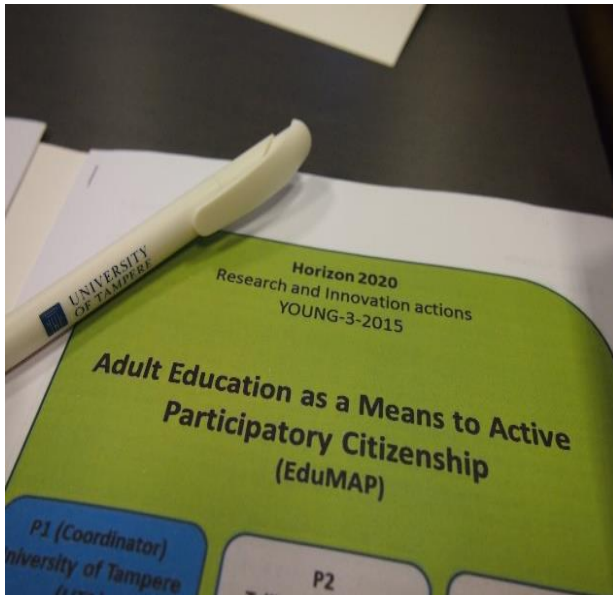
- University of Szeged, **Hungary**
- University of Loughborough, **UK**
- Social Sciences University of Ankara, **Turkey**
- University College London, **UK**

## EduMap focus

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

- Young adults in vulnerable positions (16-30) –
- e.g. unemployed; NEETs, refugees and migrants, early school leavers...
  - Lacking basic skills and formal qualifications
  - Experiencing exclusion and disengagement, low levels of confidence
  - Experiencing multiple vulnerabilities

# The role of Adult Education



- Adult education is an important means to enable people to take active part in society and the labour market
- Adult education policies and practices are not always appropriate to vulnerable groups
- EduMAP aimed to help European, national and local policymakers, educational authorities and educators to tailor adult education to meet the needs of young adults at risk of social exclusion



## The objectives of EduMAP...

- to identify and review educational programmes and services which have proven to be successful in including young people age 16-30 at risk of social exclusion in active political, social and/or economic participation.
- EduMAP identified and described elements of good practices and investigated the role of information and communication processes in shaping aspects of access, inclusion and engagement in adult education (AE) for young people at risk of social exclusion.

The understanding of citizenship as a legal status encompassing civic and political dimensions and a set of legal rights and responsibilities has been extended

- goes beyond this interpretation
- specifically aiming to address new social demands such as the need for economic adaptability, development social competence and social cohesion and civic involvement

(Field and Schemmann, 2017 Biesta 2009; Johnston 2003, Tsitselikis & Pitkänen, 2007)

## Dimensions of Active Participatory Citizenship (APC)

- Socio-cultural participation: e.g. development of social competences, social capital, social networks
- Socio-economic participation: e.g. employment, developing employability/labour market skills
- Politico-legal: e.g. civic and political participation, running for boards, neighbourhood activities

As well as - awareness of rights and responsibilities



## Findings from desk study

- **Influence of social discourses on APC**
  - Economic justification of adult education provision – neoliberal trends (Evans, 2009; Aspin et al 2012) – *'the more we learn the more we earn?'*
  - AE as a means of social inclusion/integration: Inclusion of young adults at risk of social exclusion has been related to addressing specific problems defined by current national political, social or economic agendas



# Active Participatory Citizenship

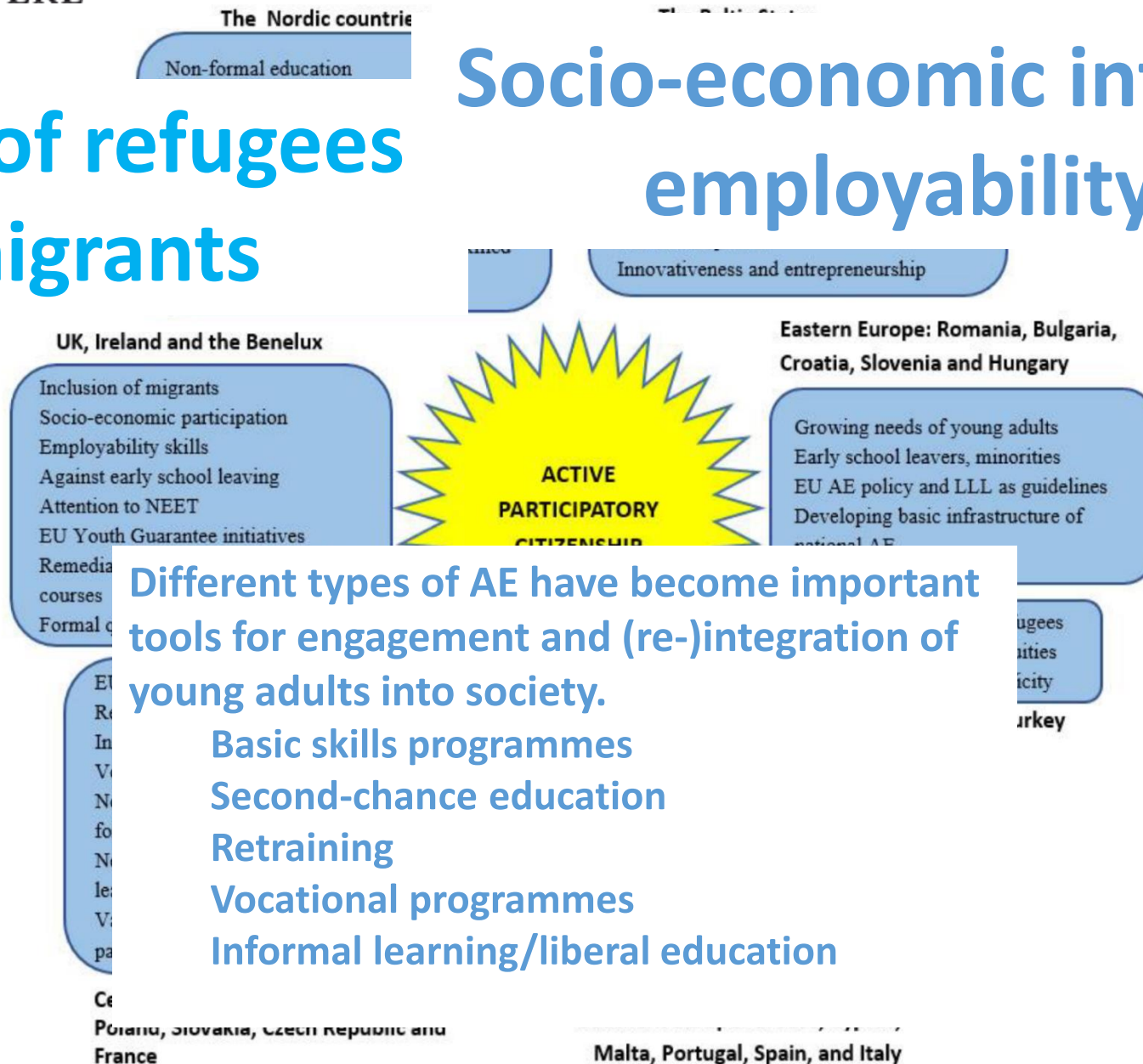
- With the exception of programmes for newly arrived migrants/refugees, the majority of adult education courses do not demonstrate an explicit focus on citizenship education/skills. However:
- Different dimensions of active citizenship (economic, social and political), have characterised AE programmes and initiatives.
- Often ‘citizenship’ is not used explicitly and/or may be embedded
- Citizenship is not seen entirely as a juridical issue but also in terms of people’s participation in political, social and economic arenas. (Field and Schemmann, 2017 Biesta 2009; Johnston 2003, Tsitselikis & Pitkänen, 2007)





# Inclusion of refugees and migrants

# Socio-economic integration – employability skills



Different types of AE have become important tools for engagement and (re-)integration of young adults into society.

- Basic skills programmes
- Second-chance education
- Retraining
- Vocational programmes
- Informal learning/liberal education



- Research carried out by 8 partner institutions, involving **40** adult education programmes across 20 countries: Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey, Sweden, UK
- Interviews (individual and in focus groups) with **814** participants in total
- **482** young people and young adults and **332** professionals (practitioners and policy makers)
- Various ‘cohorts’ of young adults, including: young people not in education, training or employment; homeless people; refugees and migrants, Roma, disabled people, care-experienced young people, prisoners, young people with learning difficulties ...



*Good practices: selected examples*

Sampling – to ensure the diversity of types/scope of AE programmes, young adults and APC



<b>Country</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Type of programme</b>	<b>APC Dimension</b>	<b>Scope</b>
Germany	Refugees and Migrants	Basic skills and remedy	Socio-cultural	Local
Cyprus	Migrants	Informal learning and non-formal learning	Political-legal	Regional
UK	Multiple vulnerabilities	Basic skills VET	All, focus on Socio-economic	Local but linked in to nationally recognised programmes
Greece	Homeless people	Basic skills and remedy	Socio-cultural	Local
Latvia	NEETs, unemployed people	VET	Socio-economic	National
Finland	Prisoners	VET	Socio-economic	National, implemented locally
Ireland	Young migrants (and Irish young people)	Informal learning and non-formal learning	All	Local but with national reach





## Young people across the 40 EduMAP Good Practice (GP) cases talked about

- the lack of or limited access to formal qualifications and resources.
- exclusion from resources, such as information, knowledge, political power and representation
- limited social capital, including social networks and connections
- inadequate preparedness and support to face risk or disasters, poor living conditions and frail physical and mental limits
- experiencing different forms of discrimination including racism related to their specific situation of risk, was a strong barrier to follow life and career aspirations.

# Cases indicate...

- young people in diverse situations of risk have positive views and experiences related to enhancing confidence and engaging more actively in society through AE programmes;
- engaging with young people through adult education should be based on their multi-layered individual needs
- experiences of active participatory citizenship (APC) relates to their specific needs, situations, priorities and aspirations



What does 'being an active citizen' mean for you?

*I think education can help us. We learn about England, something about the local customs and how things are done here. Active [citizenship]... this I think means that you need to be active in doing something? Doesn't it? Like voluntary job?*

*We often learn words that would be useful to describe what we do, where we come from, what we learn, and what we hope to do. Sometimes [the tutor] gives us texts about jobs, things to say at job interviews I think since I started the course, I can understand better life in [local area].*

## English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), UK – targets newcomers such as migrants/refugees

- Language learning is embedded in everyday life contexts
- learning about aspects of life in the UK
- Learners emphasise how their improved communication skills have enabled them to manage day-to-day tasks - helping them feel less of an 'outsider'

*You know when we come here, I don't know what's going to happen in new country. So it's always good to start going to work. In a new country I can say, so we are coming from start, from zero, but we are trying to reach something.*

Communication - friends, family, community ...



Working / paying taxes

*The first answer is duty. As they give us we should give back. Helping the city with something*

*Doing/ accomplishing something so he can later serve the community with it. ...even though it feels sometimes like we're stuck as a group, in the end at some point we'll get it right, so there's always that. And once I get something then I can explain it to the next person ... So it's kind of like a nuclear chain reaction, it's a marble that gets shot off and then information explodes within the classroom..*

## Coding skills programme (Netherlands) -

aims to support young adults at risk of social exclusion (specifically NEETs, refugees and migrants).

- immersive / peer learning approach alongside masterclasses and placements delivered in partnership with external companies
- Socio-economic participation is in the forefront, but the programme also provides socio-cultural skills (networks and integration / acculturation)
- Learners develop IT projects which support the community / NGOs (e.g. translation app for refugees)

*I don't know I never heard about this [active citizenship] but I am just guessing. And this is the first time I hear about this one, but I guess it means like it's not people who are just here and taking money from the government and not doing anything with their life ... trying to get a job, study or do anything which is good for them and the*

## Rights and responsibilities



*It gave me the confidence to...and the hope actually, I shall start with the hope more than the confidence. It was more the hope that I'm not on my own therefore things will change because there's other people also fighting for it, that kind of idea. And the confidence to continue doing because you saw the reaction that it had at the end and you were like 'yes!', you know*

## Youth participation project

**Ireland** - for ethnic minority young people for approximately four months

- enabling young people to give voice to their experiences of barriers (prejudice and discrimination, including racism and sexism)

Outcome: production of video in which young people describe the barriers experienced by ethnic minority young people in education and employment contexts.

Follow-up: engagement with policy makers and companies

*They are like 'what are you going to do, this is it'. So they like to empower you and kind of leave you to it, and they don't like....they're probably dying on the inside but they would definitely like let you go through that process.*



- Active Participatory Citizenship is contextually specific and often perceived implicitly – largely through socio-economic, socio-cultural or politico-legal dimensions:
  - Emphasis on equal rights -Contributing to political change in society
  - Contributing to economic prosperity – through work or as a volunteer
  - Developing social networks – contributing to community
  - Being independent /developing autonomy
  - Helping and supporting others
- Inclusion/APC strategies need to be targeted to specific group needs
  - Active citizenship is promoted implicitly rather than explicitly, with:
- The role of adult educator is multidimensional
- Communicative ecologies play significant role

# Elements of 'good practices' of re-engaging young people: drivers for success

- A holistic and integrated social support and pedagogical approach, centred on the learners and their specific and individual learning and support needs.
- Promoting resilience (rather than labelling young adults as 'vulnerable') and growth as key cross-cutting theme: confidence, self-esteem and aspirations
- Flexibility and personalisation rather than a 'one size fits all' approach
- Creating a safe space for learning in diverse and multicultural groups and developing a relationship of mutual trust and respect between the learner and the educator/practitioner/trainer.
- Offering opportunities to practice active citizenship in all its dimensions and related to young people's experiences and life situations. Using role models of persons who are in similar situations and have found ways of developing resilience.
- Contextualising APC competences in ways that are relevant to learners' personal backgrounds and/or professional aims.
- Importance of communication –communicative ecologies

## Adult Education as a path to social inclusion

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



Thank you for your attention!

# KONTAKTIEREN SIE UNS:

**EPALE – E-Plattform für  
Erwachsenenbildung in  
Europa**

[ec.europa.eu/epale](http://ec.europa.eu/epale)



EPALE.AT



EPALE\_AT

1010 Wien

Ebendorferstraße 7

T +43 1 534 08-0

F +43 1 534 08-699

[epale@oead.at](mailto:epale@oead.at)

[www.bildung.erasmusplus.at](http://www.bildung.erasmusplus.at)

