

## ANDRAGOŠKA SPOZNAVJA

### Studies in Adult Education and Learning

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## EDITORIAL

# EDUCATION 2030 & ADULT LEARNING: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES – BRIDGES OR GAPS?

This thematic issue of *Studies in Adult Education and Learning* was born out of the work done at the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the ESREA Research Network *Between Global and Local: Adult Learning and Communities* (BGL-ALC) which was held in Opatija in Croatia, from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2018, organised by the Adult Education Institution DANTE (Ustanova za obrazovanje odraslih), an institution with vigorous roots in local and regional educational networks and active at a European level in numerous EU projects and cooperative efforts. The organisers of the conference together with the convenors of the BGL-ALC Research Network chose as a title for the conference: “Education 2030 & Adult Learning: Global Perspectives and Local Communities - Bridges or Gaps? Agendas, praxis and research”.

The background for the conference theme was the adoption in September 2015 by the United Nations (UN) member countries of a set of goals to do nothing less than end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed upon in 2015 has specific targets to be achieved in a 15-year period.

What was the idea behind such a theme? Organisers and convenors alike felt that the SDGs for Education needed to be examined critically according to their own institutional criteria and needed, too, to be put to the test in the light of different strands of research carried out in diverse national, social or cultural fields.

After all, the 2030 Agenda highlights education as a stand-alone goal (SDG 4), committed to providing inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels. Education is also included under several other SDGs, specifically those on health; growth and employment; sustainable consumption and production; and climate change. Education is therefore seen as a necessary precondition and key element in the achievement of the abovementioned goals. The overarching aim of SDG 4 is to provide comprehensive, holistic, and universal education that *transforms* the lives of individuals, communities and societies, “leaving no one behind”, as it has become fashionable to claim. By any means a tall order.

## THE NETWORK AND SDGS

The task of achieving the Education 2030 goals embodies elements central to the research and work of the BGL-ALC Network. The 2030 Agenda stresses, for example, the vital and beneficial role of learning and education in communities and societies, recognising that learning is imperative for achieving sustainable development, equity, and inclusion.

However, the 2030 Agenda is faced with considerable challenges to its target of bridging the gap between the global and the local to ensure the attainment of specified goals for accelerated social development. By signing the document, governments committed themselves to translate global targets into achievable national targets based on their often very different, often very ambiguous education priorities, national development strategies and plans, based, too, on the ways their education systems are organised, their often far from adequate institutional capacities and, of course, on the dramatically unequal availability of resources. National governments, municipalities, towns, cities and regions have a responsibility as policy and decision-makers to address global education and learning goals.

If education and learning SDGs are to be achieved, active participation and collaboration between communities around the world, including all relevant sectors and stakeholders, are required. While any practical change will be driven by measures taken by national, regional and local governing institutions, this will obviously need to be supported by effective “multi-stakeholder” partnerships, which means that no simple solutions at local levels are immediately available and that new forms of cooperation, new social alliances, novel forms of struggle and mobilisation must be developed and put into practice. Implementing the Agenda 2030 will require national, regional and global mechanisms for governance, accountability, coordination, monitoring, follow-up and review, reporting and evaluation. It will also require “enabling strategies” — another favourite, yet ominously hollow-sounding formula that is presumably meant to mean “getting things done” — including new partnerships and financing models.

It will be imperative, too, to promote processes that generate engagement with the SDGs at the community level. The goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda can, if at all, only be achieved if members of local communities take responsibility for implementing the SDGs in their own context. We wanted to ask whether communities can realistically be engaged to make global goals set by the UN their own local goals. The conference also sought to ask how individuals and collectives might contribute to achieving the Agenda 2030 for adult learning.

Some of the further questions that it seemed important to consider together included, for example:

- How can cooperation between individuals and communities at national and transnational levels contribute to the development of genuine accessibility, equality and sustainability in adult learning? Sustainability, an obviously desirable target, remains often however, little more than a mere husk of a word, and means of measuring, or

even simply recognising sustainability, can be difficult to agree upon. (see here in particular the contributions in this thematic issue by Lucio-Villegas; Chinnasamy and Daniels; Bajner)

- If targets cannot be measured on the basis of political declarations alone, where must we begin? For a network like the BGL-ALC Research Network, and for ESREA as a whole, accessibility, equality, and sustainability of education provision and learning gains can and must be sought out and systematically researched in the *local life-world* of adult learners. (see Lucio-Villegas)
- To what extent do the SDGs for education impact on the global, to what extent on the local levels of social life? What are the real global and local challenges for adult learning? What is the role of the researcher? (see Lucio-Villegas; Chinnasamy and Daniels)
- What does it mean if educators are understood to be mediators, implementers and creators of local and global education policies? What is new in this role? What are the dangers, what are the potential gains? Is Adult Education likely to be absorbed even further than is already the case in many places into the commercialised notion of education as product-delivery? (see Chinnasamy and Daniels; Bajner)
- What role falls to researchers in interpreting global adult learning needs at the local level? The SDGs are grand concepts. Researching adult learning in the micro-context, effectively bridging the gap to SDGs, remains urgently important (for quite radically different research practices see on this Lindsay and Sereďyńska-Abou-Eid; Chinnasamy and Daniels; Khattab and Wong; Lucio-Villegas)
- What factors determine national and local communities' readiness and ability to implement global sustainable development goals for adult learning? Examples in this thematic issue remind us particularly of the after-effects on educational infrastructures of diverse social systems (see Vařatková and Dopita; Chinnasamy and Daniels; Khattab and Wong)
- Espousing the grand aims of the SDGs is relatively painless for national educational institutions. Closing the gaps between national policy contexts, global political commitments and pressing social problems can be difficult. This is an obvious field for participatory research for democracy and citizenship (see Lindsay and Sereďyńska-Abou-Eid; Lucio-Villegas)
- What forms do cross-sector collaborations in adult learning for a knowledge-based society take? Who is included, who excluded? (see Lindsay and Sereďyńska-Abou-Eid)
- What might holistic approaches to adult learning look like? How can participatory research, for example, connect different social agendas, praxis and research? (see here in particular Lucio-Villegas; Vařatková and Dopita)

However urgent, however noble the ultimate SDG targets are, and we do not call them into question, as a research network which has consistently taken as its point of departure the lived world of people in the global and the local and their experience of learning in the teeth of ingrained systemic inequalities, discrimination, chauvinism, neo-colonialism, as well as class and race prejudice, we preferred to err in the direction of scepticism and sought to pose questions and promote debate on all of the above.

The European “refugee crisis” and the new character of populisms claiming to represent a response to the arrival of the victims of war, civil war and economic pressure in themselves raised serious question marks in the direction of the workings of international agencies, their programmes and the translation of the latter into national policies. The local and the global in the light of the trade conflicts unleashed by President Trump; Chinese economic expansion, the New Belt and Road and the new scramble for limited natural resources; the continuing implosion of whole societies in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan, Venezuela (the list is long); the erosion of social and political conquests in Turkey, Hungary, Poland, and latterly Italy; the threats and promises for grassroots political action posed by the political disaster of Brexit, the costs of which remain at best uncertain – all these questions and more were on our agenda when we came together in Opatija.

At the time of writing, the entire agenda sketched in above has been further sharpened by the dramatic turn in the global environmental debate which has raised the question of immediate action and placed it for the time being at the centre of the global agenda, and without any of the habitual empty phrases (thanks essentially to the effect of Greta Thunberg and movements like Fridays for Future). In this sense, it seems clear that our discussions in Opatija by the Adriatic in 2018 were useful, were productive, yes, and yet they obviously fell far short of the demands now facing us.

A possible response might be frustration and discouragement. Both of these sensations have been felt after tiring conferences in the last years and, it can be argued, they are also necessary and often salutary. They serve to spur us on to change ourselves and our research praxis. Being able to turn and look back from a different place sharpens our self-criticism and allows us to perceive what is consistent and good, what is useful, what is informative, what, too, is unresolved or still the object of debate.

The role of adult education and learning in community processes has changed and, under the pressure of the kind of local and global scenarios referred to above, continues to change and demand from us new analyses, and that we take up new positions in order to understand. We are not interested in adult education only as a question of developing skills to read, write, make calculations and so on, or to simply acquire competences to become “employable”, though the relative importance of each of these is clearly not in question. Adult education and learning, as has been pointed out already (Evans, Kurantowicz, & Lucio-Villegas, 2016, p. 2) can, however, be understood as well as a real process to help people to read the world and change it, a more general skill that is so important in the life of individuals and communities. To be able to interpret social reality can make all the difference. The six papers included in this thematic issue serve as examples of the very necessary work undertaken by researchers active in very diverse institutional or social environments in order to provide insights and materials without which at local and global levels the heterogenous learning environments in which we work cannot be sufficiently understood, questioned, or changed.

## THE PAPERS

The first paper in this collection, “University teaching and learning in educational sciences: The case of andragogy in the Czech Republic”, written by two researchers of the Faculty of Arts of the Palacky University in the Czech Republic, Jana Poláková Vašátková and Miroslav Dopita deals with the path taken by adult education in institutions of Higher Education in the Czech Republic and as such can be seen as representative of similar experiences in other post-Communist European countries. The authors argue that de-ideologization of Czech higher education was accompanied by many other changes after 1990 in the Czech Republic. In the context of local and global educational policy, the paper presents three periods of development of educational sciences including andragogy in Czech higher education after 1990, showing how changes influenced university teaching quality. In the research part, the study concentrates on changes made by its actors – notably professors/associate professors – involved in the development of the educational sciences in the Czech Republic since the 1990s. Analysis of semi-structured interviews shows that change in educational sciences was framed by limited access to foreign literature and significant personnel changes, including the return of qualified academics from abroad. The promotion of andragogy in the Czech Republic demanded the development of methodology and a critical approach to adult learning. For individual academics, the new focus privileged research over teaching, though interaction with students remains central for the interviewees.

Turning to consider the bigger picture of educational provision for adults, this time from the perspective of the overarching discourses of the programme documents that shaped the provision of adult education over decades, in her paper, “Lifelong learning redefined: From sustainability to generational learning”, Maria Bajner of the University of Pécs in Hungary sets out to identify the driving forces behind humanistic and utilitarian considerations in the opposing approaches of UNESCO and OECD, while it also addresses the role of political interventions that contributed further to confusion of the issues at stake. The author uses documentary analysis of studies and findings of international surveys to shed light on the ambivalent stances in educational documents towards the importance of lifelong learning. She argues that a shift in rhetoric from lifelong learning to generational learning is needed in order to eliminate what she calls the “doublespeak” of the documents. Her view is that the needs of younger generations in education are introduced too often to utilitarian values and economic expectations unmatched by educational processes. The ambivalence of the meaning of LLL may contribute, she argues, to a situation in which the jobs young adults are being trained for now might well disappear, and the curricula and learning material they are using today might well become useless or obsolete in 5-10 years. Bajner wishes to shed light on the ambivalent stances in UNESCO and OECD documents towards the importance of lifelong learning and to call attention to a move towards generational learning which she feels is undeservedly missed out from the political discourse on adult education.

Jayakumar Chinnasamy and Jeannie Daniels, respectively Research Student and Senior Lecturer in the School of Education, University of the West of Scotland, United Kingdom, address the relevance of the SDGs for the work of institutions of Higher Education in their paper entitled “The role of universities and educators in developing and implementing sustainable developmental goals”. The authors maintain that Universities and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK are seen as having a social mission to deliver common good to society, both locally and globally. These institutions develop different policies due to global changes in Higher Education (HE), such as internationalisation and Sustainable Development (SD). Following UNESCO targets, they have an important role in setting sustainable developmental goals (SDGs) and also delivering them through teaching, research and other services. Effective delivery of SD practices relies, however, on educators who are directly involved in making the links between students and community. The authors point out that in practice educators are not everywhere involved in developing policies, which impacts on their ability to deliver. This research, set in Scottish HEs, investigates educators’ perceptions of internationalisation in HE, how the concept is constructed and delivered in their universities, and what – if any – involvement these educators have in developing policy. This paper argues that educators, especially HE educators, have potential that is neglected in developing SDGs.

Cora Lindsay and Renata Sereďyńska-Abou-Eid, from the School of Education at the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom, in their paper “Addressing the need for language support for the migrant and refugee community in the East Midlands, U.K.”, touch on a central problem facing local communities and their institutions impacted by increasingly critical global urgencies, often wholly unconnected historically or geographically to the communities in the host country and affected by nothing other than the pernicious mechanisms of globalisation in its most negative of forms. For migrants and refugees, language is clearly essential for dealing with officials, engaging with employment, receiving healthcare and feeling relatively comfortable in a new environment. Despite this, there is no uniform approach to English language support for incoming migrants or refugees to the East Midlands. This paper discusses the situation regarding language provision for these communities and identifies the gaps in current language provision which derive from reductions in government funding over recent years. It looks at a mixed methods doctoral study that sought to identify the language needs of the Polish community in the region and describes a University of Nottingham initiative to address the gap in ESOL provision for adult learners, both migrants and refugees, in the Nottingham area.

Amira Khattab (Dark Matter LLC and Michigan State University) and David Wong’s (Michigan State University, Associate Professor in the College of Education) paper, “Integrating Western and Arab leadership development practices: An example of the challenge bridging global and local adult learning perspectives”, discusses the choices facing non-Western (and, it has to be added, post-colonial and consistently authoritarian) societies in their attempts to conform with and fulfil international educational goals. Faced with an insufficiently skilled labour force, the authors argue, Arab countries are looking



to Western adult learning perspectives. However, Western practices, they write, cannot be implemented without consideration of regional culture. This large-scale study carried out by Khattab and Wong aims to identify best leadership development practices for Arab adult learners and examines how these practices might best fit with local cultural contexts. To determine effective practices for Arab leaders, the Delphi process was utilized to survey 24 experts in the field of executive education. In addition, eight experts were interviewed and 1,500 business leaders from 17 different countries were surveyed. Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) was used to examine indices for individual level relationships, as well as country level relationships. Findings suggest that adult learning practices must be “customized” to address the tension between global and local perspectives. Previous experience of Western practices is equally important. However, traditional schooling experiences may foster deep resistance to unfamiliar ideas and practices.

The authors’ use of the widely used, but equally widely criticised, schemata developed by Hofstede (and superficially deployed everywhere to achieve quick cultural “fixes”) to develop their analysis of the shortcomings of much HE experience in Arab societies could be the subject of a separate discussion here. At the same time, Khattab and Wong represent very much what the mainstream in professional education and personnel development argues and serve here as a useful ignition point for an important debate.

This collection of thematic papers is concluded fittingly by Emilio Lucio-Villegas of the University of Seville, Spain. In his contribution with the title “Too many evenings. Learning Democracy from a Participatory Budget Process”, Lucio-Villegas reflects on experiences linking adult education to citizenship and participation. As one of the founding convenors of the BGL-ALC Research Network, Lucio-Villegas unsurprisingly is convinced that citizenship is inseparably connected to social justice and social inclusion. He suggests in his paper that a key element in citizenship is participation in public issues which concern life in communities in order to build an egalitarian relationship among people. He connects here participation to a singular experience: to the Participatory Budget Experiment in the city of Seville from 2003 to 2007. He explores specific experiences within adult education through participatory research and the elaboration of teaching materials addressed to this end. Finally, he reflects in his paper on the consequences of these experiences for an emancipatory adult education that aims to teach and learn democracy.

## **BRIDGES OR GAPS?**

The papers collected here represent something like a fixed image of research practices at the time of their presentation. They are certainly *not* representative of research practices and research methodologies of the general fields of adult learning, adult education, lifelong learning or beyond. They are in fact much too institution-bound and obviously nation-bound to stand as representative of the field as such. The conference Call attracted a good range of practices from an interesting range of research practitioners from around Europe. Their research preoccupations are mirrored in their theoretical concerns

and their broad methodological perspectives. Thus, we have first and foremost a European set of views, problems, concerns, rationales and solutions. Moreover, the concerns are inward-looking (discussion of university policy, development, history, professional identity), institution-based (the university and its pedagogy), policy-focused (funding, regulations, roll-out, outcomes), and the research discourse and methodological rationale are centred on outcome-oriented analyses. Thus, the papers – and this holds true, too, for two of the three open papers in this thematic issue – show a marked preference in their discussion for exposition, description and comparison. Documentary analysis is employed, for example, without a theoretical framework for the identification of significant content nor for its deconstruction. The employment of key documents remains de-contextualised. Evidence is presented with neither contextual support of a theoretically representative corpus – however limited – nor theoretical grounding. Elsewhere, theoretical approaches – to the use of narrative in research design, for example – are little more than sketched in, relying on unsupported statements regarding their analytical potential and providing later little or no detail of how such analysis (narrative analysis, content analysis, focus group analysis, cultural constructs like “power-distance”, for example, and so on) is conducted and what its intrinsic value for this research or other research activities might be. The very widespread practice of collecting individual or group data (the focus group is a frequently used format here) which is then cited out-of-context and essentially as convenient evidence, with none of the inconveniences that qualitative data notoriously possess (and rightly so) is represented here too, though the even commoner alternatives of summary and free interpretation of cumbersome quantities of real testimonies are more in evidence. A refreshing exception in the papers collected here is the employment of Polish-language transcripts in the original with English translations (see Lindsay and Sreedyńska-Abou-Eid), even though in limited form.

Of course, this criticism is as much criticism of the format of the conference paper and the post-conference publication of the revised papers as it may be of the papers themselves. Our work is constrained by limits – funding, recognition by peers, time limits for presentations, word-counts, peer-reviews and so on. Many of these are salutary, some are desirable, all are inevitable. The literature review here frequently triumphs over the analysis of research data because the paper format provides the researcher with enough space to summarise and condense though not enough to argue and challenge. We may regret that this is often so, but we should also recognise that the slower task of exposition and presentation is also a part of our practice that deserves our critical attention.

In sum, then, there are arguably some important methodological gaps in parts of the papers collected here. Notwithstanding, they take their place here because they provide histories and showcase experiences which act as important bridges for the rest of us in our own research.

In 2018 we discussed the impact of SDGs and the limits of policy. Our authors here address questions of central importance that transcend the local, as well as questions that take their origin in the global sphere and invest the local experience, impacting individuals

and communities as they unravel. It is to be hoped that with their various approaches these papers go some way to providing the means to read the experiences that have been, are currently, or will be among the problems that challenge us in our places of work and research.

Beside the six thematic papers, this issue also includes three open papers, a report and a book review. In their paper “Public school teachers’ experiences of profound learning”, Davin J. Carr-Chellman and Michael Kroth from the University of Idaho, US, discuss the role of a “teacher-as-lifelong-learner”, set qualities of profound learning and learners and through in-depth focus group research with public school teachers analyse teachers’ perceptions of profound learners and profound learning experiences. In the second paper “Adult literacy and basic education policies in a comparative perspective: Selected findings from four country cases”, Alexandra Ioannidou and Carolin Knauber from the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE) investigate the interplay between the polity, politics and policies of adult literacy and basic education, drawing on qualitative data from an international-comparative project which examined basic education policies across countries, and presenting findings from four countries: Austria, Denmark, England, and Turkey. In the third open paper “Concepts of quality in evaluation practices in higher education: instrumentalization of relativistic quality”, Jernej Širok from the Slovene Quality Assurance Agency discusses concepts of quality in higher education and by analysing evaluation reports of 485 study programmes, representing 49% of all accredited study programmes in Slovenia, argues that quality does not pursue the university’s higher ideals but rather systematically helps to move higher education into the field of economic and legal relations and adapt it to economic interests. The issue is brought to a close by a report from practice on “20 years of online education at DOBA” prepared by Jasna Dominko Baloh and a book review *The Position of Marginalized Groups in Society* by Aleksandra Šindić.

*Rob Evans*

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## UVODNIK

# IZOBRAŽEVANJE 2030 IN IZOBRAŽEVANJE ODRASLIH: GLOBALNE PERSPEKTIVE IN LOKALNE SKUPNOSTI – MOSTOVI ALI VRZELI?

Ta tematska številka *Andragoških spoznanj* izhaja iz 10. konference raziskovalne mreže ESREA Med globalnim in lokalnim – Izobraževanje odraslih in skupnosti (Between Global and Local: Adult Learning and Communities, BGL-ALC), ki je potekala v Opatiji na Hrvaškem med 7. in 10. junijem 2018 v organizaciji Ustanove za izobraževanje odraslih DANTE. Ta institucija je močno vpeta v lokalne in regionalne izobraževalne mreže ter dejavna na evropski ravni v številnih projektih EU in v različnih oblikah sodelovanja. Organizatorji konference so skupaj s koordinatorji raziskovalne mreže BGL-ALC za naslov srečanja izbrali *Izobraževanje 2030 in izobraževanje odraslih: Globalne perspektive in lokalne skupnosti – mostovi ali vrzeli? Agende, prakse in raziskave*.

V ozadju konferenčne teme je bilo dejstvo, da so države članice Organizacije združenih narodov (OZN) septembra 2015 sprejele niz ciljev z ambicioznim namenom odpraviti revščino, zaščititi planet in zagotoviti blaginjo za vse kot del Agende 2030 za trajnostni razvoj. Vsak od skupno 17 ciljev trajnostnega razvoja (CTR), sprejetih v letu 2015, vključuje specifične kazalnike, ki naj bi jih dosegli v 15-letnem obdobju.

Kaj je bila motivacija za izbiro te teme? Tako organizatorji kot koordinatorji so bili mnenja, da je nujno CTR s področja izobraževanja kritično pretresti glede na lastne institucionalne kriterije in jih po potrebi tudi preizprašati v luči različnih raziskovalnih smeri v raznolikih nacionalnih, družbenih in kulturnih okoljih.

Ne nazadnje postavlja Agenda 2030 izobraževanje kot samostojen cilj (CTR 4) ter zavezuje k zagotavljanju inkluzivnega in enakopravnega kakovostnega izobraževanja na vseh ravneh. Izobraževanje je vključeno še v več drugih CTR, zlasti tistih na področju zdravja, gospodarske rasti in zaposlovanja, trajnostne potrošnje in proizvodnje ter podnebnih sprememb. Izobraževanje je torej predstavljeno kot nujni prvi pogoj in ključni element pri doseganju omenjenih ciljev. Glavni cilj CTR 4 pa je zagotoviti celovito in celostno izobraževanje za vse, tako, ki spreminja življenje posameznikov, skupnosti in družb, ter kot je modno reči, zagotavlja »enake možnosti za vse«. Nič od tega ni lahka naloga.

## MREŽA IN CTR

Pri doseganju ciljev Izobraževanja 2030 so pomembni isti elementi, kot jih postavljata v ospredje raziskovanje in delo mreže BGL-ALC. Agenda 2030 na primer poudarja ključno in pozitivno vlogo učenja in izobraževanja v skupnostih in družbah ter prepozna, da je učenje nujno za doseganje trajnostnega razvoja, enakopravnosti in inkluzivnosti.

Vendar pa Agendo 2030 čakajo pomembni izzivi pri cilju premostiti vrzel med globalnim in lokalnim, da bi tako zagotovili doseganje specifičnih ciljev za hitrejši družbeni razvoj. S podpisom tega dokumenta so se vlade zavezale, da bodo globalne cilje prevedle v dosegljive nacionalne cilje glede na svoje pogosto zelo različne in zelo dvoumne izobraževalne prioritete, nacionalne razvojne strategije in načrte; glede na oblike organiziranosti izobraževalnega sistema, institucionalne zmožnosti, ki so pogosto daleč od zelenih; in pa seveda glede na izjemno neenako dostopnost virov. Nacionalne vlade, občine, velika in manjša mesta ter regije imajo kot odločevalci in določevalci politik odgovornost obravnava globalne izobraževalne in učne cilje.

Če naj dosežemo izobraževalne in učne CTR, je nujno aktivno delovanje in sodelovanje skupnosti po svetu, vključno z vsemi relevantnimi sektorji in deležniki. Medtem ko bodo za praktične spremembe nujni spodbujevalni ukrepi nacionalnih, regionalnih in lokalnih vladnih institucij, je jasno, da te potrebujejo podporo učinkovitih »večdeležniških« partnerstev, kar pomeni, da ni preprostih rešitev, ki bi bile takoj na voljo na lokalni ravni, temveč je treba razviti in udejanjiti nove oblike sodelovanja, nova družbena zaveznitva in inovativne oblike boja in mobilizacije. Implementacija Agende 2030 bo zahtevala nacionalne, regionalne in globalne mehanizme za upravljanje, zagotavljanje odgovornosti, koordinacijo, monitoring, spremljanje in pregledovanje, poročanje in evalvacijo. Zahtevala bo tudi »strategije omogočanja«, kar je spet eden tistih izrazov, ki se dobro slišijo; predvidoma pomeni nekaj takega kot »doseči, da se nekaj zgodi«, a zveni sumljivo nedoločno – vključno z novimi partnerstvi in modeli financiranja.

Nujno bo tudi spodbujati procese, ki prinašajo aktivno udejanjanje CTR na ravni skupnosti. Cilje in kazalnike v Agendi 2030 bo – če sploh – mogoče doseči le, če bodo člani lokalnih skupnosti prevzeli odgovornost za implementacijo CTR v svojem lastnem kontekstu. Vprašanje, ki smo ga želeli postaviti, je bilo, ali je, realistično gledano, mogoče spodbuditi skupnosti, da globalne cilje, kot jih je zastavila OZN, prepoznajo kot svoje lastne lokalne cilje. Konferenca je želela odgovoriti tudi na vprašanje, kako lahko posamezniki in kolektivi prispevajo k uresničitvi Agende 2030 na področju učenja in izobraževanja odraslih.

Med nadaljnjimi vprašanji, ki se nam jih je zdelo pomembno obravnavati, so bila na primer:

- Kako lahko sodelovanje med posamezniki in skupnostmi na nacionalni in nadnacionalni ravni prispeva k doseganju resnične dostopnosti, enakopravnosti in trajnostne naravnosti v izobraževanju odraslih? Čeprav je očitno zaželeno kot cilj, trajnost pogosto ostaja samo mrtva črka na papirju, soglasje o metodah merjenja in samem

prepoznavanju pa je težko doseči (gl. še zlasti naslednje prispevke v tej tematski številki: Lucio-Villegas; Chinnasamy in Daniels; Bajner).

- Če ciljev ni mogoče meriti zgolj na podlagi političnih deklaracij, kje naj začnemo? Mreže, kot sta BGL-ALC in ESREA kot celota, se zmorejo in morajo prizadevati za in sistematično raziskovati dostopnost, enakopravnost in trajnost zagotavljanja izobraževanja in izobraževalnega napredka v *lokalnem življenjskem okolju* učečih se odraslih (gl. Lucio-Villegas).
- V kolikšni meri CTR na področju izobraževanja vplivajo na globalne in v kolikšni meri na lokalne ravni družbenega življenja? kateri so resnični globalni in lokalni izzivi v izobraževanju odraslih? Kakšna je vloga raziskovalca? (Gl. Lucio-Villegas; Chinnasamy in Daniels.)
- Kaj pomeni, če izobraževalce razumemo kot mediatorje, izvajalce in ustvarjalce lokalnih in globalnih izobraževalnih politik? Kaj ta vloga prinaša novega? Katere nevarnosti in katere potencialne prednosti vključuje? Ali obstaja verjetnost, da bo skomercializirani koncept izobraževanja kot dobavljanja proizvoda marsikje še bolj kot doslej posrkal vase izobraževanje odraslih (gl. Chinnasamy in Daniels; Bajner)?
- Kakšna naj bo vloga raziskovalcev pri interpretiranju globalnih potreb v izobraževanju odraslih na lokalni ravni? CTR so velikopotezni koncepti. Raziskovanje izobraževanja odraslih v mikrokontekstu, ki dejansko premaguje vrzel do CTR, ostaja še naprej nujno (za radikalno drugačne raziskovalne prakse na tem področju gl. Lindsay in Seredyńska-Abou-Eid; Chinnasamy in Daniels; Khattab in Wong; Lucio-Villegas).
- kateri dejavniki določajo pripravljenost in sposobnost nacionalnih in lokalnih skupnosti za implementacijo globalnih ciljev trajnostnega razvoja na področju izobraževanja odraslih? Primeri v tej tematski številki nas še posebej opozarjajo na učinke na izobraževalno infrastrukturo raznolikih družbenih sistemov (gl. Vašátková in Dopita; Chinnasamy in Daniels; Khattab in Wong).
- Zavzemanje za velikopotezne cilje CTR je za nacionalne izobraževalne institucije razmeroma enostavno. Premoščanje razlik med konteksti nacionalnih politik, globalnimi političnimi zavezami in perečimi družbenimi problemi pa je po drugi strani lahko težavno. To področje je očitna priložnost za participativno raziskovanje na področju demokracije in državljanstva (gl. Lindsay in Seredyńska-Abou-Eid; Lucio-Villegas).
- Kakšne oblike lahko v prizadevanju za družbo, temelječo na znanju, prevzame medsektorsko sodelovanje v izobraževanju odraslih (gl. Lindsay in Seredyńska-Abou-Eid)?
- Kakšni bi bili lahko holistični pristopi k izobraževanju odraslih? Kako lahko participativno raziskovanje na primer poveže različne družbene agende, prakse in raziskave (gl. še zlasti Lucio-Villegas; Vašátková in Dopita)?

Ne glede na to, kako nujni in plemeniti so brez dvoma cilji CTR, smo kot raziskovalna mreža, ki si za izhodišče tako v globalnem kot lokalnem smislu konsistentno jemlje resnični svet, v katerem ljudje živijo, skupaj z njihovo izkušnjo učenja v razmerah zakoreninjenih sistemskih neenakosti, diskriminacije, šovinizma, neokolonializma ter razrednih in rasnih predsodkov, nagnjeni k zdravi skepsi in postavljanju vprašanj, ki spodbujajo razpravo o vsem naštetem.

Evropska »begunska kriza« in nova narava populizmov, ki se predstavljajo kot odziv na prihod žrtev vojne, državljanske vojne in ekonomskih pritiskov, sami po sebi postavljata resna vprašanja glede usmeritev dela mednarodnih agencij, njihovih programov in udejanjanja teh programov v nacionalnih politikah. Lokalni in globalni vidiki v luči trgovinskih konfliktov, ki jih je sprožil predsednik Trump; kitajska gospodarska ekspanzija, iniciativa »En pas – ena pot« in novo prerivanje za dostop do omejenih naravnih virov; nadaljnja implozija celotne družbe v Siriji, Libiji, Jemnu, Afganistanu, Venezueli (in še bi lahko nadaljevali); erozija doseženih družbenih in političnih standardov v Turčiji, na Madžarskem, Poljskem in v zadnjem času v Italiji; grožnje in obljube, ki jih političnemu delovanju navadnih ljudi prinaša brexit kot politična katastrofa, katere cena je najmanj negotova – vsa ta in še druga vprašanja so bila na našem dnevnem redu, ko smo se sestali v Opatiji.

V času, ko nastaja pričujoči zapis, je tu orisano agendo dodatno zaostril dramatičen preobrat v globalni razpravi o okolju, kjer se je pojavilo vprašanje takojšnjega ukrepanja, ki je vsaj v tem trenutku v ospredju globalnega zanimanja brez običajnih praznih public (za kar so zaslužni predvsem Greta Thunberg in gibanja, kot je Fridays for Future). V tem smislu se zdi jasno, da so bile naše razprave na jadranski obali v Opatiji leta 2018 sicer koristne in produktivne, a očitno še vedno veliko premalo glede na zahteve, s katerimi se soočamo danes.

Na to se lahko odzovemo s frustracijo in upadlim pogumom. Oba občutka sta nam po napornih konferencah v zadnjih letih dobro znana, lahko pa trdimo, da sta tudi nujna in celo koristna. Spodbujata nas, da spremenimo sebe in svojo raziskovalno prakso. To, da lahko pogledamo nazaj z drugega zornega kota, krepi samokritiko in nam omogoča, da zaznamo, kaj je konsistentno in dobro, kaj je uporabno, kaj je informativno in tudi kaj je še nerazrešeno in predmet razprave.

Vloga izobraževanja in učenja odraslih v skupnostnih procesih se je spremenila ter se pod pritiski lokalnih in globalnih scenarijev, ki smo jih predhodno opisali, še naprej spreminja ter od nas zahteva, da razvijamo nove analize in zavzemamo nove pozicije, da bi jo lahko razumeli. Izobraževanje odraslih nas ne zanima samo kot vprašanje razvijanja veščin branja, pisanja, računanja in tako dalje oziroma pridobivanja kompetenc, s katerimi postanemo »zaposljivi«, čeprav seveda ni mogoče dvomiti o njihovi relativni pomembnosti. Kot že vemo (Evans, Kurantowicz in Lucio-Villegas, 2016, str. 2), lahko namreč izobraževanje in učenje odraslih razumemo kot proces, s katerim resnično pomagamo ljudem, da interpretirajo svet in ga spreminjajo, kar je splošnejša veščina ključnega pomena za življenje posameznikov in skupnosti. Če smo sposobni prebrati družbeno realnost, to lahko spremeni vse. Ta tematska številka prinaša šest člankov, ki lahko služijo kot primeri resnično potrebnega dela, ki ga opravljajo raziskovalci v med seboj zelo različnih institucionalnih ali družbenih okoljih, da bi zagotovili vpogled in gradivo, brez katerega heterogenih učnih okolij, v katerih delujemo, ne moremo zadostno lokalno in globalno razumeti, preizprašati ali spremeniti.



## ČLANKI

Prvi članek z naslovom *Univerzitetno poučevanje in učenje v izobraževalnih vedah: primer andragogike v Češki republiki*, ki sta ga napisala raziskovalca Filozofske fakultete na Univerzi Palackega v Olomucu na Češkem Jana Poláková Vašátková in Miroslav Dopita, se ukvarja s potjo, po kateri je šlo izobraževanje odraslih v čeških visokošolskih ustanovah in ki jo lahko vidimo kot reprezentativno za podobne izkušnje v drugih postkomunističnih državah Evrope. Avtorja zagovarjata tezo, da so deideologizacijo češkega visokega šolstva po letu 1990 spremljale še številne druge spremembe. V kontekstu lokalne in globalne izobraževalne politike članek predstavi tri obdobja v razvoju izobraževalnih ved, vključno z andragogiko, v češkem visokošolskem prostoru po letu 1990 in pokaže, kako spremembe vplivajo na kakovost poučevanja. V raziskovalnem delu se avtorja osredotočata na spremembe, ki jih povzročajo akterji, zlasti redni in izredni profesorji, ki so vpleteni v razvoj izobraževalnih ved na Češkem, od začetka 90. let dalje. Analiza polstrukturiranih intervjujev kaže, da so se spremembe v izobraževalnih vedah dogajale v kontekstu omejenega dostopa do tuje literature in pomembnih kadrovskih sprememb, vključno z vrnitvijo kvalificiranih znanstvenikov iz tujine. Napredek andragogike je na Češkem zahteval razvoj metodologije in kritični pristop k izobraževanju odraslih. Za posamezne znanstvenike je novi fokus pomenil, da so dali prednost raziskovanju pred poučevanjem, čeprav je bila za udeležence raziskave na splošno še vedno v ospredju interakcija s študenti.

V članku z naslovom *Ponovna opredelitev vseživljenjskega učenja: od trajnosti do generacijskih načinov učenja* Maria Bajner z Univerze v Pécsu na Madžarskem obravnava širšo sliko na področju zagotavljanja izobraževanja za odrasle, tokrat s perspektive ključnih diskurzov v programskih dokumentih, ki skozi desetletja oblikujejo ponudbo izobraževanj za odrasle. Namen prispevka je identificirati gonilne sile v ozadju humanističnih in utilitarističnih vidikov v nasprotujočih si pristopih organizacij UNESCO in OECD, hkrati pa obravnava tudi vlogo političnih posegov, ki so dodatno prispevali k nejasnosti relevantnih vprašanj. Avtorica s pomočjo analize dokumentov – študij in ugotovitev mednarodnih raziskav – osvetli ambivalentna stališča do pomena vseživljenjskega učenja, ki jih najdemo v dokumentih s področja izobraževanja. Ob tem zagovarja mnenje, da je za odpravo t. i. dvojnega govora, kot ga imenuje, potreben retorični premik od vseživljenjskega učenja h generacijskemu načinu učenja. Avtorica meni, da so izobraževalne potrebe mlajših generacij prepogosto preveč povezane z utilitarističnimi vrednotami in ekonomskimi pričakovanji brez vzporednic v izobraževalnih procesih. Kot pravi, lahko dvojnost pomena vseživljenjskega učenja prispeva k možnosti, da bodo službe, za katere se mlajši odrasli zdaj usposablajo, izginile, danes aktualni učni načrti in učna gradiva pa bodo lahko čez pet ali deset let neuporabni in zastareli. M. Bajner si prizadeva osvetliti ambivalentna stališča dokumentov organizacij UNESCO in OECD glede pomena vseživljenjskega učenja in opozoriti na premik h generacijskemu načinu učenja, ki po njenem mnenju umanjka v političnem diskurzu o izobraževanju odraslih.

Študent raziskovalec Jayakumar Chinnasamy in izredna profesorica na Pedagoški fakulteti Univerze zahodne Škotske v Veliki Britaniji Jeannie Daniels obravnavata pomen CTR za delo visokošolskih institucij v članku z naslovom *Vloga univerz in učiteljev pri razvijanju in uresničevanju ciljev trajnostnega razvoja*. Avtorja ugotavljata, da se od univerz in visokošolskih institucij v Veliki Britaniji pričakuje družbeno poslanstvo v smislu prispevanja k skupnemu dobremu v družbi, tako lokalno kot globalno. Te institucije zaradi globalnih sprememb v visokem šolstvu razvijajo različne politike, na primer na področju internacionalizacije in trajnostnega razvoja. S tem ko zasledujejo cilje UNESCA, imajo pomembno vlogo pri postavljanju CTR in njihovem doseganju s pomočjo poučevanja, raziskovanja in drugih dejavnosti. Vendar pa je učinkovito zagotavljanje praks trajnostnega razvoja odvisno od učiteljev, ki so neposredno vključeni v proces povezovanja med študenti in skupnostjo. Avtorja poudarjata, da v praksi učitelji nimajo povsod besede pri razvoju politik, kar vpliva na njihovo sposobnost delovanja. Ta raziskava, ki se osredotoča na visoko šolstvo na Škotskem, ugotavlja, kako učitelji dojemajo internacionalizacijo v visokem šolstvu, kako je ta koncept zastavljen in udejanjen na tamkajšnjih univerzah ter kako – če sploh – ti učitelji sodelujejo pri oblikovanju politik. Članek zagovarja mnenje, da se potencial, ki ga imajo učitelji (zlasti v visokem šolstvu) pri razvoju CTR, ne upošteva dovolj.

Cora Lindsay in Renata Sereďyńska-Abou-Eid, Pedagoška fakulteta Univerze v Nottinghamu, Velika Britanija, se v članku *Odziv na potrebe po jezikovni podpori za priseljence in begunce v East Midlands, Velika Britanija* dotikata osrednjega problema, s katerim se soočajo lokalne skupnosti in njihove institucije zaradi čedalje bolj perečih globalnih kritičnih situacij, ki so pogosto zgodovinsko ali geografsko povsem brez povezave z državo gostiteljico in pod vplivom zgolj najbolj škodljivih mehanizmov globalizacije v najslabši možni obliki. Jasno je, da je za priseljence in begunce jezik ključen za sporazumevanje z uradniki, urejanje zaposlitve, uporabo zdravstvenih storitev in relativno dobro počutje v novem okolju. Kljub temu v regiji East Midlands ni enotnega pristopa k zagotavljanju jezikovne podpore priseljencem in beguncem pri učenju angleščine. Članek obravnava trenutno urejenost jezikovne pomoči tem skupnostim in ugotavlja, kje v zadnjih letih zaradi zmanjšanja javnih sredstev nastajajo vrzeli. Temelji na doktorski raziskavi mešanih metod, katere cilj je bil identificirati jezikovne potrebe poljske skupnosti v regiji, in prinaša opis pobude Univerze v Nottinghamu, s katero želi ta zapolniti vrzel v zagotavljanju pouka angleščine za odrasle govorce drugih jezikov, tako priseljence kot begunce, v Nottinghamu in okolici.

Amira Khattab (Dark Matter LLC in Državna univerza v Michiganu) in David Wong (izredni profesor na Pedagoški fakulteti Državne univerze v Michiganu) v članku *Združevanje zahodnih in arabskih praks razvoja vodstvenih kompetenc: primer izziva premostitve razlik globalnih in lokalnih pogledov na učenje odraslih* razpravljata o izbirah, s katerimi se soočajo družbe zunaj Zahoda (pri čemer je treba dodati, da gre za postkolonialne in skoraj brez izjeme avtoritarne družbe), ko se poskušajo prilagoditi mednarodnim izobraževalnim ciljem in jih izpolniti. Avtorja zagovarjata tezo, da ob problemu premalo

kvalificirane delovne sile arabske države iščejo rešitev v zahodnih pogledih na izobraževanje odraslih. Vendar pa, kot pišeta, zahodnih praks ni mogoče implementirati brez upoštevanja kulture določenega območja. Cilj te obsežne študije A. Khattab in D. Wonga je bil identificirati najboljše prakse razvoja vodstvenih kompetenc za arabske učeče se odrasle in raziskati, kako bi se te prakse najbolje vključile v lokalne kulturne kontekste. Da bi ugotovila, katere prakse so učinkovite za arabske vodilne delavce, sta po delfski metodi anketirala 24 strokovnjakov na področju izobraževanja vodilnih delavcev. Dodatno sta intervjuvala osem strokovnjakov in anketirala 1.500 vodilnih delavcev v poslovnem svetu iz 17 držav. Z uporabo hierarhičnega linearnega modeliranja (HLM) sta proučila kazalnike odnosov tako na ravni posameznika kot na ravni države. Ugotovitve kažejo, da je treba prakse izobraževanja odraslih »prilagoditi« ter tako razrešiti trenja med globalnimi in lokalnimi vidiki. Predhodne izkušnje z zahodnimi praksami so enako pomembne, vendar pa lahko izkušnja tradicionalnega šolanja povzroči močan odpor do nepoznanih idej in praks.

Posebej bi lahko razpravljali o dejstvu, da avtorja pri analizi pogostih pomanjkljivosti visokega šolstva v arabskih družbah uporabljata dobro znane, a tudi močno sporne sheme, ki jih je razvil Hofstede (te se kot hitre kulturne »rešitve« površno uporabljajo tako rekoč povsod). Po drugi strani A. Khattab in D. Wong zelo dobro predstavitava, kaj zagovarja prevladujoča struja v poklicnem izobraževanju in kadrovskem razvoju, in na tem mestu zastavita koristno izhodišče za nadaljnjo pomembno razpravo.

Primerno je, da ta tematski nabor prispevkov zaokroža članek Emilia Lucio-Villegasa z Univerze v Sevilji, Španija, z naslovom *Preveč večerov. Učenje demokracije na podlagi participativnega proračunskega postopka*. Lucio-Villegas razmišlja o izkušnjah povezovanja izobraževanja odraslih z državljanstvom in participacijo. Ne preseneča, da je avtor, eden od ustanoviteljev raziskovalne mreže BGL-ALC, prepričan, da je državljanstvo neločljivo povezano z družbeno pravičnostjo in družbeno inkluzivnostjo. V članku zagovarja mnenje, da je ključni element državljanstva sodelovanje pri javnih vprašanjih, ki zadevajo življenje v skupnosti, da bi se tako med ljudmi ustvarili enakopravni odnosi. Participacijo tu poveže z enkratno izkušnjo: eksperimentom s participativnim proračunom v Sevilji med letoma 2003 in 2007. Prek participativnega raziskovanja in podrobne obravnave namenskih učnih gradiv raziskuje te specifične izkušnje v okviru izobraževanja odraslih. Ne nazadnje v članku razmišlja o posledicah teh izkušenj za emancipacijsko izobraževanje odraslih, katerega cilj je poučevanje in učenje demokracije.

## **MOSTOVI ALI VRZELI?**

Tukaj zbrani prispevki bolj ali manj kažejo zamrznjeno sliko raziskovalnih praks v času, ko so bili predstavljeni na konferenci. To nikakor ni splošno reprezentativna slika raziskovalnih praks in metodologij na področju učenja oziroma izobraževanja odraslih, vseživljenjskega učenja in sorodnih področij. Dejansko so preveč vezani na institucije in nacionalne države, da bi lahko predstavljali področje v celoti. Konferenca je pritegnila vrsto

prispevkov zelo različnih raziskovalcev iz celotne Evrope, katerih raziskovalna zanimanja se zrcalijo v teoretičnih usmeritvah in širših metodoloških vidikih. Tako gre v prvi vrsti za zelo evropski nabor pogledov, problemov, vprašanj, motivacij in rešitev. Ta zanimanja so nadalje introspektivna (razpravljanje o univerzitetnih politikah, razvoju, zgodovini, profesionalni identiteti), institucionalna (univerza in njena pedagogika) in osredotočena na politike (financiranje, regulacija, izpeljava, rezultati), raziskovalni diskurz in metodološka motivacija pa se osredotočata na analize, usmerjene k rezultatom. V prispevkih – in to drži tudi za dva od treh tematsko odprtih člankov v številki – je v razpravi razvidna jasna nagnjenost k razlaganju, opisovanju in primerjanju. Raba analize dokumentov na primer ni podprta s teoretičnim okvirom, v katerem bi identificirali pomembne vsebine oziroma ki bi omogočal dekonstrukcijo teh vsebin. Uporaba ključnih dokumentov ostaja dekontekstualizirana. Dokazna podpora je predstavljena brez kontekstualne opore v smislu teoretično reprezentativnega korpusa – naj bo ta še tako omejen – ali teoretične utemeljitve. Tudi drugje najdemo teoretične pristope – na primer vključevanje pripovedi v raziskovalno metodologijo – zgolj v obrisih, prispevki se pogosto zanašajo na nepodprte trditve glede analitičnega potenciala in podajajo malo ali sploh nič podrobnosti o izvajanju različnih analiz (narativna analiza, analiza vsebine, analiza fokusnih skupin, kulturni konstrukti, kot je na primer »oddaljenost moči«, in tako dalje) in o tem, kaj lahko same po sebi prispevajo k raziskavi ali drugim raziskovalnim dejavnostim. Prav tako najdemo zelo razširjeno prakso zbiranja podatkov o posameznikih ali skupinah (pogost format so tu fokusne skupine), ti pa se nato citirajo brez konteksta in so dejansko uporabljeni kot ugodno dokazno gradivo brez neugodnih pomislekov, zaradi katerih so kvalitativni podatki pogosto pod vprašajem (in prav je, da so), čeprav so še pogostejše alternative, kot na primer povzemanje in prosta interpretacija velikih količin resničnih pričevanj. Čeprav v omejenem obsegu, je svetla izjema med tu zbranimi prispevki uporaba transkribiranih besedil v izvirni poljščini z angleškim prevodom (gl. Lindsay in Sereďyńska-Abou-Eid).

Seveda gre pri tej kritiki ravno toliko kot za kritiko člankov tudi za kritiko samega formata konferenčnega prispevka in konferenčne publikacije v obliki predelanih člankov. Pri delu se soočamo z omejitvami – financiranje, priznanje kolegov, časovna omejitev predstavitev, štetje besed, recenzije in tako dalje. Številne med temi omejitvami so koristne, nekatere so zaželene, vse so neizogibne. Pogosto se dogaja, da pregled literature prevlada nad analizo raziskovalnih podatkov, saj format članka daje raziskovalcu dovolj prostora za povzemanje in zgoščanje, ne pa dovolj za razpravljanje in izzivalnost. To dejstvo lahko obžalujemo, vendar pa si moramo hkrati priznati, da je počasnost pri razlaganju in predstavljanju del naše prakse, ki zasluži kritično pozornost.

Če povzamemo, je torej nesporno, da se pri tu zbranih člankih pojavljajo pomembne metodološke vrzeli. Ne glede na to imajo v reviji svoj prostor, saj prinašajo zgodovinski vpogled in predstavljajo izkušnje, ki so pomemben most do vseh drugih, ki se ukvarjamo z raziskovanjem, in do naših raziskav.

Leta 2018 smo razpravljali o CTR in omejitvah politik. Tu predstavljeni avtorji obravnavajo tako vprašanja osrednjega pomena, ki presegajo lokalno raven, kot tista, ki imajo sicer

korenine v globalni sferi, a se umeščajo v lokalne izkušnje in ob tem pomembno vplivajo na posameznike in skupnosti. Upamo lahko, da raznoliki pristopi, ki jih uporabljajo ti prispevki, prinašajo orodja za pomoč pri razbiranju izkušenj, ki so in bodo še naprej izzivi v našem delovnem okolju in raziskovanju.

Poleg šestih tematskih člankov pričujoča številka vključuje tudi tri tematsko odprte članke, poročilo in knjižno recenzijo. V članku *Izkušnje učiteljev v javnem šolstvu s prodornim učenjem* avtorja Davin J. Carr-Chellman in Michael Kroth z Univerze v Idahu, ZDA, razpravljata o vlogi »učitelja kot vseživljenjsko učečega se«, navedeta značilnosti prodornega učenja in učečih se ter skozi poglobljeno fokusno raziskavo, v kateri so sodelovali učitelji v javnem šolstvu, analizirata, kako učitelji dojemajo udeležence in izkušnjo prodornega učenja. Drugi prispevek, *Pismenost odraslih in temeljne izobraževalne politike s primerjalne perspektive: ugotovitve iz štirih držav*, Alexandre Ioannidou in Carolin Knauber z nemškega Inštituta za izobraževanje odraslih (DIE) raziskuje interakcijo med političnimi enotami, politiko in posameznimi politikami na področju opismenjevanja in osnovnega šolstva za odrasle, pri čemer se avtorici opirata na kvalitativne podatke iz mednarodnega primerjalnega projekta, ki je proučeval politike osnovnega šolstva v različnih državah in predstavil ugotovitve za štiri države: Avstrijo, Dansko, Turčijo in Veliko Britanijo. V tretjem tematsko odprtem prispevku *Koncepti kakovosti v evalvacijskih praksah v visokem šolstvu: instrumentalizacija relativistične kakovosti* Jernej Širok (NAKVIS) obravnava koncept kakovosti v visokem šolstvu in na podlagi analize evalvacijskih poročil za 486 študijskih programov, kar pomeni 49 % vseh akreditiranih študijskih programov v Sloveniji, zagovarja mnenje, da kakovost ne zasleduje višjih idealov univerze, temveč namesto tega sistematično potiska visoko šolstvo na področje ekonomskih in pravnih odnosov ter ga prilagaja gospodarskim interesom. Številko zaključujeta poročilo iz prakse *20 let online učenja na DOBI* Jasne Dominko Baloh in ocena knjige *Položaj marginalizovanih grupa u društvu*, ki jo je pripravila Aleksandra Šindić.

**Rob Evans**

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# UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES The Case of Andragogy in the Czech Republic

## ABSTRACT

*The de-ideologisation of Czech higher education was accompanied by many other changes after 1990 in the Czech Republic. In the context of local and global educational policy, this paper presents three periods of development of the educational sciences including andragogy in Czech higher education after 1990, showing how changes influenced university teaching quality. In the research part, the study concentrates on changes made by the actors – notably professors/associate professors – involved in the development of the educational sciences in the Czech Republic since the 1990s. The analysis of the semi-structured interviews shows that the change in educational sciences was framed by limited access to foreign literature and significant personnel changes, including the return of qualified academics. The promotion of andragogy in the Czech Republic demanded the development of methodology and a critical approach to adult learning. For individual academics, the new focus privileged research over teaching, though interaction with students remains central for the interviewees.*

**Keywords:** *de-ideologisation, teaching, university, andragogy, leaders of educational sciences*

## UNIVERZITETNO POUČEVANJE IN UČENJE V IZOBRAŽEVALNIH VEDAH: PRIMER ANDRAGOGIKE V ČEŠKI REPUBLIKI – POVZETEK

*V Češki republiki je po letu 1990 deideologizacijo visokega šolstva spremljalo tudi veliko drugih sprememb. Članek v kontekstu tako lokalne kot globalne izobraževalne politike predstavi tri razvojna obdobja izobraževalnih ved, vključno z andragogiko, v češkem visokem šolstvu po letu 1990 in pokaže, kako so spremembe vplivale na kakovost univerzitetnega poučevanja. V raziskovalnem delu se osredotoča na spremembe, ki so jih dosegli akterji, predvsem profesorji in docenti, povezani z razvojem izobraževalnih ved v Češki republiki, po omenjenem letu. Analiza polstrukturiranih intervjujev je pokazala, da so na spremembe v izobraževalnih vedah vplivali omejen dostop do tuje literature in velike kadrovske spremembe, tudi vračanje kvalificiranih akademikov. V Češki republiki je spodbujanje andragogike zahtevalo razvoj metodologije in kritičnega pristopa do učenja odraslih. Posamezni akademiki so zaradi novega poudarka dali prednost raziskovanju pred poučevanjem, kljub temu pa so udeleženci raziskave poudarili osrednji pomen dela s študenti.*

**Ključne besede:** *deideologizacija, poučevanje, univerza, andragogika, voditelji v izobraževalnih vedah*

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## INTRODUCTION

Knowledge in higher education can be divided into academic disciplines or “academic tribes and territories” (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 41). The teaching of a discipline is then an important part of its existence as the discipline is communicated and developed by current and future professionals, academics, and researchers at least as much as it is done through the implementation of research, scientific, and research publications (Wallerstein, 1996). Among all the sciences, the educational sciences hold a unique position as they involve specific knowledge, but they can also function as a specific platform through which the knowledge of other sciences is shared. The notion of disciplinary essentialism, assuming that academic disciplines are always the same and unchangeable under all circumstances, has declined in influence (Kreber, 2009; Trowler, 2005). There is today in higher education a clearer interdependence of disciplinary and institutional contexts. Changes in higher education institutions, changes to the structures and goals of a university, affect the meaning of the quality of academics’ work, not excluding their teaching. Academics at universities hold different roles, both visible (researchers, managers, members of departments/faculties with different administrative tasks, university teachers) and invisible ones (teaching in particular). This study focuses on a characterisation of changes to the field of andragogy effected by the main actors in the field: professors/associate professors involved in the development of the higher education environment in the Czech Republic since the 1990s and how the changes they brought about have influenced teaching.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANDRAGOGY WITHIN CZECH HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education in the Czech Republic builds on its tradition starting in the 14th century. The concept of higher education has been a priori a global idea as Burke remarks (2000), and it has gradually approached ever more closely the ideal of the university (Humboldt, 1982). However, in certain periods of their development (as was the case of Czech universities belonging to the socialist area for more than 40 years), universities were purely ideological (Connelly, 2000). The de-ideologisation of Czech higher education took place after 1990 (Dopita, 2013), and the period of deconstruction (removing Marxist-Leninist ideology; replacement of individual academics, etc.) gradually continued with a period of partial stabilisation and later with the reconstruction of the new system. The reconstruction was focused on achieving ‘the state of the art’ through the foreign contacts of individuals and the return of émigré teachers (for example, Jindra Kulich, Vancouver University of British Columbia; Gerlinda Smaus, Saarland University, Saarbrücken, etc.) until 1998. In the next ten years, standardisation processes influenced the concept of how the university was to function, thus also influencing academics’ work. University teaching started to approach European and American standards (Frank & Gabler, 2006) in all educational sciences. The Bologna process brought some changes; nevertheless, its main consequences, e.g. structuring study programmes, resulted in an increase of the number of students and the massification of higher education. Students and graduates were primarily seen as



a skilled workforce and not the bearers of the ideals of science (Trow, 2006; Pabian, Šima, & Kynčilová, 2011), which changed into a request for lectures rather than for teachers. The pressure on research and publication outcomes has increased as well as the interconnection of teaching and research in the sense of Humboldt's university ideals. Due to neoliberal influences in the last decade, the quality of academics' work has increasingly been connected with the scientific performance of workplaces. Neoliberalism has reconfigured universities to 'produce' highly individualised, responsabilised graduates who have become entrepreneurial actors across all dimensions of their lives (Brown, 2005). Besides, the system of accreditation of study programmes has been undergoing change, and soon it will be universities that will bear the responsibility for accreditations (Dopita, 2013).

It is possible to identify three periods in the development of andragogy in Czech higher education after 1990. The first ten years dealt with the legitimisation of andragogy as a field of science and study. This was related to removing the ideological burden of the field of adult education formed before 1990, and this was also the reason for choosing the umbrella term andragogy instead of adult education (Šimek, 1998). The concept was developed at three Czech universities: in Prague, where it was based on pedagogy and the philosophy of education and focused mainly on adult education and personnel management (Beneš & Kopecký, 2004); in Olomouc, where the concept of andragogy was based on educational sciences and sociology, focusing on andragogy for professional development and andragogy integrating knowledge from other social sciences in order to respond to social challenges through education, learning, and counselling (Šimek, 2004; Dočekal, 2015); and in Brno, where andragogy focused on the issues of life-long learning and education, and on interconnecting generations by means of learning (Rabušicová & Rabušic, 2006). This period concentrated on curricula and updating the state of knowledge from western countries. The academics who worked in the field abroad helped transform andragogy into an independent science in the Czech Republic as visiting (Jindra Kulich of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver) or returning professors (Milan Beneš of the Freie Universität Berlin).

The second period starting in 2008 can be characterised by the massification of higher education (Brennan, 2004, p. 23; Trow, 2006, p. 244; Pabian et al., 2011). At the turn of the millennium, the concept of andragogy as represented by the Masaryk University in Brno (Rabušicová & Rabušic, 2006) dominated the scene. It focused on the issue of lifelong learning and education, linking the learning of one generation to the learning of other generations. This is a period of orientation towards the structuring of studies and students. One unintended consequence of the gradual establishment of higher education was the emergence of a large number of private higher education institutions and more students enrolled in universities (Brennan, 2004; Trow, 2006). The increase in the number of universities and study programmes led to the disintegration of the staff in departments, as many academics had several jobs at various universities. The position of guarantors of study programmes has since been regulated: the position of guarantor can be held only by an associate professor or professor whose working hours do not exceed 60 hours a

week. During this period, andragogy also began to be developed at the private Jan Amos Komenský University in Prague. Adult education as another social science has been confirmed as a productive force, as one of the outputs of applied education science, as stated by Frank and Gabler (2006, p. 49). An orientation towards the production of a 'labour' force (OECD, 2017, p. 51) during the setting up of Czech educational policy (Kopecký, & Šerák, 2015) was typical not only in the field of adult education.

In the last period, the focus on research has started to dominate the disciplines at universities. Regulatory measures implemented on the national level and aimed at the realisation of research and the publication of research results in reviewed indexed journals as a precondition for the possibility of accreditation of master's and doctoral degrees supported the further growth of e-learning courses and the minimisation of quality monographs. The space for teaching has gradually been disappearing mainly due to the developments of e-learning, as it emphasises learning and its outcomes. Learning became the central concept in higher education, and the space for teaching is diminishing. The shift from teaching to learning has been confirmed (Kopecký, 2012; Finnegan, 2016).

## RESEARCH DESIGN

This study aims to explore concepts of university teaching by leaders, i.e. by reputable academics who have significantly contributed to the development of educational sciences since 1990. Based on citation analyses, eight leaders of educational sciences with experience connected to the three main universities and six different faculties in the Czech Republic and with Ph.D. studies in educational sciences, representing pedagogy and andragogy, were interviewed. The average number of the interviewees' teaching experience was 31 years.

The research design was based on narratives, with the leaders focusing on their everyday life and university teaching in educational sciences after 1990, since narratives can capture the development of conceptions in a complex and dynamic way (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1993). For this reason, the text utilises what Mills (1959) calls 'the sociological imagination'. This is a mode of analysing a topic which enables an understanding of "the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals" (Mills, 1959, p. 5). The sociological imagination is about "grasp[ing] history and biography and the relations between the two in society" (ibid., p. 6). The study therefore seeks to put the sociological imagination to work in this chapter to draw out what Mills calls 'points of intersections' between individual concerns about the meaning of teaching and other activities resulting from higher education policy. A cycle of semi-structured interviews was carried out. The interviews aimed at stimulating academics to reflect on their experiences, focusing on the following questions.

- What did lessons look like at Czech universities after 1989? What surprised you, what changed?
- What was demanded from academics' lessons, and what is the situation like today?
- Why do you work at university? What were the reasons before and what are they now?

The research procedure was cumulative since different steps in data collection including validation procedures building on each other were applied. The gained qualitative data was analysed using content analysis in two ways: vertical analysis showing the chain of milestones in changing the individual concept of teaching, and horizontal analysis looking for commonalities in all of the academics' stories (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1993). The interview transcripts are coded in this paper as A1 (Academic 1), A2, etc., and in the rest of the paper they will be used to support the results of the analysis.

## POSTSOCIALIST CHANGE IN EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

Changes in both andragogy and pedagogy were, according to the interviews, related to personnel changes in university departments, and the educational sciences found themselves in a very challenging situation, as shown by the following interview statement: "The fact is, the faculty changed a lot, about 30% of the people left" (A6). *Access to the literature of foreign countries emerged as an important issue*, since after the revolution it was possible to use the full range of authors, which previously was not allowed. The problem was the lack of translations of foreign books and their limited availability in smaller libraries, as well as the insufficient language skills of teachers, but also of students. The translation of foreign books into the national language was therefore essential (e.g. Tonucci, 1991).

*A second thematised issue was the return of qualified academics* as those who were unable to work at universities in the 1970s and 1980s returned to the Czech Republic from abroad. A new generation of academics began to appear, or academics started to return from foreign universities. The arrival of experienced academics at universities from abroad can be documented by Jochmann who started to work again at the Palacký University in Olomouc and focused on the re-constitution of andragogy under the influence of the social sciences. The impulse from abroad can also be seen when teaching methods and study programme design are compared to those in Germany, thanks to the return of teachers from abroad.

[I]n the Czech Republic the idea has caught on that there is a study plan covering the full range of the discipline and that if this or that was missing then the person would be imperfect, so this and that must be included [...] the idea that there is a curriculum covering all [teachers], y'know [...] So first, this is an illusion, and second, everybody knows that also both non-formal and informal education provide more and more competencies, knowledge. (A2)

*Andragogy was promoted as the interdisciplinary subject* in the 1990s. "It is the distinct autonomous discipline with its specific subject and specific methods." (A1) Jochmann, inspired by the work of German educationalist Carl Weiss, who broke down education into care, socialisation and education in the sense of learning/teaching, helped to create an action field of andragogy interconnected with the environment of its operation. It

covered care, intentional and functional socialisation, and education providing a profile for andragogy that covered social work, personnel development, cultural work, and adult learning. However, there were some contradictions in the meanings of andragogy, as the concept developed at one university was not followed by other academics in the country. In the case of Masaryk University, the major was gradually constituted through new academics who approached it inductively through empirical research data.

[T]his empirical approach [...] as opposed to this normativity that was prevailing at our department for many years, in fact up to the present. If I am to extend it beyond our department, I'd say that I think that we penetrated the field of influencing pedagogy a lot; because I think we were among the first ones [...] and I think that through focusing on research we have been creating a certain platform others could gradually join. (A5)

A few years later, the closure of the J. A. Comenius Institute of Education of the Academy of Science caused a situation that represented a disadvantage to educational sciences not only in the Czech Academy of Sciences but also had a divisive effect on the meaning of andragogy as well as pedagogy that continues until the present day. The institute has not been re-opened so far, which influences the position of educational sciences in both the national and global development of sciences to a large extent.

The people who were there were of very good quality; they scattered, spread out to various institutions [...] And what happened there was that the weak side of the pedagogy, that it was perceived through the optics of ideological articles on how to bring up our youth, mainly in the communist ideals, so this in fact impacted this institute too, and nobody considered the amount of incredibly high quality research, y'know, teams etc. And this is how the J. A. Comenius Institute became one of the first ones, maybe the very first one that was cancelled when the pressure for reduction appeared. And I believe that we still bear the consequences because in fact [...] we are still facing it. (A6)

## **UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING: MAJOR AND METHOD**

The nature of educational sciences (pedagogy and andragogy) gradually abandoned normative, philosophical traditions as its primary teaching sources and focused on empirical research-based knowledge. In the case of the respondents' reports, the discipline "was based on the methodology of social sciences, sociology, and developed after the 1990s" (A1); "if you have a look at our study plans, you see a great accent on methodology [...] [,] we really try to have empirical theses. [...] [I]t can't be speculative [...] but it has to be based on some evidence." (A5) One of the main challenges was to *complement the research methodology with a qualitative methodology*, as from the early 1990s, the only methodology that was used in the Czech Republic was quantitative methodology: "I tried

to combine theoretical teaching with appropriate research methodology, and it was difficult at first. [...] Only in the last ten years, the methodology has ceased to be simply associated with statistics” (A4).

The change process started, still coming up against some (in)visible barriers, for instance, in the mind-set of actors, and of students in particular: “Even today, when I finish a lecture, embarrassment often prevails when students are trying to critically reflect the ideas of the ‘authority’ [...] students were and still are not accustomed to pluralism of opinions based on different theories and approaches” (A3). *The need for practising the critical approach both in theory and in practice is evident.* “Self-criticism is still understood rather as an attack on someone, not as part of a discussion so that [...] it develops somehow [...] So the discipline, I don’t want to say that it’s losing its contours but its continuous growth or its borders are less and less clear.” (A2)

## DEVELOPMENT OF ANDRAGOGY

The perspective on education changed in the 1990s. Functionalist views of the importance of education for society were complemented by critical theories of conflict that had earlier been lacking.

I would say that the conflictologist approaches from the sociology of education were a revolutionary turn; it turned out that education did not have any other character than a discriminatory one, that education doesn’t unite, that it’s not a tool of social democratisation but a tool of social stratification. I think this is significant. In a way, pedagogy has made the same progress in the last twenty years [...] different methodology, and pedagogy is not an ideology but it has become a real humanities or social science. (A1)

The progress in andragogy is perceived in its departure from the primarily functional concept of education to education related to adding more perspectives. What is identified is a slow generational change in university departments that is related to the rather gradually developing concept of the discipline. The restructuration of studies into the bachelor and master’s degrees in accordance with the Bologna process occupied a lot of academics’ attention during the process. “However, some shifts in the discipline do not give the impression of progress, namely the early specialisation of study programmes, e.g. at the level of bachelor.” (A4) There was still the question of the concept of study programmes, their degree of specialisation from the level of bachelor’s degree on. Questions about the form structuration should take as well as the degree of general education in the major and its specialisation remained unclear.

Everybody who graduates from university has a sort of joint diploma, and at the same time they can specialise more in pedagogy or more in field work or something similar but not split it. I’m against this splitting. What remains,

splits? The non-profit sector of andragogy, these are things that would be good if there were a hundred million citizens and fifty schools where this is taught, then each of them can specialise. (A2)

## ACADEMICS AND THEIR WORK

Changes in the work of academics have not been present so much in the character of their work, but rather in the monitoring and evaluation of the 'results' of their work in the last twenty-five years: "What is clear is the departure from not-so-easily-defined aspects to those easily measurable" (A3); "[d]uring the first ten years, professional growth was focused on publications; their reporting isn't new, scientific and pedagogic activities were reported at that time too. Still, they were not seen as the only criterion." (A3)

Freedom of choice of teaching topics and specialist sources was liberating. Specialist monographs started to disappear, the number of articles was increasing: "I wouldn't say targets were set higher [...] it's got more formalised today [...] well, we have this evaluation, all universities have it, it's quite common that the control, let's say, the reporting is stricter now." (A2) The teaching part of the academic work has, however, constantly become increasingly invisible:

Now I feel that it's not necessary to have students in order to become a professor; what is needed is an adequate number of points and vice versa. Fundamentally grant outcomes, grant research outcomes, which is a good idea too that profanes a little bit, internships and stays abroad. If someone spends nine months abroad, what will be the impact on their students? It's difficult to find a balance. (A1)

Preparation of study plans and curricula has not been a topic of discussion at universities; the attention is only paid to the vaguely defined quality of graduates. Teaching, contact with students, has been replaced by textbooks. Thus, the work of professors and associate professors is continued in thematically- and research-focused articles, sometimes scattered at first sight, and with graduates. There are textbooks on higher education pedagogy similar to those in foreign countries; however, systematic training of academics aimed at teaching is not provided. University teachers are increasingly perceived as researchers. Despite this fact, discussions with students bring about, among other things, impulses for different thinking and the re-writing of academics' ideas. The reports of the leaders of educational sciences also point out that lessons are the most important factor keeping them in their positions, because "in my field [...] I have a number of graduates who are now lecturers, thus I see the continuation of my work in a way" (A7). *The interaction is "still a live driving force"* (A8).

I have been at the university for thirty years and my graduates' spectrum is wide: personnel directors of multinational companies, business owners, public administrators, academics at universities [...] the fact that they keep in touch with me even after twenty years makes me think that I'm probably a better teacher than a researcher since no one reads articles that are 20 years old (A8).

## CONCLUSIONS

Educational sciences have gone through a difficult time since the 1990s. The reason may be the fact that university pedagogy/andragogy was ideological in the socialist period of Czechoslovakia; it was mainly produced as ideological support. Overcoming this stigma is not a question of one generation. In addition, both pedagogy and andragogy were not well represented on the personnel level. Gradually, the focus on research became central, a fact which encounters the criticism of adult education (Notten, 2002; Holton, Wilson, & Bates, 2009). The correlation between research productivity and the quality of teaching is zero (Hattie & Marsh, 1996), and there is hardly any research tackling the relationship between research and learning (Verburgh & Lindblom-Ylance, 2007; Gopaul et al., 2016; Elken & Wollscheid, 2016).

This paper has presented a review of certain changes in higher education in the Czech Republic in the last 25 years. Study plans underwent de-ideologisation, restructuring, and explicitly focused on empirical research at least at one department; this is frequently criticised in the andragogy/adult education major (Notten, 2002; Holton et al., 2009). The curriculum of andragogy was enriched with research methods and the methodology of science and their application in lessons as proofs of statements based on foreign (global) experience. The teaching methods were gradually changed too, leaving behind work with textbooks and focusing on understanding primary texts on the discipline and recent research findings. However, critical reflection of the discipline is missing with regard to the range of specialist discourse. Critical approaches have been rather exceptional up to now.

Due to changes related to demographic trends and study massification at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Brennan, 2004, p. 23; Trow, 2006, p. 244; Pabian et al., 2011), the space for meetings of teachers and students where specialist discussion about the meaning of the scientific discipline could really take place was changing. Findings show that the standardisation of study programmes in correspondence with the practices in foreign countries after 1990 was expected. Criteria of higher education funding were linked with the publication of research results, which resulted in academics' departure from teaching to research. A shift in academics' work can be identified in publication strategies, reporting publications for universities, accreditation processes, project applications, and academics' professional growth (Stöckelová, 2016; Stöckelová & Vostal, 2017). The only stable environment remaining for meetings between teachers and students is within Ph.D. studies. However, for all the changes to the role of academics, their role as teachers should not disappear since it functions as a driving force for overcoming problems and in maintaining the profession and, at the same time, it has clearly positive impacts on students – the academics of the future.

## Acknowledgements

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*Maria Bajner*

## LIFELONG LEARNING REDEFINED: FROM SUSTAINABILITY TO GENERATIONAL LEARNING

### ABSTRACT

*The following paper is intended to give a brief account of the trends in lifelong learning as they appear in the official documents of UNESCO and the OECD. It identifies the driving forces behind the humanistic and the utilitarian considerations in the opposing approaches of UNESCO and the OECD, while it also addresses the role of political influencers in confusing the issues. The author uses document analysis of studies and findings of international surveys to shed light on the ambivalent stances in educational documents towards the importance of lifelong learning. The author will argue that a shift in rhetoric from lifelong learning to generational learning is needed in order to eliminate 'doublespeak' and meet the needs of today's generations often brought up with utilitarian values and high economic expectations.*

**Keywords:** *equal educational opportunities, paradigm change, competition, quality vs. quantity, sustainability*

### PONOVA OPREDELITEV VSEŽIVLJENJSKEGA UČENJA: OD TRAJNOSTI DO GENERACIJSKIH NAČINOV UČENJA – POVZETEK

*Članek prinaša povzetek trendov v vseživljenjskem učenju, kot se pojavljajo v uradnih dokumentih organizacij UNESCO in OECD. Nato opredeli gonilne sile humanističnih in utilitarnih dejavnikov v nasprotujočih si pristopih obeh organizacij, hkrati pa se ukvarja tudi z vlogo, ki jo z zapletanjem vprašanj igrajo politični vplivneži. Prek analize dokumentov – študij in ugotovitev mednarodnih anket – avtorica razjasni ambivalentna stališča do pomena vseživljenjskega učenja, kot se kažejo v dokumentih o izobraževanju. Zagovarja tezo, da je treba namesto o vseživljenjskem učenju govoriti o generacijskih načinih učenja, saj lahko tako odpravimo »dvomni govor« in se odzovemo na potrebe današnjih generacij, ki pogosto odraščajo ob sprejemanju utilitarnih vrednot in visokih ekonomskih pričakovanj.*

**Ključne besede:** *enake izobrazbene priložnosti, sprememba paradigme, tekmovanje, kakovost ali količina, trajnost*

In non-academic circles the meaning of ‘lifelong learning’ is vague and obscure; there is uncertainty about the usage itself: it covers a whole range of educational pathways, from recreation or hobby courses to lifesaver qualifications. It is a constant topic of everyday conversations so that by the time young adults at universities graduate, the jobs they are being trained for now might well disappear, and the curricula and learning materials they are using today might well become useless or obsolete in 5–10 years. Therefore, a rising number of adult learners are searching for new study options, such as different forms of continuous education, from degree courses to professional development training courses online and offline, all of which fulfil the meaning of ‘lifelong learning’.

The aim of the paper – which uses document analysis of studies and findings of international surveys – is to shed light on the ambivalent stances in such documents towards the importance of lifelong learning (LLL) and to call attention to generational learning which seems to be undeservingly absent in political discourse on adult education.

Firstly, the paper will give a brief account of the phases and trends in lifelong learning as they appear in the official documents of UNESCO and the OECD. Secondly, it will identify the driving forces behind the humanistic and the utilitarian considerations from the opposing approaches of UNESCO and the OECD and will highlight the role of the political influencers in confusing the issues. Thirdly, it will try to demonstrate the demand for a new type of learning. Finally, it will argue that a shift in rhetoric from LLL to generational learning is also needed in order to eliminate ‘doublespeak’ and satisfy the needs of today’s generations who have arguably been brought up with a utilitarian view of education and high economic expectations.

### **THE CONTRADICTIONARY NATURE OF LIFELONG LEARNING: LEARN TO LIVE OR LIVE TO LEARN?**

It is much debated whether the concept of LLL used in UNESCO documents represents an overall humanistic ideology, stressing the importance of equal educational opportunities for all as a human right, or expresses a more pragmatic approach to life conformity, and indispensable guidance to the changing economic environment. The differing interpretations of lifelong learning given by UNESCO and the OECD have inspired scholars to explore the contradictory nature of the whole issue of LLL in the light of UNESCO and the OECD reports which seem to reflect conflicting policies, values, and interests (Elfert, 2013; Boshier, 2004; Knoll, 1996; Rubenson, 2009).

The first phase of LLL started in 1945 when the idea emerged from the basic need for access to education for everyone as laid down in the UNESCO Constitution (1945) and in the rejuvenated EFA<sup>1</sup> goals of the 1990s.

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1 Education for All (EFA) is a global commitment initiated by UNESCO “to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults”. See: UNESCO’s Programme of Education for All (1997), <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001221/122102Eo.pdf>.

Educational projects worded in UNESCO documents all convey the message of the enlightenment tradition in that they are indebted to universal values, emancipation, or individual freedom embedded in a humanist concept with the message that human beings are masters of their own destiny. As stated in one of their latest brochures on education,

UNESCO's Education Sector supports Member States in developing education systems that foster high-quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all, empowering learners to be creative and responsible global citizens while leading the debate to help shape the future international education agenda. (UNESCO, 2017, p. 3)

The OECD's version of LLL is somewhat different from that of UNESCO. LLL according to the OECD is about the acquisition of skills and competencies to meet labour market needs in the broader context of a competitive knowledge society. The OECD represents and documents these apparently pragmatic systems with the objective of promoting policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. "To participate fully in their society, people need to develop a transferable skillset over a lifetime" (OECD, 2017). This is the objective at the heart of Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by world leaders in New York in September 2015. By advocating "inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all", Goal 4 establishes an ambitious agenda to ensure that every adult has an equal opportunity to a quality education and to contribute to society (ibid., 2017).

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THEORIES**

The whole notion of LLL had its renaissance in 2015 when the old concept of the United Nations was framed into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In other words, providing citizens with up to date education and thus making them more marketable and assisting them in bettering themselves in life is no longer the duty of the state alone; responsibility is shared between the political/economic decision makers and the citizens. While LLL flourished across the developed world during the boom years, it is likely that the years of austerity to follow will see a reduction in all forms of publicly funded education and training. In the context of the EU lifelong learning policy, the Lisbon Strategy Goal (also known as the Lisbon Agenda, devised in 2000) of achieving "smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" by 2010 has been only partially achieved and future progress is threatened by a predictable economic crisis.

The third phase is signposted by the boom in technological development around the turn of the century that brought about significant contextual change with regard to LLL. The new concept of LLL has dramatically responded to the challenges of the new labour market from the point of view of global governance, thus labelling a new era of a global economic paradigm, with divergent rights, responsibilities and interests among the stakeholders, especially young adults. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places education and LLL in a global economic environment, where 'sustainability' is the old

dream in a modern context. Global economy as described in the 2030 Agenda values global citizens with a global mindset, whose role in shaping their own future is more individual than global. Active ageing is strongly articulated in the 2030 Agenda documents, but less attention is paid to the younger generations and their changing learning habits. Since lifelong education has traditionally been discussed in the context of adult education, it is no surprise that the most inspiring literature on the topic of LLL, despite addressing education in its totality, has concentrated mainly on adult education. Adult education literature is aimed at the needs of the future generations with the intention of 'teaching' and moralizing about life, personal responsibility and values, while missing out the young generation who start their intellectual awakening at an early age; this seems to make the whole concept of 'learning throughout life' incomplete.

### PROS AND CONS IN FUNDAMENTAL LITERATURE

In order to understand the old/new concept of LLL and trace the hidden meaning behind the rhetoric, it is advisable to look for clues in the 'flagship literature' concerning controversial viewpoints. My concluding views on the anomalies of LLL are highly influenced by three pivotal and inspiring works: Philip H. Coomb's (1968) analysis *The World Educational Crisis; Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow*, known as the *Faure Report* (Faure et al., 1972); and *Learning: The Treasure Within* (Delors et al., 1996), known as the *Delors Report*, all published under the umbrella of UNESCO.

The whole issue of learning can be viewed as the conflicting relationship between the individual and society and how individuals can achieve their goals within given social-economic confines. *The Faure Report* (1972) is groundbreaking in the sense that it endows citizens with the possibility of development. They can go from basic rights to basic responsibilities to taking their future into their own hands. It is a novelty in the sense that it introduces the twenty-first century concept of the 'learning society' which was used in the *Faure Report*, but without making schools responsible. People have to take every opportunity to learn, but they also have to be directed towards this. It is not the school or schooling that is a central actor in this process, but rather the process itself, i.e. the life of the individual who can form their future the whole life long, that would enable the formation of the complete person, "the citizen of the world", and "author of his own fulfilment" (Faure et al., 1972, p. 158). There is a shift in education from the quantitative to the qualitative, from the traditional to the less traditional – as there has been a shift of (state) power from formal, institutional obligation to informal, personal enrichment.

While according to the *Faure Report* there must be a constant need for the individual to learn in order to survive, the *Delors Report* does not exclude schools from this responsibility, saying that "schools should impart both the desire for, and the pleasure in learning, the ability to learn how to learn" (Delors et al., 1996, p. 19). As expressed in the *Faure Report*, people have to take every opportunity to learn but they also have to be directed towards these opportunities. The report emphasises that "although people need to take

every opportunity for learning and self-improvement, they will not be able to make good use of all these potential resources unless they have received a sound basic education” (Faure et al., 1972 p. 19). Education should provide conditions for people to defend themselves against an “alienating”, even “hostile”, system (ibid., p. 95). Both reports challenge the traditional school system: “the old idea that schooling is the only valid education and that the time of learning is limited to traditional school age [...] is fundamentally unjust” (ibid., p. 44). Both call attention to the need to see education in its totality, where the central aim of education is the fulfilment of the individual as a social being, a citizen who is able and willing to think critically and participate actively in society’s affairs.

The line of lifelong education developed by Faure et al. was taken up and modified by Delors et al. (1996) to become “learning throughout life”, which puts the emphasis on the necessity to adapt to learning requirements as a “response to an economic demand” (p. 101). Learning throughout life needs to be guaranteed through a “flexible type of education” that provides for an equality of opportunity for all learners, which is a necessary premise of democracy (ibid.). Delors’ humanistic views stirred up sharp controversies between the supporters of market-driven education and the moralists, the promoters of the “survival of humanity” (ibid., p. 16). The humanistic side collides with the economic side, where competitiveness means the ability to win a market share.

In the foundation reports discussed here, a great deal of attention is paid to the role of new technologies in education and the need for continuous training for job-related purposes. New technology is a prerequisite for individual and/or social development, and both reports express concern that “the world would be dehumanized as a result of technical change” (Faure et al., 1972, p. 94). While the possibilities of these new technologies (of the 1960s and 70s) for the democratisation of knowledge are stressed, the *Faure Report* cautions against their potential to further aggravate social inequalities, as Elfert points out (2015, p. 91). The fourth pillar of the *Delors Report*, “Learning to be”, echoes the dominant theme of the *Faure Report*, highlighting a range of indispensable personal skills which need to be enhanced, e.g. “memory, reasoning power, imagination, physical ability, aesthetic sense, the aptitude to communicate with others” (Delors et al., 1996, p. 21). Almost 40 years later, Andrew Bollington, in an OECD Forum, summarised the challenges the 21<sup>st</sup> century learners have to face: “Being educated is no longer about how much you know, but about having the skills and motivation for lifelong learning so that you can learn new knowledge whenever you need to” (Bollington, 2015). Both the *Delors* and the *Faure Report* address ‘pupils and students’ who develop their abilities informally and try new methods of alternating study with work. Meanwhile, as Delors et al. (1996) point out, education is a social experience through which children learn about themselves, develop interpersonal skills and acquire basic knowledge and skills (p. 23).

The message that ‘everybody is needed’ is expressed in the *Delors Report*: “None of the talents which are hidden like buried treasure in every person must be left untapped” (ibid., p. 21). If everyone is given an “authentically fair chance” for advanced education, the less favoured and privileged could profit from it and “pass the benefits on to society” (ibid.).

## THE QUESTIONS OF DEMAND-SUPPLY: QUANTITY OVER QUALITY?

Long before the *World Declaration for Education for All* was drawn up (UNESCO, 1990), Coombs (1968) pointed out that education can only be viewed in relation to other segments of the economy. He claims that there are different strategies an educational system can use to deal with the demand-supply gap. It can open doors, let in everyone who wishes to enter, allow them to stay for as long as they like, and go as far as they please. He visualises bulging enrolments, crowded classrooms, and probably a sharp decline in quality. This strategy, as stated by Coombs, may satisfy social demand – or at least appear to do so – but at the price of high dropout rates, poor quality, and the waste of public resources. He takes into consideration the critical rates of growth: economic, agricultural, demographic, and educational. If any of these factors become imbalanced, the nation's whole development process will be in trouble: economically, socially, and politically. If the education system turns out graduates faster than the economy can give them jobs, unemployment among the educated will increase. More recent detailed OECD analyses seem to confirm Coomb's concern about the demand-supply theory and were followed by new educational strategies at both national and international levels (OECD, 2007; 2010).

According to the College Board Report (2008), education could be among the next economic sectors “to undergo a massive restructuring” (p. 5) as the banking industry has since seen. Among factors accelerating changes, several issues are named, i.e. the globalisation of commerce and culture, demographic changes in developed countries (which concerns adult education) and accessibility of information and communication technologies (ibid.). Following this line of argument, some questions inevitably come to mind. What is the connection between a higher percentage of college graduates and economic competitiveness? Is quantity given preference over quality? Does this mean that more is better, but that ‘most’ is best? What paths should world leader education innovators, colleges, or administrators take and what tools are they supposed to experiment with?

The topic of education has long been of primary concern for policymakers and seen as a battleground of political rhetoric not free from elements of populist demagoguery. Economic competitiveness and human fulfilment are the most quoted reasons behind the demand for visible changes in both the quality and quantity of education.

In his address to the U.S. Congress in 2009, President Obama noted the connection between education and the chances of becoming a global superpower.<sup>2</sup>

With all of these steps, I am confident that by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. That's our goal. [...] That's how we'll out-educate other countries. That's how we'll out-compete with other countries tomorrow (The White House, 2011).

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2 Obama was giving a speech at Miami Central High School in March 2011.



The message was not left unanswered by the European Commission which came up with the proposal that one of the main targets of “Europe 2020” would be that by 2020, 40% of the EU citizens aged 30–34 would have a college degree in order to contribute to the advancement of the economy. The obvious question, whether having the highest percentage of college graduates has any valid connection to economic competitiveness, remains open.

The ambitious objective is far more complicated than a single correlation of prosperity with the huge percentage of the population possessing degrees. It can be argued that what matters more is what people actually learn and how this capital can be mobilised. In the digital age the highest purpose of higher education in a free society is neither an improved economy nor spiritual fulfilment, but an informed citizenry. In order to give meaning to the political ‘doublespeak’, governments would have to increase revenues and improve the quality of education in an era when they have fewer students, increasing maintenance costs, and decreasing budgets for research and development.

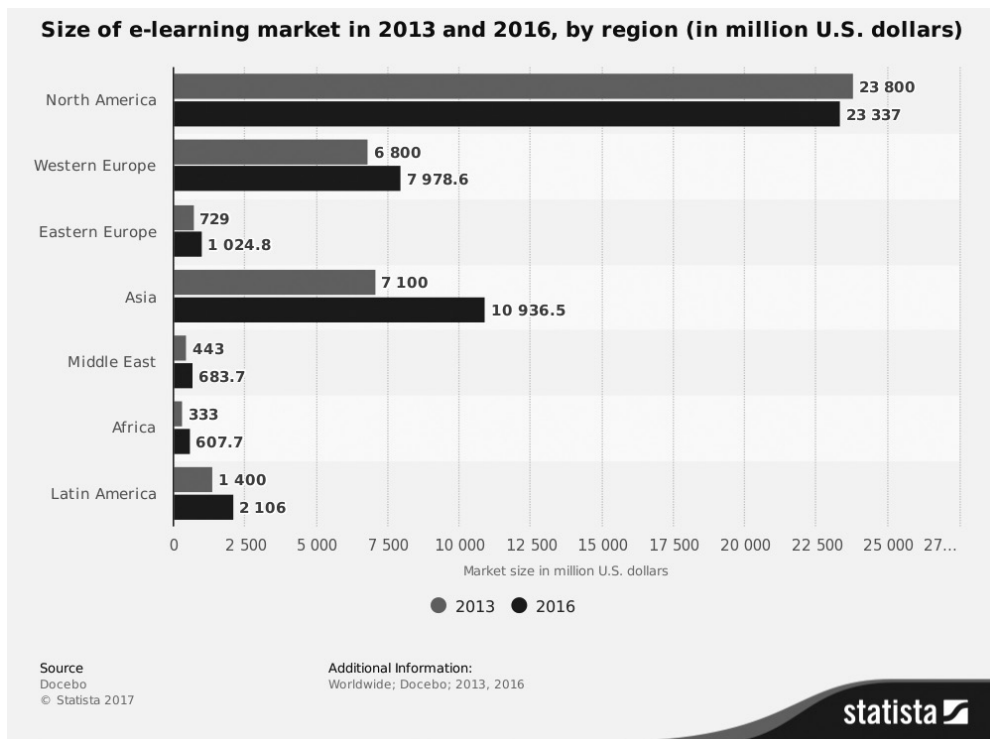
### **FOR SUSTAINABILITY, PRESS ‘SHIFT’**

Academic and non-academic decision makers must look for strategies to lower costs. To recruit more students, it seems to be evident that universities and colleges need to turn to new technologies, e.g. cloud computing, mobile computing, networking devices. As can be seen in Table 1 below, digital education has become global and marketable. With Internet access, learning is ubiquitous and profitable for all stakeholders in the education technology industry. The question is no longer about increasing the number of national or regional degree holders but about raising EdTech investments and the global market share. Massive open online courses (MOOCs) like Coursera, Udacity, or edX advertise their mission to provide open access to those who are disciplined enough to guide themselves, and who already possess the judgement, independence, and discipline to teach themselves. Besides, surveys show that students taking online courses, and taking part in different types of e-learning, especially initial students and adults with little IT experience, need guidance (Sander, 2014). Although they are required to take an active role in their education, it is also assumed that they do not enter tertiary education with definite judgements. Thus, college should be a transformative experience for them.

‘Open access’ to education does not necessarily mean equitable education: ubiquitous digital devices and online networks have radically reduced costs for accessing online and digital learning. As intuitive as the idea sounds, however, free and open technologies do not automatically democratise education. In fact, researchers point out that “free online learning materials disproportionately benefit the affluent and highly educated” (Reich & Ito, 2017, p. 3). According to Reich and Ito, the obvious barriers to democratizing education through technology are related to cost and technology access, but social and cultural barriers vary substantially across different communities and contexts (*ibid.*, pp. 4–15).

In the digital age, education is about receiving, selecting, and using new information with a special emphasis on organisational learning. It is impossible to imagine the information

Table 1: 23 EdTech Industry Statistics and Trends



Source: <https://brandongaille.com/23-edtech-industry-statistics-and-trends/>.

landscape young adults will encounter in another 20 years. What kind of abilities will be needed for the individual to succeed? They are likely to include the ability to recognise, adapt to and utilise information. Information storage will be larger, while information transmission will be faster and less expensive. The role of formal education will be to prepare young adults to understand and navigate this growing array of information, in other words, to teach them how to learn.

‘Sustainability’ in LLL is more than an empty phrase as it stresses the issue of digital technology as a prerequisite for the future of education, and as such, for the future of several generations ahead. Despite the fact that the question of learning through the generations is closely connected with the goal of sustainable development and education, there is little if any concern about the continuity of generational education. Sustainability in this sense comprises all the basic goals our predecessors in different socio-political contexts noted in their reports 70, 50, 30 years ago with a vague anticipation of the ‘digital tsunami’ to come. Over the last fifty years, constant scientific and technological innovation and change has had intense effects on how learning is understood, which was not foreseen by the decision makers at the time of planning the 2030 Agenda (Table 2).

Table 2: GENERATIONAL COHORTS (Strauss-Howe theory)<sup>3</sup>

2015 At the time of planning the 2030 Agenda	70+ Silent Generation (born before 1945)	60+ Boomers (born between 1945–65)	40+ Generation X (born between 1965–85)	30+ Generation Y (born between 1985–2000)	18+ Generation Z (born after 2000)
Representation (Labour market share)	2%	19%	43%	35%	1%
At the time of the 2030 Agenda	85+	75+	55+	45+	25+

Source: <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/generations-demographic-trends-population-and-workforce>.

19% of the people who were still active in the labour market at the time of shaping the Agenda will become inactive 15 years later and be replaced by a new generation of workers with hardly comparable learning habits. The Boomers and Generation X-ers with a profound interest in economy identify with the learning needs of their own age groups, whereas Generation Y and Z 15 years later may take up wider economic and LLL issues as the Baby Boomers continue to age and leave the policy-making arena.

## CONCLUSION

It is commonplace to say that life today is faster and more demanding than it was 50 years ago. We are living in a world of exacerbating conflicts and widening gaps in inequality; we are confronting weighty issues of global warming, migration, and contagious diseases, all of which need to be addressed and reacted upon inter-connectedly. Among factors accelerating changes, several topics have been cited, i.e. the globalisation of commerce and culture, demographic changes in developed countries (all of which concern education), and the accessibility of information and communication technologies. What challenges will educators, students, and prospective employees have to face in order to be competitive in the national and global labour market? It can be concluded from surveys carried out in the past few years that learning with technology itself is not a panacea for all educational problems, which are rooted in social issues, fiscal dilemmas, national priorities and practices.

Generational Learning can express the idea of sustainability when it comes to a global vision of the future of education. Although most studies and reports point out that learning itself is a common value and an asset we can all rely on, there is little emphasis on the joy of sharing the experience, on mixed-age community learning groups, or the satisfaction

<sup>3</sup> Neil Howe and William Strauss identified and described a recurring cycle of age cohorts with certain values and called them ‘generations.’ I refer to their classification used in their first book, *Generations* (Howe & Strauss, 1991).

that comes from sharing collective knowledge and cultural heritage. The concept of LLL has changed over the years; the meaning has been transferred from ‘lifelong’ to ‘lifelike’, thus emphasising its ubiquitous nature. There has also been an awakening of the debates over the driving forces behind the discourses as they manifest themselves in different publications issued by supranational organisations such as UNESCO or the OECD. Contemporary discourse is strongly influenced by economic determination, whereas the whole idea of LLL is associated with the enlightenment tradition of justice and equity.

In the contemporary political climate when investment in education technology is seen from the point of view of its global market share, it seems unlikely that UNESCO’s humanistic message will be noticed. But the UNESCO foundation documents, together with the three cornerstone reports, remind us that there are recurring tendencies we can learn from if we turn them to our advantage. If we persist in the utilitarian view of education, and do not practice the humanistic approach or disregard the importance of personal connections, then we lose the chance to connect to the next generation, to the future, without which the meaning of learning is lost. Lifelong.

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## THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES AND EDUCATORS IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS

### ABSTRACT

*Universities and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are seen as having a social mission to deliver common good to society, both locally and globally. These institutions develop different policies due to global changes in Higher Education (HE), such as internationalisation and Sustainable Development (SD). They have an important role in setting sustainable developmental goals (SDGs) and also delivering them through teaching, research and other services. Effective delivery of SD practices relies upon educators who are directly involved in making the links between students and community. However, educators are not everywhere involved in developing policies, which impacts on their ability to deliver. This research, set in Scottish HEIs, investigates educators' perceptions of internationalisation in HE, how the concept is constructed and delivered in their universities, and what – if any – involvement these educators have in developing policy. This paper argues that educators, especially HE educators, have potential that is neglected in developing SDGs.*

**Keywords:** *educators, internationalisation, sustainable developmental goals, policy-development, universities*

### VLOGA UNIVERZ IN UČITELJEV PRI RAZVIJANJU IN URESNIČEVANJU CILJEV TRAJNOSTNEGA RAZVOJA - POVZETEK

*Univerze in druge visokošolske ustanove naj bi imele družbeno poslanstvo, da prispevajo k skupnemu dobremu v družbi, tako lokalno kot globalno. Zaradi globalnih sprememb v visokem šolstvu te ustanove razvijajo različne politike, na primer internacionalizacije in trajnostnega razvoja. Pomembno vlogo opravljajo pri zastavljanju ciljev trajnostnega razvoja in pri doseganju teh ciljev prek poučevanja, raziskav in drugih storitev. Učinkovita realizacija praks trajnostnega razvoja je odvisna od učiteljev, ki so*

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*neposredno vpeti v ustvarjanje vezi med študenti in skupnostjo. Vendar pa učitelji niso vedno vključeni v razvijanje politik, kar vpliva na njihovo zmožnost doseganja ciljev. Raziskava škotskega visokega šolstva proučuje, kako učitelji dojemajo internacionalizacijo visokega šolstva, kako je ta koncept zastavljen in realiziran na njihovih univerzah in koliko – če sploh – učitelji sodelujejo pri oblikovanju politik. Članek zagovarja tezo, da imajo učitelji, posebej v visokem šolstvu, zmožnosti, ki so pri razvijanju ciljev trajnostnega razvoja spregledane.*

**Ključne besede:** učitelji, internacionalizacija, cilji trajnostnega razvoja, razvoj politik, univerze

## INTRODUCTION

The role played by educators in Higher Education (HE) is an important one in developing policies and practices that might address Sustainable Development (SD) needs within local communities and more broadly in a global context. There is a claim that universities and HE Institutions (HEIs) in the United Kingdom (UK) are well equipped to contribute towards SD (HEFCE, 2014). According to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), universities, HEIs and colleges are

well positioned to make a key contribution to the challenges and opportunities posed by sustainable development through their teaching and research, through their influence on students, staff and communities, and through their own operations. (HEFCE, 2014, p. 3)

In addressing the challenges posed by SD goals (SDGs) (UN General Assembly, 2015) educators play a key role as mediators, implementers, and creators of local and global education policies. In addition, they can be instrumental in developing sustainable policies in areas such as curriculum design/development, engaging students from different cultural backgrounds, internationalisation and its role in local and global communities, and enhancing quality of higher education in teaching and research.

Internationalisation in HE is globally accepted as a necessary policy, one which is undeniably linked to SD, at least in the global context. Regardless of internationalisation's global application, there is lack of clarity in defining the concept, which is constructed differently in the literature, in practice and in HE institutions in different countries. In addition, despite the acceptance of the concept of the internationalised university, there is a gap in research and documentation of educators' perceptions on internationalised universities (Daniels, 2013; Rizvi, 2010; Tran & Le, 2018). Yet, being an integral part of higher education institutions, educators play – or have the potential to play – a critical role in contributing to institutional strategies and policymaking (Tran & Le, 2018). In this paper we consider the linkages between internationalisation and SD, and claim that educators working in HE are well-placed to develop Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) through their pedagogical skills and direct connections to communities.



Cotton, Warren, Maiboroda, and Bailey (2007) have noted a rise in the significance of SD in education, and its emergence in universities and in HEIs, where there is support from leaders along with a commitment to promoting UNESCO's vision of SDGs (UNESCO, 2014b). However, in research currently being undertaken by one of the authors of this paper, it is suggested that some Scottish educators at least have been offered few opportunities, perhaps none at all, to have their say in developing institutional policies, such as internationalisation, which has a significant role in SD. In addition, the data from that study suggests that educators have different understandings of internationalisation as well as different opinions on developing internationalisation policies, possibly due to the different philosophies and priorities of the particular institutions and their geographical locations. Yet this diversity of thought could be better captured and applied to enhancing policy development in HEIs. Due to educators' limited role in institutional policymaking, their ability to influence policy application is constrained. There is a gap in the literature on studying educators' perspectives of the internationalisation phenomenon, and we claim that educators' knowledge of internationalisation could inform the application of SD strategies. We argue that educators in HEIs need to be given greater opportunities to be involved in policy development as mediators, implementers, and creators of local and global education policies. Such involvement, we claim, has the potential to create opportunity for much greater – and pedagogically appropriate – incorporation of SD into HE curricula and policy.

## **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

This paper is informed by ongoing doctoral research focusing on educators working in HE and their lack of involvement in important strategic activities, such as policymaking, in their workplaces. The research, set in Scottish HEs, investigates educators' perceptions of internationalisation in HE, how the concept is constructed and delivered in their universities, and what – if any – involvement these educators have in developing policy. Gathering the perspectives of educators is an important aspect of that research and we believe they are well placed to play a major role in driving HEI strategies and policies. Whilst the focus of that research is on internationalisation, the potential of the HE educator to influence and develop policy has relevance across all areas of HE, including that of Sustainable Development (SD). In fact, understanding the concept of internationalisation may be an advantage when considering SD – an essential aspect of the education remit according to UNESCO (2018) – since sustainability must be understood in a global as well as local context.

The focus on internationalisation in HE and becoming an internationalised university has become a key priority (de Wit, 2013; Knight, 2014; Wihlborg & Robson, 2018). The drivers for internationalisation of higher education impact on various stakeholders: students (Leask, 2001), educators (Carrozza & Minucci, 2014), and managers (Marginson, 2011). Internationalisation operates through the mobility of educators and students (Kim, 2009), institutional strategy (Marginson, 2007), curriculum development (Knight, 2011), research and publications (Knight, 2003), and international research partnerships

(Kim, 2017). According to de Wit (2010), the rationales that drive the internationalisation agenda in HE are mainly constructed on four comprehensive categories: “political rationales, economic rationales, social and cultural rationales, and academic rationales” (p. 9). The first major category, the political rationale, includes “foreign policy, national security, technical assistance, peace and mutual understanding, national identity and regional identity” (ibid.). These are all significant factors in considering institutional SD policies that could impact on society.

Economic rationales, the second category, are “growth and competitiveness, national educational demand, labour market, [and] financial incentives” (ibid.), and are of interest to governments which focus and rely increasingly on globalisation. It has been shown that universities and HEIs increase their revenue system through the export of education-related services and charging a premium fee for international students (Altbach & Knight, 2007), helping them to sustain and develop international competitiveness (Harris, 2009).

The third category, social and cultural cohesion in HEIs, has always been problematic and, according to de Wit (2010), has a coercive element: problematic because HEIs may not have a holistic approach to diversity of culture, and coercive because staff and students are expected to fit into the ‘home’ culture. In addition, as Scott (2005) reports, educators act as *mediators* for students to experience national and international cultures. This helps to construct international values and, above all, to promote cross-cultural understandings which, in turn, leads to global citizenship (Chan & Dimmock, 2008; Knight, 2007).

Finally, academic rationales include “developing an international and intercultural dimension in your research, teaching and services, extension of the academic horizon, institutional building, profile and status, the improvement of quality and international academic standards” (de Wit, 2010, p. 9). This institutional driver involves high levels of competition, modernisation globally, and building a competitive brand; these have become the focus of internationalisation of higher education systems (Marginson, 2011). HEIs compete to succeed in the top rankings so that they can attract students and parents; these high rankings can also serve to showcase the institution to other stakeholders, such as knowledge transfer partnerships and funding bodies (Chan & Dimmock, 2008).

Clearly, therefore, there is a relationship between the concepts of internationalisation and sustainable development, and the role of education (and so the educator) in both is an important one. Education, according to Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, “is the most powerful path to sustainability” (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 16). Yet, while SD is clearly defined by international organisations like UNESCO, there is less clarity around what internationalisation means.

## **DEFINING INTERNATIONALISATION IN HE**

The concept of internationalisation has been interpreted in various ways and finding a single common definition is a challenging task; the concept is viewed differently across

countries, cultures and educational systems (Knight, 2003). Indeed, Knight claims that any definition of the concept would need to be broadly accepted in the field of education and to consider the specific role played by educational systems in society. Concepts that many researchers consider key to successful implementation of internationalisation strategies at HEIs, such as curriculum development, research, partnership, and mobility, concur with de Wit's (2010) categories above. However, beyond this broad agreement, perceptions of internationalisation differ greatly. In fact, Knight (2003) suggests that, because of the evolving nature of internationalisation, no single policy statement could be used to define this complex phenomenon. For example, Hudzik's (2011) focus is on a holistic view, one that shapes the ethos and values of the institution, while de Wit (2015) focuses on process. Arum and van de Water (1992), in their activity-based definition, focus on three elements in particular, defining internationalisation as "the multiple activities, programs and services that fall within international studies, international education exchange and technical cooperation" (p. 202). Jane Knight is perhaps the most prominent scholar addressing the issue of defining internationalisation and her definition has been adopted by the International Association of Universities (IAU):

[Internationalisation is] the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education at the institutional and national levels (Knight, 2008, p. 21).

Knight's process-based definition acknowledges the evolutionary nature of internationalisation and, in particular, emphasises the need for continuous effort at all levels, fitting well with the characteristics of SD. The scope of internationalisation is thus specified using three main dimensions: international, cultural, and global. The international dimension denotes the relation between countries and nations; the intercultural dimension represents the relation between different cultures; and the global dimension reflects a worldwide view and global reach in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The ongoing research from which this paper is drawn uses a definition of internationalisation based on Arum and Van De Water (1992) and Knight (2008), as follows:

*Internationalisation is a collection of multiple activities including developing an international curriculum, student-staff mobility, and technical cooperation that reflects multiple processes such as relationships between countries and cultures, representation of different cultures within countries, and applying this global perspective to teaching, research and other services of HE institutions.*

Within this definition are activities and approaches that are in line with, and facilitators of, a number of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF HEIS AND EDUCATORS**

The role played by HE in achieving SD is made clear in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN General Assembly, 2015). Seventeen SDGs have been proposed as part of this agenda, and a number of these goals are relevant to HEIs and universities, showing how they might address SD in local communities and in broader society. The UN has also suggested that HE should have a global focus because of the significance of its role. This definition of SD suggests that not only should present conditions be taken into account, but that future needs must be treated with equal importance. Bass and Dalal-Clayton (2012) explain this, noting that over the past decades there have been significant developments in many areas, due to increases in industrialisation, population, life expectancy rates, literacy rates, food production, and income levels. They also recognise that some of these developments can cause substantial damage and their effects can impact significantly on future generations.

As key institutions in society, HEIs are expected to contribute to the development of local and global communities through teaching and research activities (Waas, Verbruggen, & Wright, 2010). They have a responsibility in both shaping strategies for the development of society and also in delivering them through a diverse range of teaching and other activities and services. According to Lozano et al. (2013), in doing so, many universities and HEIs have in fact contributed significantly in developing and educating “decision-makers, leaders, entrepreneurs, and academics” (p. 3). Universities, however, have become increasingly commercialised, and now compete in an ever more challenging, economically-driven market (Ball, 2012; Giroux, 2016). In doing so, the meaning and purpose of HE has shifted, according to Giroux (2016), who notes that the force of neoliberalism has led not only to these changes but also to a “diminished belief” in the purpose of HE as producer of critical thought. Giroux claims that, in fact, “the only questions being asked about knowledge production, the purpose of education, the nature of politics, and our understanding of the future are largely determined by market forces” (pp. 195–6). Such changes are significant for both education and sustainability; they make the case for universities serving their communities through relevant research, knowledge production, and critical engagement more difficult, yet more crucial.

Despite this market-driven push, researchers such as Wright (2004) and Barth, Michelsen, and Sanusi (2011) claim that society in fact still sees universities and HEIs as key providers of knowledge and contributors to progress in society, and expects that they should be leading action on SD locally, nationally, and globally. Waas et al. (2010) go further, suggesting that HE has a social and moral responsibility to work to address the needs of society through SD policies and practice. According to Cortese (1992), universities bear

profound responsibilities to increase the awareness, knowledge, technologies, and tools to create an environmentally sustainable future. Universities have the expertise necessary to develop the intellectual and conceptual framework to achieve

this goal, and must play a strong role in education, research, policy development, information exchange and community outreach. (Cortese, 1992, p. 1110)

As major educational institutions, HEIs are perfectly positioned to influence, reinforce, and deliver education in line with the UN's SDGs (Cotton et al., 2007; IAU, 2016). Indeed, IAU (2016) claims that HE "underpins all the SDGs" (p.1), and to this end the organisation has been instrumental in developing tools for HE research into SD. These tools are available to all HEIs (IAU, 2016), yet many HEIs and academics do not make full use of these and other online tools. In some cases this is because SD is viewed as a discrete discipline (Santos & Filho, 2005). Because it is only usually environmentally-related courses and programmes that focus on SD (Waas et al., 2010), there is a need for HE to focus more on developing a holistic approach that sees the integration of SD across all disciplines (Ferrer-Balas et al., 2010; Fien, 2002).

Cortese (1992) forecast that universities and HEIs could play a vital role in future and that SDGs could be delivered successfully on a large scale since universities have extensive resources ranging from expertise to technology. Despite this, SD, as part of HE philosophy, is still in its initial stages in many universities (Lozano, Lozano et al., 2013) with many still following traditional methods in contributing to the SDGs (Elton, 2003). It is also suggested that in some universities there can be a resistance to change and this leads to unsustainable practices (Sterling & Scott, 2008). Lozano, Luckman et al. (2013) claim that as long as universities and HEIs follow traditional teaching approaches, they will lack the capacity to deliver for a sustainable society.

## **THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN SD**

Educators working in HE understand the importance of the concepts that define internationalisation, the concepts that are integral to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Their roles as curriculum designers and teachers mean they are also well-placed to relate those concepts to real-life contexts, and their expertise is invaluable to appropriate programme design. Having direct links with their students and the community places them centrally as facilitators of both their HEI's policies and community needs. In addition, the research capacities of academics provide them with opportunities to establish understandings of diverse community needs and to identify potential solutions. Educators are also part of those communities, so often have a direct interest in seeing their community thrive.

Educators in HEIs are encouraged to reflect on their own particular social and cultural assumptions, as well as to reflect on their own practices. They must ensure that their pedagogical methods are appropriate to an international audience, and in doing this they are expected to deliver an internationalised curriculum, outline culturally-appropriate evaluation methodologies, and engage in cross-border research and educational exchanges (Black, 2004; Leask, 2007). Understanding what internationalisation is, and how it is applied in different contexts, is an essential part of HE work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. SD is also

a global concept, and educators' increased understanding of internationalisation could enable them to develop appropriate curricula and undertake research that is relevant to culturally-specific community needs.

Educators' understanding of the context in which they perform their academic work – their *insider knowledge* – may have crucial value in maintaining relevance in policy development. Educators can be seen, in fact, as central to the successful implementation of SD policies in HE. IAU (2016) has recognised the importance of educators and their significance in driving the process for SD in HEIs both in the present and in future. As developers, mediators, and implementers of institutional policies, educators play a key role in facilitating the whole process of education (Arnold & Burke, 1983).

The role of educators is viewed as multi-dimensional (Reid & Petocz, 2006), and not limited just to the multiple tasks they perform in an educational context. It is more than that, for they also have a social responsibility towards the community for which that educational provision is designed (IAU, 2016). UNESCO (2014b) recognises that HE educators in certain contexts, due to global location or cultural expectations, for example, still practice unsustainable lifestyles. Educators may therefore, in some cases, need further training to develop the required skills and competencies in developing and delivering the institutional vision. Stromquist (1997) suggests that this training should be relevant to both learner needs and political context. Various initiatives provided by UNESCO, such as the “Global Action Programme (GAP)” on “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)” (UNESCO, 2018) are designed to overcome these concerns.

UNESCO (2018) also suggests that HEIs need re-orientation in order to develop the scope for all learners to gain “knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes” that are directed towards contributing to the SDGs (p. 133). The emphasis on learners and learning suggests that UNESCO understands the important role of the educator in these processes. However, to play a genuinely significant role, educators must have opportunities for developing the areas of their professional practices that are essential to embed and deliver SD in the curriculum. UNESCO (2018) also emphasises the importance to institutions of this focus, and of motivating educators by involving them in framing institutional policies; doing so will not only reflect positively on institutional practices but will also bring about positive changes to curricula by using educators' pedagogical skills and knowledge of their communities. Educators' *insider knowledge* could be used in developing policies and a culturally sensitive curriculum that addresses the sustainability needs of society.

Internationalisation in HE is instrumental in supporting educators in understanding, accommodating, and developing a culture that facilitates the successful implementation of SD policies in their institutions. UNESCO (2005) notes that there is a need to integrate culture and SD, and that “[c]ulture is increasingly recognized as an essential dimension of sustainable development, particularly since the 2002 Johannesburg Summit” (p. 30). This global organisation thus makes it clear that, to be successful, SDGs must have culture integrated into their policies and practices, as is the case with internationalisation.

## CHALLENGES FACED BY EDUCATORS IN HE

Studies show that the perspectives of senior academics such as Deans and Heads of Schools play a vital role in initiating and executing change in HE, and yet they are not often involved in constructing such significant policies (Bell, 2004; Green & Mertova, 2010). Given this fact, it is not surprising that educators themselves do not seem to play a significant role either. This under-representation could be due to a number of factors. For example, pressure to compete academically – the “responsibility to perform” (Ball, 2012, p. 19) – often leads to anxiety and stress, and leaves educators with little time to focus elsewhere (Hall & Bowles, 2016). Tran and Le (2018) suggest that educators need significant professional development to implement institutional policies successfully. Indeed, as educators interviewed as part of an ongoing doctoral research project have suggested, there may also be a lack of encouragement from senior management, or even pressure not to become involved.

While educators face a number of challenges in current HE practice, one that could be addressed easily and effectively is that of involvement in policy development. HE academics are well situated to understand the processes of policy implementation and have a wealth of expertise that could be employed by increasing their involvement in developing policy. The role of educators in the process of internationalising universities, for example, has been investigated by a number of scholars, and these studies show that educators are by and large viewed as the empowering agents of internationalisation in HEIs and are the academics who will decide the achievement or failure of internationalisation methodologies (Black, 2004; Poole, 2005; Leask, 2007). The same potential applies to integrating SD into policy development.

However, educators face institutional barriers; as Tran and Le (2018) state, the universities’ role in addressing the needs of educators is being neglected. Institutional policies directly impact upon educators’ roles, yet the literature indicates that educators do not have enough input into developing these policies. Curriculum development is a key area in which educators could apply expertise, yet they may be limited due to time and other institutional constraints. Another reason for the lack of educators’ input may be due to the fact that there is no shared understanding of SDGs, for example, at the institutional level (Reid & Petocz, 2006). Whilst educators are believed to play a key role in facilitating policies, and although these policies have a direct impact on educators, students, and society (Beelen & Leask, 2010), the participants in the ongoing research project observe that policies are usually dictated by a top-down approach. Velazquez, Munguia, and Sanchez (2005) also suggest that educators’ views on sustainability in HE are not fully investigated and this is reflected in institutional change initiatives. The risk is that, by universities ignoring the views of educators, these organisations may experience a resulting resistance to change and to the integration of institutional SDGs (Cotton et al., 2007). According to Dawe, Jucker, and Martin (2005), lack of input from educators could result in non-participation in institutional initiatives, affecting successful implementation of SDGs.

Whatever the reasons, there seems to be a clear lack of input from educators into developing and delivering policy in HEIs. The expertise of educators is being neglected (Bell, 2004; Green & Mertova, 2010) by not involving them in the process of planning. Our claim is that, if educators were more involved in policy design and implementation, HEIs would be more prepared to produce sustainable and culturally-appropriate policies that are more globally applicable and, at the same time, more relevant to sustainability issues of particular communities.

Proctor (2016) suggests that, as educators are the ones who deliver institutional policies, their involvement is significant, and institutions should recognise their needs, because appropriate recognition for educators could result in higher levels of commitment and involvement. Negotiating the specific demands of educators could result in the successful implementation of institutional strategies useful to both local and global communities (Tran & Le, 2018).

## **CONCLUSION**

HE is well-placed to develop the capacity to address the needs of the communities it is expected to serve and to deliver education and research that will promote sustainability in those communities. By embedding SD as an institutional concept, HE can, in fact, be instrumental in effecting changes. Such changes to the institutional agenda, however, could bring with them challenges if HE is to participate in addressing SD issues. As we have seen, these issues include: increasing social and economic inequality in communities; environmental deprivation and degradation; and other issues that affect global communities and their quality of life.

We have shown that an understanding of internationalisation is helpful in developing SD policy and practice, and that educators in HEIs have the, as yet largely underappreciated, expertise to contribute to policy development. Internationalisation of HE brings not only economic benefits for the university but also brings an understanding of cultural diversity both locally and globally, and with this global perspective, educators have the expertise to successfully design and deliver SDG-focused curriculum for many culturally diverse contexts.

Through their curriculum design and teaching, educators play a key role in implementing institutional strategies; they could also be instrumental in developing sustainable policies, that is, they have the expertise to incorporate SDGs into university work, but they do face challenges. Understanding the challenges faced by educators is important if their role in embedding SD in HE is to be facilitated.

Educators, as the conduit between management and learners, are the key implementers of institutional educational policies and have the capacity to influence shaping the curriculum in a way that could deliver to the needs of community and enhance learning in the community. But educators need to have greater say and greater involvement in policymaking. Any educational process of developing community links for sustainability is



contextually dependent, but, using the concept of internationalisation, and informed by the understandings of HE educators, the university could become a more important and a much more relevant player in developing a sustainable society. Although the doctoral research referred to in this paper has been undertaken in selected Scottish universities with educators working in those universities, the data can be, to some extent, applicable more globally, and the project will serve as a starting point for similar research in other contexts.

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## ADDRESSING THE NEED FOR LANGUAGE SUPPORT FOR THE MIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITY IN THE EAST MIDLANDS, U.K.

### ABSTRACT

*For migrants and refugees, language is essential for dealing with officials, engaging with employment, receiving healthcare and feeling comfortable in a new environment. Despite this, there is no uniform approach to English language support for incoming migrants or refugees to the East Midlands. This paper discusses the situation regarding language provision for these communities and identifies the gaps in current language provision which derive from reductions in government funding over recent years. It looks at a mixed methods doctoral study that sought to identify the language needs of the Polish community in the region and describes a University of Nottingham initiative to address the gap in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision for adult learners, both migrants and refugees, in the Nottingham area.*

**Keywords:** *ESOL provision, refugees, migrants, adult education, community-based learning*

### ODZIV NA POTREBE PO JEZIKOVNI PODPORI ZA PRISELJENCE IN BEGUNCE V EAST MIDLANDS, VELIKA BRITANIJA - POVZETEK

*Za priseljence in begunce je jezik ključnega pomena pri stikih z uradniki, zaposlitvi, uporabi zdravstvenih storitev in na splošno za dobro počutje v novem okolju. Kljub temu v regiji East Midlands ne obstaja enoten pristop k zagotavljanju jezikovne podpore za priseljence ali begunce. Članek obravnava jezikovno pomoč, ki je na voljo tem skupnostim, in opredeljuje vrzeli v okviru ponujene pomoči, do katerih v zadnjih letih prihaja zaradi zmanjševanja temu namenjenih javnih sredstev. Članek izhaja iz doktorske študije, ki je uporabila raziskave mešanih metod in katere cilj je bil ugotoviti jezikovne potrebe poljske skupnosti v regiji ter opisuje pobudo Univerze v Nottinghamu, da odpravi vrzeli v pomoči pri učenju angleščine, ki je na voljo odraslim govorcem drugih jezikov, tako priseljencev kot beguncev, na območju Nottinghama.*

**Ključne besede:** *angleščina za govorce drugih jezikov, begunci, priseljenci, izobraževanje odraslih, skupnostno učenje*

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the current situation regarding language provision for migrant, asylum seeker and refugee communities in the U.K., focusing in particular on the Nottingham area. The first section of the paper describes a mixed-methods doctoral study, *Translating Cultures, Adapting Lives* (TCAL), in which one of the authors of the current paper set out to identify the language needs of migrants in the East Midlands, focusing in particular on the Polish community. This study reinforced the perception that there was a significant need for ESOL support not only for the migrant community but also within asylum-seeking and refugee circles. This paper, therefore, looks at the importance of English language (ESOL) support in general and details cuts to funding and to the availability of ESOL support for both the migrant and refugee community over recent years. The final part of the paper then describes an initiative set up at the University of Nottingham to address the gaps in ESOL provision for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the Nottingham area. This specific programme enabled trainee ESOL teachers and other students to engage with both adults and teenagers from the refugee and asylum-seeking community and to provide ESOL support for many who are currently excluded from ESOL provision for reasons either of finance or status.

## STUDY OF ESOL FOR THE POLISH COMMUNITY IN THE EAST MIDLANDS

The Polish community in the East Midlands comprises post-war refugees and many waves of migration, of whom the post-EU accession (1st May 2004) wave is the largest and in terms of numbers seems to have surpassed the immigration from the Indian sub-continent (Kaczmarczyk & Okólski, 2008) while Polish became the second language spoken in England and third in Wales (ONS, 2013; BBC, 2013). Although Holstein and Gubrium (1994) emphasise that language is viewed as the primary symbol system through which meaning is conveyed, from the structuralist perspective it rather creates a barrier between individuals and their environment as it communicates the construction of the dominant social group (Patton, 2002). Therefore, language should be at the centre of migration debates in any society. The 2011 UK Census revealed that the Polish language is the second most spoken language in England and third in Wales (BBC, 2013), and in the East Midlands among non-UK passport holders, as many as 50,740 individuals reported Polish citizenship (Migration Observatory, 2012). Regarding the language question, in literature there is considerable evidence of the significance of languages, both native and target languages, for Polish-speaking individuals migrating to other countries (for the UK and Australia see, for example, Besemeres (2008), White & Ryan (2008), Temple & Koterba (2009) or White (2011)). The doctoral study *Translating Cultures, Adapting Lives* (TCAL) conducted in the East Midlands corroborates earlier findings and further substantiates this research area (Seredyńska-Abou Eid, in print).

## THE STUDY ‘TRANSLATING CULTURES, ADAPTING LIVES’

The research study *Translating Cultures, Adapting Lives* was aimed at first generation post-EU accession Polish migrants in the East Midlands, a region that comprises Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, and Northamptonshire. Since Polish migrants reside in all locations around the UK, the area of the East Midlands was chosen for practical reasons of accessibility and the virtual impossibility to do a cross-country research within the confines of a doctoral research study. Moreover, Lincolnshire is the second area after London where Eastern European migrants settled in large numbers as there are many opportunities to find seasonal jobs, mainly in agriculture.

This mixed-methods qualitative study was designed to collect primary data in the East Midlands through an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews (May 2013–March 2014), ethnographic observations (2008–2014) and a small-scale study of online communities (2010–2011). Regarding the questionnaire and interviews, the snowball sampling technique proved most efficient and resulted in 97 questionnaire responses fully qualifying for further analysis, eleven individual and eight institutional interviews. While interviewees originated from among questionnaire respondents who declared their readiness for possible further involvement, institutions such as Nottinghamshire Police, Lincolnshire NHS, the Polish Consulate or Polish association were approached in response to media publications about Polish migrants and as a consequence of a completed literature review. Regarding the demographics of the respondents, the participating individuals were adult Polish post-EU accession migrants of all age groups, representing a range of educational levels and backgrounds. It is noteworthy, though, that only a third of all participants were male. The data obtained through these different methods was cross-tabulated and triangulated to verify the convergence of the respondents’ ideas and opinions that reflect migrants’ lived experience within their migration projects.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY FOR POLISH MIGRANTS

The results of the TCAL study indicate the high importance of the English language for Polish migrants in their lives in the UK as a vast majority of the respondents agreed that “proficiency in English is important for [their] live[s] in the UK” (Q18, LG5). In their comments, survey participants further added that “[they] wouldn’t be able to do [their] job[s] if [they weren’t] fluent in English” (in the original: “bez bieglej znajomości języka nie byłabym w stanie wykonywać swojej pracy”) and emphasised that language proficiency is “fundamental” (“fundamentalna”), “especially at work” (“zwłaszcza w pracy”). Similar results were obtained in earlier studies on Polish migrants in other parts of the UK (see White, 2011) and observed in online conversations on Polish fora. Irrespective of that, it needs to be noted that neither in this project nor in other studies on Polish migrants did the respondents recognize the English language as their socio-cultural capital, as defined by Bourdieu and Coleman (Halpern, 2005), which could bring more global

prospects in the future in the form of employment opportunities in other parts of the world or as a global communication tool. The language has not been perceived, perhaps not yet, as a potential door-opener in terms of migrants' future professional and personal opportunities, for example, for further migration projects outside the UK.

Even though the Polish migrants do not identify the English language as a career booster, most of the TCAL respondents declared that their proficiency in English improved since they had moved to the UK, regardless of their length of stay in the country. In their comments in the questionnaire and during interviews, many respondents declared that they did not speak English when they came to the UK or that they were learning English as a foreign language at school, but "school is school, you know how they teach" ("jak to w szkole, wiadomo jak uczą"). It is noteworthy that in Poland over 90% (93.7% in 2012) of pupils learn English as a foreign language. According to European data, in Poland the first foreign language is introduced as compulsory at the age of 7 (primary education) while education in the second foreign language starts for students of 13 years of age (lower-secondary/primary<sup>1</sup> education) (Eurostat, 2012). Furthermore, from September 2017, compulsory foreign language education was also introduced for pre-primary education (Dziennik Ustaw, 2014). Furthermore, foreign languages are included in the matriculation (baccalaureate) exams (equivalent to A-Level) at two levels: basic and advanced, both written and oral, while the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is applied across all levels of education. The first incarnation of written matriculation in English occurred in 1992. Therefore, at first glance it could be assumed that many Polish migrants should have a certain level of fluency in English; however, for migrants born before the early 1970s, English may be challenging as at school they learnt Russian as a foreign language.

TCAL results further indicate that migrants' inability to communicate in English, even at a very basic level, has been identified as a serious impediment to social integration and active participation in community life. In Lincolnshire, for example, such an obstacle is claimed to be one of the most significant barriers preventing migrant registration with doctors (GPs). In addition to assertions that many migrants seem to be unfamiliar with procedures, possibly due to a different organisational model or divergent expectations of staff and patients in the home country, gaps in health monitoring and screening can pose a serious health challenge to the local community. Moreover, lack of language proficiency can also impact on migrants' communication with the police in emergency situations, such as witnessed or experienced crime, hate crime or domestic violence. In both cases, health and crime issues, using translation services may either be impossible or inconvenient for the patient or victim due to the sensitive nature of the matters.

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<sup>1</sup> The 1999 reform of the educational system reinstated the division of primary and secondary education into three levels, i.e. primary (7–12 yrs), lower- (13–15yrs) and upper secondary (16–19 yrs). This division was reversed by a reform of 2016; however, those pupils who started lower secondary school before the latest reform will complete their education in accordance with the previous system.



## **CURRENT PROVISION OF ESOL FOR POLISH MIGRANTS**

The provision of English language courses for migrants occurs through various, often charitable, organisations and more informally on online fora. The latter should be categorised more as a special interest group on a Polish community platform that discusses various everyday language issues and intricacies, e.g. the English Zone on Moja Wyspa [My Island]. Otherwise, institutions such as the Signpost to Polish Success (SPS) in Nottingham, the Skegness Polish Educational Association (SPEA) or the Square Mile Project in Leicester provide English lessons for migrants to help them improve their language skills to enable their functioning in the host culture and society. It needs to be emphasised that there is no uniform policy or approach to teaching English to migrants within city or county councils and within the whole region. Therefore, attendee-related requirements and restrictions vary due to differences in the nature of those organisations. SPS, for example, provide language classes for unemployed migrants only, while the Square Mile Project has a territorial restriction, i.e. the literal square mile around De Montfort University. SPEA, on the other hand, offers support classes for the pupils of the Polish Saturday School and some additional courses for local migrants. While SPS and the Square Mile provide English lessons free of charge, SPEA includes the costs of English lessons in the tuition fee of students and charges a small fee for the other classes. Furthermore, the provision is not limited to Polish migrants only, with the exception of the Polish Saturday School in Skegness, but is also open to other Central and Eastern European migrants whose communities are much smaller than the Polish one. From the perspective of the host/local community, these migrant communities could be perceived as ethnocultural groups that “retain a sense of their cultural identity, and who (on that basis) participate in a social framework that is characterized by some social norms (legal, economic, political agreements) about how to live together” (Berry et al., 2007, p. 347; see also Neuliep, 2012).

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF ESOL SUPPORT FOR ALL: THE CURRENT SITUATION**

The situation in terms of ESOL provision for the refugee community has much in common with that of the Polish community as described in TCAL. It seems evident that knowledge of a host country’s language is central to successful and comfortable life in a new country. It makes social and economic sense for the host country, and benefits migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in a myriad of ways (see, for just a few examples from the research and government documentation, Ager & Strang, 2008; Casey, 2016; Doyle & O’Toole, 2013; Greater London Authority, 2012).

Jenny Roden, Co-Chair of the National Association of Teaching English & Community Languages to Adults (NATECLA) sums up some of the identifiable benefits of ESOL support for migrants as well as the economic benefits for the host country, and these statements are equally true for the refugee and the asylum-seeking community, who may well have different immediate needs, but still need English language to fulfil them:

By enrolling on an ESOL course, migrants are able to develop the language skills they need to gain employment, interact with others and manage everyday tasks with ease, without relying on costly state-funded interpreters or family and friends. From an economic perspective, migrants unable to learn English are often in low paid jobs or unemployed, and many rely on the state for housing and benefits (NATECLA, 2017).

Charitable and other organisations in the U.K. have been arguing for years for a national strategy for ESOL. Considerable research and official documentation indicate that a lack of English language prevents both migrants and refugees from engaging with services such as health care and education, increases isolation, inhibits independence and affects health, employment and residential location. Refugees, in particular, have to engage with official bodies on their arrival in the UK and having to rely on interpreters can make some feel vulnerable.

In 2011, Dame Louise Casey was asked by the UK government to look into integration and opportunities for ethnic minorities in the UK. Her report, published in 2016, highlighted throughout the significance of English language skills and the need for further provision of English language support (Casey, 2016). More expansively, in section 6.51, the report stated:

In relation to integration and economic success, one factor that stands out strongly as a barrier to progress is proficiency in English. English language is a common denominator and ensuring everyone is able to speak English enjoys strong public support. Lack of English skills presents a clear barrier to social and economic mobility – going for a job interview, writing a letter to a bank or understanding the country you live in. (Casey, 2016, p. 94)

Successive British governments have repeatedly acknowledged the benefits of providing both the migrant and refugee community with language support and the most recent Government document on integration, the Integrated Communities Green Paper of April 2018, in fact insists that new arrivals to the U.K. “should learn to speak and understand our language and values and seek opportunities to mix and become part of our communities” (Integrated Communities Green Paper, 2018).

Despite this, ESOL provision in England remains patchy at best and has seen numerous and persistent funding cuts over the years. Fees were introduced for ESOL courses between 2007 and 2008 when automatic fee remission was withdrawn. Between 2011 and 2012, full-funding for ESOL courses was further restricted to individuals in receipt of Job Seeker’s Allowance or Employment Support Allowance, and funding for ESOL in the workplace was withdrawn. The Casey Review of 2016 noted that

during the review, a number of providers of English Language courses told us that funding for [ESOL] provision from Government had reduced in recent

years, was being devolved locally and focussed more on higher-level language and other skills for those seeking employment. They felt that there was a significant gap in funding for pre-entry and entry level English language courses. (Casey, 2016, Section 6.51)

In response to this gap, the Casey Review recommends “[i]mproving English language provision through funding for community-based classes and appropriate prioritisation of adult skills budgets” (Casey, 2016, p. 17).

According to a statement in the House of Lords in 2016, the Skills Budget for ESOL was halved from £203 million in 2009/2010 to £104 million in 2014/2015 (House of Lords, 2016). As a consequence of these funding cuts, waiting lists for the classes that are available can be considerable. In a survey of ESOL providers carried out by NATECLA in 2014, 80% of responders said their institution had “significant waiting lists of up to 1,000 students” and 66% said that they believed lack of funding was the main cause of this. In sum, according to NATECLA, the number of adults who are able to enrol on a course fell from 207,400 to 131,000 between 2008/2009 and 2014/2015 (NATECLA, 2014).

For refugees and asylum seekers specifically, the briefing paper on adult ESOL in England drawn up for the Government in April 2018 notes that although the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) continues to provide funded ESOL for some refugees, eligibility and fees remission restrictions apply. Those who fall outside the eligible categories have to pay at least 50% towards course costs, regardless of income. Asylum seekers are unable to access a course until they have lived in the UK for six months and are only eligible for basic funding after this time (House of Commons, 2018).

Others, for example those who come on spouse visas, are treated as international students for at least a year. In all these cases, the cost of learning English is often prohibitive. Even the provisions that do exist are dependent on space and availability of classes (House of Commons, 2018). It is evident that there is both a clear benefit and a clear need for funded and available ESOL support.

## **ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE NOTTINGHAM AREA**

Nottinghamshire and the East Midlands has always been an area where migrants have settled. After the Second World War considerable numbers of Italians and Poles settled in the region, and both Leicester and Derby in particular have long been destinations for the Afro-Caribbean community as well as those from the Indian sub-continent. The 1999 Immigration Act introduced the dispersal process for asylum seekers, in which asylum seekers are ‘dispersed’ away from London and the south east to areas where there is cheaper housing and, supposedly, capacity in the infrastructure (Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999). Since 1999 and the introduction of ‘dispersal’, numbers of refugees and asylum seekers have been housed in Nottingham through the National Asylum Support Service (NASS).

In 2000 the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NNRF) was set up to provide advice and support for asylum seekers and refugees in the city alongside other national charities such as the British Red Cross and Refugee Action. Over time, the range of voluntary sector support for refugees and asylum seekers has developed and diversified and a variety of refugee community organisations have been established in Nottingham.

The situation of those going through the asylum-seeking process in the region has been compared to those in what is generally known as the resettlement scheme. The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) was launched in 2014 in response to the protracted conflict in Syria. The UK government resettled 216 vulnerable people through this scheme from 2014, and in October 2015 the Prime Minister David Cameron announced an expansion of the programme with a target of resettling 20,000 people over a five-year period. Local Authorities would be able to sign up to the programme voluntarily and would receive funding from central government to cover the first twelve months of a refugee's resettlement costs.

In Nottinghamshire, both the City and a number of District and Borough Councils signed up to the scheme. A cohort of 81 individuals were settled in Nottingham in December 2015 and by September 2017 a further 23 families had arrived in 6 separate cohorts in the City and County (Nottingham Citizens Independent Sanctuary Commission, 2017).

A report conducted by Nottingham Citizens into Nottingham's place as a city of sanctuary investigated the needs of the wider asylum-seeking and refugee community in the Nottingham area. In particular, this report compared the provision offered to Syrian families under the Government's VPRS with provision for other migrants and refugees:

Those arriving under the VPRS are guaranteed funding, accommodation, English language provision and a case worker. This contrasts with the wider experience of the refugee and asylum seeker community who come with significantly limited funding for support (Nottingham Citizens Independent Sanctuary Commission, February 2017).

Specifically, in relation to ESOL provision for those on the VPRS, the Home Office celebrated the fact that

additional funding for English language training will mean all adults arriving through the scheme anywhere in the UK will receive an extra 12 hours a week of tuition, for up to 6 months. This [...] will assist families to integrate into their new communities more quickly and make it easier for them to seek and obtain work. (House of Commons, 2018)

These are, of course, all provisions to be celebrated, and those in the VPRS are, after all, particularly vulnerable, but it indicates that there can be a will and a way to provide

considerable support for the refugee and migrant communities. The All-Party Parliamentary Group noted:

While the recent additional funding announced to provide teaching for resettled Syrian refugees is a welcome acknowledgement of the importance of ESOL classes, similar support is needed for all other refugees. (APPG, April 2017, p. 30)

### **BASIC EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE IN NOTTINGHAM (BEGIN)**

Nottingham is unusual and fortunate in that it has an organisation that coordinates ESOL screening and referrals in Nottingham and manages a waiting list of people who are eligible for classes (785 at 24/01/2017). BEGIN offers a central advice and placement service for ESOL and Functional Skills across the Nottingham area. Each year it enables almost 4,000 adults aged 16 or over to find the right ESOL course at the right level, time, location and cost that fits with work, childcare and other commitments. It matches the status of the learners in terms of eligibility, income and additional learning needs with available courses. In 2017 Basic Educational Guidance in Nottingham (BEGIN) worked with 3,800 people, numbers which are representative of a typical year. Asylum seekers and refugees made up 35% of these in 2017. ESOL for migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and other non-English speaking residents in the U.K. now represents 90% of BEGIN's work (BEGIN, n.d.).

### **THE ESOL MODULE WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM ADVANTAGE AWARD (NAA)**

There is much talk of community engagement, outreach work and links with the community from the Higher Education sector these days. Much of this is often merely a statement of principle. On the University of Nottingham website, the only community and widening participation projects described ended in 2016, although the University is apparently currently drawing up a revised widening participation strategy for autumn 2018. On the other hand, employability and work experience is of growing importance for today's students. A recent survey by Nottingham's Students Union indicated that although the majority of students pay their fees, write their essays and attend their lectures because they "have an interest in the subject", the second reason given for attending university was "to get a better job" (O'Boyle, 2018), and most universities offer employability pledges and opportunities for the students.

The Nottingham Advantage Award is a programme set up primarily with a focus on employability and is in fact run by the Careers and Employability team at the University. The Award runs parallel to but separate from the students' main degree and offers them opportunities to take modules which relate to mentoring, cultural awareness, entrepreneurship, volunteering and work in the local community.

With our knowledge of the need for ESOL support in the area, in 2016 we set up an ESOL module on this programme. This was set up with the aim of achieving two aims in particular; to fill the gap in ESOL provision for the migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking community and to offer trainee teachers and other students with teaching experience at the University of Nottingham the chance to engage with this community and to get teaching practice.

Over the last three years, four cohorts of up to sixteen trainee teachers have run six two-hour team-teaching sessions over six weeks providing ESOL support for refugees, migrants, asylum seekers and others from the community who are looking for ESOL support. The majority of the trainee teachers are either on the M.A. programme in teaching ESOL or an undergraduate Modern Languages degree, but we have also had volunteer teachers who are studying politics, biochemistry, and molecular medicine. They have come from the UK, Indonesia, Vietnam, Poland, Saudi Arabia, and China.

The learners on the NAA Module are primarily directed to us by BEGIN and are migrants and refugees of a range of statuses who are all on the waiting list for ESOL sessions. As regards their situation in terms of funding for ESOL support, some would be fee paying and some entitled to free ESOL, although obviously they do not pay to attend our sessions. In terms of their status, we have EU Nationals, EEA Migrant Workers, Asylum Seekers who have not yet been resident for six months, those on a Married/Spouse Visa, Asylum Seekers of longer duration, and Refused Refugees. Their nationalities and countries of origin are equally diverse. We have had learners from Poland, Nigeria, Russia, Pakistan, Iraqi Kurdistan, Iran, Benin, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Senegal, Ukraine, and Sudan.

### **Challenges in setting up the programme**

There have been a number of challenges in setting up the programme. We have no budget for venue hire, so have had to rely on the good will of the community. This inevitably turned out to be the local churches. There have been issues with these venues in terms of their practical suitability as classrooms as well as the cultural context for some learners. They have also been at some distance from learner residences, and there are issues around accessibility and childcare.

### **Attendance and levels**

Asylum seekers and refugees' situations and eligibility for ESOL can change very quickly. If their asylum claim is refused, they will suddenly no longer be eligible for funding until or unless they make a fresh claim and have an appeal over six months old; if there are issues with their accommodation they may be moved to another city. There may also be various factors which can affect whether or not they will be able to attend classes, such as the venue, travel costs, childcare needs, or work schedules (for refugees). The levels of those who attend are very mixed – with some never having had any schooling, and others having quite fluent levels. The majority, however, are pre-entry or level 1 in ESOL terms.

## Programme success and recognition

The programme has also, however, had a number of successes in the two years we have been running it. We have been named Advantage Award Module of the Year for 2018 at the University. We hope to expand the programme in 2018/19. We have been approached by a school with a particularly multi-cultural intake to set up similar ESOL sessions for parents of the pupils and are looking at starting lessons for both migrants and refugees in Signpost to Polish Success (SPS).

## CONCLUSIONS

The eagerness of migrants and refugees to adjust through learning and improving the host language depicts a mostly integrative strategy of acculturation, which encompasses the retention of culture of origin and exchanges with the host culture(s). This should encourage local and national authorities to offer a more inclusive provision of ESOL, which would benefit both the local communities and their new members. There is also a need for further critical exploration of some of the contradictory and controversial aspects of such programmes. The All-Party Parliamentary Group Report from April 2017 nonetheless emphasised the importance of ESOL support and the need for funding increases as well as training for those involved in providing ESOL support. The recent Government Green Paper (Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, 2018) also noted the need for additional classes in ESOL where there is evidence of need, as well as the need for a national ESOL strategy in England. It is to be hoped that there will be a greater recognition of the place and importance of ESOL support for both the migrant and refugee community. In the meantime, academic circles could be of help through organizing modules for ESOL students that could be of benefit to future English language teachers and migrant and refugee communities in need of English.

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*Amira Khattab, David Wong*

# INTEGRATING WESTERN AND ARAB LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

## An Example of the Challenge of Bridging Global and Local Adult Learning Perspectives

### ABSTRACT

*In response to an insufficiently skilled labour force, Arab countries are looking to Western adult learning perspectives. However, Western practices cannot be implemented without consideration of regional culture. This large-scale study aims to identify best leadership development practices for Arab adult learners and examines how these practices might best fit with local cultural contexts. To determine effective practices for Arab leaders, the Delphi process was utilised to survey 24 experts in the field of executive education. In addition, eight experts were interviewed and 1,500 business leaders from 17 different countries were surveyed. Hierarchical Linear Modelling (HLM) was used to examine indices for individual level relationships, as well as country level relationships. Findings suggest that adult learning practices must be 'customised' to address the tension between global and local perspectives. Previous experiences of Western practices are equally important. Traditional schooling experiences may foster deep resistance to unfamiliar ideas and practices.*

**Keywords:** national culture, adult learning, leadership development, Delphi process, hierarchical linear modelling

### ZDRUŽEVANJE ZAHODNIH IN ARABSKIH PRAKS RAZVOJA VODSTVENIH KOMPETENC: PRIMER IZZIVA PREMOSTITVE RAZLIK GLOBALNIH IN LOKALNIH POGLEDOV NA UČENJE ODRASLIH - POVZETEK

*Zaradi nezadostno usposobljene delovne sile se arabske države obračajo k zahodnim načelom učenja odraslih. Vendar pa zahodnih praks ni mogoče vpeljati, ne da bi upoštevali kulturo določenega območja. Ta obsežna študija želi prepoznati najboljše prakse za razvoj vodstvenih kompetenc za arabske odrasle učence in raziskuje, kako bi se te prakse lahko najbolj uspešno umestile v lokalno kulturno okolje. Za opredelitev najučinkovitejših praks za vodilne delavce v arabskem svetu je bila uporabljena delfska metoda, po kateri je bilo anketiranih 24 strokovnjakov za izobraževanje vodilnih delavcev. Poleg tega so bili opravljeni intervjuji z osmimi strokovnjaki, anketiranih pa je bilo 1.500 podjetnikov iz 17 držav. Pri*

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*proučevanju kazalnikov odnosov na ravni posameznika kot tudi odnosov na ravni države je bilo uporabljeno hierarhično linearno modeliranje. Ugotovitve kažejo, da je treba dejavnosti prilagajati tako, da se upoštevajo napetosti med globalnim in lokalnim pogledom na izobraževanje odraslih. Predhodne izkušnje zahodnih izobraževalnih praks so prav tako pomembne. Zaradi tradicionalnih izkušenj šolanja lahko prihaja do velikega odpora do neznanih idej in praks.*

**Ključne besede:** *nacionalna kultura, učenje odraslih, razvoj vodstvenih kompetenc, delfska metoda, hierarhično linearno modeliranje*

## INTRODUCTION

Bridging the gap between global (Western) and local (Arab) adult learning perspectives is key to the implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, the SDG 4-Education 2030 aims at: (1) promoting cultural diversity, interconnectedness, peace, and global citizenship as per Target 4.7, and (2) instilling relevant, transferable, and entrepreneurial skills as per Target 4.4 (Rieckmann, 2017). These ambitious goals identify competencies and skills adult learners, universally, should aspire to as responsible citizens and productive workers. The challenge the Arab world faces is translating these global commitments within its local educational systems, particularly among its leadership development programmes.

With the strenuous, volatile forces shaping the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the Arab world needs outstanding leaders able to take their people to more secure environments in the years to come (Jreisat, 2009) and take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead (e.g., progressive political and economic reforms in KSA and advanced technological and innovation ecosystems in the UAE). In response, this study seeks to accelerate the development of Arab leaders and unpack effective ways to build a cohort of outstanding executives able to move their team, organisations, and societies toward a productive, fair, and stable future across both public and private sectors.

In spite of governments' substantial investment in the development of its human capital, the Arab region still suffers from a skills gap crisis. The majority of Arab countries score low in global ranks on education. Results from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicate a lower quality of learning in the region's schooling system compared to countries at similar income levels. According to the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities, only five institutions in the Arab region made it to the list of the top 500 universities in the world. Furthermore, the region is afflicted by the persistent gap between the skills acquired at universities and the requirements of the labour market.

In oil-rich countries such as the Arab Gulf nations (GCC), many young people aim for conformity and comfortable jobs by joining the public sector, rather than pursue innovation and entrepreneurship within the more dynamic private sector. In turn, the private sector has relied on low-wage foreign workers to produce goods and services targeted

mostly to the domestic market as opposed to the riskier, yet economically crucial, export market. This has favoured the non-tradeable sector such as services and construction at the expense of high value-added tradeable sectors with large spillover effects. As a result, growth in productivity in the region has under-performed. For example, productivity growth in the UAE has historically been stagnant, hovering around 0.2% per annum on average for the last two decades. In countries where economies are stagnant (typically in the Levant nations), rigid hiring and firing regulations are often associated with reduced job opportunities, underutilisation of over-educated talent, and the brain drain. In addition, since family businesses constitute over 85% of the whole Arab non-oil GDP, staffing and recruitment rests heavily on personal connections, discouraging the pursuit of education.

Reform initiatives are underway, looking to the West for best practices. Research highlights how approaches to learning vary across cultures as well as the incongruity between modern (i.e., imported Western) pedagogical approaches and the traditional instruction typically found in the Arab classroom. Rather than simply importing Western models, there is a need to integrate Arabic and Western perspectives on leadership and approaches to learning. Against this backdrop, this study aims to identify the best practices for leadership development by drawing on executive education experts in the MENA region, to examine universal leadership practices against local cultural contexts, and to investigate how learning and leadership approaches differ among Arab executives.

## **ADULT LEARNING**

Adult learning and the related idea of lifelong learning have become important ideas in efforts to accelerate the upskilling of the local workforce and its leadership. The private and public sectors are now institutionalising professional development programmes and looking at Western perspectives of learning such as andragogy and Self-Directed Learning (SDL). Knowles (1980) argues that the construct of andragogy highlights several distinctions between adult learning and K-12 and university learning: adults are capable of being self-directed, their preparedness to learn heavily depends on their social roles, adults seek to develop their current professional skills, and adults' life experiences enrich the content of what is being taught in the classroom. For this reason, if adult learners find a learning experience – a professional development course, for instance – does not effectively address their needs, interests, or ways of learning, they will be much more likely to not participate or drop out than other learners.

Both andragogy and SDL exist in stark contrast to Arabic learning traditions where individual autonomy is regarded as potentially damaging to the development of individuals and their relationship to others (Alshebou, 2010). Al-Harhi (2010) found cultural variations between Arab and American distance adult learners enrolled in online courses from the Arab Open University (AOU). American students scored higher than Arab students on key competencies needed to succeed in an online environment: planning, monitoring,

effort, time and environment management, and self-efficacy. In contrast, Arab students preferred significantly higher structure and engagement with their instructors than American students. This may be related to Arab learners' reliance on instructor guidance as their source of wisdom and inclination to value being part of a group rather than functioning independently from others.

In this research project, we seek to highlight the incongruence between Western and non-Western perspectives and consider how professional development programmes can be effectively designed to bridge the gap between local cultures and global standards.

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Executive education specialists are encouraged to avoid adopting a universal approach to leadership models (e.g., Goldstein & Ford, 2001; London, 2002; Hrivnak, Reichard, & Riggio, 2009). Instead, educators need to assess learners' prior knowledge and customise the programme's content accordingly. Also, experiential learning approaches are commonly recommended, where learners learn by doing, rather than listening or reading about something. In leadership training, experiential learning enables leaders to focus on both "individual and collective learning as they work on the projects, often guided by a coach who encourages reflection, dialogue, and feedback" (McCauley, 2008, p. 42). The instructor's role is to facilitate the construction of knowledge, build on adult learners' prior experience, and value participants' voices. The facilitator engages adults in real life scenarios, builds trust, and gives constructive feedback on the learning process in a timely manner (Fenwick, 2001).

To promote participation and retention levels in leadership development programmes, it is critical to understand why adults partake in learning and why many do not. Based on Houle's (1961) typology, which has been tested over a large set of data and across several continents, adults are motivated to enrol in educational interventions for three main reasons: (a) to achieve a goal (e.g., career advancement), (b) to socialise and build connections with other adults, and (c) to satisfy the curiosity of the mind (e.g., learning for the sake of learning). Furthermore, Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) assert that the two most common reasons for non-participation are lack of time and lack of money.

With regards to the leadership competencies taught in leadership programmes, leadership models are largely based on progressive Western business values. The models emphasise ethics such as "transparency, accountability, consultation, tolerance and equity" (Neal & Finlay, 2015, p. 39). In addition, Western theories of leadership emphasise trait theory, path-goal theory, team leadership theory, servant leadership, transformational leadership, and transactional and authentic leadership (Mameli, 2013). Research on executive education in the Arab world suggests that leadership models overlap with Western best practices reinforcing trait, transcendental, and ethical leadership theories (also found in many Islamic ideals). Effective leaders were found to possess (a) qualities that include personal, emotional and ethical dimensions (Kader, 1973), (b) specific skills/competencies, and

(c) spiritual characteristics and closeness to God. With regard to ideal leadership qualities, scholars underscore the importance of humbleness, honesty, selfless service, conflict avoidance, balance, and charisma. The prophet Mohamed is considered a role model for leaders to follow.

Management training in the Arab world emphasises apprenticeship, the development of a holistic mindset, storytelling, high Arabic literacy, job rotation, on-the-job training, and mentorship. Instructors are expected to take responsibility and control over the learning process, direct the flow of communication, and act as the source of wisdom in the classroom. Training for adult learners typically mirrors the traditional instructional approach found in Arabic schools. Wilkins (2001) showed the influence of religion, localisation of case studies and Arabisation of content in promoting the effectiveness of leadership development instruction. Adults typically use education as an enabler for fuller participation in the community (Al-Barwani & Kelly, 1985) and to advance up the career ladder. Unfortunately, they also found the most common reason cited by Omari women for dropping out was the challenge of balancing between home responsibilities and studies, as well as programme-related reasons (i.e., the difficulty of the content, fear of failure in assessments, and inconvenience of schedule).

## **EXECUTIVES' BACKGROUNDS**

According to Merriam et al. (2007), learning and knowing are deeply intertwined with learner characteristics and cultural beliefs. As such, it is important to consider the adult learner's national cultural and geographical cultural background.

Culture is defined by King (2002) as "a sense of peoplehood and commonality derived from kinship patterns, a shared historical past, common experiences, religious affiliations, language or linguistic commonalities, shared values, attitudes and perceptions, modes of expression and identity." (p. 89) Hofstede's cultural dimensions typology is the most commonly used to conduct cross-cultural research and to study the impact of culture on business management development.

In this study, we use Hofstede's (2001) Power Distance Index (PDI): a measure of the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. The higher the index, the more paternalistic a society is. These individuals accept prevalent hierarchy and do not challenge authority. We also use Hofstede's Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI): a measure of the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations.

These measures allow us to better understand how societies approach learning and leadership. To illustrate, Singapore scores relatively high on the PDI, reflecting a society where managers rely on their superiors and on set rules, and do not question either. Teachers in Asian countries are typically not challenged as they represent the source of wisdom in the classroom. The United Kingdom scores relatively low on the UAI, reflecting a curious nation with a strong need for innovation. Students are encouraged

to be inquisitive and curricula include open ended assignments that examine multiple perspectives. Conversely, nations with high UAI are inclined to consider differences as dangerous: they tend to resist change and prefer to work on tasks with sure outcomes. Yamazaki's (2005) meta-analysis of four empirical studies (Boyatzis & Mainemelis, 2000; Yamazaki & Kayes, 2007; McMurray, 1998; Kolb & Fry, 1975) highlights how learning approaches change with cultural differences and proposes ways management development training needs to adapt.

Through the geographical cultural lenses, groups living in different regions across the Arab world are impacted by powerful forces of integration such as religion, linguistic, political, socio-economic, and ethnic affiliations. These forces enable the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to portray two distinct sets of visible cultural norms and practices. The MENA Asia or Levant (Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Syria) and MENA Gulf (United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen) differ in levels of democratisation, religious diversity, and natural resources. Countries in the Levant are labour abundant, resource-constrained, are more pronouncedly religiously diverse, and have more service-based economies. Gulf countries are labour-constrained, commodity rich countries with a homogenous population of Muslims (Ralston et al. 2009; 2012). We expect the dissimilarities between those two regions to affect management practices and the way their executives learn.

It is therefore vital for this study to investigate how national and regional cultural differences may be able to explain the variance in approaches to learning and leadership models. Culture is examined from both perspectives: national values as operationalised by Hofstede and regional differences based on geographical clustering. In addition, the educational background of executives will be examined to explore whether there will be differences in approaches to learning and leadership between those who have been exposed to an Arab curriculum versus those who have attended schooling built on Western curricula. Existing research that addresses the relationship between executives' education background and learning preferences is scarce.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The larger goal of this research is to propose a model for an effective leadership development programme for Arab professionals. In order to do this, this study first examines the most effective Arab leadership development practices as identified by business and international management experts. Then, this study explores the relationship between the culture and the learning preferences of Arab leaders. Culture is considered at two levels: national values as defined by Hofstede (2010) and geographical regions. Learning preferences include Arabs' views on various aspects of leadership development curricula, instructional methodologies, leadership competencies, motivation enablers, perceived barriers, instructors' qualities, and learning environment. This study addresses three research questions:



1. What are the most effective Arab leadership development practices as identified by experts?
2. How do cultural dimensions and geographical regional differences relate to the learning preferences of Arab leaders, particularly to their views about central aspects of leadership development programmes?
3. How do learner characteristics (i.e., gender, sector, age, and education background) relate to Arab preferences for leadership development?

## METHOD

### Participants: The experts

A panel of experts in executive education participated in three rounds of surveys to identify the most important elements of leadership development programmes. This process, also called the Delphi procedure (Linstone & Turoff, 1975), used a stratified random sampling to select the expert panel that represented a diverse, high-level perspective on Arab leadership development. The experts included CEOs, CAOs, research directors, university provosts, heads of NGOs, and government officials working across industries. The panel members averaged 20 years of experience in leadership development.

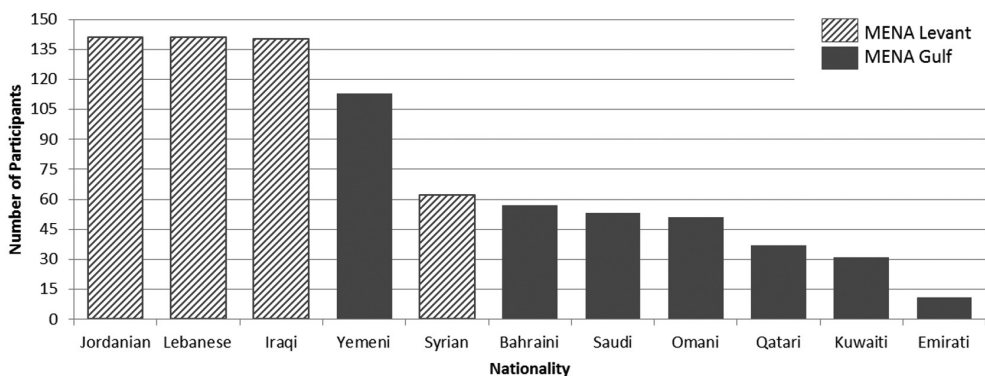
### The focus group

In order to shed further light on the results of the Delphi process, interviews were conducted with members of a focus group. The focus group consisted of eight Arab industry and academic leaders with extensive experience in executive education and seniority in their fields, and from across the MENA region and the public and private sectors.

### The executives

The third source of data was executives working in public and private sectors from the MENA Gulf and Levant regions. A total of 837 executives responded to the survey. Figure 1 shows which nations are represented and the number of participants from each nation.

Figure 1: Participants by Nationality



## **MATERIALS**

### **The Delphi procedure**

The purpose of the Delphi procedure was to determine the experts' views on four areas of leadership development programmes: methods of leadership development, content to be included in leadership development, motivational factors affecting participation, and barriers to participation. The Delphi method included a group of expert participants, a moderator, three rounds of survey questions, and anonymous and independent participation. The Delphi surveys resulted in generating 174 items capturing best-practices for classroom-based leadership development programmes. The Delphi process prioritised 50 items that formed the basis of the Large-Scale Survey (LSS).

### **Face-to-face interviews**

An interview guide was used to identify the questions and the general guidelines for what the researcher should discuss throughout the interview session. The interviewee was asked to: (a) review and elaborate on the highest and lowest rated items from the Delphi process, (b) identify gaps that were not raised in the Delphi process, and (c) discuss whether answers would change across nationalities, generations, and gender.

### **The Large-Scale Survey (LSS)**

The LSS was administered to Arab executives to learn about their views in response to the best practices identified by the Delphi experts and the focus group. Out of the 115 items used in the LSS, 74 items were grouped into seven scales to form constructs of the learning preferences related to various aspects of leadership development. Thirteen items were dedicated to demographic information and 28 items were from the Hofstede cultural module.

The dependent variable was characterised by six constructs: learning activities (LA), leadership competencies (LC), motivational enablers (ME), barriers to participation (BP), learning environment (LE), and instructor's characteristics (IC). Arab executives were asked to rate how important the items identified by the Delphi experts are to Arab executives. In summary, the Delphi Process indicated the *desirable* practices valued by the experts, whereas the LSS *desired* practices of the executives.

The LSS also included items for the homogeneity index (HO), an independent variable elaborated on in the discussion section. The LSS also gathered data on the executives' geographical area, nationality, and demographics (gender, educational background, sector, and age). Finally, the LSS contained items assessing two of Hofstede's cultural dimensions (PDI and UAI).

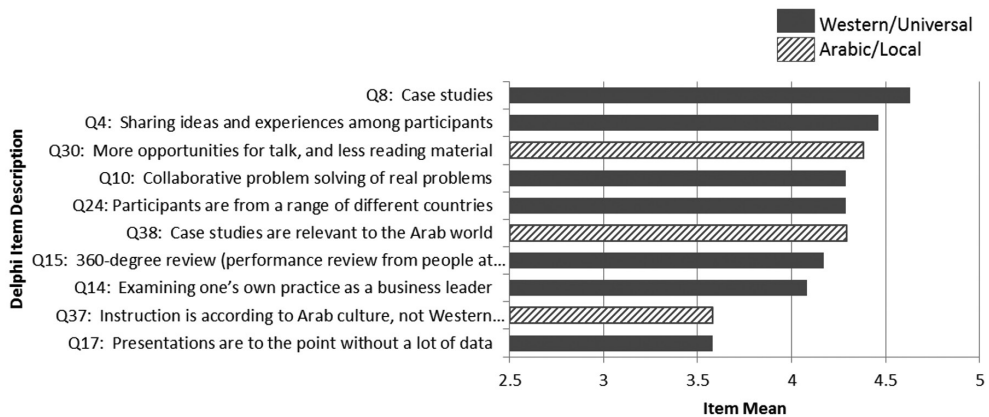
## RESULTS

### Research question 1: Effective Arab leadership development practices

The Delphi experts nominated 174 best practices to be adopted in leadership development programmes. These practices were qualitatively classified as universal/Western or local. Analysis revealed that 80% of the expert desirable features of a leadership programme mirrors Western practices and 20% represented Arabic (local) practices emphasised in the Quran, Arabic English language scholarship articles, and Arabic language publications focused on leadership in the Arab world.

Figure 2 illustrates the top ten most important items related to learning activities. Most items reinforce experiential learning strategies common in Western literature (e.g., ‘case studies’ and ‘collaborative problem solving of real problems’). However, there was also an emphasis on social interaction, and more opportunities to talk and less reading material. This emphasis on dialogue and interaction is emphasised in Western approaches. However, these activities also have a strong connection to Arab tradition. Oral debates and theory building are well-known practices called *munatharah* in the Arab world, where individuals orally tackle local problems by introducing their perspectives and commenting on the strengths and weaknesses of each solution as a collective unit (Ali, 1996). Finally, the list of the highest rated practices points to the importance of connecting to the Arabic context.

Figure 2: Delphi Experts’ Selected Item Means for Learning Activities



### Research question 2: Regional and nationality differences in learning preferences – The effects of regional differences

The HLM analysis, summarised in Table 1, indicates statistically significant differences between the Levant and Gulf regions. For example, executives in the Levant tend to rate learning activities 0.19 points higher than those in the Gulf ( $\gamma_{01} = 0.19$ ; p-value < 0.01),

when holding PDI and UAI scores constant. Also, executives in the Levant region agreed with the experts' panel ratings more consistently than their counterparts in the MENA Gulf region. In contrast, respondents from the Gulf countries placed higher emphasis on teacher-centred education. Typical of Arab schools, teachers are viewed as the sole source of expertise who transfer knowledge to learners who do not challenge their authority. Not surprisingly, GCC executives were more sceptical of Western models of leadership. They were significantly more inclined to identify loyalty, ethics, personal relationships, status, and hierarchy as qualities of good leadership.

### The effects of national cultural differences

HLM results for both PDI and UAI were statistically significant across five of the six dependent variables, as presented in Table 1. More specifically, as either the PDI or UAI score increases, the score on the learning activities decreases. For example, if a country's PDI score increases by one point, then the learning activities score decreases by about 0.004 points ( $\gamma_{02} = -0.004$ ;  $p$ -value  $< .05$ ) when holding region and UAI scores constant. Similarly, if a country's UAI score increases by one point, then the leadership competencies score decreases by about 0.01 points ( $\gamma_{03} = -0.01$ ;  $p$ -value  $< .05$ ) when holding region and PDI scores constant.

Table 1: HLM Results

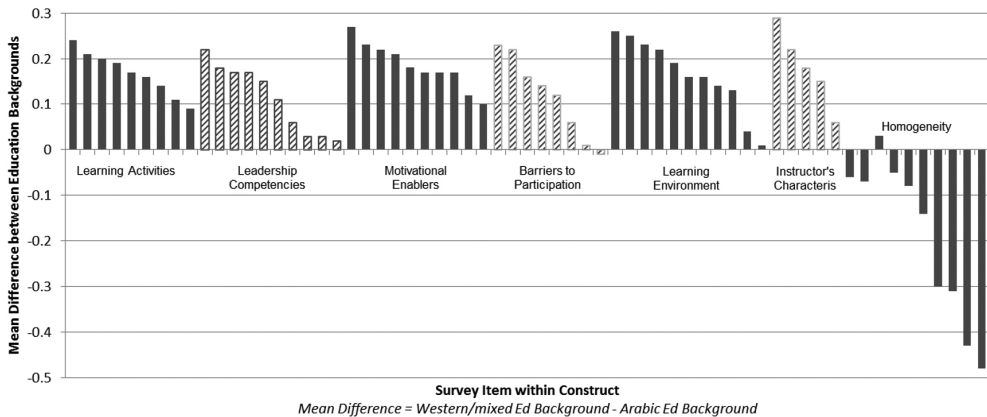
	Dependent Variable	Learning Activities	Leadership Competencies	Motivational Enablers	Barriers to Participation	Learning Environment	Instructor's Characteristics
REGION, $\gamma_{01}$	Coefficient	.19**	.23**	.16*	.15*	.15*	.198**
	Effect Size (Error)	0.294 (0.069)	0.376 (0.096)	0.223 (0.083)	0.228 (0.068)	0.238 (0.073)	0.297 (0.067)
PDI, $\gamma_{02}$	Coefficient	-.004*	-.006*	-.007**	-.004**	-0.003	-.004*
	Effect Size (Error)	0.22 (0.07)	0.29 (0.09)	0.31 (0.08)	0.21 (0.07)		0.197 (0.07)
UAI, $\gamma_{03}$	Coefficient	-0.008	-.01*	-.011*	-.015*	-.01*	-.01*
	Effect Size (Error)		0.23 (0.095)	0.22 (0.08)	0.32 (0.07)	0.22 (0.07)	0.21 (0.069)
Education Background, $\gamma_{30}$	Coefficient	.29**	.245**	.31**	.24**	.297**	.33**
	Effect Size (Error)	0.45 (0.087)	0.40 (0.089)	0.44 (0.089)	0.36 (0.083)	0.47 (0.081)	0.49 (0.082)
Sector, $\gamma_{50}$	Coefficient	.198**	.14**	.199**	0.08	.18**	.17**
	Effect Size (Error)	0.31 (0.087)	0.24 (0.089)	0.284 (0.089)		0.281 (0.08)	0.25 (0.082)
Homogeneity, $\gamma_{60}$	Coefficient	.41**	.37**	.41**	.51**	.53**	.54**
	Effect Size (Error)	0.82 (0.06)	0.79 (0.06)	0.77 (0.07)	1.02 (0.06)	1.095 (0.059)	1.05 (0.06)
* $p$ -value $< .05$							
** $p$ -value $< .01$							

In general, executives from countries with stronger beliefs in hierarchical and unequal power dynamics (high PDI) as well as executives from nations with low tolerance for uncertainties (high UAI) agreed less with the Delphi experts on the importance of several aspects related to leadership development. Higher values of PDI and UAI were related to an inclination towards didactic approaches of learning, autocratic models of leadership, lecture or theory based teaching, and traditional views for physical learning spaces and classroom tools.

### Research question 3: Demographic differences in learning preferences – Educational background

As shown in Table 1, all dependent variables have a statistically significant difference in the executives' educational background. For example, those with a Western/mixed high school education rated learning activities 0.29 points higher on average than those with a full Arabic education background ( $\gamma_{30} = 0.29$ ; p-value < 0.01), when holding other variables constant. While looking at the specific item mean differences within each construct, as shown in Figure 3, it can be seen that executives with Western/mixed high school education scored higher on all constructs except on the homogeneity (HO) construct (which has an overall construct mean difference of -0.2). This suggests that executives with Arabic educational backgrounds tended to agree more positively with experts when it comes to cultural congruence (e.g., items such as “instructor is Arab,” “participants are all Arabs,” and “materials provided in Arabic language”), and less positively with experts when it comes to the other learning and leadership preferences.

Figure 3: Item Mean Difference by Education Background (Items Grouped by Constructs)



### Sector

All constructs (except BP) have a statistically significant difference between both sectors (public and private). Executives working in the private sector tend to rate learning activities 0.198 points higher than those working in the public sector ( $\gamma_{50} = 0.198$ ; p-value < 0.01), when holding other variables constant. This difference between sectors shows that the executives working in the private sector generally have a higher agreement level with the best practices identified by the Delphi experts than executives who are working in the public sector or in NGOs.

## Homogeneity

The homogeneity index captures executives' preferences to work with colleagues who are similar to them: similar in terms of gender and tribal/nationality affiliation. Homogeneity, or cultural congruence, was statistically significant for all dependent variables. The HLM results in Table 1 show that when HO's score increases by one point, the learning activities score decreases by 0.41 points ( $\gamma_{60}=0.41$ ;  $p$ -value  $< .001$ ) when holding other variables constant, with the largest effect size of 0.93 compared to all the independent variables tested. Surprisingly, executives with higher HO also agreed with the Delphi experts more than executives with lower homogeneity. This may suggest that HO is not in conflict with modern learning practices and leadership models. Instead, it may be a reflection of the executives' attempt to protect the cultural identity of the Umma, while modernising their organisations to foster growth and openness in a rapidly globalised world (Cook, 1999).

## Age and gender

The participating executives were divided into three age groups: Millennials (34 and younger), Gen X (35 to 49), and Veterans/Baby Boomers (50 and older). HLM results were not statistically significant for age and gender. Additional testing was conducted using the Kruskal-Wallis H test<sup>1</sup>. The results suggest that both Millennials and Gen X executives place high emphasis on the use of learning resources in leadership programmes such as "materials accessible on the Web (virtual learning environment)". Veterans and Baby Boomers value leadership qualities such as "job-related competencies" more than the other two age groups. This indicates the tendency for the older generation to commend hard work and experience rather than just personality related leadership qualities (Rood, 2011; Kupperschmidt, 2000).

The results also suggest that compared to male executives, females place higher importance on several homogeneity items, as they are inclined to preserve cultural congruence in the classroom and believe that their leadership development faces higher cultural hurdles.

## DISCUSSION

Our study aims to identify best practices associated with classroom-based professional development programmes according to the beliefs of experts as well as to examine the relationship between national culture (both values and geographical regions) and learning preferences of Arab executives. Existing literature suggests that approaches to learning vary across cultures and highlight the mismatch between modern (i.e., imported global) pedagogical models and traditional orientations to learning typically found in the Arab classroom. Yet research in the Arab world on adult learning is at a very early stage. To

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1 The findings should only be suggestive or descriptive, as the Kruskal-Wallis H identifies the items where the groups are different, without controlling for nesting or other independent variables. Results should only be indicative of what may be important to attend to by leadership development designers.

date, the limited number of studies still struggle to examine Arab adult learning approaches and how they vary across nationalities, geographical regions, educational background (Western vs. Arabic high school), sector, gender, and age.

## CULTURE MATTERS

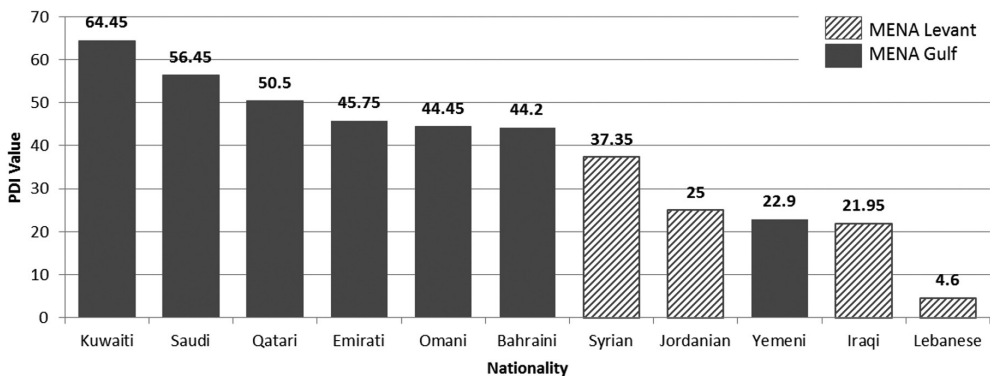
### Differences between Western and Arab models

Interestingly, 80% of the items mirror Western best practices, while only 20% is specific to the Arab context. The 80/20 ratio shows how both universal (e.g., ethical and relational leadership, entrepreneurial thinking, accountability) and local (high verbal interaction, fear of failure, reputational risks) factors can be integrated to design and deliver an effective professional leadership development programme in the Arab region. As such, this study elaborates on similarities and differences to the West and ways educators can ‘customise’ learning to address the local context.

### Differences within the Arab world

The findings show stark differences between Gulf and Levant executives’ approaches to learning and leadership. Arabs are not only different from their Western counterparts, but this study shows statistically significant differences between Arab regions. For example, Gulf countries exhibited a higher Power Distance Index (PDI) than Levant countries (refer to Figure 3). Typically, leaders from societies with a high PDI are highly respected due to their positional power and expect loyalty from their followers. In the workplace, leaders are viewed as a source of wisdom and make decisions on behalf of the team. Subordinates are encouraged to not contradict their managers and especially the elders. In the classroom, executives from countries with high PDI (e.g., Kuwait and KSA) tend to opt for teacher-centred education, where instructors take on the responsibility for the learning process and are expected to initiate communication in the classroom.

Figure 4: PDI Values of Arab Nations



### **Differences between educational backgrounds**

Educational systems in the Arab world have been influenced by both an Islamic worldview and colonial secular approaches to learning. As such, schools in the Arab region either deliver a curriculum aligned with Western practices (i.e., modern, emphasising experiential learning, self-directedness, and discovery) or dominated by a traditional approach to learning (i.e., didactic valuing authority, respect, and absolute truth). This study found that executives with Western or mixed educational backgrounds showed a higher inclination to adapt to modern leadership development approaches than those graduating from Arabic schooling. Executive education background has an average medium effect size of 0.43, which is one of the most significant predictors to effective leadership.

### **HOMOGENEOUS MINDS**

Culture was initially only operationalised using birth nationality and region; however, culture also manifested in the classroom as a set of unique preferences exhibited by the executives. Arab executives expressed cultural preferences that preserve their individual identity by showing a high inclination to collaborate with peers of the same gender and nationality, study content that is delivered in the Arabic language, learn from instructors of the same gender and nationality, analyse case studies that reflect the local context, and even appoint senior leaders who are considered relatives or who they have a personal connection to in their organisations. Such an affinity to choose aspects of the leadership development programme identical to the executives' own gender, nationality, and in-group membership, was captured in the Homogeneity (HO) construct. HO, which neither has an equivalent in Western scholarship nor has been empirically examined by Arab studies, represents cultural congruence between executives and their preferred learning and leadership approaches. It indicates a preference for using instructional approaches attuned to the Arabic culture, incorporating the Arabic language and culturally relevant content in instruction, promoting leaders based on family and personal connections, and encouraging the inclusion of participants and instructors with the same gender and nationality.

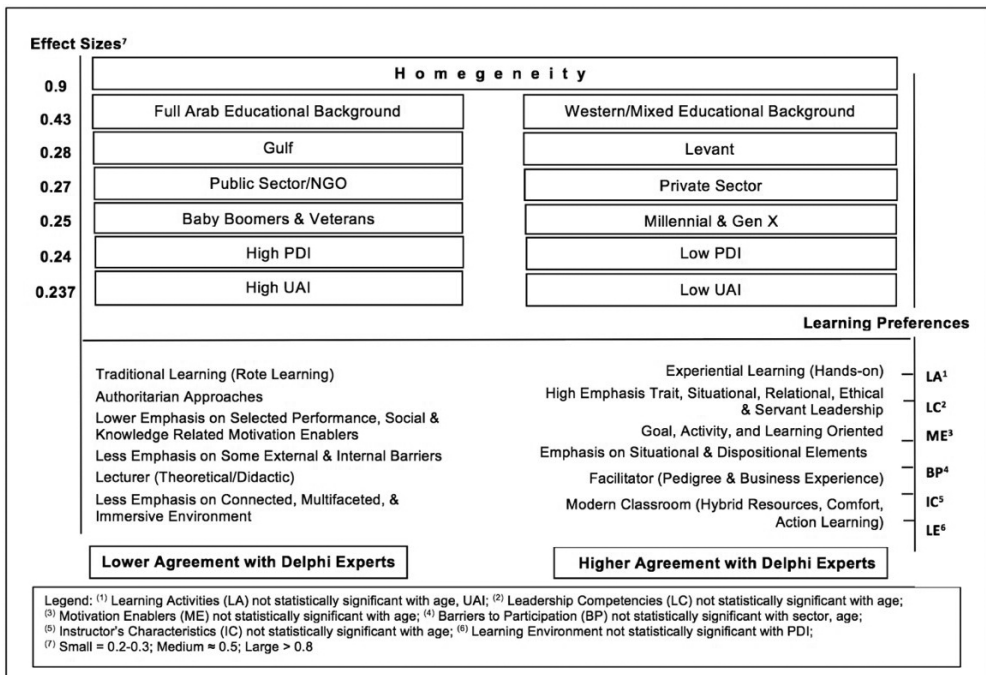
Interestingly, this study found that even though the majority of Gulf respondents agreed with modern practices, they also scored high on the homogeneity preference. On the one hand, many of the Gulf executives expressed their willingness to embrace modern practices, openness, and diverse points of view. On the other hand, their high score on the HO index or cultural congruence mirrored their tribal loyalty to identity and local roots. The tension between both modern and homogeneous preferences may need to be resolved should the Gulf executives aim to build a knowledge-based economy, which is underpinned by diversification, innovation, and change.

The conceptual model in Figure 5 below shows how region, national values, sector, educational background, and age relate to the executives' learning preferences, noting the average effect sizes and positioning the executives' responses within the continuum of high versus low agreement with the Delphi experts. Based on the model, addressing variability



between those executives who agree with the experts and those who agree less with the experts requires a shift in beliefs, cultural norms, and practices that underpin learning and leadership. We recommend that this gradual shift is institutionalised during the schooling of future cohorts of leaders as change is a strenuous process that takes time.

Figure 5: Conceptual Model Relating Executive Characteristics to Learning Preferences



## LIMITATIONS

The design of this study is exploratory in nature and is based on observational data. Furthermore, the research only aimed at examining the desired learning and leadership practices of executives and the perceptions of what the experts view as desirable. It does not examine the real behaviours of executives, which may be a more accurate measure of how they actually approach learning and apply leadership practices. Future research may investigate recommendations to test the effectiveness of the instructional methods and leadership models nominated by the Delphi experts.

A third limitation to this study is the lack of psychometric information for the homogeneity index and the limited validity and reliability of the learning preference constructs. The multi-dimensional nature of the learning preference items suggests that the scales, when constructed, did not take into consideration the complex relationships that exist between items. Moreover, the survey scores may be limited by the effect of social desirability.

Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholz (2002) contend that Americans tend to use more extreme values in their scoring, whereas Easterners are more inclined to use moderate points. Heine et al. (2002) argue that this inclination may be a result of culture, and that such bias may be reduced with certain types of items that measure concrete behaviours rather than ones that call for introspection. Another limitation is imposed by the HLM modelling procedure which assumes a linear relationship between variables. Lastly, caution should be taken when considering the PDI and UAI values of the UAE, as the sample size of the group was 11, which is smaller than the sample size recommended by Hofstede et al. (2008).

## CONCLUSION

This study identifies best practices for classroom-based leadership development programmes as per experts' views. It also informs theory that culture, regional differences, education background and norms can predict learning and leadership approaches of adult learners. Drawing on existing literature, 80% of the best practices recommended by the experts aligned with Western theories of learning and leadership and 20% were specific to Arabic scholarship. The majority of our executives were inclined to adopt modern best practices identified by the Delphi experts in spite of high levels of homogeneity. This suggests that Arab executives expressed preferences of openness to global standards as well as an affinity towards local practices. This resonates with Nisbett's (2003, p. 228) claims that individuals who are exposed to Westernisation and globalisation are inclined to become 'bicultural' in response to blended social systems, interests, and values. Adult learning that values cultural diversity and effectively integrates global standards is a main outcome of this study and a principle goal for the UN2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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*Emilio Lucio-Villegas*

## TOO MANY EVENINGS. LEARNING DEMOCRACY FROM A PARTICIPATORY BUDGET PROCESS

*The problem with democracy, Oscar Wilde once wrote, is that it takes too many evenings  
(Biesta, De Bie, & Wildemeersch, 2014, p. XIII).*

### ABSTRACT

*In this article, I reflect on experiences linking adult education to citizenship and participation. I consider citizenship to be connected to social justice and social inclusion. I suggest that a key element in citizenship is participating in public issues which concern life in communities in order to build an egalitarian relationship among people. In this article, I connect participation to a singular experience: the Participatory Budget Experiment in the city of Seville from 2003 to 2007. I explore specific experiences within adult education through participatory research and the elaboration of teaching materials addressed to this end. Finally, I reflect on the consequences of these experiences for an emancipatory adult education that aims to teach and learn democracy.*

**Keywords:** *adult education, citizenship, communities, democracy, participatory research*

### PREVEČ VEČEROV. UČENJE DEMOKRACIJE NA PODLAGI PARTICIPATIVNEGA PRORAČUNSKEGA POSTOPKA - POVZETEK

*V članku se ukvarjam z izkušnjami, ki povezujejo izobraževanje odraslih z državljanstvom in participacijo. Državljanstvo je zame povezano s socialno pravičnostjo in družbeno vključenostjo. Predlagam, da je ključni element državljanstva sodelovanje pri javnih vprašanjih, povezanih z življenjem v skupnostih, z namenom ustvarjanja egalitarnih odnosov med ljudmi. V članku obravnavam participacijo v povezavi s specifično izkušnjo: eksperimentom participatornega proračuna v mestu Sevilja med letoma 2003 in 2007. Prek participatorne raziskave in oblikovanih učnih gradiv raziskujem specifične izkušnje znotraj izobraževanja odraslih. Na koncu se ukvarjam s posledicami, ki jih te izkušnje imajo za emancipatorno izobraževanje odraslih, katerega cilj je poučevanje in učenje demokracije.*

**Ključne besede:** *izobraževanje odraslih, državljanstvo, skupnosti, demokracija, participatorna raziskava*

## INTRODUCTION

What is citizenship? Who is a citizen? When democracy and participation appear to be threatened, the answers to these questions seem crucial. However, not everyone believes that these concerns are necessary for a person's development. In fact, documents regarding Lifelong Learning enacted by the European Union in recent years have moved from a clear commitment to active citizenship to focus only on the labour market (Lucio-Villegas, 2014). In the article I try to describe a programme connecting adult education and citizenship in the framework of the participatory budget experiment (hereafter PBE) in the city of Seville. To this end, I have selected three initiatives that are representative of specific ways of treating the issues related to citizenship from a community-based view of adult education.

The structure of the paper is as follows: first, I provide a theoretical framework with a focus on communities, democracy, participation, and citizenship. The section devoted to methodology starts from the institutional assignment. Then I focus on participatory research as a general approach to build a democratic proposal that includes researchers from both academia and the community. Findings and conclusions aim to contribute to the debate about the relationships between citizenship and democracy, and adult education. Finally, it is important to note that the experiences described in this article were funded by the Municipality of Seville. This is important not only in terms of recognising the funding but also because the institutional assignment was based on the idea of enabling adults to participate.

## LIVING IN COMMUNITIES: DEMOCRACY, PARTICIPATION, AND CITIZENSHIP

According to Santos (1998), there are three common social contract oriented understandings of representative democracy: i) the social contract itself refers to individuals and their groups; ii) the concept of citizenship refers to a particular territory; the people living in this territory are citizens, whereas those outside of it (e.g., immigrants) are not citizens; and iii) the contract only holds for public issues; thus, the domestic realm is not part of the contract. Together, these three understandings constitute a specific worldview, one that is white, male, and involves people's control of nature.

Considering points ii) and iii), it is possible to think that there are people outside of this social contract. For instance, migrant people are 'in' and, at the same time, 'out' of the territory they live. On the other hand, there are spaces outside of this social contract, such as domestic spaces that hold relationships between men and women, parents and children, etc. It could be interesting here to note the difference that Torres (2005), following McPherson, established between formal democracy and substantive democracy. The former is characterised as political representation that includes voting, free elections, a parliament, and the supremacy of individual rights over collective ones. A substantive democracy involves a shift in people's relationships at both the micro and macro

levels. It also includes people's participation in politics and egalitarian rights for every citizen. This model of participatory democracy is one of the foundations of the project. This seems to be a guarantee that democracy is beyond political rights and includes relationships among individuals, and an attempt to make health, education, social services, culture, etc., accessible for all in order to build a distributive democracy (Santos, 2003).

## ON COMMUNITIES

I consider that privileged spaces where participatory democracy takes place are the communities people live in. In this sense, Wildemeersch and Vandenabeele (2007) describe community as a place in which conflict is the common issue. Pursuing this end, the authors follow Mouffe, who opposes 'politics' to 'the political'. The former refers to a consensual view of community that "is about creating consensus among different actors involved in the decision-making process, mainly by neglecting some of the basic conflicts" (Wildemeersch, 2014, p. 22). However, "the political", which is basically "dealing with conflicts", (ibid.) is associated with insecurity and risk. The world tends to be divided into 'them' and 'us' (Hoggart, 1965), whereby the 'us' creates a shelter against insecurities and 'the other' can be identified as the reason for these insecurities (Wildemeersch & Vandenabeele, 2007, pp. 27–28). The other is always an individual that comes from outside the community: the immigrant, the different, etc. To react against this current hegemonic view, it is important to stress that differences, uncertainty, diverse culture and understandings could be the basis through which it is possible to recover participation and create a new awareness about communities as heterogeneous spaces. In this sense, it is important to remember that "reduce inequality, policies should be universal in principle, paying attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized populations" (United Nations, n.d.) to build sustainable communities.

## ON PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Gaventa (2006) distinguishes four stages in the evolution of participation. First, in the 1960s, the notion that communities could organise themselves to fight for their demands; Gaventa connects this period with Paulo Freire's seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Second, the expansion of NGOs in the 1980s overlapped with the concomitant growth in programmes related to water, health, agriculture, and other areas of risk to well-being. This era can also be associated with a new term: *beneficiaries*. Consequently, only some of the participants, but not the community as a whole, are involved. Third, during the 1990s, the scope of participation was made even narrower with the introduction of another new term: *stakeholder*. According to Gaventa (2006), this ambiguous word represents the abandonment of community itself. Stakeholders are presented as "representatives of civil society's private sector, government, and donors, but not necessarily with any view as to whether they indeed represented the poor or excluded *within* these sectors" (Gaventa, 2006, p. 56, italic type in the original). Finally, by the late 1990s, there was a return to participation focused on exercising the rights of citizenship. In this

approach, citizenship was understood as a practice and an engagement rather than as something defined by law. As Wildemeersch (2014) states, citizenship is not simply about the exertion of rights but also about actively engaging in practices and decision-making processes.

Citizenship can also be considered a set of relationships between people (Heller, & Thomas Isaac, 2003). Ideally, this relationship would be constructed in an egalitarian manner. However, citizenship is subverted by social differences (e.g., class, gender, ethnicity, etc.). In any sense, citizenship is an exclusive concept that introduces differences among people: landlords and slaves; men, women and children; native and foreigner, and others. One is a citizen thanks to other people that are not. Both participation and citizenship must help to build a redistributive democracy to avoid the exclusion of people, as Santos (2003) states. This concept of redistributive democracy is very present in the process of participatory budgeting.

Participation, thus, becomes a strategic element for accomplishing citizenship, but participation can also be hijacked: “Who speaks on behalf of whom? Who sets the framework for participation? Who creates boundaries and dismantles them?” asked Mohanty and Tandon (2006, p. 15). Managing these questions and answers is not only important for the acquisition of citizenship but also for the maintenance of citizenship.

## **THE PARTICIPATORY BUDGET**

I refer to the participatory budget as a means of organising democracy in a specific way: as deliberative and participatory democracy. The background of the participatory budget offers material for a diverse analysis based on politics, participation, and descriptions of both methodologies and experiences (e.g., Avritzer, 2003; Lucio-Villegas, 2015; Santos, 2003).

The most well-known and important participatory budget process was in Porto Alegre, Brazil (Melgar, 2014). Following this was a vast catalogue of experiences ranging from decision-making at different levels to consultation processes. Therefore, it is important to remember that a participatory budget involves decision-making by citizens. Santos (2003) stressed that one of the main elements that characterised the Participatory Budget in Porto Alegre was the power to decide.

The main aim of the participatory budget is to encourage actions and establish a sustainable mechanism of shared management about public resources through collective decisions regarding the distribution of the budget (Santos, 2003, p. 389).

With regard to educational outcomes, one interesting work is the analysis performed by Lerner and Schugurensky (2007) on the participatory budget in Rosario, Argentina. According to the authors, it is possible to differentiate four assets that led to learning



and changes in people's participation (pp. 92–95): first, increased knowledge relates to a greater awareness of one's rights as citizens; second, changes in skills address ways to "monitor governments' actions, contact government agencies and officials" (p. 93); third, changes in attitudes translate to increased self-confidence; and lastly, changes in practices lead people to become more committed to community life.

Lerner and Schugurensky (2007) also present several "Indicators of Learning and Change" (pp. 91–92) and divide them into four areas: knowledge (e.g., about city government), skills (e.g., speaking in public with clarity), attitudes (e.g., self-confidence), and practice (e.g., interest in community participation). They also stress the following:

The capacity to listen, a precondition for deliberative democracy, is usually taken for granted. However, participants do not always have the necessary listening skills for a fruitful dialogue, and many develop these competences through the process (p. 94).

Lerner and Schugurensky (2007) attempted to delimit the changes derived from the process of participation:

In general, the initial inequalities between demographic groups disappeared through involvement in the participatory budget. Because people with low initial indicator levels learned and changed more, they tended to end up with the same extent of citizenship knowledge, skills, values, and behaviours as those with high initial levels (p. 97).

In our case, disparities in the quality of and the access to participation were very present and depend on the institutional assignment, as will be explained later on in the section devoted to methodology.

### **The Participatory Budget Experiment in the city of Seville**

When Seville, following the model of Porto Alegre (Brazil), launched the PBE, its main aim was to generate an open citizen space to debate and make decisions. If I refer to the process as an experiment this is because in the agreement between the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) and the United Left (*Izquierda Unida*, IU) they concurred to develop a process of participatory budgeting in an experimental way that would have to be evaluated at the end of the municipal term of office.

The basic structure for participation adopted was the *District Assembly*. This is a binding process in which the decisions that were made were incorporated into the Municipality's budget with corresponding citizen, technical, and political co-responsibility. The participatory budgeting system followed a timeline that began approximately eight months before the approval of the municipal budget (around the month of December), when neighbourhood assemblies were convened in which technicians from the Municipality reported on available resources in the areas that had been identified for the implementation of this

system. It is important to clarify that there were some issues for which it was not possible to make decisions, such as the salaries of civil servants and other workers of the Municipality, or taxes.

To make the process flexible, the city was divided into 21 zones according to the existing districts, and community centres were converted into spaces of participation and encounter. In each of these districts, so-called *neighbourhood motor groups* improved the dynamics of the community to maintain citizenship information and helped with the organisation and channelling of neighbourhood proposals to the assemblies. Among these proceedings, the call for and development of the *district assemblies* was the most important action, as it involved the distinctive structure of the participatory budget and was involved in the overall fundamental aspects of the process, including configuring the basis for direct participation.

## **METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

In this section I shall present the institutional assignment. It is very important in terms of clarifying to the reader the reason for selecting some initiatives and not others to explain the case. After this I will discuss participatory research, and finally I will present an explanation of the sources of the data presented.

### **Institutional assignment**

In the PBE in Seville, one of the main problems that people faced was difficulties in understanding how to participate in direct democracy. According to some unpublished data from the Municipality, half of the population of the city was functionally illiterate. Functional illiteracy refers here to people with difficulties in using basic literacy tools to communicate and understand the surrounding world. In this specific case this refers to individuals with problems in understanding the rules about participation in the assemblies, and people who would have problems filling out the form for presenting proposals, etc. Thus, people – as individuals or as a group – had to submit written proposals in a specific form. The proposal had to be summarised in around 100 words along with other information about the proponent, the relevance of the proposal, etc. Then, the proposal had to be discussed in an assembly, which meant that the proponent had to give an oral performance of 5 to 10 minutes. After the proposal was approved, it went to municipal technicians and the proponent had to discuss with them the implementation of it. Finally, there were assemblies to evaluate procedures and the measures to be taken.

Moreover, people had to know how to navigate through this process in an autonomous way: how to fill out the form; how to organise an oral presentation and focus on the most important things that they wanted to communicate; how to manage the project in both economic and administrative terms; etc. Thus, there was a danger that they would be excluded from the decision-making processes. The Municipality decided to confront this problem with an adult education program that was developed from November 2005 to

December 2007 to improve the quality of participation by improving education for participation. An important part of this institutional assignment was the elaboration of a set of teaching materials that I shall briefly describe below.

The main goal was the facilitation and promotion of citizen participation through the analysis and knowledge of people's daily realities. The material was divided into three sections: *Me and my environment*, concerning the analysis of the surrounding reality; *Something more than a word*, to reflect on participation and democracy; and *The participatory budget*, to focus on how to develop and present proposals to the assemblies. The teaching material was also divided into 10 activities. Each activity included the number and title, the main goal, the specific objectives, the development, the material resources needed, the multidisciplinary tools necessary to facilitate the understanding of the activity, annexes and work sheets for the students. Furthermore, the material included an evaluation for teachers and adult learners. All the teaching material is available online<sup>1</sup>.

Another set of tasks to generate a response to the institutional assignment was to mobilize help and support to organize activities in certain communities: a group of tenants that had occupied a block of social housing, a group of women organizing a theatre workshop, another group of women demanding an elevator for their adult education school, or people researching their own stories within the framework of the history of the country, and a set of courses addressed to people in social movements, amongst others.

I have selected three experiences to look at in greater detail further below. The first one is related to gentrification processes in a historic district of the city. This group consisted of 25 people, mainly women, with the age range of 55 to 80. In the second group, which was related to the recovery of the collective memory of people attending an adult education school, the research team was led by adult learners who gathered knowledge about their own experience. This group was made up of a coordinator (a teacher) and 8 adult learners, five female and three male adult learners. Finally, the third initiative described below, the Participatory and Citizenship School, addressed the lack of democracy and participation inside social movements.

### **Participatory research as methodology**

Participatory Research (hereafter PR) can be considered an adequate methodology for undertaking these initiatives. First, PR is a methodology that deepens democracy and the construction of knowledge. Second, it stems from problems and concerns which people face in their daily life and enables them to develop their experiences and ways to change their reality.

Regardless of the starting conditions, nevertheless, a sense of participation needs to be regained. It is impossible to develop a practice of PR without participation. At a conference in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, in 1997, Fals advocated the use of PR as opposed

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<sup>1</sup> See: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284730159\\_Educando\\_para\\_la\\_ciudadania\\_desde\\_por\\_y\\_para\\_la\\_participacion](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284730159_Educando_para_la_ciudadania_desde_por_y_para_la_participacion).

to Action-Research (or Participatory Action Research), emphasising participation as the essence of this methodology (Fals, 1998). According to Hall (2001), PR can be used as “a descriptive term for a collection of varied approaches which share a participatory *ethos*” (p. 173, italic type in the original). Fals (2001) used the Spanish term *vivencia* to refer to “a complex of attitudes and values that would give meaning to our praxis in the field” (p. 31). He added:

With the careful human touch of *vivencia* and its needs for symmetry in social relations, it becomes easy to listen to discourses coming from diverse intellectual origins or conceived with a different syntax (p. 31, italic type in the original).

In short, as defined by Fals, *vivencia* calls upon us to develop dialogue as a necessary tool for building knowledge that will transform reality in an educational way.

### **Sources of data**

Evidence presented in the findings derives from diverse research tools and sources. The main source of data was the field notes of the researchers working with the different groups of people (cited in the article as *fn1*, *fn2* and *fn3*). There are writing materials produced by the participants in order to describe and reflect on their situation which were published by the project (García & Lucio-Villegas, 2009). These short texts are a very powerful source of information because they are the voices of people that were not replaced by researchers. In two different adult education schools the teaching material was tested. Finally, the Participatory and Citizenship School was evaluated by the participants through a limited survey. The results of the questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics (cited in the text as *QR*). Ultimately, another source of data and information are the annual reports presented to the Municipality that summarised the development of the project. They are cited in the text as *CHR 2006* and *CHR 2007*.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE CASES**

To describe the relationships between adult education and citizenship in the framework of the specific case of the participatory budget experiment in the city of Seville, I will briefly describe each of them in turn.

### **Tenants against gentrification**

At least since 1992, historical neighbourhoods in Seville have suffered from a process of gentrification. In this specific case, the process occurred in a neighbourhood called *SB* with a strategic location for the expansion of the city to the east. As is typical of some old buildings, the owner neglected the building’s care and maintenance and sought the Municipality’s condemnation of the ruined edifice and the consequent eviction of the tenants. This situation caused damage to the building and worsened the quality of life for

the people living there. Some of these buildings were of a traditional type of construction called *Patio de Vecinos* that derived from the subdivision of

a house into many rooms and each room was rented independently [...]. The occupants, therefore, had only one room for all of the family and a shared kitchen, toilet, courtyard and access to water (Lucio-Villegas, García, & Cowe, 2016, p. 88).

After 15 years of protests and efforts to claim their right to their homes, some neighbours in SB decided to move into and occupy an empty block of social housing which was the property of the Municipality. In this case, work with these people was focused on daily tasks, such as understanding documents from the Municipality, writing their own documents, strengthening social networks, recovering the history of their neighbourhood, and discovering the existence of an identity between space and people. This was an emancipatory process to guarantee that their voice was heard. In reflecting about their situation, they wrote,

How is it possible that people who never neglected their obligations as tenants have to demand that public authorities require the owners to fulfil their duties? We question this abandonment by the Municipality and maintain the existence of a real and effective right to have a house (García & Lucio-Villegas, 2009, p. 33).

### **Recovering Memories (Historic Memory Workshop – HMW)**

This initiative is related to the collection of both individual and social stories related to the Civil War and the Dictatorship (1936–1975). It was an attempt to help people to recover their own memories and to connect them with history. These memories focused on the period corresponding to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic, the Spanish Civil War, the post-war years, and the Dictatorship. It is important to highlight that some of the members of the workshop also participated as informants, which further enriched the experience.

Thirty life histories were recorded, and more than 20 were written, initiating the analysis, systematisation and elaboration of this material. Three centres of interest were defined for this historical period during the process of analysis: repression, work and education. However, the participants wrote:

Our project doesn't end here; this is only the beginning. We want to keep working with the remaining interviews to help hear the voices of the people that in the past and still now are silenced (García & Lucio-Villegas, 2009, p. 28).

Currently, a second book of new memories and people's histories has been published (*Taller para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica*, 2016) with a focus on the time of the restoration of democracy, trade unions and political parties in the country.

### **The Participatory and Citizenship School (PCS)**

The PCS during the time of the PBE was planned and organised through 14 courses that amounted to 24 hours each (the original idea was for a 40-hour course) for two weeks from Monday to Thursday, usually in the evening. The courses focused on participation, conflicts, mediation skills, community analysis, and the development of a community project. Every course was divided into four components: (1) how to define community problems; (2) a reflection on democracy and citizenship at both a macro (community) and micro (association) level; (3) how to design and develop a project; and (4) how to look for and manage resources. Courses took place in community centres located in different districts around the city. The average number of people who attended the courses was 12, usually women with an average age of 50 who were participating in an association or attending a post-literacy level course in adult education schools. An initial prerequisite was that the participants had no previous roles in leading association groups. Another important aspect of each course was that people coming from participating associations were heterogeneous. For instance, one course included: a flamenco association, a fishing club, an immigrant workers' association, a neighbours' association, the market owners' association, a motorcycle club, an association of mothers and fathers at the primary school, and a cyclists' group.

### **FINDINGS**

I present the findings, focusing on two aspects. On the one hand, I will try to describe the basic literacy tools needed for participation. On the other, I will focus on participatory research – and *vivencia* as a part of it – as a methodology valuable for implementing citizenship.

#### **Basic literacy tools needed to participate**

Basic literacy tools seem to be essential for building and strengthening democracy and citizenship (Santos, 2003). One of the responses that the research team tried to provide was the development of teaching material which connected learning to participation and democracy in the context of adult education. This teaching material starts from a number of generative words (Freire, 1965) and was an attempt to organise learning processes. For instance, one of the activities suggested was the creation of a household budget that people could implement in their homes in order to demonstrate that a budget is basically a process that examines revenues and prioritises expenses.

An important point of these literacy tools is connected to the development of oral skills. As Lerner and Schugurensky (2007) stated, it appears important to develop public speaking and the capacity for listening. The teaching material includes activities about how to build one's own history, how to organise it, and how to present it to a group in a public assembly. The main idea is that individuals can develop performative skills to present and debate their own ideas in the public arena.

In my view, a process of participatory democracy involves three different moments: dialogue and public debate, decision-making, and actions. In the case of the PBE, these three

moments are organised around social movements. In this scenario, it is important to realise that social movements are – in the tradition of the country – traditionally connected to political parties that in many cases have co-opted some individuals and have, to some extent, left social movements without leaders. Nevertheless, as Tsuchiya (2007) states, it is important to “constantly scrutinise their practice [i.e. that of the social movements] in a democratic light” (p. 82). We cannot take for granted that social movements function democratically by themselves. In fact, in the PCS, only the course addressed to the Roma women’s association guaranteed that the participants were individuals who were not involved in any position of that association (CMR, 2007).

The evaluation of the courses seems to show that the pace of the people differs from that of the educators. People expressed that they felt stressed because the time devoted to some sections of the course did not allow sufficient time to reach a deeper understanding of other elements. When the courses were evaluated, some problems were highlighted: the use of communicative tools, of mediation skills, and acquiring knowledge about how to manage a project and the use of a dialogical methodology (QR). Another issue is related to the opportunity to establish relationships with other associations and individuals in the neighbourhood. This is in line with Lerner and Schugrensky’s (2007) research that stressed the importance of people knowing others from different groups or neighbourhoods. In our case, the diversity of people – as mentioned above – attending courses could ensure the creation of new bonds among individuals.

Finally, this knowledge allows individuals to become more committed to community life. In this direction, one of the findings of the PCS was that people found that courses were very useful for gaining a better knowledge of their own community (QR). After the relative failure of the PCS, two issues arose. The first is the importance of initiatives that come from the ground and from common people in their own communities. The second is the importance of the collective. Participatory research and *vivencia* can provide a response to these matters.

### **Participatory research and *vivencia***

An important feature of two of the subcases described – the tenants’ organisation and the research into memory and life histories – is the self-organised process that emerges from the people rather than from the educators or the city authorities. The tenants in SB, for example, decided to band together as a collective to claim their rights. The response from the municipal authorities was the threat of eviction from the building and an individual approach by the municipal social services. Thus, the objective of the Municipality was to individualise the struggle. The tenants decided to join together to resist the eviction and the individualisation of the problem (fn1). They decided to conjugate the “dangerous pronoun” (Sennett, 2000, p. 143) and learn how to become ‘we’ rather than ‘I’.

In the HMW project, people were able to recover their own history and to recover their memories. This ability came from their desire and their curiosity to learn about the history

of the country and their own role in this history. The 'success' of this experience has its foundations in people's interest and attempts to fulfil their desire to know about their own life by explaining the present from the past – a silenced past about which people told tales and stories.

Participatory research seems to be an appropriate methodology for undertaking these types of processes which look for emancipation (Inglis, 1997). In each of the experiences described, the starting point was real situations that people face in their community. As one of the participants in the PCS affirmed in a meeting with educators: "Who else can better analyse reality than those who live daily within it?" (fn2). The concept of *vivencia* discussed by Fals (2001) is clearly present in this statement. In the case of the HMW project, participatory research is also enriched by another element: the return of the research to the community, either by publications or public sessions, to explain the research process and the findings in a democratic research practice (fn3).

Educators involved in the project tried to encourage people to participate in every moment of the process, but also by joining people in their own process of participation. This is very clear in the case of the Historic Memory Workshop. The major task here was to give support to a process organised by the adult learners themselves (fn2). In this case, *vivencia* can be considered a process of creating bonds and respect, and supporting the process of reflection, action and creation of knowledge undertaken by people. On the other hand, educators helped people by creating knowledge to become more conscious of their rights. For instance, the tenants in SB think as a result about their duties, but also about the duties of the owners of the building and about the duties of a democratic government (fn1).

## CONCLUSIONS

I have noted in this article that people initially had difficulties in understanding the rules of participation. Education is not only a significant means of overcoming these difficulties but also of educating individuals about the processes related to the exercising of their rights. The experiences described were an attempt to both encourage and support individuals and groups traditionally excluded from public matters. People can present and debate their ideas and proposals as they did in the participatory budget assemblies and in other places, assuming that democracy involves claiming their rights (Wildemeersch, 2014).

Moving from common sense to good sense, in Gramscian terms, means, among other things, that people grasp and use research tools (see, for instance, Manacorda, 1976, pp. 238–244) which enable individuals to go from folklore to knowledge. What is this knowledge created by people? One manifestation of this knowledge is to monitor government. In the case of the PBE in Seville, every neighbourhood held an annual assembly to evaluate the implementation of the proposals approved in the previous assembly. In this way, they could ensure that the Municipality implemented the proposals approved in the assembly.

If a political project is also an educational one, as Gramsci affirmed (Mayo, 2007), two more issues have to be presented. On the one hand, the way to organise these proposals



can only be related to a form of direct participation that guarantees the presence of people in every moment of the process. This is only possible by developing a substantive participatory democracy where the voice of the people is not mediated, and it is expressed directly to others, creating an open space for debate. Formal democracy, in the form of representation by voting for a few representatives every four years, doesn't guarantee the creation of this deliberative and participatory space.

On the other hand, a short response can be provided to the question: why is adult education a suitable tool for tackling these matters? Adult education is about more than preparing for the labour market. Adult education means, among other things, that people can analyse and change their surrounding reality. In Freire's words, individuals become conscious of their situation by taking part in social practices, invariably with other people (Freire, 1970). At a time when populist and neo-fascist leaders are arising thanks to simple speeches and manipulative messages, it seems important to encourage people to strengthen autonomous thinking in order to confront these speeches and deepen democracy.

At the end of the day, if participation, as Dewey ([1916] 1995) affirmed, can only be taught when people are participating, it is also true that being educated to participate emancipates people from the limitations that illiteracy and an incomplete education present in creating a true democracy.

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## PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF PROFOUND LEARNING

### ABSTRACT

*Teachers play a fundamental role in the democratic process by forming an educated populace. Of our many different expectations of teachers, teacher-as-lifelong-learner is among the most neglected. Our basic research questions are: what are teachers' perceptions of profound learners and profound learning experiences. Through an in-depth focus group with public school teachers, the purpose of this study was to build our understanding of teachers-as-learners by exploring these two questions. Based on this research, the qualities of a profound learning experience include: growing, emotive, disruptive, real, irreversible, either positive or negative, social, opening, and surprising. Profound learners, according to themes which emerged: have depth of thought, are emotionally wise, take life seriously, are adventurous in thought and deed, are unbounded, and are humble. Through a constructivist lens, these qualities direct us to the following findings: profound learning is non-dualistic and holistic, is a cumulative process, and is integral to the complex role of structural identity.*

**Keywords:** *profound learning, profound learner, qualitative research, profundity, teachers as lifelong learners*

### IZKUŠNJE UČITELJEV V JAVNEM ŠOLSTVU S PRODORNIM UČENJEM - POVZETEK

*Učitelji so bistvenega pomena za demokratični proces, saj oblikujejo izobraženo prebivalstvo. Od številnih pričakovanj, ki jih imamo do učiteljev, je učitelj-kot-vseživljenjski-učenec med najbolj zapostavljenimi. Osrednji raziskovalni vprašanji tega prispevka sta, kako učitelji dojemajo učence in kako izkušnjo prodornega<sup>1</sup> učenja. Namen študije je bil bolje razumeti učitelje-kot-učence, in sicer na podlagi podat-*

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1 Translator's note: The most suitable translation of the word 'profound' in this context, 'globoko učenje', is already well-established in Slovene terminology as 'deep learning'. I have used 'prodorno' to encapsulate both the depth and intensity of the term 'profound'. Prevaljalčeva opomba: Najprimernejši prevod besede »profound« v tem kontekstu, »globoko učenje«, je v slovenski terminologiji že dobro uveljavljen kot prevod za »deep learning«. Uporabil sem izraz »prodorno«, ker zajema oboje, tako globino kot intenzivnost, zajeti v izrazu »profound«.

*kov ciljne skupine učiteljev v javnem šolstvu in osredotočenosti na zgornji dve vprašanji. Raziskava je pokazala, da izkušnje prodornega učenja zaznamujejo naslednje značilnosti: rastoče, čustveno, pretresljivo, pristno, nespremenljivo, ali pozitivno ali negativno, družabno, odpirajoče in presenetljivo. Znotraj procesa prodornega učenja in glede na teme, ki se pojavijo, učenci kažejo globino misli in čustveno inteligenco, življenje jemljejo resno, so pustolovski v mislih in dejanjih, so neomejeni in skromni. S konstruktivističnega vidika nas te lastnosti usmerjajo k naslednjim ugotovitvam: prodorno učenje je nedualistično in holistično, je kumulativen proces in je osrednjega pomena z vidika kompleksne vloge strukturalne identitete.*

**Ključne besede:** *prodorno učenje, prodoren učenec, kvalitativna raziskava, globokost, učitelji kot vseživljenjski učenci*

This study explores the qualities of the profound learner and profound learning experiences from the perspectives of teachers. It is timely given the current environment in the United States concerning education, science, intellectualism, and its rival, anti-intellectualism (Hofstadter, 1963), as well as the global movement toward ‘the shallows’ (Carr, 2011). The shallows of the internet are “chipping away” (ibid., p. 5) at cognitive skills and changing the way people think.

These forces, which move society toward the superficial and away from deeper knowledge and thoughtful discourse, are reflected in education. Teachers in the United States face de-skilled, standardised environments, are constrained by governing boards with little understanding of education, and are required to justify value through testing. More globally, students are pushed to often sub-standard online course environments, to instant facts, and to social media. The global and interconnected world requires ever more complex thinking and decision making while their training and potential for leadership are flattened by these forces (Newport, 2016). Our research explores alternative visions for lifelong learning through the eyes of teachers.

Our findings suggest that the profound learner eschews intellectualism and anti-intellectualism in exchange for a more humble and open-minded approach to learning. This profound learning recognises that no one person or group can know everything. Also, our findings suggest that cultivated profound learning continues over a lifetime. As learners construct their knowledge through deep interaction between knowing subject and known object, it becomes clear that profound learning is non-dualistic and holistic, is a cumulative process, and is integral to the complex role of structural identity.

## PROFOUND LEARNING

Kroth (2016) originally introduced the idea of the profound learner. He defined a *profound learner* as “someone who pursues deeper knowledge regularly over time” (ibid., p. 29). This, he said, was to distinguish longitudinal, persistent deepening over a lifetime from episodic learning *experiences*. This has been further conceptually and empirically

developed to include the relationship of profound learning to spiritual disciplines, preparing profound learners (Kroth & Carr-Chellman, 2018), qualities of profound learners and learning as identified by adult learning experts (*ibid.*), and the use of metaphor to conceptualise profundity (Carr-Chellman & Kroth, 2019).

Kroth and Carr-Chellman (2018) conceptualise profound learning as occurring over a lifetime, including both profound experiences and ongoing exploration that seeks insight, depth, and breadth; this can include practices or disciplines executed over time. Both the shifts and resultant deep change are indicative of transformative learning (TL); profound learning as conceptualised is not dependent upon a 'disorienting dilemma' but is more characteristically an ongoing exploration into unknown territory and the elaboration and adaptation of existing knowledge. Profound learning is primarily proactive and agentic while TL is reactive and dependent on a change in perspective.

Although TL is generally acknowledged to be the leading contemporary adult learning theory, significant theoretical progress may be slowing or even stagnant (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). As Cranton and Taylor (2012) observe, without continuing theoretical examination, "TL becomes a theory that may begin to lose its relevancy for the study of adult learning" (pp. 12–13). Developing profound learning theoretically and empirically may inform and breathe new life into TL theory, which will likely be found via further conceptual and empirical work to have some similar characteristics to profound learning.

Other theoretical constructs, such as intellectual humility, deep and surface learning, and *Bildung* have similar qualities to the emerging profound learning concept. These are being treated in detail elsewhere, but in summary, *intellectual humility* is a character trait "related to open-mindedness, a sense of one's own fallibility, and a healthy recognition of one's intellectual debts to others" ("Templeton Foundation"). The *deep-surface approach to learning* contrasts a surface approach to learning, which is characterised by the desire to meet course requirements with minimum efforts, with a deep approach, which is characterised by meaningful learning, application, appropriate methods, built upon a solid foundation of earlier knowledge (Biggs & Tang, 2011). *Bildung* is "a philosophical concept that refers to processes of cultivation of human capacities as well as to the end state of this process, the state of being educated, cultivated, or erudite" (Fuhr, 2017, p. 3).

There have been limited treatments of profundity in disparate fields over the years but no research agenda seems to exist. The qualities of a profound learner are unexplored. Little empirical research on profundity in general has been conducted and there is no evidence of ongoing comprehensive theory-building. The purpose of this section is to discuss existing literature related to profound learning.

### **Profundity in the humanities**

Exploration of profundity in music is not grounded in empirical research as much as in anecdotal experience and reflection, but it is rich. Reimer's (1995) insightful article examines the experience of profundity in music. "It is," he says, "quite simply being

moved deeply in response to music” (ibid., p. 11). The complex term ‘deeply’, he says, is informed by beliefs that “human meanings exist not on a single plane but on a spectrum, ranging from the trivial to the quintessential” (ibid., p. 12). Profound experience in music is not limited to the listener, however. The composer and performer might also have deep, personal experiences while playing. Profound experiences can be solitary or with others, and they involve the listener, the context of the experience, and the musical experience. They must interrelate, he says, “if a deep musical experience is to occur” (ibid., p. 16). Levinson says that the listener’s experience is part of what makes music profound. The music may show or reveal something about how life is or might be. The music might strongly move the listener. He concludes by saying that some music gives the gift of vision, and “impression of knowledge—of having *seen*” (ibid., p. 60).

Music is not the only arena in the liberal arts where profundity has been considered. Andresen (1965), for example, developed a Profundity Scale to evaluate the profundity of literature. Profundity, he said, is “the degree towards universality at which the resolution of problems by characters in fiction reflects and interprets the struggle of all mankind” (ibid., p. 387). Literature can be viewed from ‘planes’ starting with the least profound, the Physical Plane, progressing through the Mental Plane, the Moral Plane, and the Psychological Plane, to the most profound level, the Philosophical Plane.

Moving from social science to religious studies, the mystical traditions offer rich resources for interpreting profound experiences. Mysticism, common to faith traditions such as Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, is considered to be experiencing the absolute, the divine, or God. The relationship of mysticism, religion, and spirituality to profundity is a narrower topic than this discussion and requires a more comprehensive treatment than we can undertake here, but it is worth noting. Stange and Taylor (2008) found that an artistically engaged person is more likely to label a profound emotional experience as an aesthetic experience and that there is a relationship between a person’s belief that a profound emotional experience is a religious-mystical experience and their religiosity. They found that profound religious-mystical and aesthetic experiences are “similar, if not identical, to experiences of a deeper level of consciousness, a deeper understanding an experience of the world, that we are inclined to label according to our worldview” (ibid., p. 43).

Perry’s (2002) “look at stories of pivotal, memorable, museum learning experiences in museum professional’s lives” (p. 21) found four types of learning: 1) sparking an interest, 2) delayed learning, 3) visceral learning, and 4) wrap-around learning which, she says, is “learning you feel with your whole body and via all your senses; learning that you can wrap your arms around” (ibid., p. 24). This suggests that profound learning experiences may involve the body as well as cognition and emotions in tandem or singularly, have lasting effects, and can be induced by surprise or novel situations.

### **Profundity in the natural world**

Moving away from the humanities, the natural world has also been a site for discussion of profundity. Smith, Ham and Weiler (2011) looked at the effect of profound wildlife

experiences. The authors say that no accepted definition of profound experience exists but that related constructs such as mystical, peak, numinous, extraordinary experience, flow, and ecstasy have been described by various authors. The causes of profound experiences, they say, have common agreement. Factors include a range of triggers including religious experience, sexual activity, and experiences in nature. Profound experiences can have psychological and behavioural impacts on individuals. Smith et al. (2011) found three types of attitudinal impacts from interviewing 13 people who had profound experiences with wildlife: 1) reversing existing attitudes, 2) reinforcing existing attitudes, and 3) creating new attitudes. The range of behavioural outcomes also ranged from no impact to significant impact. Most interviewees had not experienced significant life changes and had minimally or not changed their behaviour as a result of their wildlife experience.

### **Workplace profundity**

Deming, an early influence on the quality improvement movement, developed processes for improving organisations and his work has primarily been applied to quality management in organisations. Deming's (2005) system of profound knowledge is:

[a] four-part method that describes the relationship between the essential components of systems thinking. First defined by American statistician W. Edwards Deming, a system of profound knowledge includes familiarity with variations, such as common cause and special variation, as well as the interconnectivity of systems, psychology and other motivating factors, and theory related to the learning process. ("System of Profound Knowledge", 2018)

Jensen (2014), speaking of product design, says there are three dimensions which combine to form an entire experience: the instrumental dimension, the usage dimension, and the profound dimension. The profound dimension is found "when we become fully immersed in the experience" (ibid., p. 44). Here the design considers how products affect people's lives, and interconnect with what gives meaning and purpose.

Finally, Baruss, van Lier and Ali (2014) developed a Profundity Scale to evaluate the profundity participants experienced in a three-day self-development workshop. The scale consisted of 21 Likert-style items. The instrument was administered as part of a package of post-workshop measures. Participants were asked to provide a written description of their most memorable experience that day, and then to respond to the Profundity Scale instrument. The authors reported that at least some of the participants had "somewhat meaningful, profound, spiritual experiences in altered states of consciousness" (ibid., p. 1078).

In summary, profound learning may expose elegant truths, unseen complexity, or the relationship of one to the other; be an immersive and revelatory experience which engages mind, body, heart, and spirit; and may be not only a result but also an experience and an ongoing process involving both learner and environment.

## **IMPROVING TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND PROFOUND LEARNING**

Teachers working with children in public school classrooms need to be lifelong learners. In spite of this important disposition, the literature of teacher education and professional development does not often discuss teachers as adult learners. In support of this work, the body of literature that has grown out of the academic and professional field of adult education is a valuable lens through which teacher learning, professional development, and identity formation may be viewed and interpreted (Gregson & Sturko, 2007). However, these areas of inquiry rarely intersect to form a coherent perspective. TL theory is one exception, having been used as a framework to interpret teacher learning (Freidus, 1994). The literature reviewed below indicates that authentic professional identity development transcends the traditional boundaries dividing the personal and the professional, that healthy teacher identity development is fundamental for effective practice, and that a teacher's identity is built over time through important relationships. Given what we know about profound learning, the implication of this research is that profound learning experiences are likely to help a teacher's professional practice and can help students develop as profound learners as well. Not only do teachers have important ideas about profound learning, as we explore through our focus group, but profound learning can make life better for teachers.

### **Transcending the personal and the professional**

Profound learning captures elements of broader life experience and translates them in terms of their impact on how one lives (Carr-Chellman & Kroth, 2019). There are strong connections between effective classroom practice – the purview of teacher professional development and learning – and a full rich life outside the classroom (Palmer, 2007), and profound learning offers a powerful added link. Our data show a complex picture of learning and ways of living that may improve a teacher's classroom practice and also build a fuller, richer life outside of the classroom. This fluidity and integrity between personal and professional contexts is a vital characteristic of profound learning, highlighting the limitations of narrower frameworks which depict teacher learning and identity formation as a discrete function occurring within the strictly professional walls of the school.

### **Identity development for effective practice**

Palmer (2007) reflected on the requirements for effective classroom practice, claiming that “good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (p. 1). This identity and integrity, necessarily formed in the interplay and synergy between the personal and the professional, is fundamental to effective teaching practice. Levitan and Carr-Chellman (2018) posit that “Palmer sees this identity and integrity to be at once discovered and constructed, and involves vulnerability and a willingness to expose one's personal self to students” (p. 8). Navigating this boundary between the personal and the professional is a kind of constructed self-knowledge, the



pursuit of which is a primary disposition for becoming an effective teacher. It signals the integrity of identity that is necessary for a teacher to authentically engage in the learning and teaching process (Kroth & Carr-Chellman, 2018). Profound learning, characterised by deep self-reflection, is part and parcel of healthy identity development.

### **Identity as built over time and through relationships**

The role of profound learning in teacher identity development can be significant and points to the necessity of lifelong learning for effective teaching. The picture of professional identity development that emerges is, as Franzak (2002) says, one in which “we continually construct and revise our visions of self” (p. 1). Levitan and Carr-Chellman (2018) suggest it is a kind of negotiation in which a teacher creates his or her identity as ‘teacher’ in relation to specific people, contexts, situations, and even him or herself. In this way, one’s constructed professional identity is not fixed or obdurate. Instead, it is built over time.

Developing a better understanding of teachers’ profound learning not only helps us better understand profound learning, it can also help us develop better ways for teachers to facilitate profound learning in their students (Freidus, 1994). For teachers working in public schools with children between the ages of 5 and 18, profound learning is relevant to the development of skill and technique but is not primarily oriented towards these things. Similarly, sustained effective teaching practice requires skill and technique, but also more global dispositions such as broad-mindedness, clear and open communication, and commitment to collegiality. As the teachers in our focus group indicate, their profound learning experiences and their perceptions of profound learners can impact these more global dispositions.

## **METHODS**

The purpose of this exploratory study was to discern the qualities of the profound learner and profound learning experiences from the perspectives of teachers. The study design incorporated a combination of focus group, critical incident, and affinity diagramming methods. This section will describe the method and procedure used in this study.

### **Focus groups**

This research design is well-suited to this study given the topic under investigation and the research questions. As discussed above, the phenomenon of profound learning currently has a shallow literature base, offering the opportunity for broad exploratory investigations such as focus groups. As Threlfall (1999) says:

Generally unexplored or new topic areas benefit from focus group inquiry, allowing the researcher a glimpse at the phenomenon to gain valuable information on language or behavior specifics [...]. This method provides useful perceptual information as a precursor for focus of expanded research (p. 103).

Another advantage of the focus group method for our study is the authenticity of the participant voices. As investigators into a sensitive topic, we were attending to the needs of our participants, observing closely whether public or private voices were being shared. An individual interview offers a private space where honesty can be more comfortable, while a focus group offers a public space, creating a different dynamic. At times, the focus group structure offers the best of both approaches, garnering individual responses to specific questions as well as the evolution and growth observed through group dynamics and social interaction.

An important value of the approach we used was providing a comfortable structure within which the group could warm up to authentic participation over the course of the meeting. Basch (1987) and Kitzinger (1994b) both emphasise the role of the moderator/researcher in offering a supportive environment that engenders openness and vulnerability. Given that the discussion of the group is the primary source of data, this ethos is essential for effective focus group practice. According to Kevern and Webb (2001), synergy within the group produces the richest data and opens doors to

[...] insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in the group (Morgan 1997, Kitzinger 1994a, b): ‘The idea behind the focus group method is that group processes can help people to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in one to one interview’ (Kitzinger 1994a, as cited in Kevern and Webb, 2001, p. 324).

We experienced other reasons for the richness of our focus group data. Compared with individual in-depth interviews, focus groups help mitigate the power differential between interviewer and interviewee, democratise the research process, provide a more naturalistic, social, and interactive context, and generate a sense of agency and self-determination among participants (Kevern & Webb, 2001; Kitzinger, 1994b; Wilkinson, 1998, 1999; Wilson, 1997). Given these characteristics and qualities, the focus group approach offered significant advantages for data collection with our public school teacher participants, all of whom knew each other well.

### **Critical incidents**

The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) has been used since Flanagan (1954) introduced it as a way of collecting observations for “solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles” (p. 327). It has been used extensively, being “more frequently cited by industrial and organizational psychologists over the past 40 years” (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005), and in many disciplines, such as counselling, nursing, communications, education and teaching, marketing, and social work. CIT does not have a set of rules regarding data collection but rather a “proliferation of approaches and terminology” (ibid., p. 476). Flanagan supported four ways to collect critical incident data, including individual interviews, group interviews, questionnaires, and record forms, where the details of incidents are recorded in narrative form or by check marks on an existing list.

## **Affinity diagramming**

The focus group process also utilised the affinity diagram method, also known as the K-J Method (Scupin, 1997), which involves four steps: 1) label making, 2) label grouping, 3) chart making, and 4) written or verbal explanation. Participants create descriptors and then sort them into groups, then label the groups, create a chart or configuration of the patterns found within the labels, followed by discussion. This approach is intended to build strong rapport within the group while also creating concrete representations of the knowledge objects generated through the focus group activity. Tools like post-its, flip charts, and 3X5 cards are used to facilitate discussion, categorise responses, and to keep a record for later analysis.

## **Data collection procedure**

In our study, one focus group lasting 90 minutes was conducted. We used a combination of the critical incident technique and affinity diagramming, with the intent of developing a rich understanding of teachers' experiences and perspectives of profound learning. The steps used are described next.

- 1) Participant Orientation.
- 2) Affinity Diagram Process.
  - a) Participants were asked, without speaking, to write a word or two describing a quality of a person who lives life profoundly on index cards. All the cards were then spread out on the table and participants, still not speaking, organised the individual cards into piles of similar concepts.
  - b) Participants were then allowed to speak and labelled, as a group, each group of cards.
  - c) A facilitator then listed each of the categories on a flip chart.
- 3) Critical Incident Process. Participants were asked to write a detailed description of an experience they felt was one of personal profound learning. They were asked to describe the experience in as much detail as possible, and why it had a profound effect on them. After completing the critical incidents, the group discussed what they believed the qualities of their experiences were. The facilitators captured the main ideas on flip chart paper. After discussing the qualities of their critical incidents, the group was asked to think back on the first, affinity diagramming exercise about the profound learner, and if there was anything they wished to change or add to the discussion.

## **Research site**

The focus group convened in a non-school institutional setting which also serves as a venue for regular meetings of teachers outside of school and away from students. This research site took advantage of a location offering familiarity and comfort for participants. It was easy to locate, convenient to park, and our meeting time complemented another important meeting occurring immediately prior to ours. We used a large, private room with freedom from interference and little fear of eavesdropping. The group was not

filtered for acquaintances and it was moderated by two researchers. Food and beverages were provided.

### **Participants**

Fifteen elementary and secondary public school teachers participated in the focus group, with a range of experience, an even mix of men and women, and varying ages. All worked in the same large geographic region. This was a purposive, convenience sample intended to recruit a diverse population of elementary and secondary public school teachers. Recruitment occurred through the regional teachers' association and the focus group took place after a regular association meeting. Nearly all of the teachers attending the association meeting stayed to participate in our focus group.

### **Data analysis and analytical process**

Our analytic process was thematic analysis of focus group data, taking advantage of the dual nature of the data offered by focus groups: in-depth individual responses combined with social interaction and dialogue. The analytical process was entirely inductive, extracting both articulated data and emergent data. Articulated data "is defined as that information that is expressed in response to, or specifically addresses, the questions posed. It includes responses to specific questions and probes by the moderator, as well as conversation that emerges among participants as they discuss these questions" (Massey, 2011, p. 23).

The emergent data are derived from and grounded in the attributional data and constitute the focus of this study. This data-driven, as opposed to theory-driven, approach was most appropriate for this study given the limited research base concerning profound learning and the objective of generating new knowledge. The research design was descriptive and exploratory, using the focus group method to facilitate participant elaboration of profound learning. Neither researcher approached the project with *a priori* codes or categories, eliminating the possibility of deductive analysis and hypothesis testing.

Our data included observational data retrieved at the time of the focus group and triangulated between the researchers after the fact, transcripts based on audio recordings of the focus group, and document analysis using the artefacts generated throughout the focus group. Extensive field notes were recorded by each researcher and used to help guide initial coding and subsequent iterations of coding to develop themes from the articulated and emergent data.

## **FINDINGS**

Our findings are captured in two broad categories, corresponding to our research questions: qualities of profound learning experiences and characteristics and traits of profound learners. In the first category, qualities of profound learning experiences, the following themes emerged from the data. Profound learning experiences are: growing, emotive, disruptive, real, irreversible, either positive or negative, social, opening, and surprising qualities.

In the second category, characteristics and traits of profound learners, the following themes emerged: depth of thought, emotionally wise, taking life seriously, adventurous in thought and deed, unbounded, and humble.

### **Qualities of profound learning experiences**

Following are elaborations of the qualities of profound learning experiences. Here we draw from the categorised information to develop a description of the quality. Obviously, different experiences will have more or less of any one or combination of these qualities.

Given the themes, profound learning experiences are:

*Growing.* Profound learning experiences result in growth. Participants said that they came out tougher; that they see things, including people, around them differently; that they have new understandings, that they didn't know what they didn't know; and that it wasn't possible to return to where they were before the experience.

*Emotive.* Our participants identified strongly with the idea that a profound learning experience carries a heavy emotional load. These emotions might be traumatic, painful, stressful, or exciting. The experience might culminate in a sense of relief. These are sensory, visceral emotions.

*Disruptive.* Profound learning is disruptive in several dimensions. The experience is profound because it has strong cognitive impact in ways that generate awareness, paradigm shifts, and deep realisations. Participants described a profound learning experience as one in which they were forced to question assumptions, to see the environment differently, to experience the reality of a situation instead of their own interpretation. One described it as moving "just outside my bubble, there's a whole world out there". Those cognitive disruptions ripple through other beliefs and people become aware of that which they hadn't been aware of before. This is a systemic disruption extending beyond the experience itself.

*Real.* Participants encountering a profound learning experience feel they have been through something authentic. They have moments of clarity where they feel they are experiencing a reality that was not available to them before.

*Irreversible.* Once the learner has experienced something profound they cannot go back to not-experiencing it. The person is changed. They have now stepped into a new journey, much as Campbell has described the Hero's Journey. The path has been irrevocably altered.

*Either positive or negative.* Participants identified profound learning experiences as either positive or negative. There was very little grey area or nuance. Profound experiences for these teachers were not simply good, beneficial, or positive, as colloquial common sense might suggest. Participants also emphasised that painful and negative experiences can be profound as well.

*Social.* Although the scope of a profound learning experience seems limited to the individual, participants said that it also involves others around them, both in origin and in affect. These experiences, as suggested in the “disruptive” category above, ripple through social relationships, interactions, and mutual understandings.

*Opening.* Profound learning experiences tend to have an opening effect on people. They are more curious, adventurous, open-minded. Their perspectives are more likely to be multifaceted once they have experienced something profound.

*Surprising.* A profound learning experience can be surprising. It can be unexpected but more than that, it might surprise the learner over time, as they experience the relief of dropping built up or transmitted beliefs, understandings, or expectations they had been carrying, often unbeknownst to themselves.

*Qualities of profound learning experiences – discussed.* Consistent with a constructivist theoretical perspective, the qualities which emerged suggest that participants experienced profound learning as something expansive. Qualities of opening, surprising, disruptive, and growing lead to a conclusion that experiences which instigate deep learning must also be part of an expanding, unfolding, or blooming process. That is, this experience portends human flourishing. Given our results – qualities of surprising, emotive, irreversible, real, and positive or negative, another overall conclusion suggests that these experiences penetrate deeply and progressively into one’s feelings and perceptions about oneself and the world. These penetrative experiences become part of the person’s life identity. Finally, the social quality that was identified demonstrates that profound learning experiences exist within a milieu in which the learner is immersed. The milieu is one of social connection and, to carry this idea further, one of beliefs, culture, history, and perceived futures. The themes of flourishing and identity evolution occurring within a milieu suggest the depth of profound learning is part of an ongoing process rather than just the simple cause-and-effect of an event.

### **Qualities of profound learners**

Profound learners have, like everyone, profound learning experiences but those are just a part of a more intentional, cumulative learning process which occurs over a year or a lifetime. Following are elaborations of the qualities which emerged from the affinity diagram experience combined with analysis of the meeting transcripts. Here we draw from the categorised information to develop a description of the quality. Obviously, different individuals will have more or less of any one or combination of these qualities.

Profound learners:

*Have depth of thought.* Profound learners pursue depth of thought through analysis, valuing knowledge and wisdom, and finding meaning. Depth here additionally comes from looking at situations from a multi-faceted, multi-connected perspective. Thinking for the profound learner is valued, and recognised as an intellectual, cerebral, but not entirely cognitive, process. These learners are not static, they are goal oriented, always moving deeper.

*Are emotionally wise.* A profound learner is open to emotion and self-confidently and securely authentic. They are self-aware. These qualities allow these learners to take the risks of being authentic with others, to listen deeply, and therefore be able to develop deep relationships and to learn from them the more important aspects of what they know and feel. Empathy, care, and passion are balanced with serenity, humility, and reflection.

*Take life seriously.* Profound learners are likely to be meaningfully engaged with others and the community. They make connections with people and with ideas. They may be activists interested in a cause. Regardless, profound learners are deliberate, dedicated, respectful, and conscientious people who act with integrity.

*Are adventurous in thought and deed.* Profound learning doesn't occur over time without taking risks and profound learners are on a lifelong journey, a quest, to learn. On that journey they maintain open, flexible, and non-judgmental minds. They are curious and are motivated to seek knowledge. This search to learn more is multifaceted and adventurous.

*Are unbounded.* These learners are not constrained by their age, ideological perspectives, or level of education. They transcend structural identity and are able to look holistically at what they are considering.

*Are humble.* Profound learners, while confident risk-takers who have increasing depth, remain humble in the larger sense. They are reflective, sensitive, and respectful, knowing they are on a learning journey which does not have an end. They are ethical. If the object is learning and not other extrinsic rewards then there is no purpose in acting in ways that do not 'respect the data' and insights they and others are gathering.

*Qualities of profound learners – discussed.* Qualities of unboundedness and being adventurous in thought and deed suggest profound learners have a spirit of exploration. This spirit builds upon the idea of human flourishing through blooming, extending, and unfolding which, over time, manifests in profound learners through deep experience. The identified qualities of humbleness, depth of thought, taking life seriously, and emotional wisdom exemplify virtues which profound learners also develop over time. Profound learners, we conclude, exhibit a gravitas developed over long periods of a lifetime.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

From the data, nine qualities of a profound learning experience and six qualities of the profound learner emerged. This was an exploratory study, meant to begin a theory-building process which, we hope, will initiate further studies and discussion. Here we will consider the most pertinent implications of this research. Through a constructivist lens, our data lead us to the following conclusions:

### **Non-dualistic and holistic**

Learning is often characterised as a narrowly cognitive activity, something that happens between one's ears. While our scientific understanding of how learning happens pushes

against this characterisation, the colloquial perception of learning is still often trapped in this cognitive paradigm. Our participants, on the other hand, moved easily beyond colloquial characterisations of learning into much more holistic territory. Learning in the context of profound learning experiences and profound learners is somatic, socio-cultural, as well as cognitive. It is ontological, existential, and relational.

### **A cumulative process**

The words ‘deep’ and ‘depth’ are prominent throughout the findings. Profound learning seems to be a process of continually going deeper. In particular, the relationship of profound learning experiences to the long arc of personal growth undertaken by profound learners seems essential. The profound learner is continually going forward. This deepening process has twists and turns along the way which become profound learning experiences. Profound learning does not have a predetermined path; instead, it is a process of deepening and centring through certain experiences. A profound learner intentionally engages in this process over time through practices and routines founded in curiosity and openness. Along the way the learner encounters profound learning experiences which reorient, reopen, and rearrange assumptions, a process which continues inexorably as long as the profound learner continues to move.

Everyone has profound learning experiences. They are transformative (Cranton, 2006; Dirkx, 2011; Mezirow, 2000). Those episodic experiences can have a long term, deep impact on one’s life and identity. For profound learners engaged in lifelong profound learning, these profound learning experiences are turning points along an intentionally and continually deepening and centring path.

### **The complex role of structural identity**

Structural identity is a powerful force as each participant is embedded in social networks, represents specific role identities by virtue of their participation in particular social structures, and has internalised certain characteristics of the self as it has been represented to them by others. The kind and quality of agency an individual possesses in light of his or her structural identity is a matter of debate (Carr-Chellman, 2005; Dolet, 2018; Giddens, 1984; Robinson & Robertson, 2014; Unger, 2004). As our participants discussed their profound learning experiences, the traditional dichotomy of structure and agency offered a limited toolset for interpreting their stories. Significantly, a profound learning experience was often described as a catalyst for moving beyond one’s structural identity. On the other hand, structural identity was also described as an inhibiting force, delaying growth and exploration that might contribute to profound learning experiences. The complexity of the role of structural identity highlights Cervero and Wilson’s (1994) call for “a theory of human action that integrates agency and structure” (p. 186), moving beyond a more simplistic emphasis on either structural determination or self-determination.



## LIMITATIONS

There are two notable limitations to this study. First, this small sample and single focus group, located in one geographic region, is not representative and cannot be interpreted as enabling generalisable conclusions which can be extended to the more general population of teachers or others. Second, although this is an exploratory study, meant to initiate and build theory, we recognise that we, as researchers, bring a considerable number of preconceptions to this work. As researchers, we have reflected for years about existing adult learning theory and frameworks. As individuals, we have also considered our own relationship to spirituality, our personal journeys, and contemporary issues. We recognise that others might easily analyse and interpret results differently than we have.

## CONCLUSIONS

Profound learning, that is, seeking more depth of knowledge over time, seems an especially important issue. This study argues that the qualities of profound learning experiences and profound learners can be cultivated and developed to improve teachers' personal practice and pedagogy. The cultivation of profound learning can infuse degrees of depth into practices and purposes which have been flattened by cultural superficiality and shallowness. Profound learning, as experienced by the teachers in our study, is non-dualistic and holistic, is a cumulative process, and is integral to the complex role of structural identity. This study is intended to initiate a comprehensive theory building and theory testing process (Lynham, 2002), which will hopefully help scholars to extend, reconceptualise, and 'deepen', as it were, existing theory. By exploring profound learning from the ground up rather than attaching it to existing theory we hope to loosen preconceptions that might otherwise limit generativity.

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# ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION POLICIES IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

## Selected findings from four country cases

### ABSTRACT

*Policies on adult literacy and basic education are gaining importance, especially since the results of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) revealed that a sizeable proportion of adults have low literacy levels and reported significant differences in competence-levels between countries. This article investigates the interplay between the polity, politics, and policies of adult literacy and basic education, drawing on qualitative data from an international-comparative project which examined basic education policies across countries, with an emphasis on literacy. The article presents findings from four countries (Austria, Denmark, England, and Turkey) focusing on governance structures and applying an actor-oriented theoretical framework. The analysis provides a systematic cross-country comparison on basic education policies and recognises the importance of governance structures in designing and implementing policies.*

**Keywords:** *adult basic education policies, governance, international comparative research, qualitative research design*

### PISMENOST ODRASLIH IN TEMELJNE IZOBRAŽEVALNE POLITIKE S PRIMERJALNE PERSPEKTIVE: UGOTOVITVE IZ ŠTIRIH DRŽAV - POVZETEK

*Politike opismenjevanja odraslih in temeljne izobrazbe imajo vse večji pomen, posebej odkar so rezultati mednarodne raziskave o kompetencah odraslih (PIAAC) v okviru programa OECD pokazali, da precejšen delež odraslih dosega nižje stopnje pismenosti in da obstajajo znatne razlike v stopnjah kompetenc med državami. Članek raziskuje medsebojni vpliv med različnimi oblikami politik opismenjevanja odraslih in politik temeljne izobrazbe na podlagi kvalitativnih podatkov mednarodnega primerjalnega projekta, ki je proučeval temeljne izobraževalne politike v različnih državah s poudarkom na pismenosti. Članek predstavlja podatke štirih držav (Avstrije, Danske, Anglije in Turčije), pri čemer se osredotoča na strukture upravljanja in uporablja teoretični okvir, usmerjen k akterjem. Analiza prikazuje sistematično*

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*primerjavo temeljnih izobraževalnih politik v omenjenih državah in kaže na pomen struktur upravljanja pri oblikovanju in izvajanju politik.*

**Ključne besede:** *temeljna izobraževalna politika za odrasle, upravljanje, mednarodna primerjalna raziskava, kvalitativni raziskovalni načrt*

## INTRODUCTION

Policies on adult literacy and basic education have become increasingly important in recent years, especially since the publication and wide dissemination of the results of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). According to PIAAC results a significant proportion of adults, even in developed economies, exhibit poor reading skills (18.8% of adults across the whole sample scored at level one in literacy or below in the first round; 18.9% in the second round) (OECD, 2013a; OECD, 2016). In addition, several national adult skills surveys provide differentiated data for literacy skills among adult populations, e.g. the German leo. – Level One Study in 2010/2011 (Grotlüschen & Riekman, 2012), the English Skills for Life Survey in 2011 (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills [BIS], 2012) and the annual French Journée Défense et Citoyenneté<sup>1</sup> (JDC) (Jeantheau, 2016).

The abundance of adults with low literacy skills in developed countries has led to concerted efforts by national governments alongside supranational and international organisations. The renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning (Council of the European Union, 2011) calls on Member States to focus on low-skilled/low-qualified groups and on bringing their basic skills 'one step up'. After the release of PIAAC data, the OECD makes country-specific recommendations for policy makers to tackle challenges, develop skills, and activate the supply of skills in order to achieve better outcomes for individuals and societies (OECD, 2013b; Kuczera, Field, & Windisch, 2016). Even though there are significant drivers for policy reforms at the European and international level, the policy formulation and implementation of specific policy programmes aiming at the improvement of literacy skills are under the jurisdiction of individual countries.

While there have been some overviews and reviews on policies for adult literacy and basic education (Aschemann, 2015; ELINET, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c), there is not yet any systematic, cross-country comparison on adult basic education policies. From a comparative adult education perspective though, it is important to ask how countries develop and implement basic education policies to address the problems of low literacy adults.

The findings presented here draw from an international-comparative project on adult literacy and basic education that aimed to contrast and compare policies and governance

<sup>1</sup> The JDC aims, among other things, to identify youngsters (typically between 17 and 19 years old) with low literacy skills (see Jeantheau, 2016).

structures of literacy and basic education of adults in six countries: Austria, Denmark, England, France, the Netherlands, and Turkey. Because of space constraints, in this paper we only present results for four out of six countries representing different modes of governance and regulation: Austria, Denmark, England, and Turkey.

By applying an action-theoretical perspective we addressed the following questions to examine the interplay between policy, polity, and politics of adult literacy and basic education:

- How are adult literacy and basic education defined and understood on a policy level within the studied countries?
- Who are the key actors in agenda-setting and implementing policies in this field? What kind of resources do actors use to achieve specific outcomes?
- How do country-specific governance structures influence the policy and politics of literacy and basic education?

The paper is structured as follows: we first provide an outline of the theoretical framework and research design. Next, we highlight selected empirical findings from four case studies that illustrate basic education policies from policy content to policy implementation. Emphasis is placed on the identification of influential actors and actor-constellations, their resources, responsibilities, and interactions with regard to the respective governance structures. We conclude with some reflections on comparative research on adult literacy and basic education policies, and suggestions for further research.

## **ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION POLICIES: MULTIPLE ACTORS EMBEDDED IN VARIOUS INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS**

To answer the questions raised in the introduction, we draw on the approaches of educational governance and actor-centred institutionalism. The concept of educational governance seems to be an adequate theoretical approach for addressing questions concerning the coordination and management of the mutual interdependencies of actors in the education system (Ioannidou, 2007; Abs, Brüsemeister, Schemmann, & Wissinger, 2015; Schrader, Schmid, Amos, & Thiel, 2015). The term ‘educational governance’ recognises the dynamics that arise from the emergence of policy actors at various levels (local, regional, national, transnational) and emphasises the variety of patterns among interactions and collective actions (i.e. networks, coalitions, majority rule, negotiations) (Benz & Dose, 2010). In this framework, action is embedded in institutionalised rule systems (hierarchy, market, majority rule structures, negotiations) which rarely appear in pure forms, but in varying combinations. Actors in this multilayer system exist interdependently: decision making requires a high-degree of coordination across the board.

The concept of governance is often connected with action theories, notably with actor-centred institutionalism (Scharpf, 1997, 2006). The main analytical categories of the educational governance approach and actor-centred institutionalism are quite similar (Scharpf, 2006, p. 73; Kussau & Brüsemeister, 2007, p. 26; Ioannidou, 2010, p. 273). In

the framework of actor-centred institutionalism, policy processes are driven by “the interaction of individual and corporate actors endowed with certain capabilities and specific cognitive and normative orientations, within a given institutional setting and within a given external situation” (Scharpf, 1997, p. 37).

Policies in literacy and basic education can thus be explained with reference to actor-centred institutionalism as being the outcome of interactions among intentional actors – individual, collective, or corporate actors. These interactions are structured and their outcomes are shaped by the characteristics of the institutional settings in which they occur. According to this theorem, actors are characterised by their specific orientations (perceptions and preferences) and by their specific capabilities, i.e. their material and immaterial resources such as money, privileged access to information, competencies and jurisdictions, participation and veto rights (Scharpf, 1997, pp. 43–44). The modes of interaction within this framework are classified under hierarchical direction, unilateral action, negotiated agreement, and majority vote (*ibid.*, pp. 46–47).

Policy making, by definition, involves intentional action by the actors who are most interested in achieving specific outcomes. Within the field of adult literacy and basic education, we assume a range of both state (ministries and regional authorities) and non-state actors (trade unions, educational institutions, professional associations, etc.) at different levels involved in policy-making by determining the content, securing financing, and implementing policies. Both state and non-state actors act purposefully to achieve specific goals. Their strategic action ability depends, firstly, on their capabilities in terms of material and immaterial resources, secondly, on the convergence or divergence of their perceptions and preferences, and thirdly, upon the institutional settings within which they act. These enable or hamper negotiations, unilateral actions or even hierarchical decisions.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This paper analyses international comparative data on adult literacy and basic education collected in the context of the ‘EU-Alpha’ research project, conducted by the German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning and funded by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research. Our analysis aims to contrast and compare policies and governance structures of literacy and basic education of adults in six countries (Austria, Denmark, England, France, the Netherlands, and Turkey). The findings presented here draw on qualitative data from expert interviews and policy documents. Expert interviews were conducted with key actors in the field of adult literacy and basic education policy. We focus on institutional settings and on the key stakeholders’ understanding of the content and the boundaries of adult literacy and basic education. Because of space constraints, in this paper we only present results for four out of six countries: Austria, Denmark, England, and Turkey.



Following Meuser and Nagel (2009, pp. 24–25) experts are defined as having a special knowledge in a certain area of interest acquired through their activity or specific function and not necessarily through their training or profession. The interviews included state (mostly policy administration at ministerial level) and non-state actors, notably national associations for adult and basic education, trade unions and educational researchers. We conducted 24 non-standardised and semi-structured interviews between 2014 and 2015 in the four countries with an average interview duration of 66 minutes. The content was analysed with the software programme MAXQDA (Kuckartz, 2010) according to a systematic, rule guided qualitative content analysis after Mayring (2015). The data were structured mainly along deductive categories derived from theory which were supplemented by inductive categories deviated from the data themselves. To aid the contextualisation and validation of the expert views, education policy documents (e.g. programmatic texts, guidelines, recommendations, reports, and legal acts) were reviewed and analysed alongside the qualitative content analysis.

The selection of the country cases follows the typology developed by Green, Wolf, and Leney (1999, pp. 79–106) which identifies four primary models of educational regulation and governance to which countries can be assigned: centralised systems, regional systems, systems with local control, and systems with institutional control in a quasi-market. Although the typology mainly refers to modes of regulation of formal education and vocational training, there is a similar spectrum of regulation in adult education in the selected countries – from centralised regulation to market control. Literacy and basic education provision is embedded in various sectors of the educational system: in general and vocational education for young people as well as in further education for adults. The recourse to general modes of regulation in education and training is also due to the fact that there is a lack of typologies and comparative information on adult education system characteristics (e.g. governance and regulation, funding mechanisms, etc.).

## **COMPARING THE POLICY, POLITY, AND POLITICS OF LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION: SELECTED EMPIRICAL FINDINGS FROM FOUR COUNTRY CASES**

In this section we present selected empirical findings covering four countries – Austria, Denmark, England, and Turkey – to allow contrast analysis according to the research questions. All findings listed below originate from the analysis of expert interviews (unless otherwise stated).

For systematic reasons we distinguish in the following between the processes (politics), the institutional order (polity), and the content (policy) (Schmidt, 2004, pp. 535–538), although politics, policy, and polity are in the English speaking world an undividable three-point term. This differentiation allows focusing each time on one dimension of the complex policy term, even if it is self-evident that policy, polity, and politics cannot be strictly delineated since they are interdependent.

## Policies on literacy and basic education

Looking at the policy dimension, the focus was on how literacy and basic education are defined and understood at the policy level in Austria, Denmark, England, and Turkey. The particular interest was on the understanding of basic and literacy education policy *by state* actors, and whether these policies are stand-alone topics on the (educational) political agenda.

Internationally, two main lines of argumentation can be identified in the political rhetoric on the necessity of literacy and basic education: basic education as part of the human right to education and basic education as a precondition for labour market participation. The first derives from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Declaration of Human Rights, the 26<sup>th</sup> Article of which acknowledges the Right to Education as a fundamental human right (UN, 1948). Literacy is considered part of the right to education and a public good, of which the state is the duty bearer (UNESCO, 2015, p. 47). The second line of argumentation derives from the OECD<sup>2</sup> and its conceptual underpinnings in human capital theory (Becker, 1993). Accordingly, the essential role of basic education (and education in general) is to generate high levels of skills needed for economic competitiveness and sustainable growth in a globalised economy (OECD, 2013c). Within this framework, basic skills have been defined in terms of their potential contribution to economic activity and individual employability, and also in terms of enabling participation in civic life.

In the country-specific notions of literacy and basic education it is possible to identify a bias towards either the OECD or the UNESCO framing of literacy<sup>3</sup>. In addition, country-specific notions of literacy and basic education are suffused with the prevalent education narrative, national traditions, and culture-specific patterns of meaning. They seem to be enforced by geopolitical developments and specific institutional trajectories. The notion of path-dependence in comparative analyses is linked to the idea that 'history matters.' Questions of timing and the initial conditions seem to be of a great importance since they have a strong impact on subsequent development paths (Pierson, 2000).

In *Turkey*, for example, the state changing from the Persian-Arabic alphabet to the Latin alphabet at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the entire population had to be retrained for this new alphabet, led to identifying literacy education as a sole state responsibility. Nowadays the Ministry of Education defines literacy as the ability "[to] read what you see and to write what you think" (citation from the conducted interview with a representative from the Turkish Ministry of Education). Literacy education for adults includes Turkish, math, and life-skills, which is equivalent to that at Turkish primary schools. The majority of literacy course completers attend other educational offers too, such as work-related courses

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2 The European Union discourse on literacy and adult basic education oscillates between empowerment (UNESCO) and employability (OECD).

3 For a systematic review on the different concepts and terms of adult literacy and basic education see [http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/chapt6\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/chapt6_eng.pdf).

to improve opportunities for integration into the labour market. Education policy and literacy campaigns still have very strong normative orientations and are considered by the Turkish state as both a way to develop a progressive society and to educate citizens towards accepting the “values and principles of the Turkish state” (Karakışoğlu, 2010, p. 770).

Looking at the *Austrian* case it can be stated that there is a broader understanding of basic education comprising learning skills (autonomous learning, learning to learn), the German language (speaking, reading, and writing), a basic competence in another language (speaking, reading, and writing), numeracy, and the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Frauen [Federal Ministry of Education and Women], 2017). There is a clear preference for the term basic education over the term (il)literacy as the former does not have so many negative connotations. According to ministry representatives, the concept of basic education exceeds the given definition and includes an emancipatory aspect in terms of one’s capacity to act as a citizen. There is a distinction between basic education and the completion of school education for adults, even though the first can be a precondition of the second.

In *Denmark* basic education is not a prevalent concept. The interviewed experts usually use the term adult education, which is divided into general, vocational, and non-formal adult education, and tied to different programmes and laws. Basic education can be part of educational offers in all three fields of adult education. Closest to the idea of basic education is the programme of preparatory adult education (Forberedende Voksenundervisning (FVU)), which was initiated by the government in 2000 and can be assigned to the field of general adult education. Preparatory adult education includes educational offers in reading, writing, and math; it can be implemented in a variety of settings (also in the workplace) (<https://www.retsinformation.dk>). State actors emphasise the historical significance of adult education in Denmark, based on an emancipatory understanding of education. This concept was influenced by the Danish scholar Nikolai Grundtvig (1783–1872), who stressed the importance education has for participation in civic society.

In *England* basic skills attainment, especially literacy and numeracy, are recognised by state actors as a predominant factor for integration into the labour market. The government mainly refers to basic skills in a vocational context whilst emphasising the target audience of young adults and the completion of formal education qualifications. Basic education includes ‘Functional Skills’ (English, numeracy, ICT), which represent the practical application of basic skills in everyday life. As part of ‘Functional Skills’, people can achieve qualifications which are rated in equivalence to ‘entry level’ and to ‘levels 1–2’ of the National Qualification Framework (NQF). The close connection between policies on basic education, formal (school) education, and the labour market can be seen in the political programme of the past five years (2010–2015)<sup>4</sup>. Government-funded basic edu-

4 For instance, the decision to improve the training system by increasing the age at which young people are no longer required to attend training to 18 (Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills) or the reform programme Getting the Job Done: The Government’s Reform Plan for Vocational Qualifications, which aims to reform English and math qualifications.

cation courses are almost exclusively based in a workplace-related context. That means that the content of basic education courses is related to work situations or knowledge and skills for specific jobs (in order to prepare a person for these jobs).

Summing up, it can be noted that the definition of basic education deployed in the country cases comprise literacy but also basic skills such as numeracy and ICT. With regard to the function of basic education, state actors in England primarily emphasise benefits to the labour market, whereas in Austria, Turkey, and Denmark they also underline political education and civic participation as being key aspects of basic education. Turkish emphasis lays on national values while Austria and Denmark highlight emancipation and empowerment. In England the basic education policy agenda is clearly linked with policies concerning vocational training and the labour market, whereas in Austria and Turkey basic education policies are less dependent on labour market policies. Denmark has a flexible understanding of basic education, linking it to various learning environments and purposes. In all cases, the country-specific notion of basic education policy is shaped not only by current debates deriving from the growing influence of international and supra-national organisations but has roots in national traditions and historical narratives as the examples of Denmark and Turkey reveal.

### Key actors and responsibilities (polity)

For the polity-dimension, that is the political institutional order and responsibilities, we analysed governance structures focusing on key actors in the field, their competencies and capabilities. The research question addressed was: Who are the key actors (state and non-state) involved in policy-making, especially in determining the content, securing financing and implementing basic education and literacy policy?

In all countries, state actors are mainly responsible for determining the *content* of basic education policies; non-state actors can also be found in a subordinate role though. In some cases there are different state-levels responsible depending on the type of governance in the education system (compare Table 1).

Table 1: Own classification of the selected countries concerning their governance structures in adult basic and literacy education into the typology of Green et al. (1999)

Models of education regulation and governance (Green et al., 1999)			
<i>Centralised systems with some elements of devolution and choice</i>	<i>Regional systems with some minor devolution and choice</i>	<i>Local controlling with national 'steering'</i>	<i>Institutional autonomy in quasi market systems</i>
Turkey		Denmark	England
Austria			

In *Turkey*, all relevant decisions concerning the content of basic education policy are made by the Ministry of National Education (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB)). The Ministry is

the supreme governing and controlling body of the national education programme. It is responsible for all (further) training measures and teaching content (e.g. curriculum development; definition of criteria for formal and non-formal education achievements, with the exception of universities).

In *Austria*, both state and non-state actors are responsible for defining the content of basic education and literacy policy but in different functions. An expert group, which consists of state and non-state actors, decides the central content requirements for a cooperation-initiative between the federal state government and the federal states, the “Initiative Erwachsenenbildung” [Initiative Adult Education]. This expert group is a key actor within the Austrian basic education and literacy policy. Representatives of the federal government (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Frauen), the federal states (respective provincial government offices) and the Arbeitsmarktservice [Job Center Association] as well as of non-state actors such as the Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs [Conference of Austrian Adult Education] (which is an umbrella group of the main non-profit providers of adult education), social partners and individual scientists are members of this expert group. Although the decision-making competence lies with the federal and the federal states’ governments, non-state actors play an important role in policy development, in particular the trade unions and the umbrella group of training providers. The current structure of the cooperation-initiative “Initiative Erwachsenenbildung” has a central supervisory body which is able to make important decisions with a three-quarters majority vote. Four seats in this supervisory body are for the federal government and nine are for the federal states (all seats with voting rights). Representatives of the social partners only have an advisory function, without voting rights.

Several state actors are responsible for defining the content of basic education and literacy policy in *Denmark*, since basic and literacy education can be part of the threefold, general, vocational and non-formal adult education. The content of preparatory adult education which is mainly associated with basic and literacy education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (Undervisningsministeriet). Nevertheless, state actors indicate in the interviews that non-state actors, in particular social partners, do have influence through their participation in different boards of adult education in an advisory function (tripartite negotiations). Furthermore, preparatory adult education is a comprehensive and flexible programme, giving the providers at a regional and local level plenty of leeway for the exact content specification of literacy and basic education concerning offers, target groups, and educational settings.

In *England*, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is responsible for the determination of basic education and literacy policy. However, training providers that implement the basic education policy get a certain scope for content decisions within a given framework (such as the qualification levels of teachers).

The *financing* of basic education lies, in all country cases, with state actors. In *Turkey* the responsibility lies solely in the hands of the central Ministry of Education. In *Austria* both

federal states and the federal state government (Ministry of Education and Women) are responsible for the financing of basic education and literacy. Much of the promotion of basic education for adults in Austria takes place through the “Initiative Erwachsenenbildung”. This initiative is based on a joint federal government and federal-states agreement (pursuant to Art. 15a B-VG), deciding a joint financing (against the federal principle of separate competencies and financing of federal government and federal states). In *Denmark* basic education financing, depending on the area of adult education, is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education or the local communities. Preparatory adult education is financed and administered by the Ministry of Education. The money is distributed to 30 regional government-funded, self-governing adult education centres (Voksenuddannelsescenter (VUCs)), which are subordinate to the Ministry of Education and which are also providers of adult education. The VUCs are further entitled (since 2007) in licensing of other providers to offer adult education and receive state funding. his role, being a provider and at the same time having a conditional mandate for licensing other adult education providers, might lead to conflicts between VUCs and other providers. In *England* the funding for basic education and literacy is the responsibility of BIS. The executive authority of BIS for the administration of budget in the field of education (excluding higher education) is the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), which forwards funds to training providers directly.

Concerning the *implementation* of literacy and basic education policies different (state, non-state) educational institutions or service providers are responsible. In *Turkey*, the implementation is primarily a governmental responsibility and determined by hierarchical decisions. Institutions of adult and continuing education, which are under the control of the Directorate of Lifelong Learning of the Turkish Ministry of Education, are responsible for the implementation of adult literacy courses. *Austria* allows only non-profit providers to apply for funding toward basic education and literacy courses. Hence, the implementation is characterised by non-state and non-profit providers. Education providers are bound to the quality specifications of the “Initiative Erwachsenenbildung” for the implementation of their offers. A similar situation can be found in Denmark, even though the implementation of preparatory adult education is under the jurisdiction of the state-run VUC and a few other non-state and non-profit providers. Quality standards for education providers are specified in the legal text of the preparatory adult education law and in a manual for providers. In *England* the implementation of literacy and basic education policies is the responsibility of non-state providers from the non-profit and profit sectors that compete for funding. Quality standards for providers and their subsidised offers are inspected by the government-funded educational inspection authority Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Based on the above, it is evident that in the field of literacy and basic education a variety of both state (ministries and regional authorities) and non-state actors (e.g. trade unions, educational providers, professional associations, municipalities, and experts) are involved in policy-making. They determine the content, secure financing and implement

policies in this field. In all the considered countries it is the state actors (in the case of Austria state actors at different levels) who are mainly responsible for determining the *content* of basic education policies. This is not surprising as the securing of the provision of basal qualifications for all citizens is a core activity of a state. Furthermore, Austria (due to its corporatist tradition with influential major interest groups) and Denmark (due to its decentralised system and tripartite negotiations) also involve non-state actors. Unsurprisingly, a similar pattern can be seen in the *financing*: state actors are responsible for financing in all the considered countries. This is seen in Turkey and England at the central ministry level; in Austria in both the central and federal states; and in Denmark at the state and regional/local level. The *implementation* varies between countries: in Turkey implementation is performed by state-actors, in Denmark by state and non-state actors, whereas in Austria and England implementation is the responsibility of non-state actors only. In Austria and Denmark those actors are non-profit oriented; in England some are profit and some are non-profit oriented.

With regard to governance structures in the area of basic education and literacy policy, the findings indicate that Austria cannot fully be assigned to the centralised model as proposed by Green, Wolf, and Leney (1999), since both the federal state government and the federal states are involved in governance (compare Table 1). Turkey can clearly be assigned to the centralised governance model, whereas Denmark to the local system with decentralised control structures, having the financing and quality standards from the state but leeway concerning the distribution of funding and the design of the content on the regional/local level. Finally, England can be clearly assigned to the model of quasi-market systems with limited state influence in line with the typology of Green, Wolf, and Leney.

### **The politics of literacy and basic education**

As illustrated before, different actors (state and non-state) at different levels are involved in the formulation and implementation of policy programmes on adult literacy and basic education. These actors work within an institutional framework which allows or restricts their activities, corresponding to the governance structures of each country. According to Scharpf (1997), institutional settings define both the capabilities of actors and the forms of interaction. Capabilities could be defined as “all action resources that allow an actor to influence an outcome in certain respects and to a certain degree” (Scharpf, 1997, p. 43) while the forms of interaction between actors are “unilateral action”, “negotiated agreement”, “majority vote”, and “hierarchical decision” (ibid., 47).

The decisive capabilities of state actors are primarily regulative power in the form of legislation and decision-making competencies (compare Table 2). In addition, they have material resources in the form of budgets or structural frameworks, enabling them to finance and implement policies. Non-state actors are in particular equipped with intangible resources, e.g. expertise, privileged access to information or access to the field. Not all actors have equal access to the same resources, which leads to dependencies and interdependencies between them.

Table 2: Actors and their primary resources in the selected countries

Country	State Actor	Primary resources	Non-state actors	Primary resources
Austria	Federal state government (Ministry for Education and Women) and federal states (and the respective offices of the state governments)	Decision-making power, money	Social partners	Expertise and privileged access to information in the field, state-allocated, advisory function/ rights
Denmark	Ministry of Education/VUCs	Decision-making power, money/ conditional mandate for licensing other adult education providers (to receive state funding and provide offers)	Non-state, non-profit education providers and scientists	Expertise and privileged access to information in the field, advisory function for the state in different and varying advisory boards
England	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	Decision-making power, money	NIACE	Expertise and privileged access to information in the field
Turkey	Ministry of Education	Decision-making power, money	No relevant non-state actors	-

Furthermore, according to Scharpf (1997) the institutional setting influences the mode of interaction between actors. Applying Scharpf's interaction forms to our findings, Turkey clearly demonstrates a hierarchical direction by the state with no relevant actors besides the state. In England there were – at the time of the interviews – some relevant non-state actors, such as the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE<sup>5</sup>) influencing basic education and literacy policy or its implementation. NIACE was able to influence policy through privileged access to information and expertise, e.g. when preparing reports and educational concepts. However, these expertise/reports were primarily used as a source of information by the state actors<sup>6</sup>, and therefore interaction takes place

5 NIACE existed at the time of the expert interviews but merged with the 'Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion' in 2015 to form the 'Learning and Work Institute', a quasi-state organisation with a more work-oriented focus.

6 Experts were, for example, involved in the report "Adult Literacy and Numeracy". This report makes recommendations on how adults can improve their literacy and math skills. Furthermore, the report suggests (as one of many suggestions) a national campaign to improve adult basic education (House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Committee, 2014, p. 46) and the further public-funding of basic education efforts by the trade unions. Contrary to the recommendations of non-state actors, a national campaign is currently being politically rebuffed. Additionally, the state funding of basic education by trade unions has been greatly reduced over the past three years.



rather in the form of a unilateral action by the state. A similar situation can be found in Denmark, where non-state actors like adult education organisations and researchers are contacted by state-actors to receive policy advice. In Austria non-state actors such as the social partners also have expert knowledge and privileged access to information and to the field. Yet their influence formally exceeds the one of non-state actors in England and Denmark. In Austria non-state actors (e.g. the association of non-profit providers *Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs (KEBÖ)*, the federal states network *Ländernetzwerk Weiterbildung*, social partners, and scientists) were involved in the development of the “Initiative *Erwachsenenbildung*”. The social partners have a permanent (non-voting) right to advisory participation in the supervisory group of this political initiative. The contributions of non-state actors are considered to be very important for governmental decision-making, even though they are legally non-binding. Hence, the mode of interaction in Austria can be allocated between unilateral action by the state actors and negotiated agreement between state and non-state actors. The representatives of the federal state government and of the federal states discuss their decisions in the mode of negotiation. More precisely, decisions in the supervisory body of the current initiative are passed on a majority vote of three-quarters.

In summary and in conjunction with the third research question, it can be stated that the respective governance model and the institutional context of the actors do shape the mode of interaction (Scharpf, 1997, 2006). Centralised governance systems (Turkey) favour decisions that are made hierarchically. Regional systems with several state actors (Austria) tend to have negotiated agreements or majority decisions. The local control system (Denmark) favours unilateral decisions of (state) actors on a local level and the quasi-market system (England) unilateral decisions on the ministerial level. Non-state actors in Austria, Denmark, and England can to a certain extent influence policy-making and implementation with resources like expertise, privileged access to the field and participation rights in institutionalised advisory functions (only in Austria). In contrast, no influential non-state actors can be found in Turkey, which is characterised by hierarchical decision making.

## **CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK: COMPARING POLICIES ON LITERACY AND BASIC EDUCATION**

This paper described the interplay between the policy, polity, and politics of literacy and basic education in four countries: Austria, Denmark, England, and Turkey. Drawing on findings from a research project, the paper provides a systematic cross-country comparison by answering questions on how country-specific governance structures influence the policy and politics of adult literacy and basic education by applying an actor-oriented framework.

The analysis shows that cross country differences can be identified at three levels. First, at *policy* level, it is evident that the country specific notion of basic education is rooted in

national traditions and specific institutional trajectories. Second, at *polity* level, it seems that the respective governance model has a significant influence both on the variety of actors involved as well as on their interaction forms and decision making power. Reasonably, there are more actors involved in policy formulation as well as in policy implementation in decentralised systems rather than in centralised ones. Finally, at the level of *politics*, it can be stated that centralised governance systems (Turkey) favour decisions that are made hierarchically. Regional systems with several state actors (Austria) tend to have negotiated agreements or majority decisions. In this case decision-making requires a high level of coordination between various actors.

The findings can contribute to an informed and broader debate on adult skills policies in various countries. Further, they can generate research questions on how conditions at macro level (political, socioeconomic, and institutional factors) can affect the provision of basic adult education and subsequently participation patterns and skills outcomes. This could be a first step to evaluate the effects of adult basic education policies. Given that the lack of basic education diminishes education and life chances, basic education can be defined as a public good and part of welfare state policy. Consequently, it would be challenging to extend the current research and our understanding of literacy and basic education policies and to define them as a part of modern welfare policy (Knauber & Ioannidou, 2017). These insights as well as evidence from research on skills production regimes and inequality issues (Allmendinger & Leibfried, 2003) provide a solid ground for further research on the supply and demand side of adult literacy and basic education as well as on the interplay between institutional structures and participation patterns.

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*Jernej Širok*

# KONCEPTI KAKOVOSTI V EVALVACIJSKIH PRAKSAH V VISOKEM ŠOLSTVU: INSTRUMENTALIZACIJA RELATIVISTIČNE KAKOVOSTI

## POVZETEK

*Kakovost je uzakonjen instrument nadzora in transformacije visokega šolstva z vzvodi kulture, ki je bolj organizacijska kot akademska. Ne opira se na univerzi lastne koncepte tega, kaj je dobro, torej na jasno strukturirane ideale in vrednote, temveč na funkcionalnost po sebi. Esencialistična opredelitev se ne zdi mogoča, ker je funkcionalna kakovost pomensko relativna in razrahljana – služi heterogenim, partikularnim interesom. Tako na sistemski in regulatorni ravni kot v praksi ni enotnega esencialističnega koncepta kakovosti z univerzalnim sistemom vrednot, ki bi odkrito usmerjal presoje kakovosti v akreditacijskih in evalvacijskih postopkih v delih, ki presegajo ugotavljanje skladnosti z objektivističnimi predpisi in se opirajo na izrekanje vrednostnih sodb. Instrument česa je torej kakovost v praksi? Odgovor poskuša ponuditi empirična raziskava evalvacijskih praks v Sloveniji, ki kaže, da kakovost ne zasleduje višjih idealov univerze, temveč sistematično pomaga visoko šolstvo preseliti v polje ekonomsko-pravnih razmerij in ga prilagoditi ekonomskim interesom.*

**Ključne besede:** akademski, ekonomistični, tehnokratski in konstruktivistični pristop h kakovosti, evalvacijske prakse

## CONCEPTS OF QUALITY IN EVALUATION PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF RELATIVISTIC QUALITY - ABSTRACT

*Quality is a legalized instrument of control and transformation of higher education through a culture that is rather organizational than academic. It does not rest on university's concepts of what is good, i.e. on clearly structured ideals and values, but on functionality per se. An essentialist definition seems impossible, since functional quality thrives on relative and loose meaning – it serves heterogeneous, particular interests. At the systemic and regulatory level as well as in practice, there is no unified essentialist concept of quality based on a universal system of values that would openly steer evaluations in parts that exceed establishing compliance with objectivist regulations and depend on passing value*

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*judgements. Instrument of what then is quality in practice? The empirical research of evaluation practices in Slovenia tries to show that quality does not pursue university's higher ideals but rather systematically helps to move higher education into the field of economic and legal relations and adapt it to economic interests.*

**Keywords:** *academic, economic, technocratic and constructivist approach to quality, evaluation practices.*

## UVOD

Čeprav so prizadevanja za dobro izobraževanje in raziskovanje del univerzitetne tradicije, je instrumentarij zagotavljanja kakovosti kot novost v slovensko visoko šolstvo prispel na valu neoliberalnih politik novega upravljanja javnega sektorja ter začel vanj uvajati funkcionalizem, pod katerim se bohotijo univerzi ekstrinzične vrednote. Pred akademska načela je stopila skrb za izdatke v visokem šolstvu in poslovno uspešnost oziroma tržno naravnost, ki jo spremlja za akademsko dejavnost obremenjujoča masifikacija študija (Newton, 2006; Nadoh Bergoč in Kohont, 2007).

Sprememba je temeljila na vstopu konceptov in besedišča upravljanja kakovosti mehанизiranih in avtomatiziranih proizvodnih procesov v visoko šolstvo, ki so slednjega začeli obravnavati skozi prizmo upravljanja pričakovanj ljudi ter virov, potrebnih za izobraževanje in raziskovanje (Srikanthan in Dalrymple, 2002). Spremenjeno paradigmo so nacionalne vlade s pristopom novega upravljanja javnega sektorja sistematično vtakale v celoten državni aparat (Kovač, 2002). Akademsko regulacijo tako izpodriva upravna vladavina, ki s profesionalizacijo vodstvenih funkcij uprav visokošolskih zavodov te spreminja v korporativne organizacije (Močnik, 2013). Visoko šolstvo se tudi s pomočjo kakovosti spreminja iz javne v storitveno dejavnost, v kateri neposredno odgovornost med posamezniki in zavodom prevzemajo ekonomski in pravni odnosi. V njih odgovornost za kakovost storitev postaja, kakor piše Biesta (2010), finančna in apolitična.

V novem polju je uvedena kakovost ostala pomanjkljivo opredeljena, tradicijo predstav dobrega v izobraževanju in raziskovanju pa je radikalno pretrgala. Zatekla se je k puhli predpostavki, »da se kakovost prenovljenega sistema visokega šolstva diametralno razlikuje od kakovosti dosedanjega sistema terciarnega izobraževanja« (Nadoh Bergoč in Kohont, 2007, str. 99). Nekdanje razprave o dobrem izobraževanju nadomeščajo razprave o uporabnem, optimiziranem, učinkovitem, uspešnem, odgovornem in preglednem izobraževanju (Biesta, 2010). Takšen pogled na kakovost odpira vrata njeni instrumentalizaciji: omogoča ji opravljati funkcijo uresničevanja partikularnih, izključujočih se in univerzi ekstrinzičnih interesov ter uvajanja (samo)nadzora skozi stalno poročanje in načrtovanje, usmerjeno v merjenje učinkovitosti in produktivnosti po ekonomsko obarvanih ciljih, kazalnikih in standardih (Bourdieu in Passeron, 1990).

Vrednote vplivajo na predstave o tem, kaj je v visokem šolstvu kakovostno in kaj ni. Opredelitve kakovosti ne morejo mimo sistemov vrednot in ne morejo biti niti znanstveno

niti ideološko nevtralne (Pirsig, 2005; Možina, 2009; Biesta, 2010). Kljub visoki stopnji standardizacije, tj. kljub številnim unitarnim specifikacijam, ki jih na področju kakovosti v visokem šolstvu določajo nacionalni predpisi, so osnovni pojmi s pojmom kakovosti na čelu relativni in pomensko prazni, z njimi povezane vrednote pa latentne in raznolične, kar dopušča interesno uporabo logike in jezika kakovosti. Kakovost posledično ne more sistematično razločevati med akademskimi, ekonomističnimi, tehnokratskimi in konstruktivističnimi vrednotami. Na paradoksen način sooča izmuzljivo naravo individualno, družbeno in kulturno pogojenega spoznavanja in razumevanja kakovostnega z objektivnim preverjanjem in merjenjem po predpisanih normah, standardih, kazalnikih in organizacijskih ciljih (Pirsig, 2005; Wittek in Kvembekk, 2011). Ker mita objektivne in merljive kakovosti ne brzda konceptualno poenoten program s strukturiranim sistemom vrednot, so presoje kakovosti kljub svojemu videzu rezultat partikularnih in relativnih vrednostnih sodb.

Članek obravnava povezavo med transformacijami idealov visokega šolstva in vsesplošno relativnostjo njegove kakovosti. Posledice obstoječih razmer skuša izluščiti iz lastnosti evalvacijskih praks v Sloveniji. V empiričnem delu ponuja odgovor na glavno raziskovalno vprašanje, v kakšnem obsegu in s kakšnimi učinki so različni esencialistični koncepti kakovosti in posledično različni ideali visokega šolstva navzoči v evalvacijskih poročilih presojevalcev (t. i. strokovnjakov) v postopkih podaljšanja akreditacije študijskih programov. Na rezultatih za dve različni vrsti študijskih programov iste stopnje in dve različni skupini disciplin, v katere so študijski programi vpeti, pa raziskava osvetli tudi, koliko je instrument kakovosti v svoji konceptualni relativnosti občutljiv za intrinzične posebnosti študija. Predstavljeno stanje je del prve obsežne raziskave vpliva instrumenta kakovosti na spremembe v slovenskem visokem šolstvu. Spodbuja premislek o nadaljnji kritični analizi prevladujočih konceptov in idealov kakovosti ter posledicah njene uveljavljene relativnosti.

## **K POJMOVANJU KAKOVOSTI VISokega ŠOLSTVA**

Kljub pomenski in konceptualni odprtosti kakovosti v visokem šolstvu obstajajo številni poskusi opredelitev, ki jih je mogoče členiti na funkcionalistične in esencialistične ter na partikularne (tj. relativistične in individualistične) in holistične oziroma univerzalistične. Alternativno se lahko členijo na tiste, usmerjene v kontekst, in tiste, usmerjene v agense (Watty, 2014). Prav tako se lahko členijo na esencialistične in nominalistične (Kump, 1994b). Line Wittek in Kvembekk (2011) ločnico pri opredeljevanju potegneta med subjektivnim in objektivnim – v prvem primeru se kakovost povezuje z dobrim izobraževanjem ali visokošolskimi zavodi, v drugem pa s kazalniki.

Tako v znanstvenih kot strokovnih besedilih namesto poskusov strukturiranja idealov obrege visokega šolstva prevladujeta relativizacija in opuščanje opredeljevanja kakovostnega zaradi partikularnih in izključujočih se pogledov posameznih skupin agensov na kakovost (Krause, 2012). Poudarja se na primer poznavanje individualnosti, partikularnosti in

specifike namena kakovosti (Erčulj, 2000). Vendar isti avtorji, ki reproducirajo relativnost kakovosti, obenem svarijo pred neugodnimi posledicami nezmožnosti njene opredelitve (Krause, 2012). Takšna namreč lahko pomeni karkoli. Lahko je presplošna ali pa postavlja umetne in celo kontradiktorne meje (Wittek in Kvembekk, 2011).<sup>1</sup> Njenih pomenskih gradnikov ni mogoče povezovati v strukturirano celoto. Ekstrinzične vrednote svojega primata ne odstopijo akademskim vrednotam niti se z njimi ne povežejo. To neurejeno sobivanje dveh vrednostnih svetov ima visoko ceno. Kakovost ne more pojasniti, ali in v kakšnem razmerju so za posamezne modalnosti visokega šolstva (na primer za različne stopnje in vrste študija ali njihovo vpetost v različne discipline) dobro uporablanje ali ustvarjanje znanja; kvalifikacija, socializacija ali subjektifikacija; uresničevanje individualnih pričakovanj, organizacijskih ali univerzalnih ciljev; izobraženost diplomantov, njihova zaposljivost ali bilanca visokošolskega zavoda; kognitivna sprememba študenta na podlagi njegove učne izkušnje, učni izidi in kompetence za delovno mesto ali široko in poglobljeno znanje na najvišji ravni; ter akademski, strokovni ali poslovni habitus. Tudi slovenska strokovna in znanstvena literatura reproducira odklon do absolutnih, univerzalnih in idealističnih sidrišč kakovostnega v visokem šolstvu, kakovost pa prepušča osmišljanju skozi procesne rituale in prakse, ki naj bi jo hkrati manifestirali in nosili.<sup>2</sup>

Dediščina političnih projektov Evropske unije je bila nekritično prenesena v nacionalne predpise in pravilnike na visokošolskih zavodih, v katerih z redkimi izjemami ni mogoče zaslediti opredelitev kakovosti. Do danes v Sloveniji ne bele knjige ali nacionalni programi, kot tudi ne zakoni ali podzakonski akti niso ponudili razlage kakovosti v visokem šolstvu ali je postavili v razmerje do predhodnih konceptov kakovostnega v znanosti in izobraževanju. Kljub vsesplošni razširjenosti klicanja kakovosti je doslej ni opredelila ali v koncept postavila niti njena glavna in uradna skrbnica, Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije za kakovost v visokem šolstvu (v nadaljevanju: Agencija). Podobno so se z izzivom spoprijeli posamezni visokošolski zavodi.

Glavno holistično opredelitev kakovosti v visokem šolstvu sta ponudila Harvey in Green (1993). Razčlenila sta jo na pet krovnih pristopov in predstavila njihov zgodovinski razvoj.

### **Holistična opredelitev kakovosti v visokem šolstvu**

Kakovost kot izjemnost ali odličnost je pristop, ki kakovost povezuje z nečim posebnim, izvrstnim, izjemnim, ki pomeni presežno ali visoko vrednost. O tem absolutističnem pristopu (Kump, 1994b; Možina 2009), ki sta ga povezala s statusom lastnika oziroma tistega, ki mu je taka kakovost priznana, ter z visoko ceno oziroma visokim simbolnim

1 Podobno je mogoče očitati tistim holističnim in esencialističnim opredelitvam kakovosti, ki so bodisi tavitološke bodisi postrežejo s konstruktom abstraktnih in sintetičnih pomenskih gradnikov kakovosti, oddaljenih od realnih praks v visokošolskem polju.

2 V ospredju se znajdejo organizacijska in upravljavka vprašanja operacionalizacije procesov zagotavljanja in izboljševanja kakovosti. Pogosto se promovirajo poslovni modeli kakovosti in odličnosti, kot so ISO, EFQM, TQM, ter merila, standardi in kazalniki, ki jih postavljajo organizacije, kot sta Organizacija za gospodarsko sodelovanje in razvoj ter Svetovna banka (Kroflič, 2015; Nadoh Bergoč in Kohont, 2007).



kapitalom, sta podvomila. Med drugim sta ga označila za tradicionalističnega, elitističnega ter neuporabnega za visokošolske politike in za presojo kakovosti. Za neprimernega je bil označen tudi pri nas (Kump, 1994b). Tako avtorja kot njuni sledilci so ta pristop zavili v nesprejemljivi elitizem in snobizem, ki izvira iz anglosaškega okolja in ni povezan s sistemom univerzalnih akademskih vrednot in predstav o dobri univerzi. Akademsko elito so poistovetili z družbeno, politično in ekonomsko elito ter odpravili brezčasne ideale produkcije in reprodukcije visoke vednosti ter njene meritokratske regulacije znotraj avtonomne akademske skupnosti.

Kakovost kot popolnost sta Harvey in Green (1993) opredelila kot brezhibnost in konsistentnost v smislu izpolnjevanja specifikacij oziroma standardov za doseg stanja brez napake, ki poleg zanesljivosti pomeni tudi merljivo konformnost z zahtevanim. V imenu kakovosti se uvaja oblika nadzora, kot je poprej obstajala v industriji (Burrows, Harvey in Green, 1992). Line Wittek in Kvembekk (2011) za ta pristop ugotavljata, da znotraj organizacijske kulture združuje objektivne specifikacije z odgovornostjo agensov, Sonja Kump (1994b) pa opozarja na nemožnost prenosa takšnih specifikacij na družbene procese. Poleg epistemološke konfuznosti ta koncept zaznamuje protislovje, da so lahko bodisi vsi enako kakovostni bodisi boljši položaj enega nujno pomeni slabši položaj drugega. Če bi se namesto oznake *popolna kakovost* uporabljala točnejša oznaka *skladnost/ustreznost v visokem šolstvu*, bi se lahko omejile navidezna grandioznost, iluzije in prakse nične vrednosti (Alvesson, 2013), ta pristop pa bi se približal svoji ontološki resnici. Izpolnitev standarda ali specifikacije še ne pomeni nujno kakovosti, temveč le skladnost.

Kakovost kot ustreznost namenu izhaja iz namena izdelka ali storitve (Harvey in Green, 1993). Pomemben je način doseganja namena, ki ga ne zaznamuje ekskluzivnost, temveč inkluzivnost, in ki ga je mogoče doseči brez zunanjega priznanja. Namen se lahko konstruira skozi pričakovanja, potrebe ali zahteve uporabnikov, ki jih pomaga sooblikovati ponudnik, ter skozi organizacijske cilje, ki so zaviti v poslanstvo, vizijo in strateške cilje. Ponujeni novorek opušča tradicionalne vloge univerze in uvaja ekonomistične kategorije uporabe oziroma potrošnje, ponudbe in blagovne izmenjave. Sprejeti organizacijski cilji nastajajo pod vplivom dominantnih skupin agensov in skozi svoje uresničevanje kvečjemu ustvarjajo videz kompromisa različnih upravičenih interesov, ki ni nujno presečna slika njihove množice. Prav tako niso nujno povezani s kakovostjo po sebi. Ta pristop, ki prevladuje v polju visokošolske kakovosti, ne temelji na idealih. Je funkcionalen (Kump, 1994b; Možina 2009) in relativističen. Usmerjen je v usklajevanje visokošolske izobrazbe z nameni delovnega življenja in poslovnimi ambicijami visokošolskih zavodov (Wittek in Kvembekk, 2011).

Kakovost kot vrednost za denar (Harvey in Green, 1993) je izključno ekonomističen pristop. Nacionalne vlade z njim povezujejo *odgovornost*. To odraža vidik kakovosti kot namen za čim manj stroškov izobraziti čim več državljanov. Spregleda kvazitržno ureditev visokega šolstva in predpostavlja, da bo na dolgi rok trg uredil polje kakovosti in ločil dobre visokošolske zavode od slabih. Takšna kakovost je funkcionalna, materialna in relativna, njeno gonilo pa ni odgovornost, temveč učinkovitost (Wittek in Kvembekk, 2011).

Kakovost kot transformacija pomeni kvalitativno spremembo (Harvey in Green, 1993). V ospredje postavlja vprašanje, kaj izobraževanje naredi študentu, in ne, kaj naredi zanj. Ključni vrednoti sta izboljševanje in opolnomočenje. Prva pomeni transformacijo v smislu *dodane vrednosti* v pridobljenem znanju, zmožnostih in veščinah, druga pa vpliv študentov (ki jih avtorja označujeta kot *učence*) na svojo transformacijo, možnost soodločanja in nadzor nad svojim *učanjem*, na podlagi katerega naj bi *učenec* kot centralni agens izobraževalnega procesa *kapitaliziral* svojo izobraževalno izkušnjo. Jana Nadoh Bergoč in Kohont (2007) v tem pristopu prepoznata premik od utilitarističnega učinkilnega študija k procesnorazvojnemu. Kim Watty (2014) pa opozori na njegovo usmerjenost v demokratizacijo študentov brez osvetljevanja ideoloških deficitov njene omejenosti na kapitalistično demokracijo zahodnega sveta in krepitev individualizma. Ta pristop, ki je pravzaprav segment konstruktivističnega pristopa in bo ponovno obravnavan v nadaljevanju, kvalitativne spremembe omejuje na kognitivne, študij pa psihologizira in ga zvede na učenje.

Harvey in Green (1993) ideale univerzitetnega izobraževanja, ki so obstajali pred prihodom kakovosti v visoko šolstvo in h katerim sodita tudi ideala emancipacije in razsvetljevanja skozi razvoj kritičnega in avtonomnega mišljenja, omejita le na konstruktivistični pogled na kakovost, pri tradicionalnem pristopu h kakovosti pa jih zaobideta. Njuni pristopi segajo od funkcionalističnih do esencialističnih. Slednjih ne zgradita na homogenih sistemih vrednot, temveč bodisi na vrednotah, ki imajo psihologistično in procesno podstat, bodisi na negativnih vrednotah, povezanih z elitizmom in snobizmom, s priokusom anahronizma. Mednje posejeta ekonomistične vrednote in jih opreta na ekonomistični novorek, obenem pa zapostavita univerzi lastna jezik in logiko za prepoznavanje dobrega. Ker je modalnost konceptualnih izbir, ki jih ponudita, problematična, sta upravičena ponoven poskus holistične opredelitve kakovosti, ki sega od funkcionalizma do esencializma, in oblikovanje pristopov, ki temeljijo na deklariranih sistemih vrednot. Porajajoča se dihotomija loči med reprodukcijo akademske kulture na eni strani in kulture performativnosti (Biesta, 2010) ter organizacijske kulture na drugi. Univerzi, ki ustvarja projekt družbe ter za seboj potegne aktivno zavzetost in delovanje (Freitag, 2010), pa ob bok postavlja univerzo, ki je sama projekt zunanjih in od nje neodvisnih vplivov. Vendar pričujoči prispevek ni namenjen postavitvi teoretičnega okvira pristopov h kakovosti, temveč zgolj konceptualnih izhodišč, na katerih je temeljila raziskava evalvacijskih praks. V nadaljevanju sledi strnjena skica alternativnih pristopov h kakovosti, ki bo pomagala razumeti rezultate in njihovo interpretacijo v empiričnem delu.

### **Alternativni pristopi h kakovosti v visokem šolstvu**

Ekonomistični pristop h kakovosti visoko šolstvo postavlja v funkcijo gospodarstva. Njeni poglavitni vrednoti sta prispevek k gospodarski rasti in napredku ter produkcija usposobljene in produktivne delovne sile. Tudi visokošolski zavod ponotranji ideal izobraževalne ustanove kot organizacije, ki sama izvaja pridobitno in gospodarsko dejavnost. Želena paradigma njegovega upravljanja je managerializem, managerska superstruktura (Findlow, 2008) pa je idealno jedro koncentracije moči in vpliva, ki ju pomagajo konsolidirati

organizacijski cilji (strategije) in organizacijska kultura. Produkcija znanja je zainteresirana, usmerjena v ustvarjanje uporabne vrednosti in dobička. Pomembna so visoko specializirana znanja (Kump, 1994a), ki pomagajo obvladovati svet, dosegati napredek in večati gospodarsko rast. Idealno izobraževanje je strokovno usposabljanje oziroma veččinjenje, povezano z delovnim okoljem. Poleg stabilnih, zaprtih in praktičnih specialnih znanj (Minogue, 1973) posreduje kompetence za delovno mesto, mehke in prenosljive veščine in sposobnosti pridobivanja, urejanja in organiziranja informacij (Findlow, 2008) ter krepi tehnično, informacijsko, komunikacijsko in funkcionalno usposobljenost (Kunze, 2016). Razmerja med agensi se vrednotijo kot koristoljubna poslovna in tržna razmerja med odjemalci, uporabniki oziroma potrošniki in ponudniki oziroma preskrbovalci, ki izmenjujejo blago (Kump, 1994a). Pristop temelji na individualnih potrebah, pričakovanjih, hrepenenjih in željah (Scott, 2003). Pomembne vrednote v izobraževanju, raziskovanju in upravljanju so tako: učinkovitost, inovativnost, optimalnost, produktivnost, podjetnost, (poslovna) uspešnost, storilnost, rentabilnost, uporabnost, konkurenčnost, fleksibilnost, grandioznost in privlačnost. Ekonomski kapital in poslovni etos se pri vrednotenju povzdiguje nad simbolni kapital in akademski etos.

Tehnokratski pristop h kakovosti (Freitag, 2010) se opira na organizacijsko kulturo. Razmerja med agenci so idealno pravna, odnosi med njimi in njihove dejavnosti pa so formalni in regularni. Čim bolj jih urejajo pogodbe in predpisi. V ospredje prihajajo vprašanja pravic, obveznosti in dolžnosti agensov. Pomembno je, da se njihovi interesi in aktivnosti neodvisno od konteksta ali vsebine upravljajo strokovno, tehnično ter po ustaljenih in predvidljivih procesih. Bolj kot njihova politična vloga in uveljavljanje najprepričljivejših argumentov je pomembna možnost oziroma pravica do participacije po vnaprej določenih ciljih, predpisih in procesih. Tak pristop povzdiguje statistično obravnavo in merjenje družbene dejavnosti, na primer bibliometrijo ali »kazalnike kakovosti«, ter ju povezuje z organizacijskimi cilji, da skupaj racionalizirajo odločitve mimo političnih in akademskih argumentov. Zato pozdravlja mehanizme spremljanja in nadzora visokošolske dejavnosti. Pomembne vrednote v izobraževanju, raziskovanju in upravljanju so tako: odgovornost (v povezavi z nadzorom in financami), transparentnost in preglednost, pravni in procesni red, strokovno in racionalno upravljanje, načrtovanje, evidentiranje, dokumentiranje, poročanje, spoštovanje izvedbenih rokov, (samo)nadziranje, (samo)ocenjevanje, sledljivost in dostopnost. Freitag (2010) opozori na problem samoreferenčnosti tega pristopa, ker visoko šolstvo navidezno očisti vrednosti in vrednot – te namreč postanejo pravila, tehnike in procesi po sebi. Visokošolski zavod je kakovosten, če je njegov administrativni stroj profesionalen in dobro naoljen, tako da se skladno poganja. Kot tak normalizira in utrjuje obstoječi red ter tiste spremembe, ki so skladne z vladajočo ideologijo, z dominantnim pogledom na namen visokega šolstva. Agense pomaga vpeti v pravila igre, jih instrumentalizirati in individualizirati.

Konstruktivistični pristop h kakovosti (Pérez Rodríguez, 2011) emancipatorni in kritični vidik izobraževanja omejuje na usposabljanje in veččinjenje znotraj monisitčne in pretežno aplikativne vednosti ter hegemonie ideologije. Visokošolski učitelj se idealizira kot

inštruktor ali trener, ki podpira in lajša učenje, študent pa kot individualistični učenec, ki mu visokošolski zavod zagotavlja pogoje za maksimizacijo učne izkušnje (Pérez Rodríguez, 2011). Kvalitativno spremembo v znanju, veščinah in vrednotah ter v osebnem razvoju (Cvetek, 2015) znotraj učenčevih subjektivnih in kognitivnih omejitev (Pérez Rodríguez, 2011) je mogoče povezati s transformacijo v smislu dodane vrednosti (Harvey in Green, 1993). Opravka imamo s pristopom, ki tako kot tehnokratski v imenu kakovosti v visoko šolstvo pripušča ekonomistične vrednote, hkrati pa tudi tehnokratske. Vsi trije pristopi kažejo medsebojno povezavo: učenec kot uporabnik svojo odgovornost prakticira skozi svobodo pri izbiri tistih vsebin, ki obljublajo najboljši izid (tj. zaposljivost) za najmanjši vložek. V tem kontekstu so pomembni načini in tehnika poučevanja ter ocenjevanja po sebi, v ospredje pa so postavljeni študent in njegove individualne želje. Poleg učinkovitosti, fleksibilnosti in uporabnosti izobraževanja so ključne naslednje vrednote: refleksija učne izkušnje, na študenta osredinjeno učenje, proaktivnost, opolnomočenje in izboljšanje (Harvey in Green, 1993), izkustveno se naučiti učiti se, upravljanje učenja in nadzor nad njim.

Akademski pristop h kakovosti idealizira avtonomno univerzo, ki razsvetljuje, nezainteresirano zasleduje resnico in širi razum (Jaspers, 2003). Opira se na akademsko kulturo in akademske vrednote. Dober študij je zahteven in poglobljen. Odvija se na visoki ravni (Kunze, 2016). Temelji na akademski vzgoji, ki posameznika kvalificira, socializira, kultivira in subjektificira (Biesta, 2010; Ortega y Gasset, 2014). Uvede ga v disciplino in v akademsko okolje ter mu ponudi strokovna znanja in veščine za poklic. Odpre mu vrata v družbeni in kulturni svet ter v njun red, a ga hkrati razsvetli in izgradi v avtonomnega posameznika, ki je sposoben razsodno interagirati z akademskim okoljem, stroko, družbo, kulturo in svetom (Jaspers, 2003; Ortega y Gasset, 2014). Takšno izobraževanje je široko in celostno. Je pluralno in odprto (Kump, 1994a; Miller, 2006; Ortega y Gasset, 2014). Postavlja visoka pričakovanja, zahteva velike vloške, trud in intelektualno sposobnost. Diplomant postane učenjak. Z izobrazbo si izoblikuje intelektualno zavest in odgovorno ravna s svojim razumom ter z dovršenim in celovitim znanjem, ki ga je usvojil (Collini, 2012). Visokošolsko poučevanje je refleksivno sokratsko izobraževanje z logično in intelektualno razlago, sistematizacijo znanja, njegovo dopolnitvijo, razčlenitvijo, sintezo, umestitvijo v disciplino, konkretizacijo in kontekstualizacijo, posplošenjem in abstrakcijo, vrednotenjem in refleksijo (Jaspers, 2003; Minogue, 1973). Pogloblja študentovo znanje. Destabilizira in demistificira njegova prepričanja. Izziva njegov intelekt in ga usmerja v emancipatornem prehodu od naivne h kritični zavesti (Biesta in Bingham, 2010; Sutton, 2015). Visokošolski učitelj ima velik simbolni kapital kot pedagog in znanstvenik ter ima razvit akademski habitus. Izobražuje po izbranem pedagoškem pristopu in upošteva posebnosti matične discipline, stopnje in vrste študija. Raziskovanje je znanstveno. Zaznamuje ga avtonomno in nezainteresirano (odvisno od discipline) zasledovanje resnice in razuma na ustvarjalni in znanstvenoraziskovalni ravni ter po pravilih matične discipline. Ustvarjena vednost, ki je nastala na podlagi jasnega, strogega, natančnega, sistematičnega, kritičnega in izvirnega približevanja resnici oziroma širitve razuma, ima visoko intrinzično vrednost ter prispeva k razvoju in bogatitvi discipline, pa tudi stroke

oziroma kulture (Jaspers, 2003; Ortega y Gasset, 2014). Primarni elementi akademske kakovosti so: akademska svoboda, institucionalna avtonomija oziroma avtonomija akademske skupnosti, odgovornost do visoke vednosti in disciplinarna naravnost, kolegialnost, akademski etos, akademski habitus, akademska kultura, akademski ugled in vpliv, samoupravna meritokracija, interna regulacija vednosti, njen pluralizem in odprtost ter vsebinska in racionalna naravnost.

## METODOLOGIJA

Raziskava konceptualnih lastnosti kakovosti v evalvacijskih praksah črpa iz javno dostopnih končnih evalvacijskih poročil strokovnjakov v postopkih podaljšanja akreditacije študijskih programov, o katerih je svet Nacionalne agencije Republike Slovenije za kakovost v visokem šolstvu sprejel končno odločitev v obdobju od 2014 do 2017 (Spletni arhiv Agencije, b. d.). Ugotavlja, katerim spremenljivkam kakovosti so strokovnjaki posvečali več pozornosti in katerim manj glede na to, ali je bila določena lastnost oziroma stanje vredno njihovega kvalitativnega poudarka (Širok, 2018a).

Poročila so bila analizirana s pomočjo anketnega vprašalnika z vprašanji zaprtega tipa, ki je za vsako spremenljivko kakovosti posebej usmerjal zajemanje kvalitativnih poudarkov strokovnjakov. Slednji so poudarke v skladu z uradno predlogo za pisanje poročil razvrščali med tri kategorije – prednosti, priložnosti za izboljšanje in neskladnosti. Lastnosti oziroma stanja so tako že zgolj z razvrščanjem k eni od kategorij vrednotili kot dobra, celo izvrstna, slaba oziroma takšna, ki bi lahko bila boljša, ter kot nesprejemljiva. Ker vseh spremenljivk niso vselej obravnavali s poudarkom znotraj ene od treh kategorij, se je za vsako spremenljivko dodatno spremljala četrta kategorija *ni obravnavano*.

Od skupaj 156 anketnih vprašanj izbranih 30 vprašanj pokrije 30 opisnih spremenljivk kakovosti, ki jih je mogoče povezati z različnimi esencialističnimi pristopi h kakovosti. Izbrane spremenljivke so bistvene za področje organizacije, vsebine in izvajanja študijskih programov. To področje iz Meril za akreditacijo in zunanjo evalvacijo visokošolskih zavodov in študijskih programov (v nadaljevanju: Merila za akreditacijo) namreč glede na preostala najbolj celovito povezuje tako kurikularna, študijska, pedagoška, raziskovalna kot tudi organizacijska, upravna in procesna vprašanja ter s tem predstavlja prostor, v katerem lahko vsak pristop h kakovosti zavzame bodisi dominanten bodisi marginalen položaj, in obenem akademskemu pristopu h kakovosti glede na preostala področja ponuja priložnost, da pride najbolj do izraza. Iz raziskave so izvzeta vprašanja za področje vpetosti v okolje, delovanje visokošolskega zavoda, kadrov, študentov, materialnih pogojev in zagotavljanja kakovosti, saj so v njih določeni pristopi h kakovosti, še posebej akademski, apriorno marginalizirani. Vprašanja oziroma spremenljivke so neposredno utemeljene na določilih v obdobju od 2014 do 2017 veljavnih in nespremenjenih Meril za akreditacijo.

Vnašanje kvalitativnih poudarkov strokovnjakov v vprašalnike je zahtevalo subjektivno interpretacijo zgolj pri pripisu posamezne kvalitativne trditve strokovnjakov k posameznemu anketnemu vprašanju. Kvalitativna vrednost pri tem je bila jasna, saj so trditve kot

prednost, priložnost za izboljšanje ali neskladnost kategorizirali izključno strokovnjaki. Interpretirati je bilo treba, ali trditev sodi k specifičnemu vprašanju; ali je presplošna ali preozka, da bi jo bilo mogoče z gotovostjo povezati z vprašanjem; ali po vsebini preveč odstopa od posameznega vprašanja in bi jo bilo treba pripisati k drugemu vprašanju; ali pa je ni mogoče pripisati k nobenemu vprašanju (Širok, 2018a). Pri vnašanju kvalitativnih poudarkov v vprašalnike so bila upoštevana naslednja pravila: kadar v poročilu za več študijskih programov posamezen študijski program ni posebej omenjen, velja poudarjena ugotovitev za vse študijske programe; za vsako poročilo je zaradi možnosti spremembe kvalitativnih poudarkov treba upoštevati morebitno dopolnilno mnenje skupine strokovnjakov; isti poudarek je mogoče povezati z več kot enim anketnim vprašanjem le, če gre za sestavljeno, združeno ali posplošeno trditev, ki se očitno in celovito navezuje na več kot eno anketno vprašanje; če k enemu anketnemu vprašanju sodi več specialnih kvalitativnih poudarkov, se ti na podlagi ocene skupaj pripišejo k povezanemu anketnemu vprašanju; in kvalitativni poudarki, ki jih strokovnjaki razvrstijo v napačna področja presoje, se vnesejo v anketna vprašanja matičnega področja presoje. V jedru besedila poročila nad prednostmi, priložnostmi za izboljšanje in neskladnostmi se preverijo morebitna pojasnila: če je kvalitativni poudarek premalo jasno ali presplošno zapisan, da bi ga bilo mogoče kategorizirati; če je preveč specifičen, da bi ga sploh bilo mogoče kategorizirati; če je vsebinsko podoben poudarek v poročilu že označen z drugo kvalitativno kategorijo ali z več kot eno kvalitativno kategorijo hkrati. Če kvalitativnega poudarka kljub navedenim okoliščinam ni mogoče razvrstiti ali če gre za očitno pomoto, se ga pri izpolnjevanju vprašalnika prezre (Širok, 2018b).

Vzorec zajema poročila strokovnjakov za 485 študijskih programov visokošolskih zavodov, kar je 99 % vseh programskih reakreditacij v obdobju od 2014 do 2017 oziroma 49 % celotne populacije akreditiranih študijskih programov v Sloveniji po podatkih eVŠ evidence visokošolskih zavodov in študijskih programov za december 2017. V nadaljevanju obravnavane skupine filtriranih študijskih programov obsegajo 65 visokošolskih strokovnih in 159 univerzitetnih študijskih programov prve stopnje. Študijskih programov s področja humanističnih ved in umetnosti je 119, s področij računalništva, tehniških ved, proizvodne tehnologije ter kmetijstva, gozdarstva in ribištva pa 94 (Širok, 2018a; eVŠ evidence visokošolskih zavodov in študijskih programov, 2017).

Pričujoča raziskava je del širše raziskave kakovosti v terciarnem izobraževanju in lastnosti evalvacijskih praks v sklopu sistemske analize, ki jo Agencija periodično izvaja, in poleg evalvacij študijskih programov zajema tudi evalvacije visokošolskih zavodov in višjih strokovnih šol ter analizo njihovih samevalvacijskih poročil.

Specifično skuša raziskava odgovoriti na vprašanje, kateri pristopi h kakovosti so ne le pogostejše obravnavani, temveč se v smislu kritičnosti obravnave tudi večkrat poudarjajo kot priložnosti za izboljšanje oziroma neskladnosti (s predpisi). Nadalje na primerjavi rezultatov za skupini dveh različnih vrst študijskih programov iste stopnje in dve različni skupini disciplin, v katere so študijski programi vpeti, ugotavlja občutljivost instrumenta kakovosti za intrinzične posebnosti študija. Predstavljeni rezultati osvetljujejo posledice

pomensko odprte in relativne kakovosti v odsotnosti deklariranih in strukturiranih sistemov vrednot.

Ustvarjena baza podatkov ponuja rezultate za študijske programe kot razmerja med štirimi kategorijami za vsako spremenljivko kakovosti posebej, ki so izražena v odstotkih študijskih programov za posamezne kategorije in posamezne spremenljivke. Rezultate je mogoče filtrirati po stopnji in vrsti študijskega programa, njegovi klasifikaciji, vrsti in statusu visokošolskega zavoda, ki ga izvaja, ter področni primernosti članov skupine strokovnjakov glede na njegovo področje. Za posamezne spremenljivke, njihove skupine, povezane z različnimi pristopi h kakovosti, kot tudi za vse spremenljivke in celotno populacijo študijskih programov so bili za namen analize, primerjave in interpretacije rezultatov izračunani srednje vrednosti in standardni odkloni. Ker je raziskava namenjena opisu stanja in ne napovedovanju trendov ali statističnemu preskušanju hipotez, so rezultati predstavljeni na ravni opisne statistike.

## REZULTATI IN INTERPRETACIJE

Pristopi h kakovosti, ki sta jih ponudila Harvey in Green (1993), v Merilih za akreditacijo in na področju presoje, ki ga zajema raziskava, niso uravnoteženo zastopani. Vseh 30 spremenljivk kakovosti glede na svoje izhodišče v Merilih za akreditacijo (2014) sodi bodisi h konceptu kakovosti kot popolnosti (oziroma skladnosti) bodisi kakovosti kot ustreznosti namenu. V njih ni apriornih zasevkov izjemnosti, odličnosti, posebnosti oziroma izvrstnosti, ki bi temeljila na elitizmu in visokem simbolnem kapitalu, saj so Merila za akreditacijo kot izhodišče za oblikovanje spremenljivk zapisana v obliki minimalnih univerzalnih specifikacij. V njih prav tako ni izključno ekonomskega pogleda na visokošolsko dejavnost in pogoje zanjo v smislu razmerja med vložki in izkupički kot vrednosti za denar. Koncept kakovosti kot transformacija pa formalno vznikne šele z Merili za akreditacijo iz avgusta 2017 (Uradni list RS, št. 42/17 in 14/19), ki kot novost uvajajo na študenta osredinjen študij. Spremenjena Merila za akreditacijo so začela veljati v obdobju po programskih evalvacijah, zajetih v pričujočo raziskavo.

Štirje pristopi alternativne holistične opredelitve kakovosti na podlagi vrednot in idealov so zaradi omejenega števila spremenljivk povezani in poenostavljeni na osnovno dihotoimijo med esencialističnimi in funkcionalističnimi spremenljivkami, ki pretežno temeljijo bodisi na visokemu šolstvu intrinzičnih bodisi ekstrinzičnih vrednotah ter na reprodukciji akademske kulture na eni strani in kulture performativnosti ter organizacijske kulture na drugi. Tako so v eno skupino združene spremenljivke s predispozicijo za akademsko kakovosti, v drugo pa spremenljivke, ki so glede na svojo podlago v Merilih za akreditacijo pretežno povezane z ekonomističnim in tehnokratskim pristopom h kakovosti oziroma mejijo na konstruktivističnega.

Za vse spremenljivke skupaj znaša srednja vrednost za poudarjene prednosti 12,82 %, za priložnosti za izboljšanje 15,78 % in za neskladnosti 0,41 %. Povprečen delež obravnavanosti spremenljivke je 29,03 %, kar pomeni, da v prek 70 % študijskih programov

povprečna spremenljivka ni bila obravnavana. Sorazmerna usklajenost med povprečnim deležem prednosti in priložnosti za izboljšanje je povezana z usmeritvijo Agencije, da naj strokovnjaki prednosti in priložnosti za izboljšanje številčno uravnotežijo. Bolj ko rezultati posamezne kvalitativne kategorije glede na drugo odstopajo od povprečnih vrednosti in predvsem večje ko je rezultatsko razhajanje med njima, toliko bolj so odkloni in razlike pomenljivi. Razmeroma skromen povprečni delež obravnavanosti gre pripisati velikemu številu spremenljivk kakovosti (156), zaradi česar je obravnavanost kvalitativnih poudarkov bolj razpršena.

Razpon deležev sega pri prednostih od 0,21 % do 66,39 %, pri priložnostih za izboljšanje od 0 % do 38,35 %, pri neskladnostih od 0 % do 3,3 %, pri kategoriji *ni obravnavano* pa od 99,59 % do 22,89 %. Sledi prikaz ranžirne vrste rezultatov za celoten vzorec po vseh 30 spremenljivkah kakovosti za kategoriji *ni obravnavano* in *priložnosti za izboljšanje*, ki najpreprosteje ponazarjata, čemu so strokovnjaki dajali kvalitativni poudarek in kako kritični so bili pri tem, ko so namesto prednosti poudarjali priporočila za izboljšanje oziroma slabosti. Prikaz je dopolnjen z vrednostmi stopnje kritičnosti, ki pomeni razmerje razlike med deleži prednosti ter vsoto deležev priložnosti za izboljšanje in neskladnosti.

Tabela 1: Ranžirna vrsta rezultatov za celoten vzorec po kategoriji obravnavanosti

Spremenljivka	Kakovost kot ustreznost namenu (0) / kakovost kot popolnost oz. skladnost (1)	Akademsko kakovost (0) / ekonomistični, tehno-kratski oz. konstruktivistični pristop (1)	Ni obravnavano	Priložnost za izboljšanje	Razlika med prednostmi ter vsoto priložnosti in neskladnosti
Zadovoljevanje potreb okolja po znanju (intelektualna vpetost v širšo skupnost)	0	0	22,89 %	10,72 %	56,12 %
Zaposljivost oz. zaposlenost diplomantov	0	1	37,94 %	34,43 %	-8,45 %
Skladnost vsebine ŠP (tj. študijski program) z njegovimi cilji, znanji, kompetencami in učnimi izidi	1	0	53,40 %	29,69 %	-14,43 %
Krepitev kompetenc za delovno mesto	0	1	54,43 %	37,32 %	-29,07 %
Skladnost vsebine ŠP z njenim kreditnim vrednotenjem	1	1	55,88 %	38,35 %	-38,14 %
Spremembe in posodobitve vsebin ŠP	1	0	57,11 %	7,42 %	28,22 %



Spremenljivka	Kakovost kot ustreznost namenu (0) / kakovost kot popolnost oz. skladnost (1)	Akademsko kakovost (0) / ekonomistični, tehno-kratski oz. konstruktivistični pristop (1)	Ni obravnavano	Priložnost za izboljšanje	Razlika med prednostmi ter vsoto priložnosti in neskladnosti
Kompetence diplomantov	1	1	57,32 %	12,58 %	17,11 %
Prilagojenost vsebin ŠP potrebam študentov	0	1	58,35 %	28,66 %	-16,29 %
Izvajanje kontaktnih ur, njihov obseg in razporeditev	1	0	60,41 %	23,71 %	-10,31 %
Sodelovanje z gospodarstvom na področju izobraževanja	0	1	61,86 %	8,45 %	21,24 %
Upoštevanje pobud študentov za spremembe ŠP	0	1	63,09 %	20,62 %	-4,33 %
Prilagojenost vsebin ŠP potrebam gospodarstva	0	1	65,36 %	23,09 %	-11,75 %
Zahtevnost študija	1	0	68,45 %	21,44 %	-11,75 %
Preverljivost učnih izidov in kompetenc	0	1	69,90 %	17,73 %	-11,96 %
Sodelovanje z delodajalci pri prenovi ŠP	0	1	70,52 %	22,27 %	-15,46 %
Zadovoljevanje potreb trga dela	0	1	71,13 %	25,36 %	-21,85 %
Učni izidi in kompetence ter njihova povezanost z zaposljivostjo	0	1	73,40 %	22,47 %	-18,35 %
Dovršenost strukture ŠP	1	0	73,61 %	22,27 %	-18,77 %
Prilagojenost izvajanja ŠP potrebam študentov	0	1	75,26 %	14,64 %	-4,54 %
Izobraženost diplomantov	1	0	76,70 %	3,30 %	16,70 %
Zadovoljevanje potreb po znanju za javne storitve in javno dobro	0	1	79,18 %	1,03 %	18,76 %
Obvezne sestavine ŠP, ki se ne tikajo kurikulumu	1	1	79,18 %	16,49 %	-15,04 %
Način ali oblika izvajanja ŠP (glede na število vpisanih, ciklično, na daljavo, kombinirano)	1	0	84,33 %	9,28 %	-3,71 %
Skladnost vsebine ŠP z njegovim področjem in disciplino	1	0	86,80 %	7,01 %	-1,65 %
Interdisciplinarnost študijskih vsebin	1	0	88,66 %	4,95 %	1,44 %

Spremenljivka	Kakovost kot ustreznost namenu (0) / kakovost kot popolnost oz. skladnost (1)	Akademsko kakovost (0) / ekonomistični, tehnokratski oz. konstruktivistični pristop (1)	Ni obravnavano	Priložnost za izboljšanje	Razlika med prednostmi ter vsoto priložnosti in neskladnosti
Skladnost vsebine ŠP z njegovo stopnjo in vrsto	1	0	93,20 %	3,30 %	0,21 %
Sodelovanje z zunanjimi akademiki, znanstveniki, strokovnjaki ali umetniki s področja ali discipline pri prenovi ŠP	0	0	95,05 %	4,74 %	-4,53 %
Povezanost učnih izidov in kompetenc z ravno znanja, socializacije in subjektifikacije	0	0	97,32 %	1,86 %	-1,45 %
Spremembe obsega in razporeditve izvajanja kontaktnih ur	1	0	98,76 %	0,21 %	0,82 %
Spremembe načina ali oblike izvajanja ŠP	1	0	99,59 %	0,00 %	0,41 %

Vir: osebne analize.

Pogled na lestvico pokaže, da so v akademsko kakovost usmerjene spremenljivke, kot sta *skladnost vsebine študijskega programa z njegovim področjem in disciplino* ter *skladnost študijskega programa z njegovo stopnjo in vrsto*, kljub izrecni podlagi v Merilih za akreditacijo poredkoma poudarjene in vrednotene. Odnos strokovnjakov do njih ni izrazito kritičen, saj je stopnja kritičnosti blizu 0 % in presega povprečno vrednost za vseh 30 spremenljivk (-3,36 %). Nasprotno pogled na spremenljivke *krepitev kompetenc za delovno mesto* (ekonomistični pristop in kakovost kot ustreznost namenu), *skladnost vsebine študijskega programa z njenim kreditnim vrednotenjem* (tehnokratski pristop in kakovost kot popolnost oziroma skladnost) in *prilagojenost vsebin študijskega programa potrebam študentov* (konstruktivistični pristop in kakovost kot ustreznost namenu) pokaže visoko stopnjo obravnavanosti in visoko stopnjo kritičnosti. Na tem mestu je treba pojasniti, da neskladnost zagotovo, priložnost za izboljšanje pa praviloma pomenita, da mora visokošolski zavod na takšen poudarek odreagirati pred sprejetjem odločitve o podaljšanju akreditacije oziroma se mora ukrepu vsaj zavezati z akcijskim načrtom. Preseneča tudi, da ima od teh treh spremenljivk izrecno podlago v Merilih za akreditacijo le spremenljivka, povezana s kreditnim vrednotenjem.

Če si rezultate za izbranih pet spremenljivk pogledamo še z vidika razlike v kvalitativnih poudarkih med visokošolskimi strokovnimi študijskimi programi in univerzitetnimi študijskimi programi prve stopnje ter med študijskimi programi s področja humanističnih

ved (področje 22) in umetnosti (področje 21) na eni strani ter študijskimi programi s področij računalništva (področje 48), tehniških ved (področje 52), proizvodne tehnologije (področje 54) ter kmetijstva, gozdarstva in ribištva (področje 62) na drugi strani (Klasi-us, b. d.), primerjava povprečij rezultatov za obe skupini spremenljivk dodatno osvetli razlike v odnosu strokovnjakov do študijskih programov na osi splošno, nezainteresirano in kritično izobraževanje/usmerjeno oziroma aplikativno izobraževanje ter na osi vpetost študija v mehke čiste discipline/trde aplikativne discipline.

Tabela 2: Podrobnejša primerjava rezultatov za izbrane vrste/stopnje in študijska področja:

	Ni obravnavano		Priložnost za izboljšanje		Razlika med prednostmi ter vsoto priložnosti in neskladnosti	
	Spremenljivki akademske kakovosti	Spremenljivke ekon., tehn., konstr. kakovosti	Spremenljivki akademske kakovosti	Spremenljivke ekon., tehn., konstr. kakovosti	Spremenljivki akademske kakovosti	Spremenljivke ekon., tehn., konstr. kakovosti
VS. 1. st. (N = 65)	93,08 %	67,18 %	4,62 %	25,64 %	-3,85 %	-23,59 %
UN. 1. st. (N = 159)	87,74 %	49,06 %	6,29 %	43,82 %	0,00 %	-38,16 %
Podr. 21 in 22 (N = 119)	83,62 %	44,82 %	8,41 %	45,94 %	-0,42 %	-38,65 %
Podr. 48, 52, 54 in 62 (N = 94)	96,28 %	57,80 %	2,66 %	32,62 %	-1,60 %	-25,89 %

Vir: osebne analize.

Ravno univerzitetni študijski programi, ki naj bi bili v primerjavi z visokošolskimi strokovnimi bolj splošni, teoretični in primerni za nadaljnji študij, ter študijski programi s področja humanističnih ved in umetnosti, ki morajo ohraniti določeno distanco do aplikativne in monistične vednosti, so pod največjim pritiskom strokovnjakov – slednji ekonomistično, tehnokratsko in konstruktivistično spremenljivko obravnavajo občutno pogosteje in bolj kritično, s čimer takšne študijske programe intenzivneje potiskajo pod okrilje visokemu šolstvu ekstrinzičnih vrednot.

V kolikšni meri se odnos strokovnjakov do študijskih programov, kakor ga razkriva primerjava petih najizrazitejših spremenljivk, potrjuje na primerjavi rezultatov za vseh 30 spremenljivk?

Tabela 3: Primerjava povprečij za 2 skupini po 15 spremenljivk – alternativni pristopi

	Spremenljivke akademske kakovosti (0)			Spremenljivke ekon., tehn., konstr. kakovosti (1)		
	Ni obravnava- vano	Priložnost za izboljšanje	Razlika med prednostmi ter vsoto priložnosti in neskladnosti	Ni obravnava- vano	Priložnost za izboljšanje	Razlika med prednostmi ter vsoto priložnosti in neskladnosti
Vsi pro- grami (N = 485)	77,09 %	9,99 %	2,49 %	64,85 %	21,57 %	-9,21 %
VS. 1. st. (N = 65)	76,10 %	12,20 %	-1,74 %	67,28 %	17,44 %	-3,18 %
UN. 1. st. (N = 159)	76,10 %	10,78 %	2,39 %	61,89 %	25,62 %	-13,92 %
Podr. 21 in 22 (N = 119)	77,76 %	8,24 %	5,55 %	64,26 %	24,43 %	-14,17 %
Podr. 48, 52, 54 in 62 (N = 94)	74,61 %	11,63 %	1,84 %	62,34 %	20,21 %	-3,33 %

Vir: osebne analize.

Na ravni celotnega vzorca študijskih programov se delež obravnavanosti spremenljivk, usmerjenih v ekonomistično, tehnokratsko oziroma konstruktivistično kakovost, poveča za 12,24 %. Podobna sprememba je opazna ob pogledu na rezultate za stopnjo kritičnosti, ki se pri teh spremenljivkah za vse študijske programe skupaj odkloni v negativno za 11,7 %. Glede na zgoraj navedene povprečne vrednosti za vseh 30 spremenljivk in vse študijske programe skupaj sta ta deleža izjemno velika.

Na ravni posameznih skupin filtriranih rezultatov največjo rast v obravnavanosti in stopnji kritičnosti kažejo ravno univerzitetni študijski programi prve stopnje. Razlike so primerljive in imajo podobne implikacije, če rezultate za skupino študijskih programov s področja humanističnih ved in umetnosti primerjamo z rezultati za skupino študijskih programov s področij računalništva, tehniških ved, proizvodne tehnologije ter kmetijstva, gozdarstva in ribištva. Tu preseneča največji odklon v stopnji kritičnosti (-19,2 %) za študijske programe, vpete v reprezentativni mehki in pretežno čisti disciplini. Strokovnjaki torej znatno večji pomen pripisujejo funkcionalnosti izobraževanja kot pa izboljšanju kakovosti glede na njegove intrinzične danosti. Poleg tega to večkrat in pogosteje počnejo ravno pri tistih vrstah in področjih študija, kjer bi morali manjkrat in manj kritično, saj so

ti za funkcionalnost glede na svoje posebnosti bolj občutljivi – bolj jim je tuja in je zanje bolj problematična.

Tabela 4: Primerjava povprečij za 2 skupini po 15 spremenljivk – Harvey in Diana Green (1993)

	Kakovost kot ustreznost namenu (0)			Kakovost kot popolnost oz. skladnost (1)		
	Ni obravnavano	Priložnost za izboljšanje	Razlika med prednostmi ter vsoto priložnosti in neskladnosti	Ni obravnavano	Priložnost za izboljšanje	Razlika med prednostmi ter vsoto priložnosti in neskladnosti
Vsi programi (N = 485)	66,38 %	18,23 %	-3,46 %	75,56 %	13,33 %	-3,26 %
VS. 1. st. (N = 65)	69,54 %	14,67 %	1,13 %	73,85 %	14,97 %	-6,05 %
UN. 1. st. (N = 159)	64,28 %	21,26 %	-7,13 %	73,71 %	15,14 %	-4,40 %
Podr. 21 in 22 (N = 119)	67,17 %	19,61 %	-6,95 %	74,85 %	13,05 %	-1,68 %
Podr. 48, 52, 54 in 62 (N = 94)	65,18 %	17,59 %	-0,35 %	71,77 %	14,25 %	-1,13 %

Vir: osebne analize.

Odnos strokovnjakov do pristopov h kakovosti, kot sta jih ponudila Harvey in Green (1993), problematiko zunanjih presoj študijskih programov osvetli z drugega zornega kota. Rezultati kažejo, da so spremenljivke, povezane s pristopom h kakovosti kot ustreznosti namenu, v povprečju za 9,18 % pogosteje obravnavane, da dosega nekoliko večje deleže priložnosti za izboljšanje oziroma neskladnosti, a hkrati tudi večje deleže prednosti, tako da o pomenljivi spremembi stopnje kritičnosti ni mogoče govoriti. Primerjava po skupinah filtriranih rezultatov za deleže obravnavanosti prav tako ne ponudi večjih razlik. Kljub temu rezultati sledijo trendu, da si strokovnjaki ravno pri univerzitetnih študijskih programih prve stopnje in študijskih programih, vpetih v reprezentativni mehki in pretežno čisti disciplini, prizadevajo za večjo funkcionalnost študija. Kakovost je v očeh strokovnjakov primarno funkcionalna – največkrat je dobro, kar služi namenu, predvsem interesu posameznih skupin agensov.

## SKLEP

Čeprav zastopanost različnih esencialističnih konceptov kakovosti že v Merilih za akreditacijo ni uravnotežena, raziskava kaže, da evalvacijske prakse obstoječo asimetrijo še stopnjujejo. Medtem ko so v akademsko kakovost usmerjene spremenljivke obravnavane bolj poredko in z nižjo stopnjo kritičnosti, je rezultat za spremenljivke, usmerjene v ekonomistične in tehnokratske ideale, nasproten. Obstoječi konceptualni horizont relativne kakovosti poleg tega premalo upošteva intrinzične posebnosti študija. Z njimi prihaja celo v destruktivno kolizijo. Višje stopnje obravnavanosti in kritičnosti pri spremenljivkah, povezanih z visokemu šolstvu ekstrinzičnimi ideali, namreč kažejo ravno študijski programi, ki so glede na svojo vrsto in disciplinarno vpetost še posebej občutljivi za aplikativnost in funkcionalnost. Pomensko odprta in relativna kakovost visoko šolstvo potiska v polje ekonomsko-pravnih razmerij. Prilagaja ga interesom, ki ne izhajajo iz intrinzičnih danosti regulacije in (re)produkcije visoke vednosti. Dobro je predvsem, kar služi namenu – neposrednim interesom posameznih skupin agensov. Čeprav štejejo med slednjimi za največje upravičence študenti, instrument kakovosti skrbi, da se njihova pričakovanja kot tudi pričakovanja preostalih kodirajo in upravljajo z jezikom, logiko in vrednotami, ki so akademski kulturi pretežno tuji.

Akademski pristop h kakovosti ima v primerjavi z drugimi pristopi večji potencial, da avtentično vzdržuje avtonomijo in identiteto univerze. Če se opira na akademske vrednote, še ni vase zaprt, elitističen, snobističen ali anahronističen. Prav tako ni samoumevno nemogoč. Na uradni instrument kakovosti imajo namreč visokošolski zavodi z rektorsko konferenco na čelu v svetu Agencije velik vpliv. Če pa se mora kakovost znajti v množici esencialističnih in funkcionalističnih pristopov, mora odkrito razločevati med sistemi vrednot in razglašati svojo konceptualno modalnost. Opredeliti mora, na katerih idealih slonijo njene sodbe in priznanja ter komu oziroma čemu predstavlja določeno vrednost.

Predstavljena raziskava po eni strani osvetljuje aktualno interesno in politično pogojenost instrumenta kakovosti, po drugi pa utelešenje njegovega vpliva na poslanstvo visokega šolstva. Zato so pomembne nadaljnje kritične analize kakovosti in njenih konceptov. Ustvarjena baza podatkov omogoča celovitejšo raziskavo občutljivosti instrumenta kakovosti za intrinzične posebnosti študija, pa tudi raziskavo nekaterih drugih oblik modalnosti kvalitativnih poudarkov: kako se denimo kvalitativni poudarki strokovnjakov usmerjajo v pogoje (za potencialno kakovost), procese (ki naj bi vodili h kakovosti) ali končna stanja (kot udejanjene kakovosti). V tej modalnosti je mogoče iskati tako elemente uvajanja organizacijske kulture in kulture performativnosti kot elemente ustvarjanja praznih ali od dejanskega stanja odmaknjenih podob o dobrem. Kritično analiziranje drugih lastnosti evalvacijskih praks bi zahtevalo raziskavo in metodo, ki bi bila na interpretativni ravni strožja in kompleksnejša.

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## 20 LET ONLINE IZOBRAŽEVANJA NA DOBI

Besedilo, ki je pred vami, nima namena natančnega in izčrpnega prikaza razvoja online študija na DOBI, v njem želim obuditi nekaj točk spomina, ki so pomembne za nekatere temeljne ideje. Tudi zato, ker te še danes veljajo za izhodišča razvoja online izobraževanja.

Na DOBI smo oblikovali strategijo online študija, sprejeto na ključnih organih DOBE. Odločili smo se za najzahtevnejši model študija na daljavo v kombinaciji z e-izobraževanjem, in sicer za v celoti spletno podprto učenje – online učenje brez fizičnega stika med študentom in profesorjem. S celostno podporo študentom in sodobnimi pedagoškimi pristopi zagotavljamo visoko raven aktivnosti študentov, doseganje ciljev, kompetenc, učnih izidov ter sodobno preverjanje in ocenjevanje znanja.

Med študijem študentom ponujamo pedagoško, organizacijsko in tehnično podporo. Študente spremljajo profesorji in online mentorji. Vloga slednjih je predvsem motivacijska, študentom so na voljo 24 ur na dan sedem dni v tednu.

Model online študija na DOBI nas postavlja ob bok modelom online študija, ki veljajo za najbolj domišljene in kakovostne v svetovnem merilu. Oblikovali smo ga kot odgovor na potrebe po bogatitvi in povečanju dostopnosti izobraževalnega prostora v Sloveniji, kot odgovor na potrebe posameznikov po večji fleksibilnosti, individualizaciji, kakovosti njihovega znanja in kompetenc, kot podporo vseživljenjskemu učenju in ne nazadnje kot vnos svetovnih trendov v naš prostor.

### PREHOJENA POT

DOBA je od ustanovitve v devetdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja rasla in se razvijala. Skupaj s sodelavci smo iskali nove priložnosti za vnašanje inovativnosti v slovenski izobraževalni prostor. Razvijali smo izobraževane programe, izvajali jezikovne in srednješolske programe ter ustanovili prvo zasebno višjo strokovno šolo v Sloveniji. V devetdesetih je bila družbena naravnost naklonjena tudi razvoju zasebnih izobraževalnih zavodov. To nas je navdajalo z optimizmom. Spremljali smo novosti v svetu in se navduševali nad novimi pristopi za večanje dostopnosti in fleksibilnosti izobraževanja ob podpori informacijske tehnologije. Mikalo nas je, da bi tudi na DOBI odraslim z drugačnimi pristopi omogočili večjo dostopnost izobraževanja. Zato sem predlagala, naj začnemo razvijati online študij, sodelavci so bili navdušeni. Oblikovali smo razvojnoprojektni tim, skupaj smo sedli Mateja, Ema in Rado. Vodenje tima je bilo zame pravi izziv, vsi člani smo bili zavzeti in željni novosti pri uvajanju drugačnih pristopov v izobraževanju ob zavedanju, da so inovacije generator spreminjanja v izobraževanju.

Ko sem idejo predstavljala na takratnem ministrstvu za šolstvo in na Andragoškem centru Slovenije, so se nejeverno spogledovali in se spraševali, ali ima ta ideja v Sloveniji možnosti za uspeh.

Navkljub vsem dvomom smo staknili glave, pripravili analizo online študija v svetu, študirali literaturo, se vključevali v različna izobraževanja, obiskovali izobraževalne ustanove v Evropi, spoznavali modele, pripravili izhodišča za naš model z jasnimi cilji. Da, dve leti smo trdo delali pri projektu – to je še danes naš največji razvojni projekt – in uspelo nam je. Razvili smo DOBIN model online študija. Že od vsega začetka projekta smo postavljali v ospredje razvoj pedagoškega modela, ki bo nadomestil fizični kontakt med profesorjem in študentom. Za informacijsko podporo smo uporabili že obstoječa in ponujena orodja, ki so jih razvili na svetovnih univerzah.

### **ŠTEVILO ŠTUDENTOV SE JE IZ LETA V LETA POVEČEVALO, TUDI NJIHOVO ZADOVOLJSTVO**

Študentje na DOBA Fakulteti in na Višji strokovni šoli so v glavnem zaposleni, večja je zastopanost žensk, povprečna starost je med 25 in 40 leti. DOBIN model online študija je najprimernejši za zaposlene, športnike in druge, skratka za tiste, ki zaradi službe in družinskih obveznosti ne morejo obiskovati predavanj.

Pred 20 leti smo na DOBI v ta edinstveni način študija vpisali prvih 30 študentov, ob ustanovitvi DOBA Fakultete pa smo model uspešno prenesli tudi v visokošolske programe na fakulteti.

Danes je v DOBIN model online študija vključenih prek 1200 študentov na leto, ki delajo in živijo v 46 državah sveta. Pri nas je diplomiralo že prek 7000 online diplomantov, ki uspešno prenašajo nova znanja v delovna okolja.

Zadovoljstvo študentov z izvedbo je visoko (ocena 6,7 na sedemstopenjski lestvici).

Uspešnost in napredovanje diplomantov skrbno spremljamo, saj so prav diplomanti ambasadorji kakovosti naše izobraževalne ustanove. Tako ugotavljamo, da kar 56 % diplomantov po diplomi napreduje v karieri. Tudi delodajalci so naš pomembni partner. Povprašamo jih po zadovoljstvu z diplomanti. Najvišje ocenjujejo razvoj mehkih kompetenc pri diplomantih (sodelovanje, delo v timih, kritičnost, inovativnost, samoorganiziranost, reševanje problemov, inovativnost). To so pomembne kompetence 21. stoletja.

### **RAZVILI SMO DOBIN MODEL ONLINE ŠTUDIJA**

Model online študija na DOBA Fakulteti je *usmerjen v študenta in kompetenčno zasnovan*: v ospredju so študentje in njihove učne aktivnosti, ki so usmerjene v razvoj in krepitev kompetenc. Model študente spodbuja k aktivnemu sodelovanju v učnem procesu, skupnemu kreiranju novega znanja, izhajajočega iz njihovih izobraževalnih, socialnih in delovnih izkušenj, k sodelovalnemu učenju, ki ga podpiramo z različnimi aktivnimi

metodami dela, kot so diskusije, študije primerov, reševanje problemov, projektno in timsko delo ter drugo.

To niso samo želje in zapisani cilji, tako dejansko poteka izvedba online študija na DOBI. Ob sprotnih aktivnostih si študentje sami določajo čas za učenje in učni tempo ter s podporo tehnologije dostopajo do učnih informacij in gradiv kjerkoli in kadarkoli.

Za kakovost izvedbe online izobraževanja je pomembno nenehno pedagoško inoviranje. Pedagoško inoviranje na DOBA Fakulteti razumemo kot spodbujanje, širjenje in razvijanje kulture inoviranja, in sicer na področju:

- inovativnih pedagoških pristopov,
- uvajanju inovativnih tehnologij,
- razvijanja inovativnih vsebin ter
- sodelovanja in povezovanja z vsemi deležniki.

Na DOBI se zelo zavedamo dejstva, da samo uvajanje tehnologije brez sodobnih pedagoških pristopov ne zagotavlja uspeha in da je lahko ob nestrokovni implementaciji za študente celo neprimerno. Pristop mora biti celosten, poleg pedagoških pristopov je med drugim pri online študiju treba uvesti tudi sodobnejše načine preverjanja in ocenjevanja znanja. Slednji izhajajo iz učnih ciljev predmeta, so integrirani v študijske aktivnosti študentov ter potekajo sprti s povratnimi informacijami in samoocenjevanjem.

V nasprotju z drugimi ustanovami terciarnega izobraževanja na DOBI že od vsega začetka največ pozornosti namenjamo podpori študentom v vseh fazah – pred študijem, med njim in po njem. Sistem podpore nenehno krepimo ter izgrajujemo skladno s potrebami in pričakovanji kandidatov, študentov in diplomantov v celoto, ki zajema pedagoško, organizacijsko, tehnično in administrativno podporo. Tako zastavljen celostni sistem podpore pomeni danes eno ključnih dodanih vrednosti DOBINEGA modela online študija, kot to prepoznavajo naši študentje in strokovnjaki s področja online izobraževanja v svetu.

Na DOBI se zavedamo, da ima lahko zanemarjanje spremljanja velikega napredka spoznanj o učenju in novih tehnologijah in njihovega uvajanja precejšnje negativne posledice. DOBIN model online izobraževanja zato nenehno dograjujemo in inoviramo. V 20 letih smo spremenili celoten pedagoški model v skladu z najnovejšimi dognanji pedagogike in visokošolske didaktike, spreminjali smo tehnologijo s poudarkom na krepitvi interaktivnosti med učitelji in študenti ter dogradili zagotavljanje varnosti pri preverjanju in ocenjevanju znanja.

## **KAKOVOST SMO POTRJEVALI Z MEDNARODNIMI AKREDITACIJAMI**

DOBA je s svojim dinamičnim in nenehno razvijajočim se modelom online študija, ki sledi mednarodnim standardom kakovosti online izobraževanja, prepričala tudi strokovnjake. Je prva institucija v jugovzhodni Evropi, ki je pridobila mednarodni akreditaciji UNIQUE in EOCCS.

## RAZISKAVE IN RAZVOJ SO VPETI V NAŠE POSLANSTVO

Pozorno spremljamo učinkovite pedagoške prakse v svetu in se tudi sami intenzivno ukvarjamo z raziskovanjem in razvojem novih oblik in načinov poučevanja ter učenja.

Online izobraževanje je eno izmed temeljnih področij raziskovanja visokošolskih učiteljev in raziskovalcev na DOBA Fakulteti. Izvedli smo naslednje večje raziskovalne in razvojne projekte:

- Analiza stanja na področju digitalizacije in e-izobraževanja v visokem šolstvu,
- Osebnostne značilnosti in učno vedenje online študentov DOBA Fakultete,
- Uvedba učnih analitik v online izobraževanje na DOBI.

Od leta 2007 na DOBI deluje *Svet za študij na daljavo/e-študij*, ki z zunanjimi eksperti spremlja naše delo in predlaga ključne točke razvoja, od leta 2018 pa še *Inštitut za e-izobraževanje*. Njegovo poslanstvo je z raziskovalnim in razvojnim delom prispevati k nadaljnjemu razvoju in kakovosti online študija na DOBI ter h krepitvi DOBE kot nosilke in spodbujevalke tovrstnega študija v Sloveniji, z mednarodno prepoznavnostjo in ugledom.

V skladu z našo zavezanostjo odličnosti poučevanja in učenja v okviru *Kompetenčnega centra* na DOBI skrbimo za razvoj kompetenc za sodobno učenje in poučevanje pri vseh deležnikih fakultete.

## ONLINE ŠTUDIJ DANES IN NAŠ POGLED V PRIHODNOST

Online izobraževanje je danes v svetu prepoznano kot kakovosten način izobraževanja, ki ponuja izobraževalne priložnosti vsem skupinam prebivalstva ter spodbuja razvoj znanja in spretnosti, ki so bistveni za obstoj in razvoj digitalne družbe. V ospredju ciljev online izobraževanja so ustvarjanje znanja s kritičnim razmišljanjem, povezovanjem, sodelovanjem in reševanjem problemov ter ustvarjanje in odprta uporaba digitalnih vsebin.

Informacijske tehnologije so pomemben vzvod inoviranja in prilagajanja v izobraževanju. Na DOBI se zavedamo, da se inovativnost v izobraževalnih ustanovah ne »zgodí« sama po sebi, je navdih, je kultura, ki jo gojimo in negujemo ter se z njo vsak dan poslovno in osebno razvijamo. Izvajanje in razvijanje online študija v prihodnosti je za nas izziv. Zavedamo se nalog, ki so pred nami, in verjamem, da jih bomo izpeljali. Postavljamo si visoke in ambiciozne cilje, ki nas vodijo med vodilne izobraževalne ustanove glede na dobro prakso v EU na področju visokokakovostnega online izobraževanja. Usmeritve in cilje bomo tako kot doslej dosegali z motiviranimi in zavzetimi sodelavci. Imamo voljo, znanje, optimizem, energijo in veliko željo po novem, edinstvenem izobraževanju, kar je potreba za danes in za jutri.

Skrb zbujaajoče pa je zaostajanje Slovenije na področju e-izobraževanja, posebej v visokošolskem sektorju. Na to opozarjajo mednarodne in domače raziskave. Izvajanje online študija na DOBI z mednarodnimi akreditacijami je za konkretnejši preboj e-izobraževanja v Sloveniji premalo, treba bo strniti moči in oblikovati novo strategijo.

Danes skrbi na DOBI za razvoj in izvedbo online izobraževanje široka razvojna in strokovna ekipa: Irena, Marko, Vesna, Stanko, Teja, Zvezdana, Ksenija, Jure, Aneta. Ti sodelavci skrbijo za uvajanje pedagoških inovacij, za pedagoško podporo profesorjem, zadovoljstvo študentov. Za izvedbo je odgovornih 126 višješolskih predavateljev in visokošolskih učiteljev, ob sodelovanju 73 online mentorjev.

Naš slogan je: *»razvijati nove stvari« in »razvijati obstoječe stvari na bolje«.*

***Jasna Dominko Baloh***



*Nebojša Macanović, Jagoda Petrović, Goran Jovanić (ur.)*

## **POLOŽAJ MARGINALIZOVANIH GRUPA U DRUŠTVU** *Banja Luka, Centar modernih znanja; Beograd, Resursni centar za specijalnu edukaciju, 2019*

Obsežna monografija/zbornik *Položaj marginaliziranih skupin v družbi* (629 str.) je izšla ob mednarodni znanstveni konferenci *Družbene deviacije*, ki jo prirejajo od leta 2016 in se ukvarja z različnimi družbenimi problemi, ki so pogosto vzrok disfunkcionalnosti. Letos je bila konferenca osredotočena na temo marginaliziranih skupin v družbi in je odprla pereča vprašanja družbene izključenosti. Organizator je bil Center modernih znanj iz Banjaluke. Svoje raziskave so na konferenci predstavili znanstveniki iz osmih držav: Avstrije, Madžarske, Slovenije, Hrvaške, Makedonije, Srbije, Črne gore ter Bosne in Hercegovine.<sup>1</sup>

Zbornik vključuje 66 prispevkov in je zanimiv tudi za področje izobraževanja odraslih in starejših odraslih. Osvetljuje namreč različne probleme posebnih ciljnih skupin, ki so družbeno na obrobju ali so družbeno izključene. Avtorji in avtorice analizirajo probleme z različnih teoretskih zornih kotov, saj prihajajo iz različnih znanstvenih disciplin (pravo, psihologija, politologija, medicina, socialna pedagogika, socialno delo, andragogika idr.), in ponudijo rešitve za ublažitev ter premagovanje družbene marginalizacije in prikrajšanosti. Na ta način zbornik oblikuje multidisciplinarno celoto.

Vsak avtor je na svoj način osvetlil specifične posameznih marginaliziranih skupin, kot so revni, brezposelni, brezdomci, migranti ... Druga skupina referatov prikazuje možne socialne izključenosti glede na družinsko strukturo, npr. enočlanska gospodinjstva, enostarševske družine, otroci brez staršev, številčne družine ipd. Tretja skupina analizira družbeno izključene skupine, kot so etnične, rasne in verske manjšine, skupine različne spolne usmeritve (npr. skupine LGBT) in skupine z alternativnim slogom življenja (npr. deviantne subkulture mladih). Nekatero raziskavo (npr. *Marginalizacija mladih na delu*, *Marginaliziran položaj starih žensk*) so izpostavile družbeno marginalizacijo glede na starost in ugotavljajo, da so skupine mladih in skupine starih (lahko) brez družbene moči. Tudi storilci kaznivih dejanj so skupina, ki jo je treba obravnavati ločeno. Vključuje trenutne in nekdanje zapornike, mladoletne prestopnike. Kompleksna tematika se dotika tudi žrtev nasilja in otrok zapornikov (npr. raziskava o marginalizaciji otrok zapornikov).

<sup>1</sup> Program konference je dostopen na <https://www.centarmodernihznanja.com/novosti/38-agenda-iv-medjunarodne-konferencije>. Dostopne so tudi ugotovitve dela v sekcijah na povezavi <https://www.centarmodernihznanja.com/novosti/40-zaključci-cetvrte-medjunarodne-konferencije-drustvene-deviacije>.

Mnogo težav imajo v družbi skupine ljudi z nizko izobrazbo, slabim zdravstvenim stanjem (npr. naraščanje števila obolelih za demenco) in hendikepom. Ljudje, ki imajo posebne potrebe zaradi telesnega ali duševnega hendikepa, so soočeni z mnogimi stereotipi (podobno kot druge marginalizirane skupine) in imajo veliko ovir tudi v izobraževalnem sistemu. O tem govori raziskava Diskriminacija oseb z invalidnostjo v sistemu visokega izobraževanja v Srbiji. Na ta problem so opozorili tudi raziskovalci, ki so sami osebe s posebnimi potrebami. Prav to, da je konferenca vključujoča ne le na ravni pristopov in vsebin obravnave problemov, temveč tudi na ravni izvajalcev (govorcev, moderatorjev), prispeva k izjemni klimi v konferenčnih prostorih.

V zbornik so vključena tudi poročila raziskav o skupinah ljudi z različnimi vrstami odvisnosti (od alkohola, psihoaktivnih substanc). O tem je govorila dr. Zlokovićeva v uvodnem referatu o starših, ki so odvisniki, in otrocih, ki so soodvisniki. Raziskovalci poudarjajo tudi razmeroma novo področje raziskovanja odvisnosti od dela kot vrste neke-mične odvisnosti.

Večdisciplinarni pristop k problematiki marginalizacije (pravni, medicinski, psihološki, sociološki, antropološki) kaže na zelo širok nabor načinov razmišljanja in obravnave ter tudi na zelo veliko skupin, ki so lahko marginalizirane. Besedila v zborniku predstavljajo različne možnosti za reševanje problemov, tako denimo prispevki s področja različnih programov za resocializacijo zapornikov (Trening socialnih veščin v zaporih), migrantske krize (Migranti kot »nevarni drugi«), trgovine z ljudmi (Položaj žrtev trgovine z ljudmi) ipd. V zborniku so dela raziskovalcev iz različnih kulturnih in znanstvenoraziskovalnih okolij (npr. fakulteta za kriminalistiko, kriminologijo in varnostne vede, filozofska fakulteta, edukacijsko-rehabilitacijska fakulteta, fakulteta za politične vede, ekonomska fakulteta, klinika za bolezni odvisnosti, ustavno sodišče ...), kar daje vpogled tako v različne kulturne prakse kot v različne pravne in strokovne rešitve (socialno delo, socialna pedagogika). Različne države se s problemi družbene izločenosti soočajo na različne načine, skladno s svojim gospodarskim, pravnim in kulturnim okvirom. Lahko bi rekli, da je problematika še veliko bolj kompleksna v državah, ki so v tranziciji.

Zbornik je sporočilo o možnosti preventivnega delovanja, iskanju smernic za razvoj novih praks, ki zmanjšujejo izključenost, in hkrati kaže na odgovornost znanstvenikov, da prispevajo k družbeni kakovosti, blagostanju in povezanosti. Prihodnje leto (2020) bo že peta mednarodna konferenca. Vse bolj se izrisuje potreba, da v negotovih in nepredvidljivih ter zelo kompleksnih časih znanstvena skupnost išče rešitve za izzive sodobnih družb. Po objavljenih besedilih sklepamo, da je ustrezen odgovor sodelovanje vseh akterjev, zasnovano na solidarnosti. Eden od tako imenovanih akterjev je tudi akademska skupnost, od katere se pričakuje tudi dejavno iskanje možnosti za družbeno solidarnost.

*Aleksandra Šindić*