

**EDUCATION OF ADULT ROMA
FROM MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES IN SLOVAKIA**

**EDUKÁCIA DOSPELÝCH RÓMOV
Z MARGINALIZOVANÝCH KOMUNIT NA SLOVENSKU**

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Abstract. The subject of this study is the analysis of the current state and of possibilities of the education's development of adult Roma from marginalized communities⁴ in the system of formal and informal education. We also include the concept of informal learning, which we, alongside with the necessary changes of formal and informal education, see as the potential space for reaching of the desired changes in the life of marginalized Roma. We look at these mentioned systems critically while we, with the analysis of current educational processes in adult age, point to the limits and lacks, which co-influence the lasting problem of low effectiveness of education of adult Roma from marginalized communities. We are sure that in the education of adult Roma it is necessary to implement the elements of individualization of edu-

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⁴ Marginalized segregated Roma communities are socially excluded Roma communities, whose inhabitants have restricted access to public service, goods and sources and to participation in deciding in a town. They have restricted contact with other inhabitants living outside their community. Their communities are on a lower social-economical level than other parts of town and have different characteristics, e.g. lower quality and overpopulation of the houses, absence of the infrastructure, high unemployment, income and material poverty of the inhabitants, lower level of education and higher amount of lower age categories [38, p. 4]. Segregated Roma communities (geographically separated independent settlements) and separated Roma communities (separated Roma parts, streets or colonies, which are a part of town) belong to the marginalized Roma communities in Slovakia [10, p. 11].

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cation. The main aim of any educational and social interventions within this target group is the learners' critical reflection of the reality and of their own options for change. The basis for our methodology is the methodology of social sciences [9], the critical pedagogy [11] and the theory of cultural capital [4]. Formal adult education is realized in the sub-system of second-chance education. As the absence, resp. low level of education is a strong exclusive factor on labor market, we consider enabling Roma from marginalized communities to complete their education in a school system to be crucial. The level of education is still the strongest stratification factor not only on labor market. From the educational activities in the system of non-formal education point of view, we deal mainly with the problematic effectiveness of non-formal education in connection with barriers of participation in education. We also draw attention to the inadequately created educational activities, which still keep the marginalized Roma passive. In the process of informal learning we think of the potential of its results in favor of the development of individual potential of adult Roma. The background of our ideas about problems in all kinds of education of adult marginalized Roma as well as about the necessary changes, are situated mainly in the theories of emancipation pedagogy [11], cultural capital [4] and transformative learning [23]. After having examined the theories and practice of the adult marginalized Roma education in Slovakia we can say, that education is not sufficiently individualized on the basis of knowing and understanding of its participants – adult Roma, on the basis of knowing their specific human capital in interaction with everyday situation and contexts of their social and cultural environment and such as is not focused on the educational needs of adult Roma from marginalized communities. We see the individualization of education as a possible tool of the inclusion of Roma into the social structures of the society. The education as a complex phenomenon needs to be seen in the connection with knowing of the historically developing mutual relations of Roma and the majority, but, in the practice of planning and realizing of education, it is necessary to eliminate the prevailing view „we“ and „they.“

1. Introduction

Educational paths of Roma from marginalized communities have, in comparison with non-Roma population, lower level concerning quality and quantity (number of years at school is generally lower and the quality of education is more often sub-standard). Slovak educational system is rela-

tively strictly linear, which means that the failure of primary or secondary education strongly correlates with the low level of education in adult age. The particular stages of the educational path are interconnected and one is a pre-condition for the other. In this educational reality, concentrated mainly on children, youth and formal education, the system of *adult education* has a more *adapting* than *compensatory* function. It means that it fulfils the needs and strenghtens the positions of mainly those, who were successful in previous phases of education.¹ For those, who could not reach success in the early stages of job preparation from various reasons, the system of adult education cannot create space to catch up their educational handicap, although the school legislative in Slovakia enables it [40, 39]. The system of further adult education not only does not offer an alternative for the undereducated and unemployed, it even deepers the differences between adults, as it emphasizes qualification differences between the educated and undereducated. The concept of equal opportunities is oriented to those participants of lifelong learning, who have the lowest contribution from education and so their interest in education is the lowest. A more intensive reflection of those processes is missing in the Slovak andragogy and in the practice of adult education, what leads to the strengthening of the selective function of adult education, which serves mainly the strong ones and forgets the weak ones. In a more and more polarized society, adult education should be interested adequately, concerning its humanistic tradition, in the real social practice through accentuation of its social functions. Successful transfer to economy, enabling social development and adequate life quality, has to be accompanied with strengthening of education's social functions and the necessity of lifelong learning. Despite the fact that the right to education is enshrined in the Constitution and legally established duty to school attendance, the large group or Roma from marginalized communities do not achieve quality education [see f. e. 12]. They do not have the same conditions to enter the school environment, the school system excludes the

¹ The criticism of the school as an institution comes mainly from its strong ideological and selective function, according to which the institutionalized education serves to confirm the social status among the unequal people. Providing of competencies for application in the labor world is seen [e.g. 4] as secondary; the strengthening of the ideological dominance is more important. „The school does not choose the most competent ones. It gives the opportunity to stand out to those, who meet the criteria of the dominant group the best... The system of formal education legitimizes the position of those, who come from higher classes, as if they were the most competent to occupy the best places.“ [17, p. 48].

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significant groups of Roma children and the system of adult education is not ready (organizationally and ideologically) to compensate for these lacks.

2. Formal and informal education of adult Roma

The education of adult marginalized Roma is still an insufficiently reflected and a very briefly examined area from the point of view of andragogy. Only a few authors deal with this topic in our conditions [e.g. 34; 19; 25; 37], if we take out the target group of children and youth from the literature dealing with Roma issue, resp. the important, but broader connections of education (employing, social care, living, health state, missionary activities etc.)

To identify the areas, in which education of adult Roma takes place, we will use the division, according to which the *formal education* is an educational activity of the institutions that is meant for education and professional training and leads to the officially accepted documents of qualification [21]. Beside school education (initial and second chance), also further education belongs to formal education, according to the *Act nr. 568/2009 on lifelong learning* (accredited educational programs with a certificate). *Nonformal education* is usually not finished by obtaining of an official document of completion and it can take place in various institutions (for example workplace, leisure organizations or political parties). *Informal education (learning)* is a common term for the educational (learning) processes that do not have institutional character and take place mainly as side aspects of everyday activity of an adult person. A person often does not realize that learning takes place in his or her diverse activities at home, in the family, work and during their leisure and shaping adult personality in positive and negative sense as well.

This classification helps to identify the segments of the educational practice with adults, in which we can better understand and analyze the issue of adult marginalized Roma education. As the majority of marginalized adult Roma stands out of labor market, the next area of the educational practice is also *education and training for labor market of the job applicants*, which is a part of the tools of active precautions at labor market and follows the specific regulations [41].

3. Second chance education of adult Roma

According to the *Act nr. 568/2009 on lifelong learning*, it is impossible to gain a degree of education in the subsystem of further education. This means that second chance education is not a part of further education, but

it is a fully-valued part of the school education [39, 40]. The realization of education for adult Roma from marginalized communities in the formal educational (school) system comes from the regulations of the Act on upbringing and education [40], where the second chance education is not used. But, second chance education is the common term for this area of education in the terminology of educational policy and in andragogy (theory and practice of adult education).

Providing of second chance education comes from the opinion that every human, mainly adult, is capable of the constant re-interpretation of his or her being. The humanistic theories of education, like for example the conception of self-directed learning, traditionally work with this opinion. Although there are many critical theories (e.g. Frankfurt School, transformative learning or emancipation pedagogy) that doubt the vision of an autonomous person, who is free in deciding, regardless the social, cultural and political conditions, formal adult education is still based on this assumption.

Second chance education comes from the philosophical background, which says that regardless the causes of falling out of education it is right and desired to provide the possibility to increase the educational status of adults in higher age. It should represent an alternative space, that on all levels and in relation to all involved actors (management, methodologists, teachers), hast to avoid of copying the model of school education, in which the potential education participants were unsuccessful. Its aim is to offer the students, pupils – adult people the possibility to complete education, to obtain degree of education. Second chance education is a necessary and important part of the concept of lifelong learning, because it fulfills its main idea – the openness and availability of education at any age of a human.

Second chance education in our conditions is described as “an opportunity for adults to gain in the continual cycle of education such kind and level of education, which is usually gained in childhood or youth during initial cycle of education...” [36, p. 225]. Second chance education can be typically defined according to the types of its participants: they are usually young people who were pushed out of the initial education or there were other reasons why they did not finish the school. In the structure of this group we can identify social groups with common status features, which are formed by life experience of social outsiders [2]. In the Slovak society they are represented mainly by Roma population from marginalized com-

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munities and by another traditional target group of second chance education – prisoners. Second chance education can be seen as a path for reaching of higher education in neo-liberal atmosphere based on the individual responsibility [2]. An author emphasizes the motivation and responsibility of every human for self-development, which is very important in professional training and in interest-based adult education.

There are many publications, research papers and comparative studies concerning the state and development of second chance education generally and in particular countries. Scientific papers, which analyze second chance education in relation to ethnic minorities or to immigrants, are also important concerning the possibilities of education of adult Roma population with the lowest educational status in the school environment in Slovakia. This involves, beside various European countries, also authors from Australia, Canada and the USA [e.g. 27; 26]. The source of knowledge about realization of second chance education is also represented by the results of analyses and researches in the European space [e.g. 24; 7].

There is a direct reference to the need to create possibilities for second chance education for Roma (resp. members of socially excluded communities) with missing or low level of education in the *Strategy of Slovak Republic for the integration of Roma until 2020* [33] in the part dedicated to the aims in the area of unemployment. Second chance education and adult education in general, are primarily connected to the profession roles of an adult. In the document [48, p. 33] there is a global aim „to support the increasing of employment of Roma community members“ and a definition, that this aim should be reached also through „the support of increasing of educational and qualification level of job applicants from Roma communities, who did not finish primary (ISCED 2) and secondary (ISCED 3) education – to support second chance education.“

Target groups of second chance education are homogeneous neither before nor after entering second chance education. The members of these groups have a common experience with failure in education, resp. they share a more or less free and conscious decision to leave the study or not to continue with it. Lower level of education is traditionally connected to the higher risk of poverty as a consequence of unemployment or of a low-paid job, to the higher level of criminality, violence and addictions (as well as of other pathological phenomena), to higher vulnerability and generally to higher risk of social exclusion. Adult education should be naturally con-

nected to the ideas of social equality, equality in the approach towards education and applying of the right for education. Therefore, according to our opinion, andragogy should concentrate more on socially excluded groups of population, on which the second chance education is primarily focused. It is not possible to say how many Roma can be seen as a potential target group of second chance education. We can use available data about the number of people with uncomplete primary, resp. secondary education, which can be found on the whole-country level in the results of *Counting of citizens, houses and flats (2011)*. In connection to the application at labor market, the statistics from the *Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family* are available; they involve the important but incomplete group of people with low level of education. Even if the correlation between the level of education and employing is very strong, we cannot say that every uneducated person is unemployed and it is clear that not every person with university diploma is employed. The structure of unemployment in relation to the obtained education is specific in Slovakia by its regional disproportions. It reflects the differences in economical development of the particular regions as well as the ratio of Roma population in the given region from the whole number of population. According to the latest available statistic data, the ratio of people without education in the whole number of job applicants in January 2018 was 6,16 % (it increases a little in relation to the trend of fall of unemployment). The ratio of people who only finished primary education was 27 % [22]. We can find the more relevant numbers about the level of education of marginalized Roma in the research [10, p. 92], where 18,4 % people with unfinished primary school and almost 60 % with only primary education were identified. Educational structure of Roma population is, as well as many other indicators, getting worse proportionally to the degree of integration of the given community. Many people with low or none education live in the regions with the long-term highest level of unemployment (more districts of Košice, Banská Bystrica and Prešov region). There is also the highest degree of social dependency in these regions. These facts confirm that poverty is uneven in Slovakia and it has a strong ethnic character.

Early school leaving and the lack of possibilities to complete the school are key factors when thinking about the causes of the fact, that although we have a relatively dense network of primary and secondary schools, a significant part of adult Roma excluded population does not participate in education. The common denominator of these social phenomena is their

“focal character”. It is therefore necessary to develop second chance education in those areas that suffer from the phenomena of low educational level, unemployment and poverty the most. Barriers and obstacles, which we will introduce later, are not related to only personal decisions of adult Roma coming from the opinion that education will be useless for them, but they refer to the structural factors that need to be dealt with and it is also necessary to create conditions to involve these vulnerable groups into education from the point of view of school, self-government, country and other actors.

Another important argument for the realization of second chance education is a fact, that (not only) in Slovakia the employers do not accept the certificates from short-term courses in nonformal education as a sufficient qualification for occupying a certain job. Completing of a program of further education ensures neither better chance for employment nor a better salary [18]. According to the data of ÚIPŠ (Institute of information and prognosis of school system), only 0,5 % of adult population finishes the degree of education on the level of school-leaving exam as a part of school education. According to the report [7], the participation of unqualified adults in formal education and in the system of professional training is on the level of 2 %. The data from *Eurostat* (2015) reveal that 3 % of population between 25-64 years took part in the activities of further education in Slovakia in 2014. In Denmark, it was 31,7 %. Off course the definition of what is adult education/learning activity is crucial in measuring its level in particular countries.

Short-term re-qualification and motivational courses and trainings are a necessary complement enriching the qualification and shaping the personal competencies. But they do not solve the existence problems of socially excluded groups of populations in a way that they would not be depending only on occasional and short-term jobs. In such jobs, empowerment of learners is impossible; such there is no education ... “and work with them on such level, that a client (a learner – authors' note) understands that it is in his or her hands to change the quality of one's life” [43, p. 53], to take control over one's life.

4. Barriers of participation in adult education

What are the main reasons that cause that un/undereducated adult Roma do not participate in education? When we want to find the causes why adults, specifically those, who are marginalized in the society, do not take part in education, we need to come out of the barriers and obstacles of

adults' participation in education, which are being researched sufficiently in andragogy. Many programs concentrated on elimination of traditional **barriers**¹ of adults' participation in education were elaborated in the course of the last two decades. Obstacles and barriers in the approach towards adult education represent the traditional research topic, which is being dealt with since the publishing of the first national study about participation in adult education [16]. There is a great amount of complex papers and original research studies, which also bring information about the degree and reason of participation and absence of adults in education in national and multinational comparison [e. g. 20; 30; 1 and others].

Barriers of marginalized adult learners can be deduced from this classification [5, p. 90]:

– *dispositional* (psychological) – fear, low self-confidence, depressions, frustration, fatalism,

– *situational* – financial problems, lacks of resources for everyday life, strategies of life concentrated on the immediate satisfaction of material needs, preferring of duties in the family and as a parent and neglecting of self-development [for example 19],

– *institutional* – lack of opportunities for education, insufficiently flexible schedule, strict requirements to enter education, locality of the training/course, inadequacy of the education's content, of the used methods, forms and didactic tools, insufficient support etc.

Barriers, which will be presented later, are the synthesis of the most frequent findings from the mentioned sources; they are not listed hierarchically according to their frequency. **Financial expenses** connected to the payment for educational activities (courses, training) and traveling expenses are considered to be a serious obstacle of education. These expenses are paid by qualified employed adults on their own² or by their employers while the *Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family* (RE-PAS program) pays for the

¹ In the literature we can find the terms barriers as well as obstacles to denote the factors that keep the adults away from participation in adult education, or they do not allow them to participate. Barriers can be seen as factors, circumstances that represent an insolvable problem for adults in participation in education (for example a finished secondary education is necessary to study externally at university). Their violation or elimination is relatively independent from an individual. Obstacles can be seen as factors or phenomena that an adult can overcome (also with the help of institutions) [see f.e. 15]. The barriers and obstacles can both have a character of external (situational – situated in an environment) or internal (dispositional – situated in the personality) factors [see f.e. 16].

² According to the data of Eurostat, adults do not participate in education mainly for family reasons (21 %), job reasons (19 %) and because of their fear of “school-desks”.

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expenses of unemployed adults with low level of education in their evidence. Labor offices usually decide who can begin with which educational activity and what activities will be offer to whom. The access of marginalized Roma towards digital technologies and internet is also problematic and can be, beside financial expenses, a fundamental obstacle in education and learning mainly for the older generation (not only of Roma). Learning competencies of people with lowest educational status are also questionable.

The area of obstacles connected to **family duties** is still an important factor that does not allow increased adult participation in education. These obstacles would play an important role for adult marginalized Roma, mainly for Roma women (even if we do not have the necessary data) in connection to the traditional division of labor in Roma families and to the prevailing (educational-constructive) self-understanding of a woman as a mother and wife.

Another obstacle in participation in education can also be **a lack of informations** about the available educational activities. Roma men and women registered as unemployed at the Office of Labor receive information about current educational offer mainly from the employees of the Office, as well as through the website istp.sk. This website offers, beside current vacancy jobs and overall criteria for occupying of the particular job positions, also new information about educational activities that currently take place (courses or trainings). Unemployed persons have their own account at istp.sk. But it is questionable, whether a job applicant that is unemployed for a long time and has a low level of education, has sufficiently developed ICT competencies (and whether he or she can develop them – for example access to internet at home) to be able to search for information on this website.

Motivation of adult Roma to participate on further education is also influenced by **their own experience** with the educational system, in which they were unsuccessful. Also school environment can bring unpleasant memories for the ones who have negative experience with school [15]. The main thing is that many off them just do not believe that a potential increase of their education level could influence their life, the others (mainly women) do not even think of it because of their duties in the family and the others do not need education to occupy mainly simple but hard manual work.

The findings about how the community sees the ones who take/took part in education in adult age from individual reasons (not under the influence of realization of a project or under the pressure of Labor office) are unfor-

unately not available. There are some data about the experience of Roma who finished courses concentrated on their training for labor market. The contribution of the educational courses realized as a part of various projects is minimal from long-term viewpoint, regardless the fact whether the result is the obtaining of a certificate [14]. Many Roma men and women see the contribution of these activities as problematic; they do not see any real influence on their life situation and it makes them often think that completing of courses and obtaining of certificates cannot help them at labor market. Roma men and women expect particular contribution of the realized project, optimally in form of a paid job, although some of them evaluated educational activities as beneficial. Many from the group of Roma, who took part in education, emphasized the „motivation“ to their consistent participation in education, which was enforced by powerful Office of Labor – under threat of removing from the evidence (in case of education and professional training), as well as by local authorities (for example under threat of removing from community services).

Ethnicity, overall offer of vacancy jobs in the region and some other individual and structural causes still play a negative role in approach towards further education (the structural barriers of participation in education). The biggest differences between Scandinavian and other countries are not in the character of barriers, but in the possibilities of their overcoming. They are not fully in the hands of individuals and refer to the higher degree of responsibility of the local and national authorities for creating conditions for increasing of the level of adults' participation, not only from excluded environment, into the system of adult education [32].

Motivation of adult Roma men/women from marginalized communities to education is strongly connected to the current and perspective educational needs of the education participants. When projecting the educational activities, it is fundamental to know what Roma really need and how it is possible to be aligned with the needs of the local labor market. Education must clearly and demonstrably be connected to the employment opportunities at labor market. Otherwise the techniques of negative motivation when activating unemployed Roma to work or motivating them to educate labor market as well as in the area of their motivation towards further education, will still prevail.

Educational activities, which are seen by Roma as useless and which lead to the strengthening of opinion that they only represent the source of

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so-called Roma bussines, alongside with problematic application of certificate at labor market lead us to the belief that the most important is to realize an education that leads a degree of education (formal qualification). But it is necessary that school education of adult Roma, in which they failed in the initial phase, will be realized on the basis of other principles than the education of children and youth. It is also questionable, to which extent are the competencies gained in short-term courses comparable with those, which are obtained during school education. Do socially excluded people with low or no level of education have such cognitive structures, resp. meta-competencies, on which it is possible to build and develop their professional competencies for occupying of a job, if obtaining those competencies in often formalized and short-lasting courses of further education?

5. Individualization of second chance education of adult Roma

The need for qualitative changes of second chance education comes from the specific social and personal characteristics of the target group members and their individual educational needs. The otherness of the socially excluded is connected to the normative vision about the necessity of their inclusion through increasing of their level of education and their involvement at labor market. Meanwhile there is an application of aims, forms and methods of education, which are made-to-measure to the middle social class into the system of second chance education. We do not consider the current model of second chance education to be appropriate for socially excluded groups of population. We think that is it necessary to transform it in sense of principles of *the individualization of education*.

The concept of the individualization of education refers to the transformation of all system-creating features of education towards knowing, fulfilling and development of the individual educational needs of learners. It reflects into all didactic parts of the educational process. The main obstacle of the effectiveness of education is, according to our opinion and experience until now, *the equation of the educational needs with the aims of education*, which are moreover created without the participation of adult Roma. So far we do not have any relevant results of the analysis of educational needs of the specifically defined (geographically, problem-oriented) target group of adult members of Roma community. Despite this, there is much information in the literature saying what adult Roma need and what is important and appropriate for them. This approach towards identification

of educational needs is methodologically incorrect; it reflects the ideas of the creators (authorities) of educational programs about what Roma really need, resp. it represents the visions of the majority of society (the state) about how Roma should be like and not what Roma actually need. In an effort to educate those, who are uneducated and in the process of identification of the target group and creation of the educational program the past experience with education, the real needs in relation to everyday life (usefulness of the education's results) and the need for professional support with the aim to transform external motivation into internal are not respected.

Second chance schools, when educating adult Roma and other groups, usually copy the formal school system (its organization and didactic, personal and material sources) set up for the middle class, because they are, just like the school education of children and youth, realized on the basis of *Act nr. 245/2008 on upbringing and education* and of relevant pedagogic documents; the teachers come from primary or secondary school of the corresponding study branch and they are not required to have andragogic training. The transfer of system of education from the common school without desired changes and without considering the specifics of the target group increases the risk of formalization of education. The aims of education can be also reached in this case, but the quality of the educational results and their persistence is questionable, as well as their evaluation at labor market.

The early school leaving also indicates the absence of learning competencies. Despite the fact, that university students spent most of their life in the educational system, their learning competencies are underdeveloped (methods of analysis, induction, deduction, comparing, generalization, ability to distinguish important and less important parts of the learning material, ability to set and choose relevant sources of information, ability of critical thinking etc.) [35]. Similarly students with higher level of literacy and mathematical abilities have problems with learning activities, which are an academic routine for ordinary students (for example abilities to work with text, to use registers in books, dictionaries etc.) [29, p. 33]. What expectations to develop these competencies can we have for adult Roma in second chance and further education, who stayed much shorter in the educational system so they did not have enough time and opportunities to acquire and develop these competencies? Can we expect (in the system of further education) that there will be, under the influence of short-term educational courses, such changes in adult Roma's individual potential that will be stable and will lead

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to the higher level of their autonomy in deciding, active problem solving, in the development of critical thinking etc.?

We can search for the answers to these questions in the concept of key competencies. Meta-character is characteristic for key competencies. They are not connected to the particular profession. *“Key competencies are such knowledge, abilities and skills, which flow into competencies, with the help of which it is possible to occupy many positions and functions at the current moment and which are appropriate to cope with problems of the requirements that change accidentally in the course of life”* [3, p. 174). The employers expect that their employees will have the ability to learn and develop their working skills at the first place. The ability to learn, including motivation to learn, was marked as priority in the presented structure of key competencies at the 2001 conference of OECD “Education for tomorrow”.

If the key competencies represent the condition to full participation in life of society and their development is conditioned by the degree to which the students will learn the basis of “knowing what” and “knowing why” [13, p. 6], what alternative of key competencies development offers the system of further education for socially excluded adult Roma? Socially excluded adult Roma without education had no opportunity to experience functional connection between their education, qualification and its economical evaluation at labor market. So how should we motivate towards education, how to ensure that the initial external motivation will transform into internal motivation?

We think that the answer is the implementation of the principles of individualization of education in all phases of second chance education (but also in further education). We consider it crucial that the methodical, organizational and mainly pedagogical staff keeps these principles:

- the choice of appropriate form of education (it is questionable, whether the frequently used external form of education, where self-study is emphasized, can be an appropriate form for those who do not have their learning competencies developed);

- the choice and using of adequate teaching methods, which consider the ability of learners to learn, psychological regularities of learning at adult age, their social characteristics, life experience. Beside the influence on the cognitive part of the personality, it is also necessary to accentuate the social-affective element of the personality regarding the specifics of the marginalized ones (problematic motivation and the value of education);

– informal diagnostics by the teacher enables to continually assimilate the individual aspects of the teaching process to the particular characteristics and needs of the learners;

– using of all verified tools of motivation to catch learners' attention. The teacher should mainly take care of the clear, understandable structure of the educational process, lesson and material, what will enable to realize continual formal and informal diagnostics and evaluation of the learners. The teacher should offer immediate feedback after fulfilling of the task, what will enable the learners to experience the feeling of partial success as an important precondition of their motivation towards education;

– the teacher should be aware that some learners will not ask for help, even if they would need it. This can be caused by their pride or by relying on themselves (negative experience with teacher), but it can also be a demonstration of shame or confusion. Evaluation of such behavior should come from the knowing and respecting of its socio-cultural background.

This implies that educational process in second chance education is not only about the transfer of knowledge and abilities, but it also involves the ways how to achieve full participation of learners in education. The concept of individualization seems to be a possible solution of the outlined problems in an effort to overcome traditional normative approaches in education. It also represents an appropriate and compact way of reaching of higher quality in second chance education.

6. Informal learning and marginalized Roma

How important is informal learning for marginalized adult Roma? The research results in this area are missing in Slovakia, so we can only use researches from abroad. The chosen researches [for example 8; 6], which worked with social groups with similar characteristics, show that informal learning, when recognized and conscious, is a kind of learning that is considered to be the most important by socially excluded individuals with low level of education. This assumption comes from the markedly under-dimensioned educational path of marginalized Roma, from the absence of formal qualification and education and from the lack of work experience at official labor market.

The discourse about informal learning is only present for 30 years worldwide, since we noticed a shift from narrowed look on education in its institutional form towards enforcement of the broader frame of lifelong

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learning, which takes place every time and everywhere (at home, in work, during leisure time). Increased interest in informal education in the currently realized educational policies, at least in the EU countries, is in parallel supported by research activities confirming that informal learning represents a dominant way of acquiring and developing of professional skills and competencies [8].

Informal learning has a mainly *experiential* character. A learner is every person who develops their personality in social relations and situations. It is a *lifelong* process, in which, under the influence of everyday experience, the own identity, a personality in the permanent process of personalization is being created. It is not *organized*, it does not have primary educational aims and its outcomes are hard to be identified and measured. Most people *do not realize* that this process takes place and that they are learning in everyday activities. As we will show later, the dimension of realization, recognition and identification of the processes and outcomes of the informal learning is problematic in relation to the group of marginalized adult Roma, but at the same time it is a possible maneuvering space for their education and personalization.

Exclusion, resp. marginal position of the population of Roma marginalized communities at labor market is primarily connected to low level of their education. Low level of education reveals the absence of formal qualification, but it does not have to, and it usually does not mean, that a person is capable of nothing. Formal qualification (certificate or diploma) is markedly more preferred at Slovak labor market when compared to certificates from nonformal education, resp. competencies that a person acquires in the process of informal learning. A system solution representing a real possibility of increasing of educational status at adult age – mainly for the members of socially excluded communities, is still missing in the educational policy. We are currently in the process of creating of *National system of qualifications*, which will (in connection to other necessary processes) enable people to verify and formally confirm their knowledge, abilities and skills and to reach necessary qualification also without education. But currently, the criteria-based and competency-based choice of employees prevails at labor market. Informal learning can have much bigger meaning for socially excluded groups of people than for the integrated “middle classes.” We can find similar ideas enforcing dialogic forms of education based on everyday experience of the adults of lower low class [11]. In *Recommendation of the*

Board from 20th December 2012 about confirming of informal education and informal learning [28], the main idea of this process is emphasized in the first article. Confirming of the results from both kinds of education can play an important role in increasing of the employability and motivation towards lifelong education, mainly in the case of socially disabled individuals and individuals with low level of education.

Marginalized individuals emphasize the results of the informal learning [19] or informal education more [31]. They highlight mainly their abilities, skills and knowledge that they acquired outside school education – in the family, in the work, peer groups etc. The explanation can provide a fact that formal education was rather an unsuccessful and useless stage of their life for most of them.

Even if informal education, learning and its results cannot be considered to be relevant alternative to formal or nonformal education so far, its results should be recognized in the process of increasing of potential of low qualified individuals at labor market. The process aimed on better and deeper self-awareness and motivation towards learning and education is crucial. The problem in the educating of long-term unemployed people is not only the content, which they should learn, whether they want to learn, but also the understanding of what and how it needs to be done, changed so that they want to learn, to educate. Therefore, while reaching of educational (learning) aims, it is necessary to know how learners evaluate their current potential and how they see their competencies. Therefore the realization of consulting, socio-educational activities based on individual diagnostics has its meaning. We consider these activities alongside with the realization of initiate education¹ to be key elements of the individualization of education of adult Roma from marginalized communities.

7. Conclusion

We identified the need to individualize the adult education in second chance education. It is necessary to realize by assimilating the forms, methods and tempo of education to the specifics of the target group of education. Andragogic training of teachers, who are not trained to educate adults,

¹ The main aim of the initiate education is to understand the need to educate. It can be reached only by overcoming the differences in perception of the process and benefit of education, learning through presentation of its meaning for everyday life, broadening of the vocabulary in Slovak language and understanding and interpretation of the meaning of words and collocations in particular context.

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also seems to be essential. The most of educational activities take place in nonformal education, but their effectiveness is problematic in regard to their long-lasting positive influence on the personality of adult and on the real application of the acquired (not acquired) competencies. There is not enough research data about the effectiveness of these programs. The effectiveness of education and training for labor market as a tool of active policy of labor market (realized by Office of Labor, social affairs and family) is disputable, as the educational programs are realized without adequate analysis of educational needs and potential of the learners. Moreover, they mostly allow only short-term of often precarious jobs. The opinions of the education's participants are significant: „better than nothing,“ „good for something,“ „it was good, but if we only got a job...,“ „it was good for nothing...“ [14, p. 76].

We based our assumption about the meaning of informal education for adult Roma men and women on the markedly sub-dimensioned educational path of marginalized Roma, on the absence of formal qualification and of formal education and on the lack of professional experience on the official labor market.

We consider the individualization of education in all kinds of education of adult marginalized Roma to be a possible effective way to increase quality of education. The main tool of individualization of education is counselling for adults. We think that the missing professional counselling support for socially excluded adults is one of the reasons of the low interest in education, as the supportive system in education, concentrated on the help with overcoming the barriers of adults' participation in education, is totally missing in Slovakia (for example continual daycare for adults and their needs, available transport, adequate nutrition and constant mentoring, counselling and support towards ensuring of educational successes). Each educational activity with adult Roma from marginalized communities, should be based on an analysis of educational needs of participants and optimally a supporting program, concentrated on increasing of self-knowing level, should be realized in parallel. Individualization of education of adult Roma from marginalized communities means an educational strategy and approaches of assimilation to the specifics of the target group of education in the cycle of education with the aim of its social integration through fulfillment of the particular educational aims, which should be defined also by members of the target group [25, p. 111].

Notes

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