

Chapter 7

Promising or Compelling Future in Hungary?



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Introduction

Adult education (including formal, informal and non-formal) has been considered as a direct tool for serving short-term, ad hoc or local labour market needs in Hungary. At the same time, in the EU, adult education has emerged as a means of individual self-fulfilment, facilitating the adaptability to the globalization and the democratic values in a changing (work) environment. This chapter considers why this paradigm shift does not succeed in Hungary, when we take into account the broader socio-economic context and the components of adult education policy.

In Hungary, public education, vocational education and training, higher education and adult education have been undergoing institutional, content and funding transformation since 2011. These reforms have resulted in taking away the voice of local communities, and undermining their participation in management and governance. Due to centralization trends affecting public administration of all educational levels, there is no independent evaluation, quality control and effective enforcement organization to protect the interests of students/consumers in the education and training context. Some new regulations have been introduced in recent years, and

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N. Kersh et al. (eds.), *Young Adults and Active Citizenship*, Lifelong Learning
Book Series 26, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65002-5_7

121

public spending on education has been significantly decreasing. At the same time, education and training related costs for families and employers are increasing in both formal and non-formal education (e.g. university tuition fee/credit, learning a foreign language, training for novices, etc.). Various international rankings and national statistics are only available in fragments.

Confused Competitiveness

Lifelong learning focuses on the development of a new learning culture and the spread of competence-based education. It aims to provide individual access to learning and to foster diverse forms of learning, for example learning outside school settings. Therefore, the concept – as it appears in various EU documents – considers learning to be a personality-building experience beyond formal school-based learning, including other contexts such as everyday life experiences, for example the workplace, family or media experiences. Therefore, LLL sees the ability to learn essentially in the context of the complexity of economic competitiveness, sustainable development and dignified individual life and social well-being (Jenkins and Wiggins 2015). Additionally, this complex ability is related to the problem of migration and the integration of migrants, who are moving where prosperity and happiness are greater than the place from where they emigrate (English and Mayo 2019). The Hungarian data indicate the lack of this complex ability.

Hungary's competitiveness includes comparing dozens of parameters and indicators with other countries, involving factors that limit adult education and activity of citizens. In the 2018 ranking of *Global Competitiveness Report* (Global Competitiveness Report 2018), Hungary ranked 48th out of 140 countries, with 64% performance, while the 10-year average GDP growth rate was 1%. Estonia ranked 32nd, Slovenia 35th, Bulgaria 51st, Romania 52nd and Croatia 68th. The post-socialist region is therefore quite diverse, with 30 positions among the best and the worst. Hungary produced very uneven performance in this field. For example, in the institutional affairs (Pillar 1) ranked 66th (103rd in the field of judicial independence, the 134th in the efficiency of legal framework in challenging regulations, 108th in the property rights) and it was the 121st in the conflict of interest regulation; in innovation capability (Pillar 12) its rank was 39th, and in the health care (Pillar 5) 69th. Moreover, Hungary achieved rank 83rd in the labour market (Pillar 8, including the active labour policies in 63rd score and 136th in the area of internal labour mobility). The country reached rank 49th in training (Pillar 6), with 75th rank in the critical thinking in teaching, and 100th in the extent of staff training. Similarly, the 115th position in digital skills among population, 124th in quality of vocational training, and being 138th in finding skilled employees is regrettable. All of these rankings indicate that there is an internal tension between education supply and employment demand, i.e. employment and training/education policies and related regulations with institutions are not suitable for coordinating them. For this reason, the competitiveness of the economy and society cannot improve.

The IMD *World Competitiveness Ranking* evaluates 63 countries, among them Hungary was ranked at 52nd place in 2017, and 47th in 2018 with 66 points. Such result shows some improvement, especially in the area of economic indicators.¹ However, in the *ranking of digital skills and development*, which also materially determines economic and civic activity, Hungary stood at 36th place in 2014, 44th in 2017, and 44th in 2018, with 57 points.² This is an international scoreboard, which defines digital competitiveness in three key factors: (a) Knowledge, such as know-how necessary to discover, understand and build new technologies; (b) Technology, including overall context that enables the development of digital technologies, and (c) Future readiness indicating the level of country preparedness to exploit digital transformation. Fifty criteria are weighted by researchers during the ranking of these three factors, and in the future readiness factor, Hungary dropped to its highest: from 36th place in 2014 to 58th in 2018. For example, it includes adaptive skills and attitudes that is ranked 62nd in 2018 indicating that there is a great trouble in adapting the economy and society, including adapting to the challenges of globalization. *Talent management* also shows the country's adaptability. The international ranking³ examines three main categories: (a) investment and development, (b) appeal and (c) readiness. The three categories assess how countries perform in a wide range of areas, including education, apprenticeships, workplace training, language skills, cost of living, quality of life, remuneration and tax rates. In 2018, Hungary was ranked 49th with 48 points, which is an improvement compared to 2017, but a decline compared to 45th in 2014. The slightly worsening trend is also explained by the fact that the state budget resources have not increased (total public expenditure on education was 4.2% of the GDP, and the governmental expenditure on education per student means 22.8% of GDP per capita in the secondary education). Moreover, the employee training is not a high priority in companies, because it ranked at 57th, the skilled labour readiness rank was 63rd, while the language skills were not really meeting the needs of enterprises as rank 59th suggests.

Focusing on adult education, are the indicators in Hungary better? Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) are a series of reports that monitor progress on Adult Learning and Education promoting actions and solutions. GRALE plays a key role in meeting UNESCO's commitment to monitor and report on countries' implementation of the Belém Framework for Action in five areas of adult education and training: policy/governance, financing, participation,

¹IMD World Competitiveness Ranking <https://www.imd.org/news/updates/the-us-overtakes-hong-kong-at-first-place-among-worlds-most-competitive-economies/> (15 March 2019).

²IMD Digital World Competitiveness Ranking <https://www.imd.org/wcc/world-competitiveness-center-rankings/world-digital-competitiveness-rankings-2018/> (15 March 2019).

³IMD World Talent Ranking <https://www.imd.org/wcc/world-competitiveness-center-rankings/talent-rankings-2018/> (15 March 2019).

inclusion/equity, and quality.⁴ The recent report says that 2–4% of public education spending currently goes to adult education and learning between 2009 and 2014, in a decreasing rate. Participation rate of adult education and learning was 15% in 2014, but about 66% of the adult education and learning structure (mainly regarding the number of participants) has a VET character because of employment reasons. Therefore, courses are at least in the ratio of 30% funded by employers. Moreover, cultural and social resources, democratic values, solidarity and peaceful co-existence are improved to a small extent through the adult education (GRALE 2015). The mid-term evaluation of results recommends further efforts to Hungary. Accordingly, Hungary must establish a real LLL system, recognize the importance of non-formal adult learning, create a cross-sectoral governance structure, increase dialogue with stakeholders, support civil society, prioritize and increase investment in adult learning, collect comprehensive data on adult education and learning costs/finance, reach out to and empower disadvantaged and under-represented groups, as well as Recognition, Validation and Accreditation (RVA) is a key tool in order to promote lifelong learning. The national report clearly demonstrates that there is an urgent need to prioritize, promote and invest in adult learning for all. There is still a demand for a holistic attitude towards the benefits of education, beyond qualifications, certifications and economic benefits, acknowledging that education often impacts at the individual level, and in workplaces and communities. Hungary needs a ‘learning world’ where everyone can and wants to participate in learning (Kozyra et al. 2017).

In sum, analyses of different methods and geographies (based on statistical data and surveys) are unanimous that there are *structural problems in the operation and development of human capital in Hungary*, which have become increasingly evident in training, learning and employment issues after 2011. Educational transformation, centralization and changing legal regulation have not helped society to adapt to the requirements of the globalization and democratic involvement of citizens.

Getting Away from the Goals Set for Education?

The EU Commissioner for Education underlined that, according to various indicators of the *Education and Training Monitor* in 2018, Member States’ education systems have advanced towards the EU 2020 goals, except for Hungary.⁵ In 2000, the EU launched its comprehensive development program, connecting to the Lisbon Strategy. Some target numbers have been identified that need to be achieved in 10 years, and the Member States (MS) divided, who would contribute more or less

⁴This Framework was adopted by 144 UNESCO Member States at the Sixth International Conference on Adult Learning and Education (CONFINTEA VI), which was held in Belém, Brazil, in 2009.

⁵Education and Training Monitor 2018 https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-infographics-2018-eu_en.pdf (10 March 2019).

to them, and then, all of this has been swept away by the economic crisis. Taking the lessons learned, the EU2020 strategy has set two goals for education: the proportion of graduates need to be raised to 40% (Hungary has undertaken only 34%), and the proportion of early school leavers should be reduced to 10%, also in Hungary. According to the European Commission, the reason for the deterioration in education may be explained by the lowering of compulsory school-leaving age from 18 to 16 years. This means that in many poor families, young people do not continue to study after the age of 16, thus they do not acquire qualifications, so they do not work on the real labor market, but only on community work (organized by the state/municipality where wages are paid at the official minimum wage). Unfortunately, community work is a segmented employment that does not include adult training. Therefore, these unskilled young people will be passive throughout their lives and will not survive without social support. Furthermore, if the child of a poor family continues to study after the age of 16, the amount of family support (unchanged since 2008) does not help the family. The entry of young people into higher/tertiary education has become more and more difficult in recent years (introduction of tuition fees in several disciplines, higher of maturity exams, high housing and travel costs, reduction of scholarships, and introduction of foreign language exam in regulation). Therefore, social mobility is minimal, members of poor families cannot afford to learn either as young or as adults. Comparing Hungary with CEE countries, and Estonia implementing a major education reform, it can be seen that the PISA survey values have deteriorated in the past 4 years: the rate of underperformance at the age of 15 has also fallen in several areas between 2014 and 2017. While in 2014, only 1,5–2% of Hungarian students were left out of the EU28 average in sciences and reading, by 2017 the distance increased. In regard of reading, from 19.7% to 27.5%, and the proportion of poorly performing pupils increased from 18% to 26% concerning sciences. Compared to the CEE countries, Hungary shows that values have deteriorated almost everywhere in 2014–2017, yet there are big differences. It is a special feature that there are significant differences between the performance of Hungarian schools and this indicates strong selectivity. Namely, students from the better and the worse socio-cultural backgrounds are segregated very early in the school system, because 37% of students go to schools, where the disadvantaged children are in majority (it is the second worst in the EU). Hence, disadvantaged students in Hungary are much more segregated from non-disadvantaged pupils/schools than in other countries. According to the PISA survey, the socio-economic background of the 15-year-old is the most deterministic in Hungary concerning school performance, and the school is hardly able to compensate the study disadvantages of disadvantaged learners (Education at a Glance 2018). Consequently, the quality of training for disadvantaged people, especially Roma students, and their access to general integrated education with the children of the majority society should be improved.

The OECD and EUROSTAT data show that poorly performing pupils are concentrated in vocational schools (Szabó 2018). Two-thirds of the members of the 14–18 age groups are admitted to vocational training schools and one-third to

grammar school.⁶ In the former, they provide minimal general knowledge and barely develop their learning abilities (for example, 15-year-olds studying there have a lower reading competence than the national average of 12-year-olds) and young people with vocational training are unable to get into tertiary education. At the same time, students with higher social status, and therefore better results, can be admitted to grammar school with reduced capacity in recent years, and its training formally entitles the students to university education. If the parents can afford it, they have a genuine chance to take part in special preparatory courses before enrolling at universities (Szabó 2017). Consequently, where families cannot afford private teachers, those students have a less chance of enrollment in the grammar schools, and developing general skills, since they were born in the wrong place, in a poor family.

It is a modest result that in the age group 15–29, young people who are neither studying nor working (NEETs), there has been some improvement by 2017. Thus, their proportion (14%) is only slightly higher than the EU23 average (12%) among native born young people. On the other hand, since immigration is low, NEETs have a share of only 12%, compared to 19% of EU23 (Education at a Glance 2018). It is also possible to increase the number of young people without work and school, since the government decreased the number of grades in vocational schools from 4 years to 3 in 2012. The number of classes serving vocational preparation has not changed, so the number of hours for general education has dropped by half. Therefore, without general skills, learning ability and vocational training, young people may be inactive (Nahalka 2018).

The proportion of those participating in adult education is very modest and could only be doubled in 4 years, from 2.9% in 2017, to 6.2%, but it is still far from the EU28-average of 10.9%. In 2017, Estonia was among the Member States, where the participation rate in adult education (see Chap. 8), in last 4 weeks, already exceeded the 15% benchmark. By contrast, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovakia and Poland reported adult learning rates of 4.0% or less. In 2017, women recorded higher participation rates than men in all EU Member States, except for Romania or Slovakia. Typical forms of informal learning are taught learning via coaching or guided visits or it can also take place as non-taught learning, e.g. self-learning or learning in a group with friends or colleagues. In 2016, 40.6% of adults, in the age of 25–64, reported participation in any informal learning in the last 12 months preceding the interview, but the average of EU28 was 60.5%. Participation in informal learning ranged from below 35% in Lithuania and Poland, to over 90% in Croatia. However, the rate of formal and non-formal training/education for adults in age 25–64 was 15.1% in Hungary, in the last 12 months in 2016.⁷

⁶Megvannak a 2018-as kompetenciamérés eredményei: elszomorító teljesítmény a szakközépiskolákban [Poor results of students' test on competences attending vocational schools in 2018] Education Office, Eduline/HVG, 23 June 2019.

⁷Eurostat: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Adult_learning_statistics#Providers_of_non-formal_education_and_training_activities

Table 7.1 Four education-driven indicators in Hungary

Year	Rate of early school leaving (%)	Rate of tertiary education attainment in age 30–34 (%)	Rate of under-achievement in basic skills according to the PISA survey on 15-year-old students (%)	Rate of adult participation in learning in age 25–64 (%)
2011	11.4	28.2	17.0	
2012	11.8	29.8		2.9
2013	11.9	32.3		
2014	11.4	34.1	19.0	
2015	11.6	34.3		
2016	12.4	33.0		40.6 (informal education in last 12 months) 15.1 (formal and non-formal education in last 12 months)
2017	12.5 (EU28 average: 10.8)	32.1 (EU28 average: 39.9)	27.0 (EU28 average: 19)	6.2 (EU28 average: 10.9)
2020	EU28 average < 10.0	EU28 average > 40.0	EU28 average < 15.0	EU28 average > 15.0

Summarizing the data from Table 7.1 and the results of monitoring on schooling, the differences in learning outcomes and accession to learning have increased in Hungary. Reducing inequality could help poor, rural, Roma and young people with disabilities to become active citizens, and even more broadly, could contribute to social cohesion, if political intentions and budgetary resources would be concentrated on this aim. However, instead of developing general skills/competences in formal and non-formal education, the government's goal is to produce a *simple disposable (manual) worker or service providing labour force*. Improving equal access, equalities in education results, social mobilization and talent management are therefore marginal.

More Centralization, More Control and Less Money

Centralization in public administration and operation of public services, as well as stronger control, could, in principle, facilitate the effective integration of well-developed policies (social inclusion, anti-discrimination, employment, education, adult training, etc.), building on each other, and multiplier effect. However, legislation is not based on impact assessment, targeted surveys or research of the necessary public funding. These characteristics also apply to legislation on the public education system. Moreover, *centralization in numerous fields* of education was introduced, not only at ministerial, but at strategic and financial level as well. For

instance, local governments could no longer be the owners and maintainers of schools, a central state bureau received the tasks of control. Moreover, centralization and control together have been extended to the field of curriculum, to the employment of teachers and textbook market, too.

Modest results have been achieved in the EU, using relatively large amount of money, because in 2016, *public funding for education* increased by an average of half a percent in real terms compared to 2015. However, the share of public spending on education in Hungary has been stagnating or slightly decreasing, and falls well short of EU averages in nominal and absolute terms. In 2010, 5.5% of government spending went to full public education compared to 4.7% in 2012, 5.1% in 2015 and 4.9% in 2016 (when the EU average was 4.7%). Another problem is how to spend the budgetary money. For example, the government has forced vocational training against a grammar school that provides better basic skills, as well as the centralization of public education (the establishment of the necessary gigantic managing authorities and consolidated institutions, the liquidation of smaller schools, the elimination of alternative education programs) and the decrease of age limit for compulsory schooling to 16 years. Adult training grants have been channelled to the community work/jobs to give unemployed people compensation, which is lower than the lawful minimum wage for the community employment, but without providing any effective adult training program. The aim was to improve unemployment statistics in parallel with the reduction of social benefits. For these reasons, budget priorities have changed since 2011.

The funding of Hungarian education is one of the lowest in the OECD countries (Varga 2017). It means that Hungary spends little money on education in proportion to its economic power, and since the implementation of this limited funding is not efficient, serious discrepancies can be revealed in the system. In Hungary, the cumulative expenditure per student aged 6 to 15 by educational institutions in 2013 was 47,229 USD, while in Slovenia it was 92,850 USD, and in Croatia 50,722 USD.⁸ In 2015, Hungary spent only 3.8% of its GDP on primary, secondary and tertiary education, while the EU23 average was 4.6%. On the other side, the total public expenditure of all government expenditures (on primary, secondary and tertiary education) was 6.9%, but the EU23 average was 9.6%.⁹ The total expenditure on upper secondary educational institutions per full-time equivalent student by programme orientation was 6110 USD for general programme (EU23 average was 9235 USD), and 9794 USD for vocational programme (EU23 average was 11,115 USD). In the same year, the total expenditure on educational institutions per full-time equivalent student by level of education at primary was 5089 USD (the EU23 average was 8512 USD), at secondary was 5879 USD (the EU23 average was 9882 USD) and at tertiary (excluded R&D) was 7068 USD (the EU23 average was 10,919 USD).

⁸ <http://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=HUN&treshold=10&topic=PI>

⁹ https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2018/hungary_eag-2018-49-en#page1

These unfavourable phenomena are reflected in the situation of pedagogical research in Hungary (Csapó et al. 2017). However, for the scientific support of development, comprehensive pedagogical research programs have been launched around the world (in particular, reading/mathematics/science education, social studies, civic education and foreign language teaching). In the subject-pedagogical research program launched by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (2016–2020, with the involvement of 19 research groups), all of these major research areas appear. The improvement of the international competitiveness of the Hungarian education system cannot be achieved without the development of educational research, but its finance has remained limited in fact.

Instead of purely employer-specific knowledge, transversal skills are getting more and more important. The definition of transversal competencies has six domains that are not related to the required skills to a particular job: critical and innovative thinking, interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, global citizenship, media and information literacy, and others, such as competencies, physical health or religious values.¹⁰ Effective “human capital” development (which is increasingly interpreted as one of the main pillars of modern labour law theory) can be mostly improved by generally useful skills. Labour law must play a role in ensuring meaningful human capital formation. The logic of “risk sharing” is in the focus: *who bears the burden of LLL?*

Burden-sharing in Hungary places a disproportionate burden on employers and citizens, as follows¹¹: (a) employers, because they pay training tax to the Employment Fund, and according to the decree of the minister, they can receive grants for vocational training, as well as for adult education (state training institutions and public foundations) and even for adult training research; in addition, companies can reduce their training taxes to the Employment Fund by the amount of training organized for their employees within the framework of ministerial decrees; (b) the state bears responsibility towards the local governments to ensure the minimum LLL conditions in the settlements of more than 1000 people, primarily by means of a folk high school, and to establish or operate public cultural institutions with a symbolic grant, as stipulated in the ministerial decree; (c) civil organizations which may apply for training and programs for EU and other sources; and (d) citizens who pay for the training in professional or formal training institutions or in informal training.

From case studies and interviews, it can be concluded that companies are primarily looking for work-related training and are involved in organizing and supporting them in Hungary. Based on the analysis of Hungarian employment policy

¹⁰UNESCO: School and teaching practices for twenty-first century challenges: lessons from the Asia-Pacific region, regional synthesis report, Bangkok 2016.

¹¹Act CXL of 1997 on Public Culture amended by the Act LXVII of 2017, Act LXXXVII of 2013 on Adult Education, Act CLXXXVII of 2011 on Vocational Training, Act CLV of 2011 on the Statutory Contribution to the Vocational Training and Support for the Development of Training, its implementation by the Ministerial Decree No. 16 of 2016, May 27 (NGM) and Ministerial Decree No. 21 of 2013, June 18 (NGM).

instruments, it can be said that it does not strongly support LLL (Homicsko 2017). Therefore, a change in the legislator's approach would be necessary.

What are the two main components of LLL in Hungary? (a) Adult training is a form of learning outside the school system, in which the participants are not in a student relationship with the training institution because it is course-specific, it does not necessarily provide any formal qualifications, the participants pay the costs and the service is realized on a market basis; (b) adult education is – at least in part – state-supported vocational training in a school system. Naturally, the tertiary education is related to both, but with own regulation.¹²

Companies and entrepreneurs have to pay vocational training tax¹³ to provide resources to VET that the state (somehow) distributes or uses, e.g. supports vocational training workshops or pays scholarships for young people's undergoing training. School-based and state-recognized vocational training is provided by law,¹⁴ while non-school adult training courses are governed by the Act on Adult Education.¹⁵ According to the latter, adult training institutions can issue a state-recognized qualification, and may organise language training, if they have been accredited by the state (they have received a training permit from the authority). The fee for adult training is basically paid by the student, unless a company spends part of its vocational training tax on its own employee, or training for disabled adults, which can be supported by budget/EU funds as defined in the Budget Act (up to two courses within 2 years for the same person). Exceptionally, the Minister can also provide adult education support. Regarding the active employment policy instruments, the costs of professional/adult training are only partly or entirely borne by the labour office, but under very strict conditions (the applicant is a job-seeker, of a certain age, cares for a child/family member or has a minimum level of education). However, there is no income provided for the duration of the training, only if they are in a crisis situation (severely deprived and only in minimal amount). Consequently, continuing education, supporting professional change, upgrading competencies and technical knowledge is not part of public employment policy task, but a matter for companies and workers or civil organizations.¹⁶

In the LLL process, the majority of citizens intend to become involved in a part of tertiary education. The world of tertiary education is no longer the prerogative of the elite, and higher education is increasingly linked to formal and non-formal learning, adult education, further training, self-development, public/civil organization activity, and competence development (by additional, supplementary, ordinary, retraining, summer or senior courses). As citizens, we need to be well informed when it comes to issues such as the financing of higher education by community, business or private individuals, or its effectiveness. For instance, access to learning

¹²Act CCIV of 2011 on tertiary education.

¹³Act CLV of 2011.

¹⁴Act CLXXXVII of 2011.

¹⁵Act LXXVII of 2013.

¹⁶Act IV of 1991 and Ministerial Decree No. 30 of 2000, Sept 15 (GM).

is influenced by the ratio between public funding and private financing (Temesi 2012). However, in 2015, the share of expenditure on tertiary education financed from the public budget was 63%, while the EU23 average was 76%, and private expenditure meant 37% (the EU23 average was 19%). In other words, the subdued state funding is replaced by families and students/learners, while a public to private transfers are missing (EU23 average was 5%). Learning opportunities determine employment and earnings, in which the gender gaps are considered the main equity challenges by the OECD.

Strategic Thinking?

Focusing on the 2014–2020 period, the EU's financial planning term, the government has developed a *National Adult Training Strategy*. (NATS)¹⁷ The main message of NATS is that acquired competencies can increase the employability of the individual and hence the societies and the economic significance of adult education. The new Adult Education Act, in line with employment policy objectives, aims to increase competitiveness, improve employability, and integrate disadvantaged people into the labour market. The law intends to incorporate safeguards into the adult education system, in order to provide participants with quality knowledge from subsidised adult education, and to ensure that the obtained certificate has the same standard of qualification as acquired in the school system. Otherwise, adult education meets the requirements of transparency and consumer protection, and the needs of labour market.

In this target system, chambers of commerce also play a role in complementing the authority's authorization process. The aim of the transformation is to increase the adaptability and competitiveness of the employees, to increase employment, to promote the employment and sustainable employment of disadvantaged job seekers and inactive people, especially people with low education, the long-term unemployed, the Roma, the elderly, the young mothers and young adults.

In brief, the strategy focuses not on the complex development and expansion of the individual's talent management, human capital and knowledge. Therefore, the reference to LLL is very formal, while the implementation is basically planned from the EU funds, with the coordination of public policy directions by the ministry. The 108-pages-long document contains only generalities about the material, organizational, and coordination tools of implementation.

The *Strategy for Social Cohesion and Inclusion* is also based on the EU's financial planning period, so it is for the years of 2011–2020. In the 126-pages-long

¹⁷The framework strategy of lifelong learning policy for the period of 2014/2020. <http://www.kormany.hu/download/7/fe/20000/Eg%C3%A9sz%20%C3%A9leten%20%C3%A1t%20tart%C3%B3%20tanul%C3%A1s.pdf>

document,¹⁸ there are some sections about adult education. The objectives of the Strategy are linked to the Europe 2020 strategy to combat poverty, including the reduction of child poverty. For this reason it promises support for families with children, the reduction of the gap between the Roma and non-Roma population (schooling/pre-schooling of Roma, 60 second-chance courses). Moreover, it offers public work programs with simple vocational training, to integrate the long-term unemployed people to the labour market, including the Roma. The Strategy wants to reduce territorial handicaps and segregation. In other words, the three million people living in poverty and exclusion must be integrated on the basis of these priorities. However, people with disabilities, young people, the low-skilled or people in need of formal education receive marginal attention in the Strategy.

According to the Strategy, the coordination of sectoral measures and programs serves complex developments, and financed primarily from the EU funds. The framework agreement between the Government and the National Roma Self-Government facilitates the implementation of the strategy (e.g. professional and university training for 35,000 young Roma people).¹⁹ However, there is no guarantee for control and transparency in absence of ethnic data on Roma, in addition to scientific surveys and research. Although, they set out to develop some guarantees and deadlines of the implementation, all government reports on the Roma are in doubt.

Vocational training and adult education are managed jointly by the Strategy as a competitiveness and economic issue. According to this, there is a need to encourage a supply of training that flexibly adapts to the needs of the economy, and also, enterprises should consider training for employees as a rewarding investment, and engaging employees in training is crucial, in order to adapt to the ongoing social and economic changes. Among the priorities of adult education, the development of digital literacy and the expansion of access to the opportunities provided by the information and communication technology will be a priority. On the other hand, adult education should be placed on a new basis to provide the proper framework²⁰ for LLL: be effective in controlling, filling in school deficits, worn out competences, contributing to social cohesion (e.g. by making 85,000 Roma economically active). Unfortunately, no calculations are included in the document about their costs and personal conditions.

*Lifelong Learning's first Strategy*²¹ for the 2007–2013 period was the complex development of human resources, defining deadlines and responsibilities. Two ministers had to report every 2 years between 2006 and 2010, regularly scrutinized legal

¹⁸Nemzeti társadalmi felzárkózási stratégia (Mélyszegénység, gyermekszegénység, romák) 2011–2020, [National Societal Catching Up Strategy (Deep Poverty, Child Poverty, Roma)] Budapest, 2011. november, KIM Társadalmi Felzárkózásért Felelős Államtitkárság.

¹⁹Government Resolution No. 1136 of 2011, May 2 and Government Resolution No.1338 of 2011, Oct 14 determines the detailed tasks and cooperation.

²⁰Its element is the integrated training and education centers in regions defined in the Ministerial Decree No. 3 of 2011, March 11. (KIM).

²¹Government Resolution No. 2212 of 2005, Oct 13.

and financial instruments for efficiency. In 2014, a new social inclusion strategy was developed, together with the *new LLL policy document*, the new concept of public education development, and the early school leaving strategy. The strategies adopted at the same time had to be integrated into the existing different professional development plans. Finally, in line with the EU's financial timetable for the 2014–2020 period, the government has adopted a new *LLL strategy action plan* to improve the employment of segregated, Roma, disabled and NEET youth, and to develop their key competences.²² Teacher training, targeted actions, developing non-formal and informal learning opportunities (e.g. e-learning, distance learning, workplace training) were some examples. This activity was reported annually by ministers.

Overall, the *strategic plans approach education and adult education too narrowly* – as the Adult Education Act does not cover all relevant areas (Farkas 2013). These do not provide sufficient resources, and the government cannot effectively coordinate closely related measures, without any partnership or dialogue with the professional, civilian, and municipal actors, nowadays. The government wants to resolve everything with administrative tools, and only from EU funds. Meanwhile, all indicators show deteriorating results to the average of EU28.

Two Good Initiatives

The two examples – as documented – apply to people with severe disadvantages, such as Roma and people with disabilities, and are able to show the relevant contradictions in the region, not only in Hungary: (a) the successes in the examples remained isolated and unchanged the trend, lacking coordination and monitoring of impacts, so that, based on their experiences, good local initiatives can be sustained and followed elsewhere; (b) the two projects confirm that cumulative disadvantages (segregated social groups in depressed settlements, labour shortages, low levels of education and lack of democratic traditions) can only be compensated by complex programs that simultaneously develop the local community, transparency and social participation; (c) the two examples show that prevention can hinder the reproduction of social disadvantages, but if this is lacking in adult education and other sectoral policies, there is no long-term, strategic social program-setting as long as the government focuses only on tackling rapid, short-term economic problems. In other terms, democracy cannot function without widespread democratic thinking, active citizens and NGOs fighting for rights, because the formalism of above-mentioned government strategic documents is not enough.

²²Government Resolution No. 1603 of 2014, Nov 4, and Government Resolution No. 1705 of 2016, Dec.5.

Disabled People's Advocacy Organizations

According to the census, 9% of the 15-year-old population with disabilities graduated from university, 20% had a secondary education, 17% got a qualification (vocational training), and 54% graduated from primary school at most, but did not have any qualification. At the same time, only 6% of them study full-time, while 14% are employed, i.e. their economic activity and autonomy are very low compared to their 46% level of education, while 80% live in *quasi* isolation (at home or in institutions for the disabled people).²³ Meanwhile, the number of people under guardianship was about 54,000, and 60% of them could decide in nothing regarding his/her life, and 40% have the right to decide in some questions, because, according to the law, their guardian appointed by the authority (62% family members, friends, 30% professional agents) act, decide or arrange.²⁴ This is barely visible that approximately half a million people with disabilities living between walls and their voices are not being heard by decision-makers.

Disabled people's advocacy organizations and NGOs do not only demand independent life, but its social respect for self-determination.²⁵ They have also developed a number of complex suggestions of how to implement the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in domestic legislation,²⁶ through the various sectoral strategies mentioned above.²⁷ The basic principle of CRPD, such as equal access to public services (e.g. education, training, employment, adult education, electoral rights), is severely restricted today, in Hungary. Therefore, the guardianship, that is fully restrictive regarding the ability to act, must be abolished immediately in Hungary, the exclusion of disabled people from the right to vote shall be eliminated, the current functioning of the supported decision-making system established in 2013 does not comply with the requirement of pre-eminence under Article 12 of the CRPD. It was suggested, how Article 29 of the CRPD could be complied with it, i.e. to repeal the legislative provisions allowing for the restriction of the right to vote of persons with disabilities (Art.13/A in Act XXXVI of 2013). At the same time, it was indicated that the specific national level regulation of Regulation 651/2014/EU for the worker with disabilities is rather opaque and lacks regulation of developmental employment in Hungary. Their recommendations were available for the public and were handed over to the responsible ministry, to launch a public discourse.

²³ Central Statistical Office, KSH Népszámlálás, 2011. http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/tablak_fogyatekossag

²⁴ Statistical Mirror, 2011. <https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/stattukor/gondnoksag11.pdf>

²⁵ Önrendelkező életet élni. [Living a self-determined life] Mozgáskorlátozottak Egyesületeinek Országos Szövetsége (MEOSZ), Budapest, 2017.

²⁶ Government Resolution No. 1653 of 2015, Sept 4 on action plan of national programme on disabled persons to the period of 2015–2018.

²⁷ Fogyatékosággal Élők Jogaiért Felelős Tematikus Munkacsoport Javaslati, [Recommendations of the Thematic Working Group Responsible for the Rights of People with Disability] 8 November 2017.

For years, NGOs have been organizing actions to promote social inclusion and decision-making for people with disabilities, but petitions and demonstrations have not caused a turn. The initiated dialogue is therefore a modest result of social learning.

Motivation Student Mentoring for Roma Students

Two-thirds of the 18–24-year-old Roma youth were early school leavers in 2017, with at most primary education. The proportion of early school leavers from early school age increased between 2014 and 2017, from 57% to 63%. However, not only Roma youth, but all 18–24 year olds have increased the proportion of primary school graduates in Hungary, from 11.4% to 12.5%. 80% of the active-age Roma have only primary education, compared to a total population of only 22%. Due to the low level of education of the Roma, their employment prospects are also much worse than the average, according to data. The proportion of early school leavers in the overall young population is also rising: the EU average was 10.7% in 2016, rising from 10.49 to 12.45% in Hungary between 2010 and 2016, where men are over-represented.²⁸

The Motivation Workshop²⁹ supports the social integration of disadvantaged people, especially children and young people, by motivating, empowering and sensitizing society. Since 2007, the *Motivation Student Mentoring Programme* has prepared Roma secondary school students for university studies through individual mentoring by trained mentors (about 200), who were volunteers recruited from the university; but mainly for disadvantage-compensating and talent-care education programmes, as well as research and expert activities in the field of equal opportunities for education, with the collaboration of members of three NGOs in Szeged and its surroundings. One is running the Tanoda Platform, a network of 70 second-chance schools run by a non-governmental organization, based on local features, voluntary participation by children and young people. They provide a complex service of personality development for children and young people, who are not appropriately recognized in the education system, and who are in need. Tanoda Platform is also an expert group.

Second-chance schools (Tanoda) have become part of the child's basic care services since 2019³⁰ as a great achievement. These are run by the municipality, the church or a civil organization to fight early school leaving and learning inequality. These special schools have been in operation for more than 20 years and 280 are already operating across the country. However, the operation of schools is subject to state licensing, if they want to receive state subsidies for the poorest children to catch up studies, especially for Roma and deviant children. However, state support

²⁸ G7, EDULINE 2018, February 28., EDULINE 2018, November 29.

²⁹ <https://motivaciomuhely.hu/en/our-activities/current-projects/> (15 March 2019).

³⁰ Act CXVII of 2018 and Act XL of 2018 on Child-care system.

is delayed for 196 schools because the government coordination of social inclusion has been transferred to the Ministry of Interior from the Ministry of Human Capacities, and so caused a fraction to hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged children in need, namely about 6000 students cannot learn without interruption.³¹ These two examples of volunteering have promoted social groups (people with disabilities, Roma youngster) from isolation, helping their social integration, with volunteers being prepared only by adult training and NGO and professional collaboration for project work. In other words, adult learning – in the absence of money – is an increasingly spread form of social responsibility actions in Hungary. Minimizing public funds often inspires an increase in social innovation.

Conclusion: The Postponed Change of Paradigm

The chapter has shown how Hungary has been in the past years looking for a place for adult education and training. On the basis of statistical data and international comparison, the condition of human capital has weakened; competitiveness, adaptation to globalization and environmental crisis, and social solidarity would require much more investment in all institutions of training. The big question remains, when will the government recognize that learning is a complex ability to adapt, to change, to exploit change, and to individual self-realization. It is already recognized that an adult training that responds to tight labour market needs is an improvement in the complex ability to learn, instead of the knowledge-transferring forms of teaching.

Based on the constructivist approach to theory of learning (Bada 2015), the ability of lifelong learning autonomously requires a *balance between traditional teaching and new (personalized, differentiated, networked) teaching* (Nahalka 2018). At the same time, responsibility for learning failure is pushed to students and their parents in CEE, which is well suited to the fears of teachers that they do not have the appropriate tools. In this region, it is a question of when this paradigm shift in pedagogy and educational institutions will take place, if there is neither political priority nor money. The expansion of social adaptability and learning potential is slow.

Furthermore, the government is struggling to cope with the *learning ecosystem*, and is far from the governance by learning outcomes model. However, EU education policy has been moving in this direction since 2002 with the open coordination mechanism, i.e. the setting of common goals, the monitoring of the achievement of objectives, and the intensive exchange of experiences on the objectives. State regulation is so overweight that it hardly leaves any room for self-regulation, so there is no balance in this aspect (Toth et al. 2016). In CEE, the government has a strong ambition to formalise complexity, but to suppress it substantially (Rado 2017); e.g. rigid central curriculum regulation in Bulgaria, increase in efficiency gaps for Roma

³¹ NEUBERGER, E., Abcúg/EDULINE, 13 June 2019 (15 June 2019).

students in Slovakia, radical centralization and political control in Hungary, mistrust towards teachers, inability to manage change.

Now, the social development of the region has been halted due to autocratic inertia, while globalization has led to an identity/sovereignty fear. Hungary has moved away from the international trend, returning to a non-market-driven, indoctrinating, legally over-regulated system.

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