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Adult Learning:  
Global Perspectives  
and Local  
Communities -  
Bridges or Gaps?  
Agendas, praxis and  
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## Table of contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Conference information</b> .....   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Conference programme</b> .....   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Organisers</b> .....   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Introduction</b> .....   | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Plenary speakers</b> .....   | <b>9</b>  |
| Katarina Popović  |           |
| AGENDA 2030 - A CATALYST OR A PROCRUSTEAN BED FOR THE COMMUNITY ADULT LEARNING .....  | 10        |
| António Fragoso   |           |
| FROM THE GLOBAL-LOCAL RELATIONS TO THE CHALLENGES AND CONTRADICTIONS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT .....   | 12        |
| <b>Part 1: Global expectations and local challenges: Can the two be reconciled?</b> .....   | <b>14</b> |
| Maria Bajner  |           |
| GENERATION PARADIGM IN THE PRACTICE OF LIFELONG LEARNING. ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT MY ADULT LEARNING .....   | 15        |
| Dana Bernardová; Kateřina Ivanová; Martin Fink; Tetiana Arkhangelska  |           |
| CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY – GLOBAL CONCEPT & LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: A TASK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING .....  | 17        |
| Jacqueline McFarlane-Fraser   |           |
| UBUNTU PARADIGM OF ENGAGING COMMUNITIES THROUGH CREATIVE COMMUNITY LEARNING .....   | 20        |
| Balázs Németh   |           |
| BRIDGING THE GAPS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE LEARNING COMMUNITIES: GLOBAL LEARNING CITIES FOR QUALITY LIFELONG LEARNING – A COMPARATIVE APPROACH .....           | 22        |
| Julia Preece  |           |
| ADULT COMMUNITIES IN RURAL SOUTH AFRICA: THE CHALLENGES OF ACCESSING INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE AND QUALITY EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING .....              | 24        |
| David Wong, Amira Khattab   |           |
| INTEGRATING WESTERN AND ARAB LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES: AN EXAMPLE OF THE CHALLENGE BRIDGING THE GLOBAL AND LOCAL ADULT LEARNING PERSPECTIVE ..... | 26        |
| <b>Part 2: Achieving accessibility, equality and sustainability through community engagement</b> .....  | <b>28</b> |
| Nevenka Bogataj   |           |
| EXAMINATION OF RESOURCE USE RULES IN TWO CASES OF ADULT LEARNING FROM SAVINJSKA REGION (SLOVENIA) .....   | 29        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Georgina Kasza, Zsuzsa Kovács, Attila Károly Molnár  |           |
| LEARNING AND MOTIVATION IN SEMINARS AT THE THIRD AGE UNIVERSITY .....  | 31        |
| Cora Lindsay, Renata Seredyńska-Abou Eid   |           |
| THE NEED FOR PROVISION OF LANGUAGE SUPPORT FOR THE MIGRANT AND REFUGEE<br>COMMUNITY IN THE EAST MIDLANDS REGION, U.K.....                            | 33        |
| Violeta Orlović Lovren   |           |
| LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PROTECTED<br>AREA GOVERNANCE.....   | 35        |
| Roberta Pistagni   |           |
| “PORTA MEDITERRANEO”, A COACHING-ORIENTED APPROACH TO BUILD UP A<br>SUSTAINABLE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND ENHANCE A BOTTOM-UP ADULT LEARNING<br>MODEL..... | 37        |
| Cláudio Rodrigues, Ana Rita Seirôco  |           |
| ERASMUS+ PROJECT COMMUNITIES COMMUNICATION: A BRIDGE OF INTER-<br>GENERATIONAL UNDERSTANDING IN EUROPEAN LOW DENSITY URBAN AREAS.....                | 39        |
| <b>Part 3: Learning for sustainable development: The role of university.....</b>   | <b>41</b> |
| Carla Cardoso, Teresa Medina, Sofia Nunes, Ricardo Soares  |           |
| ASSOCIATIONS AND ASSOCIATIVE MOVEMENT IN THE 30 YEARS OF EDUCATIONAL<br>SCIENCES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTO .....                                    | 42        |
| Jayakumar Chinnasamy   |           |
| INTERNATIONALISATION IN SCOTTISH HIGHER EDUCATION: EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES<br>ON CONSTRUCTING THE INTERNATIONALISED UNIVERSITY.....                  | 45        |
| Miroslav Dopita, Jana Poláchová Vašátková  |           |
| UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES: CASE<br>OF ANDRAGOGY.....  | 47        |
| Georgina Kasza   |           |
| INBOUND MOBILITY OF ADULT STUDENTS. THE HUNGARIAN PERSPECTIV .....   | 49        |
| Emilio Lucio-Villegas, Noelia Melero Aguilar   |           |
| CREATING KNOWLEDGE WITH COMMUNITIES. AN EXPERIENCE ABOUT TEACHING AND<br>LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY .....  | 51        |
| Adrianna Nizinska  |           |
| UNIVERSITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. POLICIES, PRACTICES, CHALLENGES.....   | 53        |
| <b>Part 4: Characteristics, needs and challenges of (new) adult learners.....</b>  | <b>55</b> |
| Balazs Benkei-Kovacs   |           |
| EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND FOLLOW-UP STUDY ON THE HUNGARIAN VOCATIONAL BRIDGE<br>PROGRAM.....  | 56        |
| Rajka Bračun Sova  |           |
| ART HISTORY PROGRAMMING AT SLOVENIAN THIRD AGE UNIVERSIT .....   | 58        |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Carla Cardoso, Teresa Medina, Sofia Marques Silva   |    |
| YOUTH CATHOLIC GROUPS AS COMMUNITIES OF LEARNING AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION.....           | 60 |
| Ewa Kurantowicz   |    |
| NONTRADITIONAL LEARNERS IN HE. CAN THEIR PARTICIPATION CHANGE THE LOCAL LIFE-WORLD? ..... | 63 |
| Jessica Neureuther, Dominik Böhmer  |    |
| NON-EMPLOYED PEOPLE AS TARGET GROUP OF ACADEMIC FURTHER EDUCATION .....                   | 65 |
| Aleksandra Pejatović, Dubravka Mihajlović, Edisa Kecap                                    |    |
| GLOBAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORLD OF WORK AND YOUNG ADULT LEARNING NEEDS .....          | 67 |

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# Global Characteristics of the World of Work and Young Adult Learning Needs



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## Abstract

Taking various specifics, contemporary global characteristics of the world of work are recognised on the national and local labour markets. They could be seen within countries' economic systems, at the level of organisations, workplaces and in the quality of work and overall life of individuals. At the individual level, the requirements arising from the work environment are differently actualised, experienced and reflected in view of the career development stage in which a person is. On this occasion, the development stage, characterised by the pre-transition period from the world of education to the world of work, that is, the labour market, was chosen for a more detailed analysis. This is why young adults were selected as the target group, or more precisely, the students in their final years of bachelor and master and doctoral studies alike.

Both statistical data and international organisations, through their documents and analyses, as well as numerous authors, draw attention to the findings which indicate that young adults are the most vulnerable group on the labour market. Among the characteristics of the transition period and also the position of young adults in it, the following are stated: growing unemployment, underemployment, lower quality of workplaces for those employed, underpayment, longer and more insecure transition duration from school to work, dissatisfaction with life quality (ILO, 2012; Marjanović, D, 2016; Repalust, A, Velimirović, I, 2015).

The research conducted was aimed at identifying learning needs of the students in the pre-transition period between education and work. It was based on the level of their

concern expressed in relation to certain global characteristics of the world of work. On the basis of the previously conducted analyses, a scale was made consisting of 26 characteristics. By numbers from 1 to 3 the students indicated the level of concern they felt in relation to each item, with 3 being the highest level of concern. The sample included 150 students from University of Belgrade.

The students expressed the highest levels of concern in relation to: different working conditions, reducing the number of full-time employees with an increase in engagement through more flexible forms of work arrangements; “ageing“ of the employed; growing unemployment; necessity of taking control over one's own life; and changing the concept of security.

On the basis of the results obtained, it is possible to identify the areas in which it is necessary to “strengthen” students for a more successful forthcoming transition and for a more successful fulfilment of requirements set for them in the stage of career development they are in. This “strengthening” implies enabling them to acquire certain knowledge and improve the skills of managing their own careers.

The last segment of the analysis included linking the identified learning needs with the nationally developed and accepted Standard service for career counselling and guidance. This model is based on outcomes in terms of competences. Standards, within the model, relate to career guidance skills, practitioners' competences, work organization and programme.

**Key words:** world of work; career development; education-work transition; young adults; learning needs

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