



**EUROPEAN VOCATIONAL
SKILLS WEEK 2019**



COMMON GOOD AND SOCIAL JUSTICE PERSPECTIVES TO ADULT EDUCATION

PEPKA BOYADJIEVA
15 October 2019
Helsinki

#DiscoverYourTalent

*Employment,
Social Affairs
and Inclusion*



- Problem outline**

- Research and policy questions**

- A common good perspective towards adult education**
 - ✓ **Theoretical conceptualisation**
 - ✓ **Empirical representation**

- A social justice perspective towards adult education**
 - ✓ **Theoretical conceptualisation**
 - ✓ **Empirical representation**

- Policy implications**



PROBLEM OUTLINE (1)

The European agenda for adult learning sets the goal to “enhance the possibilities for adults, regardless of gender and their personal and family circumstances, to access high-quality learning opportunities at any time in their lives...” (EC, 2011: 3).

This goal clearly reflects the idea that adult education (AE) should be available to all people.



However:

- The identified patterns of participation in AE clearly show that younger adults, those with higher educational attainment, those with jobs or those employed in high-skilled occupations, participate more frequently than older, low-educated and unemployed people or those employed in low-skilled occupations (OECD, 2003; Roosmaa & Saar, 2012).
- Data show that there is a trend towards privatisation of AE - fewer public than private resources are invested in training and that the “role of the state is less than that of companies and families” (European Commission, 2013, pp. 10-14, 63).



Research question:

How can we better understand and conceptualise participation in AE of different social groups?

Policy question:

How can different stakeholders motivate and involve in training the social groups that are most in need of continuing education and training, i.e., people with less than primary and lower secondary education, unemployed, and older people?



A COMMON GOOD PERSPECTIVE TO AE (1)

AE – private, public or common good? (UNESCO, 2015; Locatelli, 2016, 2018, 2019; Boyadjieva & Ilieva-Trichkova, 2018).

- ❑ **Private** – one person’s involvement in AE reduces the possibilities someone else to be involved and benefits he/she can obtain from it.
- ❑ **Public** – all individuals cannot be excluded from the use and benefits of AE and the involvement of one individual does not reduce its availability to others;
 - the focus is on public institutions that should provide the regulatory framework for the development of democratic educational systems, adult learning systems included.
- ❑ **Common** – AE is a collective shared endeavor, both in its production and in its benefits.



A COMMON GOOD PERSPECTIVE TO AE (2)

- ❑ Defining AE as a common good implies acknowledging that it is indispensable for human well-being in contemporary societies.
- ❑ AE is a common good when it is accessible to a growing number of people and when policies have been implemented to reduce inequalities in and barriers to its access.
- ❑ AE is intrinsically neither a private nor a public – or common – good. Being nested in the wider social and cultural settings, AE as a good is policy sensitive and, consequently, varies by time and place.
- ❑ The realisation of HE as a common good depends on the country's specific institutional arrangements and the established system of AE.
- ❑ The extent to which AE is accomplished as a common good in a given society/country reflects its accessibility, availability, and affordability and the commitment of society and all its influential actors to this goal.



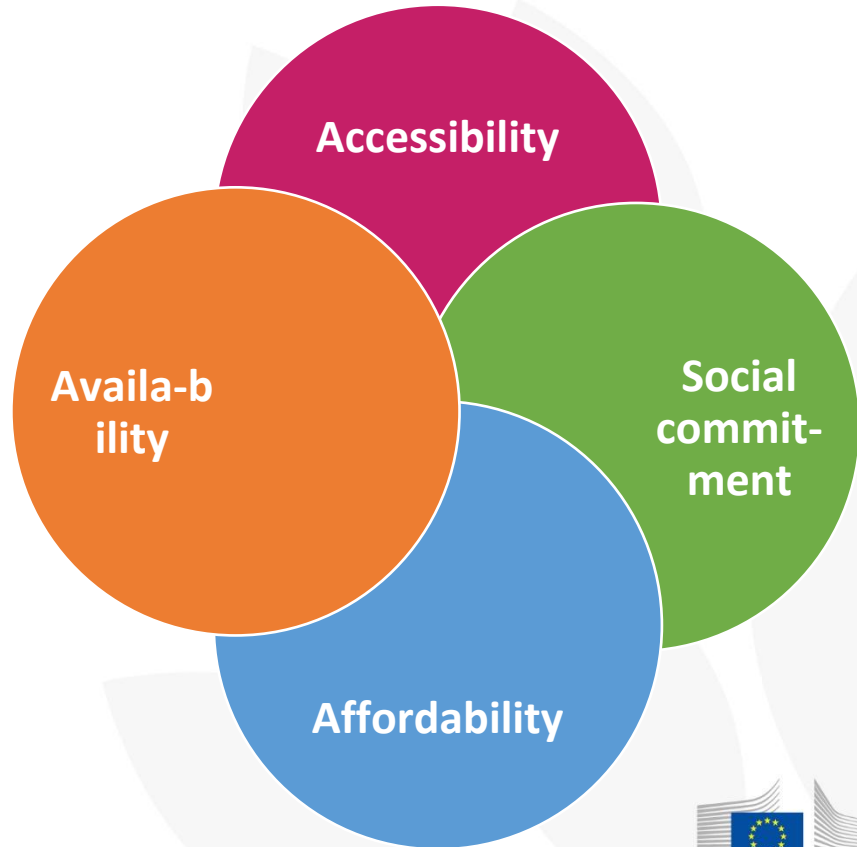
INDEX OF AE AS A COMMON GOOD

Data from:

- Adult Education Survey 2011,
Labour Force Survey 2011
- Continuing Vocational Training
Survey 2010.

Index of AE as a common good

Calculated following
Lessenski (2016) methodology.
Ranges between 0 and 100.
It includes four sets of indicators
which refer to:



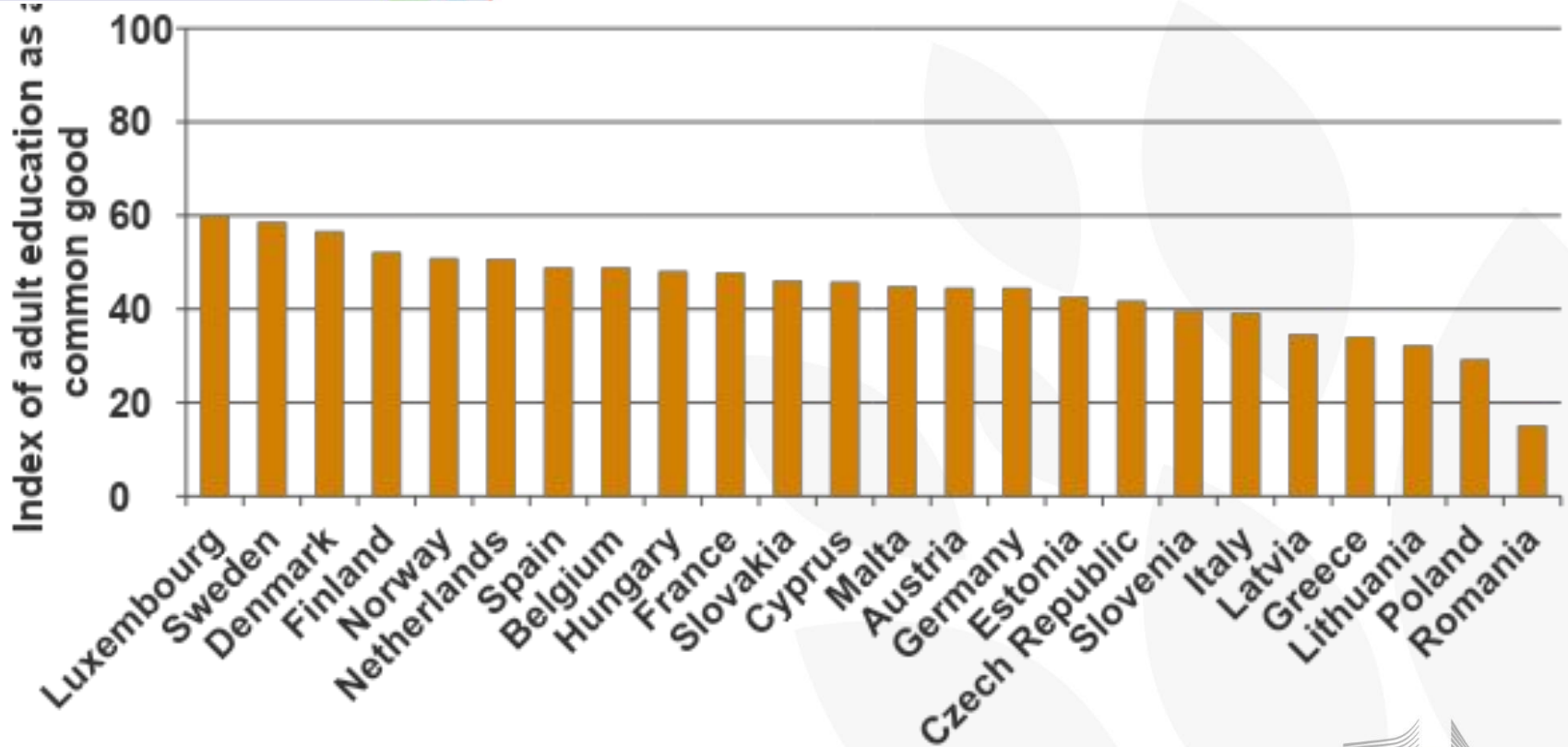


INDICATORS OF AE AS A COMMON GOOD

Categories/indicators	Weight of the dimension	Weight of the indicator
Accessibility	25.00%	
• Participation rate		12.50%
• AE equity index		12.50%
Availability	25.00%	
• Distance to place of education		5.00%
• Distance learning		5.00%
• Suitable offers		5.00%
• Access to information		5.00%
• IT equipment		6.67%
Affordability	25.00%	
• Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses		8.33%
• Acceptable cost of education		8.33%
• Employer's support		8.33%
Social commitment	25.00%	
• Engagement of various institutions with payment		12.50%
• Engagement of various institutions with provision		12.50%



AE AS A COMMON GOOD IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES





INDEXES FOR AE'S ACCESSIBILITY, AVAILABILITY, AFFORDABILITY AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT TO AE



— Accessibility Score — Availability Score — Affordability Score — Social commitment Score



A SOCIAL JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE TO AE

- ❑ **‘Social justice’** is often taken as an unconditional good and there are few attempts to define its meaning (Jackson, 2011).
- ❑ In order to explore the expansion of AE in a given country, we need to ask at least three questions:
 - ❑ **What growth?**
 - ❑ **Access for whom?**
 - ❑ **Access to what?**
- ❑ Social justice in AE needs to be **analysed separately for different types and programs of AE.**



- ❑ Relying on Sen (2009) and Marginson (2011) we differentiate between 2 perspectives in which social equity in AE can be conceptualised:
 - ✓ **inclusion** – focuses on growth in the absolute number of people from under-represented socio-economic groups, as defined in terms of income measures or social or occupational status,
 - ✓ **fairness** – reveals the extent to which the representation of a given group in AE corresponds to the representation of the same group in the general population.

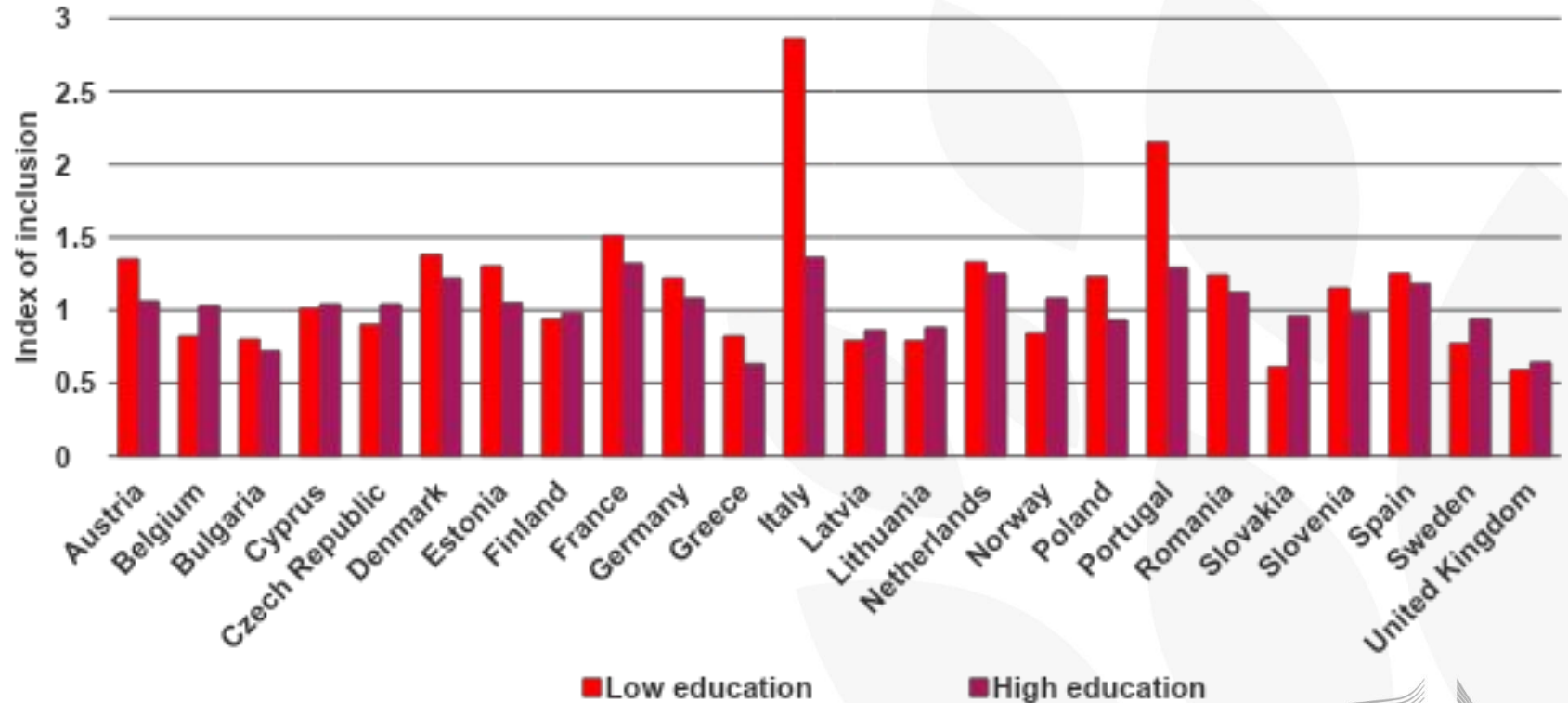


DATA AND CALCULATION OF INDEXES

- ❑ **Data:** Adult Education Survey (AES) – 2007, 2011
- ❑ An index of inclusion in participation in adult education (**lincluAE**) and an index of fairness in participation in adult education (**IfairAE**)
- ❑ Calculated for those with a low level of education, ISCED 1997 0 to 2, and those with a high level of education, ISCED 1997 5 to 6.
- ❑ **lincluAE** – binomial logistic regression models for formal and nonformal AE separately for all 25 countries using a variable distinguishing between whether people participated in a given type of education and training as a dependent variable and several independent variables.
- ❑ **IfairAE** – the ratio between the representation of a given social group in two temporal points, in our case - 2011 and 2007.

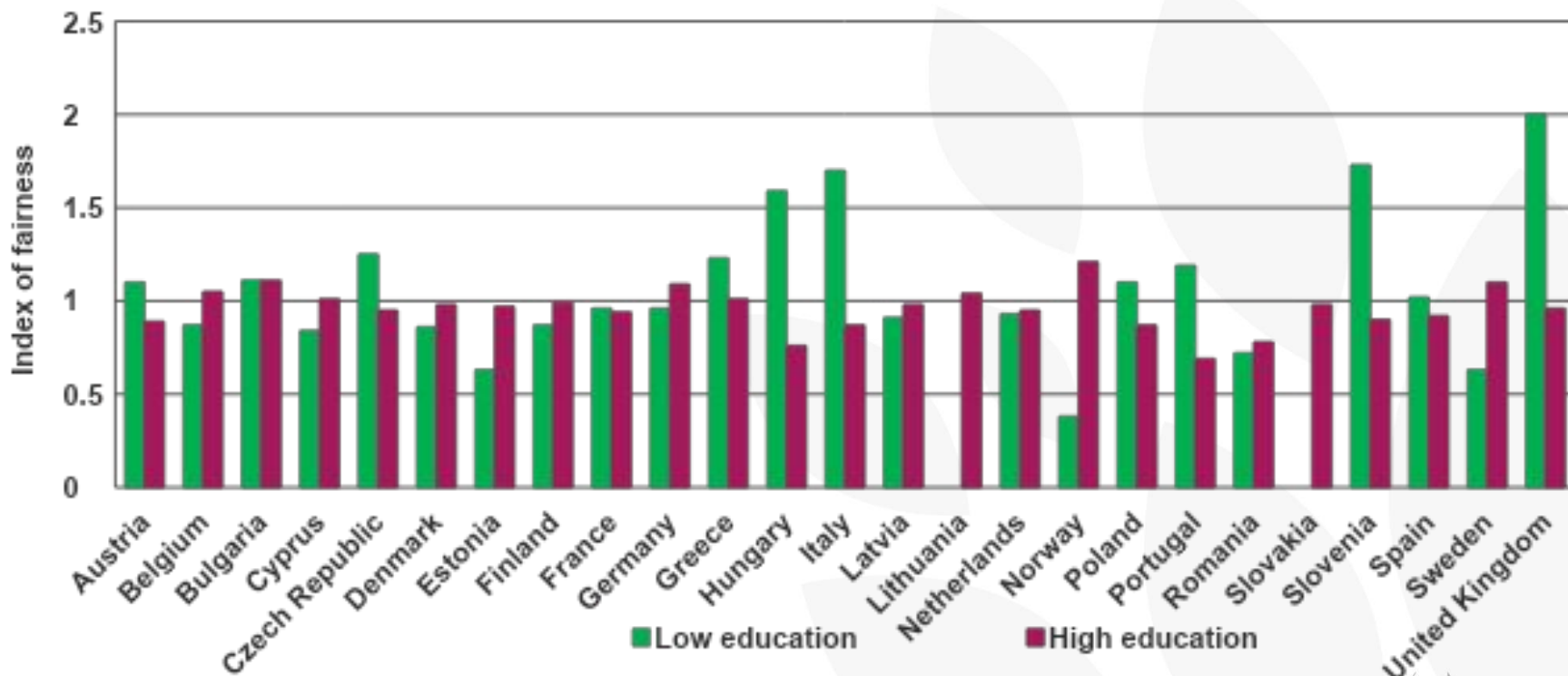


INCLUSION IN NONFORMAL AE OF PEOPLE WITH LOW AND HIGH EDUCATION FOR 2007-2011





FAIRNESS IN PARTICIPATION IN NONFORMAL AE OF PEOPLE WITH LOW AND HIGH EDUCATION FOR 2007-2011





DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- ❑ To continue the theoretical reflection on social justice in AE and AE as a common good and to study how they relate to other issues, e.g. quality and effectiveness of AE.
- ❑ To study the factors at both macro and micro level, which could explain the identified differences between countries.
- ❑ To examine the relationship between countries' social inequality index and social justice index and indexes for inclusion and fairness in AE and for AE as a common good.
- ❑ To analyse social justice in AE and AE as a common good separately for different types and different programmes of AE, e.g. for job-related and non-job related AE.



POLICY IMPLICATIONS (1)

- ❑ **Adult education could substantially contribute to the Education 2030 Agenda only if it is understood, governed and practiced, from a humanistic perspective that takes into account both individual and public interests, and that calls for the pursuit of common goods.**
- ❑ **Equity is an indispensable dimension of the widening of access to AE.**
- ❑ **Social justice in AE is a complex phenomenon, which is context and time-specific.**
- ❑ **Although AE reproduces existing educational hierarchies in almost all countries studied, the fact that countries differ considerably with regard to underrepresentation of people with low education and overrepresentation of people with high education and in the tendencies over time, points out that, under certain social conditions, AE has the power to influence educational inequalities.**



POLICY IMPLICATIONS (2)

- ❑ Both common good and social justice perspectives to AE require giving special attention to groups suffering cumulative disadvantages, e.g. adults who find themselves in a situation, where the negative impacts of various factors (low education level, low family status, sex, health problems) combine, are in need of greater and more differentiated support.
- ❑ If policies aim to boost participation among the vulnerable groups, they should overcome institutional and situational barriers that prevent these people from engaging in educational activities. There is a need for more diversified, affordable and sustainable educational programmes for disadvantaged adults.
- ❑ There is a need for an adequate educational approach, one that takes into account the specificities of people being trained and their life stage.



POLICY IMPLICATIONS (3)

- ❑ AE as a common good presupposes and requires that it develops as:
 - ❑ an inclusive process beneficial to all or most members of a given community/society;
 - ❑ a shared endeavour which involves different stakeholders.
- ❑ Understanding of AE as a common good emphasises its complex nature and the plurality of its roles and values, which go beyond its instrumental function, and acknowledges its empowering/transformational mission as well.
- ❑ AE as a common good is associated with and requires the active role of those who benefit from it.

- ❑ Empowerment of people through AE is a process which must be “forged and accomplished” with them – not for them.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The presentation is based on the following papers elaborated within ENLIVEN project:

- ❑ Boyadjieva P., Ilieva-Trichkova P. (2018). Adult Education as a Common Good: Conceptualisation and Measurement, *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, V. 37 (3): 345-358.
- ❑ Boyadjieva, P., Ilieva-Trichkova, P. (2017). Between Inclusion and Fairness: Social Justice Perspective to Participation in Adult Education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, Vol. 67(2) 97–117.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Contact details:

pepka7@gmail.com