What do we mean by popular education? In France alone, the definition is not self-evident as there is not just one definition. Jean-Claude Richez suggests two underlying principles that help define it: giving access to culture to as many people as possible and culture as a condition of exercising citizenship. These two invariants have a corollary, which is the implementation of active teaching. Popular education therefore means education based on these three principles.

There is very little recent literature on the subject. So what does this philosophy, this way of thinking, really mean around Europe? Does popular education really exist? What does popular education mean to a Swede or a Spaniard? We conducted a survey of our European partners to answer that question. The answer is yes, popular education is still alive and kicking all around Europe.

We could not conduct an exhaustive review but we were able to pinpoint many similarities throughout Europe. First, in Scandinavia, in Germanic countries, in Italy and in Spain, there is a long tradition of popular education and cultural activity dating from the 19th century. In Finland, Sweden and Germany, this did not come about in reaction against the church (on the contrary) and in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland it takes the shape of further education for adults. On the other hand, in France, Italy, Spain and Belgium, popular education offered by working men's insurance companies, cooperatives and citizen's bureaus has often been in opposition to religion and/or conservatism. In all these countries, the aim was the emancipation of the individual within the group.

Greece and the UK stand slightly apart. The associative sector in Greece is still poorly structured despite anti-austerity movements arising from the financial crisis. In the UK on the contrary, associations are numerous and “professional”. Volunteer work is widespread but the economic model (in particular state funding of NGOs) and practices are currently too different to be able to draw comparisons. Adult education, feminine emancipation, culture for all, rights for minorities, social inclusion, fighting prejudice, commitment, volunteering etc. all these are not strictly popular education yet they definitely contribute to its definition, with the two invariants mentioned earlier. If we had to stipulate a “French exception”, it would be in the close links between popular education and formal education that exists in France. Apart from in Belgium, there are no such close ties with schools elsewhere in Europe.

The term and the underpinning of popular education are old although the practice is less so and differs from country to country depending on the period in history. How important is it in today’s Europe? The acknowledgement of formal and informal learning as part of lifelong education is one of the major orientations of popular education in Europe. There is also the desire to cater for the interests of the community as a whole and to address the issue of active citizenship in popular education. In this report, all stakeholders in civil society demonstrate their commitment to organising society so that a European-wide civil dialogue can really take place. But that is a story for another day.

Ariane Ioannides
Kari Anttila is former Finnish secretary of state for culture and education and ex secretary general of the Workers’ Educational Association (TSL). With a long history of political activism, Kari explains what lifelong education means in Finland, continuing professional development, but also general education (elementary, secondary or higher education).

**“POPULAR EDUCATION IS NOT AT ALL MARGINAL”**

Les Idées en mouvement: Until very recently, you were secretary of state for culture and education. You have also been active politically, what role does culture play in society?

Kari Anttila: Before becoming secretary general of TSL, I spent 15 years as a consultant and trainer for local authorities. I did a lot of work with NGOs and the public sector. I was also very involved in youth movements, especially Alliansi ry which coordinates youth and education associations in Finland. I have been a trainer for people working with children and youths (club leaders etc.), members of ecological and social democratic organisations, etc. I am driven by the organisation of civil society. It’s what makes me tick and it’s how I can actively contribute to making the world a better place.

What do you understand by “popular education” in Finland and what role does it play in society?

In Finland it is largely focussed on adult education1. It’s a sort of second chance to get an education, in a good way. We believe that everyone should have the chance to start over. It’s an important principle of our educational system. In Finland we have several “foci of education” and adult education is one of them. Second, we are convinced that motivation can increase and strengthen skills. Finally, the third characteristic is that in our country, associations and NGOs play a major role in civil society. At TSL we train people who want to be active in local councils for example. To sum up, Finnish adult education is based on the idea that people have to believe in their own potential to play an active role in society. So, in Finland, what you call “popular education” and what we call “adult education” is by no means uncommon.

What form does adult education actually take in Finnish society?

We have adult education centres, folk schools, summer schools, study centres and sports institutes. We have around 300 adult education centres run by local authorities. Courses are open to all, over a million people each year take lessons (out of a population of 5.3 million). The first folk schools were founded in 1891, inspired by the philosopher Grundtvig2 who had a major influence in our country. There are now 87 of them offering free, long and short courses. We also have twenty or so summer schools that are open to all. Further education is a longstanding tradition and was especially important when many workers had no formal education. The Lutheran church also addresses that problem and we are not at all opposed to their ideas on that matter. Today, things have changed. Our educational system is much better than it used to be and we attract a different audience.

What is your target audience nowadays?

The results of the PIAAC3 survey of adult skills reveal a need for lifelong education, particularly for seniors who have to deal with the challenges of our information society and who lack the relevant skills. Immigrants, who need language training and information about the local culture and job-seekers are also part of our target audience.

At the moment, the atmosphere surrounding these categories of the population is tense. There is finger-pointing in Finland and all over Europe and increasingly they are victims of hate speech. Our biggest challenges are therefore social inclusion and minority rights, to build a society in which everyone has a place.

Politically, we are going to have to come to terms with being a more conservative government4 that has a preference for formal qualifications.

**Several studies show the Finnish education system to be one of the best among OECD countries. How does adult education fit in with school?**

We work alongside each other. Adult education is quite independent. However, it is involved in foundation programmes because training centres can offer courses, improve general knowledge and the stationery examination centres. There is no competition between us. The added value of further education is widely acknowledged. Work experience enhances the skill set. Skills acquired at school, university or at work form the basis of qualifications. That is the strongest link between what you call formal and informal education. That may be a little less true today because society has a tendency to overestimate the value of diploma or degrees.

Interviews conducted by Eino-Lauree Gay and Arina Iosimatos.

1. Following the legislative election, Kari Anttila was appointed general secretary of the social democratic (SPD) parliamentary group. His subsequently stood as secretary general of TSL.
2. Grundtvig (1783–1872) is a Danish Lutheran parish, writer, linguist, historian and teacher. Founder of folk schools, he is considered the father of folk education and today, Grundtvig is the name of the European Commission’s action in the field of adult education.
3. An international survey conducted in 33 OECD countries as part of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). It measures the cognitive facets and competences in work.
4. The results of the PIAAC survey of adult skills reveal a need for lifelong education, particularly for seniors who have to deal with the challenges of our information society and who lack the relevant skills. Immigrants, who need language training and information about the local culture and job-seekers are also part of our target audience.

**The adult training organisation DAPHNI KEK was founded in 1996 by a group of Greek university professors to combat unemployment. Today, Vassiliki Tsekoura and her husband remain at the helm and are still convinced that lifelong training is essential in Greece.**

Based in Patras in the village of Eliasgoldon/Peloponesse, the organisation offers a wide range of courses: ICT, agriculture, art, cultural and educational courses for vulnerable persons such as immigrants and job-seekers.

“We are convinced of the necessity and appropriateness of our project declared Vassiliki Tsekoura, cofounder of DAPHNI KEK and trainer. Within the economic, financial and social crisis currently underway in Greece, DAPHNI KEK has to deal with political and financial instability and is therefore very adaptable. The organisation is currently carrying out outstanding work for Romani groups. Between 2012 and 2014 it conducted a social entrepreneurship recycling project involving a hundred Romani people in Patras. The project was put together with the Romani community, from the selection of participants to the content of the training workshops. Cohabitation between Romani and Greek trainees is not always easy in today’s economic climate.

DAPHNI KEK works towards the emancipation of Romani women in particular. Several workshops have been set up for writing, sewing, parenting etc. Over time we have built a trusting relationship between trainers and Romani women. Vassiliki says that “trainers have learnt as much as the women”.

Thanks to this very human approach, DAPHNI KEK has forged a reputation in the area and has built up a local network of training professionals and stable European partners.

The EU is a necessity for DAPHNI KEK, from a political and a financial point of view. A member of the European association for adult education, DAPHNI KEK contributes its expertise and works alongside other associations such as the Ligue de l’enseignement for the acknowledgement of informal adult education. The Greek associative sector has taken a bashing since the economic crisis. But Vassiliki is optimistic: “In Greece, lifelong education and training are seen to be for adults with little or no qualifications. Our aim is to render them accessible to all citizens as a means of furthering self-sufficiency and a better social mix.”

Målina Schreger and Arina Iosimatos.

**Learn and Flourish**

www.kekdafni.gr/en
www.caee.org

---

1. In Greece, the associative sector is not very structured or organised. It depends on funds from national public bodies which are not very forthcoming. The most powerful and influential associations are religious institutions, charities, cooperatives and those in the field of sport. The impact of civil society in debates and decision-making is weak, even though trade unions still have the means to pressurise.
2. The title academic capacity of the national census formed in the autumn of 2011 is opening to all Greeks and immigrants. It includes 600 organisations working in the fields of education, culture, health, social services and sports. The census has been open until the end of the year and is now closed. The results will be published in the coming months. Information gathered from a presentation by Christos Giamopoulos, member of Education Plus (a body). More information on solidarity in Greece is the magazine Activizenship by the European Commission. For more information onsolidarity in Greece is the magazine Activizenship by the European Commission on the web www.caee.org.

---
Civil service in Germany has been compulsory for a while. Compulsory military service was abolished in 2011 and has been replaced by federal voluntary service, a national scheme for all ages. The scheme plays a major role of German culture and runs alongside other volunteer schemes for 16–27 year olds such as social or work. All schemes are year-long commitments in associations or in the public sector. Let’s take a closer look at ASC Göttingen¹, which manages the scheme in Lower Saxony.

ASC has been running the Lower Saxony social volunteer scheme for sport since 2002. The club receives some 750 volunteers each year and has nearly 900 host establishments, mainly sports clubs and an increasing number of schools since the reform encouraging extracurricular activities. Very popular in Germany, the volunteer year is seen as “a year of personal development and the first step in a career for young people as well as being a way of contributing to the community” says Ole Flöcklich of ASC. During the year, volunteers receive a total of 25 days training shared between three seminars hosted by ASC. The club has also encouraged overseas volunteer schemes in five African countries and in France in partnership with the Ligue de l’enseignement. In 2014, Germany boasted 100,000 volunteers in social, ecological and sustainable schemes. Since 2011, ASC has also been involved in a federal volunteer scheme (Bundesfreiwilligendienst). “This scheme is also open to people over 27 and can be a part-time commitment”, says Ole Flöcklich. The ASC has between 20 and 40 older volunteers each year, often seniors. A group might include a retired university professor, a housewife and an unemployed graduate. The programme offers less training but we organise seminars in which volunteers play a major role, starting with the choice of topics. As with social volunteering, training is a fundamental aspect of the commitment.

Civil volunteering began in churches in the 1950s. Charities quickly followed suit by setting up volunteer schemes in the medical-social field. Today, the field has widened to include sport, culture, education etc. In 2014, Germany boasted 100,000 volunteers in social, ecological and sustainable schemes. Since 2011, ASC has also been involved in a federal volunteer scheme (Bundesfreiwilligendienst). “This scheme is also open to people over 27 and can be a part-time commitment”, says Ole Flöcklich. The ASC has between 20 and 40 older volunteers each year, often seniors. A group might include a retired university professor, a housewife and an unemployed graduate. The programme offers less training but we organise seminars in which volunteers play a major role, starting with the choice of topics. As with social volunteering, training is a fundamental aspect of the commitment.

1. ASC Göttingen, a sports club founded in 1945, now has 60,000 members and offers a wide array of sporting activities ranging from traditional sports to leisure pursuits that open their doors to disabled people: basketball, badminton, squash, gym, physiotherapy exercise and wheelchair sports. ASC has the most volunteers in the sporting field in Germany. For more information, see www.asc46.de.

2. Volunteer schemes for 16–27 year olds financed by the Länder (regional councils).

In Italy, just like in France, popular education is totally separate from schools or formal education. However, it remains largely political. Carlo Testini, manager of the cultural sector of Arci, a popular education movement, explains how he sees things and the challenges that his organisation will soon be facing.

Les idées en mouvement: What role does popular education play in Italy?

CARLO TESTINI: In today’s Italy, the notion of popular education sounds hollow/has no real echo. It was more meaningful during a more complex period in our history and at a different stage in our development. After WW2 until the sixties, when the poorest classes became emancipated. At the time, many educational movements grew out of the confrontation between left-wing social culture and the religious, conservative culture of the centre-right. There was an organised teachers’ movement to promote the concept of popular education although teachers supported free education in a specific social and cultural context.

“All the same, sport and popular education totally disappeared. Yes, unfortunately they are. Many schools offer cultural activities alongside formal education but they are paid for by parents. In Italy, we tend to talk of further education, which is different to the concept of popular education that the Arci network promotes. We work on the principle that it is necessary to improve people’s ‘cultural ability’ to make them more independent and encourage them to become protagonists within society. Film, drama and reading—the creative process in general—can be efficient tools in the training and promotion of popular education.

“All the same, there seems to be a thriving cooperative spirit in Italy. Can you tell us why that is? “Workers’ societies” blossomed in the 19th and early 20th century, set up by workers in the major industries of the north and by farm workers in the south. These societies offered aid for the poorest workers and were a forum for free political discussion. Civic movements were set up too. “People’s houses” sprang all up over the country at the same time. They were built by workers and housed cooperatives, left-wing party headquarters, trade union offices, cultural and leisure activities. As Pay were mostly linked to left-wing movements, during the 20-year long fascist reign, they were closed or turned into fascist headquarters. In the post-war period, they were reopened and workers flocked back. To strengthen the association movement, there was a need for a network that reflected those roots. Arci was born in 1957 of a combination of structures close to the communist and socialist parties. From then on, associative and cooperative movements went from strength to strength. Today, the various sectors are independent but some buildings still house associations, trade unions and cooperatives.

What challenges is Arci currently having to deal with? We are currently reinventing our political engagement and our organisation. The challenges are so great that we need to employ all the means at our disposal to strengthen the popular education project and make a real difference in changing society. In the last two decades, we have maintained our interests in leisure and cultural initiatives. At the same time, we have stepped up our defence of personal rights. Our defence of refugee rights has become a symbol of Arci’s action¹. Our aim remains a fairer, more sustainable model for society and we support the networks around the Mediterranean and across Europe that defend Human Rights: access to culture, citizenship, sexual liberty, tolerance, including of religion, fighting inequality and the mafia. All this is possible thanks to the support we get from other major popular education organisations that share our values, like the Ligue de l’enseignement in France. One of the aims we have in common is to promote progressive ideas on building an organised, independent civil society throughout Europe and the world.

Interview by Ariane Ioannides.

ARCI, A LONGSTANDING TRADITION IN SOLIDARITY

1. Arci recently questioned the EU in the dramatic refugee situation. The press release entitled “Stop the massacre! Here! The Mediterranean is our sea, too!” was signed by 11 thousand organisations in Europe, including the Ligue de l’enseignement. It put forward ten proposals to deal with the emergency. There was an international demonstration on 20 June—world refugee day.

2. Since the 1940s and 50s, the struggle for solidarity. In 1957, Arci and the Ligue de l’enseignement have been working closely to support workers, prisoners, women, migrants, refugees and support the networks around the Mediterranean and across Europe that defend Human Rights: access to culture, citizenship, sexual liberty, tolerance, including of religion, fighting inequality and the mafia. All this is possible thanks to the support we get from other major popular education organisations that share our values, like the Ligue de l’enseignement in France. One of the aims we have in common is to promote progressive ideas on building an organised, independent civil society throughout Europe and the world.

“We NEED TO BUILD A EUROPEAN NETWORK”

In Italy, just like in France, popular education is totally separate from schools or formal education. However, it remains largely political. Carlo Testini, manager of the cultural sector of Arci, a popular education movement, explains how he sees things and the challenges that his organisation will soon be facing.

1. Arci recently questioned the EU in the dramatic refugee situation. The press release entitled “Stop the massacre! Here! The Mediterranean is our sea, too!” was signed by 11 thousand organisations in Europe, including the Ligue de l’enseignement. It put forward ten proposals to deal with the emergency. There was an international demonstration on 20 June—world refugee day.

2. Since the 1940s and 50s, the struggle for solidarity. In 1957, Arci and the Ligue de l’enseignement have been working closely to support workers, prisoners, women, migrants, refugees and support the networks around the Mediterranean and across Europe that defend Human Rights: access to culture, citizenship, sexual liberty, tolerance, including of religion, fighting inequality and the mafia. All this is possible thanks to the support we get from other major popular education organisations that share our values, like the Ligue de l’enseignement in France. One of the aims we have in common is to promote progressive ideas on building an organised, independent civil society throughout Europe and the world.

“We NEED TO BUILD A EUROPEAN NETWORK”

In Italy, just like in France, popular education is totally separate from schools or formal education. However, it remains largely political. Carlo Testini, manager of the cultural sector of Arci, a popular education movement, explains how he sees things and the challenges that his organisation will soon be facing.

1. Arci recently questioned the EU in the dramatic refugee situation. The press release entitled “Stop the massacre! Here! The Mediterranean is our sea, too!” was signed by 11 thousand organisations in Europe, including the Ligue de l’enseignement. It put forward ten proposals to deal with the emergency. There was an international demonstration on 20 June—world refugee day.

2. Since the 1940s and 50s, the struggle for solidarity. In 1957, Arci and the Ligue de l’enseignement have been working closely to support workers, prisoners, women, migrants, refugees and support the networks around the Mediterranean and across Europe that defend Human Rights: access to culture, citizenship, sexual liberty, tolerance, including of religion, fighting inequality and the mafia. All this is possible thanks to the support we get from other major popular education organisations that share our values, like the Ligue de l’enseignement in France. One of the aims we have in common is to promote progressive ideas on building an organised, independent civil society throughout Europe and the world.

“We NEED TO BUILD A EUROPEAN NETWORK”

In Italy, just like in France, popular education is totally separate from schools or formal education. However, it remains largely political. Carlo Testini, manager of the cultural sector of Arci, a popular education movement, explains how he sees things and the challenges that his organisation will soon be facing.

1. Arci recently questioned the EU in the dramatic refugee situation. The press release entitled “Stop the massacre! Here! The Mediterranean is our sea, too!” was signed by 11 thousand organisations in Europe, including the Ligue de l’enseignement. It put forward ten proposals to deal with the emergency. There was an international demonstration on 20 June—world refugee day.

2. Since the 1940s and 50s, the struggle for solidarity. In 1957, Arci and the Ligue de l’enseignement have been working closely to support workers, prisoners, women, migrants, refugees and support the networks around the Mediterranean and across Europe that defend Human Rights: access to culture, citizenship, sexual liberty, tolerance, including of religion, fighting inequality and the mafia. All this is possible thanks to the support we get from other major popular education organisations that share our values, like the Ligue de l’enseignement in France. One of the aims we have in common is to promote progressive ideas on building an organised, independent civil society throughout Europe and the world.
The Swedish association ABF (Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund or association for worker’s education) introduced a programme to encourage worker fathers to read to their children.

The “Read to Me Dad” programme stemmed from the simple facts that men read less than women and that children from working-class backgrounds find it more difficult to read. ABF, which has always had close ties with trade unions, launched the project for fathers, stepfathers and children aged 0–12 years.

A group of fathers spends a day with an author. Together they discuss the role of the father in helping children learn to read, the importance of reading aloud and of letting your child see you read. For Torony Karnsudd, author and former worker, “this programme has a major impact on the lives of fathers and children alike.” “Read to Me Dad!” addresses the need to give workers a second chance and to enable them to play a role in their children’s education. Knowing how to read and write is the foundation of self-confidence and the basis of defending one’s rights. Fathers then follow a guided tour of the local library to see how it works, including the children’s area. They borrow a book for each of their children and one for themselves. Workers are paid for the day as part of their employee training allowance. Thousands of workers have taken part since the scheme began. Marianne Holmgren, head of the culture department at ABF and programme coordinator, is now seeing a new generation of fathers asking to take part as their fathers did before them. For ABF, the programme is a real success: over half the participants change their reading habits after the training day and regularly go to the library—which is free. The project has given rise to other programmes such as “Read to Me!”, which encourages parents, especially bilingual families, to read aloud to their children in different everyday situations.

Morgane Roturier.

ABF, INFORMAL ADULT EDUCATION

Founded in 1912 by the Swedish social democrat party, a consumer cooperation movement and the federation of unions, ABF is the biggest informal adult education association in Sweden. Its role is to promote and develop activities that enable people to take charge of their lives and to encourage people to play an active role in society, to reduce educational inequality, raise the overall level of education and stress the importance of culture. ABF covers the whole of Sweden via its member organisations and partners. Over 650,000 people take part in 85,000 study circles (small groups of 8–12) each year and nearly 5 million people attend cultural events. Overall, some 3 million Swedes take part in study circles (out of a total population of 9.5 million).

http://www.abf.se/
“Originally, these literacy courses were intended for parents who don’t speak French, or not very well, to help them read their children’s school reports, understand the institution and monitor their children’s education,” explains Hanane Cherquiou, trainer at the Belgian Ligue de l’enseignement. She has been teaching in Saint-Gilles, a cosmopolitan district in the suburbs of Brussels, for nine years now. From September to June, three or four mornings a week, she teaches a group of fifteen to twenty mostly Moroccan women. There are no men. Mixed classes would constitute a barrier and men, who have generally received an education, attend more formal courses in French as a foreign language. In Hanane’s class, the atmosphere is studious, although not too theoretical. Naturally, there has to be some grammar and verbs but she focuses on role-play in real-life situations as much as possible. She bases her lessons around trips to the theatre, to the cinema and workshop activities. Anything goes as long as French is spoken! Having the courage to speak out is the most important thing. It’s not so much a language issue as a lack of self-confidence. Once women feel confident, they can talk about anything, make themselves understood and achieve a certain degree of independence.

A step along the path to emancipation, an end in itself? Until last year, lessons took place within the school. For Hanane and her nine colleagues who have been teaching for nine years now, the BelGIaN lIGUe IS 150 yearS olD.

www.ligue-enseignement.be

LITERACY: THE GATEWAY TO CITIZENSHIP

Hanane and her nine colleagues who have been teaching for nine years now.

The workshops are designed to avoid secondary school dropouts. These schemes are not stopgap measures used to hold students in place with failure. If their initial intentions remain unchanged, they are excellent laboratories for learning techniques.

The crux of these workshops is the “time out”, i.e. taking the pupil out of school, for a set period. A typical team is composed of teachers, social workers and representatives of the local authority responsible for cultural, sporting, or civic actions. The coordination is shared between the teachers and the local authority.

The main idea is to prevent pupils from dropping out by watching out for tell-tale signs as early as possible, in years 7 to 9. The aim is to motivate pupils about school and to encourage them to pick up where they left off. For a relatively short time, 6–12 weeks, pupils will not go to school as usual but will instead attend the workshop instead, which is usually not on the same premises.

The pupils are not taken out of school as such, they are being educated elsewhere. The workshop is not a dictatorship or an institution. It should be well received by the pupil and his or her family. Pupils are selected by the head teachers and teaching staff in collaboration with medico-social staff and their case is examined by a committee that proposes a solution. At the workshop, pupils work a normal school day in small groups of 6–10. There are also special courses, maths and French lessons, plus presentations from members of the association, cultural or sporting world. Directly or indirectly, these projects aim to give young people a different approach to learning. Playing board games, for example, is a way of working on a number of skills such as understanding rules, the need to respect rules and to other players, fellow pupils and adults. The difference is in the teaching approach. The idea is to motivate and to make learning meaningful.

BROADENING FIELD OF POSSIBILITIES

In Haute-Garonne, La Ligue de l’enseignement runs journalism workshops with secondary school dropouts. This activity is run as part of the “relay workshop” (ateliers-relais) programme and aims to motivate pupils.

Hanane Cherquiou, trainer at the Belgian Ligue de l’enseignement runs literacy workshops in the working-class district of Saint-Gilles, on the outskirts of Brussels. She has been teaching French to women of Moroccan origin and helping them build up their self-confidence for nine years now.

Hanane and her nine colleagues have been teaching for nine years now.

The workshops are designed to avoid secondary school dropouts. These schemes are not stopgap measures used to hold students in place with failure. If their initial intentions remain unchanged, they are excellent laboratories for learning techniques.

The crux of these workshops is the “time out”, i.e. taking the pupil out of school, for a set period. A typical team is composed of teachers, social workers and representatives of the local authority responsible for cultural, sporting, or civic actions. The coordination is shared between the teachers and the local authority.

The main idea is to prevent pupils from dropping out by watching out for tell-tale signs as early as possible, in years 7 to 9. The aim is to motivate pupils about school and to encourage them to pick up where they left off. For a relatively short time, 6–12 weeks, pupils will not go to school as usual but will instead attend the workshop instead, which is usually not on the same premises.

The pupils are not taken out of school as such, they are being educated elsewhere. The workshop is not a dictatorship or an institution. It should be well received by the pupil and his or her family. Pupils are selected by the head teachers and teaching staff in collaboration with medico-social staff and their case is examined by a committee that proposes a solution.

At the workshop, pupils work a normal school day in small groups of 6–10. There are also special courses, maths and French lessons, plus presentations from members of the association, cultural or sporting world. Directly or indirectly, these projects aim to give young people a different approach to learning. Playing board games, for example, is a way of working on a number of skills such as understanding rules, the need to respect rules and to other players, fellow pupils and adults. The difference is in the teaching approach. The idea is to motivate and to make learning meaningful.

The workshops are designed to avoid secondary school dropouts. These schemes are not stopgap measures used to hold students in place with failure. If their initial intentions remain unchanged, they are excellent laboratories for learning techniques.

The crux of these workshops is the “time out”, i.e. taking the pupil out of school, for a set period. A typical team is composed of teachers, social workers and representatives of the local authority responsible for cultural, sporting, or civic actions. The coordination is shared between the teachers and the local authority.

The main idea is to prevent pupils from dropping out by watching out for tell-tale signs as early as possible, in years 7 to 9. The aim is to motivate pupils about school and to encourage them to pick up where they left off. For a relatively short time, 6–12 weeks, pupils will not go to school as usual but will instead attend the workshop instead, which is usually not on the same premises.

The pupils are not taken out of school as such, they are being educated elsewhere. The workshop is not a dictatorship or an institution. It should be well received by the pupil and his or her family. Pupils are selected by the head teachers and teaching staff in collaboration with medico-social staff and their case is examined by a committee that proposes a solution.

At the workshop, pupils work a normal school day in small groups of 6–10. There are also special courses, maths and French lessons, plus presentations from members of the association, cultural or sporting world. Directly or indirectly, these projects aim to give young people a different approach to learning. Playing board games, for example, is a way of working on a number of skills such as understanding rules, the need to respect rules and to other players, fellow pupils and adults. The difference is in the teaching approach. The idea is to motivate and to make learning meaningful.

The workshops are designed to avoid secondary school dropouts. These schemes are not stopgap measures used to hold students in place with failure. If their initial intentions remain unchanged, they are excellent laboratories for learning techniques.

The crux of these workshops is the “time out”, i.e. taking the pupil out of school, for a set period. A typical team is composed of teachers, social workers and representatives of the local authority responsible for cultural, sporting, or civic actions. The coordination is shared between the teachers and the local authority.

The main idea is to prevent pupils from dropping out by watching out for tell-tale signs as early as possible, in years 7 to 9. The aim is to motivate pupils about school and to encourage them to pick up where they left off. For a relatively short time, 6–12 weeks, pupils will not go to school as usual but will instead attend the workshop instead, which is usually not on the same premises.

The pupils are not taken out of school as such, they are being educated elsewhere. The workshop is not a dictatorship or an institution. It should be well received by the pupil and his or her family. Pupils are selected by the head teachers and teaching staff in collaboration with medico-social staff and their case is examined by a committee that proposes a solution.

At the workshop, pupils work a normal school day in small groups of 6–10. There are also special courses, maths and French lessons, plus presentations from members of the association, cultural or sporting world. Directly or indirectly, these projects aim to give young people a different approach to learning. Playing board games, for example, is a way of working on a number of skills such as understanding rules, the need to respect rules and to other players, fellow pupils and adults. The difference is in the teaching approach. The idea is to motivate and to make learning meaningful.

The workshops are designed to avoid secondary school dropouts. These schemes are not stopgap measures used to hold students in place with failure. If their initial intentions remain unchanged, they are excellent laboratories for learning techniques.

The crux of these workshops is the “time out”, i.e. taking the pupil out of school, for a set period. A typical team is composed of teachers, social workers and representatives of the local authority responsible for cultural, sporting, or civic actions. The coordination is shared between the teachers and the local authority.

The main idea is to prevent pupils from dropping out by watching out for tell-tale signs as early as possible, in years 7 to 9. The aim is to motivate pupils about school and to encourage them to pick up where they left off. For a relatively short time, 6–12 weeks, pupils will not go to school as usual but will instead attend the workshop instead, which is usually not on the same premises.

The pupils are not taken out of school as such, they are being educated elsewhere. The workshop is not a dictatorship or an institution. It should be well received by the pupil and his or her family. Pupils are selected by the head teachers and teaching staff in collaboration with medico-social staff and their case is examined by a committee that proposes a solution.

At the workshop, pupils work a normal school day in small groups of 6–10. There are also special courses, maths and French lessons, plus presentations from members of the association, cultural or sporting world. Directly or indirectly, these projects aim to give young people a different approach to learning. Playing board games, for example, is a way of working on a number of skills such as understanding rules, the need to respect rules and to other players, fellow pupils and adults. The difference is in the teaching approach. The idea is to motivate and to make learning meaningful.
THE SHAPE OF POPULAR EDUCATION ACROSS EUROPE

There are just about as many definitions of popular education as there are movements. All the same, two main principles stand out: giving access to culture to as many people as possible and culture as a condition of exercising citizenship. These two invariants have a corollary, which is the implementation of active teaching. Extracts from a presentation by Jean-Claude Richez, associate researcher at Injep on 16 January 2013 at the media club in Strasbourg on this topic.

Popular education concerns Northern Europe as well as Mediterranean Europe. Germanic Europe and Scandinavia have long been the scene of powerful popular education movements in the form of summer schools with close links to the notion of Volkbildung in Germany and Volksbildning in Swedish (literally “people’s education”). The complex notion of “bildung” in German covers both training and culture, a process and a state. It means to get training and to be cultivated. The term also comprises the idea of transformation and personal fulfillment.

In France, we tend to see Contocard as the founder of popular education but in Scandinavia and beyond, it was Grundtvig, the Danish poet, linguist, teacher and historian. Grundtvig’s teaching focuses on an individual’s environment, on real life, the world as it is. It aims to develop our sense of a common resource. The folk school movement launched by Grundtvig in the mid 19th century spread all over Scandinavia and remains strong today. There are many folk schools with many pupils. Their courses are often similar to those proposed via popular education in France.

In Germany, the DVV network has over 1,000 folk schools. They act as local lifelong learning centres and cater mainly for adults. The system is similar to the ones in Austria and Switzerland (another birthplace of popular education). They act as local lifelong learning centres and cater mainly for adults. The system is similar to the ones in Austria and Switzerland (another birthplace of popular education).

The complex notion of “bildung” in German covers both training and culture, a process and a state. It means to get training and to be cultivated. The term also comprises the idea of transformation and personal fulfillment.

In some ways, popular education in France is an exception. It offers from the rest of Europe in two ways. First, popular education in northern Europe mainly concerns adults, while in France the field also addresses youth problems. Different types of popular education have all but taken over informal education for this segment of the population. Second, in northern Europe there is no link between adult education and help for youths outside schools although there are a number of Northern European youth traditionally been catered for by youth movements linked to political parties (socialist workers or communist parties or directly by the catholic or protestant church). These differences can be explained by the fact that in countries where widespread education for children was introduced long ago, the issue did not lie with formal education, but with further education, in particular for the working classes who had no secondary education.

Since 1981, many folk schools have been introduced in Spain. They are part of a general desire for adult education. They are based on a number of shared values in keeping with Spanish teaching tradition: lifelong training and access to education, for all, at any age, gender equality, interculturality and democratic citizenship through social and cultural participation.

Popular education is no more a foundation of Europe than secularity. Yet, today, both formal and informal education is acknowledged in European strategy on the principal that learning is a lifelong process.

WOMAN, A ROMANI AND EMANCIPATED

Drom Kotar Mestipen, Romani for “road to freedom” is an association founded in Barcelona in 1999 by Romani and non Romani women. Its aim is to promote the emancipation of Romani women and girls without denying their roots. Drom Kotar Mestipen is active throughout Catalonia, which is home to some 80,000 Romani (official data).

The association set up a training course for “leisure time and caretaker staff” eight years ago and nearly 200 women have been trained to date. The course is officially approved by the Catalan government and enables women to work in after-school clubs or in school cafeterias. It was introduced in response to a recurring demand from schools with Romani pupils. The Romani staff act as role models for the children and help prevent absenteeism. There is a real need for this in Catalonia, explains Natalia Fernandez, coordinator of the association.

Training sessions are organised and planned by the women themselves. They set the schedule, allocating the 308 hours (including 150 hours of hands-on practice) according to their own timetables. The theory lessons include lessons on Roman history and culture. The course is free and childcare is available. Over 80% of the women find a job after the course. Aside from employment, the course gives women the opportunity to be a part of school life.

Fighting prejudice
Drom Kotar Mestipen also uses the principle of coeducation with “trobadar” (meetings) between Roman women, pupils and students and those who would like to be. These encounters involve 250–300 women twice a year. “I found it really useful to go to a trobada. I met some gypsy students. They weren’t like my family. It was a bit of a shock. With no women around, the women express themselves more freely. It’s not out of fear, because the men know about the scheme and support it. It’s more out of respect for fathers or elders,” says Cristina, a volunteer member of the association. Drom Kotar Mestipen also helps combat the cliché that Romani don’t want to study or work and don’t look after their children.

Eve-Laure Gay and David Lopez.
Popular education in Europe, what does it really mean?

Founded in 1866, la Ligue de l’enseignement is one of France’s largest organisations in non-formal education. It gathers 25,000 associations in 103 local and 22 regional federations with the common aims of training responsible citizens, fighting against all inequalities and building a fairer and more independent society. It aims to guarantee access to education for everyone and further promotes a secular society, solidarity among citizens and active citizenship.

Department of international and European affairs, La Ligue de l’enseignement
3, rue Récamier 75341 Paris cedex 07
Phone : +33 (0)1 43 58 97 94
dlopez@laligue.org

Graphic design: Anne Vanwynsberghe