

“ADULT LEARNING & COMMUNITIES IN A WORLD ON THE MOVE: BETWEEN NATIONAL TENSIONS AND TRANSNATIONAL CHALLENGES”

UNIVERSITY OF LOWER SILESIA, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
WROCLAW, STRZEGOMSKA ST. 55

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Monika Popow

Learning and re-creating of a local community.

The case of Nowy Port in Gdansk

The aim of our presentation is to analyse the processes of learning in the local community on the example of grass-rooted educational and social animation work conducted in Nowy Port in Gdansk.

Nowy Port is one of the historical districts in Gdansk. It has been perceived as neglected and dangerous, often stereotyped as associated with poverty and criminal activities. During in the period of economic transition gradual deterioration has been observed. As far as social environment is concerned, there have been high unemployment rate, as well as increasing alcohol and drugs abuse in the recent years. Interviews conducted by Monika Popow show that many inhabitants feel abandoned and forgotten by the local authorities.

Recently the increasing number of social actions has been conducted in the district. They are organized by institutions as well as by local activists, who want to revitalize their neighbourhood, restore local memory, learn about their district, but, also, to empower people living in the district. Some of the local activists use local cultures, including street culture (like rap culture, street dance) as means of self-expression.

We will present the activities organized by inhabitants of Nowy Port. We will ask also about their meaning in the context of community work, as well as reconstruct the process of collective learning. We assume that both activists and participants of their actions remain in mutual learning process. In this context learning occurring in the district seems to be subversive, as it uses local means of expression, often perceived stereotypically as low culture, as well as its own language so as to speak about themselves. The process seems also to create space for dialogue and connectivity between diverse people as it is aimed at overcoming the feeling of being excluded and redefining the position of subalterns. It goes accross dominating narrations about national and local communities, focusing on locality described in its own language. It also treats diversity, especially understood in terms of a social class, as natural and unquestionable, reating new spaces for solidarity ans self-awarness.

The presentation will be based on empirical research conducted by Monika Popow and experience of the 180 Degrees Association from Nowy Port. The cooperation was born thanks to our meeting in Nowy Port. We will try to connect our different experiences so as to describe the processes of learning and re-creating.