

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

UNIVERSITY OF LOWER SILESIA, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,  
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Anna Bilon, Paweł Rudnicki, Michał Mielczarek

**The dimensions of learning in activism – the narratives of social activists**

The paper is aimed at the analysis of activism as a learning process in which one can identify various dimensions of learning. It is based on the research project concerned with the ways of thinking about activism, its dimensions, forms of activity, experience and biographical “costs” of our interlocutors. We conducted quasi-biographical interviews with social activists. In our speech we will show the dimensions of learning in activism in reference to the biographies of six people. Among them, there were: two generations of activists of the international organization in the field of human rights; dissident during the communist period and activist in the current political movements against the present Polish government; activists of the informal group dealing with the situation of the Romanian Roma in Wrocław; activist with the anarchist group dedicated to the care of the homeless; activist involved in the actions against pharmaceutical companies. As our research showed, social activism had a great importance for all of them. Therefore, while using some of the adult learning theories (namely, Mezirow, Biesta) we would like to analyse how the shared struggle for the social change shaped not only their biographies being learning process. We would like to focus on both individual and social dimensions of learning as well the civic one. So that to capture the complexity of the phenomenon in our analyses, we will also refer to experience and reflections of activists and dissidents i.e. J. Kuron, K. Modzelewski, V. Havel. What we also would like to pose is the political dimension of learning. As a result we will present a few kinds/types of learning that take place in the social activism. In our interviews social activism itself was presented as the process of making sense of the world in the times of crises (not only the current ones, but also crises in the historical sense - we identified biographies struggling with crisis of: II World War, communist and post-communist regimes, neoliberal politics etc.). From the other perspective, in our research, social activism manifested itself as a particular “link” between individual biographies and social/societal changes. But it has not only positive but also negative dimensions. Each of our interviewees, outside the story about the experience of activism, also presented a biographical, social and occupational costs of being an activist. In this context, the *cost* category has also become one of our key categories in our research project.