

**Necessities of disadvantaged learners
regarding the use of CALL
in conventional language classes,
and how can this target group be motivated to do so**

**Awareness raising
for project partners**

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Setting the framework

In the framework of the project our aim, as a partner organisation, is not to provide solutions to the problem. Our aim is to raise the questions we think are necessary to answer when we want to develop educational solutions to disadvantaged people.

“Necessities of disadvantaged learners regarding the use of CALL in conventional language classes, and how can this target group be motivated to do so.” This is a very complex and broad question when we start to think about it in details.

There are many further questions popping up immediately:

- Why is this question important for us?
- Is this a social justice related question?
- Is this a business related question?
- Is this question asked by education policy makers?
- Is this asked by language teachers?
- Is this asked by social workers?
- Who exactly are we talking about when we say “disadvantaged learners”?

In the current project there are partners with IT, language teaching and social work backgrounds and for all of us, the answers to the original question are likely to be completely different. For now, in the framework of our contribution, the focus of the thinking is on social justice, the personal motivations and opportunities of the learners.

In this respect there is another set of questions coming up.

First of all let's further focus the attention on the “disadvantaged learners”. Their opportunities and motivations are obviously very different in many ways. In the framework of the project Kereső Ember

Foundation focuses on these specific groups:

- poor rural women raising children in Hungary
- poor rural youth in Hungary (high school or university graduates)

Members of both groups can be highly educated can also be poorly educated. Being poor, rural, women or youth do not necessary correlate with the level of education in Hungary right now. Rural poverty in Hungary is typically a result of lacking social and economic structures, labour opportunities as well as insufficient and expensive public transportation.

If we think about these two (still rather large and diverse) groups we might be interested in asking the questions:

- How available is education for these groups and in what ways?
- What is the aim and purpose of education in general?
- Is it about literacy?
- Or about labour market integration?
- Or about general social well being and good standard of life which includes education?
- What are the social and economic circumstances that define the opportunities and motivations and also the achievable aims of the target groups?
- What is the social promise that the mainstream society gives to these people when expecting them to be interested in e.g. language learning?
- What is the minimum required IT infrastructure and how available that is to the target groups?

Geographical scope and aspects

This is a European project, funded by the European Union.

The questions raised can be examined on the European level and also on national levels.

Questions raised:

- What is the purpose of education on European level in terms of disadvantaged groups?
- How do social and cultural differences of the member states have an impact on the features and content of CALL applications in relation to disadvantaged groups?
- How are the target groups different and similar in Austria, Poland, UK, Hungary?

The purpose of education (?)

In the current context it may be important to specify what the aim of education is from the perspective of the society.

- Is it about the access to the labour market?
- Is it about general well being?
- Is it a general social value (right to education) that we intend to maintain?
- Are we, as a society, responsible for providing the quality education that will enable the disadvantaged learners to become self-sufficient role players of the labour market?



Characteristics of the current Hungarian labour market:

- large unemployment ratios especially among the two target groups
- economic climate is not supporting self-employment
- mobility and commuting to larger distances is not an available option for women raising children (no sufficient child care and affordable public transport)
- state education is not in line with the needs of labour market, therefore staying in education is not necessary an entrance pass to the labour market especially for disadvantaged people, whose access to the labour market is very limited regardless of their education

In the scope of the current project we can say that state provided education, the mainstream labour market structures are insufficient to provide social inclusion and labour market access to the two target groups. So from the social justice and opportunity development perspective there is a very exciting question popping up:

How can CALL and other available ICT tool be used to support social inclusion and economic stability of the two disadvantaged target groups?

Available and not available resources and opportunities in Hungary

- Broad band internet connection is available nationwide.
- Schools are typically equipped with computers but they may not be powerful and new machines. They are not always available for learners on demand.
- Smart phones and mobile internet connection is available at a relatively low price.

- Rural women raising children may not have the opportunity (time) to travel to classroom environments if they do not have a computer in their homes.
- Both rural women and youth may not have the financial resources to commute to educational centers for learning if they do not have computers in their homes.
- Smart phones and broad band internet connection is available in Hungary at a reasonable price especially compared to public transport prices. So instead of travelling to places to study it may be more suitable if the teaching material travels to the learner.

Necessities of the target groups

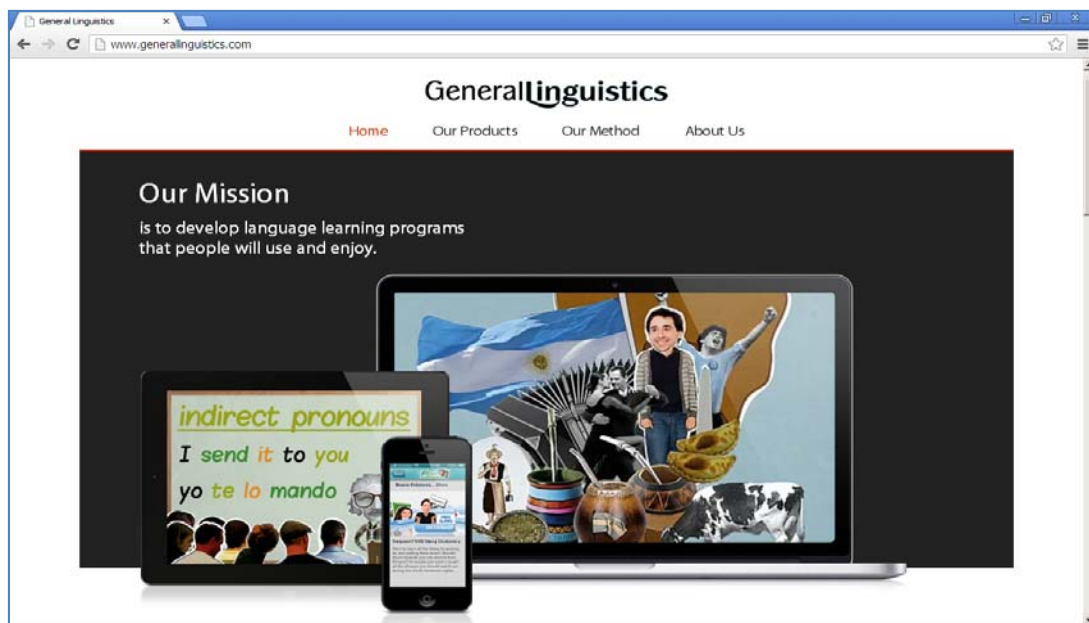
Regarding the content of education

- empowerment
- soft skills development
- self esteem and self competence development
- technical and manual skills
- foreign languages to improve their potential mobility
- direct link with personal situation, direct response to personal problems (motivation)

Regarding the tools of education

- cheap applications
- no need to travel
- very direct and efficient techniques
- multiple purpose (motivation)

A good example: <http://www.generallinguistics.com/>



Advantages:

- easy to follow,
- multiple purpose (language, culture),
- cheap,
- simple,
- no need for very special equipment.

The project has a number of objectives from which we would like to address the following two:

- B1 Increase the motivation of learners by using CALL in conventional language learning
- B5 Requirements for learners from minority groups regarding the use of CALL in classroom

B1 Increase the motivation of learners by using CALL in conventional language learning

Or in other words how can learners be motivated by using CALL?

- poor rural women raising children in Hungary

The target group is typically overexploited in terms of time and energy spent on householding and childcare. These women have very little time for themselves, low self esteem and limited resources and opportunities to spend time on their own, relax, recharge.

Women can be more motivated to study languages if the course fulfil the following criteria:

- support and empower their self esteem
- include funny, uplifting or encouraging messages
- create a self-support women's community in other areas of their lives also
- to follow the course it does not require too much extra energy, not repetitive and non-judgemental
- contribute to their real labour market value

- poor rural youth in Hungary (high school or university graduates)

The target group is typically trying to find jobs, places to live, integrate to the adult population. If a CALL can address any of these aims, it might increase their motivation. Attractive CALL applications are moreover closer to their communication routines if these applications integrate the characteristics of online community mechanisms.

Rural youth can be more motivated to study languages if the course fulfil the following criteria:

- contribute to their real labour market value (including mobility and international participation)
- help their mobility
- support them in their hobbies

For both groups CALL can also be used as supplementary tool. If there is a course on anything that is of interest to any of the groups, a CALL module can be applied to support the international communication among the students. If for example there is a general course on food production on household level, women may be interested in participating not only in the course, but also in the CALL module, if it enables them to share their experiences in an international community.

B5 Requirements for learners from minority groups regarding the use of CALL in classroom

The current economic and social structures, including the educational system, do not provide the framework in which the selected target groups have access to classroom education to a large extent. It is especially true in rural areas where mobility of poor people is very limited. If the aim of the society is to create opportunities for these groups to enter classroom type of education, travels costs to the location of the classrooms have to be covered. This is the key bottleneck in any kind of rural classroom education. Or if possible the classroom has to be transported to the people directly, e.g. to the local community houses.

If physical access to classroom education is provided to the target groups and if CALL applications are developed in a way that it responds to the group-specific needs of the target groups, than these tools, applications and methods can be used effectively to reduce social exclusion of these people and groups.

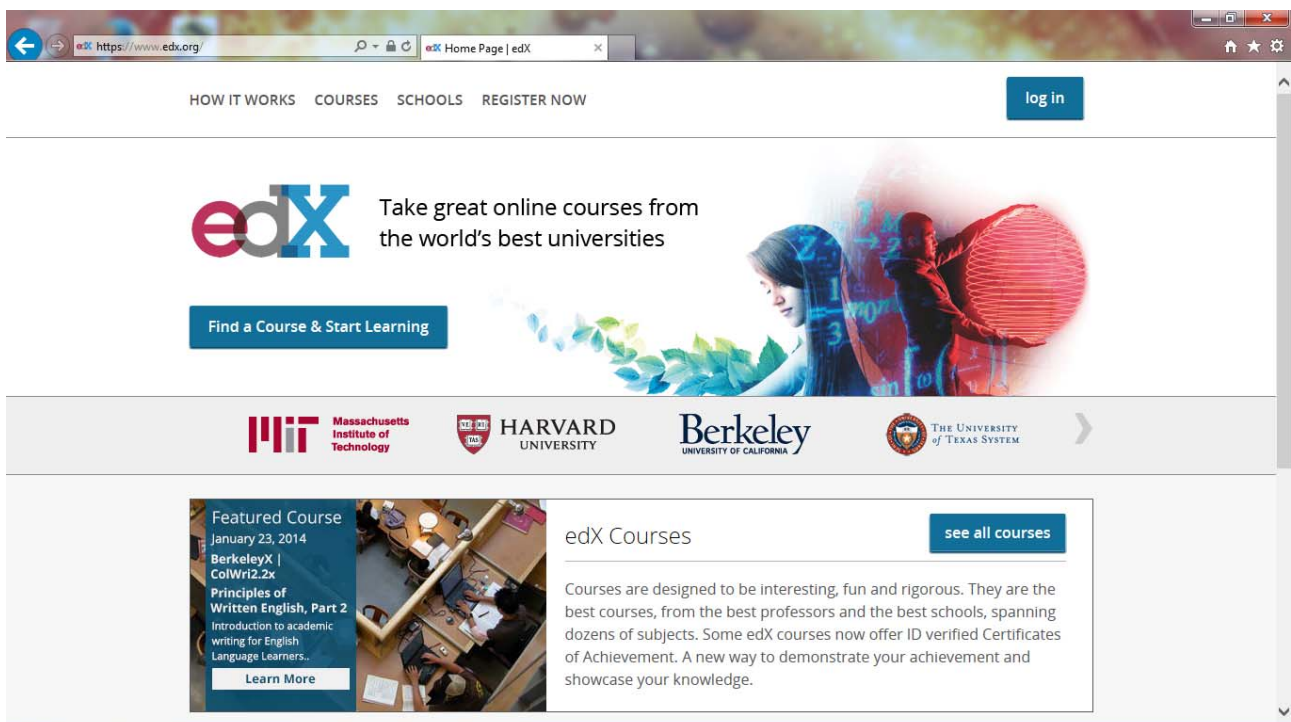
Additional recommendation, summary

Disadvantaged social groups are typically disadvantaged because social structures, economic measures and other resources are not available for them. In rural areas especially, where social exclusion and poverty is high it is rather hard to convince people that language learning is useful for them. For young people it may be easier but for overexploited rural mothers it is really hard.

According to our field experiences we believe that language teaching should be combined with other additional educational content, which can deliver extra knowledge for the target groups at the same time. It may have a labour market focus or subjects that are related to any areas in life, which empower these people.

We also recommend the teaching method that is used by edX for example.

<https://www.edx.org/>



The screenshot shows the edX website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "HOW IT WORKS", "COURSES", "SCHOOLS", and "REGISTER NOW", along with a "log in" button. The main banner features the edX logo and the text "Take great online courses from the world's best universities". Below this is a "Find a Course & Start Learning" button. The banner also includes a graphic of a person's head with a globe and numbers inside. Below the banner, there is a row of logos for partner institutions: MIT, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, Berkeley UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, and THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS SYSTEM. At the bottom, there is a "Featured Course" section for "BerkeleyX | ColWri2.2x: Principles of Written English, Part 2" with a "Learn More" button. To the right of this is a section titled "edX Courses" with a "see all courses" button and a description of the courses.

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