



Youth

Report

2010



MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVA  
SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY

**Y**outh Report 2010 is mapping current life conditions of young people, informs about their living situations and outlines current challenges in specific areas of policy in relation to youth, that were influenced by measures taken in the period 2007 - 2009. It seeks to ensure continuity in setting of objectives of state policy for children and youth. The preparation of the Report was coordinated by Department of Children and Youth of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic in cooperation with IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute.

# Slovakia is the country of young people

There are 2,201,798 people under 30 years living in Slovakia. Young people represent 40.68% of the total population. Slovakia, unlike other European Union countries, does not face the lack of young people, yet. Demographic trends show that the aging process will accelerate in the coming decades. While currently there is a ratio of two young people under the age of 17 per one citizen over 65, according to the centric variant of forecast, ratio will be reversed - two people over 65 per one citizen under 17 in 2050.





There were made significant changes in the field of formal education in past three years. Determination of two-level curriculum (national and school educational programme) should bring greater freedom to schools in their influence on content and methodology of educational process. In order to respond to the needs of labour market, according to the local and regional conditions, possibility to participate on shaping the school educational programme was opened to local governments, employers and employees in the vocational training. Lifelong Learning Act envisages the creation of the National qualification framework, to align learning outcomes with labour market needs, equal formal and further education and to encourage participation in further education.

Non-formal education in youth work has been supported by two major grant programmes in Slovakia. The International Programme of the EU Youth in Action since 2007 and programmes of financial support for the activities of children and youth of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, known as ADAM, since 2008. Both programmes have become an important stimulus for using of the principles of non-formal educational by organizations in various activities and projects. The major challenge remains, however, the check of the quality of skills acquired. An option is accreditation of non-formal education modules certified by the Accreditation Commission for specialized activities in youth work, which was founded in 2009 by Act no. 282/2008 Z. z. on the Support of Youth Work and update of Act no. 131/2002 Z. z. on Higher Education and amending certain laws, as amended.

# Education



# Employment

The unemployment rate in Slovakia in December 2009 reached 13.6%, while youth unemployment in the same period reached 32.9%. What means that Slovakia has the third highest youth unemployment rate of young people under the age of 25 years from the EU member countries. A significant problem is their long-term unemployment, which in 2008 accounted for almost half of total unemployment of young people.

Many information and advisory services have been established in order to support employment. Since 2009 the employment offices have established three-zone system for the provision of employment services by the level of support to job seekers needs. Besides them, there are active measures present at labour market - from individual action plans and learning support through a contribution to the self-employment, support for disadvantaged job seeker, to the contributions of graduate practice or occupational mobility.

Despite the measures above, a major challenge in the employability of young people is the solution of their long-term unemployment and their consequent unemployability because of the lack of skills and work habits. Another challenge is the continuing discrepancy of formal education with labour market and the associated degradation of higher level of university/tertiary education, which often fails to prepare graduates for the realities of the labour market.







# The Youth Enterprise

According to the Flash Eurobarometer 192 the number of young people who prefer self-employment as their main source of livelihood in the future increased (from 17% to 39%) in 2007 in Slovakia. Although the quality of Slovak business environment is not significantly different from other European countries, there are also enough opportunities for learning within the structures and measures of the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic, employment offices, some schools and other public or non-state actors, young people do not largely run own business in Slovakia. The support for the initiative and entrepreneurship is to the follow-up of actions resulting from several documents such as Slovakia 21 Modernization programme and others. There are several programmes that promote entrepreneurship for young people (from training companies, through education and various competitions) in the framework of secondary and higher education. According to the expert's opinion the reason for lower number of small and medium enterprises (whether specifically young people or in general) may be a decline of the interest in studying at vocational schools in Slovakia, as the graduates of these schools are typical actors in running small businesses. The number of graduates is decreasing and preparation for entrepreneurship itself in vocational education is not encouraging enough to result in a greater interest in entrepreneurship and self-employment.



Logic of „I see the needs - I am looking for solutions to satisfy them“ is still underused in Slovakia. This does not favour either the prevailing idea in families where a child future is rather linked to finding a good job than the career of the entrepreneur. The image of the entrepreneur as the creator of values is partly connotation to a speculator. To improve the situation help the positive examples of projects and events designed to improve the visibility of positive examples from practice, for example: Entrepreneur of the year, Top businesswoman of Slovakia and others.

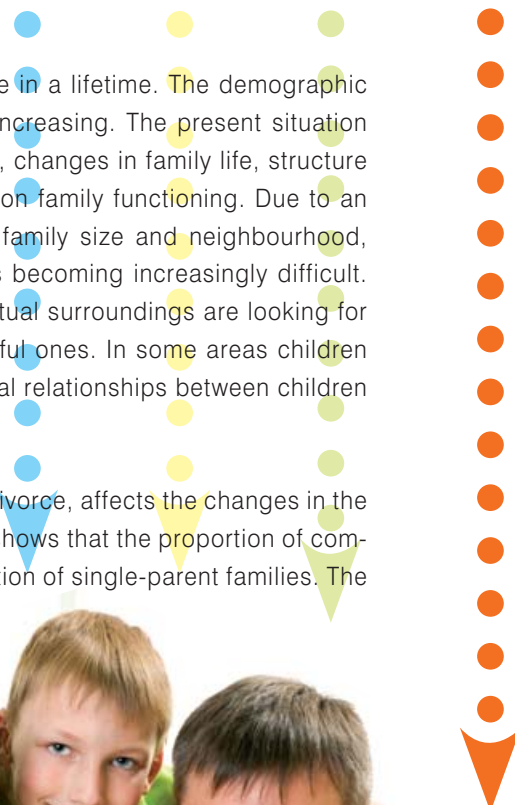
According to expert's opinions the role of the media, especially the public media in promotion of entrepreneurship of young people is less significant, even slim. Publicity and promotion of successful models and those that are worthy to follow models in various fields of the present entrepreneurship in Slovakia and in the world absents, especially in electronic media.

# Family



**M**ost of the Slovak population get married at least once in a lifetime. The demographic data show that the average age of marriage rate is increasing. The present situation is characterized by: expanding the forms of family life, changes in family life, structure and size, as well as labour and employment impact of parents on family functioning. Due to an growing workload of parents, stress, breakdown of traditional family size and neighbourhood, the conditions for children living in families and communities is becoming increasingly difficult. Children often suffer from loneliness and in their familiar and virtual surroundings are looking for counsellors, friends. Not always are found trustworthy and helpful ones. In some areas children overtake their parents and teachers knowledge and the traditional relationships between children and adults are changing.

The decline of birth-rate and marriage rate, as well as growth in divorce, affects the changes in the structure and size of families. Comparison over the last decade shows that the proportion of complete families is gradually reducing and there is growth in proportion of single-parent families. The most common form of financial support of families with children is a tax benefit when parents with children pay fewer taxes than people without children. Other financial benefits are children allowance, childbirth allowance, maternity allowance and family benefit.





# Housing and independence of young people

Most of young people are having difficulties with separating from their parents. Slovak men leave their parents at an average age of 31.5 years and Slovak women do that as 29.8 years old. Several mechanisms, such as obtaining credit from the state Housing Development Fund, are intended only to young people who have set the maximum income. Another option is a housing programme of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family dedicated to socially disadvantaged young people. Young people who earn more than the fixed amount but not enough to afford a mortgage can only think of a soft of favoured loan from commercial banks.





# Leisure time

**Y**oung people have an average of four hours of leisure time per a day. Most free time (up to seven hours a day) have unemployed young people who are not enough in the heart of youth organizations. Most of their free time young people spend at home or with friends. Information how to spend free time they obtained mainly from friends and via Internet. Great influence on spending free time of younger children have parents who are focusing on organizations more narrowly. Organized forms of leisure time activities are regularly confined to less than 16% of young people, out of which over 86% are children under 14 years. Older youngsters prefer individual and unorganized forms of spending leisure time.

Young people have a general overview of the network of facilities possible to use, particularly for unorganized leisure time activities (sports yards, libraries, information centres, school clubs, and cultural facilities). The opportunities for leisure time activities in different centres, organizations and institutions are known approximately by half of young people. Amount of young people using those services is minimal (only about 12% of young people). The offer of organized leisure time activities does not sufficiently reflect needs of young people and thus is little attractive for them. In the case of younger children it is often financially demanding. Closer cooperation, related to use of school facilities between schools and youth organizations is still lacking to complement each other for the empowerment of young people.



# Youth participation in social and political life

In the Slovak Republic, number of young people participating in the activities of youth organisations and school facilities on the basis of membership in organizations is cca. 11% out of the total number of young people. Except activities of school student councils in the formal school system, the young people have not many other opportunities to gain competencies necessary for participation in democratic processes. The results of expert studies are documenting young people's interest in politics in the broadest sense (e.g. on the local political level). On the other hand, there is a growing tendency of young people not to participate actively in solving problems. One indicator of this is very low representation of young people among the members of local and regional self-governments.

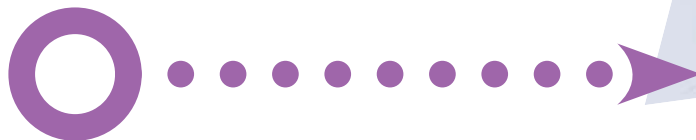
Young people in Slovakia have been perceived for a long time as a social group, which „makes/creates problems that need to be solved/addressed“and not as a potential source of possible solutions. The result is the lack of confidence in the skills and responsibilities of young people for the operation of the city, town or region. In many cases youth, city and school parliaments exist only as a formal proof for the self-governments dealing with youth issue. These structures often provide only cultural or sport activities for other young people and their representatives are not actively involved in decision-making. One of the obstacles to the development of youth participation is the fact that there is no tradition of consultations in the political culture at all levels in Slovakia. The tradition of consultations has been started relatively recently and

is still not part of routine practice, do not have a permanent operational structure and platforms or they are not attractive for young people.

The development of youth civic participation is the aim of several national and European supporting programmes and foundations (The EU Youth in Action Programme, grant Programmes ADAM, programmes of Intenda Foundation and others), but their possibilities are particularly limited in the terms of resources.



# Health and healthy living /lifestyle



Lifestyle of young people significantly affects their health. Youth in Slovakia spends much time in front of a computer, Internet, in shopping centres and in informal groups often meeting in pubs or cafes. Fast food (fast-food, pizza) has become fashionable and very popular, as reflected in the increase of obesity and related diseases. One of the measures to improve the situation are the European Programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak republic called School Milk and the School Fruit. Since 2005 the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic has been contributing to improving the health situation by the grant programme Health in Schools. In 2008, one of the priorities of the Ministry of Education support Programmes – ADAM was the support of project activities on health and healthy lifestyle for young people.

Smoking area is adversely changed, particularly among young girls visiting secondary schools aged 15-18 years, where smoking is increasing more significantly comparing with boys. In 2007, 35% of boys reported daily smoking and up to 38% of girls. Similar findings were reported in the area of alcohol and there was an increase of the percentage of young people who indicated frequent consumption of alcohol. Analysis of the abuse of illicit drugs among high school students showed an increase of consumption in both sexes. Taking LSD and hallucinogens grew as well as ecstasy. A new phenomenon is the weekend drinking as a target rather than a accompanying activity to another activity.



# Social and pathological phenomena and their prevention

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According to available statistics, the proportion of youth crime is to clarify the long-range above 20%. This may be linked to particular social transformation changes and their negative effects (release of moral and legal standards, imperfect legislation, false understanding of democracy, the rapid acquisition of the drinking lifestyle, decrease standards of living, etc.). But also the weakening of the primary prevention of social -pathological phenomena from the side of primary educational officials/factors.

On the other hand, the support receive various prevention programmes where cooperation of groups from different sectors and ministries is presented (projects Behave normally, Safe Community - The Community is our Home, Responsibly.sk, Your right choice, etc.). Despite of several successful projects, the most significant problems in this area is the lack of well trained youth workers, as well as their lack of financial and social assessment. More attention should be paid to the active involvement of children and youth in the development and implementation of preventive programmes.



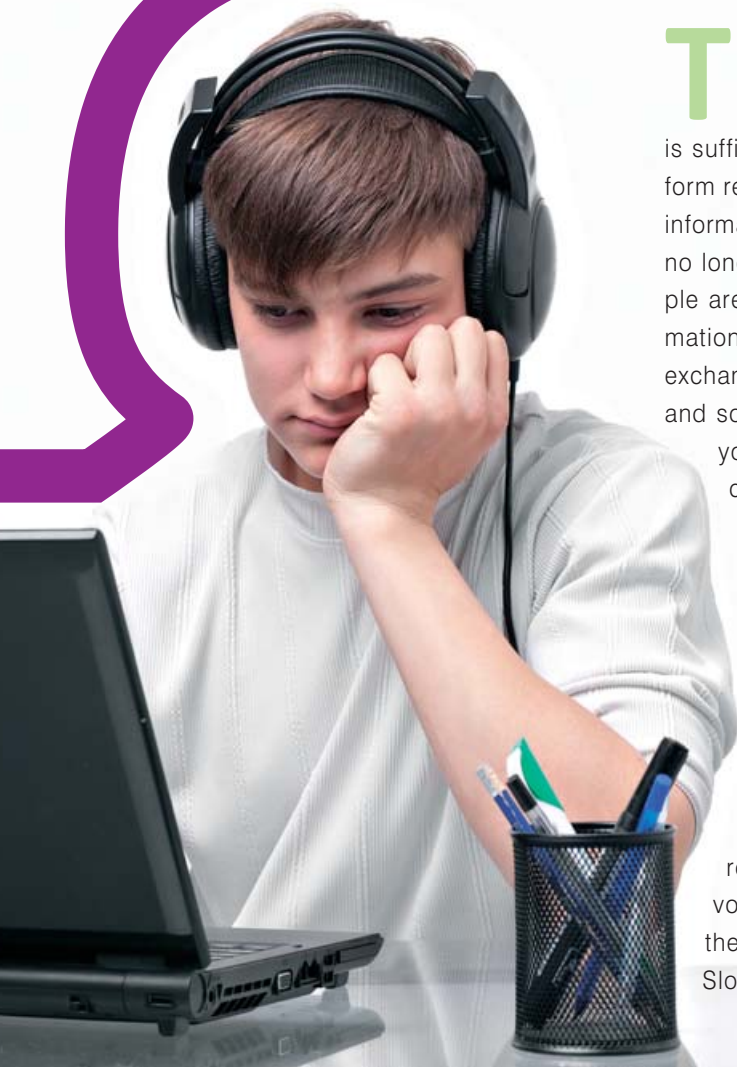
# Culture ○●●●●●●●●●●

Conceptual documents for the field of culture see/perceive young people as one of the groups, however with special needs. Also in the field of culture there is an absence of coordination of operation of departments of culture and education, clear and specific financial provision of youth activities in the field of arts and culture, as well as the conceptual approach of law and public institutions on the issue of availability of culture. Little support for the alternative youth scene is resulting in the orientation of young people in consumer culture and societies.

The Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic ensures availability of cultural events through the Cultural vouchers for primary and secondary schools students and teaching staff and motivates for visiting various cultural institutions. Nevertheless there has not been an increased number of visitors yet.



# Information and communication technology

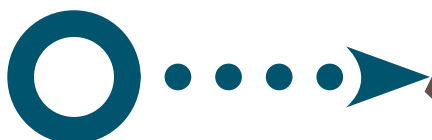


The area of collecting, processing and disseminating information to youth is in a time of enormous growth of information, a key moment. Today's question is not whether the information is sufficient, but whether they are accessible to young people in the form required and the way that they are close to. Traditional forms of information and advice for young people through the direct contact, no longer conform to the needs and demands of youth. Young people are increasingly seeking innovative ways of disseminating information using modern technologies, especially the Internet, email, to exchange views and experiences in real time via video-conferencing and so on. There is a reasonable network of information centres for young people (ICM) in Slovakia but their number or geographical coverage cannot comprehensively cover whole Slovakia by information and counselling services. Moreover, only 3% of young people use these services, although this number is higher in municipalities where the ICM is located.

Another tool for spreading information is Eurodesk - a free information service that monitors, collects, processes and updates the European and national information in a form to be user-friendly and understandable. Information service is provided on national and regional level. There are other European and national projects, programmes and institutions devoted to this area (European Youth Card Association, EURES, the Slovak Academic Information Agency, the Youth Council of Slovakia and others).

# Mobility

**E**ducational mobility, ie transnational mobility in order to acquire new skills is one of the ways by which young people can increase their chances of obtaining employment in the future and ensure their personal development. Slovak Republic, as a member of the European Union, is using the possibilities offered by various programmes such as Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, Marie Curie, mobility within networks of excellence and technology platforms, Leonardo, Comenius, Grundtvig and others. Recently have been added Erasmus for young entrepreneurs. Even from this list of programmes, it is clear that the majority of support measures are intended to talented students. The only program that focuses on the mobility of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds is the Youth in Action Programme.



# Environment



One of the most effective tools for addressing environmental problems in a group of children and youth is a comprehensive system of school and after-school environmental education. Environmental education is an integral part of the curriculum and the curricula of primary and secondary schools. Carefully revised conservation and ecological aspect are shown number of museums nationwide, but also those at the regional level. Popularity is gaining by exhibitions with the topic of conservation, talks, lectures, seminars, competitions, field trips, etc..

NGOs in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic have organized a project „Green School“ aimed to change attitudes of students and to influence their thinking and action towards protecting the environment. The project will involve schools that are in competition on the most environmentally friendly school - trying to get a certificate and flag of „Green School“. Slovak Environmental Agency organizes exhibition of environmental educational programmes called „Cone“. In 2005, the Environmental Commission was established as higher Departmental advisory body to the Minister of Education and Minister of Environment. Its task was to develop a national strategy of education for sustainable development.



# Rural Youth



Young people in rural areas compared to young people living in larger settlements have fewer opportunities. Rural youth are considered disadvantaged in terms of availability of education, employment opportunities, information, internet, leisure facilities and services in rural regions that are significantly underdeveloped in the terms of structure, scope but also the quality of services in comparison to urban regions. There is lack of continuous monitoring of needs and requirements of youth in rural areas and also lack of space and reasonable terms for non-formal education of rural youth in the place of living.



# Major challenges of youth policy

**R**eport on Youth 2010 confirms continuing deficiencies in developing and providing youth policy in Slovakia. Besides the traditional areas where information about children and young people are specifically collected and related measures are taken (education, health, socio-pathological phenomena, family), the vast majority of policies do not see children and youth as a distinct/separate group of people requiring special treatment and do not perceive any need to specify concrete measures to be taken. Children and young people are often placed among the other groups of citizens, although some policies, such as employment, business, culture, regional development, environment, housing, underline their specificity.

The local and regional level in recent years has adopted policy documents in relation to young people. Consultation with representatives of young people in their development and implementation into the practice are getting slowly. Active youth policy at regional level is copying the problems and obstacles from the national level, especially in little or no emphasis on the youth dimension in relevant policy areas (e.g. regional development, transport, etc).



# Report on Youth 2010

**R**eport on Youth 2010 provides the most significant challenges to youth policy:

the need for better communication and coordination between different sectors

the use of the huge potential for cooperation between government, local self-governments, local authorities and NGOs.

To get the full version of the Document entitled YOUTH REPORT 2010 , visit the website [www.iuventa.sk/LEGISLATION](http://www.iuventa.sk/LEGISLATION).



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