

# CURRENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE FIELD OF SPECIALIZED ACTIVITIES FOR THE YOUTH IN SLOVAKIA

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## **Abstract**

The submitted paper discovers and explains the current educational system in the field of specialized activities for the youth in Slovakia. This report is realized in the time when the school reform in Slovakia still resonates and the system of after-school children and youth activities and the youth organizations financing is being adjusted. The survey is aimed mainly at the way and the system of accreditation in the field of youth activities from the point of Slovak youth organizations. By the means of analysis we also come to a conclusion that there exists a great variety of accredited places of employment providing qualification growth. This complex analysis of qualification growth options for the people working with the youth helps to reveal the possibilities and the interest in such a kind of education.

*Keywords: accreditation, education, youth work qualification*

## **Introduction**

Since 2008/2009 school year the reform of educational system has been in progress in Slovakia. This legislative change based on the Act no. 245/2008 about education (Education Law) redefined the system of schools in Slovakia, where this new educational system was supposed to meet the international ISCED standards. Its aim was to implement a two-level educational model that should have brought the option for the schools to better shape themselves according to their and their region's needs. Building on this reform, the subsequent educational areas should change and create conceptions gradually. One of these areas is a section for children and youth.

The school reform was a response to the critique of the traditional educational system. Now, professional non-governmental organizations should respond more flexibly to the educational needs of children and youth. In the field of informal education its aim was to make use of the methods that allow direct experience acquiring – experiential and social learning. Non-governmental organizations should enter the educational influence not only through leisure time and interest activities. Their experience should help in implementing new procedures and methods and thus help in formal education and enrich the existing new approaches established by schools and school facilities.

The section of children and youth under the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic indicates a couple of conceptual materials. The action plan for the 2010 – 2011 youth policy that results from the Key areas and action plans of the state policy towards children and youth in Slovak Republic for 2008 - 2013 tries in a complex and integrated way to support and improve the lives of the young people, their education, access to information, accommodation, employment, health and active leisure time utilization. From the point of informal education of the youth it is important to support the participation of the youth at society's development and active citizenship and patriotism.

The state's policy towards children and youth in Slovak Republic is provided by the tasks in the action plans, fulfilled by particular ministries, local authorities as well as non-governmental organizations and public institutions that deal with children and the youth. Recent situation, according to the Youth report for 2010 ([www.iuventa.sk](http://www.iuventa.sk)) shows the following. Young people have in average 4 hours of leisure time during working days. Its volume differs from social activity, though. The unemployed young people (7, 2 hours) and basic school (5, 42 hours) and high school (4, 51 hours) pupils have the biggest amount of leisure time. The people who work, study at university and women on maternity leave have the minimum leisure time. They devote the most of their leisure time (54, 4 %) to the rest home, and they watch TV, listen to the music, or play computer games. The current "on-line generation" spends more and more time in a digital world, the "virtualization of life" of a young generation in Slovakia extends and this concerns the young people without bigger differences according to their residence, age or sex. An active way of leisure time spending within young people is very occasional - 35, 1 %. On regular basis, only 15, 7% of the young people in a national average perform it, out of which 86,2 % is created by the children under 14 years. More than 75 % of adolescents clearly prefer individual forms, meaning that they perform these activities individually or with their friends who they chose according to themselves. Almost a half of children and the youth (48, 4 %) do not attend any activity at all. As we can see from these data, the system of youth support has big flaws in its function. The role here plays also the financing system of the organizations dealing with the youth. These are financed either directly, in a form of capitations, or in a form of educational vouchers. The third way is a possibility of big youth organizations to gain finances for their activities in a form of projects. The way of financing itself was designed into a few stages. The aim of children and youth financial support programmes for 2008 – 2013 (ADAM programmes) is a creation of conditions for clarification and systematic and purposeful financial support extension for children and the youth out of the process of formal education. These programmes are aimed at financial support preferably in the following areas:

- civic participation of the young people in the life of the society
- young people's volunteering,
- information and advisory activities for children and the youth,
- informal education of children and the youth,
- better acquaintance of children's and youth's situation in the regions using
- the youth research,
- volunteer, professional workers' and young leaders' education

These programmes divide into three individual programmes:

- ADAM 1 - Promotion of systematic work with children and youth
- ADAM 2 – Support of project activities aimed at children and youth work development
- ADAM 3 – Support of acquisition and activation activities for children and the youth and support of stakeholder's networking at national, regional and local level.

## **1 Aim**

The aim of this paper is to describe and explain the current educational system in the field of specialized activities for the youth in Slovakia.

## **2 Methods**

We collected our data by studying of web sites and Ministry of Education databases. We obtained the further information from the organizations dealing with children and the youth, such as Iuventa, Association of information and advisory centres for the youth of the Slovak Republic (ZIPCEM), and Youth Council of Slovakia. For the missing information we inquired the competent Ministry of Education employees.

## **3 Results and discussion**

In the beginning we were interested in the actual state of organized out-of-school activities realized by various organizations dealing with children and the youth. Based on the Youth Report for 2010, almost a half of the young people between 13 – 27 years does not know whether in their neighbourhood non-governmental organizations (46,9 %), open clubs (47,2%), and pastoral centres or congregational houses (39,3%) perform their activities. Better insight into these organizations show people from smaller towns and villages.

On the base of young people's responds we can assume that the facility network and the possibility for active leisure time spending are relatively good. Up to 90% of young people stated that in their neighbourhood there are sports places, playgrounds and parks. A little smaller (84%) is the option to get information from libraries and information centres. The possibility to spend their leisure time at schools in a form of school children clubs and various playgroups was stated by three quarters of the respondents (77%). Cultural activities are available to the 70% of young people, 65% of young people also reflect basic schools of art in their neighbourhood. Leisure time centres work in the neighbourhood of 56% of respondents. Out of these options the young people mostly use sport activities, cultural activities, visit libraries or information centres.

Organizations providing leisure time activities focus insufficiently on basic and high school students who have relatively enough leisure time and very often they are not able to fill it with activities, which can lead to a useless passivity.

The research shows that parents like the idea of regular playgroups, but schools do not offer them adequately. In schools the leisure time activities of civic associations are not promoted. Schools often very randomly cooperate with the institutions within their community; they lack the strategies for cooperation development for a friendly community. Options for leisure time activities are little attractive for the children. Children stress the lack of activities where they can personally meet new people, new environment, choose activities according to them.

Further, we were interested in the state of the conditions in the area of qualifications allowing people to work with children. Since the 1 September 2008, the new Law for youth support has been in operation (Act no. 282/2008). This law in its contents provides better conditions for young man formation as an active citizen who participates in the quality of his or her life. In many countries of the European Union (e.g. Austria, Germany, Finland, Ireland, and Belgium), the problematic of state policy towards children and youth legally is adjusted in an independent law, which influences the development, protection and support of young people in the process of the informal education. According to this establishment, the Accreditation committee for the specialized activities for the youth has been set. Another law that influences the accreditation of educational institutions and allows conducting enterprise is the Act no.

568/ 2009 about the lifelong education. It describes the function of education institutions, process and conditions of accreditation, issuing of accreditation documents, duties of the education institution, issuing of graduation certificates from the accredited educational programmes and the activity of the Accreditation committee for the further education.

An interest of youth organizations in improving their members' qualification in a form of accreditation of their own organizations is low (Görner – Kompán, 2008). Only 15% out of 22 candidates of organizations working in the sphere of education and work with the youth have used a possibility to ask for grants in the Adam 1 programme since 2008. As for other subjects using different forms of accreditation, the biggest assert have the subjects from the sphere of sport and lifelong education. Subjects qualified through the accreditation of lifelong education find their place in the enterprise.

## **Conclusion**

Legislative support of education in the area of working with the youth after the school reform in Slovakia is ready for the accreditation system. Its task was to create legislative conditions for a mutual supplementation of the school and the further education as well as the informal learning that would acknowledge the competencies of young leaders, youth volunteers and their deputies who, by the means of systematic and intentional work with children and the youth, acquired specific competencies. However, the awareness and the interest of the organizations in educational possibilities and new directions and subject fields is very low. Slovakia is very conservative in these trends and seldom takes knowledge from abroad. Its direct consequence is the loss of the target category – children and the youth from the point of organized leisure time activities. Young people then lose the idea of volunteering from their minds. There is a lack of supplies for young people in which they could organize and plan their leisure time themselves. What prevail are the offers that are defined in advance and they are thematically oriented. It is also necessary to give more attention to a field social work and field work with the youth. On a membership basis only 11% of young people attend youth organizations and school facilities. In Slovakia up to the year 2008 there had been set 13500 non-governmental organizations, out of which much less really work. In 2008 only 40 non-governmental organizations registered and asked for a support from the Ministry of Education through the Adam 1 grant scheme. These organizations showed a membership basis of 50 700 children and young people. This represents 2, 3% from the overall number of young people. From the above mentioned data we can state that the level of young people's involvement in the governmental and non-governmental organizations, whose task is the work with the youth, is at level of 11%, which is very low. It is significant to know the current needs of children and youth in the field of education and leisure time spending in particular regions of Slovakia. Therefore it is important that universities as a moving force of an educated society start, besides theoretical outcomes, to provide efficient educational options and qualifications aimed at the needs and interests of present-day children and youth.

## Literature

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## **SOUČASNÝ SYSTÉM VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ PRO SPECIALIZOVANÉ ČINNOSTI V OBLASTI PRÁCE S MLÁDEŽÍ NA SLOVENSKU**

Předkládaná studie zjišťuje a objasňuje současný systém vzdělávání pro specializované činnosti práce s mládeží na Slovensku. Studia je realizována v době kdy na Slovensku doznívá školská reforma a upravuje se systém financování mimoškolních aktivit dětí a mládeže ze státu a organizací zabývajících se prací s mládeží. Průzkum se zaměřuje hlavně na způsob a systém akreditace v oblasti zájmových činností a aktivit mládeže z pohledu celoslovenských mládežnických organizací. Z výsledků se dozvídáme také o rozmanitosti struktury akreditovaných pracovišť k provádění příslušného kvalifikačního růstu formou analýzy. Uvedená komplexní analýza příslušných možností kvalifikačního růstu lidí pracujících s mládeží napomáhá odhalit možnosti a zájem o takové druhy vzdělávání.

## **DAS GEGENWÄRTIGE AUSBILDUNGSSYSTEM FÜR SPEZIALISIERTE TÄTIGKEITEN IM BEREICH DER JUGENDARBEIT IN DER SLOWAKEI**

Die vorliegende Studie untersucht und erklärt das gegenwärtige Ausbildungssystem für die spezialisierten Tätigkeiten der Jugendarbeit in der Slowakei. Die Studie wird zu einem Zeitpunkt durchgeführt, als in der Slowakei die Schulreform greift und das Finanzierungssystem für außerschulische Aktivitäten der Kinder und Jugendlichen vom Staat und von Organisationen, die sich der Jugendarbeit widmen, überarbeitet wird. Die Umfrage konzentriert sich hauptsächlich auf das Verfahren und das System der Akkreditierung im Bereich der Freizeitgestaltung und Aktivitäten junger Menschen aus der Perspektive der slowakischen Jugendorganisationen. Aus den Ergebnissen der Analyse erfahren wir auch von der Vielfalt der Struktur der akkreditierten Stellen, die qualifizierte Weiterbildungsmöglichkeiten gewährleisten. Die genannte umfassende Analyse der jeweiligen Möglichkeiten des Qualifikationswachstums hilft den Menschen die Möglichkeiten und Interessen in der Jugendarbeit aufzuzeigen.

## **OBECNY SYSTEM KSZTAŁCENIA W ZAKRESIE SPECJALISTYCZNYCH ZAJĘĆ Z MŁODZIEŻĄ NA SŁOWACJI**

Niniejsze opracowanie diagnozuje i wyjaśnia obecny system kształcenia w zakresie zajęć specjalistycznych prowadzonych w ramach pracy z młodzieżą na Słowacji. Badania realizowano w czasie, gdy na Słowacji dobiegała końca reforma szkolnictwa i systemu finansowania pozaszkolnych zajęć dzieci i młodzieży przez państwo i organizacje zajmujące się pracą z młodzieżą. Badania dotyczą przede wszystkim sposobu i systemu akredytacji w zakresie kółek zainteresowań i form aktywności młodzieży z punktu widzenia ogólnokrajowych organizacji młodzieżowych. Wyniki wskazują ponadto na różnorodność struktury akredytowanych placówek podnoszących kwalifikacje. Przedstawiona kompleksowa analiza odpowiednich możliwości wzrostu kwalifikacji osób pracujących z młodzieżą pomaga w ustaleniu możliwości i zainteresowania tego typu edukacją.