

A Vision
of a Fundamental
Reform
of the
Educational
System
in Slovakia
(And Elsewhere)



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One of the crucial problems in Slovakia – and elsewhere – is an educational system (especially its primary and secondary levels) failing to adapt to the challenges of modern society. There is one ultimate reason behind it: the prevailing central planning approach has resulted in rigidity, bureaucracy, and purely formalistic requirements disconnected from the real world.

Therefore, it is not enough to fine-tune the existing system. It must undergo a fundamental reform in its funding and teaching content (curricula), and include proper incentive structures for all stakeholders: students, parents, education providers, policymakers, and politicians.

Rather than design a new system of primary and secondary education using a top-to-bottom approach, it is preferable to define conditions within which the new system would evolve as a result of the actions of all relevant stakeholders. Thus, a successful vision must design new incentive structures that encourage the desired outcomes: increased flexibility, diversity and higher quality in provision of

educational services, responsibility of “consumers” of educational services, and less rigidity from politicians and policymakers. Let us take a look at a brief description of the current system and its major weaknesses.

MAJOR WEAKNESSES AND FAILURES OF EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SLOVAKIA

Slovakian system is based on 10 years of compulsory education provided by primary schools (for students from ages 6-15) and secondary schools (for students from ages 15-19); a pre-primary stage is non-compulsory, with nursery schools (ages 0-3) and kindergarten schools (ages 4-6).

The school year is organized into two semesters, starting in September and ending in June, with five to six teaching lessons daily from Monday to Friday, two months of summer holidays in July and August, and one week of winter holidays in February.

It is mostly a state-run system funded from taxpayer money and provided to them for “free” with a chronic lack of funding as a result of

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SLOVAKIA

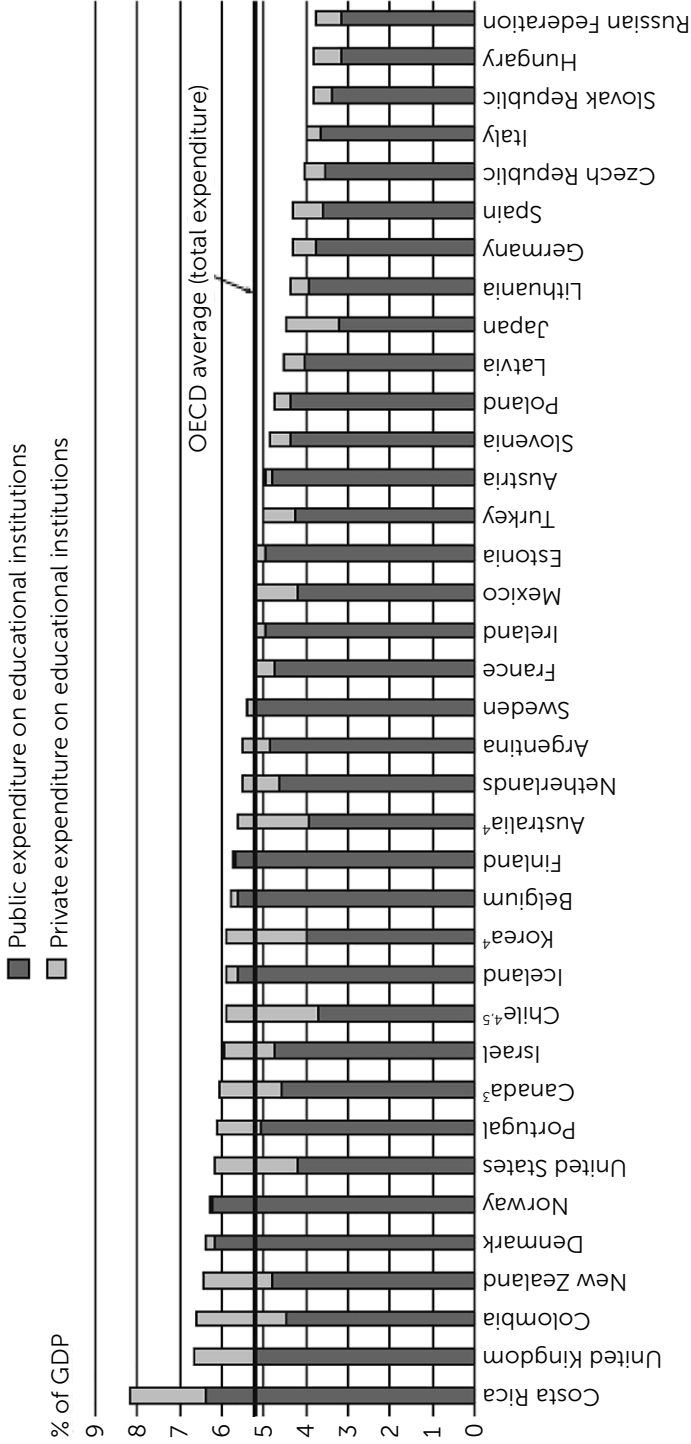
Primary school education is divided into two stages, with the first one for all children ages 6-10 and the second one for ages 10-15, where kids and their parents decide to stay in a nine-year primary school or opt for an eight-year gymnasium.

Primary education consists of a wide range of subjects: Slovak language and literature, foreign languages, mathematics, geography, history, religion or ethics, biology, chemistry, physics, music, and drawing, with a long tradition of after-school classes of music, theatre, technical education, etc.

Secondary schools provide four years of general, non-vocational education (four- or eight-year grammar schools or high schools called gymnasiums), or various types of vocational education.

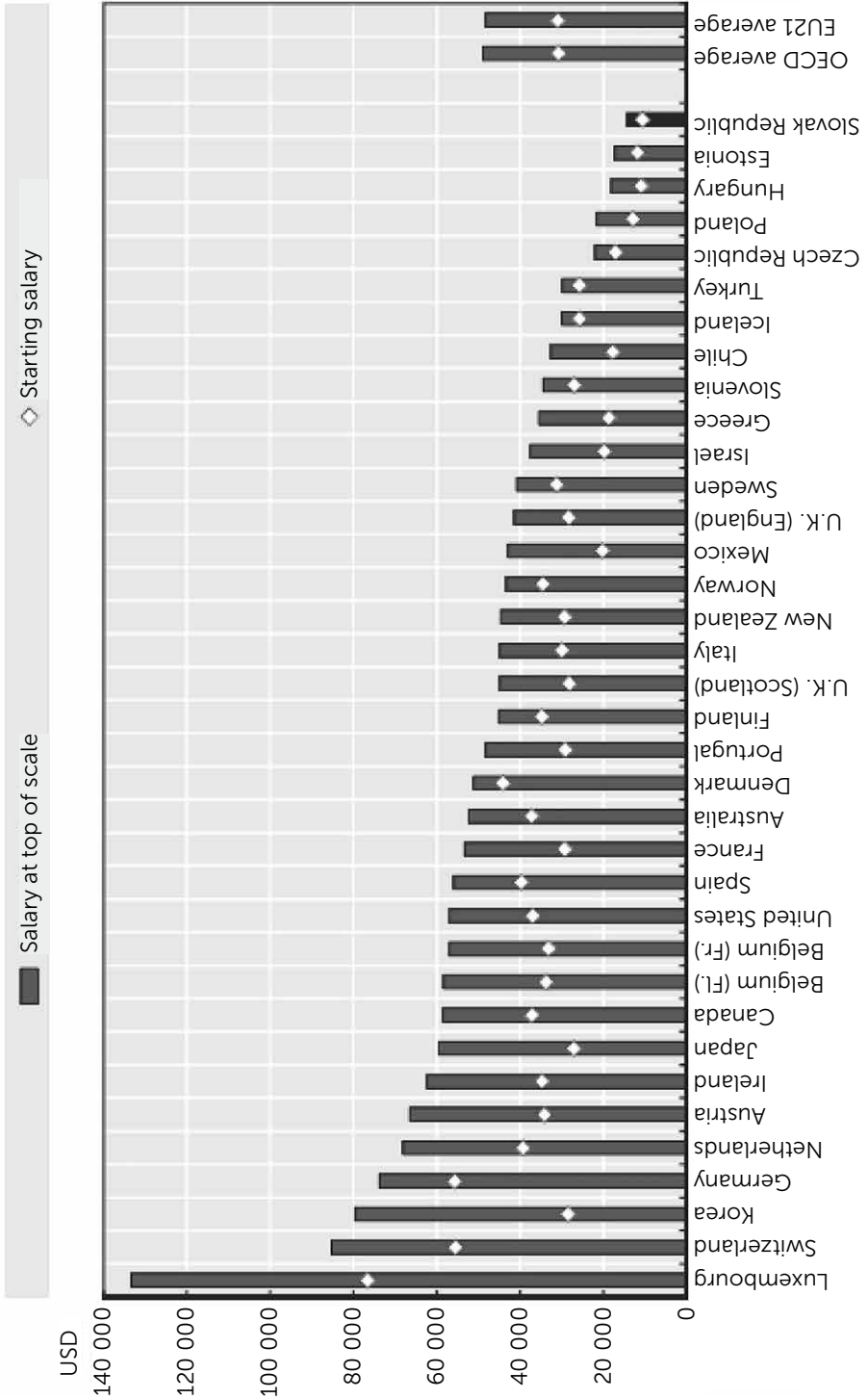
While gymnasiums prepare students for their next stage of studies, mostly at the university level, secondary vocational schools and apprenticeships and craft centers train young people ages 16-19 for the labor market.

Figure 1: Public and private expenditures on education in Slovakia in 2013



Source: OECD, Reviews of School Resources: Slovak Republic 2015

Figure 2: Teacher annual salaries at start of career and at top of the scale, lower secondary education, public institutions in Slovakia in 2012



Source: OECD, Reviews of School Resources: Slovak Republic 2015, p. 180

Table 1: Inefficiencies in the provision of educational services in Slovakia

	2003	2008	2013
Number of schools			
State	2 272	2 090	2 003
Private	11	34	42
Church	104	113	114
Total	2 387	2 237	2 159
Number of students			
State	554 986	436 077	399 760
Private	503	3 066	4 874
Church	25 302	22 572	22 743
Total	580 791	461 715	427 377
School size			
State	244.3	208.6	199.6
Private	45.7	90.2	116.0
Church	243.3	199.8	199.5
Total	243.3	206.4	198.0
Class size			
State	21.3	19.7	18.5
Private	12.0	14.6	14.2
Church	21.1	19.3	18.2
Total	21.3	19.6	18.5

Source: OECD, Reviews of School Resources: Slovak Republic 2015, p. 48

political decisions, which generates serious imbalances (e.g., the number of schools, teachers, and students) and struggles to adjust quickly.

The whole system is organized around interests of education providers (schools and teachers), not around the educational needs of individual students. Students are not seen by providers as their "clients".

It provides a "mass education", that a uniform and overloaded teaching content, is unable to tailor education to the specific needs of individual students. That creates a rigid environment that kills creativity and flexibility, the crucial assets of potential employees in the future economy.

All those shortcomings lead to one outcome: an extreme mismatch between labor market needs and the type of school graduates. Many more students go to gymnasiums than necessary and very few students opt for vocational schools, which results in a vast shortage of employees with technical skills.

TRANSITIONAL NEGLECT IN EDUCATION

After the collapse of communism in 1989, all post-communist countries were busy with a transformation of their political and economic systems. Politicians – with unequal pace in different countries – introduced democratic political institutions and

liberalized their economies. However, the so-called “soft sectors” (primarily social security, health care, and education) remained more or less untouched even by the most reform-oriented governments.

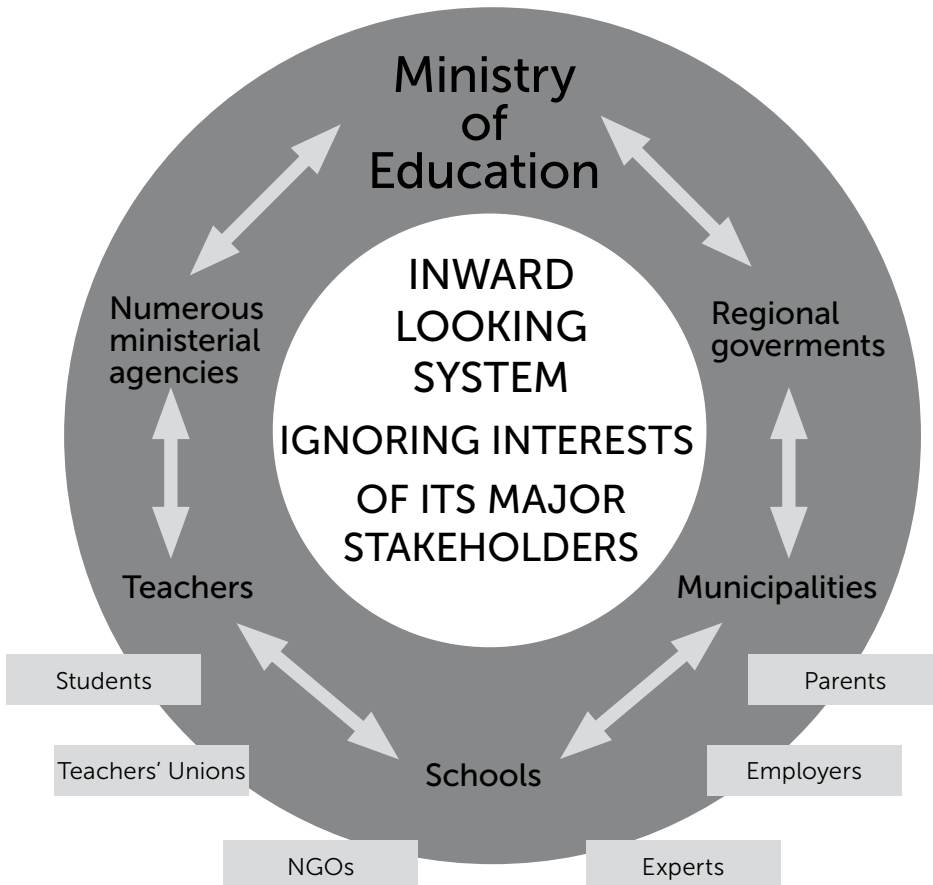
The education system is a long-discussed topic in Slovakia. It is a common belief that all governments after 1989 failed to modernize it. As a result, many serious problems accumulated over more than 25 years, including poor remuneration and motivation of teachers, a lack of freedom of schools in the teaching process, an excessive bureaucracy, and too many elements of a central planning.

OECD: “MINOR MODIFICATIONS RATHER THAN A MAJOR OVERHAUL” IS NEEDED

Since 2000, Slovakia is a member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Based on international comparisons, it has a positive view on the functioning and performance of the school system in Slovakia. In its recent analysis, the OECD even stated that “it needs minor modifications rather than a major overhaul”.¹ That assessment applied to how Slovak education is funded.

¹ OECD (2016) *Reviews of School Resources: Slovak Republic*, p. 15.

Figure 3: A vicious circle of government bureaucracy



Source: Own work



TEACHERS IN SLOVAKIA ARE AMONG THE WORST PAID IN THE OECD

However, it seems that it reflects the position of the OECD toward the Slovak school system in general.

Nevertheless, the OECD raises criticism of several aspects of the Slovak education system, including low public expenditures on education, low teacher salaries, and inefficiencies in the provision of educational services [See Figure 1].

In 2011, less than 5 percent of the GDP was spent on educational institutions in Slovakia. It is the second-lowest figure among OECD countries after Hungary [See Figure 2].

While teachers in the OECD earn, on average, between 77 percent and 89 percent of the salary of a tertiary graduate, teachers in Slovakia are earning less than half of the salary of a tertiary graduate. It means that teachers in Slovakia are among the worst paid in the OECD [See Table 1].

Inefficiencies in the provision of education services can be clearly seen from the Table 1. Between 2003 and 2013, the number of students at a basic education level declined from 580,791 to 427,377 – 26.4 percent. However, the number of schools only declined by 9.6 percent. The mismatch is even more striking at the secondary level: the number of students declined by 23.3 percent while the number of schools in

the same period increased by 10.3 percent. These inefficiencies are caused by a lack of rationalization in the school system in response to demographic changes. Schools are not adjusting to the number of students.

Those – and many other – negative features of the current educational system in Slovakia did not discourage the OECD from its overall positive assessment in its review. Why? It gives high credit to two older changes that significantly affected the functioning of the school system: a partial decentralization in 2002 and a school funding reform in 2003. In 2002, due to a broad reform of public administration, municipalities gained more responsibility for the governance and management of pre-primary and basic schools and eight newly established regions gained more responsibility for upper secondary schools. In 2003, school funding on a per-student basis was introduced when a budget for each school became dependent on the number of students at the school, the school type, and other parameters defined by the legislation.

While the changes represent a partial improvement they are inadequate as a justification for the existing status quo and result in policy recommendations that are limited to a fine-tuning of the existing system.

OECD IS WRONG: SLOVAKIA NEEDS A FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION SYSTEM REFORM

It is not enough to argue that the educational system in Slovakia is more or less an average system among OECD countries. School systems of the majority of OECD countries are struggling to keep pace with ever-changing requirements in labor markets as well as the latest developments of information and communication technology. It is not enough just to compare one educational system to



others. It must confront future challenges which will require much more focus on student needs, increased flexibility, continuous improvements, and innovations in teaching content and processes. The opposite characteristics prevail in the current Slovak educational system: an inward-looking system with too much centralization, an enormous bureaucracy, and a flawed incentive structure for all stakeholders.

Every education system is a complex world with different stakeholders: politicians, government officials and a dedicated ministry; various government educational agencies, students, parents, and employers; schools, teachers and their unions, numerous NGOs, researchers, etc. Unfortunately, it is not organized around the interests of its most important stakeholder – the students. The system is inward-looking and self-centered. Its major organizational principle is supremacy of the needs of educational infrastructure over the needs of its “clients”. Students, parents, and employers are, in fact, marginalized by the current educational system in Slovakia [See Figure 3].

STILL TOO MUCH CENTRALIZATION

There are three levels of administration of the school system in Slovakia: the central government, regions, and municipalities. The central government still holds the key regulatory role via the Ministry of Education. It is responsible for national education policy, defines the levels and terms of funding (including teachers’ salaries), manages the register of schools and school facilities, establishes the framework for student learning objectives, sets the requirements for competence of educational staff, etc. Regions and municipalities are responsible mostly for the provision of public education services.

Looking at the flow of funds [See Figure 5], decisions made on financial resources, teaching content and process, human re-

sources and the types of policymaking, it can be only said that there is still too much centralization in the Slovak educational system.

STILL TOO MUCH BUREAUCRACY AND RIGIDITY

A “troika” of authorities (the central government and its agencies, regional governments, and municipalities) brings to the system too much politics and bureaucracy, as well as a slow response to the changing environment. Moreover, it generates rigidity and kills flexibility.

Two good examples are two “monster” projects (both inspired and funded by the EU): “the national system of qualifications” and “the national system of professions”. It is a response to a real problem, a serious mismatch between knowledge and skills of graduates and the requirements of employers. Despite the fact that social partners at a central level are involved, all efforts and tens of millions of euros spent have no relevance for students and their parents, schools, or teachers. Since it is financed from EU funds, it is unnecessarily expensive. Bureaucratic exercises have continued at a central level for almost a decade without any tangible results.

In the meantime, the state as a regulator generates many rules and regulations imposing a serious administrative burden on schools and teachers which is neither necessary nor needed. Teachers are obliged to fill out multiple reports on teaching process, collect data for statistical purposes for various agencies, conduct administrative duties unrelated to their schooling activities, e.g., reporting to health and safety regulators, etc.

PERVERSE INCENTIVE STRUCTURE

One of the major weaknesses of the current education system in Slovakia is its perverse incentive structure for almost all

stakeholders involved, which is either encouraging them to do undesired behavior and/or discouraging them from desired behavior. Teachers can serve as an illustrative example. The current system failed terribly in providing adequate financial reward to teachers as discussed above. In addition to low salaries, there is almost universal consensus in society that their social status is very low and still declining. In the past, it was a respected profession. Today, not anymore. It is not financially attractive for young people and therefore the teaching workforce continues to age at a high rate. A significant number of school teachers in Slovakia are now over 50 years old.

Given this serious situation, it is not surprising that teachers have all incentives to focus almost exclusively on one single issue: the need to rapidly and radically increase teachers' salaries. However, while this matter undoubtedly is important, there are many other equally important problems which receive much less or no attention in policy debates.

Students are another crucial stakeholder who are not incentivized properly. They should be at the heart of the system, its efforts and attention, its ultimate goal – yet, they are not. Their possibilities to correct this failure are extremely limited. There is almost no direct way for students to influence the flow of funds within the system. They are encouraged to stay passive. And they accept this role of the most inactive element of the education process. At this point, it is not enough to introduce “minor modifications” into education. It is necessary to conduct a major overhaul of funding (more autonomy in financial decisions for students and their parents), teaching content (significant reduction in curricula overload of unnecessary information), and proper incentive structures for all stakeholders, students, parents, providers of ed-

ucation, policymakers, and politicians (i.e., introduction of real competition among providers of education).

THE SLOVAK EDUCATION SYSTEM: A NEW VISION

It is important to emphasize that the educational system is complex and involves many different players and institutions with complicated procedures and processes. Thus, a successful vision of the fundamental change should rely more on new incentive structures that encourage required outcomes and less on direct interventions from politicians and policymakers.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical principles on which reform is based consider state intervention (ownership of assets, direct provision of goods and services, regulation) as a negative factor. This leads to a serious distortion of market coordination, the creation of privileged groups dependent on public spending, near elimination of competition, a lack of financial resources, inadequate provision of goods and services provided by the public sector, and the reduction of entrepreneurship, creativity, and personal responsibility.

THE CONCEPT OF DEMONSTRATED PREFERENCES

The first foundations of the concept of demonstrated preferences were laid down by early Austrian economists such as William Stanley Jevons, Irving Fisher, and Frank Fetter. It was fully developed by Ludwig von Mises. The idea is based on the assumption that “human preferences are reflected, thus being demonstrated by their real decisions when making choices”². Thus, if a person is attending an educational institution for five years and he or she pays opportunity

² Rothbard, M. (2001) *Ekonomie státních zásahu*. Praha: Liberální Institut, p. 18.

costs in terms of lost earnings not generated from the labor market, it can be assumed that the action was preferred over another alternative. By this decision, people demonstrate their preferences in given conditions.

THE THEORY OF HUMAN CAPITAL

The theory of human capital was developed by 1992 Nobel laureate and economist Gary Becker. Education and various courses, which are considered to be capital, make an individual more attractive in the labor market by improving his or her social status over a lifetime. Therefore, economists consider investing in these goods as investment in human capital. Education has an impact on earnings and social position, improves the quality of life, and provides orientation in economic life and social environment.

EDUCATION IS NOT A PUBLIC GOOD

The economic concept of the theory of public goods³ is more than debatable. It is accepted by most scholars without reservation for "goods" such as national defense or law enforcement. In education, this theory cannot be applied. According to David B. Johnson, "Education is clearly private good, because particularly those who receive education benefit from it and those who do not pay tuition may be denied to consume it. A country would have more technicians, journalists, doctors, or lawyers even if there were no public schools"⁴.

There is another significant problem, this time related to information: provision of education through public expenditure and its coordination by civil servants. In coordinating education policy, the public sector

does not have information on what people really need or what is good for them. Or rather, this information is obtained with a considerable delay. At the same time, the public sector – in its political process – cannot flexibly respond to changes in consumer preferences that are, in the case of education, based on labor market needs.

PROFIT AND MARKET PRICE SYSTEM MUST BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

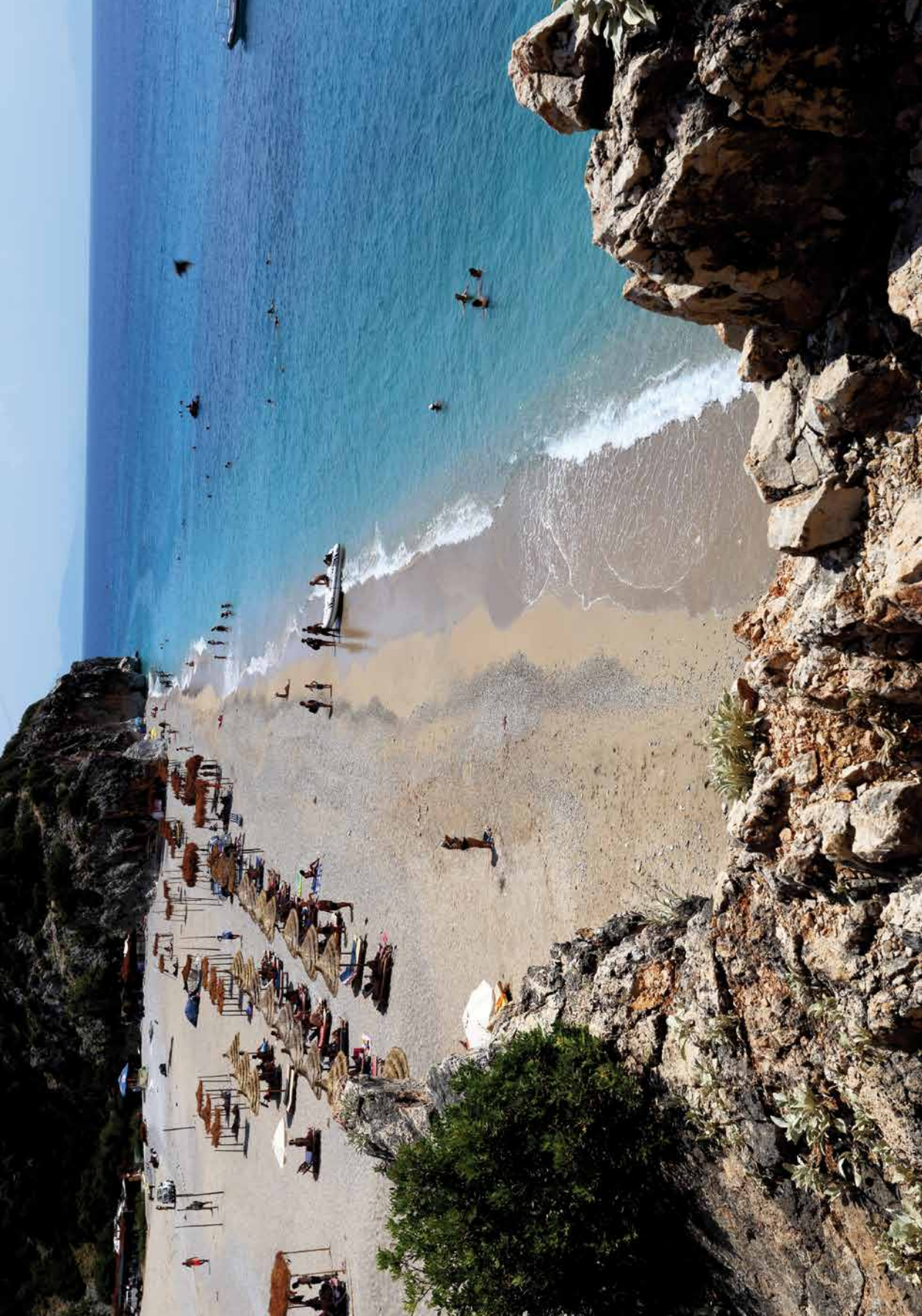
Profit. This term makes a considerable number of people angry. As Henry Hazlitt says, "It is an indication of how little is understood a role profit plays in the economy."⁵ It is absolutely essential for any sector to have an opportunity to generate profit. In short, we can say that the main function of profits for businesses is to provide them with information on customer satisfaction, or whether their efficiency corresponds to the optimal utilization of resources. From an economic perspective it can be argued that the profit a) is one of the coordinators of the behavior of individuals in the market and b) motivates the search for better opportunities of satisfying consumer needs. With the price mechanism, we can calculate our costs and thus profit.

Problems arise wherever – including education – there are no market-determined prices of goods and services, i.e., where there is no system for individuals to value goods and resources as compared to other available resources. We can characterize them as a) underfunding, b) lack of understanding of needs of individuals and the labor market, and c) the absence of a flexible system that would determine how to teach, what to teach, and in what quality and form, what is the optimal number of students per teacher, how many training facilities should exist, etc.

³ I.e., goods that are available to everyone and are non-rivalrous.

⁴ Johnson, D.B. (1997) *Teória Verejnej Volby*, Bratislava, Sofia, p. 114.

⁵ Hazlitt, H. (1999) *Ekonomie v Jedné Lekci*. Praha: Liberální institut, p. 154.

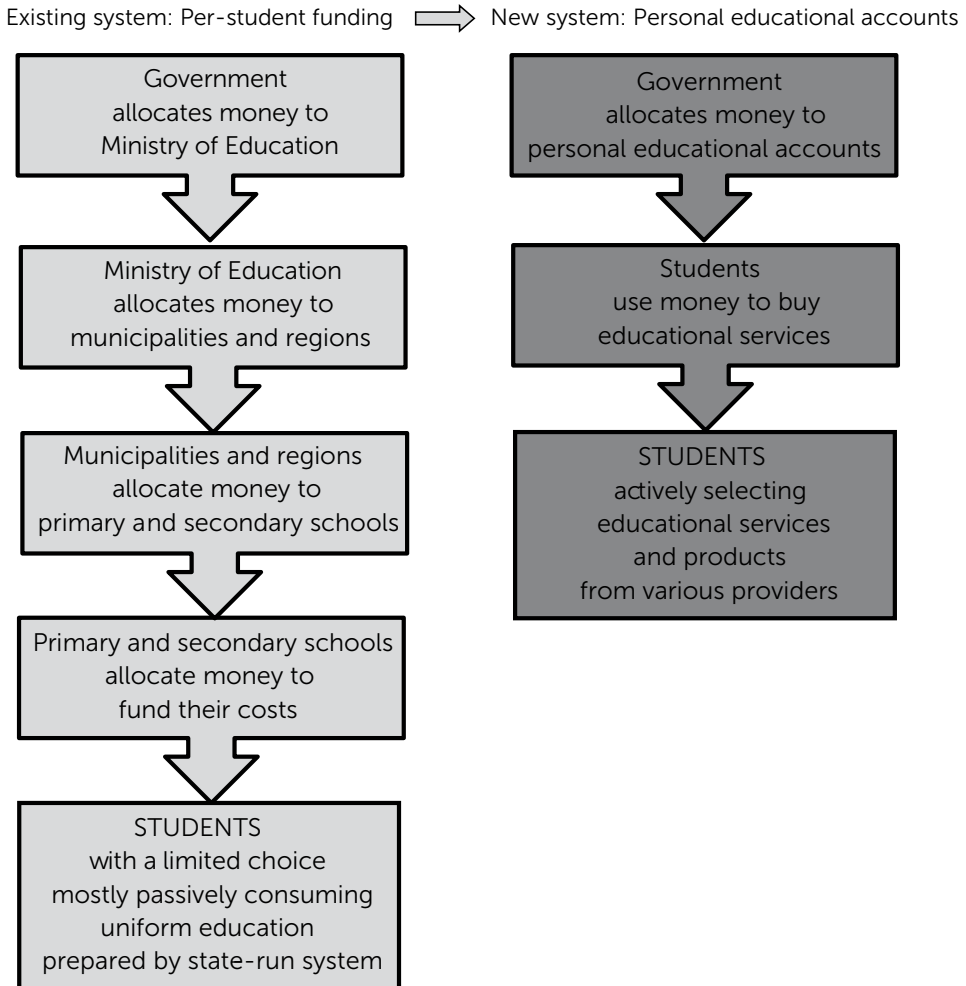


The market price mechanism not only generates all that information, but it also guarantees an optimal funding for education. Without the price system we are economically blind. Market forces can be introduced to state-run education relatively quickly even without complete privatization: simply by giving students (and their parents) freedom to choose the school they want to attend or the educational product they want to buy.

ALLOWING COMPETITION – FREE ACCESS TO INDUSTRY

An absolutely necessary condition for market prices of education is competition, which, according to the Austrian School of Economics, shall be defined as free entry to the sector. This means no strict regulatory measures from the authorities. From this definition it can be assumed that competition is not only the actual provision of the goods or

Figure 4: A paradigm shift in funding



services to other businesses, but it also poses a threat in terms of the supply of these goods or services by other competitors in that market.

For a regulatory policy, there should be one overarching imperative: as few restrictions as possible when it comes to teaching content (with a few basic requirements: reading, writing, and calculating, and stakeholders deciding the rest), ways of teaching, and providers of education (innovative and diverse approaches should be welcomed, with minimum requirements for entry).

SECURING INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR EDUCATION

It is important to emphasize that decisions on education of children should be made by individuals, namely students and their parents, not by the government. State educational policies created by politicians and bureaucrats that determine “what to teach” and “how to teach” undermines the role of the family, the rights of individuals, and their personal responsibility. State paternalism in this area is probably based on the belief that the government officials are the most competent to decide how the education system should look like on behalf of the interests of society. This argument, however, is incorrect and immoral. Each person is exceptional and unique. Therefore, they have the right to make decisions concerning their life and future.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE VISION OF EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SLOVAKIA

From underlying theoretical assumptions, it is possible to derive a set of fundamental principles of the vision. They can serve as a foundation for recommendations on how the new system should look:

- It must include as many economic incentives as possible that allow its stakeholders the maximum flexibility in order to adapt to ever-changing conditions;

- Parents (of the most) of the children and the children themselves have to be empowered. They will need to play a crucial role in the education system, associated also with a greater responsibility for decisions in the education of children;

- There must be a significant shift in funding – from financing of educational infrastructure (schools) to the financing of educational services;

- New funding must be based on a system of personal educational savings accounts administered by parents; each student must be seen as unique. Therefore, the education system must be designed along the lines of his or her educational needs;

- The system must guarantee universal access to education for all children;

- The public administration has a position of the guarantor of the functioning of the system of control over compliance with generally specified conditions, social security, and so on;

- The education system must respond to new technological trends like social media, free online courses, cloud technologies, mobile learning applications, etc.

Those principles can then be formulated into the following policy recommendations covering three major pillars of the vision.

NEW PARADIGM OF EDUCATION FUNDING: PERSONAL STUDENT ACCOUNTS

The aim of introducing per-student funding was to increase transparency and efficiency in financing primary and secondary schools. This goal was only partially fulfilled. Moreover, the Slovak Ministry of Education gradually complicates the system. Today there are 24 different ways of

calculating per-student funding for secondary schools as a result of modifications to the original formula. It is clear that there must be a significant shift in funding – from financing of educational infrastructure (schools and teachers) to financing of educational services. This can be achieved by introducing a fundamental change in the flow of financial resources within the system. The financial resources for education need to be allocated directly to students' personal accounts instead of circulating money within educational structures. Namely, from the Ministry to municipalities and regions, from municipalities and regions to primary and secondary schools, and from schools to teachers to cover personal costs of education, and from schools to providers of electricity, heating, etc. to cover operational costs. Even from this brief description it is clear that somebody and something important is missing here: students and their educational needs.

In order to bring students into the center of the system, the old way of funding must be eliminated and replaced by the new way of funding where financial resources for education are allocated directly to the personal accounts of students. Students – and parents of students under 18 – would be able to pay for education directly from their personal account. It would simplify

the whole system on one side and give the transparent control of cash flows and decision-making directly to the people [See Figure 4].

Such a personal student account may take the form of a bank account, credit card, or on-line government account. The final decision of which form to opt for needs to be made after a careful consideration of simplicity, user friendliness, flexibility, and other criteria. In the future, even crypto systems (smart contracts and crypto-currencies) with defined properties of finance might also be used.

Amount of the allocation to the personal accounts would be calculated as follows:

Amount of the allocation per student = (Total amount of resources for education - total amount of state and social grants - overheads) / Number of children between ages 6-19

After feeding this formula with data, the total amount of annual allocation per student would be equal to about 2,000 euros.

Furthermore, a student's personal account would receive allocation in regular time intervals (e.g., quarterly). There would be a possibility to spend money only on defined services or products with a license. That should limit fraud. However, since the licensing can potentially

Figure 5: Centralized versus decentralized systems

	Centralized system	Decentralized system
Hard policy making	Bureaucracy Prescription and control of activities Standardized resources (qualifications) Mandatory provision	Setting of mandatory goals Obligatory control of results
Soft policy making	Mobilizing commitment, engagement	Market Self-organization, autonomous activities Flexible resources, acquisition Intervention through incentives, sanctions

have a damaging effect on the supply side and its flexibility, it needs to be an easy, speedy, and light procedure with minimal eligibility criteria to support competition and diversity of educational products and services.

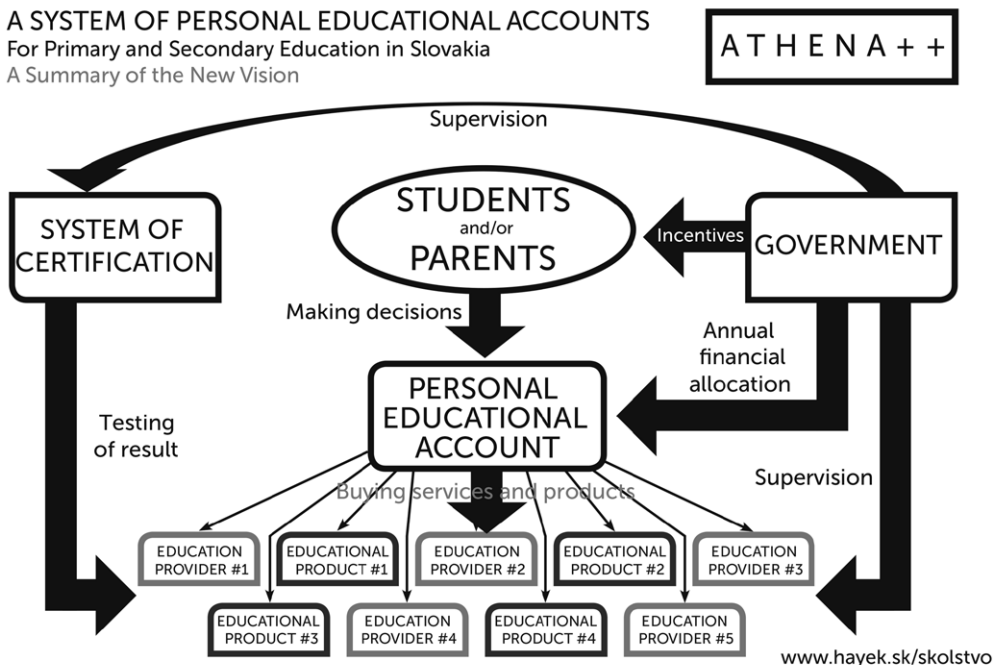
There would also be a possibility of saving money if parents and/or students were able to purchase cheaper education by opting for the most favorable combination of value from all available alternatives. Savings could be used to finance education of students in the future, including higher levels of education, lifelong learning, etc. These financial resources would be owned by students and that is why they ought to be inherited. This model combines ideas of educational voucher

systems with personal savings similar to the system of individual pension accounts currently existing in Slovakia and many other countries in Europe and in the world.

OPENING A PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES: MORE FLEXIBILITY, DIVERSITY, AND HIGHER QUALITY

Nowadays we live in a world where everybody is confronted with constant change. Labor markets require utmost flexibility. The abovementioned financing system would allow more freedom for the education of children. If introduced, it would change the motivation and functioning of the schools themselves because a competitive environment would be created. It

Figure 6: A vision of the decentralized system of primary and secondary education in Slovakia



would push education providers to come up with attractive learning models for better prices and better adapt to the labor market.

In principle, anyone would be able to get an educational license – schools, teachers, individual entrepreneurs, freelancers, institutional investors, NGOs, etc. In order to promote diversity, the state should require certain standards in limited areas (writing, reading, and mathematics); otherwise, it should deregulate the curriculum.

In the new system, it would make no sense to divide schools into different types – the school becomes a center of learning which can be extremely specific (from one-sided focus on various aspects such as age, course content, or the form of training) to extremely diverse (courses offered to different age groups). The cost of education would be set up by licensed subjects themselves. Teachers would face competition from other teachers and other education providers.

This can be a cause of concern for many. What about a risk of a “race to the bottom” in terms of price and quality? Those concerns can be addressed effectively by the third fundamental pillar of the new system: a rigorous and thorough evaluation of quality.

EVALUATION OF QUALITY: SYSTEM OF CERTIFICATION

The last important area is testing the results of education – certification of competencies, which should go to specialized bodies that deal with measurement and evaluation. The certification body would be able to carry out its activities only upon obtaining a license. Various institutions (like universities, businesses, or business associations) would be eligi-

ble. There would be many types of certificates accepted, by foreign entities, the labor market, colleges, basic state certificates, etc.

In terms of public policy, state focus would be on the testing of certain universal skills and knowledge such as writing, reading, and mathematics.

The form, content, and cost of the certification itself would be determined by evaluation bodies. Certification would be an eligible cost for students and he or she could use their personal student account to cover it.

Of course, many questions may arise. How quick would be a transition from existing system to the new system of education? How would the new system protect against fraud? What about students from poor social environments, children without parents, and abandoned kids? Answers to those and other questions, together with a more detailed description of the changes and proposed implementation (the most important elements of the new design of the education system in Slovakia), can be found on a web page of The F. A. Hayek Foundation. It is impossible to foster economic growth and enhance productivity without education systems tailored to the needs, requirements, and challenges of the 21st century. And visions like the one presented here make it possible.

In order to give the reader a better idea of the whole vision, it is useful to summarize all its important elements in one graphic [See Figure 6].

CONCLUSIONS

The current educational system in Slovakia does not please anyone. Teachers are frustrated by low salaries, parents are unhappy with declining quality of schools (as measured by international comparisons

like PISA), employers are unable to find enough skilled people on the labor market, and politicians always confronted with other policy priorities.

There is a general consensus that, after decades of ignoring its problems, this segment of society needs to go through a fundamental reform that would make it fit for challenges of the 21st century.

However, there is almost a vacuum when it comes to suggestions for what should be done and how, exactly, the educational system needs to be changed. Teachers' labor unions, political parties, employers' organizations, NGOs, various experts — they all have in common a bold criticism presented from their particular points of view, and at the same time have no reform plan.

The new vision of the Slovak primary and secondary education presented here is the first comprehensive proposal on the need for a far-reaching overhaul of the system and how it should be changed.

It is based on the firm belief that decisions about education should be made by individuals, not by the state. It is therefore trying to propose measures maximizing freedom and responsibility of individual students and their families to make decisions on which educational services and products to buy that would be best tailored to their needs.

The proposal presented in this article is not as radical as it might sound. It does not eliminate the existing system of publicly funded education. Its main part is a proposal to shift decision-making powers over taxpayers' money to be spent on education. Until now, politicians and government officials were in charge. From now on (after implementation of this vision) "consumers" or "clients" (students and their parents) of

the school system will be in charge. There is also much more heterogeneity and diversity of providers of educational services and products envisaged.

The system as proposed in this text does not exist in any country in Europe or elsewhere. It is not going to be implemented tomorrow. Its main purpose is to open debate and inspire others in Slovakia (and in other countries) to adapt their educational systems to modern realities of the contemporary world with all its challenges, risks, and opportunities. ●



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