

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



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Information sheet BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF YOUTH SLOVAK REPUBLIC



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1. Promotion and support of youth research

There is no special law regulating/governing youth research in the Slovak Republic. Despite this fact, the topic is carried out in several documents of lower legal force.

From 2008 to 2013 the **Key Areas and Action Plans of State Policy towards Children and Youth in Slovakia for 2008 – 2013** (hereinafter referred to as “the Conception”) was implemented, which similarly as the preceding Youth Policy Conception (2002 - 2007), emphasised the importance of professional research and collecting of information being necessary for active and modern youth policy. The research is (according to the Conception) a basis, from which the concrete steps including action plans are developed.

The document **Key Areas and Action Plans of State Policy towards Children and Youth in Slovakia for 2008 – 2013** was approved by the governmental decision no. 184 on March 26th, 2008. The Conception defines objectives, principles and priority fields of government, counties and other subjects in selected areas of children and youth life. It also names the basic tasks of structures participating in its executing and describes steps that will guarantee their effective fulfilment. Moreover, the Conception defines the needs and optimal conditions for quality education and professional training of young people, their involvement in social life and for development of competences and talents within school education as well as outside the school. Special attention is paid to both, pedagogical research revitalisation and collecting of information related to young people with health disabilities in regard to their preparation for future career and work integration or to disadvantaged groups such as rural youth. Evaluation of the implementation of Youth Policy Conception is planned for 2013 (including the Youth Report).

Governmental program

The Act No. 282/2008 of Youth Work Support came into force on September 1st, 2008. This act guarantees improved conditions for forming young people as active citizens, who participate in the quality of their own life. The law determines the tasks of counties and municipalities in relation to youth work. Accreditation commission for specialised activities within youth work has been established, and it will operate as a consulting body regarding the recognition of non-formal education in the field of youth work. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport is obliged to create „legal, organisational, research and economic conditions for youth work development.”

2. Legal basis for an evidence-based approach to youth policy

Key Areas and Action Plans of State Policy towards Children and Youth in Slovakia for 2008 – 2013 not only settled a pattern for the steps to be taken in the youth field, but also defined the needs, which should be met during the term. Following the defined needs, the priorities of European youth policy and new development of international youth policy, the Cross-Sectoral Steering Committee for Youth Policy has been founded. The Cross-Sectoral Steering Committee (hereinafter referred to as “CSSC”) is a decision-making body, within which the nominees of all youth-relevant ministries discuss and adopt the measures that will be performed by the Slovak Republic towards children and youth under the age 30 (according to the Act No. 282/2008 on

Youth Work Support). CSSC has a legal status. In practice, CSSC meets several times a year. Its paramount assignment is adoption of Action Plans of Youth Policy.

Action Plan of Youth Policy for 2012 – 2013¹ is the latest document, which especially in thematic parts such as Education, Information and Communication Technologies, Employment and Youth Participation on social and political life not only emphasises the necessity of systematic collecting of information as the basic material for modern youth policy creation, but also defines the concrete steps to achieve this goal in cooperation with responsible institutions and bodies (ministries, counties, IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute, Youth Council of Slovakia and others). Proposed measures, mentioned in action plan, are as follows:

- To observe the development of children and youth, especially with a focus at the influence of socio-economic indicators;
- To support monitoring, a national and international survey in the field of occurrence of obesity;
- To support monitoring, a national and international survey in the field of **socio-pathological** phenomena,
- To support a national and international research.

During the year 2013, several working groups will be established aiming at preparation of a new strategic youth policy document for 2014 – 2020. This document will serve as a basis in many areas, including steps, which will shape the actions taken in the field of youth research.

3. Structures and actors playing role in gaining better knowledge of young people

Although the system of youth research support and its organisation is not formalised - several directions of youth research have been established as the result of modern national and European Youth Policy. The Slovak Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport supports the research through several ways: thanks to several subordinated organisations, special financial support and through academic research at universities.

3.1. Departments in universities gathering knowledge on youth

No Slovak University has a specialized pedagogical-research institute (department, establishment) serving only for youth research issues. Faculty and University institutes are perceived as centres for basic research in individual/different sciences. Philosophical or Social-political faculties run departments of sociology, politology, pedagogy, psychology, ethnology and social work operating as such centres.

Rare doctoral studies are noted in the field of youth (at Departments of political science, sociology or ethnology). More often such studies can be found at departments of psychology (development psychology) and pedagogy (social pedagogy, pedagogy of leisure time).

¹Action plan of youth policy in Slovakia 2008 -2009, http://www.iuventa.sk/index.php?www=sp_file&id_item=378 z 15th October 2008
Information sheet 'Better knowledge of youth'

The most significant capacity of pedagogical-research projects concentrated on children and youth issues is concentrated at pedagogical faculties. However, research in the scope of teaching theory (didactics) prevails over the theory of education and problems in school environment (e.g. bullying) or in family, or in free time of young adolescents.

Universities having pedagogical faculties are: Comenius University in Bratislava, University of Matej Bell in Banská Bystrica, University in Prešov, University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, University in Trnava, Catholic University in Ružomberok, and University of P.J.Šafárik in Košice.

Departments of social work are relatively new components in the structure of pedagogical or health faculties. They prepare experts for social work in various scopes of social life as well as in the system of youth work. So they devote time to academic-research and publication activities in the scope of youth (for example solving youth drug addiction, prevention, social-educational problems of youth and their solutions, unemployment, counselling, social participation etc.).

3.2. Major public and semi-public bodies dealing with youth research, including public companies

IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute, directly run by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, has been carrying out activities in the field of youth work and youth policy for more than 50 years. IUVENTA has always had an ambition to play more important role in supporting youth research. In the past, the group of researchers worked on various themes and tasks such as youth unemployment, influence of media etc. (Krupinsky Miruška, 2001; Turan Vesna; 2001).

At present, IUVENTA supports especially researchers' networking, cooperates in research projects with external network and provides information transfer from different structures of the Council of Europe and the European Commission focused on youth research within the confines of the academic community. Research, in general, focuses on 13 topics, directly linked with youth policy, especially on those, in which no relevant data is at the disposal. This resulted to financial support of 15 researches; some of them were already presented in regular meetings and seminars. Prof. Ladislav Macháček (ladislav.machacek@ucm.sk, www.ucm.sk) is in charge of quality assurance and consultation.

All finalised researches are published in an online data archive of youth research on www.vyskummladeze.sk (English version also available).

The youth issue occurs in programs of academic-research institutes belonging to other ministries than the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport. The most important institutes are:

- Institute for Labour and Family Research (2006) (www.sspr.gov.sk) - Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic,
- Department of Population Statistics at Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic <http://portal.statistics.sk>,
- National Health Information Centre at the Ministry of Health,
- Informatization department at the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic.

3.3. NGOs gathering knowledge on youth

The main initiative in gathering scientific information on youth is taken by the Slovak Youth Council, which is active in producing researches and surveys focused on non-formal education in the field of youth work (especially in children's and youth NGOs), youth participation and youth leisure (www.mladez.sk).

Other organisations: CARDO (<http://www.cardo-eu.net/en/node/53>) and The Platform of Volunteer Centres and Organizations (http://www.dobrovolnickecentra.sk/clanok-0-43/1424_About_Us.html) support volunteering and provide scientific information from various international researches, in which they have been involved.

3.4. Private companies dealing with youth research

There are no private companies dealing exclusively with youth research although the third sector organisations and private academic and research agencies play irreplaceable role within institutional research. There were some examples of private companies being hired in order to deliver the specified research.

The most important ones are:

- FOCUS agency www.focus-research.sk: evaluation of the EU YOUTH programme, project organisations and participants, collection of other sociological data
- GFK Agency www.gfk.com: research on youth (life style, youth legislation)
- CVEK www.cvek.sk: Centre for the research of ethnicity and culture, problems of multicultural society, intolerance and racism

3.5. Statistical offices collecting statistics on youth

There is not any exquisite institution completely covering youth research or collecting the data in Slovakia (as for example the German Youth Institute in Munich, www.dji.de), youth research takes place in various governmental and non-governmental institutions. Basic demographic data collection and some other surveys are performed by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (www.statistics.sk). Youth as a specific group is not under a special strand of research but the data can be available from the general researches and collections.

The Institute for Information and Prognosis in Education annually publishes a Yearbook on Children and Youth (www.uips.sk). Surveys are focused on civic associations' activities, youth information centres, school clubs and youth centres at local level, projects in the youth field supported from various sources, publications etc..

3.6. Directory of national youth researchers

- Alžbeta Brozmanová / University of Matej Bell, Banská Bystrica: youth volunteering,
- Ladislav Macháček/ University in Trnava: youth participation, school democracy
- Eduard Čukan/ Ministry of Defence: young people in the army
- Danka Moravčíková, Pavol Barát/ Agricultural University in Nitra: rural youth and civic and political participation,
- Norbert Vrabec / CCCC Nitra: youth media and online participation
- Radoslav Štefančík /University in Trnava: youth political extremism and political recruitment of young people
- Peter Lenčo, Ondrej Gallo /Slovak Youth Council: young people and youth organisations, non-formal education in youth work, influence of youth work experiences, role models of present-day young people
- Mária Nogová/ State Pedagogy Institute: peer education
- Alena Rochovská/Comenius University Bratislava: youth homelessness
- Milan Pukančík, Tomáš Demočko/ Comenius University Bratislava/ Health and Social Work College (Sv. Alžbeta/St. Elisabeth) Bratislava: youth migrants.

Academic–research institutes established by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport have a special status in the scope of youth research.

- Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology (VÚDPaP) (www.vudpap.sk) is the only institute dealing with complex research of mental evolution of children in normal and pathological developments and conditions that influence this evolution and possibilities of optimisation.
- National Pedagogical Institute www.statpedu.sk deals with research, verifying and executing projects (IEA or OECD international studies are important, e.g. PISA)
- Slovak Academy of Sciences operates a specialised system of academic-research institutes (see www.sav.sk) solving research projects contributing to better knowledge of social conditions of young people's life, such as
 - Institute of Sociology,
 - Institute of Political Science,
 - Institute of Experimental Psychology,
 - Ethnological Institute,
 - Institute of Prognosis,
 - Department of Research for Social and Biological Communication.

3.7. National research networks on youth

Since 2008, IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute has cooperated on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport with various researchers or research institutions in preparation of research projects focused on youth policy topics or priorities. In 2011 a new round of different researches started. The topics are focused on the fields, in which a lack of information complicates evaluation of the strategic youth policy documents: Action Plans and Conception (e.g. rural youth civic and political participation, school councils' development, youth volunteering, minorities and their interaction with the majority society etc.).

IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute regularly organises meetings of researchers, politicians as well as people working directly with youth (meetings take place at least twice a year, often more frequently). The agenda of the meetings implies various topics:

- a) Some meetings are oriented on research – either on the presentation of the results or the discussion on the methods, approaches (the researchers' network in such way ensures the quality of the research).
- b) Some meetings are aimed at a single topic, in which the other actors (politicians and practitioners) are present and the research itself is only the start to the discussion on expected measures and support.

There are special support measures prepared to reflect the needs of researchers (young ones) such as the training in qualitative research methods, training in policy brief preparation and policy recommendations from the research etc. For more information, please, contact: iuventa@iuventa.sk.

3.8. Transnational networks on youth with relevance for national networks

The most important transnational organization, which Slovak experts cooperate with, is the European Sociological Association (ESA, <http://www.europeansociology.org/>). Out of 36 research networks, one section of the ESA is called Youth & Generations, (available at <http://www.europeansociology.org/research-networks/rn30-youth-and-generation.html>) and this network focuses on all aspects of sociological and cultural youth research.

There is outstanding cooperation also with International Sociological Association (www.isa-sociology.org). In this association, the research committee 34 – Sociology of Youth is traditionally active.

3.9. Knowledge networks supporting youth policy

EuNYK and EKCYC initiatives have been an impulse for setting up national youth researchers' network, which includes academic-research department as well as research institutes (see 3.7).

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport traditionally coordinates the governmental youth policy. There were several attempts to overcome the barriers caused by this multi-dimensionality. As one of the examples serves the above-mentioned Cross-Sectorial Steering Committee (see part 2.).

Another body was established in 2011: Committee for Children and Youth (coordinated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family), which is active in the field of children's rights and any youth policies directly involving children's rights protection.²

4. Promotion and support to youth researchers and other actors working towards better knowledge of youth

Promotion and support of youth research by IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute:

IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute regularly prepares (in cooperation with different partners) several events with the aim to spread information on youth towards key actors and/or - for better information on current youth policy issues - to youth researchers, University teachers and others.

The seminar called “**Currently in Youth Research in Slovakia 2011**” was held with the aim to:

- present the findings of the research on youth autonomy, and its implications on youth policy,
- inform about the European Year of Volunteering. The European Year of Volunteering was an impulse to begin a discussion about volunteering itself and its role in the Slovak society, since there had not been any detailed information based on data from volunteering research.

Subsequently, the seminar called “**Civic Education and Youth Education to Citizenship**” fostered the information database accessible for those strongly interested in the topic of Active Citizenship and Civic Education. The seminar created a platform for experiences exchanging and for a discussion about the outcomes of “The IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS 2009)” research. The IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study was focused on new areas of civilization changes and forthcoming challenges. The research provided information from a different perspective, i.e. from the national as well as the regional context. Furthermore, it collected data about specific aspects of civic education and education towards citizenship.

² <http://www.employment.gov.sk/vybor-pre-deti-a-mladez.html>

The seminar called “**Slovak Youth Mirrored by Research**“ was a platform for presentation and discussion about many ongoing research projects, taking into consideration the content as well as the methodology of researches.

Other support of youth research in Slovakia

The biggest part of youth research is realised at universities and scientific departments of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport or other ministries. Therefore, the main financial sources are connected to the budget of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport. Youth researchers are supported in their work thanks to several funding opportunities. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic provides the researchers with two types of programs - KEGA and VEGA - which represent a source of financial support for the academics and their research.

Some universities even have their own grant schemes to support especially talented doctoral students. A research analysis on the conditions of generational exchange has been carried out by pedagogical-research workers. Lots of young scientific-research workers leave before they vindicate their doctoral work to find work in private companies due to financial motivation. The student mobility is supported by various programmes and agencies such as the Slovak Academic Information Agency or the Life-long Learning Programme Agency. There was a research analysis about the conditions of generation exchange organized by pedagogical-research workers. Many young science-research workers leave to private companies before vindicating their doctoral works due to financial motivation.

Another form of youth researchers support lies in promotion mobility opportunities. Students' Mobility is supported by various programmes as for example: National Scholarship Programme, www.saia.sk, AIESEC, www.aiesec.org/slovakia. Mobility is supported also by public and private foundations (Konto Orange, Foundation of Slovak Gas Industry, Foundation of TatraBanka, etc.).

Students have an opportunity to create their own organisations in order to cooperate and suggest proposals leading to improvement of doctoral student's conditions. For example: The Association of Doctoral Students was created, <http://www.ads.sk> in order to motivate and articulate their socio-economic problems and ask for their legislative solutions. There are also other aims than identification and solution of most important problems of graduate students, collecting of information about graduate students, communication with public, increase of financial sources for young scientists in Slovakia in general, international cooperation and other..

International scientific and technology cooperation (MVTŠ)

Internal system of financial support for research projects of international scientific cooperation at universities enables departments to be involved in research in the frame of:

- Programmes of European Union (Framework Programme) 7th
- International programmes (COST, EUREKA, NATO, INTAS, ENV /ESF – European Foundation for Science, NSF – National Foundation for Science and others)
- Bilateral and multilateral projects.

Slovak Research and Development Agency (<http://www.apvv.sk>)

This institute covers development and implementation of new programmes and support systems of international cooperation in the field of science in coordination with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. Participation of the Slovak Republic in European programmes and initiatives is obviously also supported.

Cultural and Education Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (KEGA)

Cultural and Education Grant Agency KEGA is an internal grant agency aimed at financial support of projects of applied researches in the area of education, creative art initiated by

researchers from public universities or ministries. Projects are accepted following the call specifying the given thematic area. The support comes from institutional financial sources of public universities.

Scientific Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport and the Slovak academy of Sciences (VEGA)

Internal institution for the area of Education and Slovak Academy of Science (SAV) coordinates the identification and evaluation of basic research projects implemented at departments of universities and Slovak academic sciences. The financial support for new and continuous scientific projects is evaluated by the agency and it advises the Minister and president of SAV in matters of the support. The support comes from institutional financial sources of public universities and the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

Other financial sources for youth research in Slovakia

- Open Society Institute through Open Society Foundation – aimed at marginalised youth;
- Educational foundation of Ján Hus – programme of innovations in curriculum at universities;
- Norwegian financial mechanism.

Private sources for youth research do not exist on permanent and regular basis. There is information only about ad hoc private sources in the field of research in natural and technical sciences.

5. Publications and accessible data on youth

5.1. Data collections providing updated statistics on youth (public and private)

Annual Report on Children and Youth is produced by the Institute for Information and Prognosis in Education (<http://www.uips.sk/level2m/roценка-o-detoch-a-mladezi>) and provides an overview of statistical data related to children and youth. While primarily based on data collected by the Institute of Information and Prognosis of Education (indicators of civic associations for children and youth, youth information centers, youth clubs) it is supplemented by surveys for demographics, unemployment and youth criminality as well.

5.2. Regular youth reports

So far, two complex reports about youth have been made by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. In 2001, in relation to the first official state conception towards children and youth until 2007 and in 2005, National Youth Policy Review in the framework of the Council of Europe's Initiative.

In Slovakia, partial reports on participation, information about youth, volunteering and research of youth were prepared for the European Commission in the framework of Common Objectives on EU Youth Policy. In 2010, IUVENTA published the Youth Report 2010, which summarizes information about state policy measures towards children and youth in 16 areas. The next report will be presented in 2014.

On regional level (N/A)

5.3. National journals and reviews on youth research

„Youth and Society“ Slovak Journal for State Youth Policy and Youth Research is published regularly four times a year since 1990 by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport and the Institute for Information and Prognosis in Education.

5.4. According to publications and recent data collections: what are priority themes in the field of youth research in your country

Youth participation, youth employment, excluded groups (Roma minority), youth mobility, peer education and non-formal education in youth work.

6. IT dissemination of knowledge in the youth field

6.1. Web-Portals and online databases on better understanding of youth

Electronic archive of youth researches www.vyskummladeze.sk (English version)

7. Good practice related to fostering better knowledge of youth

Electronic archive of youth researches www.vyskummladeze.sk is the example of good practice. It is widely used by the politicians, students and practitioners.