

YOUTH REPORT 2018

The graphic consists of two overlapping circles. The larger circle on the right is white, and the smaller circle on the left is a light blue color. They overlap in the center, creating a lens-shaped intersection. The background is a solid medium blue color.

or „Two million of the future“



MINISTRY
OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE,
RESEARCH AND SPORT
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC



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We are supplying the third instalment of this Youth Report. The Report is mapping the current lives of young people in Slovakia based on analyses, surveys and the findings of numerous Slovak experts. It follows on from the Youth Report of 2014 and has allowed us to compare the development of the circumstances and life conditions of youth in different areas of this explicit area, and one of the most important parts of the population in each advanced society as well.

According to the latest figures published by the Slovak Statistics Office, The Slovak Republic, as of the 31st December 2017 the census population stood at 5,443,120 inhabitants, of which 1,931,633 people were at the age of 30 or below, this accounted for 35.5 %. When compared with 2013 the number of young people at this age has decreased by 2.85 %.

The youth of 2018 are the first inimitable generation, which do not have any recollection or knowledge of a non-democratic era of a single party government as was the case before 1989. Furthermore, it is the first generation, which has been using technological and mobile communication since early childhood, whether in the form of mobile phones or computers.

Over the past four years, it has become evidently apparent in the field of Education and Training, that from the 1st September 2015 there has been ongoing effective innovative state Education programs for nursery schools, Primary schools, Lower secondary schools, Upper secondary schools, 4 or 5 – year gymnasiums, Lower and Upper secondary schools, 8-year gymnasiums and also Primary Art schools.

On 30th June 2015, the Educational sector submitted to the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Committee for Education, Research, Youth and Sport information about the implementation of the procedures and measures which would be used for the improvement of pupil outcomes in International Students Assessment by the OECD – PISA.

Correspondingly, within this context The Ministry of Education declared the 2016/2017 school year as the year of Reading and Literacy. The State Vocational Education Institute was responsible for supporting the practical literacy of pupils across primary and secondary schools in the field of natural science subjects.

The Vocation act of 1st September 2015 for Vocational Education and Training established a system of dual Education and training. It is a model of vocational Education and training which attains the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for a profession, a group of occupations or various professional activities.

One of the many phases towards this change was also a document titled „Learning Slovakia “, during its preparation experts and the wider public able to comment on its content.

Despite the numerous initiatives we could state that the Educational system in Slovakia is still insufficiently equipped to increase the economic potential of the country.

Slovakia's position within the statistical information supplied by OECD in the area of the quality of Education and social mobility, along with the highest percentage of university students studying abroad amongst all of the OECD countries, which does not deter foreign students from studying in Slovakia, exemplifies this situation.

The disadvantages that are becoming widely visible under the topic of social inadequacy is a very serious problem, this is not only a social problem for young students in the varying regions of Slovakia, it is also very serious issue for regions like Prešov, Košice and Banská Bystrica. In such cases where pupils deemed to have special Educational needs and behavioural problems would not be successfully included in the social inclusion aspects of school life, there would be an increased risk of a significant number of students that would leave school early and face the potential risk of long-term unemployment in adulthood.

At the present time, it is increasingly important not only to understand but to also to promote the importance of learning outcomes gained through both formal and non-formal learning methods.

This set of competencies should subsequently create information for employers, on the basis of which they should be able to identify the required knowledge and skill set of job seekers. They should also help Education and training providers to determine the content and level of provided Education in accordance with the needs of the labour market.

In addition to the structural challenges in the field of Education at different levels it is important to talk about Education on citizenship, critical thinking and the prevention of progressive radicalization of youth as significant joint challenges in Education in Slovakia.

What are the opinions of young people in the Educational system in Slovakia?

It seems to me that the Educational system continues to prefer a lot of factual knowledge and formal results (marks). Money comes to schools according to the number of pupils in the classroom, secondary schools accept almost anyone. When a person wants to educate themselves further, they must manage it in their spare time through non-formal Education.

Andrea, 18 yrs., Gymnasium

Teachers' should pay more attention to the personality development of pupils and not on knowledge that is irrelevant for real life. They should teach pupils better communication skills and skills to express their views and opinions.

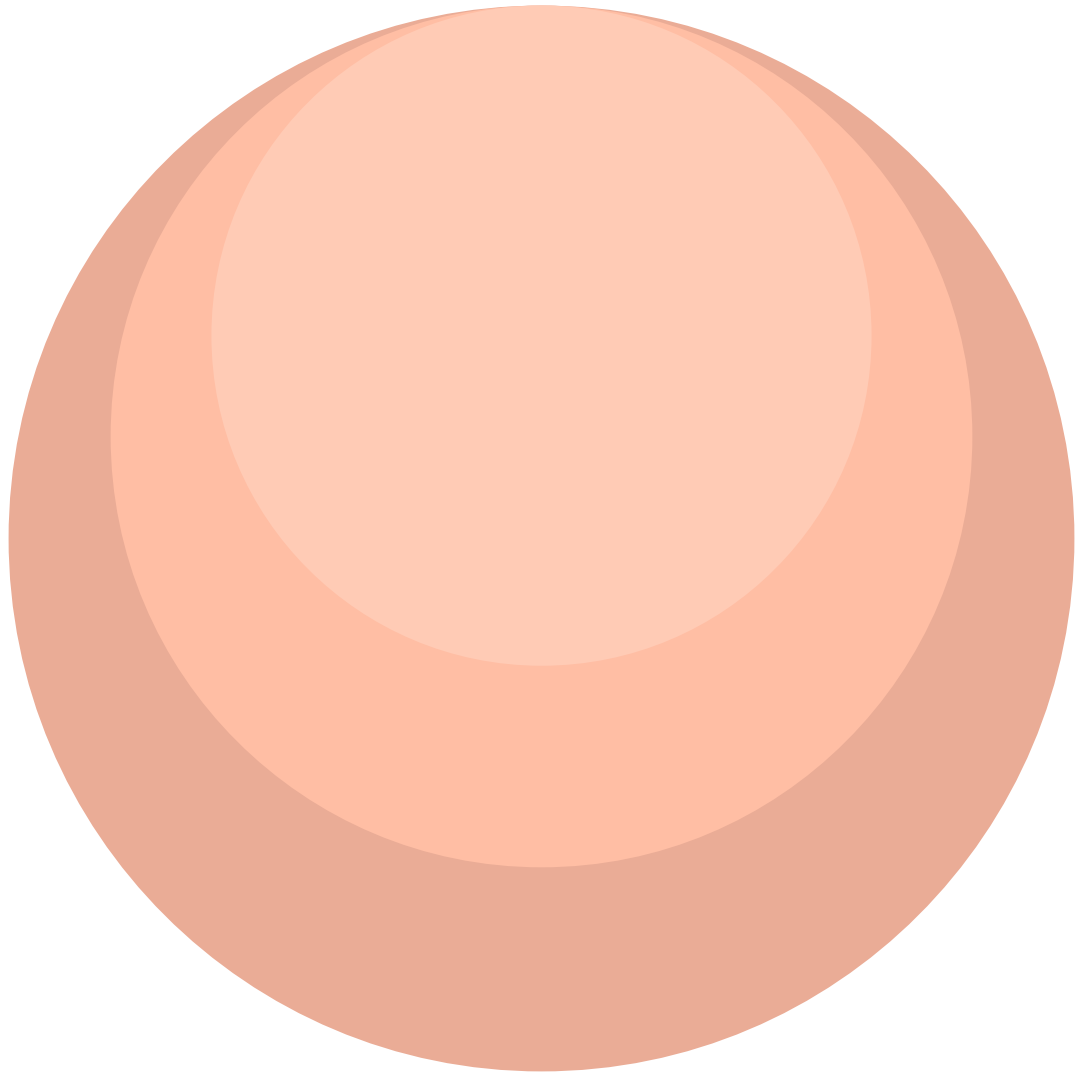
Stano, 19 yrs., High school student

Certainly, we all know that the Education and training system of The Slovak republic is not perfect, and it will not be solved in the short term. I study at a gymnasium, which does not necessarily give me everything I need, a better university or a better life, but thanks to the teachers who are trying. Thanks to them our Education system, is a bit better.

Hana, 17 yrs., Gymnasium

The Educational system in Slovakia is quite effective. The disadvantage is, that unlike other States, we still carry full backpacks of textbooks for school.

Jakub, 14 yrs., Pupil of Lower secondary school



EMPLOYMENT

Slovakia has introduced several procedures aimed at supporting the employment of youth, resulting in declining unemployment rates. These measures significantly support and help when placing job seekers on the labour market. Nevertheless, targeted support of youth employment is still a challenge. Support for youth employment is divided into four areas:

Counselling: Support of career guidance at all levels of Education (Primary schools, Secondary schools, High schools, Colleges and Universities).

Employment Services: Employment services which are used to specifically promote and enhance the quality of demand in the labour market, and to be more focused according to regional specifics and needs. Greater focus on employment and employability of disadvantaged groups, could be secured with assistance, mentoring, training centres, centres of work, apprenticeship and so on.

Employers and employees: There are insufficient training and development programmes for young people in the field of labour relations, as well as employees' rights and obligations of employees. Motivation of employers should be provided by the direct promotion of "best practices", especially in the field of supporting the practice and experience of young people without work habits and in the area of mentoring. The public sector should be leading by example. Communication strategies of Companies as well working conditions, should be adapted to suit the new incoming generation of youth, which has been built on new values and expectations.

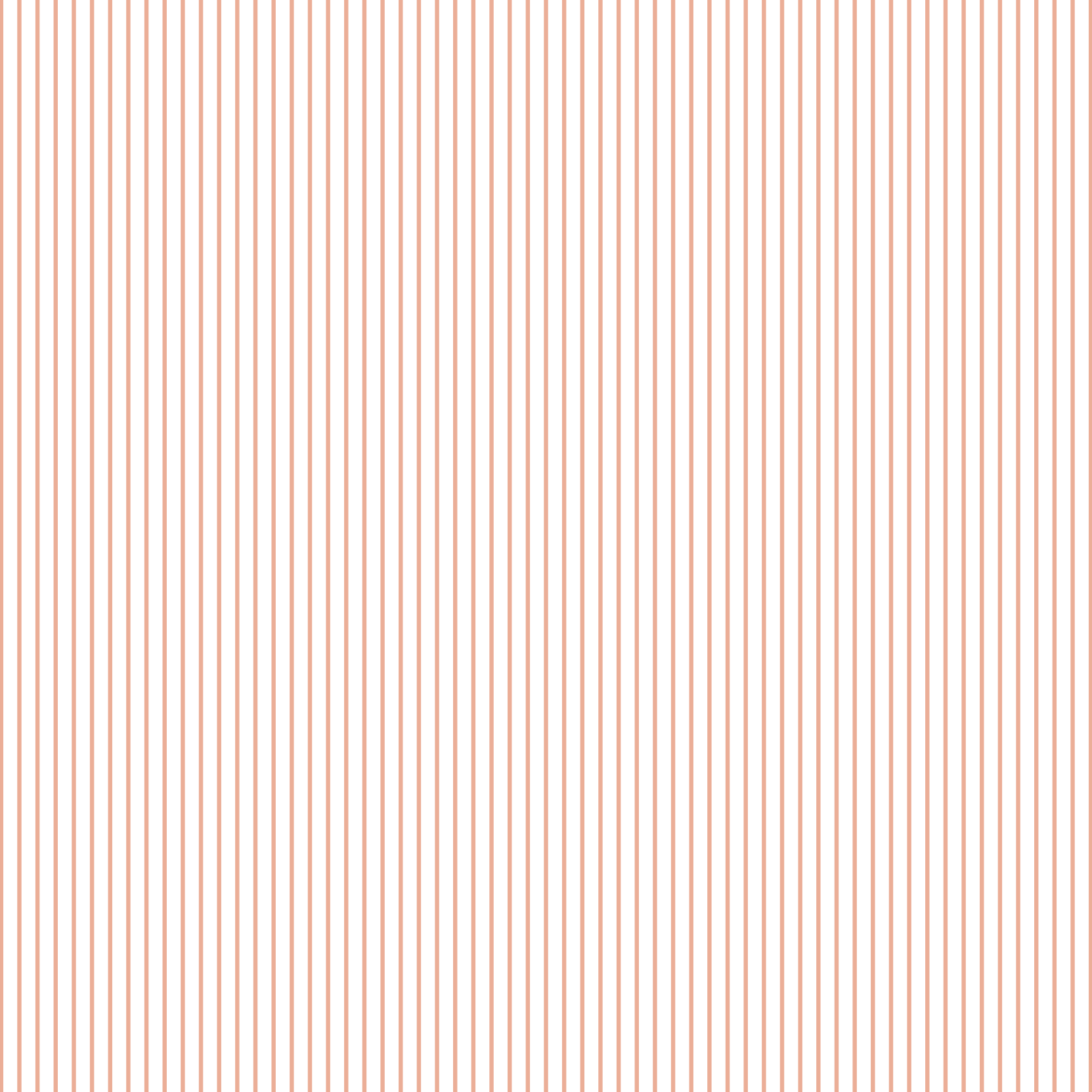
What is the opinion of youth on employment and work?

I think that employment is an important way for self-realisation, this is the reason why people should look for jobs based on their experiences and interests.

Maty, 18 yrs, activist - Council of Europe Youth delegate, Youth Council of the Prešov Region

I know from my own experience, that having a part time job during my studies taught me how to be independent, how to value money and value things, which I had to earn money for. It provided me with more freedom, for example I no longer had to ask my parents for pocket money and on the other hand it also gave me more responsibility I had to calculate how much things cost and how long I would have to work before I could afford it.

Matúš, 19 yrs., Gymnasium





CREATIVITY
AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The economic growth of Slovakia and the entire European Union is in the long-term dependent on the ability to support the emergence of new small and medium-sized companies and the development of the future knowledge of the economy. Therefore, creativity and entrepreneurship of youth are key competencies not only for future entrepreneurs, but for all youth seekers looking for self-realisation in the 21st century economy. Young people in Slovakia are self-confident to start a business. According to surveys 46 % of youth believe that they have required competencies to start their own business. Only a quarter of young people declare an interest to start their own business, probably due to the fact that only 31 % of youth in their surroundings perceive that there is a business opportunity. In other words, young people do not have lack of self-confidence or courage, but in actual fact lack the strength and depth in necessary skills and support.

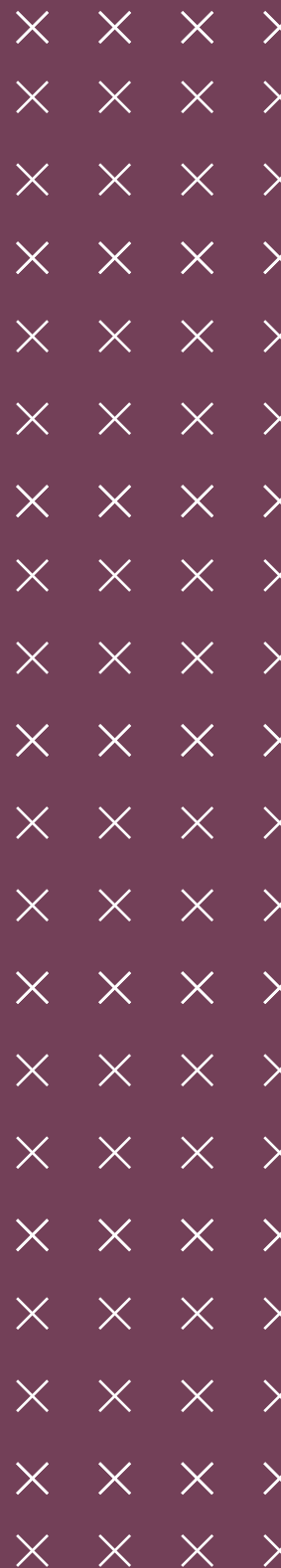
Conditions for young people starting a business in Slovakia have gradually become better also because of systematic support and initiatives, which extends the possibilities for further Education and vocational training in the field of entrepreneurship, clearer and simpler rules to promote growth and start-ups of new businesses, adjustments aimed at reducing the bureaucratic burden of entrepreneurs also thanks to the digital era and simplified electrification etc. Readily available is also access to initial capital for starting a business through micro-loans. Amount of co-working places, business incubators and accelerators are growing. Thanks to a variety of competitions and initiatives, young entrepreneurs have the opportunity to become visible, to receive feedback on their business ideas or skills, or to receive access to start-up funding and support services.

Creativity of youth is supported by services of open studios, creative incubators and accelerators etc.

In the area's infrastructure access and capital, the business environment in Slovakia is getting better and approaching EU level or the level of most advanced economies. For young people to learn and better understand the opportunities in their environment, it is important to help them to get practical Competencies for the 21st century: Entrepreneurship & Business Literacy, Financial Literacy, Digital Literacy, and Soft Skills (communication, team work and collaboration, creativity and critical thinking). Youth at all levels and in all systems of Education should have the opportunity to test these skills in the form of practical examples, projects, or preparations.

A key challenge for the future is:

- to create space and to secure resources for development of competencies for entrepreneurs also through formal Education,
- mutual co-ordination of supportive tools and co-ordination with non-governmental organizations,
- networking and sharing best practices in formal and informal learning, professional development of teachers, workers and volunteers in the field of youth,
- informing young people about available infrastructure, supporting instruments and sources of funding,
- networking and promotion of cooperation between the youth and business sector.





Young people's opinion on the opportunities of self-employment, establishment of their own business and entrepreneurship?

I personally admire people, who are not afraid to do business on their own. Nowadays, it is too difficult to find a “hole in the system”. As the time moves forward, the demands also grow for people on the quality of services and products. Often people prefer to forget the idea of starting their own business, whether it is the financial reason, where a certain initial capital is needed or they are missing courage to start something of their own and new.

Matúš, 19 yrs., Gymnasium

Not all secondary schools offer training in the field of entrepreneurship. The Business academy is one of many types of schools, which is offering such an Education. I can imagine having my own business, but rather in cooperation with someone else.

Ema, 18 yrs., Student of Business Academy

“I didn't want to rely on school, because I felt, that it doesn't do enough to prepare me for life. That's the reason why I thought, where do I start. You must first rethink, what are you better at than other people, what is enjoyable for you, what fulfils you, and what kind of perspective it has. Afterwards, you have to sit down and Google it and look at which of these things you are interested in. Also, to check if there is not too much competition as well.”

Filip, 17 yrs., Entrepreneur

Currently in Slovakia, self-employment is very demanding, as the state does not sufficiently support small and medium-sized enterprises, but helps to attract large businesses by allowances.

**Maty, 18 yrs., Activist – Council of Europe Youth delegate,
Youth Council of the Prešov Region**

PARTICIPATION

The participation of young people in public affairs and the life of society does not only include the right to vote and to be elected, but also the wider spectrum of participation in different areas of life. Foundation of participation is also the right to be heard and to be part of the decision-making process about issues which relate to the lives of young people. To make young people part of public affairs, it is important not only to have courage, but also sufficient preparation and support by the majority society of adults.

Recent surveys on the issue of participation in Slovakia shows that young people are interested in politics. More serious problem is scepticism of youth towards key political institutions in the Country.

On average 80 % of youth between the ages 15 – 24 years do not trust the government and parliament. There is even a higher level of mistrust towards political parties. At the same time the prevailing opinions of young people are that they have only a very small influence or none at all on the functioning of this country. Young people feel excluded in their own country, they do not feel support or interest from the state regarding their problems. With the youth in particular this feeling has become closely related to the lack of interest in engaging in political action, or inclination to extremist and non-standard political subjects.

Participation of youth on political activities at both European and national level has been stagnating or decreasing compared to previous elections. The amount of young people as political candidates has increased, but only two MPs under the age of 30 have consequently been elected.

In contrast with political institutions, there is considerable trust among young people in youth and student political activities. Recently, more and more people have been actively involved in the activation of young people in communal or urban areas, respectively at community level. The reason for engaging in these activities is very often the case for self-realisation, securing possibilities for youth, which are in fact missing or non-existent on these areas. Important roles are played by youth institutions, which are influencing by its activities approximately one third of youth. At the same time youth in this organisation are building positive relationships and skills necessarily needed for active participation and solving public affairs.

Youth parliament play an important role in this field, according to available data in Slovak towns and villages there are a total of 45. The National Youth Parliament was also founded, its role is to bring together municipal youth parliaments and represent them at national level but also helps to establish youth parliaments in other cities as well.

School is a natural environment, in which pupils and youth should be led towards learning and participation across the whole Educational process. Besides that, for more than one decade there has existed a legally defined tool, which is developing this competency - pupil school board. Experiences from practice however demonstrates its weak and inefficient use. It is proved by Data collected from the survey of State Schools Inspections in the Slovak Republic and Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical information. The most serious findings were information that not all secondary schools establish, promote and encourage the formation of a pupil's School Council. Established School Councils are very often non-functional or established only formally. Pupils often do not feel that they have the opportunity to influence school performance through the pupil's School Council.

Strengthening Civic and Value Education could help to develop and support participation. It is important to engage youth in relation to policy making which is directly related to their lives. It seems that the problem is that adults are not prepared enough for the participation of youth. Therefore, it is necessary to work with a majority population - adults and symbolically to "open the door" to youth to get into public affairs. An important tool for political participation to which we need to pay close attention is the importance of Structural dialogue. A special approach also requires engaging young people with fewer opportunities, special youth from marginalized Roma communities.

How do young people perceive politics and their role in society?

I see the difference between young people living in towns and villages as the village environment influences the thinking of young people differently than urban life. I see my role in the teachings of young people perceiving their surroundings, community, and the needs not only of their own but also of others. It is important to express our opinion and not to be afraid to actively engage in public affairs.

Naty, 24 yrs., Employed

I belong to a group of active young people, interested in the political situation in our country, and world.

Samuel, 21 yrs., University student

I am participating in the social life of my village, together with the village youth parliament, we are organizing various activities.

Jakub, 19 yrs., Employed



YOUTH AND THE WORLD

The Aim of Global education is to support an understanding and to educate society and young people in topics of Sustainability, Development aid, Ecology, Human and Civil rights and Poverty in the world. Predominantly Global education should collectively enhance people's ability to understand the connections between their own lives and the lives of other people from different regions of the world, this should also be the platform which is used to create an increasing awareness of different the various socio – economic problems in the world, which are directly or indirectly influencing our daily lives. UNESCO is a recognised leader in the field of Global education, while closely cooperating with OECD, UNO and other partners. The engagement and inclusion of youth in the fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goals is essential. UNESCO recommends integrating lessons about developmental goals into educational strategies. The organization of MESRS is currently working on the preparation of contractual agreement with UNESCO as a part of an educational reform processes. Education on sustainable development is ready to be integrated into State curriculum.

EU Program Erasmus+ supports activities in the field of education, vocational training, youth and sport. These are particularly international short-term or long-term mobilities of young people, either in formal or non-formal education and leisure time activities.

Youth mobilities under the program are mostly institutionalized (80 %). This means that it is implemented under an umbrella of civil association, non-profit or non-governmental organisations. Only 17 % of mobilities are carried out by unorganized youth, which are called an Informal group. The enhancements of which have been beneficial are as follows - 95 % of youth, who participated in mobilities within the program Erasmus+ reported an improvement in communication skills, changing their intercultural attitudes within the intercultural discussion. The amount of mobilities have growing tendency. The most demanded are short-term mobilities (week or two). The most successful are long-term mobilities (from 2 months up to one year). Oppositely, informal education the amount applicants for scholarship have shown a slightly decreasing trend.

Mobilities of youth in the Slovak Republic are also supported by other organisations such as (AIESEC). Its responsibilities are to provide young people with leadership development, cross-cultural global internships, and volunteer exchange experiences across the globe. The organization focuses on empowering young people to be able to make a positive impact on society. According to a survey, apprenticeships have shown a slightly decreasing tendency, but despite this fact AIESEC supported the mobility of several hundred young people.

The interest of youth in mobilities could most likely increase if there was higher support for mobilities at not only international level but also at regional level. It is also necessary to increase the quality of youth work, particularly youth work with youth leaders and to support more activities of non-formal youth groups.

Another challenge is to support more organisations dedicated to carrying out youth exchanges and through improving their work, to offer to young people other activities e.g. consultations.

As a tool for connecting youth work at all levels, local, regional, national and international, it could be proposed that linking the objectives and priorities of the existing European programmes with the current National grant scheme for Youth programs 2014 to 2020, respectively connecting European priorities with the priorities of the new generation of programs of National grant scheme for youth.

What is the opinion of young people on mobility, environmental protection and globalization?

Environmental protection is amongst the youth quite a deliberated topic. Although, most youth are not actively involved, they do however have their own opinion. I do believe that environmental protection is also recycling, separation of waste or the cleaning of different areas (rivers, parks, water areas). My opinion is that everyone should be involved in it. Environmental protection is very important. Our school belongs to „green schools “. We are dealing with different topics (1 topic = 2 years). We try to deal with various environmental problems through different activities at school and in our village

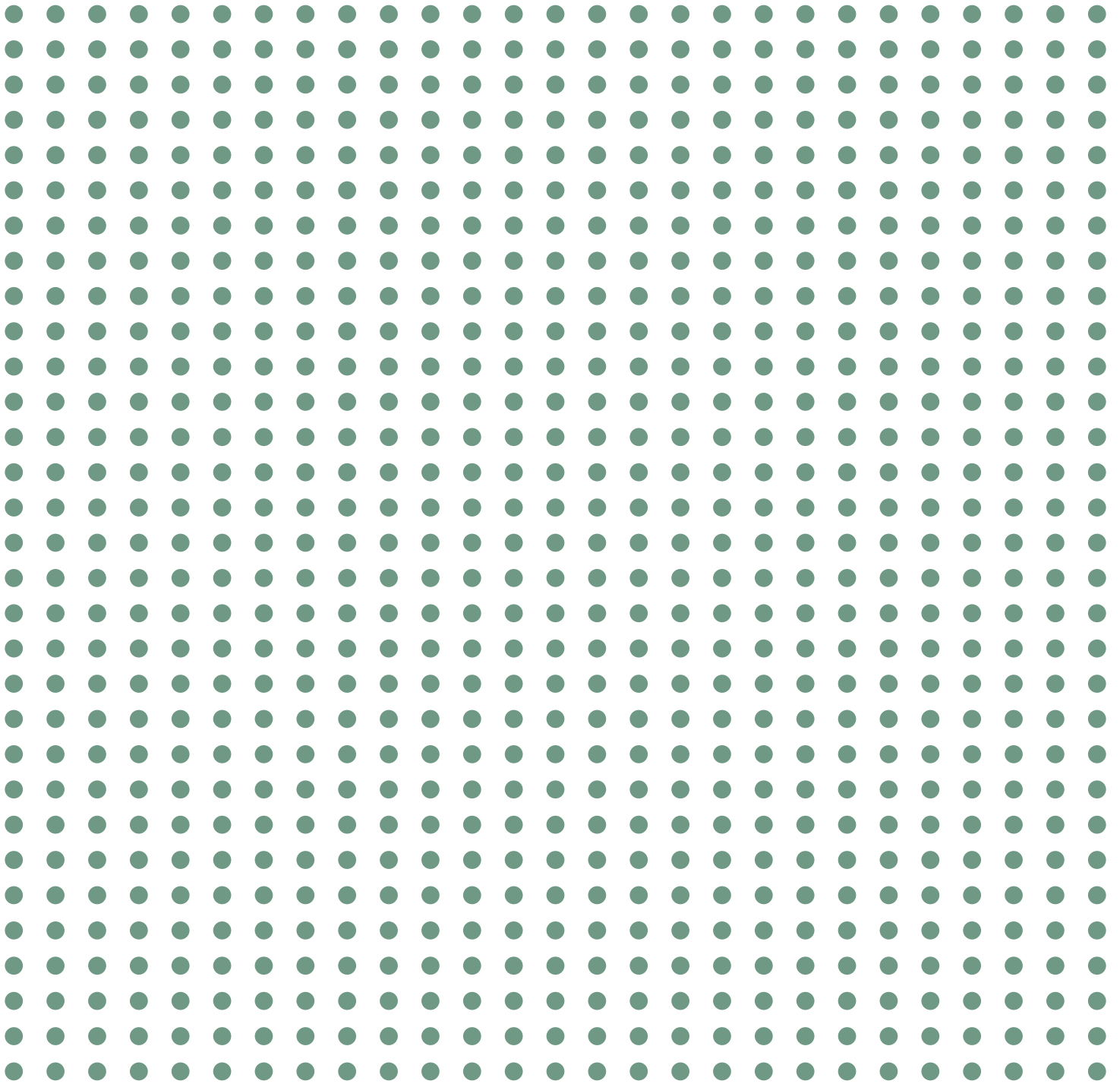
Petra, 14 yrs., Secondary School pupil

I believe that mobility is a tool against discrimination, xenophobia and radicalization. I have taken part in many projects, which have supported the mobility of students and thanks to this experience I believe, that young people should travel more.

Maty, 18 yrs., Activist – Council of Europe Youth delegate

Technological development of society should lead to an increase in environmental support. Currently, trends do not correspond with this option, more likely contrariwise.

Jacob, 24 yrs., Employed





**HEALTH
AND
HEALTHY LIFESTYLE**

Health care should not only be for young people a natural part of their life style. Healthy eating, ensuring plenty of physical activities, meaningful use of free time for relaxation and entertainment and at the same time consciously avoiding of risk factors such as smoking, alcohol, drugs and stress.

However, according to the data from research, the total percentage of overweight children including children with obesity was during the previous decade somewhere in the range between 9 – 13 %, from this amount 3.3 % – 4.6 % were obese children. Over the next decade, the rate of obesity will double, currently rates amongst 10 to 12-year-old boys 10 %, amongst 7 to 12-year-old girls 8.5 %. Overweight ratio (obesity included) has grown depending on age groups and gender up to 13 % (16 – 18 yrs., girls) up to 25 % (10 – 12 yrs., boys).

Lack of activities increases the probability of reducing the immunity of the organism and deterioration of the health care in young people. A large proportion of young people do not get enough physical exercise. The number of children that spend two or more hours on a computer between the ages of 11 to 15 years has dramatically increased. The most common reason why young people do not do any sport or physical activity is because of the suggestion of a lack of time.

The Number of youths, younger than 18 years of age that drink alcohol is increasing. The age for the first experimenting with the use of illegal substances is decreasing. Differences in regular smoking of boys and girls is disappearing. In 2015 there was a decrease in marihuana users, except in pupils from vocational training. Girls are using more legal and illegal drugs in comparison to their peers from twenty years ago.



Representative surveys published in 2015 shows serious negative and positive trends, from which we have chosen:

- Less school children are eating breakfast. Energy drinks and sugar-sweetened beverages are for school children without restrictions.
- One third of school children do not have organised leisure time.
- Nearly half of 11-year-old school children's parents do not have rules about watching Television. Similarly, from age 4 to 10 youth have little rules or no rules how long they can be on the Internet.
- Girls like school more than boys; younger school children enjoy being at school more than boys.
- In the long term there is a growing number of problematic pupils.
- Levels in the seriousness of behavioural disorders of pupils and diversity of symptoms of these disorders are increasing.
- Comparing with other countries, Slovak youth have less experiences with sexual intercourse.
- Symptoms of problematic behaviour including truancy, drug abuse, and crime are not predominantly problems of secondary schools. Comparing with previous years there has been an observed rapid increase of problematic behaviour of people in primary schools. Comparing with the previous period the number of problematic girls is rising.

Support of new preventive programs at schools, which are using nonformal educational methods or experimental methods. Ensuring monitoring of existing preventive programs. Creating conditions for development and implementation of activities of educational counselling and the prevention and diagnosis of methodological tools with digital support, which are comparable with standards of other countries in the European Union. An increase in counselling care could delay the identified negative trends in the future.

What are the opinions of young people about health and healthy lifestyle?

I really value my health, I try to spend my life actively, e.g. I do sport and I am eating healthily.

Soňa, 24 yrs., Employed

It is very individual. For me personally, I think that I actively pay attention to my health and lead a healthy lifestyle. I have enough information and I do sport actively. Health is affected by many factors, such as: environment, smoking etc. There is too much pressure on today's youth, so they often push to find vent and they are finding it in alcohol, cigarettes,...

Veronika, 15 yrs., Secondary School pupil

I behave responsibly towards my health. I rate my lifestyle positively. For me Healthcare prevention is very important. I read lot of articles, how to live correctly. As I play handball and go to CrossFit, I try to keep the right diet.

Jakub, 19 yrs., Employed

I consider my own health as a priority, and therefore I do sport and I am interested in what I eat.

Maty, 18 yrs., Activist – Council of Europe Youth delegate





INCLUSION

Currently Slovakia doesn't have any standards in the field of social inclusion at youth work level. In this field there are only varied publications with examples of good practices. The most complex definition of social exclusion is defined in the National Strategic Framework for combating Social Exclusion and poverty. Already, in the previous Youth Report of 2014 was cited the context of problematic inclusion and social inclusion of youth which was divided into two groups, the socially excluded youth group and youth group at risk of social exclusion. Youth living in segregated Roma settlements in the eastern part of Slovakia have been widely considered over the past five years as the most vulnerable and excluded. An emerging strong communication and isolation barrier towards this group is a direct consequence of absent contact with majority population. This creates a definitively strong obstacle in the adaptation of youth in the educational process and their access for using leisure time activities. Consequently, the Secondary factor is low interest in self-development, self-identification, exploration of their own identity and the need for their lives.

Some of the most endangered youth groups, which are at high risk of poverty are, youth in crisis situations caused by the breakdown of their family, youth in fostered care and professional families, street youth (door-key children), youth from incomplete families, youth with educational barriers, youth from geographically remote areas, youth from other cultures, religions, ethnicities, teen parents and young people with disabilities.

Each year more than 1,000 youth will surpass the age from orphanage care. Termination of care for the reason of reaching adult age and starting their independent life accounts for more than one third of all terminations of care. Leaving orphanage care as soon as possible, is one of the risk factors, which cause the reason that youth are not successful in life. Basis for inclusion is to have a place to live, to have a job, to be employed and to have inspirational social contacts. Extension of stay, gradual transition, and placement in groups for young adults decreases the risk of being unsuccessful in the labour market and increases integration in life.

There are no official statistics in Slovakia about the number of people with hearing impairment. According to some qualified estimates, every year 200 children are born with serious hearing impairment. Up to 90 % of children with hearing loss are born to parents with normal hearing. Heavily impaired hearing has an impact on the complex development of a person. As a consequence of low hearing they are not able to understand the spoken word. From hearing impairment difficulties a child faces difficulty in understanding the complexities of the world around them from the view of, society, and their own family.



In the context of the term „street youth “or „door-key child “we understand - young people who are growing in a restricted living environment, with a cluttered housing environment formed by concrete apartments buildings from the communist era. This environment determines mainly their free time activities. Youth and children search for self-realisation opportunities and interaction with new people by meeting on playgrounds or benches, or just spending time in online space. Based on our experience and observation we could state, that young people from these types of settlements are being endangered by social exclusion especially in cases where they do not have a support network outside of schools which are able to offer support at crucial times. The consequences are pathological phenomenon: truancy, drug abuse, engaging in racist and extremism groups, and suicidal thoughts.

Currently the situation in Slovakia shows progress only in two areas - Roma youth and Youth with a low level of education. On the level of state policy the national procedures are absent in the area of: inclusion of youth with sensory disabilities, communication barriers, learning disabilities, physical and health disabilities and youth growing out of biological families and living in situational crisis.

Appropriate measures in this area should be:

- implementation of surveys and research about status of disadvantage youth groups,
- increasing promotion, availability and awareness about special tools which make learning easier. To engage disadvantaged youth to leisure time activities by adjusting space, providing physical devices and software programs etc.
- supporting establishment of social enterprises helping with employment of youth and employability of disadvantaged youth (mentoring practice or internship, first job offers, training centres workshops),
- support of greater sensitivity to the needs and expectations of multiple socially excluded youths from government, municipality and third sector.



How do young people perceive social exclusion and the ability to apply their rights and active citizenship?

Social exclusion involves me mainly because of socially and economically weaker students in our school. Other classmates' don't accept them because they do not have branded mobiles or clothes.

Petra, 14 yrs., Pupil of Lower secondary school

I have seen social exclusion in different situations. I don't like this approach, as I have seen and experienced these things personally, especially exclusion of students due to handicap.

Ema, 18 yrs., Student of Business Academy

Personally, I had experience with persons like this. At primary school there was a girl in a wheelchair. I really liked how they treated her. They adjusted the classroom for her to have easier access. On the end of the staircase she had a wheelchair which could lift her up to the upper floor. I think that we should have an approach like this for every person with a handicap and not to judge due to disability.

Martina, 17 yrs., High - school student

Social exclusion is the major of my University studies. I am not inconsiderate to this issue. I contribute to fund-raising and worked as a volunteer as well. I participate in NGO which is devoted to children from orphanages.

Eliška, 21 yrs., University student

YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

Youth volunteering supports solidarity in a society. It is a sign of active citizenship and engagement and participation. Typically for youth volunteering in Slovakia is a close connection between volunteering and membership and a preference of long-term and regular volunteering. The prevalence of altruism – unselfishness or devotion to the welfare of others, welfare of society and environment etc, and not egotistic self-orientated motivation. Personal experience with volunteering has a significant influence on the lives of young people. From the altruistic motives among young people it is dominated by „welfare” and the „social engagement”.

Volunteering strongly influences individuals engaged in it. Its benefits range from entertainment, a feeling of joy, to both personal and professional development, or a change of life and lifestyle as well. The benefits of volunteering for young people are closely linked to study and work. Thanks to volunteering, youth are gathering valuable experiences, practice, and also knowledge and skills, which they are using in their professional lives. Some young people have found work because of volunteering or decided to study or work due to their volunteering experiences.

The analysis also points to a change in the recognition of benefits from volunteering. While in 2011 the experiences obtained during volunteering were not perceived as beneficial in professional life and professional development. In 2016 youth perceived voluntary activities as beneficial for studies or work and included volunteering in their Resumes.

Key elements in the field of volunteering of youth in Slovakia during monitored period were: inconsistent definition of volunteering in legislation, financial support of volunteering through the grant scheme of the MESRS for Youth programs, the grant scheme Erasmus + and several schemes of different foundations, addition of job position “Volunteer coordinator” to the National Occupational Frameworks, creating quality standards for the management of volunteers, implementation of accredited educational program in the field of volunteer management and initiation of the concept of education and training for children and youth towards volunteering.

The most important activities promoting and recognizing volunteering are: Volunteering days, Volunteer Week, 72 hours, Volunteer Market, Campaign Bad Feeling, price the Heart on Your Palm. Since 2014, there have been available online tools for recognition of competences acquired in volunteering “D-zručnosti pre zamestnanie” (V-skills for employment).

Platform of volunteer centres and organizations and volunteering centres in individual regions played an important role during the development of volunteering infrastructure. In Slovakia in 2015 an international program called 'The Duke of Edinburgh's Award' (DofE) began to run, which significantly contributed to an increase of the involvement of young people in volunteering.

Strategic goals in this area are „Interconnection of volunteering with formal education on all levels and types of schools “and „Implementation of education for children and youth towards volunteering in primary, secondary and high schools as a cross – curricular topic based on learning through services for community “. In 2017 an experts' group was established, which prepared Concept note for education of children and youth towards volunteering. According to the document attention should be geared towards primary, secondary and high school teachers and their personal experience with volunteering in communities or organisations, this is a requirement for them to be able to explain this topic correctly.

What do young people think about volunteering?

Officially I don't work for any voluntary organisation. But in my free time I do voluntarily many things for the environment around me. In my opinion, doing things for others greatly enriches us. It makes a better world, relationships, environment...

Jacob, 19 yrs., Employed

I think that these days many youths think that volunteering is not good – they are surprised that volunteers invest their time in an “unpaid activity”.

Petra, 18 yrs., Gymnasium student – Volunteer

I have personal experience with volunteering. It gives me valuable experiences. So many youth say that they do not „have time “. They go somewhere where they can earn money. Every person should try volunteering at least once, just to experience how it is to work hard the whole day just for smile and good feeling. It is nice, I strongly recommend it.

Matej, 19 yrs., Volunteer



YOUTH WORK

It is still possible to see great benefits of projects financed through EU social funds KOMPRAX – Competencies for practice and PRAKTIK – Practical skills through non-formal education in youth work, which were implemented by IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute. Thanks to the sustainability of the project's activities and further dissemination of outputs of these projects, there are still educated young people, youth workers and youth leaders.

Annual State Contribution to Youth Work is approximately 2.3 million Euros and from the European Union it is 3.1 million Euros. Financial support is distributed through grant scheme YOUTH PROGRAMS 2014-2020 and grant program ERASMUS+.

Despite the financial support, youth work is both undervalued and underestimated and needs much higher support, not only from the state. Survey results from MESRS „Municipality and Youth 2015” points to the fact, that the situation in youth work in villages compared to towns or cities is varied. It is getting worse depending on the size of the village. Local authorities in those areas do not make any initiatives and they don't offer any extra services, only those which are resulting from the above-mentioned legislation.

In the upcoming period, it is necessary to strengthen the support of non-organized youth via legislation as well, because the amount of organised youth is very low. It would also be good to accept measures supporting youth work by creating financial support for youth workers in institutions, organisations, municipalities which have the capacity to develop youth work. Important elements in the field of youth work, except for state institutes and non-governmental organizations is municipality which should create appropriate material, financial and personnel conditions for sustainable support of youth work available to all young people.

How do young people perceive themselves? (Reflections on themselves or on youth in general)

In my opinion youth are not critical enough these days and they do not live real lives as much as they should. Youth are unable to communicate with each other. They rather use social networks. They adapt to trends just to be part of group and just to get attention. Many times young people are able to harm themselves to fit into a group.

Michal, 18 yrs., High - school student

I think that young people cannot see themselves in real light. Either they are too self-confident, arrogant, or do not believe or underestimate themselves.

Timo, 23 yrs., Youth worker

I perceive today's generation as being isolated from natural relationships. Nearly everyone in my community lives in virtual reality and they are obsessed by it so much, that they are forgetting to live in real life. Young people have problems with communication, to get to know each other, to express themselves and their opinion, and above all to express themselves in front of a group of people. They are looking for entertainment in drugs. If I have to judge myself, I learned from motivational literature there is nothing to be afraid of, and from my own experience I can say that it really is not...

Veronika, 15 yrs., Pupil of Lower secondary school

Young people have a lot of energy that we often do not use because of laziness.

Matej, 19 yrs., Volunteer

Personally, I believe that today's youth have great potential. Many people stand for their dreams, but at the same time they are afraid of it. Today's youth are very different; therefore, everyone is evidently different. From my opinion we are not „lost youth” as other say. Everyone can make a dream come true, also during the hard time. You just need to go for it and this is very individual. I perceive myself as an active person. Taking into consideration my hobbies and interests I believe that I can do what I want.

Erika, 18 yrs., High - school student

This Youth Report should be a document, which enables us to learn about the situation and the quality of lives of young people in Slovakia and to compare it with the situation in other EU member state countries. Through the initiatives of The Youth and Sport Department of the Council of Europe, the same process has been carried out in several European countries since 1997. The report is divided into chapters, which corresponds with individual parts of the Strategy of EU for Youth – Investing and strengthening the position of Youth adopted by the EU Council on the 27th April 2009. At the same time is a division of this report identical to thematic areas of the National Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth for years 2014-2020, in order to maximize links between identified challenges and their solutions.

The Youth Report has the ambition to answer this question, to what degree is the current society friendly towards children and youth. It does not offer complete solutions, but it shows basic challenges and obstacles of development in particular areas and serves as material for the preparation of future measures within inter-sectoral and sectoral cooperation which is becoming inevitable.

Guarantor of the Youth Report 2018 is MESRS, The Youth Department. Coordination of the creation of text was under sole responsibility of IUVENTA - Slovak Youth Institute - a state organization directly managed by the MESRS.

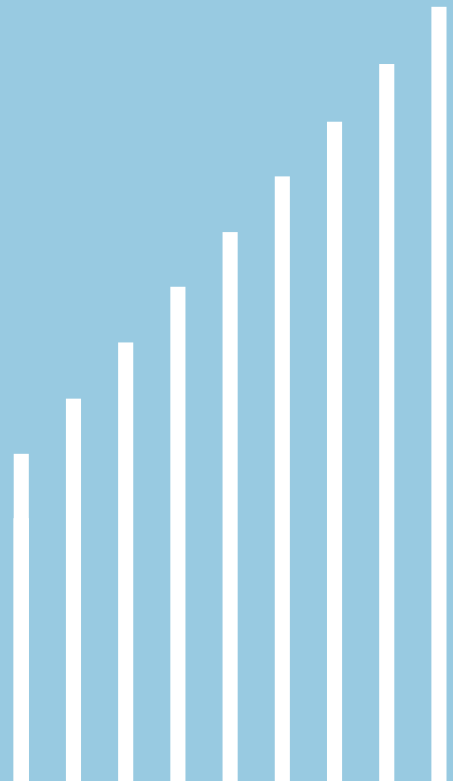
The Youth Report 2018 was based on the information about the status of youth received from research and analysis, as well as requested expert documentation. The content of the Report was created by members of nine working groups, (according to chapters of this Report), which were representatives of the state and public administration bodies, employees and non-governmental organisations active in concerned areas, experts, researchers and young people. Working groups were led by experts on their particular topic. The chapters finally went through a review of selected experts who were not involved in the text preparation phase.

Quotations of youth, which are illustrating findings from The Youth Report, comes from personal meetings or were part of discussions during the trainings organised by IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute.

Full text of Youth Report is available at <http://www.minedu.sk/12183-sk/dokumenty-a-predpisy/>

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IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute is a state organization directly managed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. IUVENTA prepares and manages many interesting programs and projects for young people, youth workers and people responsible for the implementation of youth policy. It encourages young people in such a way that they are aware of their possibilities, they are active and improve their competencies to be successful in life and in the labour market. IUVENTA raises awareness and educates youth towards Human rights, promotes the development of Volunteering, educational programs and also young talents.

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