



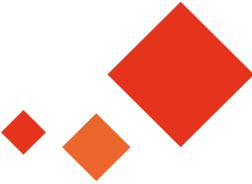
COUNTRY STUDY



HUNGARY

Country Monitoring Report

The Hungarian education system has become exceedingly selective and polarized, as students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to attend vocational schools, which are not able to give the students the extra support they need, thus leading to high drop-out rates (and hence perpetuating inequalities in society). Disadvantaged groups in particular Roma are especially targeted, as they are over-represented in VET and the transition from education to the labour market is problematic.



Recommendations

- Improve efforts to develop persistent and strong policy development in lifelong learning.
- Increase school age from 16 to 18.
- Develop a systematic approach to promote inclusive mainstream education in order to increase the participation of disadvantaged groups in particular Roma.
- Strengthen measures to facilitate the transition between different stages of education and to the labour market, and improve the teaching of essential competences.
- Develop a national strategy on the validation of non-formal and informal learning based on uniform principles and procedures.





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1. Promoting access and participation in LLL

According to the Commission, the rate of adult participation in lifelong learning (LLL) is amongst the lowest in the EU: 3% compared to an EU average of 10.5% in 2013. Moreover, the Hungarians are confronted with a paradox in LLL. While the demand for LLL has significantly increased, the provision of training has shrunk. Although Hungary implemented a new law on adult training, many important measures

such as career guidance and the recognition of prior learning has not been implemented yet¹.

In addition to this problem, the Hungarian education system faces other challenges with regards to LLL. For example, the early-school leaving rate (ESL) have continuously risen (from 10.5% in 2010 to 11.9% in 2013). One of the possible reasons to explain this may be the government's decision to reduce the school age from 18 to 16 in 2012. Furthermore, access to higher education has further narrowed in 2014, with the number of students enrolled in higher educational decreasing by approximately 22% compared to 2010 (while the number of applications actually increased). Last but not least, the long-standing segregation of Roma pupils has become worse during the past decade. Our Hungarian member note that it has been demonstrated that pro-integration government policies were effective in decreasing segregation between 2006 and 2008. However, since 2010 the government has not only discontinued these efforts, but it has also purposefully legislated loopholes into the anti-discrimination and anti-segregation legislation and has publicly defended ethnic segregation under specific circumstances.

2. Vocational Education and Training

Since the new law on vocational education and training came into force in 2013, Hungary has used the dual model in upper secondary education. Participation of upper secondary students in vocational education and training (ISCED level 3) remains well below the EU average, with 27.3 % compared to 50.4 % in 2012. In this context, our Hungarian member underline that 63% of Roma students participate in vocational education and training (VET). However, their rate of ESL in vocational education and training in the first year is 36, 1% and 28, 6% in the second year.

¹ European Commission (2014). *Education and Training Monitoring Report -Hungary*.

The Commission states that due to an insufficient level of basic skills resulting in poor quality training courses in some regions and for certain professions, students' chances of succeeding in further learning or of changing jobs in the long term may be limited². Consequently, the transition from education to the labour market is problematic and the majority of students in VET have difficulties to access the labour market. This is a particular cause of concern for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as Roma students, who are over-represented in VET. Additionally, the government announced to reduce the number of general secondary school places, where pupils study for the matura, in November 2014 in order to promote participation in VET. However, this may result in fewer applicants to higher education, and may make the vocational path less attractive to high-performing students. Combined with the increasing admission requirements for higher education, this development could further limit the social mobility of the disadvantaged.

3. Validation of NFIL

Hungary does not have a national strategy on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (NFIL) based on uniform principles and procedures. It is difficult to identify a clear model of validation in Hungary. Although some elements of the validation can be found in the legal arrangements in VET, higher education and in the adult training sector, these elements are without any declaration of explicit policy goals. Generally, the term 'validation' and the procedure of recognition are not yet widely known.

In the adult training sector a prior learning assessment scheme has been included in the Adult Education Acts (2001, 2013) since 2001 but not widely used. The scheme has been introduced in order to customise the training provision but the practice is very small-

² European Commission (2015). *Commission Staff Working Document, Country Report Hungary 2015 Including an In-Depth Review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances.*

scale and limited due to the contradictory interests of different stakeholders, and also the lack of an adequate measurement and assessment system. One of the main obstacles to validation development is the 'congestion symptom'. The introduction of the learning outcomes approach is an indispensable condition to elaborate NQF and validation procedures. This approach is fairly new to Hungarian education sectors so it is difficult to build on. The other problem is the lack of clear overall policy goals of application. Moreover, it is particularly difficult to identify actors bearing responsibility for validation development at the level of the Hungarian government. The lack of financial resources at institutional level is also a significant obstacle³.

4. Early-school Leaving

Hungary does not have a national strategy on early-school leaving (ESL) yet. As already mentioned above, the government decreased the school age from 18 to 16 in 2012 and thus increased the extent of ESL. The number of early-school leavers was actually dropping before the introduction of this measure and has started to rise again, from 10.5% in 2010 to 11.8% in 2013 (compared to an EU average of 12% in 2013 and a national target set at 10% for 2020). However, the Hungarian government decided to make early childhood education mandatory from the age of three (instead of age five, as it is currently) as of 2015 as a preventive measure to reduce ESL. The success of this reform will, however, depend on the country's ability to provide the required number of places in early childhood education, in particular in suburban areas of the capital and cities, and on tackling other barriers to access (e.g. distance from nursery schools, transport and financial constraints).

In addition, Hungary tightened the rules of child support and linked the attendance of school from children to financial supports for families in order to

³ European Commission; Cedefop; ICF International (2014). *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014: country report Hungary.*



combat ESL. In case children do not attend school, their families will not receive financial aids.

The high ESL rate is particularly problematic in VET and amongst students from Roma families (who are over-represented in VET schools and whose rate is more than seven times higher than amongst those from the non-Roma population). Less than one in five Roma children complete secondary education, whether general or vocational, while only 0.5% complete tertiary education⁴.

According to a Cedefop report, the Hungarian education system has become exceedingly selective and polarised. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to attend vocational schools, which are not able to give the students the extra support they need, thus leading to high drop-out rates (and hence perpetuating inequalities in society)⁵.

5. NEETs

Hungary's NEETs rate has continuously increased during the last years and was 15.4% in 2013. The rate is especially high amongst Roma students with a percentage of 37% among the 16-24 year olds. Hungary submitted a Youth Guarantee implementation plan in December 2013, an updated version of which was then provided in April 2014. However, the plan will not be fully operational until 2018. The Hungarian Youth Guarantee is only partially meeting the challenge of youth unemployment. This is because there is no guarantee what the quality offer will cover and whether sufficient human capacity at the Public Employment Service will be ensured for implementing the scheme.

Several active measures have been launched even before the introduction of the Youth Guarantee, which will be boosted by the new programme aiming at the involvement of long term young jobseekers into specialised measures. A legal modification will ensure

⁴ European Commission (2014). *Education and Training Monitoring Report – Hungary*.

⁵ Cedefop, ReferNet Hungary (2011). *Hungary: VET in Europe – Country Report 2011*

that young people below 25 and those involved in active labour market programmes do not have to accept public work. This modification is to guarantee also that the definition of the “quality offer” will exclude public work and ensure that the trainings will lead to qualification. It is crucial that the monitoring system supports the follow up of the results and shows clearly the impacts of the Youth Guarantee on youth related macro indicators, particularly for disadvantaged groups such as the Roma⁶.

6. Citizenship education

Civic education is part of the official education curriculum under one of the ten overarching topics ('Humans and society') and social and civic competencies are listed among the nine competencies the curricula is supposed to develop. The curriculum includes rights and responsibilities in Hungary and the European Union, democratic principles, political institutions, the role of media and the public sphere, minorities as well as electoral systems. However, there are no up-to-date assessments of the quality or impact of the civic education and an independent assessment has notably criticized that the curriculum achieves little with regards to fighting the discrimination, social exclusion, and negative stereotypes of the Roma population.

7. Council recommendations

Hungary is encouraged in the Country specific recommendations to develop a systematic approach to promote inclusive mainstream education. This approach is required to increase the participation of disadvantaged groups in particular Roma in the Hungarian education system, to combat their high early school leaving rate and to improve the support offered to these groups through targeted teacher training. Additionally, the Council recommended that Greece should strengthen measures to facilitate the transition between different stages of education and to the labour market, and improve the teaching of

⁶ European Commission (2015). *Commission Staff Working Document, Country Report Hungary 2015 Including an In-Depth Review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances*.





essential competences⁷.

⁷ European Council (2014). *Council Recommendation of 8 July 2014 on the 2014 National Reform Programme of Hungary and delivering a Council opinion on the 2014 Convergence Programme of Hungary*. European Council (2015). *Council Recommendation of 14 July 2015 on the 2015 National Reform Programme of Hungary and delivering a Council opinion on the 2015 Convergence Programme of Hungary*.

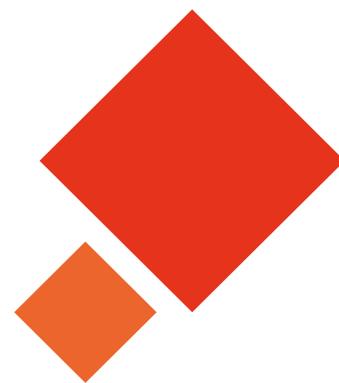






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SOLIDAR, together with our national members and partners, has developed 15 case studies in 2014, presenting innovative, effective, sustainable and tailor made models to promote social inclusion, the social economy and quality job creation by adapting a social investment approach. In their daily work, SOLIDAR members and partners anticipate new or unmet needs of socio-economically vulnerable people and empower them to actively participate in society and to access the labour market.

These case studies gather strong evidence of the social impact of the activities undertaken by our members and partners to help Member States making progress towards the achievement of the social and employment objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the implementation of the Social Investment Package.

SOLIDAR Foundation in cooperation with national members and partners has gathered an examples of national programmes and initiatives that present the innovative and successful approaches that contribute to the process of building inclusive learning societies. The case studies are centred on themes of lifelong learning, civic and citizenship education, the validation of learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning, and NEETs (young people Not in Employment, Education or Training).

