

Schooling for Tomorrow

Initial Report

National Institute for Public Education
Hungary, 2006 February

Preliminaries

Hungary joined the OECD in 1996. This has opened up new possibilities for the country to participate in organized common thinking on education matters, including the thinking on the future of the education.

Hungary became part of the European Union in May 2004. Access to EU sources (Structural Funds) could offer new chances for the developments in education.

The future thinking is getting priority in the Hungarian public policy because in order to have access to European Union funds Hungary has been obliged to prepare National Development Plans (below NDP). These plans are setting the framework for the utilization of Structural Funds assistance. In Hungary the NDP is a medium term strategy, based on the **National Development Policy Concept (below NDPC), which is a long-term (up to 2020) strategic program that was passed by Parliament.** The NDPC establishes the framework for development activities implemented with the assistance of EU funding as well as purely national resources. The elaboration of the NDPC based on professional and social debates happened parallel with that of the National Rural Development Plan (below NRDP), with a strong correlation between them.

Based on the NDPC, there are two medium-term NDP plans: the first NDP I. focusing to the period between 2004-2006 and the second, NDP II covering the period between 2007-2013. The NDP II (2007-2013) is under elaboration, following the priorities set up by NRDP and using the experiences of the NDP I. The European Union supports some priorities established in National Strategic Reference Framework (below NSRF). The NSRF is the basic strategic document in regards to the use of EU sources, which defined operational programs. The NSRF is compiled on the basis of the NDPC and NDP II. That is why the actual debates regarding the NSRF overlaps the discussions of NDP II.

As the NDPC is the single long-term (up to 2020) strategy, the Hungarian Schooling for Tomorrow (below HSfT) project will focus on the development of its education policy concepts.

The strategic objective of Hungary within the framework of the long-term development policy (NDPC) considers the improvement of Hungarian economy, increasing competitiveness by education and the strengthening of social solidarity between its priorities. As mentioned below, one of the NDPC's aims is to support the links between education and economy. That is why NDPC contains various elements regarding the public education, not in a separate section but as part of Human Resource Development and the Regional Development. The measures endeavor to ensure equal opportunities within the educational system for disadvantaged pupils, to promote the development of skills necessary for lifelong learning, to develop the vocational training system to make it more flexible and responsive to labor market needs, to promote the adaptation of higher education to the requirements of the knowledge-based society.

There were widespread professional and social discussions (workshops, talk shows in mass media and television) led by National Development Office (below NDO) regarding the NDPC's policy concepts. Several of them affected educational matters, although, there were few workshops tackling deeply only the educational sections of the plan. As we know the NDPC was the result of the roundtable of various experts from different fields. In spite of this the social and professional debates revealed that several aspects of the education policy of the NDPC could be improved. The experts underlined that the situation analysis of the NDPC could be mended by using the SWOT analysis of the country's strengths and weaknesses. They also observed that the future projecting could become more consistent using the conditional logic (if...then) too. The debates revealed, that the future scenarios should take into consideration all potential alternatives. Beside the positive elements the possible negative risks and consequences. The remarks also emphasized that strategic development considerations should focus more on the actual educational issues:

- The quality and effectiveness concerns regarding the educational system (and of the public services in general);
- The reform of final examination system;
- The introduction of linear structure in higher education and so on.

The education policy concept of the NDPC is too short and too general. That is why as part of the HSfT the National Institute for Public Education would like to unpack, complete, develop, specialize and concretize it in order to contribute to the long-term strategic planning in Hungarian education.

Aims

The HSfT project, run by the National Institute for Public Education (below NIPE) has two goals:

1. To contribute to the development and spread of the long-term (covering 15-20 years) and medium term strategic planning in education in Hungary;
2. To foster an intensive discussion between different educational-policy agents on the future of education in Hungary.

The Hungarian initiative has two objectives:

1. To write a report which expounds the weaknesses and possible amendments of the educational policy concept of the NDPC;
2. To take part in the development of a methodological toolbox on the future of education;
3. To develop a documentary on the future thinking on education.

The main purpose of our project is **to contribute to the development and spread of the long-term (for 15-20 years) strategic planning for education in Hungary**. As the NDPC is the base of the NDP II covering the period between 2007-2013 the development of its educational policy concept will hopefully **contribute to the medium term planning in Hungarian education**.

The NIPE in cooperation with the NDO would like to **foster an intensive discussion between different educational-policy agents** (teachers, school-managers, parents, entrepreneurs, experts, advisors, policy makers) on the future of education in Hungary. Our intention with the roundtable discussions is to think together on possible educational scenarios. Our goal is to help the different actors of educational policy to be able to place it in other actors or stakeholders. We would like to facilitate the consensus decision-making between different parts regarding the long-term educational policy aims and tasks. In this way, the HSfT project could contribute to the refinement of the educational design of NDPC.

In cooperation with other OECD experts, we are planning **to take part in the development (adoption) of a methodological toolbox**. This is essential for the foundation of structural future thinking in education. The methodological toolbox will be a set of methodologies, putting together the existing OECD methodology and other methodologies used in future projection by different sciences (demography, economics, labor-force, regional development, social-stratification, public sphere forecasts) and other experiences of several Hungarian initiatives of future thinking and dissemination (see detailed below) and adopt them to the educational field.

Our aim is to establish the strategic planning in the Hungarian education by setting and gradually **developing a documentary** (accessible to the large public) **on the future thinking on education**.

Design and activities

The intention of NIPE is to release a two-year program in three phases. The activities will be managed by an Advisory Council composed by Péter Radó (SuliNet KhT), Zoltán Loboda (Ministry of Education), Gábor Halász (director of NIPE), Judit Lannert (director NIPE), Éva Balázs (NIPE) and Kinga Mandel (independent expert).

The most important activity of the two years is the establishment of a structured dialogue between different agents on the future of education.

1. We will organize and monitorize four workshops in **the first half-year** (between 2006 February – 2006 June). In every workshop different target groups (composed by professional group, strategic planning, broader actors or stakeholders involved in education, see below) will tackle different actual and educational questions (see below). The monitoring (the feed-back) serves to gradually improve the methodology and techniques of the discussions and future thinking. The focus of the workshops will be discussion papers debated previously using ICT technologies (Internet forum, correspondence list). The input of the first two workshops will be the critical points of education policy concept of the NDPC and opinions of different experts and other actors regarding the education considerations of NDPC. The thematic of the workshops will be issues with an effect on the future of the Hungarian public education (see below). The materials and events will be disseminated using the mass media and Internet. We are planning to participate in different talk shows, expert's debates and informative programs, beside of continuously presence on Internet.

2. **The second phase** of one year consists in adopting and improving the methodological toolbox, counting with the professional support, expertise and materials of the OECD in the field.

3. The last half of year will be consecrated to measure the effects and the success of dissemination. With the support and possibly coordination of the OECD we would like to present our results in an international workshop.

Methodology

In our workshops and in the adoption of the methodological toolbox we are planning to use several methodologies. For example the methodological tools developed by OECD (trend analyses) EU (Forward Studies) and other tools used by international organizations (for ex. European Futurists, ESPON, RAND) in different projects (for ex. LEONIE, the 21st Century Learning Initiative, OECD SFT, Creating Learning Communities), the methodology and materials of future projection used by other social sciences (demography, economics, labor-force, regional development, social-stratification, public sphere forecasts). We could also lean on experiences of several Hungarian institutes (for ex. DEMOS, The Future Research Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Strategic Research Institute, Budapest Club, Future Research Department of the Corvinus University, Regional Research Centers of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences). Such an experience is served by the initiative of Education Policy Café's, which are informal conversations regarding an actual education policy question. The formerly existed commission called Technological Forecast Program that acted in the nineteen's generated possible future scenarios, which offers other possible sources. We could also lean on the experience a Hungarian School Initiative run by the Apáczai Public Foundation which gathered the experts opinions by launching its discussing paper in a correspondence list. A background for the dissemination could be the Roma-project run by Sociology Department of the Eötvös Lóránt University. This project focused on the changes of preconceptions of participators, during a long running moderated debate.

Experienced trainers in the field, who managed previous social and professional debates on the concepts of NDPC, will facilitate our workshops based on their former experiences.

Inputs

The input materials will be based on the OECD, EU and other international organization's scenarios regarding the possible future of education. The national and local input consists of NDPC's educational policy strategy, the Life Long Learning strategy accepted by the Hungarian Government, the public education middle-term policy elaborated by the Educational Policy Institute of the SuliNova Kht, and regional scenarios elaborated by different regional institutes and agencies. According to the methodology of future thinking and the revising of the long or middle term education policies mentioned above, the workshops will focus on the following thematic:

- The relation between the environment and education;
- The integration of minorities and persons with insufficiencies in education;
- The competencies and literacy needed in the society of future;

- The place of Hungarian education in international context, its competitiveness and cooperation functions;
- Competitiveness and social cohesion;
- The education and its environment, sustainability;
- The innovating function of education.

Target groups

We would like to attain our main objective by considering the dissemination of future thinking in education as a top-down process, gradually widening and broadening our target group. We plan to start with homogenous target-group from a well-defined circle (experts, researchers, policy advisers) and stage by stage to involve new and new educational policy actors from different levels of education system of different stake and function in education. That is how we would like to come to a heterogeneous target group, where all actors are present.

One target group is the professional group made by researchers, experts and policy advisers in the field of education, education policy, pedagogy, economy, regional sciences, philosophy, sociology, public policy, futurology and university professors, school managers.

Second target group is the strategic planning and decision making group consisting by consultative boards, politicians, local government experts, managers of educational foundations, members of regional development committees, members of different ministries, members of vocational and technical development committees, parliamentary deputies.

A third group could be made of broader actors or stakeholders involved in education like different trade unions (parents, students, teachers), representatives of entrepreneurs, commercial chamber's deputies, economical agents, members of labor market agencies.

The fourth group could be a mixture of the previous three groups.

The planned number of the participants will be between 12-15 persons per workshop.

Timing of workshops

Date	Target group	Input	Output
March 17, 2006*	Experts, researchers, advisors	Educational concepts of the NDPC, week points, social and experts critics, educational scenarios, methodology of the future thinking	Records of the workshops, amendments and suggestions, documents
March 31, 2006	Policy-makers, advisors	Educational concepts of the NDPC, week points, social and experts critics, educational scenarios, methodology of the future thinking	Records of the workshops, amendments and suggestions, documents
April 21, 2006	Stakeholders, trade unions, managers, economic actors	Educational scenarios	Records of the workshops, amendments and suggestions, documents
May 19, 2006	Mixed group of the previous three	Educational scenarios	Records of the workshops, amendments and suggestions, interim report to OECD, final report to NDA

*Every workshop will be organized between 9.30-14.00 CET

Outputs

We consider being a result of our project the **ongoing social debate on the future of Hungarian education**. The output of the first phase of the project will be an interim report to the OECD and final report to the National Development Office. The OECD report will take into consideration the main activities developed in this first half-year, their consequences and possible applications. The NDA report will contain the analysis of the education policy concept of the NDPC, **a summary of the amendments and suggestions regarding the NDPC image on future of Hungarian education**.

Other possible output will consider the documentary on the theories and methodology of future thinking in education. A considerable output will be the Internet surface tackling the future thinking in education in forums, questionnaires and correspondence lists.

The output of the second phase will be the **adoption and improvement of a methodology of future thinking in education, its dissemination**. The output of the third phase will be **the participation in the international OECD conference** (possibly in Hungary too) **tackling the future of education** with the contribution of our experiences. An other possible output or ongoing process could be the **establishment** with the OECD's support of **a regional Central-European sub network tackling the future of education**.

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List of abbreviations

- HSfT - Hungarian Schooling for Tomorrow Project
- ICT – Information and Communication Technologies
- NDO - National Development Office
- NDP - National Development Plan
- NDPC - National Development Policy Concept
- NIPE - National Institute for Public Education
- NRDP - National Rural Development Plan
- NSRF - National Structural Reference Framework