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# The Place of Adult Education in the Social and Economic Strengthening of Human Capital in Serbia – North Vojvodina

# handshake

*Development of Hungarian and Serbian vocational and adult education systems through competency based on training activities*
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# The Place of Adult Education in the Social and Economic Strengthening of Human Capital in Serbia – North Vojvodina

Due to political difficulties, prolonged economic structural adjustments and privatisation, human capital has suffered a lot in the Serbian society, i.e. has experienced economic, intellectual and moral loss in its importance. The present paper applies a secondary data analysis method covering the economic environment, the labour force market, regional imbalances, likewise the qualifications of the human capital and the education.

### *Hypotheses*

· If a human capital-related worthwhile dialogue between the economic and administrative (state decision-making and educational institutions) subjects fails to come to effect, we will have to face the following situation:

· The formation of economic structures and the slow transition processes in Serbia are irresolutely followed by the proactive changes in education and employment policy. Based on the experiences of Vojvodina as a point of departure, the root cause of it is the lack of appropriate communication, institutionalised cooperation between the institutions, playing a key role in developing the region's human capital and the political subjects and the professionals.

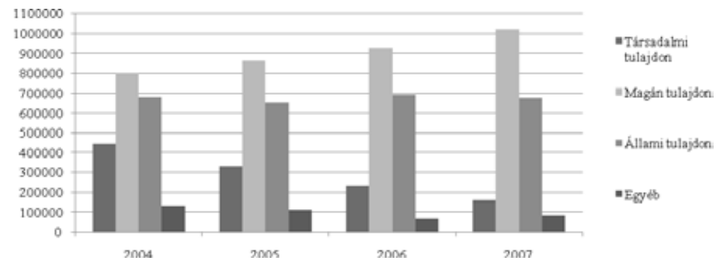
· Individuals (employees, unemployed etc.) make *ad hoc* decisions, while accommodating to market requirements. The requirements of the labour market are re-shaped by the EU's market economy principles and the inherited, especially contradictory (failed privatisation, black economy, corruption) principles, to which commercial subjects are forced to accommodate.

· Central authorities are not willing to sacrifice their institutional legitimacy, not either for the principles of economic reasonability, if they are for the sake of arguments for decentralisation. Hence, local and province (Vojvodina) economic resources are weak, initiatives, foreign capital and enterprising creativity are absent.

### *1. The Social-Economic and Structural Features of the Human Capital in Serbia and Regional Employability*

Both in Serbia and Vojvodina, citizens are afraid of unemployment, because the employment chances of young professionals are poor, while the unemployment period of senior citizens is very long (3-8 years). In order to keep their jobs, employed have to renew their knowledge continuously by providing their professional workmanship and skills through life-long learning. To compensate the insufficiently functioning labour market and in the interest of prospective economic growth, the state assumes a role in providing social aids and in re-training unemployed. Yet, it is still insufficient, because it is a redress of the consequences, and not of the causes. Due to multiple crises, human capital has become "vulnerable" in Serbia, unemployment has risen, and hence, the economy is not functioning, while the labour market is giving up its statutory functioning. Serbia (without foreign loans) still fails to be prepared to resolve crises and its economic reforms are far to be concluded. Otherwise, by the delayed implementation of new technologies, companies are displaced from the market. Unemployment had continuously grown in Serbia in the 1990s, while in 2003 it was 30% (Stojić, Atanasov, 2004). As a consequence of economic adjustment and privatisation, unemployment doubled between 2001 and 2006, i.e. from 11% to 21,6% (Arandarenko–Ognjenović, 2008). One fifth of the unemployed and one fourth of the public sector employees attempted to earn resources in grey economy in Serbia in 2000 (Stojić, Atanasov, 2004). The number of illegal workers reached an estimated half a million in 2002 (Marjanović, 2002). According to the 2006 World Bank Report, 43% of the total number of employed in Serbia are working in the „unofficial" sector, and 26,7% of the workers are illegal employees (Arandarenko–Ognjenović, 2008).

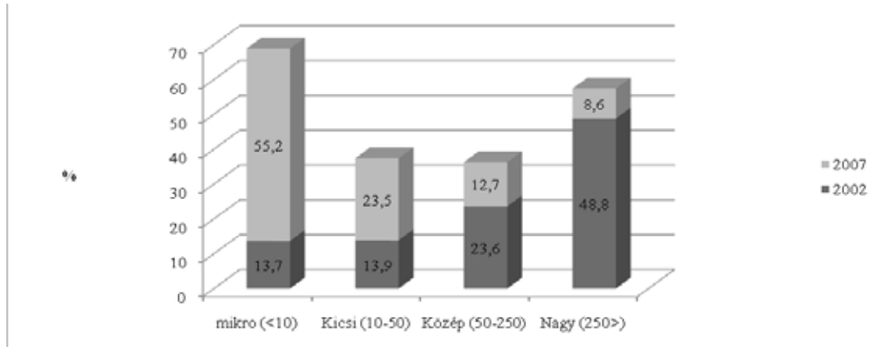
Figure 1. The Number of Employees in Different Forms of Ownership in Serbia between 2004-2007




Source: Edited by Zoltán Takács based on Domazet – Zubović, 2009

The continual growth in the number of employees in private companies is eye-catching (Figure 1), likewise the continuous drop in the number of employees in commercial subjects in social ownership. Since the large company-based structure of the former social and economic formation was not competitive, its place was taken over by small and medium sized companies, employing ten or less employees per units[1] (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Employee Distribution within Corporate Structure in 2002 and 2007




Source: Edited by Zoltán Takács based on Domazet – Zubović, 2009

The development potential of these small companies is weak, i.e. the private sector cannot absorb the labour force, who became unemployed due to cutdowns in the social sector, with adequate speed and capacity. Well-known, flexible forms of employment (part-time jobs, self-employment) are not specifically present at the Serbian labour market(Stojić, Atanasov, 2004). These forms of employment occur, first and foremost, among labour force with lower qualifications. Only 13% of the registered employees is engaged in temporary, seasonal jobs or is employed for a definite period (Arandarenko–Ognjenović, 2008).

According to the EUROSTAT methodology-based status report on labour force for 2009[2], the total number of inhabitants in Serbia was 7.528.262, the number of those younger than 15 was 1.177.934 (16%), while those of older than 15 was 6.350.328 (84%). 35,1% of the population older than 15 was employed, 6,5% of it was unemployed, while 42,8% of the population in Serbia is inactive. The total number of inactive population is 3.219.048, while the number of active population is 3.131.280 (ARS, 2009). 84% of the active population is employed, and 16% of it is unemployed. The distribution of employees: *(1)* the number of employed workers is 1.780.758 (57%), (2) the number of self-employed is 626.999 (20%), whereof 83% is entrepreneur, and (3) 234.929 (7%) are assisting family members. 97% of the employees work full time and the number of part-time employees is low, merely 3% (ARS, 2009). The employment rate of the economically active population in Serbia, in European relations, is low (51%). In 2009, 70% of the employees worked in private companies, 27% of them was employed by the state and 3% in social and other ownership forms of companies (ARS, 2009).

Losing jobs was the most dramatic in the following sectors in 2009: processing industry 23%, trade 23%, education 15%, real estate 9%, building 6%, traffic and catering 4-4% each. Those with secondary education make the largest group among unemployed (68,5%). The labour supply they represent is inappropriate. It is necessary to provide the reform of vocational training and adult education, competitive knowledge and competence and to institutionalize life-long learning, competitive (Gábrity Molnár, 2008, Takács, 2008b). Unemployment is significantly high among the youth. Economically active population younger than 34 make up about 50% of the overall number of unemployed. 36% of the unemployed are first-time job seekers, 65% of them wait 1-10 years for employment making thus long-term unemployment more massive. 10% of the unemployed wait for 1-2 months for the first job, 12% of them wait 3-5 months, while 13% wait even a year to get a job.

70% of the demands formulated by the employers and summarized by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, is targeted to qualified and 30% to non-qualified labour. They would employ the labour for a definite term in 72% of the cases, while in 28% of the cases employers offer employment for an indefinite term (NSZZ, 2009).

[1] In Serbia, 99,3% of the newly established companies in 2006 were micro- and small-size companies (*Arandarenko–Ognjenović,* 2008).
[2] ARS - Anketa o radnoj snazi, (Labour force survey) 2009





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## *2. Human Capital Losses – Emigration, Brain Drain*

Population migration to foreign countries is almost a hundred years old phenomenon in Serbia. According to its causes and intensity, we distinguish several waves of it (Gredelj, 2006):

· In the 1920s: the emigration of the poorest.

· In the aftermath of World War II: political emigration.

· Economic migrants from the mid-1960s, the result of Tito's "policy of opening" (guest worker statuses). It was an organised and continuous emigration of economically active population (Gábrity Molnár, 2006b), who were called by the then-Yugoslav socialist state apparatus as „temporary employed abroad" and their number was growing continuously since 1971. Compared to 1971, the percentage of Yugoslav citizens, who searched for their private and existential way in the world was for 51,1% more in 1991. An estimated 2,5 million (but there are some other estimates of four million)[3] people of Serbian origin live abroad (Gredelj, 2006).

· The next wave was the flee of refugees, who left the country during the recent Balkan wars (an estimated 200 000 -500 000) due to political, economic and security reasons.

· The present is featured by "brain drain", i.e. the process started in the 1990s has been continued (Arandarenko–Ognjenović, 2008). Two thirds of the students at technical departments would like to seek employment abroad after graduation. 50% of the emigrants is younger than 40 and 75% of them is younger than 45 (Marjanović, 2002).

After the changes in the 1990s, Hungary has also become one of the target countries.[4] The pre-Schengen period between 2001 and 2008 draws the attention to a continual emigration process. Budapest and Pest County are the general and dynamic emigration centres of Hungary, while Vojvodina is the central area where migrants are coming from. (Kincses–Takács, 2010).[5]

Losses caused by emigration are human, material and demographic in their characteristics resulting in the emergence of the "region's strengthlessness and the lack of opportunities for development". The lack of professionals is a source of many other problems: slackening economic growth, decrease of productivity, lack of innovation, technological lagging, gradual loss of competitiveness. In relation to brain drain, Gredelj (2006) refers to the "reproduction of academics and researchers"[6] and the "dispersion of the intellectual capital", while other experts indicate the "irrecoverableness of profiles" (Gábrity Molnár 2008).

## *3. Vojvodina and the Regional Imbalances - Education*

In macro-regional comparison, employment and unemployment indicators are more unfavourable in all respects in the province (Đurđev, 2009). However, it is vital to stress, that prior to the years of economic and political crisis, in view of labour force, Vojvodina was one of the most developed regions in the country. Regretfully, the contingent of youth and elderly has equalled in Vojvodina, whereby the continuous drop in the number of men can be observed. The employment rate of economically active population in Vojvodina is 70,8% for men and 50,7% for women. Unemployment rate is for 3,6% higher in the case of women, and it was 15,9% in Vojvodina in 2008. The activity rate of the region's economically active population is for 2,2% lower than the activity rate in Central Serbia. Employment rate is for 1,7% lower in the region than in Central Serbia. Unemployment is higher in Vojvodina than in Serbia and Central Serbia respectively, and it is 15,8% (Chart 1, Figure 3).

[3] Migration Management Strategy in RS Official Gazette no. 59/2009.
[4] The direction of movement until the late 1980s were the countries of western and central Europe: FR Germany, Austria and France. 92% of them moved to Europe, while 7,2% of them went overseas. (*Gábrity Molnár,* 2006a, 2008a). Germany is the most attractive country for Yugoslav migrants, workers, refugees, asylum seekers and political migrants. Pavlica reports about 600.000 Yugoslav, which makes 25% of the migrants according to the 1991 Census. Germany was followed Austria (22,5%), Switzerland (14,1%), France (7,7%), Sweden (3,5%), USA (6,3%), Canada (2,2%), Australia (1,9%) in the number of Yugoslav emigrants. After 1990, Germany records massive refugee flees: by 1994 a number of 316 243 persons, then between 1995-1999 another 156 645 persons with refugee status (*Pavlica*, 2005). Note: Within five year the approximate number of Yugoslav refugees in Germany was as much as the number of refugees who arrive to Hungary between 1988 and 1999 from Europe and the world.
[5] Serb settlements mostly affected by migration to Hungary: Subotica (3365 persons), Senta (1951), Novi Sad (1020), Backa Topola (705), Kanjiza (694), Bece (524) and Zrenjanin (508); About 88% of the migrants from Serbia came from Vojvodina. On the other hand, the most preferred settlements in Hungary as a target destination, are: Szeged (4481), Budapest (3896), Kecskemét (499) and Baja (336). (*Kincses–Takács*, 2010).
[6] In the period between 1979 and 1994 the number of experts who left the research institutes in Serbia is 1 256 (10% of the academic elite). More than half of them was younger than 40 and made researches in natural sciences (physics, chemistry, mathematics, medicine and electronics). The three billion US dollars, invested in their education was a direct loss for Serbia, not the mention the indirect consequences (*Gredelj*, 2006.).

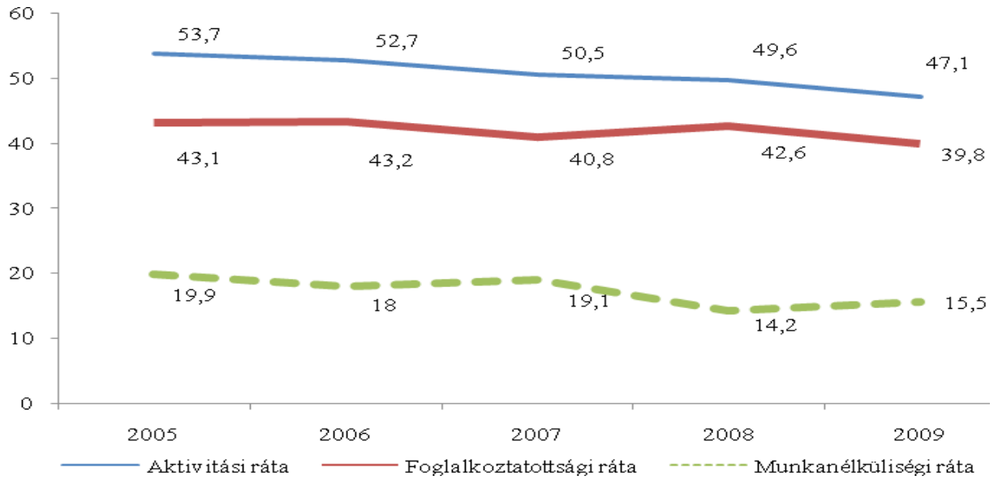
Chart 1: Regional Comparison of Employment Indicators

| | Vojvodina | Central Serbia | Serbia |
|---|---|---|---|
| Activity rate of economically active population | 60,8% | 63,0% | 62,7% |
| Employment rate of economically active population | 52,2% | 53,9% | 53,7% |

Source: Đurđev, 2009.

In the period between 2005-2009, a fallback was experienced in Vojvodina. Unemployment was rising, while activity and employment rates were falling.

Figure 3. Unemployment, Employment and Activity Rates of the Population Younger than 15 in Vojvodina between 2005-2009




Source: Edited by Zoltán Takács based on CESS, 2009, ARS, 2009.

In the composition of employed, the share of employed workers is dominant, and it is 72,9%, followed by self-employed with 22,7%, and homemakers with 4,4%. After the privatisation processes, in 2008, the distribution of employees according to ownership was the following in the region: private ownership: 60%, state ownership: 29,5%, not registered private ownership: 4,6% and (still existing) social ownership: 3,7% (Đurđev, 2009). Contrary to the experience of developed countries, the share of employed in agriculture(including forestry and water management) is dominant among industries and it is 23,3%, followed by the processing industry with 24% and trade with 15,6%.

The labour supply of Vojvodina, represented by the Province Office for Employment, comprises a massive number of unemployed without experience, young and women, first-time job seekers, apprentices, disabled, older than 50 and refugees (Šuljmanac–Šećerov–Durman, 2006). The number of unemployed persons was 199.902 in the Province in 2009. 12,4% of them were young people between 25-29 years of age. 26,7% of the unemployed is waiting for one year and 22,2% of them even two years to get a job. The average time for getting a job is 48 months (Sokić M., 2009).

The issue of employment is covered by the scope of the central authorities of Serbia: the Ministry of Economic and Regional Development, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Youth and Sport respectively.[7] Essentially, the institutional modernisation of the employment policy would mean the establishment of an effective coordination among these institutions and the Ministry of Education (Arandarenko-Ognjenović, 2008). The National Employment Service supplementing the scope of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, deals with changes on the labour market, unemployment, re-training etc. on a practical level. Otherwise, its offices functioning on the level of economically weak districts, accomplish the tasks related to local-regional employment/unemployment.

In Vojvodina, in a form of delegated competences, employment policy tools are implemented at regional level (as well).[8] The Province Secretariat of Economy, likewise the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, does not dispose of special employment policy tools. The holder of the overall regional employment policy is the Province Secretariat for Labour, Employment and Gender Equality[9], which is also the implementer of the regional employment policy in pratcice and it stimulates the re-employment of unemployed, the employment of apprentices, the registration of unemployed agricultural farmers and self-employment. Most part of the programmes include executive tasks adopted by the central authorities, then delegated with references to the territory of the province. Full legal and source-regulative freedom is not enjoyed by this province body either.

In the sense of the new law on the state budget, local self-governments have been collecting taxes and fees, which make up their own incomes (property tax and fees paid after property sale) since 2007. It has further improved tax collection rate efficiency, which has, otherwise, always been higher in the northern parts of Vojvodina than the average elsewhere in Serbia. The importance of this change in the taxation system is also proved by the fact, that own incomes, which do not origin from shared or transferred taxes, make up about 35% of the self-governments' budgets. . Another third of the self-governments' incomes are made up by support funds from the central budget, while the third part of these incomes is the local tax on salaries. Regretfully, the view of most local self-governments is that taxes and fees imposed on entrepreneurships and which are their own incomes, may not be increased further, since that would discourage investors, i.e. they cannot be raised.

The most important large companies [10] of the Province, which could be supportive of the region's development policy are primarily in the field of processing industry, wholesale and retail, repair of vehicles, agriculture and crude oil processing [11] . Processing industry employed 42,3% of the employees in 2005, owned 32,8% of the fixed assets and produced 29,9% of the total income, while 37,4% of the corporate income made 69,2% of its losses. The most number of companies are in trade and vehicle repairs and in the field of repairing household appliances (46,6%). The number of agricultural companies is large, but 12,1% of losses belongs to them as well.

Municipalities in North Vojvodina are unsatisfied with the economic results. Offices for economic development have been opened in Subotica, Becej, Senta and Backa Topola, which established business incubators, spaces adequate for greenfield investments and facilitated obtaining permits for company start-up. Owing to such measures, the economic performance of North Vojvodina exceed the Serbian average, yet extremes are also significant:

· Mali Idjos is the least developed, Subotica is a municipality offering the most opportunities.

· Kanjiza was the wealthiest municipality in 2002, but later the performance of Senta was a prevailing one.

· Economic performances worsened and decreased not only in Kanjiza (due to the ownership-related problems in Keramika), but also in Backa Topola and, generally, in all other municipalities.

· It is only in Senta, where economic growth can be experienced in the region, owing to the occurrence of privatising multinational corporations.

· Per capita budget incomes in municipalities exceeded the average in Vojvodina only in Subotica.

· Except for Senta and Becej, in all other municipalities, average salaries were lower than the average of Vojvodina.

· The level of national income was larger than the average in Vojvodina in Subotica, Backa Topola, Kanjiza and Becej.

[7] The Law on Ministries - RS Official Gazette no. 65/08

[8] Pursuant to para. 65 and 66 of the Law on Scopes, the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, as delegated competences, regulates, coordinates and "controls the employment policy" on its territory. The central role is still played by the National Employment office, whereby the coordination of the work of deconcentrated offices and the implementation of individual programmes is done through a regional office (Province Office for Employment). The Law on Establishing the Scopes and Competences of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina – RS Off. Gazette no. 99/09.

[9] In Serbian: Pokrajinski Sekretarijat za rad, zapošljavanje i ravnopravnost polova

[10] The selection of the 10 most successful and profitable companies showed the following picture in 2005: *Carnex* Vrbas, *Matijević* Novi Sad, *Victoria group* Novi Sad, *Nectar* Bačka Palanka, *Aleva* Novi Kneževac, *Sojaprotein* Bečej, *Dijamant* Zrenjanin, *Sunce* Sombor, *Mlekara* Subotica, *Univerexport* Novi Sad, *Jaffa* Crvenka, sugar factories: *Crvenka* Crvenka, *Šajkaška* Žabalj, *Bačka* Vrbas, *Donji Srem* Pećinci and *Jedinstvo* Kovačica. The distribution of the most successful corporations: 5 in processing industry, 2 chemical and one each in paper and printing and machine industry. Economic statistics analyses 7 of the largest corporations in the province. The following have well defined development strategy: *Hemofarm* Vršac, *Sintelon* Bačka Palanka and *Lafarge BFC* Beočin; of whom the following are export-oriented: *Hemofarm* Vršac, *Sintelon* Bačka Palanka, and *HIP Petrohemija* Pančevo. Finally, the list can be completed with *Novkabel* Novi Sad, *Zastava* Sombor and *Hipol* Odžaci, though they have insufficient developmental opportunities. See: Osnovni pokazatelji poslovanja preduzeća po sektorima /Basic business indicators of companies acc. to sectors/ - 2005

[11] IZVRŠNO VEĆE AP VOJVODINE, Sekretarijat za privredu, ANALIZA VELIKIH INDUSTRIJSKIH SISTEMA U AP VOJVODINI, Novi Sad, December 2006. p. 13.

Education/qualification levels are in close correlation with the issue of employment. The structure of the population's qualification in Serbia and Vojvodina therein has seen a process of massive growth over the past fifty years. The decrease in the share of illiterate persons in Serbia was as follows: in 1921 it was 50,5% and in 2002 it was 3,6%. Mirnics (1998) analyses the changes in the population's education through a division in three stages: at first, the network of elementary schools was built, which was followed by the second stage providing the population's basic education, while in the third stage the population's participation in secondary and higher education had started to grow, whereby a higher educational structure was formed in the society.

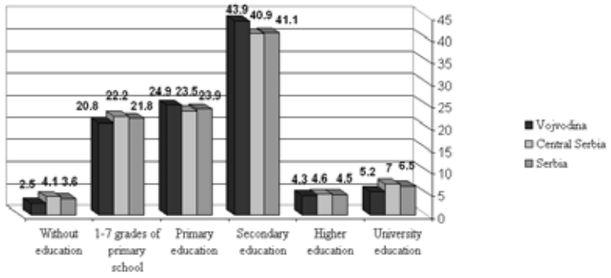
Chart 2: Educational Statistics of the Population Older than 15 in Vojvodina, 1953-2002

| Census | Total | Elementary school up to the 3rd class | Elementary school 3rd to -7. 7th class | Completed elementary school | Secondary school | Higher education, university |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In absolute figures: | | | | | | |
| 1953 | 1 268 302 | 349 959 | 711 889 | 88 171 | 105 473 | 6 982 |
| 1961 | 1 360 824 | 316 779 | 732 765 | 120 432 | 170 552 | 16 855 |
| 1971 | 1 539 760 | 273 735 | 689 037 | 234 398 | 293 871 | 43 356 |
| 1981 | 1 629 497 | 218 286 | 345 550 | 517 009 | 442 220 | 83 833 |
| 1991 | 1 627 459 | 171 056 | 373 723 | 411 552 | 537 333 | 120 689 |
| 2002 | 1 709 778 | 110 103 | 245 663 | 425 564 | 751 182 | 162 081 |
| Percentage distribution - % | | | | | | |
| 1953 | 100 | 27,6 | 56,1 | 7,0 | 8,4 | 0,6 |
| 1961 | 100 | 23,3 | 53,8 | 8,8 | 12,5 | 1,2 |
| 1971 | 100 | 17,8 | 44,7 | 15,2 | 19,1 | 2,8 |
| 1981 | 100 | 13,4 | 21,2 | 31,7 | 27,2 | 5,1 |
| 1991 | 100 | 10,5 | 23,0 | 25,3 | 33,0 | 7,4 |
| 2002 | 100 | 6,4 | 14,4 | 24,9 | 43,9 | 9,5 |

Source: Đurđev, 2007.

Education in Vojvodina had a long tradition since the Austro-Hungarian Empire, hence, there the education levels show far more favourable values than in Serbia Proper. In regional comparison, the population of Vojvodina, according to the last census results, has a more advanced educational structure than Central Serbia and Serbia in general. The share of illiteracy among population older than 15 is lower (2,52%) than in Serbia (3,64%) or Central Serbia (4,05%). In the province, the share of completed elementary education is for 1% higher than in the two other regions mentioned above. Completed secondary education is about 3% higher than the country's average and the qualification level in Central Serbia. However, we see that Vojvodina is lagging behind for 2% in the field of higher (college, university) education. It is even more expressed in the case of university education. (Figure 4 .)

Figure 4. Educational Structure of the Population in Serbia Older than 15 in Spatial Comparison




Source: Census data, 2002



It is apparent from Chart 3, that differences in qualifications are also very distinctive among ethnic communities of the region's population. The Hugarians' educational deficiency – compared to the majority nation – is the most obvious in the case of secondary and higher education respectively. In both cases, the lagging can be measured by an approximate 5% educational ratio (secondary and higher). [12] The share of higher educated Hungarians in the population older than 15 is about 3% lower than that of the majority nation.

Chart 3: Educational Difference Among the Ethnic Communities in Serbia - %

| Ethnic Community | Without any education | Elementary school up to the 3rd | Elementary school 3rd to 7th | Completed elementary school | Secondary school | College | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Serb | 5,42 | 1,94 | 13,73 | 23,06 | 42,23 | 4,65 | 6,69 |
| Montenegrin | 2,49 | 0,95 | 5,00 | 16,83 | 48,14 | 8,72 | 16,35 |
| Albanian | 12,38 | 1,10 | 13,58 | 44,96 | 16,63 | 1,87 | 2,36 |
| Hungarian | 2,11 | 3,09 | 20,95 | 29,76 | 37,34 | 3,28 | 3,03 |
| Croat | 2,08 | 2,40 | 22,91 | 27,81 | 38,77 | 3,06 | 2,84 |
| Slovak | 1,60 | 1,70 | 22,82 | 31,99 | 34,87 | 2,99 | 3,20 |

Source: Kajári based on UNDP, 2006

Further regional-spatial analyses show, that those environments, where there are strong educational institutions (secondary schools, colleges), the population's educational level exceeds (even in municipalities with absolute, 80-90% Hungarian majority) the average in Vojvodina/Serbia (e.g. in the case of elementary education: Kanjiza, Becej, Mali Idjos, Ada). On upper levels of education, smaller towns do not provide sufficient proportions. Subotica, as a node region, the regional centre of North Vojvodina, with the proportion of its secondary and college educated population exceeds educational data in Vojvodina. At the same time, the city cannot achieve an educational structure such as that of the southern Backa region, where the proportion of higher education population is about 8% (due to the University of Novi Sad and other socio-economic reasons). [13] Except for South Backa, all other regions (districts – NUTS 3) in Vojvodina are below the country's average in the proportion of higher educated people (Chart 4).

Chart 4: Education Level of the North Vojvodina Population Older than 15 in Relative Figures

| Regio | Without any education | Elementary school up to the 3rd grade | 4th to 7th grade | | Secondary school | College | University |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vojvodina | 4,4 | 2,0 | 14,4 | 24,9 | 43,9 | 4,3 | 5,2 |
| North Backa | 2,6 | 2,0 | 16,2 | 27,0 | 43,1 | 4,4 | 4,7 |
| North Banat | 3,5 | 3,5 | 2,8 | 18,8 | 39,4 | 3,8 | 3,6 |
| Municipalities | | | | | | | |
| Subotica | 2,2 | 1,6 | 15,3 | 26,5 | 44,3 | 4,8 | 5,1 |
| Backa Topola | 3,8 | 3,0 | 19,0 | 28,0 | 39,1 | 3,5 | 3,6 |
| Mali Idjos | 3,5 | 3,1 | 17,2 | 29,3 | 41,0 | 3,0 | 2,6 |

[12] It is also apparent in the case of other national minorities.

[13] Districts in Serbia (in the sense of the Republic of Serbia Regional Development Strategy 2007-2012) are NUTS 3 regions, which have definite regional differences, exclusively, depending on the existence of university centres. On the level of Serbia, in the city of Belgrade, the share of university graduated is 21%, in South Backa it is 13%, in the Nis District it is 11,6%, while in Sumadija (owing to the University of Kragujevac) 9,5% of the population has higher education. (*Strategija regionalnog razvoja Republike Srbije za period od 2007 do 2012.*).

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ada | 2,2 | 2,6 | 20,6 | 28,8 | 38,5 | 3,8 | 3,1 |
| Kanjiza | 2,1 | 3,2 | 23,8 | 30,9 | 34,8 | 3,0 | 2,1 |
| Senta | 2,3 | 2,0 | 18,8 | 26,2 | 41,3 | 4,8 | 4,5 |
| Coka | 2,7 | 4,5 | 24,3 | 27,9 | 35,1 | 2,9 | 2,2 |
| Becej | 3,6 | 3,0 | 17,4 | 30,3 | 37,6 | 3,4 | 3,8 |

Source: Census data, 2002

As to age groups, the age group 25-35 years has the highest levels of education in the case of both Serbs and Hungarians. Both in regional and ethnic aspects, the North Vojvodina region is featured by differences in education. The chapters below shall analyse the deficiencies of the educational system as root causes of the differences.

The present structuring of higher education in Serbia contributes to the emergence of regional differences in the educational structure of the population. Even the higher education capacities of Vojvodina, considered to be a developed (macro) region in Serbia, seem to be insufficient in comparison with the national (mostly international) indicators. There are 7 state universities in Serbia altogether. The total number of students is 238 710, according to the 2007 Statistical Yearbook (i.e. in the academic 2006/07 year). The number of teachers is 12 884 (whereof 8 150 lecturer and 4 734 research worker). Thus, the teacher-student proportion in Serbia is 1:29 and it is one of the worst indicators in the countries of South-Eastern Europe. [14] This indicator is even more unfavourable in Vojvodina. The total number of teaching staff in the province's higher education is 3 040 (1 846 teachers, 1 194 research-workers), hence the proportion is 1:30. The number of research institutions in Serbia was 163 in 2005. In Central Serbia it was 141, while in Vojvodina there were only 22 research institutions. [15] Two of them are independent scientific research institutions, 5 are corporate and institutional R&D units and 15 are higher educational research institutes.

From the 1990s on, there was a higher educational expansion in Vojvodina's higher education (the number of students has risen for 120% from the 1990s till present and a number of private faculties started to work). That period was followed by a qualitative change in concept since 2003 in accordance with the Bologna Processes (new departments, flexible programmes, shortened time of graduation). The distribution of study programmes among ethnic communities is different in the province's higher education (humanities are the leading, while other sciences are featured by under-representation). Higher education in the region of Vojvodina is characterised by the concentration of institutions in the province centre and by the marginalisation of the region's northern part. The University of Novi Sad contributes with 70,3%, while Subotica with only 17,7% to the capacity distribution of the higher educational network (Takács, 2009a).

Given regional economic development prospects should surmount a three-stage „impediment" (Takács, 2009b):

· Since the development of higher education and establishing higher education institutions are not covered by the regional development policy of the country as a basic objective, the local-regional elite has to tackle this issue.

· Regional-province bodies have to provide a tight cooperation between higher education and regional development, bearing in mind, that the advancement of higher education is not the internal issue of the education management only, and that it requires increasing cross-sectoral coordination. [16]

· Upon the establishment of institutions based on social needs, their long term functioning should also be provided, likewise their ability to accomplish spatial development tasks as (new) elements of the innovation system, and for that, according to Horváth, higher education has to fulfil further requirements. Research should be treated as high priority and stimulated adequately, technological and economic innovations should be created, the organised cooperation of higher education and economy should be supported in territorially decentralised higher educational environment, where balanced advancement is ensured in the division of labour, appropriation of sources and sizes of institutions (Horváth, 2003).

[14] In Croatia and Slovenia, this indicator is 1: 23, while OCDE's average is 1:16. (*Ivošević – Miklavič*, 2009)
[15] In Serbia, the National Statistical Office analyses statistical data divided into three territorial units: Serbia as a whole, Central Serbia and Vojvodina.
[16] Horvath, in referring to Horvath's recommendations given to modernisation and higher education development in Hungary(*Horváth*, 2003).



## *4. Vocational Education and the Labour Market's Demand in Competences*

Employers have a common requirement from their employees: competence. The task of the education system is to mop up and nowise to increase the number of unemployed professionals. The education system should be governed by market demands in producing the adequate professional labour capacity. If we take into consideration the potential labour force, that leave vocational secondary schools and higher education, we can concluded, that, very often, the employer demands from the employees, are unrealistic. Our educational system is deficient, vocational secondary schools do not prepare the pupils either for employment or for further education. The causes of this deficiency are in the inappropriate teaching staff and outdated curriculum (Gábrity Molnár, 2008). The primary issues of secondary education are: Lack of vocational standardisation (knowledge + skills), a lot of theory, scarce practical teaching, lack of modern trades, rigid curricula, teaching plans and programmes.

Empirical research results [17] prove the relative unpreparedness of the region's educational institutions in relation to the requirements of the labour market. There is an absence of active school management, practice-oriented education (instead of conventional secondary education) in the institutions in Vojvodina. Our schools are characterised by a capacity-filling attitude, and by inadequate regional vocational distribution of work, which is typical for the region. Most schools in the region fail to have a simple and clear, publicly presented adult education plan, their programmes are *ad hoc*, frequently we can speak about school-type education, vocational training and therein re-training, upgrading, supplementary training and specialisation only. There contacts with the representatives of industry/economy are scarce. There are occasional contacts with the National Employment Office to organise re-training for unemployed in a duration of a couple of months. In the case of schools, market-based attitude is absent, hence they stick to traditions (delegated by the ministry), established habits to train in a school-system and are not willing to open up towards trainings, which could be commercialised more easily.

In the adult education strategy[18] of Serbia, adult education[19] means the formal and informal educational participation of any citizen over 18 without a pupil or student status. Adult education may be formal, informal, general specialised, initial, continuing, regular and irregular. Formal education is provided within the traditional school system from elementary school to university education. Informal education means all programmes and educational activities, which are provided outside the traditional school system. Initial education facilitates and precedes the entrance to labour market and first-time employment. Continuing training comprises all education and training, which is pursued after completing compulsory education and employment: upgrading, re-training, acquiring new competences.

"Adult education activities are, mostly, targeted to two areas: vocational training (acquiring the first trade, or carrier correction due to wrong-chosen (insufficient) training, re-training and further training). (Gábrity Molnár 2008b). In Serbia/Vojvodina, state educational institutions are mostly unprepared for these tasks in the field of adult education. Namely, adult education programmes are not efficient enough in order to organize the re-training of unemployed (Gábrity Molnár, 2009b). Wide-ranged vocational training, the planning of flexible and practical programmes, the innovative - corrective revision of the education system and market demands, can be carried out by modelling adult education within a new, legal framework. In Serbia there is an absence of common operative programmes for the concept of life-long learning, of a more flexible, interdisciplinary educational attitude and of the market strategy approach (Takács, 2009c). Mostly secondary educational institutions are designated as the optional institutions of adult education (Gábrity Molnár, 2008b). Other opportunities: institutions for basic education with adequate capacities, higher education institutions, people's universities, open universities, corporate entities and other organisations and institutions.

## *5. Higher Education Demands of the North Vojvodina Region*

The micro region of North Vojvodina has been characterised by the decrease of population for decades, i.e. natural population decline has been higher than the average of Vojvodina, especially in the municipalities of Coka, Mali Idjos, Backa Topola and Senta. The population figures per years and municipalities are shown in Chart 8. Decline in the number of population in

[17] The background of adult education in the school-network of North Backa: results of empirical research, 2008: coordinated by dr Irén Molnár Gábrity. The research was conducted by the team of researchers of the Regional Scientific Association: Irén Gábrity Molnár, Krisztina Kovács, Verona Molnár, András Ricz, Tünde Ricz Dencs, Sándor Somogyi, Éva Szügyi, Zoltán Takács, Zsófia Veréb Miskolci.
[18] Strategija razvoja obrazovanja odraslih u Republici Srbiji /Adult Education Development Strategy in the Republic of Serbia/ (2007), RS Off. Gazette no. 1.
[19] In terminology, it does not make a difference between adult training and adult education (obrazovanje odraslih). It uses adult education as a generally accepted, established category in Serbian context.

municipalities is, without exemption, continuous, yet, it is a typical phenomenon in the Province and in Serbia as well. From the changes in figures it can be concluded, the human resources can be increased only in the level of education and qualification.

Chart 5: Population of Municipalities According to Municipalities 2002-2008

| Year | Ada | Coka | Mali Idjos | Kanjiza | Becej | Subotica | Backa Topola | Senta | Total | Vojvodina | Serbia |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2002 | 18.988 | 13.780 | 13.491 | 27.480 | 40.928 | 148.346 | 38.162 | 25.531 | 326.706 | 2.034.851 | 7.500.031 |
| 2003 | 18.878 | 13.575 | 13.402 | 27.289 | 40.580 | 147.700 | 37.824 | 25.341 | 324.589 | 2.030.218 | 7.480.591 |
| 2004 | 18.724 | 13.351 | 13.238 | 27.123 | 40.238 | 147.254 | 37.427 | 25.155 | 322.510 | 2.022.257 | 7.463.157 |
| 2005 | 18.558 | 13.133 | 13.073 | 26.948 | 39.912 | 146.765 | 37.005 | 24.930 | 320.324 | 2.012.918 | 7.440.769 |
| 2006 | 18.372 | 12.896 | 12.943 | 26.754 | 39.597 | 146.238 | 36.550 | 24.673 | 318.023 | 2.002.598 | 7.411.569 |
| 2007 | 18.189 | 12.634 | 12.770 | 26.566 | 39.317 | 145.752 | 36.051 | 24.457 | 315.736 | 1.991.507 | 7.381.579 |
| 2008 | 18.028 | 12.393 | 12.585 | 26.391 | 38.965 | 145.169 | 35.575 | 24.288 | 313.394 | 1.979.389 | 7.350.222 |

Source: Chart edited by the Regional Scientific Association, 2010

In North Vojvodina, there are efforts to establish universities, however the processes are slow. The status and directions of development of higher education is significantly influenced by the multiethnic environment, which is specifically typical for the region. In line with our earlier hypothesis, higher education, which is organised within a multi-lingual institution has a future in the northern part of Vojvodina.

The fundamental questions of higher education development are:

· How large is the elbow room provided by regional (local) competences, scopes, source-regulating mechanisms to mobilise social and economic powers and to ensure the innovative role of the regional elite?

· In the regional absence of a common national adult education, what can be the fundament of the region's growth?

· Building on faculties of extension, can a more serious, cross-border transfer of knowledge and a catch-up process of the region be started?

· Anyway, is there a social, minority-community consensus in place in relation to the development of higher education institutions?

Enrolment quotas are defined by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia each year. According to the statistics, there were 117.212 students in Serbia[20] in 1990, while this number doubled by 2006 to reach 238.710. The number of graduates was 15.368 in 1990, while it was 29.406 in 2006.

Chart 6: Student Number Distribution According to Universities in Serbia - 2010[21]

| | Name of the University in Serbian | Name of the University in Hungarian | State (S) or Private (P) | Number of students (made up or estimated) | Year of |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Univerzitet u Beogradu | Belgrádi Egyetem | S | 89,800 | 1905. (31) |
| 2 | Univerzitet u Novom Sadu | Újvidéki Egyetem | S | 43,200 | 1960. (14=9+5) |
| 3 | Univerzitet u Nišu | Nisi Egyetem | S | 26,270 | 1965. (11+2) |
| 4 | Megatrend Univerzitet | Megatrend Egyetem | P | 5,000 | 2000. (5+2) |
| 5 | Univerzitet u Kragujevcu | Kragujeváci Egyetem | S | 14,160 | 1976. (11) |
| 6 | Univerzitet u Prištini (Kosovska Mitrovica) | Pristinai Egyetem szerb nyelvű részlege Kosovska Mitrovicán | S | 9,300 | 1969. (10) |
| 7 | Univerzitet Singidunum | Singidunum Egyetem | P | 4,200 | 2005. (7+1+2) |
| 8 | Univerzitet Alfa (Braća Karić) | Alfa Egyetem (Braca Karic Egyetem) | P | 5,000 | 1993. (6+1) |
| 9 | Univerzitet Union Beograd | Union Egyetem Beograd | P – accreditation in process | 2,500 | 2005. (7+1) |
| 10 | Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu | Belgrádi Művészeti Egyetem | S | 1,200 (estimated) | 1973. (4) |
| 11 | Evropski univerzitet | Európai Egyetem | P – accreditation in process | 650 | 2000. (5+1) |
| 12 | Univerzitet u Novom Pazaru | Novi Pazari Egyetem | S | 1,500 | 2006. (3) |
| 13 | Internacionalni Univerzitet u Novom Pazaru | Novi Pazari Nemzetközi Egyetem | P – accreditation in process | 1,000 (estimated) | 2003. (5) |
| 14 | Akademija lepih umetnosti | Szépművészeti Akadémia Beográd | P | 500 (estimated) | 1997. |
| 15 | Privredna akademija Novi Sad | Gazdasági Akadémia Újvidék | P | 4,000 | 2000. (6+1) |
| 16 | Univerzitet Educons Sremska Kamenica | Educons Egyetem Sremska Kamenica | P – accreditation in process | 1,720 | 2008 (5) |
| 17 | Univerzitet Metropolitan Beograd | Metropolitan Egyetem Beograd | P | 1,300 | 2005 (4) |
| | | | Total | 207,000 | |

Source: Edited by Irén Molnár Gábrity

It is a general view, that the University of Novi Sad – in relation to other universities in Serbia – has made a significant step ahead in the field of higher education reforms and accreditation. The University of Novi Sad had 43. 414 students in the academic 2009/2010 year[22]. The number of students with state scholarships was 26.985, i.e. 62,12%, while 16,455 (37,88%) students paid tuition fees. The number of students on master studies was 2.378, while PhD courses were attended by 954 students (most of them paid their own tuition fees). In the 2008/09 academic year, 4.500 students graduated. The average time of studies, according to the old programmes and laws, was 7,37 years. The period of studies has significantly shortened in the case of those studying in the Bologna system.

A total of 6.392 students studied in 2009 at the departments of the University of Novi Sad in Subotica. Adding up a contingent of 4.000 students in Zrenjanin, Sombor and Kikinda, than the ones at the faculty of extension of a Hungarian Faculty for sciences, i.e. 200 students, likewise some (estimated) 300 students at the private faculties in Subotica, there are about 12.000 students in the region. . Higher education in the region of Vojvodina is characterised by the concentration of institutions in the province centre and by the marginalisation of the region's northern part. The University of Novi Sad contributes with 70,3%, while Subotica with only 17,7% to the capacity distribution of the higher educational network.

[20] The number of inhabitants in Serbia (without Kosovo) according to the 2002 Census is: 7 498 001.

[21] Source: http://www.studentskisvet.com/studije.php (2011-03-01)

[22] In the academic 2009/10 year a number of 9.975 students enrolled in vocational colleges established by the Province, but we have to add to it the number of students at private faculties in order to get a total number.

### *5.1. Experiences in Training*

Empirical research results[23] prove the relative unpreparedness of the region's educational institutions in relation to the requirements of the labour market. There is an absence of active school management, practice-oriented education (instead of conventional secondary education) in the institutions in Vojvodina. Our schools are characterised by a capacity-filling attitude, and by inadequate regional vocational distribution of work, which is typical for the region.

Most schools in the region fail to have a simple and clear, publicly presented adult education plan, their programmes are *ad hoc*, and frequently we can speak about classroom-type education, vocational training and therein re-training, upgrading, supplementary training and specialisation only. There contacts with the representatives of industry/economy are scarce. There are occasional contacts with the National Employment Office to organise re-training for unemployed in a duration of a couple of months. In the case of schools, market-based attitude is absent; hence they stick to traditions (delegated by the ministry), established habits to train in a school-system and are not willing to open up towards trainings, which could be "sold" more easily.

In the change of the systems in Central and Eastern European countries the structure, speed and social influence of economic adjustment can be readily followed. Among the changes, the re-shaping of the labour market is of vital importance, first and foremost in relation to the qualitative (professional) and quantitative composition of the labour force.

In Serbia, Vojvodina, hence also in North Vojvodina, the structural adjustment of employment depends on two factors acting in two opposite directions: the liquidation of (state) companies, on the one hand, and the result of the creation of new entrepreneurships, on the other. During the structural adjustment of economy the composition of the so called "marketable" professions changes as well, and potential employees should be informed about it timely, since it influences the choices of young people and the willingness of adults to re-train themselves.

Parallel to such adjustments, the schools in North Vojvodina are features not by the monitoring of demand, but by their capacity-filling attitude. Very often, classes are opened on the base of the school's capacities in teaching staff and trendy interest and not in line with the market (employer) demands. Frequently, schools interpret "market demand" as a number of those applying for a certain profile, and believe, that the popularity of the vocational profiles they offer, means that the schools is more marketable, because it can attract more pupils.

We concluded, that the distribution of work is deficient in this field among the secondary schools of the regions, hence there are double vocational classes, while elsewhere capacities are left empty. Secondary schools in North Vojvodina fail to have a consistent, simple and clear plan (re-training, upgrading, supplementary training, specialisation) of adult education (published for the stakeholders). In the absence of an adequate law, adult education is functioning outside the school system for the time being . If schools are asked to provide an education, they enrol in an *ad hoc* manner private students, organise the training, but they do not have their own management, which would provide an adequate offer. Mainstream secondary school will soon face an intensive process of rationalisation and cutback, whereby sources will be re-appropriated for the needs of adult education. Cutbacks can be expected, especially in the case of those who fail to have adequate qualifications and competence. School-leaving graduates can be employed by the labour market as new employees only to a small extent. The job-seeking period is long, and, very often, potential employees can meet employment-demands only if they re-train themselves. Especially general profiles are those, which, in a later phase, require re-training and specialisation because of the special demands.

The issues of vocational education can be resolved on a local level through the dialogue of competent authorities: i.e. schools, state and private institutions, unemployed, job centres. At present, the contacts of schools and employers are scarce and, in most cases, initiated by the labour market and not by the school. Schools and job centre also maintain separate "negotiations", mostly initiated by the job centres. There is an absence of an active and open school management, of a common plan on retraining unemployed on the labour market, despite the fact, that there is also a need for specialised and practice-oriented training and not only for elementary trainings.

[23] The background of adult education in the school-network of North Backa: results of empirical research, 2008: coordinated by dr Irén Molnár Gábrity. The research was conducted by the team of researchers of the Regional Scientific Association: Irén Gábrity Molnár, Krisztina Kovács, Verona Molnár, András Ricz, Tünde Ricz Dencs, Sándor Somogyi, Éva Szügyi, Zoltán Takács, Zsófia Veréb Miskolci.



The demand for higher educated human resources with specialised and practical knowledge has increased in the region, but, at the same time, there is a gap between secondary and higher education.

The emphasis is on secondary education built upon a matured, traditional network of secondary education. This network should establish such a specialised acquisition of knowledge in the region, which will surmount the existing conventional secondary education. It would be necessary to establish the specialised and practice-oriented training, defined by the employers in soonest possible time and to prepare the pupils for a practice-oriented higher education as well.

As to the labour market in Vojvodina, the number of professionals in healthcare, economy and technical-informatics field seems to be sufficient, but in agriculture there is a lack and surplus of professionals at the same time and it should be redressed by the economic growth and off-agricultural labour demand. Existing schools and more developed vocational training centres, open universities mean an advantage in the organisation of further and adult education in view of their experience in organising education. Relying on their experience, an efficient adult and further education could be organised, accompanied with consulting services both for future students and job-seekers.

The reform of education foresees a more open secondary school in the future, which will apply modern methods and tools in implementing modern education. An important step in this process is to get in contact with similar educational institutions in the neighbouring countries. Such cooperation would mean, on the one hand, sharing experiences and, on the other, would enable teachers and students to have an insight in the results of the European states and the life of teachers and students there. Due to these requirements, the following conclusions are considered important:

· In Serbia there is an absence of common operative programmes for the concept of life-long learning, of a more flexible, interdisciplinary educational attitude and of the market strategy approach.

· Contrary to international and domestic expectations, in Serbia/Vojvodina, state educational institutions are mostly unprepared for the tasks in the field of adult education. Namely, adult education programmes are not efficient enough in order to organize the re-training of unemployed.

· At the same, employers are unsatisfied. Their experience shows that young professionals lack interest, fail to have sufficient practical knowledge, hence they should undertake a special, one- or two-year long, training to be able to participate in the work processes.

· Our educational system is deficient, vocational secondary schools do not prepare the pupils either for employment or for further education.

· The task of education is to follow the needs of the region's economy, to handle it and to eliminate for good the "production" of unemployed professionals.

· Market and commercial entities shaping the market are indispensable, their opinion and needs are value-creating for vocational training.

· The task of formal and informal educational institutions is to provide competence (foreign language, computer literacy, team work), i.e. besides formal education (traditional education in schools), informal education (outside traditional school system) should also play a role in educational/training forms, which promote entrance to labour market and facilitate employment and the acquisition of continuing re-training, further education and new competences.

At last, but not at least, let's emphasise the definition of the basic functions of adult education:

· The first function is to facilitate the acquisition of qualification and vocational qualification, at least that of the primary school and first vocational qualification for the age group of 16-29.

· The second main function is to facilitate continuing vocational training and the acquisition of higher level vocational qualifications, based on employer-needs and organised and supported by the employer.

· The third main function of adult education is to provide the acquisition of marketable professional knowledge and vocational qualification for adult employees through employment-supportive trainings (mostly during the period of unemployment). It can be directed towards re-training and upgrading, and as a result of training a qualification can be acquired, which is recognised by the state as such or as a job-specific training.

· The fourth function of adult education is to assist, by so called supplementary trainings, vocational trainings, employment and the success of job seeking, or higher efficiency in a job. The range of supplementary trainings is very wide: acquir-

ing career-oriented knowledge, acquiring knowledge necessary for starting vocational training, getting to know information necessary for employment/job seeking, knowledge needed for specific jobs in order to produce higher efficiency (e.g. foreign languages, computer literacy, features of modern employees).

## 6. Summary

### 6.1. General Conclusions[24]

· In the change of the systems in Central and Eastern European countries the structure, speed and social influence of economic adjustment can be followed. The transformation of the labour market is of vital importance among the changes. In Serbia the structural adjustment of employment depends on two factors acting in two opposite directions: the liquidation of (state) companies, on the one hand, and the result of the creation of new entrepreneurships, on the other. During the structural adjustment of economy the composition of the so called "marketable" professions changes as well, and potential employees should be informed about it timely, since it influences the choices of young people and the willingness of adults to re-train themselves.

· In the building of the school system in Vojvodina, capacity-filling attitude is prevailing. School often open classes according to interest and not in line with market (employer) demands. Schools interpret "market demand" as a number of those applying for a certain profile, and believe, that the popularity of the vocational profiles they offer, means that the school is more marketable, because it can attract more pupils. The distribution of work is deficient in this field among the secondary schools of the region, hence there are double vocational classes, while elsewhere capacities are left empty.

· Secondary schools in North Vojvodina fail to have a consistent, simple and clear plan (re-training, upgrading, supplementary training, specialisation) of adult education. In the absence of an adequate law, adult education is functioning *ad hoc* for the time being. If schools are asked, they enrol private students, but, still, do not have their own management.

· Mainstream secondary education institutions will face rationalisation processes, which will manifest in the re-appropriation of funds for organising adult education. Cutbacks are to be expected, especially in the case of those who fail to have appropriate competences.

· School-leaving graduates can be employed by the labour market as new employees only to a small extent. The job-seeking period is long, and, very often, potential employees can meet employment-demands only if they re-train themselves. Mostly general qualifications are those, which, on a later stage, require re-training and specialisation due to special needs.

· The issues of vocational education can be resolved on a local level through the dialogue of competent authorities: i.e. schools, state and private institutions, unemployed, job centres. At present, the contacts of schools and employers are scarce and, in most cases, initiated by the labour market and not by the school. Schools and job centres also maintain separate "negotiations", mostly initiated by the job centres. Active and open school management is absent.

· The demand for higher educated human resources with specialised and practical knowledge has increased in the region. The demand for specialised and practice-oriented training is general.

· In Vojvodina, the emphasis is on secondary education built upon a matured, traditional network of secondary education. It would be vital to create specialized and practice-oriented trainings as defined by employers in soonest possible time. The system of practical education could be planned, despite the fact, that the legal framework for the functioning of the whole system is still to be resolved in Serbia. The system of requirements, curricula, personal conditions, accreditation, exams, system of diplomas and certificates, their connection with the secondary and higher education can be set in advance.

· As to the labour market in Vojvodina, the number of professionals in healthcare, economy and technical-informatics field seems to be sufficient, but in agriculture there is a lack and surplus of professionals at the same time and it should be redressed by economic growth and off-agricultural labour demand. There is a huge number of unqualified labour in agricultural companies. Their training/upgrading needs are not mapped and their accidental involvement in further education depends on their individual ambitions only (no corporate support is in place for them).

· Existing schools and more developed vocational training centres, open universities mean an advantage in the organisation of further and adult education in view of their experience in organising education. Relying on their experience, an efficient adult and further education could be organised, accompanied with consulting services both for future students and job-seekers.

[24] See for details: *Képzetteké a jövő, A felnőttképzés háttere Észak-Bácska iskolahálózatában*, Szerk.: Irén Gábrity Molnár, Published by: Regionális Tudományi Társaság, Szabadka 2008. 266 p.



· Cross-border institutional contacts would also be important, since the emphasis is on cooperation. Such cooperation would mean, on the one hand, sharing experiences and, on the other, would enable teachers and students to have an insight in the results of the European states and the life of teachers and students there.

### 6.2. Specific Tasks

· Secondary and higher education institutions educate those who are willing to get employed and very often they fail to provide specialised qualifications. Hence, for example, persons qualified in economy, informatics or technical science get employed in agriculture or provide services to companies involved in agricultural production, but their relevant knowledge is deficient.

· Based on mapped corporate demands, the upgrading of employed, the supplement of adequate vocational qualifications should be re-scheduled by efficient and accredited educational programmes through vocational organisations. In Vojvodina, employers and HR managements in companies fail to define effectively their demands for supplementary training and specialisation.

· The reform of the adult education system in Vojvodina, likewise the planning of upgrading and re-trainings will require continuous and competent contribution by the experts (functioning in professional networks).

· The functioning of a uniform, flexible and mobile adult education network is necessary for the human resource potential of the region. The modalities of adult education shall include: re-training of redundant and not adequately qualified labour, institutionalising supplementary training, organising upgrading by developing a rational, cost-effective and flexible educational infrastructure.

· Multi-lingual higher education institutions should be established in the region, offering a number of profiles and practice-oriented education, in order to supplement the decades-long deficit in human capacities. Practice-oriented higher education in individual deficit qualification can be implemented on an inter-regional level, through the cross-border cooperation of university departments.

### 6.3. Recommendations

The shortcomings and outdatedness of the adult education system require that this issue is tackled comprehensively. The system itself, likewise the organisations participating in the system, should fulfil the following general objectives: to be based on the principle of competences, to be oriented towards practice and accommodated to the status on the labour market and to the requirements set by the formation of the vocational training structure. Representatives of the economy and the entrepreneurs, professional interest-protecting organisations, chambers and sectoral state authorities from the level of ministries to the level of self-government should participate in drawing up and implementing the development policy and in the functioning of the system.

Before the most important long- and medium-term tasks are drafted, the importance of controlling and managing continuous changes should be stressed in the interest of a quality-centred, market-oriented adult education-training. The following should be controlled on a continuous basis:

· Do quality, content and form meet quality requirements?

· Is the institutional infrastructure adequate?

·Is teaching competence adequate? (Professional competence, didactical knowledge, communication skills, besides teaching: ability to facilitate learning).

There are two roads and if we want these two roads to meet, we should pursue permanent revision. The first road is, that the educational institution – in line with the teaching material – defines the competences to be acquired by its students. The second is, that the industry, self-governments and the civil sphere, together with the students as future employees and a consulting company, jointly define the expectations, competences and skills on which a specific training programme is built.

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